

# FP MARKETING

*Fledgling carrier aims to boost brand presence with spokescharacters*

## Aliens 'natural fit' for Mobilicity

By **HOLLIE SHAW**

Spokescharacters are an easy and obvious way to connect an audience with a brand without the potential drawbacks of celebrity spokespeople — popularity declines, embarrassing moral lapses — not to mention the expense.

Like jingles, spokescharacters have a way of sticking in people's minds, for better or worse. For every adored brand ambassador such as the Old Spice guy, there are the polarizing figures: the Canadian Tire couple and the Taco Bell dog; or the Bell beavers, which memorably claimed the top spot simultaneously on both the most-liked and most-hated ads list on Leger Marketing's regular *Marketing* magazine poll before their official demise three years ago.

Now, one-year-old Mobilicity, an upstart Toronto wireless company seeking to make a more indelible brand presence in Canada, has come out with its own spokescharacters strategy with a pair of unnamed aliens.

Anthony Booth, chief customer officer at Mobilicity, said the carrier's initial marketing had focused so exclusively on the low-price offering and service, that there was little else people thought of the company. In a segment

is responsible for the creative brand campaign, which includes TV and online ads, point of sale, digital and radio. A Facebook contest to name the aliens launched this week and closes Sunday.

"We actually looked at spokespeople who would be a good fit for the brand," Mr. Booth said. The company considered creating a character rather than using an actual person and ended up with aliens, which tie in with the carrier's new tag line, 'Now that's smart,' he said.

"Aliens tend to be seen as smart, advanced, forward-thinking, technically advanced, higher life forms [with] better decision-making [skills]. It just came down to a very natural fit as a way to talk to consumers, and that two of them could tell a story in a fun and engaging fashion."

He said there was no fear about the potential for consumers having divided opinions on the spokescharacters.

"A lot of spokescharacters tend to be very successful, but some of the missing links for people [have to do with] whether there is a real connection back to the brand. I would never speak ill of a company like Bell, but [that was] one of the questions for me around the beavers. When I think about a beaver and I take a beaver on its own, why does that tell me anything about Bell? What does it say about Bell? It is hard for me to draw that connection."

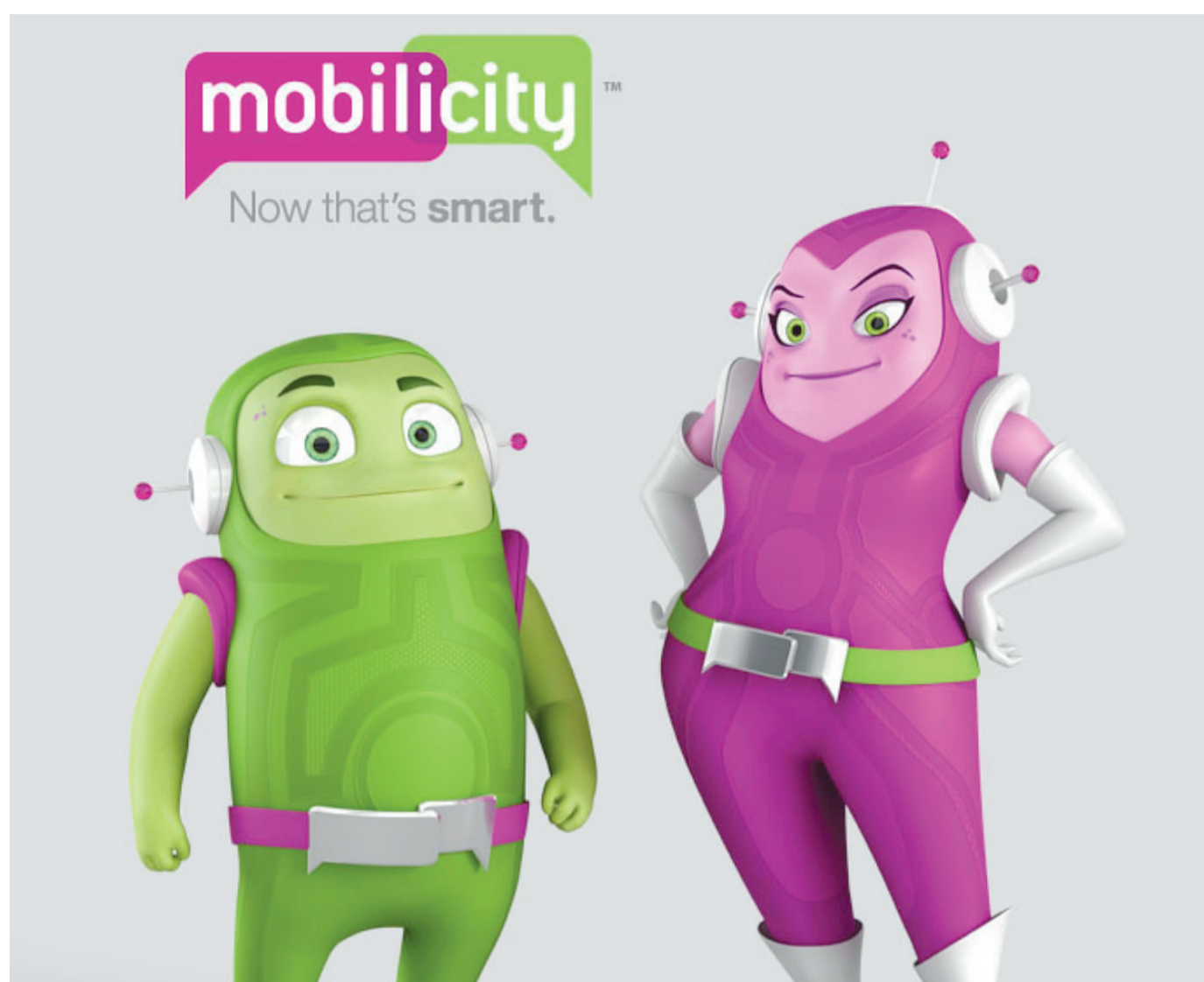
If there is any downfall to using a spokescharacter or spokesperson, he said, it is that the figure in question needs to work and embody a message and point of view even if the actual message is missed by consumers.

"Even if [consumers] don't remember anything that is said, how does [an advertiser] use that person or character to short-circuit consumers into making an instantaneous connection with the brand. With the aliens, even if none of the messages breaks through, you can translate the inherent things about them quite quickly back to the type of business we are and the brand."

Branding consultant Andris Pone, chief namer at Andris and Associates Brand Naming in Toronto, has a different point of view.

"It is almost beside the point whether aliens are intrinsically more relevant to a wireless brand than beavers are," he said. "What really matters is whether the creative execution can make them so. Although the relevance of the beaver to Bell's brand was never made especially clear, the spokesbeavers were amazingly successful at creating awareness. The challenge for Mobilicity is to bring to life that 'smart' positioning — which does seem different in this space — over a long period of time."

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A Facebook contest to name Mobilicity's aliens was launched this week and closes Sunday.



### AD MISSIONS

## Facebook fans to drive Volkswagen ad

Red Urban's "Drive Until" television ads for the Volkswagen Golf, Part 1 and Part 2, have been getting attention for memorable soundtracks and for the intrigue about Part 3. For the final part of the trilogy, the agency collaborated with Facebook fans of Volkswagen to create the script, choose a cast and pick music for the ad. The Ad Missions team takes a spin on Parts 1 and 2, entitled "Courage" and "Time." Part 3 was crowd-sourced, filmed last week and will air in the coming weeks

**Henry Wong** is creative director at Toronto-based agency Tenzing Communications Volkswagen Golf: Gets you from A to B. Check. Gets you from A to B reliably. Check. Gets you from A to B while enjoying the drive. Double check. It's a checklist for the campaign as much as it is for the car. The commercials take you on a journey of simple driving pleasure that arrive to a nice destination. And in this case, a nice destination of emotional fulfillment. All you need to add is a dose of music: thank you Jesus and Mary Chain. Thank you Wave Machines. Here the music does more than supply a head-bobbing soundtrack. It actually captures the feeling of being along for the ride. Car copywriters say it is as much about the journey as it is the destination. And for VW, they have shown quite nicely that it is about more than getting

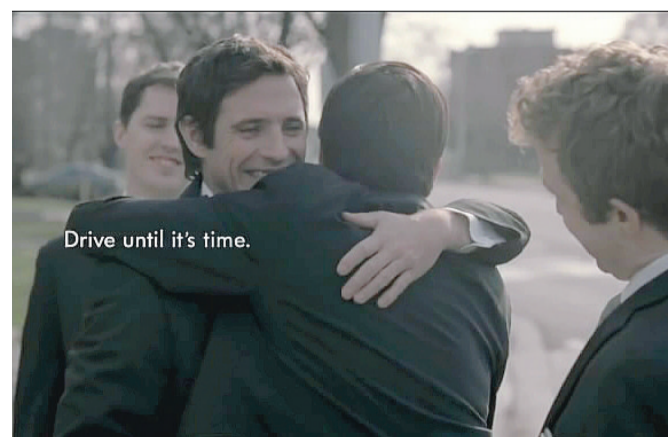
you to point B, it's about getting you to points in your life.

**Anthony Kalamut** is a professor, program chairman and chief enthusiasm officer of the Creative Advertising Program at Seneca College Toronto. It's taught at every level of film and ad schools that to be a great storyteller you need

the right mix of ingredients. Two of these are great images to capture the viewer's eye, the other is adopting the right soundtrack to evoke emotion. These two vignette spots fully captured the view and emotions of real life through beautiful photography and direction by Jean-Michel Ravon and Red Urban Toronto. If the two spots "Courage" and "Time" are the start to the campaign, which will unfold in a series of chapters, it will be a best seller. And now calling upon the very loyal and deeply passionate Volkswagen nation to come along for the ride by writing the next chapters via Facebook will add the authenticity too often missing in serial ad campaigns.

Curious to see how the next chapters will unfold bringing together the user content, the agency filters and the client bravery. Be brave Volkswagen. Be brave. Wish there was a LOVE+ button.

**Chris Hall** is president of Toronto ad agency Huxley Quayle von Bismark. I have bought Volkswagens when they weren't the best deal out there, and I have changed jobs for the chance to work on the Volkswagen business. Why? Because of their advertising. Volkswagen has had a long history of innovative creative advertising and has built a brand that not only supports and demonstrates a good product, but stands up for that product when things like longer product cycles, high fuel prices, or competitive discounting comes into play. My feeling has been that they had recently lost their grip on this exclusive territory. This could have happened when they abandoned the idea of "Drivers wanted" for what is now "Das Auto." Since then, some car companies have been "out-Volkswagening" them. This "drive until" campaign is good, and could start them on the road back to where they belong.



Red Urban's "Drive Until" TV ads for Volkswagen.

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