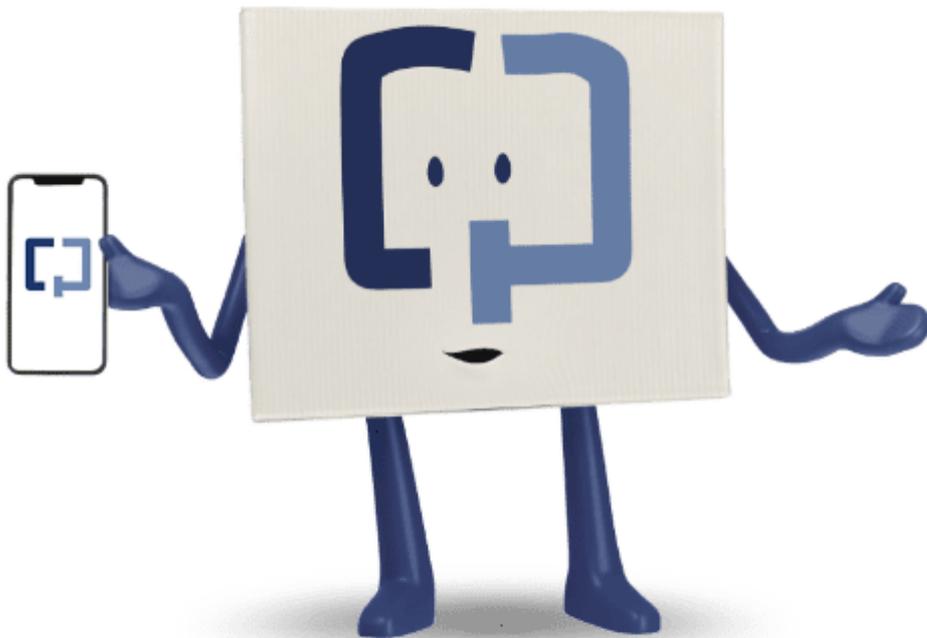


Want to Sell Something on TV? Find a Box or Animal to Animate



Tom Madden, Founder & CEO, TransMedia Group

Jumping out of our TV screens and into our living rooms these days are an array of creatures from walking bladders to talking boxes urging us to screen test our colon. Then tall emu's and short geckos keep reminding we better have insurance.

Yes, one of the advertising industry's favorite tactics is using animals. They know how much cute and furry sells, and how animals with human characteristics make us laugh. A number of well-known brands have come to be defined by their animal stars, which have become just as famous as their human counterparts.

Content creators in advertising know well the power of emotional storytelling. And whose emotions do they want to cater to and inflate into action? Ours!

They also know it works best when these two ingredients are present together: a human element married to a narrative structure.

The human element is the cute little character in the story that creators want their audience to like, be charmed by, be comfortable with, to listen to and most importantly, trust!

They run the gamut from the ubiquitous Geico gecko insurance reptile with the hybrid Cockney London accent to the friendly walking CG box recommending simple at-home colon cancer screening.

Didn't the Holstein cows once make moo magic in commercials, ads, and billboards, helping Chick-fil-A surpass KFC in sales?

The narrative structure is what drives consumer engagement while propelling me either to head to the refrigerator multiple times a night or to the bathroom when they pop up with their perennial pitching, albeit cute as Miss Pie a la Mode.

Their trick is to capture us with a simple story often comprising just a simple question and answer like how easy it is to find out if something's wrong, say with your colon.

Or, do we really need an animated bladder to take us by the hand and drag us to a toilet until we've had enough with our frustratingly frequent urination?

Personally, I'm sick of the cute little animal actor crackers, the emus swooping down in helicopters, and that clever little carnivore lizard that stands for Geico, but apparently most TV viewers aren't for they continue popping up in commercial

after commercial.

In other words, they work.

It's a whole new generation of cereal selling Tony the Tigers that us TV viewers, like it or not, are just going to have to put up with and let into our living rooms for those 30-second or one-minute spots.

But do they have to put our organs on legs?

Ugh.

About the Author: Besides an inveterate blogger, Tom Madden is an author of countless published articles and five books, including his latest, **WORDSHINE MAN**, available in January on Amazon. He is the founder and CEO of TransMedia Group, an award-winning public relations firm serving clients worldwide since 1981 and has conducted remarkably successful media campaigns and crisis management for America's largest companies and organizations.