

## How video storytelling and mobile have transformed Shell's corporate marketing

Shell's global corporate marketing has shifted entirely from one dominated by traditional media (i.e. TV and print advertising) and brand messages to one dominated by digital media and video-led storytelling.

And the stories it tells are no longer about Shell the company, they're about the alternative energy start-ups it helps.

Malena Cutuli Group Head of Integrated Brand Communications & Capability at Shell talked to Andy Favell for ClickZ at Mobile World Congress 2017's Modern Marketing Summit:

"Six years ago, when I joined the company, Shell's global corporate marketing was 80% traditional communications and now we are doing 85% digital and content creation and 15% traditional. And that is for countries where digital is not easy to find, such as in Africa."

The Shell corporate marketing team hasn't run a TV ad for four years, with the exception of in China, where the last TV ad ran two years ago.

That doesn't mean you won't see a Shell ad on TV. TV advertising is still used by the retail marketing team (which is separate to Malena Cutuli's brand communications group), to help sell Shell's products – but you won't see TV ads about Shell the company.

### Brand storytelling

The main focus for Shell brand communications is telling video-led stories related to the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities. These include spreading the word through the #Makethefuture campaign about young social entrepreneurs and alternative energy companies that have been fostered through Shell's start-up / accelerator initiatives such as Shell LiveWIRE and Shell Springboard.

*"The best part is that every story we do is a real project. These include energy access projects in Brazil, Kenya, China and the UK.*

*"So in the UK, for example, Shell is helping an entrepreneur [Bio-bean] who has figured out how to turn coffee waste into biofuels. Shell will sponsor the world's first bus service that will be fuelled by coffee, which will be launched in London in June."*

These stories are delivered through a broad range of digital platforms including Facebook Live, Tumblr, BuzzFeed and Sina Weibo (in China). Shell works with local vloggers (video bloggers) and influencers as well as co-creating branded series through partnerships with publishers such as NY Times, Wired and Channel 4.

The following video showcasing Bio-bean is part of a series co-created by Shell and the NY Times T-Brand Studio.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNK-b\\_cwVbg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNK-b_cwVbg)

#Makethefuture is an integrated campaign of events, tours, all backed up and documented with lots of media that focuses on six social entrepreneurs.

The centrepiece of the 2016 campaign was a music video Best Day of My Life which used six musicians – Jennifer Hudson, Steve Aoki, Pixie Lott, Luan Santana, Yemi Alade and Tan WeiWei – to promote the six companies.

The video has been remarkably successful. According to MediaCom, in its first three months, the video was viewed 262 million times, and the video was shared 4.1 million times, making “Best Day of My Life” the ninth most shared brand video in the world in 2016.

There is also an interactive version created for the SnapChat audience.

The six entrepreneurs featured in the video include:

- GravityLight – creates light for off-grid homes in Kenya using the gravitational pull of a bag of rocks
- Pavegen – captures kinetic energy from footsteps, proven by powering a floodlit game of football game in Rio and Lagos
- MotionECO – turns used cooking oil in China into biodiesel
- Insolar – uses solar panels to provide free electricity to houses in a Rio favela
- Capture Mobility – creates energy from passing vehicles, using roadside turbines
- Bio-bean – changes used coffee into biofuel.

The following video features a 50 night tour undertaken in Kenya to promote GravityLight.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1i4Xs2dZadY>

### **Engagement and commitment**

Malena Cutuli doesn't just want people to watch/read the stories, she wants to encourage support and action:

*“We need to make it clear what we want people to do – we don't just want passive story-telling, we want the readers to make pledge support or take action. Initially this starts with a low barrier of entry to pledge their support or share one of the entrepreneurs' stories.*

*“But we also encourage people to volunteer to install solar panels in the Favelas. One of the social entrepreneurs, a company called Insolar, has developed a low-cost solar Panel for use in the Santa Marta, in Rio. Shell is helping by training volunteers recruited from the community and through Tumblr, to help install and repair the solar panels.”*

The screenshot shows the Shell Global website header with the logo and navigation icons. Below the header is a breadcrumb trail: "You are in: Shell Global > Energy and innovation > Make the future > Show your support". The main content area features a video thumbnail with six diverse energy entrepreneurs and the text "SHOW YOUR SUPPORT". Below the video is a red horizontal bar. The text reads: "At Shell, we believe that if we work together we can develop more and cleaner energy. You can show your support for #makethefuture. By signing our pledge, you will support the collaborations with the six energy entrepreneurs." The form includes a "Name\*" field with two input boxes labeled "First Name" and "Last Name", and an "Email\*" field.

Screenshot of a Shell website requesting that viewers pledge support for the social entrepreneurs.

### What makes video content mobile-friendly?

It is critical for Shell to that all content whatever the partner is made for mobile.

*“Mobile is super important. We design everything mobile first. We do not allow anyone to produce content for us that is not mobile.”*

*“Content needs to be the right length and engaging. You need to deliver the message in a very short period of time. You need to be able to capture the attention and give them the opportunity to discover more; because the journey of discovery for content is as important as the content itself.”*

*“If you lose them in the first two seconds you won’t be able to go back. It is important to have retargeting, so you can reengage with people after they have viewed the content.”*

Malena Cutuli explains that Shell has experimented with content of all lengths, from 3-minute music videos, to pieces as short as 5 seconds long.

So, for example, the Best Day of My Life music video is 3 minutes. However, the same agency that made the music video, New York-based EKO (formerly known as Interlude) is now working on a new interactive film project called War Games.

This will include five second interactive slots, which are created by the War Games director, and will be in keeping with the film, but will deliver Shell's message.

### **One size does not fit all**

Rather than creating the content, then distributing it to the various platforms, Malena Cutuli recommends creating or co-creating for each platform.

*"The content works best when it is designed for the platform on its own. For me, rather than trying to deal with a 100 platforms I like to focus on a few like Facebook, Instagram and Tumblr. We use Tumblr as a repository of all our #makethefuture content to try to keep people engaged.*

*"We have shifted the model from a traditional brand content model, through creating films with creative agencies, to allowing the content to be created by the platform where our target audience spends time.*

*"So last year with the NY Times we did a piece of content called Powering Human Progress around our work with social entrepreneurs. We also did a brand partnership with the UK's Channel 4 called Reverse Engineers in the UK to showcase our support for energy start-ups and highlight the Make the Future London festival."*

In the following video the Reverse Engineers investigate an energy innovation from one of Shell's entrepreneurs:

<https://youtu.be/jxPwJytuF9c>