

# The Fast Fox

Extract from Field Marketing Magazine, Winter 2008



pocket2web enables Sure to deliver a lightning quick service

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Annika Bizon : Sales Director, Twentieth Century Fox

The home entertainment sector is a very competitive market place in which new products have limited shelf life and competitive products often launch consecutively in advance of key leisure weekends. Within that sector DVD purchase at retail is under pressure vs. online and years of industry growth are now steadying. Globally Warner, Sony and Twentieth Century Fox currently enjoy the highest sales with none of these 3 far ahead of its rivals. Strong competition also comes from Universal, Disney, Paramount and Lionsgate. Innovation wars also come about fairly regularly with HD Blu-Ray technology being the most recent.

The industry also offers little opportunity for the distributor to make a branded impact on the consumer for themselves. The consumer brand is the film on DVD in question. Unsurprisingly then the distribution teams measure each film against expectation and seek to influence the retailer in order to exceed that expectation. Home Entertainment field marketing teams are some of the

best drilled of any industry sector and all of them operate with launch after launch to manage.

The Twentieth Century Fox team is run by Sure Field Marketing in partnership with Zync Solutions – a relationship that has burgeoned since 2002 when they first won the contract. These days there is a permanent field team of 168 in action augmented by additional tactical staff at peak times.

The team has established a very strong client-agency relationship and this is driven two-way, by industry leading technology and flexible reps in the field. This combination has delivered valuable trust levels which has created a virtuous circle and made Twentieth Century Fox (Fox) into a formidable retail sales and marketing team.

Each user operates pocket2web a PDA application designed by Zync Solutions. The team is responsible for 3,600 calls each week, collecting 90,000 pieces of question data and 10,000 pieces of product data.

**System benefits include:**

Data is available in real time to the client via a bespoke website, as soon as merchandisers download their data, while on the move via GPRS, throughout the day. Sure can then access data during the day; monitor compliance levels and call coverage. The client is then informed of activity and issues as they happen.

The website includes raw data downloadable CSV files allowing any type of analysis to be created, a pre constructed OLAP based summary reporting and free input OLAP 'wizard' allowing Sure the ability to instantly create a report of any permutation to meet the clients desires. Simple to use forms operated on the PDA by merchandisers, contain a flexible question structure, allowing the client to ask any question desired. Sure can then specifically match the question to response types, such as: Multi/single choice response, Date only, Number only, Text only and Linked questions. This ability allows them to keep the reporting clean and generates accurate quantitative analysis. Questions can be added and amended at any time throughout the working cycle.

Optional enforced additional feedback by response or question allows the merchandiser the ability to input free text giving more detailed information surrounding an issue, allowing Sure to produce qualitative reporting to the client.

Returns data can be collected with the aid of a Bluetooth scanner. This allows Sure to instantly process returns with a direct link to the supply chain. The whole returns process from the merchandiser counting stock to stock being collected by the courier can be achieved at a maximum length of 48 hours.

The program has a built in data integrity checker, that allows Sure to ensure no question goes unanswered and all data is collected in all stores that are visited.

Data can be seen from various levels, (question, store group and Store) and the

ability to "drill down" offers the client the ability to see data any way they please.

Web based data input is also available and seamlessly integrates with data collected via PDAs. This allows Sure to increase the field team at will without the added expense or time delay of having to issue equipment; staff can carry out calls and input data as soon as they return home.

**Function benefits include:**

Signature capture function per call allows the team to ensure that a signature is captured from a store contact. This can be used as evidence to show the store is non compliant. For example, paid for FSDUs being refused, allowing the client take this up at retailer head offices.

- Integrated image capture function allows merchandisers the ability to document impressive displays, extra space gained and competitor activity.
- Determining if POS is damaged in transit and reporting back to the client allowing them to take this up with to suppliers.
- Compliance comparisons can be made between titles to determine the levels of set up and overall store compliance per new release.
- Uploading POD information to the PDAs allows merchandisers to challenge store contacts and ensure that paid for POS delivered direct to store is sited.
- Uploading trailers and POS images to the PDAs allows merchandisers to build awareness and showcase new releases in store.
- Identifying stores consistently reporting low stock levels allowing the client to aid the stock reordering process.
- All historical data held on the live website for 24 months. Currently the website is holding over 9 million records of data. All data older than 24 months is still accessible via an archive system. This gives Fox a unique ability to analyse historical data at any point in time.
- The system also optimises call coverage and makes it simple to redeploy the team to cover gaps in the event of sickness or leave.
- Real time reporting and flexible questionnaires are becoming more

commonplace in field marketing. But the Sure and Zync team has been delivering that for years already and has taken availability and visibility onto another level. Individual merchandisers have a full understanding of their brand ambassador role and the ability to receive as well as send information to and from the field is key to the trust relationship.

The ability merchandisers have to preview film clips in store is an additional facility that is a clear justification of the PDA investment.

Consistent results have allowed Fox to prepare for store takeovers — even changing the fascia at one Woolworths in a Google home page style celebration of the DVD Simpson's film launch. Above all though, the technology drives speed when it is needed most. Annika Bizon, sales director, Twentieth Century Fox comments "The industry that we participate in is continually changing and a rapid response is essential. Sure are always willingly adaptable and manage to turn around last minute requests at lightning speed, with absolute professionalism."

Sure and Zync Solutions received a Highly Commended in the Most Effective Use of Data/IT category at 2008 Field Marketing Awards.

**For more information contact  
Zync Solutions Limited UK offices on**

**tel: +44 (0) 3330 446245**

**fax: +44 (0) 1923 620326**

**email: [enquiries@zync-solutions.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@zync-solutions.co.uk)**

**web: [www.zync-solutions.co.uk](http://www.zync-solutions.co.uk)**

**UK Offices:**

**Unit A1 Spectrum Business Centre  
Anthonys Way,  
Rochester, Kent ME2 4NP**

**7 Paynes Park,  
Hitchin, Herts SG5 1EH**

