

CNN bringing branded content to Cannes

By  Ann Nurock

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Ann Nurock interviews James Hunt, vice president of CNN Create, who talks to her about why CNN is increasing its presence at Cannes, elaborates on what type of clients CNN produces content for and what the importance of Africa is to CNN.



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James, it is really good to meet you. Why is CNN so interested in being at Cannes.

I think for us it has been something that we've steadily increased our presence at over the last two or three years and from our perspective, I think the reason we have done that is that the sophistication of the creative that we are now providing for our clients has exponentially increased over the last few years.

I think the proliferation of multi-platform campaigns – so campaigns that now sit across TV and digital and social – for us has steadily increased in that time as well. And we are now working with our clients, delivering a range of creative solutions for them from still making 90 second TV commercials, but also now delivering a range of digital and mobile and social creative solutions for those campaigns.



New CNN Travel multiplatform, multimedia digital destination launched

13 Jun 2017



So, we felt that actually as a global media platform – and one of the largest in the world – that if we were going to choose (we all have our budget constraints as you know) one particular place to actually step up what we are doing and introduce ourselves to the wider industry, was Cannes.

And so, this year for us, we have steadily built on what we did last year and we entertain a range of clients and guests from around the world but obviously, it is also an opportunity for us to check in with partners, the advertising community, more broadly across the week.

■ ***Where are your branded content studios?***

So, there are two major hubs: London, and then we have a smaller team but still, a decent group that is out in Asia, split between Hong Kong, Tokyo and Singapore. The business produces international advertising across the world outside of North America, so we have, obviously, a core team which as I say is based out of Europe and then Asia, and we supplement that team with freelancers and local production crews that we staff up.

So, we will always have an in-house creative director/producer that will run a particular campaign and so on, but then we will staff up with local production crews around the world where needed.



The rise of the in-house creative agency

James Hunt 12 May 2017



■ ***Who is the type of client that you produce content for?***

So, probably the simplistic way of answering that would be to say that the reason why the studio started about ten years ago was in response to the fact that media advertisers on CNN didn't always have an agency or creative capability to produce creative to go across the channel. So, we started really making TV commercials for those types of clients.

That's our history. Now, that studio capability has matured and grown – as I say – particularly in the last two or three years, but to answer your question, we still do an awful lot of work directly with clients. We obviously work with the media companies, and we all know who those are, and we tend to work with them albeit the percentage tends to go up in the more mature markets.

But in large parts of Africa, Middle East, Central Asia, South East Asia, up into China and Australasia, we still have a lot of clients that don't have the capability and frankly, we also will speak to our clients to say we feel that we are best positioned to make that content for them because we understand the channel, we understand our audiences, we understand the content that resonates.

We have many instances where clients will be able to give us the content to run across the channels, but we also provide a service and solution for those that don't.

■ ***What is the importance of Africa to CNN?***

This is probably outside of my specific area of expertise, but as Jeff Zucker was saying today, we pride ourselves on the fact that we are one of the very few organisations that are able to cover the world and cover breaking news wherever that may be. So, whether that is in South Africa, whether that is Nigeria, whether that is in Morocco, you know, with any part of the world.

Again, if you listen to Jeff, he will say that one of the major things that CNN is known for is for being everywhere and being able to cover all the major issues of the day. So, again to answer your question directly, I would say Africa is as important

to us as all of the continents that we cover, and we have a great brand presence there which we are very proud of and we have had some great African clients and partners. So, very important for us.

ABOUT ANN NUROCK

Ann is a Partner at Relationship Audits and Management, a global consultancy that measures and optimizes client /agency relationships. Her proprietary Radar tool is used by 30 corporates globally and as a result she interacts with over 80 agencies of all disciplines. Ann spent 25 years plus in the advertising industry as CEO of Grey Advertising South Africa, and head of the Africa region followed by President and CEO of Grey Canada. Contact details: ann.nurock@relationshipaudits.com | Twitter [@Annnurock](https://twitter.com/Annnurock)

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