



Irish Broadband ad is a global hit

by Catherine O'Mahony

A quirky, small-budget online and viral advertising campaign created for Irish Broadband has been picked up and forwarded to 126 countries.

Created by online agency Brando, the campaign is called Girlfriend/Boyfriend in a Box and features an interactive chat with Irish actress Orla O'Rourke. It is averaging 1,600 hits a day, according to Brando's managing director, Darren McGrath.

"As far as I'm aware, it's the first time interactive film has been used for an online campaign in Ireland," he said.

The 'girlfriend' in question claims to love ironing, for instance, and gives the thumbs up to football and pizza. The boyfriend encourages his girl to buy more shoes and go out with her friends, while he tiles the bathroom.

"It shows what you can do if you invest in some high-quality creative," said McGrath. He said the campaign had been four to five times more effective than an average promotion. Links to the ad can be seen on sites such as www.boards.ie, stumbleupon.com, cloudy.nights.com and coolstuff.com. Google is also proving a referral source. Irish Broadband's head of marketing, Orla Carroll, said the exer-

cise had proved a low-cost way to get brand awareness and had also boosted sales. Eighteen per cent of people who saw the ad, either by e-mail or on the web, had watched it twice, she said. Producing the online ad cost less than €15,000, compared with an estimated €150,000 to €200,000 for a television commercial.

"You can get a very heavy one-month online campaign for €20,000, which wouldn't buy you a week's radio, so that's pretty cost effective," Carroll said.

The campaign is part of a €2 million integrated ad campaign from the company, which ranks third after Eircom and BT among Irish broadband

providers and is the biggest supplier of wireless services. Most of that spend has been directed to traditional media – television, radio and press – but the key was to integrate everything, Carroll said.

The coming months are particularly key for the company because, unlike some other products, its 'in a box' offering can be picked up in a retail store as a Christmas present.

"People were bamboozled by the information available to them about broadband, so we're trying to do something different and show them how easy it can be," said Carroll. "People don't need to be afraid of the service, it's very easy to get online."