



Agency Name: Starcom MediaVest Group

Campaign Name: Shark Tank Meets Main Street

Advertiser Name: U.S. Cellular®

1. **Challenge.** What is your client's business and what was their business challenge?

U.S Cellular® is the 5th largest national wireless cellular carrier. They operate in 23 markets across the country - specializing in smaller towns and rural communities. In 2014 USCC was eager to re-establish themselves with the small business (SMB) community after a 7-year hiatus from marketing specifically to them. Given that hiatus, USCC lagged in consideration among SMB consumers versus the competition. In fact, competitors frequently leveraged large-scale national partnerships to drive visibility, credibility and engagement. Being a regional brand focusing on efficient spend can narrow partnership possibilities. However, the team also recognized the value in the USCC brand being associated with a national property. This helped to reimagine what was possible for the brand.

In thinking through our challenge, the client/agency team uncovered an insight we felt the brand was uniquely positioned to address. Innovation has been seen as the sole propriety of Wall St., "tech corridors" and silicon valleys. Their ability to make innovation happen is easier, there's more infrastructure and support for it. USCC's footprint is underrepresented in startups and venture interests (for example, on Kickstarter, the USCC footprint represents less than half of its "fair share" of startup projects).

USCC's opportunity was to advocate, drive and support innovation from Main Street. Our challenge was finding a way of demonstrating that with scale and impact, efficiently.

2. **Objective.** What was the campaign objective?

Build credibility and visibility for the U.S. Cellular® brand among business owners (and consumers) by demonstrating our commitment to their communities.

Generate real-time leads to attract new consumer and business customers.

3. **Plan.** Why did you plan Local Broadcast TV?

As a company that operates in a regional footprint we recognize Local Broadcast TV is one of the most effective ways to reach our consumers. What's unique about this plan is we were able to establish a custom content partnership with a national property, *Shark Tank*, and it was executed ONLY in our key markets. Therefore, there was **zero waste!**

National shows typically don't work with regional brands advertising in a local footprint as they generally have smaller budgets. We needed a little ingenuity to get a seat at the table. Knowing that the show historically reserved their casting calls for the "big city," we found a way for U.S. Cellular to strategically bring *Shark Tank* to Main Street, by hosting casting calls in three of our markets -- mutually driving targeted awareness of both brands while catering to the very essence of the show's roots - that great ideas come from everywhere. In doing so, *we created a first-of-its-kind partnership* that harnessed the credibility and reach of ABC primetime to channel a custom, local program that elevated brand perception and amplified core messaging exclusively in key markets with zero waste. We were able to achieve this and further elevate the program by pushing out featured :90 content pieces not nationally, but through ABC affiliate stations in 56 key US Cellular markets. The campaign was able to

build credibility and visibility for the U.S. Cellular brand among consumers and business owners by demonstrating our commitment to their communities while also delivering a nationally-renowned network.

In Des Moines, Milwaukee, and Greenville (North Carolina), U.S. Cellular provided businesses in their footprint access to the *Shark Tank* casting team for the first time in the show's history, giving entrepreneurs the opportunity to pitch their ideas and bring them one step closer to appearing before the Sharks. And to continue giving U.S. Cellular markets the access they crave, we delivered them custom content with a never-before-seen look at what it takes to get on the show and funding from the Sharks, anecdotes that have application beyond *Shark Tank*. Each authentic casting call provided a beautiful, organic environment that served as the set for our 'DVR-proof' content, airing in Q4 within *Shark Tank* local commercial ad time, on U.S. Cellular's own channels, on a co-branded microsite destination and geo-targeted across ABC.com. We capped off the partnership with the "Shadow Shark Tank Sweepstakes," a lead generation mechanism that gave small businesses and *Shark Tank* fans in U.S. Cellular markets the chance to spend the day on the set of *Shark Tank*, where one lucky winner could listen to other entrepreneurs pitch to the Sharks in real-time while asking business questions to show executives & talent.

4. Platforms. Which TV station ad platforms did you buy?

- On-air: In 56 DMAs across the US Cellular footprint, we purchased spot media on the ABC affiliate station in the given market. During the first three premiere weeks of *Shark Tank* (September/October 2014), we had both a :90 and a :30 in each episode. The :90 was rich-co-branded *Shark Tank* content, and ran adjacent to the show (deeming it "DVR-proof"). Each of the three :90s featured a different piece of content, relevant to entrepreneurs and *Shark Tank* fans alike
 - i. Perfecting the Pitch
 - ii. The Road to Success
 - iii. Casting on Main Street

The :90 content was re-enforced with a US Cellular :30 brand message, also running in-show. To viewers at home within these 56 markets, the branded content and brand message appeared national, bolstering USCC through affiliation with *Shark Tank*.

In casting call markets, we additionally ran :15 promo spots driving attendance to US Cellular's three casting calls. Across all 56 DMAs, we ran :15 promo spots driving entries to our "Shadow *Shark Tank*" sweepstakes, capturing business leads for US Cellular.

- Online/Mobile: Co-branded *Shark Tank*/US Cellular media ran across ABC.com properties (both Desktop & Mobile) and included both display and video assets. Flighted throughout the campaign, media drove tune-in to *Shark Tank*, as well as entry to the "Shadow *Shark Tank*" sweepstakes. Media ran across ABC.com but was geo-targeted to our 56 key markets.
- Search & Social: Strategic use of search and social was implemented to support the program. These tactics both drove awareness, sweeps entries, as well as drove users to a hub which housed additional content (as well as content featured in-show) with resources and tips for entrepreneurs.

5. Results. Please share results. How did the campaign make the register ring?

Our regionally-targeted program generated national exposure beyond just our footprint, granting us visibility and credibility on the same level playing field as our competitors.

There was awareness of our casting calls outside of the casting call markets:

- Over 94MM PR imps across regional and national publications, including a front page story in NYT business section.

- All 7 Sharks promoted our casting call events on their social media, building awareness outside of our footprint and casting call markets.

The casting calls themselves were a huge success for the brand, the show and the hundreds of aspiring entrepreneurs that came out to pitch. Whether someone does/doesn't make it on the show, our markets have already won - their small businesses have been heard, and they took an important step in learning how to pitch and network in their city. Some entrepreneurs from our casting calls have in fact already advanced into the next round of the show's review process, and a few have the chance to appear on-air in Season 7.

In two weeks across the three markets there were 680+ pitches and 1,300+ attendees, helping generate 200+ quality business leads for U.S. Cellular. And in the first phase of the partnership alone, the brand generated more than 8MM+ social/digital and 25MM+ PR impressions across POE channels. We had co-branded retail presence in hundreds of U.S. Cellular retail stores, giving sales associates "a sense of pride" in speaking with customers and generating new business leads.

Perhaps the most impressive result was the overwhelmingly heartfelt response we received from attendees in our markets, thanking U.S. Cellular for "bringing Shark Tank to our little town" and "putting us on the map." The local press outlets onsite proclaimed the casting calls the finest event in town that year; the locals said it was an experience that would live with them long after *Shark Tank* hit the road, one with the power to transform a city, ignite future ideas and change the way others look at their community. And U.S. Cellular was present every step of the way.

The content pieces and Shadow Shark Tank Sweepstakes drove additional brand metrics, all the while putting a spotlight on entrepreneurialism (with access at the center) in the cities U.S. Cellular champions.

- Generated more business leads for U.S. Cellular including an opt-in by consumers who engaged with our sweepstakes to receive more information from U.S. Cellular that surpassed benchmarks by 5 times.
- CTR for our Shark Tank digital promotional banners and pre-roll exceeded U.S. Cellular internal benchmarks/norms.
- Our DVR-proof content achieved 7.95MM content impressions across Shark Tank prime, ABC digital platforms and owned promotion.
- 100% of social media chatter around U.S. Cellular's partnership with Shark Tank was positive.

U.S. Cellular brought unparalleled access to small businesses in its markets, in the process elevating its brand to a new level of marketing potential.

6. Scale. Do you have plans to scale this campaign to more markets?

This year, we are amplifying the work to support specialization of our network working in unexpected cities and making a stronger tie to our brand promise. That's why we picked 3 new U.S. Cellular markets with integrated media across the 56 DMAs we advertised in 2014 to broadly amplify U.S. Cellular's brand positioning as it relates directly to the Casting Call news.

While the Casting Calls in 2014 were primarily meant to support business owners in U.S. Cellular markets and generate business leads for the company, with our 2015 consumer-focused initiative, these events have evolved to become equity drivers for the U.S. Cellular brand. This campaign will demonstrate U.S. Cellular's commitment to our 23 specialty markets by providing them with this opportunity, while generating both local and national PR and buzz about bringing Shark Tank to 3 cities where you least expect it.

7. Tell Us More. What else is there to know?

As a regional advertiser with significant spend in footprint, we were able to set the gold standard for what was possible for a regional advertiser to achieve. We successfully changed our mindset to "entrepreneur" and disrupted the company culture. Our program pushed us to reimagine how we all talk

about U.S. Cellular internally, banning words like “local” and “footprint” - and putting ourselves in the national mindset.