

Reach Entertainment: Giving Companies the Hollywood Touch

By Jonathan Dean

We all love the allure of Hollywood: the glamorous celebrities, red carpets, and the feeling you get when you get your first glimpse of studio magic. For Gabe Gordon and Frank Catapano, it is not about seeking fame—it is about adding that Hollywood touch to their clients' content to make brands stand out like a new movie on the Chinese Theater marquis. Gordon and Catapano's marketing clientele has included Best Buy, Nokia, Hilton Hotels, and the NFL. More recently, they added Under Armor and Nestle-Purina to their client list. When speaking with the minds behind Reach Entertainment, it was wonderful to witness the humble individuals share their story about delivering the Hollywood feel to the entertainment, digital media, and technology industries.

Both Gordon and Catapano started their adventure working in the marketing department for William Morris, a respectable advertising agency with high-profile clients. The duo's job was to help companies navigate their brands by enlisting the help of high-profile content creators from the Hollywood area to teach these companies how to partner with entertainment entities. Over the course of 10 years, Gordon and Catapano grew close and became acquainted with each other's abilities, work ethic, deal-making skills, and the will to succeed. Gordon lamented that he believed that though both of their own skill sets differed, they complemented each other in harmony like music notes in a chord.

After many years of serving their A-list clients, Gordon and Catapano saw their chance to branch out and take the leap into a business of their own. Thus, Reach Entertainment was born. Gordon admitted that he and his partner were experts at striking deals, but lacked the expertise of building a business from the ground up. The most arduous task Gordon and Catapano faced was finding an investor to help them with the start-up aspect of the business. Gordon admitted that he and Catapano were not necessarily seeking an investor for finances so much as for the person's business strategy. Gordon characterized the process of finding an investor as difficult, having "kissed a lot of frogs"

in the process. Finding people with money was not an issue for Gordon and Catapano, but finding someone who shared their vision of an entertainment marketing agency became an ever-growing thorn in their side.

Providence came for Reach Entertainment in the form of Swirl Integrated Marketing, an advertising agency based in San Francisco. Gordon and Catapano finally found a new investor through an old colleague and considered themselves incredibly lucky to have Swirl on their side, as the agency has worked with big names like Microsoft and eBay. Gordon mentioned that he viewed Swirl more like an accelerator because of the resources and expertise the agency provided for Reach Entertainment, ranging from website development to legal documents. After officially establishing Reach Entertainment earlier this year, Gordon stated that he and his partner owed many thanks to Swirl, claiming that they “chose the right partner.”

I asked Gordon how he would summarize Reach Entertainment and its mission. He classified Reach Entertainment as a premium content marketing agency that utilizes content creation talent from the major film and television studios (i.e., the writers, directors, and producers) to help companies build their brands in new ways that reflect Hollywood’s own marketing campaigns. Reach Entertainment serves the entertainment industry, but has also branched out into the digital media and technology workspaces due to their exponential growth in recent years. Gordon and Catapano distinguish themselves from other agencies by concentrating on telling a company’s story through partnering with the right Hollywood content creators rather than seeking media sponsorships or platforms. Gordon went on to say, “You can think of us as a normal agency, except our Chief Creative Officer is a different writer, director, or producer any day, and so we sort of bring the power of that community to brands.”

Since Reach Entertainment’s inception, the company has worked on many large, high-profile projects for its primary client, Nestle-Purina. Earlier this year, the company managed deals for YouTube premium channels in partnership with Freemantle Media, a production company that produces shows like “The X-Factor” and “American Idol.” One

of these channels was the Pet Collective, a Top 20 premium YouTube channel for pet owners, for which Reach Entertainment was able to integrate Purina into over 50 hours of content for the channel. Gordon and Catapano also partnered with Demand Media to produce an additional 50 hours of content that integrated Purina for exposure on another channel.

Another recent project had Reach Entertainment crossing entertainment award shows with typical product commercials when they partnered again with Freemantle Media and new client Friskies to produce an award show for cat videos. The award show was called *The Friskies* and was streamed live to judge for the Best Cat Video. The show was considered a grand success and broke new ground for the up-and-coming marketing agency.

Most recently, Reach Entertainment's first solo event was the first-ever pet-focused Hack-A-Thon, produced in association with Purina. The event invited over 70 developers that were grouped into 18 teams to produce a variety of apps, programs, and hardware based on the relationships between pets and their owners. Gordon and Catapano were filled with pride at the success of the event and the marketing value it brought to Purina. Although it was something they considered outside the box, they are considering doing a similar event in the future.

Gordon admitted that the best thing about being a part of Reach Entertainment is the freedom and control he and Catapano have in being able to successfully manage their clients' needs. It is this generous outlook that allows the partners to make so many wonderful connections in the entertainment industry and utilize Hollywood's best content creators to give their clients a chance to walk on the red carpet in their own industries. Everyone wants to be a star, and Reach Entertainment puts its clients on the big screen in the marketplace.

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