Happiness Factory

Sapient shaves days off the development of the third-generation Happiness Factory digital campaign for Coca-Cola using Adobe® Creative Suite® 4 Web Premium software.

In April 2006, Coca-Cola launched a television advertising campaign that told the story of what really happens behind the scenes when you buy a Coke from a vending machine. This campaign became the genesis for a wildly successful customer loyalty campaign that today reaches consumers on multiple devices including television, computer, and mobile. In 2009, Coca-Cola enlisted Sapient to create the third iteration of the Happiness Factory microsite and associated digital campaign.
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Capturing the magic
Coca-Cola wanted an experience that extended the popularity of the Happiness Factory while highlighting the burst of joy, refreshment, and energy you get with every sip of Coke. “The overall goal of the campaign is customer engagement and brand loyalty,” says Freddie Laker, director of digital strategy for Sapient.

The digital campaign includes a microsite, banner advertisements, co-marketing on partner websites, MSN Messenger games, and an iPhone application. The banner advertisements and marketing on partner websites drive traffic to the microsite.

The Happiness Factory site launched globally in January of 2009, and received over a million visits in the first six months. On average, 5,000 people spend over seven and a half minutes a day on the site. Since its launch, the website has won a number of awards, including: Best in Show at the MIXX Awards; gold W3 Awards in Games and Gaming and Food and Beverage; the Adweek Buzz Award for Best Integrated Campaign; a WebAward for Outstanding Website; and the Creative Website Award for Top Flash Website. The campaign was also a finalist for Cannes Cyber Lions and the Clio Awards and was named Site of the Day on TheFWA.com.

A comprehensive campaign
The Happiness Factory microsite serves as the interactive hub of the campaign. Knowing how everyone loves the Happiness Factory characters, Sapient decided to give site visitors the opportunity to take on the role of the Worker and experience the trials and tribulations of creating that perfect bottle of Coke.

The series of MSN Messenger games are similar to what is available on the main microsite. Players unlock content by playing the games and have fun with “buddy icons” of characters from the factory, which respond to instant messenger conversations by changing their expressions. The Happiness Factory MSN Messenger campaign launched with four different two-player games across multiple markets and languages.

Over 813,000 MSN Messenger game matches were played in the first month after launch, the average session time is over seven minutes, and the game sees a 15% repeat visitor rate. Sapient also created the “Spin the Coke” iPhone application for Coca-Cola, which was downloaded more than 10,000 times in its first weekend.

Sapient used Adobe Creative Suite 4 Web Premium software to create the Coca-Cola Happiness Factory campaign. The team spent three weeks concepting the microsite, with lots of back and forth internally and with the client. The whole project was developed in less than three months, and at least 20 people were involved in the process.

“The integration among the tools was one of the best benefits of working with Adobe Creative Suite 4 Web Premium software,” explains Laker. “The improvements to speed and functionality in Adobe Creative Suite 4 software easily saved us days of work.”

Pushing the limits
When Sapient initially received the concepts from Coca-Cola the team wanted to push the limits of what could be done and make the user experience more immersive, while keeping the site consistent. Sapient created first-person, 3D immersive games, including the ice luge and coin roll, which were ambitious for a site created in Adobe Flash CS4 Professional.
The team worked with 3D animators and Psyop models from the original animation for the TV commercials, rather than just pulling clips from the TV commercial, to reconstruct the experience online. With the models from Psyop, Sapient used the 3D functionality in Adobe Photoshop® CS4 Extended to prepare the assets for importing into Adobe Flash® CS4 Professional.

Sapient designers used Wacom tablets, and the fluid canvas rotation in Photoshop CS4 Extended enabled them to smoothly turn the canvas for distortion-free viewing at any angle. They also liked the smoother panning and zooming and Bird’s Eye View features, which let them quickly zoom in and out on different areas. Adobe Bridge CS4 was a key component for sorting assets and keeping everything organized.

Most of the project involved working with animated sequences, so the flow from Adobe After Effects® CS4 to Flash CS4 Professional was very important. “In typical Adobe fashion, we didn’t have any problems with the workflow and were able to export compositions from Adobe After Effects CS4 as layered projects and import them into Adobe Flash CS4 Professional, preserving all animated transformations,” says Laker.

Achieving technical goals
The site was technically ambitious due to its size, so the unload and stop feature in Flash CS4 Professional was very useful to developers. If the team encountered any memory issues, this feature let them wipe the slate clean rather than going through the time consuming process of removing each item that was loading.

Flash CS4 Professional enabled developers to do animation on the timeline, which made it much easier to move animations around and change the position of items. The 3D transformations in Flash CS4 Professional also helped the team scale movie clips, changing their width and height, and make things move through the 3D space along the x, y, and z axes. Previously this was a very time consuming process and these new features saved hours of work.

The giant Worker featured on the home page was originally made up of PNG sequences. To move him, developers had to move all of the sequences frame by frame. With the object-based animation in Adobe Flash CS4 Professional the team was able to select everything at once and make changes to motion with Bezier handles. Sapient also used After Effects CS4 to render the video of the Worker, which handled better than the sequence of PNGs. Adobe Soundbooth™ CS4 played a large part in preparing the audio for the site.
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At the organization level, the new project features helped Sapient manage site elements more easily. Changes to the Library in Flash CS4 Professional also simplified the ordering of items and let the team more easily sort, redistribute, and name assets, such as movie clips. They then used Adobe ActionScript® to pull assets from the Library and place them on the stage in Flash CS4 Professional.

Measuring success
Coca-Cola is very focused on measuring the ongoing business value of its digital marketing efforts. For the Happiness Factory campaign, this value can be seen in the positive engagement metrics such as standard web traffic, links from other locations, and session length. In addition, Coca-Cola is evaluating the third generation campaign based on its standing in the social media space, overall buzz, positive campaign sentiment, and awards. The global campaign will run in multiple languages throughout 2009 and 2010.

For Sapient, the Happiness Factory campaign is one of the most ambitious digital campaigns the agency has completed. “We really put our heart and soul into this project and came together as global agency,” says Laker. “There were people contributing from all over the world and the integration among Adobe Creative Suite 4 applications made the process seamless. We’re very happy with the end result.”