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1.0 Introduction to Organisation: Viu

Started in 2015, Viu is a Hong Kong-based over-the-top video streaming service platform under its parent company, PCCW Media Group (PCCWa, n.d.), providing a wide array of genres to over 60 million monthly active viewers (Tan, 2022) across 16 countries. Similar to competing streaming channels such as Netflix, Viu's service is available for viewers through its webpage and application on smart devices. According to Media Partners Asia AMPD Research Report for the 4th Quarter of 2021, Viu was ranked as the #1 premium video-on-demand platform with the highest number of monthly average users and ranked #2 for the second highest number of paid subscription users and streaming minutes (PCCWa, 2022) as compared to other video streaming platforms in Greater Southeast Asia.

Viu's expansion of its business into local markets allows for a better understanding and reach towards providing its users with localised content. In particular, Viu Singapore collaborated with local media production company Mediacorp to provide Asian entertainment across both channels to the region (Mediacorp, 2020). Additionally, Viu Singapore partnered with local telecommunications network providers - M1, SingTel and Starhub, to provide fibre television (Singtel, n.d.) and customers with free or cheaper premium access to Viu (M1, n.d.).

1.1 Organisation's Vision and Mission Statement

Viu does not have a vision and mission statement. However, PCCW Media Group's vision is "to be an ethically, socially and environmentally responsible information and communications technology and media service provider that delivers an excellent customer experience while supporting and connecting the communities [they] serve". Their mission is to "utilise [their] services to empower, connect and transform communities and businesses by pioneering products and services that make people live better and help businesses thrive" (PCCWb, n.d.).

Without a mission and vision, Viu has a tagline, "No one knows Asian entertainment like we do" (Tan, 2021) which is targeted more towards its consumers instead of their business partners. Development of their own vision and mission would be necessary to differentiate from their parent company due to its differing business model and target audience.

1.2 Major Business of the Organisation

Viu provides a video streaming service to its viewers through a paid subscription and free-of-charge model (PCCWa, n.d.). In partnership with Singapore, Thailand, and major Korean broadcast channels, Viu viewers are able to stream popular television shows online (Figure 1), with various language translations and subtitles. The subscription-free model is supported through advertisement placements. Focusing on the subscribed users, Viu provides a slew of benefits such as high-definition video resolution, earlier access to ongoing shows eight hours after the initial broadcast on television channels and unlimited downloads for offline viewing (Singtel, n.d.). Viu strives to become an efficient streaming platform for viewers to catch up on the latest trending shows.

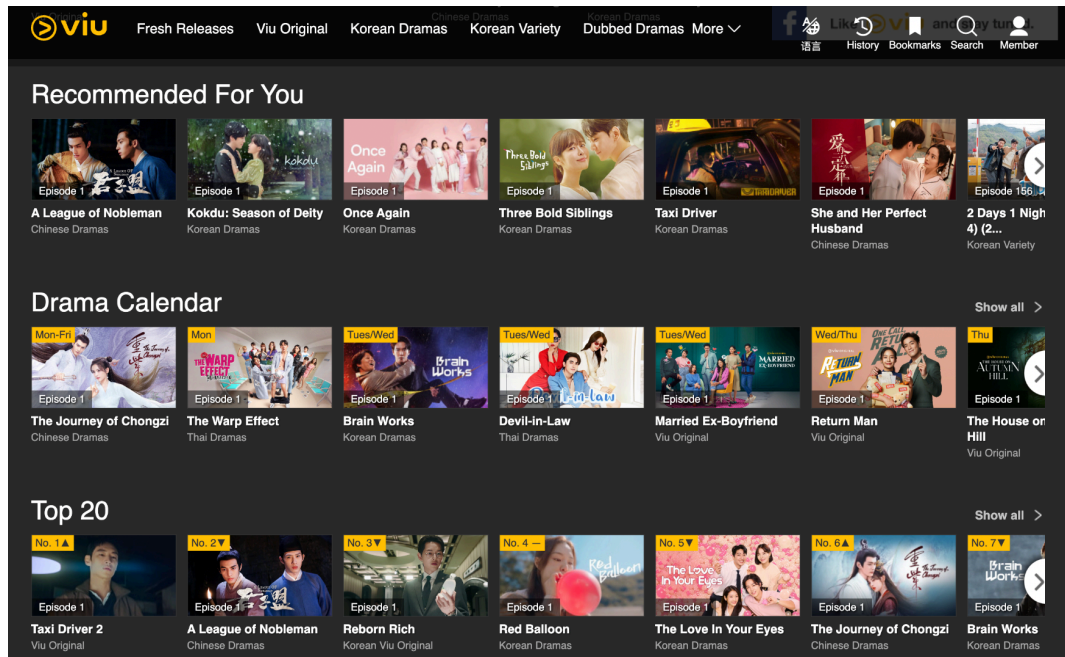


Figure 1: Viu's website (Viu, 2022)

In a press release by Media Partners Asia AMPD Research, they reported that content from Korea had the highest Southeast Asia premium video viewership (Media Partners Aisa, 2022). With an increase in consumers' demand for watching Korean dramas (K-dramas) across various streaming platforms, Viu's CEO mentioned that the organisation has a competitive advantage as one of the streaming services that had exclusive broadcasting rights, especially for K-dramas when other streaming services offered majority-Western broadcasts (Tan, 2022).

Viu also produces exclusive shows under 'Viu Originals', in collaboration with well-known local and international celebrities to bring about more exciting and relatable content to its viewers. Viu Originals has garnered popularity recently, such as *Pretty Little Liars* Season 2, which ranked Top 10 across 4 Southeast Asia markets (PCCWb, 2022).

1.3 Overview of Key Public Relations (PR) Functions by the Organisation

PCCW has a regional in-house PR team. Viu's press releases are mainly distributed by PCCW's regional PR and Communications Lead, headed by Jonathan Leow for Regional Corporate Communications in Asia. He reports to PCCW Group's Group Communication Manager for Viu's parent company, who oversees all PR-related communications to external media channels and internal communications within the organisation through their newsletters (LinkedIn, 2023).

Similar to regular PR functions across entertainment organisations, the in-house PR team deals with crisis management and builds strong, friendly relationships with journalists and media outlets. As PCCW Group does not have an in-house PR team specifically for Viu, the organisation works closely with external PR agencies such as SPRG and Bread Butter Bacon (Bread Butter Bacon, 2021) for local PR Campaigns and press releases.

2.0 Case study: Viu's Survive The Night PR Campaign

This essay analyses Viu's "Survive The Night" PR Campaign, which was established to promote a horror-based K-drama titled *Sell Your Haunted House*.

2.1 Background Information of the Issue/Problem

Viu is commonly known as a streaming platform for its wide offerings of K-dramas. With romance as their most popular genre, Viu wanted to challenge themselves to create a PR campaign to promote the then-newly released horror K-drama, *Sell Your Haunted House*.

2.2 Target Audience, Goals and Objectives

The target audience for the campaign would be the free and premium users of Viu in Singapore, with an age range between 18 to 35 years old (Tan, 2021).

The goal of the campaign is to increase the viewership of *Sell Your Haunted House* on Viu through the "Survive the Night" challenge, a digital-cum-physical experience for its viewers to be immersed in the game conducted in a haunted house.

The objective of the campaign is to get *Sell Your Haunted House*, a horror-comedy-based K-drama, into the weekly Top 10 most-watched dramas on Viu during the "Survive the Night" campaign period.

2.3 Strategies and Tactics

Viu collaborated with an advertising agency, Bread Butter Bacon, to develop the “Survive the Night” PR campaign (Marketing-Interactive, 2021). Before the start of the campaign, market research was done to understand viewers’ perceptions and frequency of watching horror-genre shows. As studies showed hopeful results of viewers enjoying horror-related films, Viu’s campaign set out to evoke viewers’ emotions through their virtual involvement. Leveraging on the pandemic when people were spending more time at home, Viu wanted to create a unique opportunity for viewers to experience horror, which can ultimately shift their interest to watching *Sell Your Haunted House*.

Playing around with the concept of experiencing a haunted house, Viu created a hybrid immersive haunted house experience. They invited Viu users to join the challenge, ensuring that its target audience take part in the campaign. Viu further engaged local Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) with a huge online following such as Tosh Zhang and Nicole Chang Min, to promote the K-drama and join in the challenge. In addition, Viu also partnered with one of Singapore’s mainstream media, AsiaOne, to promote the challenge. Viu’s (Figure 2) and KOLs’ instagram posts further helped to build up the anticipation towards the challenge that was held on 30 April 2021.

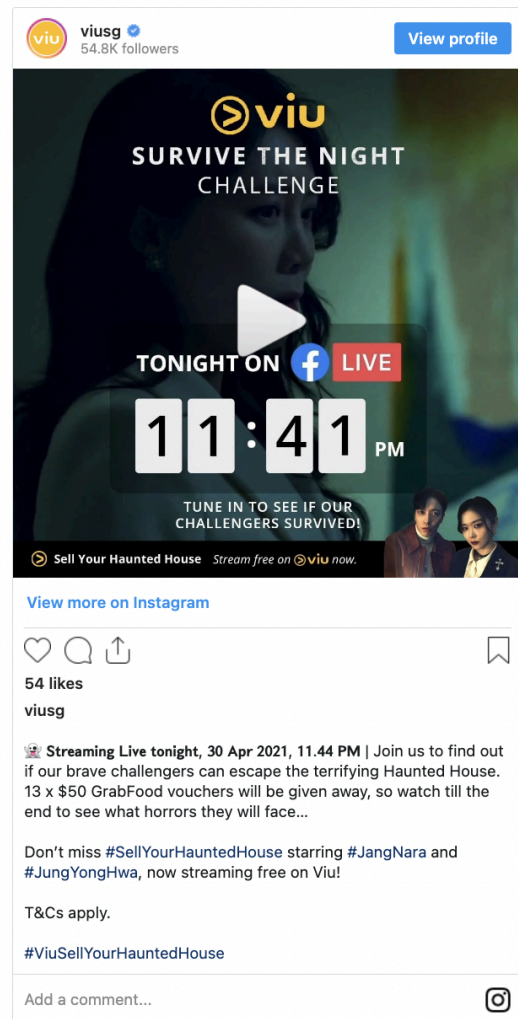
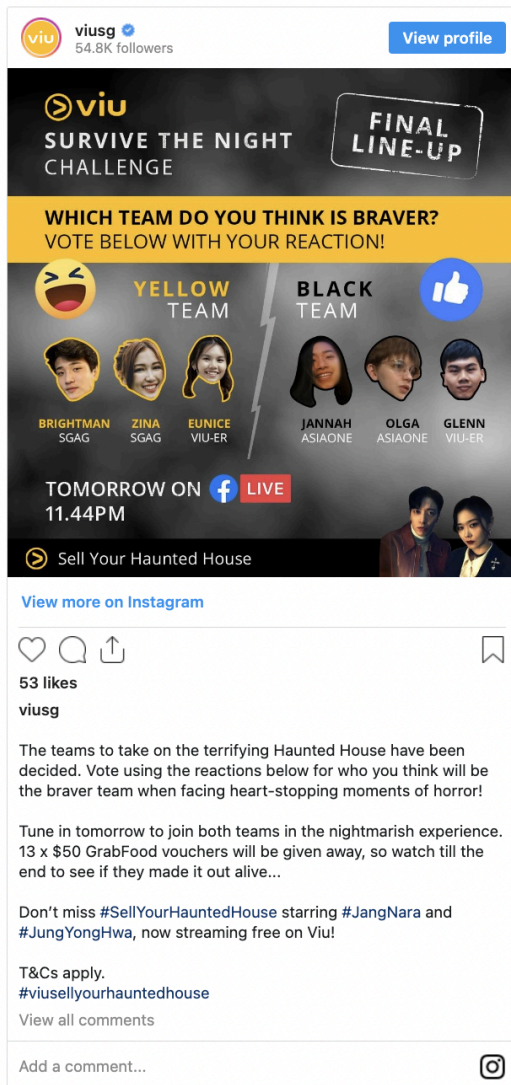


Figure 2: Viu’s Instagram Posts on Survive The Night Challenge (Bread Butter Bacon, 2021)

The “Survive the Night” challenge livestream was broadcasted in real time on Facebook at almost midnight. The challenge included a group of KOLs, representatives from AsiaOne and selected Viu users to take part in a 4-part mission in the haunted house (Marketing-Interactive, 2021). Various horror elements such as the eerie and dark environment, jumpscares, spooky objects were used in the challenge to create an ominous atmosphere for the participants and viewers to fully experience the haunted house.

2.4 Evaluation and Analysis of PR Campaign

2.4.1 Analysis on the Success of the PR Campaign

“Survive the Night” was a huge success. The Facebook livestream garnered over 19,000 lifetime video views and a 300% increase in video views when compared to 2020’s livestream (Marketing-Interactive, 2021). Despite the campaign being targeted towards users from Singapore, the campaign also went viral in other parts of Asia.

The involvement of the target audience of the campaign allowed a personalised experience for its viewers, whereby viewers who are interested in horror shows were selected to take part in the challenge. The inclusion of Viu viewers as part of the challenge highlighted Viu’s effective ability to understand its key stakeholders’ interests and elevate the experience for them through both online and offline platforms - where chosen viewers got to experience the haunted house firsthand, while other viewers watched the livestream being filmed through the first-person and third-person’s perspectives. The use of incentives such as giveaways at the end of the livestream enticed viewers to follow along the entire challenge.

As the challenge itself resembles the setting of *Sell Your Haunted House*, the novelty concept of the campaign would attract viewers’ interest to watch the K-drama to experience similar emotions that they have felt while watching the livestream. Due to the unique concept of using a new media tool - the livestream broadcast of a haunted house experience, the media garnered interest in promoting the challenge on their media outlets. Additionally, the engaging content

publicised by Singapore-based KOLs successfully promoted the challenge and K-drama to a wider group of audience - including non-Viu users interested in horror-related shows. This could be seen from a 200% increase in sign-ups for Viu's premium subscription (Marketing-Interactive, 2021).

Besides using new media, Viu's close engagement and relationship with AsiaOne was an effective strategy to promote its challenge and K-drama on the mainstream media platform, which may have prompted other prominent media outlets such as The Straits Times to pick up on the campaign (Marketing-Interactive, 2021) due to its large local influence.

The success of the campaign was reflected through *Sell Your Haunted House*'s appearance in the Top 3 most-watched K-drama on Viu during its full 12-week run, ranking number one K-drama for 6 consecutive weeks and garnered over 1.5 million views (Marketing-Interactive, 2021).

Notably, the campaign won Gold for 'Best PR Campaign: Entertainment' and 'Most Creative PR Stunt' categories (Marketing-Interactive PR Awards, 2023).

2.4.2 Improvements for the PR Campaign

Several improvements can be made towards the PR campaign. Firstly, the livestream of the challenge could be hosted on different social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Live to garner higher viewerships. As the aforementioned platforms are video-centric in nature, the livestream may attract attention from potential new Viu users and fans of horror. These video-centric platforms provide a more intimate, interpersonal experience through its portrait-mode livestream that can be viewed on smartphones, further immersing viewers in the horror elements of the challenge.

Secondly, the PR campaign could be expanded beyond Singapore, to the nearby regions. As Viu had identified that the Malay community seem to enjoy horror-related content, they worked with Malay KOLs in Singapore to promote the K-drama (Marketing-Interactive. 2021). Viu should consider expanding the challenge to take place in other countries as well such as Malaysia, with a majority Malay demographic which can be one of their target audience. Viu can challenge its viewers, local KOLs and local media outlets across Asia to take part and compete in the challenge against participants from other countries.

Lastly, Viu should develop their organisation's vision and mission statement and integrate them into their PR campaigns. With a clear vision and mission, it can help Viu to understand what they wish to achieve in providing the best video streaming service on its platform regardless of the subscription model. It can also help Viu communicate better with their internal and external stakeholders, including Viu's employees in working towards a shared vision through its shared values. The vision and mission statements can set the direction for Viu's future PR campaigns.

3.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, Viu, a video streaming platform, successfully launched a PR campaign for their horror-based K-drama through an innovative strategy of mirroring the concept of the K-drama for their campaign challenge. The engagement of various stakeholders allowed for a successful promotion of the campaign. However, some improvements can be made such as the use of other video-centric platforms for its livestream, the expansion of the challenge to other countries as well as the focus on developing the organisation's vision and mission.

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