

Heroes, humbugs and happily ever afters.

Taking an Advanced proposition to market.

Submission title: **FairITales**
Industry sector: **Software & Computer Services**
Client company: **Advanced**
Design consultancy: **Graymatter**
Submission date: **June 2017**

For Publication.



“Have you bean looking for financial growth?”

2. Executive summary (252 / 300 words)

Advanced are consolidating and growing their position as the UK's third largest solutions provider, and rebranded in 2016 to both elevate perception and provide a platform from which to challenge the market leaders.

As part of this they now have a compelling proposition – ‘right-first-time solutions’.

Their challenge was creating a campaign that would support and promote this proposition (and their new brand), unify and work consistently across different business departments, resonate with prospects, and ultimately deliver a substantial sales pipeline.

‘FairITales’ achieved this.

Delivered as four consecutive waves of activity, the combination of storytelling, distinctive creative and evidential content achieved the necessary levels of cut through, consideration and conversion to generate a sales pipeline far exceeding KPIs, and also contributed to a dramatic and positive shift in Net Promoter Score.

FairITales first launched in July 2016 and is still live, so whilst the final results are not known, as of April 2017 the activity from waves one, two and three had already generated a substantial sales pipeline in excess of **£3.9m**, with closed sales providing a current ROI of **771%**.

Whilst these results alone have been strong enough to delight Advanced, the really exciting news is in knowing that sizeable and complex solutions can take up to 9 months to implement, and are in progress.

This, combined with the yet to be confirmed results from wave four mean the best is yet to come, and should be more than enough to ensure Advanced have their very own ‘happily ever after.’

771%

Current campaign ROI (waves 1-3)

£3.93m

Sales pipeline (July 2016 > April 2017)

+38places

Advanced leap to 97th place in Sunday Times Grant Thornton Top Track 250



“No-one likes their solution turning into a pumpkin at midnight”

3.1 Project overview

Key business objectives

- Sales pipeline £1m+
- Raise awareness of Advanced with prospects
- Promote 'right-first-time' solutions

Original scope of project

To create the concept and assets for a campaign to meet the above objectives, with implementation by an in-house marketing team.

About Advanced

Advanced are the UK's third largest solutions provider and on an ambitious growth trajectory.

- Sunday Times Top Track 250 Company 2015/2016
- Deloitte UK Fast 50
- Tech Company of the Year – PwC's UK Tech Awards 2014

Realising their potential, Vista Partners purchased Advanced in 2014 for £725 million and promptly de-listed them from AIM. This resulted in a focus on establishing Advanced as a centre-of-excellence – an objective that demanded strong marketing initiatives supporting the new marketing strategy, positioning and aggressive growth targets.

Broader business issues

The transformation process of reorganisation, rebranding, relocation and restructuring applied time and resource pressure onto a marketing team already busy implementing a rebrand in addition to daily objectives.

£1m

Sales Pipeline target

293%

Amount the Sales Pipeline KPI was exceeded by



“Are you still looking for a solution that’s *just* right?”

3.2 Project overview continued

Revised scope of project

Understanding the known broader business issues made it clear that delivering against the objectives would be difficult. A more holistic and rigorous approach was needed. A swiftly agreed revised project scope resolved challenges and informed the following:

- **Strategy**
 - Channels were informed by audience profile and comms were aligned to a sales funnel giving them clear purpose. Marketing automation helped transition the audience swiftly through awareness, consideration and conversion.
 - Campaign waves were deliberately non-sector specific to maximise reach but had flexibility to target sectors if necessary, e.g: Jack and the Beanstalk was aimed at the finance sector. As Advanced operate in 13 sectors to target each sector individually would have been budget and time prohibitive.
- **Alleviate time pressures**
 - Take responsibility for ideation, production, build and delivery of assets.
 - Implement efficient working methods and plan key decision stages providing Advanced with clarity about what would be required, when.
- **Key decision makers needed to be taken on the journey**
 - This was the first time an overarching campaign theme unifying different departments had been implemented. This informed using easily understood campaign ‘roadmaps’ – single points of reference containing key campaign elements: strategy, funnel, messaging, creative.
- **Reporting**
 - Regular reports and reviews were scheduled to make the campaign work smarter, with any learnings applied to subsequent waves.

1843%

ROI for Wave 2: Goldilocks

“I’d like my software to be just like the goldilocks story: not too hot, not too cold, but just right.”

Comment from a CEO at ILTA
- excerpt from Legal IT Insider,
September 2016.



“Is your solution more Bah, Humbug than ho ho ho?”

3.3 Project overview continued (605 / 850 words)

Understanding the opportunity

We researched* the sector to find out just how hard the campaign would need to work to hit KPIs – and it was good news – 44% of UK businesses were looking to increase their IT budgets in 2016, with 51% expecting this spend to happen within 12 months. Even better, the majority expected to increase their spending on cloud (50%) and software (48%) solutions.

So whilst the sector is fiercely competitive and dominated by SAP and Oracle, the research proved there was opportunity. We already had a strong proposition, we just needed to find the right creative angle to exploit the opportunity.

Audience profile (across 11 sectors)

- CEO, FD/CFO, HR, CMO/Marketing Manager, MD, COO/Ops Manager, CTO/IT Manager

Campaign time scales and costs:

Original brief and discovery meetings

- May 2016

Campaign strategy / planning / concept / roadmaps / sign off / first wave production

- June 2016 (wave 1) / subsequent campaigns (waves 2 - 4) briefed month prior to launch

Delivery – campaign waves

- Wave one – Cinderella (July 2016 launch)
- Wave two – Goldilocks (September / October 2016)
- Wave three – A Christmas Carol (Treated as a 'Christmas Special' running over 4 weeks in November/December 2016 and split into: Intro / Christmas Past / Present / Future)
- Wave four – Jack and the Beanstalk (March 2017 launch)

Agency fees

These are confidential.

44%

Of UK Businesses looking to increase IT budgets

48%

Looking to increase their spend on software based solutions

51%

Expect to spend within the next 12 months

* Sources:
ComputerWeekly
TechTarget IT Survey 2016
Morimer Sprinks Tech Survey 2016



"Following our major rebrand earlier in the year, we took a fresh and innovative marketing approach that stands out from the myriad of business communications that our customers and prospects receive each day. This creative campaign delivered a great opportunity to reinforce our brand values and drive opportunity for all business units – as well as being an enjoyable read. I'm pleased to say, that for Advanced, this fairy tale had a very happy ending."

Sally Scott | Chief Marketing Officer | Advanced

4.1 Outline of design solution

Informing the concept

During the discovery phase the conversation turned to the competition.

What are they doing? Why? What are their strengths? And whilst the answers revealed shining examples of excellent business practice they didn't uncover an angle we felt we could use.

So we flipped the question, and asked what happens when things go wrong? What impact would implementing an inappropriate solution have on a thriving business? Are there common sector issues? Irritations?

And having listened to examples of how things really shouldn't be done a pattern emerged – of a gulf between expectation and experience caused by over-promising and under-delivering.

"They may as well have been sold make believe." "...a dream."

Or a fairy tale.

It was enough to inform an idea, that with time to reflect, provided us with the beginnings of a campaign. However we couldn't simply proceed on the strength of anecdotal evidence. We needed something more substantial.



“ We’re delighted to have achieved our very own happily ever after with the Christmas Carol FairITale. In just a few weeks the campaign has generated a substantial sales pipeline, meaning a positive start to the new year with some exciting new opportunities.”

Clare Frost | Director of Field Marketing | Advanced

4.2 Outline of design solution continued

Proving the concept

Research* highlighted that obsolescence, complexity, and a lack of integration topped frustrations with 71% of IT professionals, with 29% devoting their time to ongoing IT issue resolution and management. Additionally consumer trust varied wildly depending on the solutions provider, with product quality, reliability and contribution to profitability all key concerns, with expectations met inconsistently.

This informed four take-outs:

- A simple ‘right-first-time’ proposition was likely to resonate
- Reassured us that client expectations were indeed infrequently met
- Informed focused content for case studies
- Provided a range of concerns that we could align a fairy tale to.

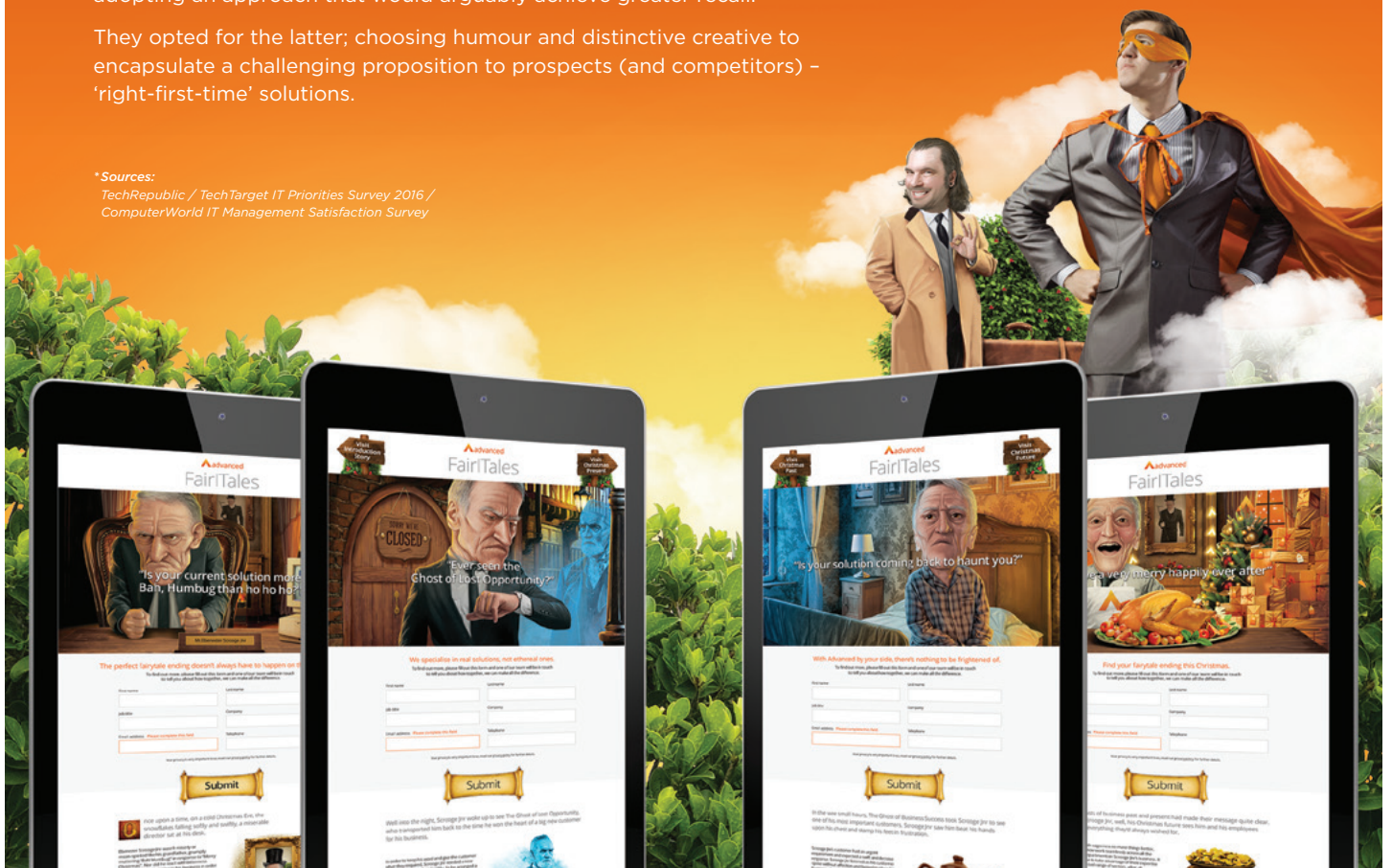
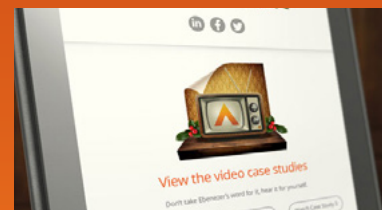
Sign off

Now Advanced had a choice; play it safe risking cut-through, or be brave; adopting an approach that would arguably achieve greater recall.

They opted for the latter; choosing humour and distinctive creative to encapsulate a challenging proposition to prospects (and competitors) – ‘right-first-time’ solutions.

* Sources:

TechRepublic / TechTarget IT Priorities Survey 2016 /
ComputerWorld IT Management Satisfaction Survey



“ This is a milestone campaign in the tale of our business transformation. Our customers and prospects found it both humorous and engaging and we’ve not only seen a rise in brand awareness and perception, evidenced in our recent surveys, but we’ve strengthened our sales pipeline with some great opportunities, too.”

Clare Frost | Director of Field Marketing | Advanced

4.3 Outline of design solution continued (498 / 500 words)

Bringing everyone on the journey

Campaign roadmaps allowed the marketing team to take other departments on the journey quickly, and had the unexpected benefit of getting teams excited - they loved feeling included, could see how they could contribute, and were so engaged they were suggesting their own internal reward structures based on the appropriate wave theme.



Creating the campaign

- Fairy tales and 'IT' combined to create a distinctive campaign umbrella - 'FairITales'.
- Fairy tales were shortlisted, with the sector issue informing fairy tale selection.
- Each fairy tale would position a problem, before Advanced (the hero) would magically appear, making everything better with a fit-for-purpose right-first-time solution.
- Familiar fairy tale phrases were remixed for headlines and story lines made the most of quirky phrasing such as 'sophisticatedly simple solutions' to lighten the tone.
- Given that 'multifunctional oat transformers' and giant beanstalks are hard to source (and generic sector photography is prevalent) a differentiating hand-drawn illustrative approach was adopted.
- Headlines, illustrations and content were all then nuanced to align creative to funnel.
- The only logical sign-off underpinned it all, '...get in touch for your very own happily ever after'.

