

## WARC News

### Unilever turns to "crowdsourcing"

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LONDON: [Unilever](#), the consumer goods giant, will use "crowdsourcing" to generate new TV and print ads for [Peperami](#), its meat snack range, in the UK, rather than working with an ad agency on the campaign.

"Crowdsourcing" is one of a [growing number of options](#) for brands hoping to use Web 2.0 for research purposes, but what makes Unilever's move qualitatively different is that it has also dispensed with its previous agency in the process.

The Anglo-Dutch firm had been working with [Lowe London](#) on the account, but has now asked for suggested executions from members of **Ideabounty**, which defines itself as "a magical place that allows clients to post creative briefs and for creatives to sell their ideas."

As part of this process, it is offering \$10,000 (€6,836; £6,018) for the best submissions, and *Matt Burgess*, the managing director of four Unilever brands, including Peperami, said Lowe had partly been a victim of its own success.

The agency, he argued, had "done great work on the account over the years. They've created a strong creative vehicle that's extremely well-defined and very portable."

However, "their great work has created a problem for them, because it makes Peperami the obvious candidate for crowdsourcing."

Rather than loosely-formed plans, Unilever wants this approach to yield creative work with the same production values as its existing ads, while offering a greater number of ideas for it to choose from.

It was this ambition to "get the creative back from 'good' to 'outstanding' again", Burgess said, that led to the decision to "increase the amount of creatives exposed to this brief. This is the overriding driver."

"We left Lowe on good terms and they took the news very professionally. Their business model is set up to expose a brief to two or four creatives – that doesn't give us the value we get from going it alone."

With around 5,000 members, almost 10% of which are estimated to have joined in order to submit ideas for the Peperami brief, Ideabounty has already partnered with companies like [BMW](#) and [SABMiller](#).

While brands such as [Doritos](#) have previously run [high-profile ads](#) based around material delivered by consumers, Unilever is distancing itself from such efforts.

"This is not user-generated content. Anyone can respond to the brief, but it's more likely to attract people with a creative track record or an interest in creative output," said Burgess.

In time, he added, it is hoped such a strategy could be pursued "sustainably", and Unilever's cmo, *Simon Clift*, is thus taking an active interest in results of the Peperami experiment.

"This could work for other brands. We're looking at a long-term model to produce content and I'm keeping Simon Clift involved," Burgess said.

"He's interested to see how it will turn out. There will be a very public judgment of what we come out with and it's risky, but it's a risk worth taking."

*Jonathan Ratcliffe*, marketing director of Idea Bounty, added that "Unilever has been pioneering in their use of IdeaBounty."

"I could never have gone into a company and persuaded them to dump their agency. It takes a very cutting-edge marketing department to do this."