

*Wolfmother Rocks First Live Streamed Gig*  
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**NEED/OPPORTUNITY** / Australian telecommunications companies compete fiercely in the music market. Vodafone leveraged its *Vodafone Live at the Chapel* sponsorship to connect with the fickle youth segment and promote its *Vodafone live!* 3G music and video portal as the leading source of music content in the telecommunications space.

Wolfmother is one of the world's hottest rock bands. The measure of the Australian act's global success is a Grammy Award and a world tour. The week the band was set to take the stage at the ARIA (Australia Record Industry Association) awards, Vodafone secured them to perform at Melbourne rock venue "Vodafone Live at The Chapel" for their first performance back on home turf. All this to create an Australian first—the first gig streamed live and for free to Vodafone mobile phones.

This project faced several challenges:

- ▶ Wolfmother confirmed the performance less than 14 days before the gig; therefore—as there was no time to produce and secure advertising—it was up to public relations to promote the event.
- ▶ Many music and technology industry commentators were skeptical about the concept of watching a rock concert on a mobile phone screen.
- ▶ Rock stars are notorious for failing to understand or comply with contractual obligations to their own publicists on their own projects—let alone to those of the technology sponsor for one local gig.
- ▶ Young music fans are hard to reach through traditional avenues and averse to what they see as overt PR tactics.

#### **RESEARCH**

Research covered three pillars—the band, the music, and the digital media landscape and competitor activity within the telecommunications space.

1. **The band—Wolfmother**—was one of the most popular bands in the country at the time. Although popularity can generate media interest, it can also mean that an act is over-exposed and hence media fatigued. The team completed a media audit on the band and researched their recent tours and plans to perform live within the coming six weeks. From this research, they were able to work up an angle for media around the first time fans could access the band for free since they left for their world tour some months prior.
2. **Media landscape.** The team spent time investigating which journalists had been covering the ongoing digital music story so they could be targeted with the sell-in. They also spent time track-

ing which journalists had not embraced the digital revolution and would be a challenge. They knew they would need to use access to the band to lure these journalists into covering the story.

- 3. Competitor landscape.** To gain a full understanding of the digital music landscape, the team audited digital music media coverage from the previous 12 months. They tracked trends, dominant stories, bands of interest and hero journalists to see what was of interest within this section of the music community. From this research, they determined the “first streamed gig to mobile phones” would be the soft spot for media that had shown interest in the first gig streamed over the Internet. Performing research and identifying trends allowed the team to ensure the claim was substantiated.

**INTENDED AUDIENCE /** The primary audience was comprised of general music fans and Wolfmother fans who could not be at the gig. Another primary audience included early adopters of technology who would be interested in the first live streamed music performance. A secondary, more general audience was 16–40-year-old males and females.

Music fans can be a challenging audience to capture. Research indicated that they can be fickle and are very sceptical of brand activity within the music space. With this in mind, the team had to ensure that all communication was genuine.

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES /** The objectives were to position Vodafone as:

- ▶ The mobile leader in music and entertainment.
- ▶ A passionate music supporter delivering exclusive, unprecedented access for fans.
- ▶ The source of the live stream for the Wolfmother gig in 100 percent of media coverage.
- ▶ The home of exclusive recorded and streamed music and video content on *Vodafone live!* with 3G.

Music is a key brand identifier for Vodafone globally. In other world markets, such as the U.K. and New Zealand, Vodafone has become synonymous with music and youth. In Australia, the music community had remained sceptical of Vodafone as a related music brand. The most important objective of this activity was to gain some traction for Vodafone in the music space.

The measures of success were not financial; they were to be in the quality of the reported music association within the press and the volume of customers who engaged in the stream and watched the performance.

#### **SOLUTION OVERVIEW / RESEARCH AND INSIGHT**

Research revealed that generating excitement about a new medium or technology did not necessarily translate into a successful campaign. The team also learned that believable endorsements from celebrities are an effective element of successful communication plans.

**Big Idea:** Putting fans “front row, centre” with new technology

**Strategy:** Ensure all communications were about the needs of the fans and the experience that was being created especially for them. This would:

- ▶ Allow fans to see Vodafone as a genuine enabler between them and the music.
- ▶ Encourage the band to speak about the event (which Vodafone created) as a great experience for their fans; thus ensuring cut-through and branding integral to the experience, not simply a badged sponsorship.

The creative idea was to leverage the performance of Wolfmother at the Chapel by creating the first ever live stream, marrying Vodafone’s use of new technologies and commitment to music.

#### **MEDIA TACTICS**

The team executed a four-phase strategy targeting music, general news, IT and telecommunications, entertainment, and social and broadcast media:

1. **The announcement:** A release to music and other media alerted fans and generated buzz for the event.
2. **The competition:** Vodafone won agreement from Wolfmother to extend the band’s original contract to run a competition on the official Wolfmother site. It would offer a fan in each state a Sony Ericsson w850i handset and sim starter pack so they could watch the performance live to mobile. The team developed case studies from the winners’ experiences and pitched them to general news and consumer IT media after the event
3. **The event**

**Media hospitality:** The team invited 40 media from around Australia to watch the performance at the venue and gave those who could not attend a mobile handset so they could stream the performance live.

**Celebrity hospitality:** The team secured buzz and social media coverage by inviting celebrity guests.

**Handset and content demos:** The team conducted handset streaming and content demos before the gig for media and celebrity guests.

**Wolfmother one-on-ones:** Because the team would have access to the band for just 10 minutes before the gig, the band and management were sent handsets and briefing sheets on the live stream in advance to ensure key messages were communicated to media. Briefing materials concentrated on what the experience would mean to fans who could not be there to see them. The team set up interviews with key music, technology and general news journalists.

**Vodafone one-on-ones:** Vodafone Australia's head of mass markets, Richard Sherwood, conducted interviews with key trade journalists to discuss the live stream and offer industry comments on mobile music.

4. **The wrap-up:** a media release and photos detailed the performance highlights, the success of the live streaming event, and the guest list at the live event.

The key messages for this activity were:

- ▶ Vodafone Australia brings Wolfmother fans an Australian first—their chance to stream an exclusive Wolfmother gig LIVE on their mobile phones (Vodafone live! with 3G).
- ▶ Vodafone is passionate about music and is a proud sponsor of *Vodafone Live at the Chapel*—making it easier for audiences to get up close and personal with some of Australia, and the world's best music acts, including Wolfmother.
- ▶ Vodafone brings the event to life for customers by offering exclusive *Vodafone Live at the Chapel* music content and experiences money can't buy on Vodafone live!
- ▶ Vodafone live! customers can choose from over half a million music tracks, including *Vodafone Live at the Chapel* music tracks and exclusive behind-the-scenes artist interviews.
- ▶ With Vodafone live! 3G you can download the music you love whenever and wherever you are.

These key messages were modified for delivery through media materials, Vodafone corporate spokespeople, third-party corporate spokespeople and the band themselves.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION AND CHALLENGES / BUDGET**

This project fell within the monthly retainer for the client and utilised AU\$8,000 in agency fees within the 14 days of activity.

One of the biggest challenges of the project was the very limited time frame for the planning and implementation of activity. The band was only confirmed to perform two weeks before the event date. Within this period, the team had the challenge of creating and implementing a complete campaign. The agency dedicated extra resources to the event, including a music specialist who could liaise with industry parties effectively and efficiently.

The central role of the sponsor also proved to be very challenging. Vodafone became the central communication hub for the activity as soon as the performance was announced. The event had many stakeholders, including artist management, the production company, the band's record label, a third-party publicist for the TV show and internal stakeholders at Vodafone. To keep everyone involved and informed, the team led regular conference calls, in which all parties could participate in an equal forum to raise concerns and problems.

The role of the spokesperson, taken on by the band, was another crucial issue to be overcome in the lead-up to the event. In the past, Vodafone had worked with international artists who had proven to be

detrimental spokespeople for the brand. With this in mind, the team had to create a solution that would allow media to access the band to discuss the event and Vodafone's involvement. Most important, the solution had to be one in which the band would deliver messaging around Vodafone's passion for music and the technology without making the artists feel uncomfortable, which may in turn cause them to strike out at the brand. To negate this potentially disastrous situation, the team devised a strategy that was "fan-centric" and engaged the band members a week before the performance so they had time to experience the technology before they spoke to media.

#### MEASUREMENT/EVALUATION / DIRECT RELATION TO OBJECTIVES

The team achieved these results against the objectives to position Vodafone as:

- ▶ **The mobile leader in music and entertainment.** As thousands of fans tuned in, the stream hit the maximum capacity of *Vodafone live!* Consumers saw the exclusive performance as the hottest mobile content. Media—from metropolitan dailies to music industry bibles—gave Vodafone wide coverage because of the band's high profile. The event forged relationships with some of the most powerful stakeholders in the industry—including the label Universal Music, leading artist manager John Watson and production house MCM Entertainment. These stakeholders commented publicly on the worth of the live stream, accepting Vodafone as an industry peer.
- ▶ **A passionate music supporter delivering exclusive, unprecedented access for fans.** The event was exclusive to Vodafone customers, and the online contest gave potential customers the chance to be part of it. Vodafone was able to grant music journalists one-on-one interviews with one of the hottest properties in rock music.
- ▶ **The source of the live stream for the Wolfmother gig in 100 percent of media coverage.** All of the coverage featured Vodafone brand mentions as well as a mention of the stream.
- ▶ **The home of exclusive recorded and streamed music and video content on Vodafone live! with 3G.** By driving consumers to such a ground-breaking event, the team increased traffic on *Vodafone live!* to capacity. This created new consumer behaviour with mobile music. It also delivered a new level of awareness of the recorded content available.
- ▶ **Connecting with the fickle youth segment.** The team used youth-oriented street press to connect with the fickle youth segment. Street press got behind the stream, informing their readers it was happening.

#### MEDIA COVERAGE

The campaign generated 42 pieces of media coverage. This created 8.1 million opportunities to see branded messages about the live stream across varying forms of media. In a country with a population of only 20 million—the target market of music fans and early adopters had a significant chance of being exposed to the messages.

The coverage appeared nationwide in consumer, music, trade, business and general media. It included a page three story in *The Australian* and a *Business Sunday* television piece on digital music featuring Vodafone.

**COST-EFFECTIVENESS**

The coverage generated a total advertising value of AU\$126,776.74. The Public Relations Institute of Australia calculates the increased value of editorial credibility by multiplying the advertising space value by three. This means the campaign generated a public relations value of AU\$380,420.22.