

7 QUICK & CASE STUDIES

**How a diverse
group of companies
has achieved success
using computer animation**



Toronto Animation Case Studies:

How a diverse group of companies has achieved marketing success using 3D computer animation

Mike Efford Motion Design, one of a select group of Toronto animation companies who specializes in technical animation, is pleased to present this group of 3D animation case studies.

The 7 brief marketing case studies here showcase the success of a broad range of companies who have used computer animation to market everything from subway systems to sponges.

Case studies point the way forward for marketers to take their existing marketing communications into new territory...

If 3D animation is new territory for your company, take a few minutes to scan these brief marketing case studies. They validate the use of this medium through sheer variety. If a group of companies this diverse has had major success using computer animation to market their products, then your company can score with this medium too.

Case Study #1:

Alcatel, a multinational technology firm, won a \$650 million dollar contract with the London Underground Subway Lines to re - signal their subway tracks.

Alcatel spent years developing a new series of train signaling systems. They needed to explain the features and benefits of their systems to upper level managers and financiers of the London Underground Tube Lines. Alcatel's R & D investment was enormous, and competition for the lucrative contract included some of the world's largest conglomerates. The technology was very complex, and not easily understood in the course of a single meeting.

To win the contract, Alcatel needed to convey the essence of the technology quickly and effectively.

Problem:

1. Timing: the need to demonstrate the timing of the technology. Print brochures were nearly useless at conveying the precisely timed interactions of the signaling system

7 QUICK CASE STUDIES

- components with the trains, because print is a static medium.
2. Scale: the movement of trains from one station to another takes place across a very large distance, sometimes a mile or more. Attempting to show Alcatel's equipment in a print diagram to accurate scale in comparison to the trains and the long distance traveled in the tunnels was futile.
 3. Features: Alcatel needed to introduce a large set of product features as quickly as possible, a tall order considering the complexity of the technology

Here is how computer animation addressed these challenges:

Solution:

1. A series of 3D animations demonstrated how Alcatel's systems would operate, showing each piece of gear operating at the right moment in a well – coordinated sequence of action. Animation demonstrated what print cannot, and did so quickly and dramatically.
2. The animation's camera viewpoint followed the train from one station to the next, all the while revealing trackside equipment like radio dishes, fiber – optic cable linkage, and computer boxes. The animation was able to present the birds – eye view of the subway route, yet zoom in briefly to show critical details of the system, and how they functioned. All in one grand sweep, in a single animation.
3. Still frames from the animation, compiled into interactive multimedia presentations and overlaid with text and diagrams, supplied the technical details in a format that coordinated seamlessly with the animations.

The animations and interactive presentations were a key element of the corporation's success in winning a massive \$650 million dollar contract with the London Underground. It created 100 new jobs at one of the corporations plants in North America. (reported in the Toronto Star, Saturday Oct. 4, 2003)

The lead presenter found the animation very easy to use and was "blown away" with it. He said the audience quickly understood the essence of the technology and that they left a very favorable impression with executives of the London Underground.

Case Study #2:

3M Canada Corporation demonstrated their new Aldara skin cream to thousands of physicians across North America, with a CD-ROM featuring several 3D animations. They showed how this

7 QUICK CASE STUDIES

compound actually empowered the body's immune system to target and destroy skin cancer lesions.

Problem:

3M developed an innovative skin cancer treatment in the form of a cream. They needed to overcome healthy skepticism from both doctors and patients that this topical cream would be as effective as more invasive cures such as chemotherapy or radiation.

3D Animation enhanced the perceptions of this innovative product.

Solution:

Animations in a CD-ROM presentation zoomed in to a microscopic detail of a cross section of skin, and let patients see the active ingredients of the cream, in action. Without using much medical jargon doctors played the CD-ROM in their offices, and let the animation demonstrate the effectiveness of the cream.

The animations saved time for the doctors, and enhanced communication. Doctors and patients who might be skeptical or fearful were reassured. Animation can literally be a life – saver!

Case Study #3:

Insta-Clean used 3D animation to zoom in to the micro – pore structure of a sponge made of a new, high tech material.

Problem:

Even photography through a microscope could not effectively demonstrate the significance of this structure, and why it was different from an ordinary sponge. This new product was hard to differentiate from the old generic version because it looked pretty much the same.

Solution:

A broadcast animation in a TV commercial quickly grabbed viewers attention as it zoomed in to a close - up of the product removing dirt at a microscopic scale.

Animation made it possible to show customers:

7 QUICK CASE STUDIES

1. the effectiveness of the product in a way photography could not
 2. the key competitive strength of this deceptively simple - looking product.
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Case Study #4:

MediFlow used 3D animation to demonstrate the features and benefits of their innovative water – filled medical pillows.

Problem:

1. The innovative features of Mediflow's medical pillow were hidden inside it. From the outside it resembled any other feather or foam rubber filled pillow. But inside, there was a rubber bladder that was filled with water through a plastic screw cap. And surrounding that, a layer of foil insulation that kept the temperature stable and further protected the water filled bladder from being punctured. Trouble was, none of the innovative features were visible from the outside.
2. Function: the product delivered exceptional comfort to the user because the water in the bladder flowed (hence the name "Mediflow") around the user's head and underneath the neck in the correct proportions, supporting the cervical vertebrae. The way the pillow actually worked was not obvious.

Solution:

They contacted a small corporate communications firm who had connections with a freelance animator, and produced a corporate video initially, then an infomercial, both featuring several 3-D animation sequences demonstrating the product, its features and benefits. They also used a high resolution still frame from the animation as an illustration for their packaging.

Here is how 3-D computer animation addressed each of the above challenges:

1. The inner features were made visible through a cutaway / reveal animation sequence that peeled a section of the pillow open, and showed a multi – level cutaway of each of the layers inside. It showed animated ripples in the water like those seen on the bottom surface of a swimming pool, and also revealed the outer array of polyester puffs that gave added softness. This cutaway animation allowed the viewer to recognize how different the pillow really was from any conventional one, and thus communicated its added value.

7 QUICK CASE STUDIES

2. A second animation showed a wireframe human figure whose head rested on a Mediflow pillow. This cutaway animation showed how the water bladder inside the pillow shifted and changed shape as the figure rolled over from lying on her back to lying on her side. Animated arrows showed the transformation inside the pillow clearly and effectively.

MediFlow took the lead in North American sales in that product category. After two years the company was so successful they used their cash position to acquire a competitor. Once again, computer animation was able to help customers see exactly why a company's product was better.

Case Study #5:

All the major oil companies profit by using animation on TV to show how their motor oil flows through a car engine, providing essential lubrication to all moving parts. It seems every winter there is a new variation on this theme. Some animations have the look and feel of science fiction - like "x-ray vision".

Problem:

1. How to dramatize a commodity – like product in such a way as to make it memorable and exciting
2. How to show the product actually functioning inside an engine, when it cannot be seen from the outside by conventional means.

Solution:

1. The oil companies use 3D computer animation to create drama. They fly the viewer inside an engine and present the moving components larger than life, almost in a video – game style. The exterior of the engine is often rendered semi – transparent, imparting a high tech "X-ray vision" look to the commercial.
2. Animation reveals the inner workings of a system in many ways, often making the exterior transparent.

Oil is just a commodity, but animation dramatizes the value. The oil companies definitely know how to use computer animation to make money. There's a new variation on this theme every winter. Watch for it!

Case Study #6:

Chalmers Truck Suspensions solved a difficult marketing problem with 3D animation, overcoming resistance to change in the conservative trucking industry.

Problem:

1. Their premier suspension system was innovative and unconventional. It did not operate like the typical system, and did not look the same, either. It went a long way toward maintaining the correct load distribution on each axle, which improved handling and traction—and reduced wear and tear. But it looked different, and the articulation of all its moving parts was different.
2. Plans and drawings of the suspension system did not make it obvious how the system functioned. Its mechanical articulation, the way it rotated, stretched and adjusted was not easy to read from any kind of static picture, no matter how detailed. Something better was needed to demonstrate how it worked.

Solution:

1. The 3-D animation was embedded in a video which featured footage of trucks using the Chalmers system shot in beautiful, picturesque locations across North America. The locales were attractive and yet showed the system performing in difficult terrain. Plus interviews with truckers were shown, all recommending the system. The 3-D animation was an eye – catching addition to the collection of visual and verbal content that was designed to create a positive emotional response to this new product.
2. Its mechanical articulation, the way it rotated, stretched and adjusted was demonstrated with 3-D animation in a way no photography could do. A continuous looping animation rotated the whole suspension system 360 degrees while all its mechanical components articulated repeatedly. And the viewer could see the various parts interacting from every angle because of the constant rotation. A zoom sequence provided further detail. As well, some components were “Ghosted” back to a semi – transparent look, highlighting a few working components at a time.

The new Chalmers suspension system became, and continues to be, one of the most popular of all suspensions with truckers and fleets across North America.

7 QUICK CASE STUDIES

Case Study #7:

Jaguar used animation to dramatize the power of their V-12 engine, in a prominent television ad.

Problem:

How to fully realize the potential of a powerful, premium brand. Conventional photography can present a car like a Jaguar quite well, but the evocative Jaguar brand has within it an imaginative potential that sets it apart from the other auto manufacturers. How to realize that potential?

Solution:

Jaguar worked with a top ad agency who used 3D computer animation to excite the imagination through a physically impossible fantasy scene built around their product. In the animation, the car's chrome hood ornament, a cat, morphed smoothly into a floating engine, with all its cogs, gears and moving parts.

The "fantasy" appeal of the ad made it impossible to ignore. All the car companies use animation to tell their technology stories. Jaguar was just a little more stylish at it. Good recall generated from a concept that only computer animation could accomplish.

That's the 10 – minute success tour.
If these companies can succeed with this medium, you can too!

7 QUICK CASE STUDIES

Mike Efford Motion Design is a Toronto animation company specializing in technical and graphic animations for a wide range of production companies, corporate communications firms and ad agencies in the Greater Toronto area and internationally.

For demo reels of technical and product animations, visit:

http://www.mike-efford-motion-design.com/TechnicalDemos_1.htm

or visit Mike Efford Motion Design's YouTube channel:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/MikeEfford3D>

If your company is looking for a Toronto animation studio, visit:

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7 QUICK CASE STUDIES

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