Article Side

Darth Vader brings the dark side to Currys and PC World by John Bregar

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With so much competition out there, more channels and viewer choice, not to mention the increasing popularity of digital and on demand technologies it comes as no surprise to hear that the traditional television advert has begun to lose its impact. Not that itâ€™s a dramatically fading medium itâ€™s just now harder to guarantee your audience and know how many are likely to see your message. Some advertisers in an attempt to try to prevent viewers from fast-forwarding or skipping their adverts have reverted to using well known and popular TV and film characters to help endorse their products.

Just look at the latest M&S advert. This uses the current contestants on ITVâ€™s popular talent show The X Factor to try to engage their audience.

Over the past two years Lucasfilmsâ€™ iconic Star Wars characters have begun to appear in television advertisements. The recent advert for Curryâ€™s/PC World sees Darth Vader visit the store. Star Wars was first screened in 1976 and still never fails to capture the imagination and the dark lord remains an iconic figure in modern filmmaking.

The advert was directed by Rocky Morton at MJZ and was written by Orlando Warner at M&C Saatchi. It was produced by Chris McBride at MJZ and Ronae Rayson at M&C Saatchi along with VFX Supervisors Bill McNamara, Eileen Chan & Anthony Bloor. The team tackled a complex post-production task which enabled them to bring Vader's visit to the store to life.

3D VFX work played a major part in completing the production. MPCâ€™s 3D team - led by Anthony Bloor - had the job of recreating the complete CG starship. To do this they worked from reference materials of the original models from the film to ensure the final look and feel of the ship was in line with the original movies. The team also ensured that all shots showing the interior of the ship were all CG.

There is a scene when the shuttle crushes the store manager's car. To create this the team amplified the shuttle's landing gear from a slimmer design and used the plate of a abandoned car â€“ picked so they could crush it â€“ and made it look like a brand new vehicle. Other effects created were hovering laptops and 3D mist.

The 2D teamâ€™s role was just as challenging in completing the spot ad. To create a menacing feeling when Vader arrives the MPC team gave the sky a dark and dreary tone using subtle lens flares and cinematic light effects to mark his landing.

All unnecessary branding was taken from the store itself to give the advert a fresh look. To create the cityscape backdrop for Vaderâ€™s landing, the team used a digital matte painting. The large crowds were created using several initial plates which were shot and then put together and replicated using Flame.

More work meant that the whole inside of the store was rebuilt, the video wall replaced and extended with shot footage and Vaderâ€™s light sabre being created. The Director of Colour Grading Jean-Clement Soret added the grade using Base light. The campaign also featured some online viral spots which were directed by Joel Wilson at 2AM.

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