Introduction

"No-one likes their infrastructure turning into a pumpkin at midnight."

Advanced are looking to consolidate and grow their position as the UK's third largest solutions provider, and have recently undergone a re-brand to both elevate perception and provide a platform from which to challenge the market leaders. As part of this they now have a compelling proposition – 'right-first-time solutions'.

Their challenge was in creating a campaign that would support this proposition, work across different business departments with consistent messaging across all channels, and not least strongly resonate with prospects. FairITales is the campaign that achieved this.

The idea behind the campaign was informed by a (sadly) fundamental truth – within the B2B Technology sector there are solutions providers who will over-promise and under-deliver, tantamount to selling a fairy tale – so the campaign takes common sector issues, wraps them up in familiar tales, and features Advanced rescuing the day with a fit-for-purpose right-first-time solution - reputationally something they're known for.

Offering the audience solutions "...that are *just* right", or asking if their current solution was more "Bah, Humbug! than ho ho ho" clearly resonated, helping the campaign surpass expectations.

With a modest budget, aggressive delivery time-scales and aspirational targets to deliver against, the blend of storytelling, relevant messaging, strong CTAs, and differentiating execution achieved the necessary levels of cut-through, consideration and conversion to quickly generate a healthy sales pipeline in excess of £3.4m – a figure that has exceeded initial KPIs.

Launched in July 2016, the campaign is still live, but within six months has already provided ROI in excess of 8:1. The caveat is that sizeable account wins in the technology sector can take up to 18 months to implement so the final ROI is not yet known, but should (based on conservative conversion rates and the current sales pipeline) comfortably exceed 22:1, with more waves ready to increase this further.

Word count: 299 (299 / 2000)

Approach | Idea & execution

"Still trying to find a solution that's just right?"

There are those ideas that are 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration, and then there are those ideas that sneak up on you and you just need to be receptive enough to spot them.

During the discovery phase the conversation turned to the competition: Who are they? What are they doing? Why are they doing it? What are their strengths, their weaknesses? Common sector issues? And having listened to some examples of how things really shouldn't be done, a pattern was emerging – of over-promising and under-delivering, of selling make-believe, a dream, a fairy tale.

It was enough to inform some hastily scribbled headlines, that with time to reflect, supplied the raw inspiration from which to create a successful campaign, informed by a truth we knew would resonate.

With the core of the idea in place the campaign elements just flowed. Fairy tales was combined with 'IT' to create FairITales, the umbrella term for the campaign. Familiar fairy tale phrases were remixed to create headlines, and whilst body copy loosely followed fairy tale story lines, it was modernised. Quirky turns of phrase such as 'sophisticatedly simple solutions' were sprinkled throughout to keep the tone light. Underpinning all of this was the only logical sign-off, '...get in touch for your very own happily ever after' which perfectly supported their 'right-first-time' proposition.

Visually the campaign adopted an illustrative approach. After all, 'multifunctional oat transformers', pygmy cows, and magical pumpkins are hard to come by (and horribly expensive to make). Wherever possible hero imagery included the colour orange to tie it back to the newly created Advanced master brand palette.

The headlines, hero images and content were all then nuanced as required to fit with the campaign delivery roadmaps, which clearly aligned the creative to meet their objectives.

Word count: 293 (592 / 2000)

Approach | Campaign delivery

"Is your current solution more Bah, Humbug than ho ho ho?"

The campaign was split into waves of activity, each wave being a different fairy tale to keep things fresh, and messaging was personalised but non-sector specific to have broad appeal.

Although the concept readily leant itself to having a specific fairy tale per sector instead of generic waves, Advanced operate across 13 sectors which would have made the campaign cost prohibitive, reduced the longevity, and also ran the risk of missing prospects if they didn't fit neatly into one of the sectors.

So, generic waves, each structured into a simple awareness, consideration, conversion model, with measurement embedded from the start (unique telephone numbers, email addresses, tracking) and learnings from previous waves applied to the subsequent waves.

The waves of activity were launched every 8 weeks, commencing July 2016.

Campaign waves:

• Wave one – Cinderella (July 2016 launch)
• Wave two – Goldilocks (September/October 2016)
• Wave three – A Christmas Carol (Treated as a 'Christmas Special' running over 4 weeks in November/ December 2016 and split into: Intro / Christmas Past / Present / Future)
• Waves four onwards – (embargoed - not yet released).

Word count: 180 (772 / 2000)

Approach | Campaign comms

"Does a huff and a puff blow your IT down?"

Awareness

Driving audience to dedicated landing pages.

- Personalised DM to key decision makers: CTA read more / get in touch for you own 'happily ever after'
- Emails: Containing a snippet of the story with the CTA encouraging the audience to read more / get in touch for you own 'happily ever after'. Headings were split tested, hard or soft bounces removed from database, and response rates tracked.
- Timed social media posts: Seeded across LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter to increase campaign reach.
- Banner advertising: Accountancy age, Financial Director, Computing.
- Exhibitions. The FairITale theme was embraced and rolled out across trade shows and events, and not only provided great stand out, but became a real talking point. (Implementation for exhibitions and banner adverts was done by their in-house teams from assets provided).
- Internal. The concept was embraced by Sales teams with themed prizes for hitting targets.

Consideration

Landing pages.

With a diverse audience being targeted and research showing that multi platform was by far the preferred means of consuming information*, the landing pages were built to be fully responsive. To substantiate what Advanced were saying, evidential case studies, white papers, and video content were made freely available to anyone that had clicked through to the site, and pre-populated form fields made it easy to get in touch. Implementing best practice cues ensured forms and content were optimised for better conversion.
There were also 'soft' elements on the page, with the hero images parallaxed to track the mouse and be more immersive, and the form button animated – closing and opening again to say 'thank you' on submission.

Conversion

Every customer that engaged with the campaign was sent a follow up thank you email, removed from the campaign for that wave, with leads followed up within 24hrs by the Sales teams.

Word count: 302 (1074 / 2000)

* Between 67-84% Source: Smartinsights

Approach | Marketing position

"For the perfect storybook ending why not give us a call?"

Advanced are the UKs third largest solutions provider and on an ambitious growth trajectory, recognised as a Sunday Times Top Track 250 Company 2015 and ranking in the Deloitte UK Fast 50 which recognises the 50 fastest growing technology companies in the UK. Advanced are also winners of Tech Company of the Year in PwC's UK Tech Awards in 2014.

Realising their potential, US private equity firm Vista Partners purchased Advanced in 2014 for £725 million and promptly delisted them from AIM (the London Stock Exchange's international market for smaller growing companies).

This resulted in a focus on establishing Advanced as a centre-of-excellence – a priority objective that demanded best-in-class marketing initiatives and programmes to support the new over-arching marketing strategy, market positioning and aggressive growth targets.

This meant their very capable marketing team needed external support for three reasons:

• Implementing an ambitious four pillar transformation process of reorganisation, rebranding, relocation and restructuring was applying time and resource pressure onto their marketing team who had a complete rebrand to implement in addition to their day-to-day objectives.

• Secondly, marketing communications from Advanced were historically product and sector focussed, reactive and short term. Whilst this targeted approach demonstrably generated isolated successes, customers were not aware of the breadth of solutions on offer as different departments effectively operated as silos. An external agency would not be bound by the same processes and structure which allowed the creation of something unique (and a first) for Advanced – a truly business wide campaign with consistent messaging across all channels and departments as well as consolidating and aligning previously sector specific tactical comms under one unifying campaign umbrella.

• Thirdly, the rigour that agency campaign experience brings in terms of roadmaps and measurement. All comms were aligned to different funnel stages; awareness, consideration, conversion, and measurement embedded from the outset. This allowed us to clearly show the 'how' we would answer their KPI's and define what success looked like.

Word count: 323 (1397 / 2000)

Approach | Contribution to business development

"Ever seen the Ghost of Lost Opportunity?"

As the sector is fiercely competitive, achieving cut-through is critical, and there-in lies a degree of risk; play it safe and lose visibility, or be brave and risk sacrificing some of your potential prospects and opportunities for greater awareness and recall.

Advanced opted for the latter. After all, they'd thrown down the gauntlet to both prospects and their competitors with a campaign promoting 'right-first-time' solutions, so the campaign was already going to differentiate itself and represent a departure from what was typically seen within the sector.

Anecdotal sentiment gleaned from trade shows, events and the press made for interesting reading.

As expected, whilst the majority of prospects loved it, it didn't always resonate. A CeO at ILTA remarked how he wanted his software to be *'...like the Goldilocks story: not too hot, not too cold, but just right'*, whilst an IT Director at a major international law firm shared how he now *'...associate[d] their software with porridge'*,* Either way, the campaign was cutting through, causing a reaction, getting traction and was memorable – something the Sales teams were enjoying because offering solutions that worked resonated, and the high campaign recall provided them with a good dialogue opener, helping generate a rapidly growing sales pipeline.

The financial value of the pipeline was the direct measurement of business development success, but this measurement has an important caveat – solutions that are technology based can take up to 18 months to implement for substantial business wins, a lead time which directly impacts the value of converted sales in the short term.

That said, with known campaign costs, sales pipeline, and actual sales, we can comfortably work out both current and (using a conservative conversion rate of 38%**) the projected ROI.

Both figures are shared on the following results pages, together with examples of the campaign assets for each wave.

Word count: 304 (1701 / 2000)

* Source: September edition of Legal IT Insider
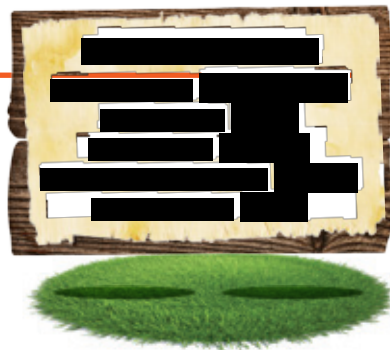
** Source: Advanced

Results | Summary

Campaign cost £59,985 (and 75 pence).
Sales pipeline as of January 2017, **£3,441,644**.

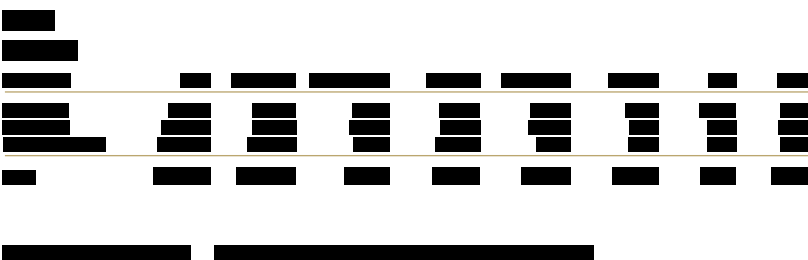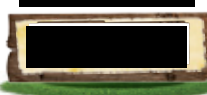The following pages go into a little more detail.

EXCELLENCE AWARDS
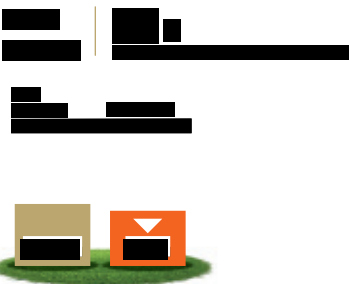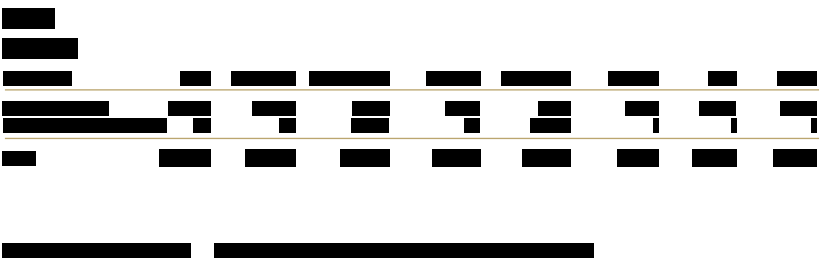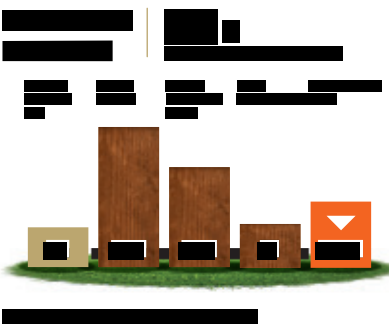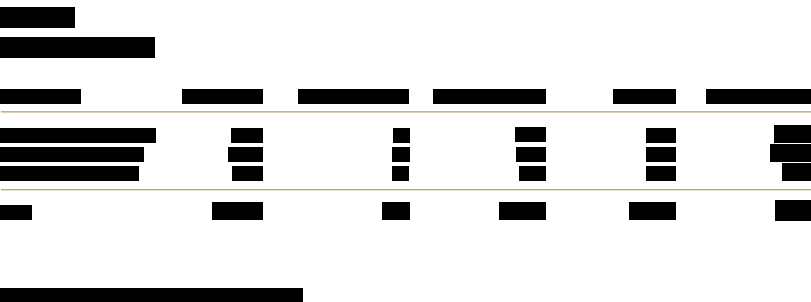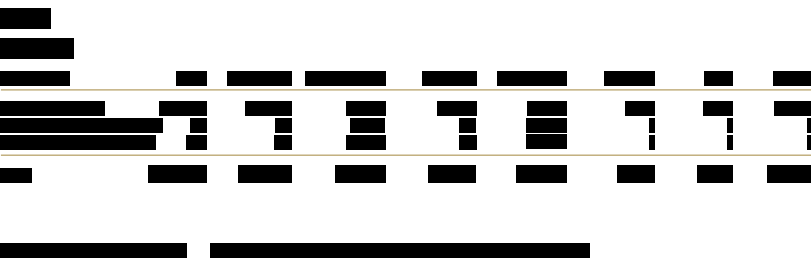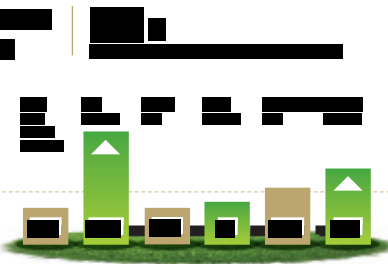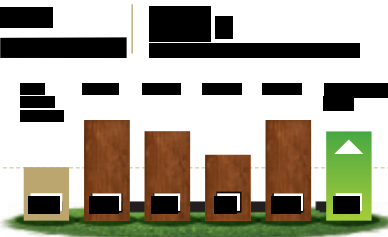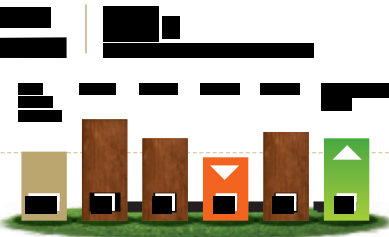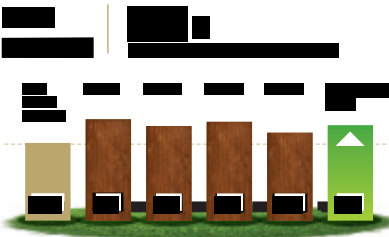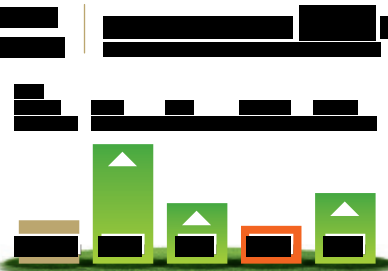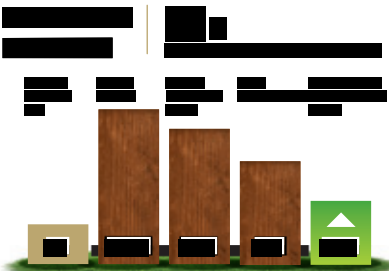
Results | Testimonials

"Wishing you a very merry happily ever after."

FairITales testimonials:

"Following our major rebrand earlier in the year, we took a fresh and innovative marketing approach that stands out from the myriad of business communications that our customers and prospects receive each day. This creative campaign delivered a great opportunity to reinforce our brand values and drive opportunity for all business units – as well as being an enjoyable read. I'm pleased to say, that for Advanced, this fairy tale had a very happy ending."

Sally Scott | Chief Marketing Officer | Advanced

"This is a milestone campaign in the tale of our business transformation. Our customers and prospects found it both humorous and engaging and we've not only seen a rise in brand awareness and perception, evidenced in our recent surveys, but we've strengthened our sales pipeline with some great opportunities, too."
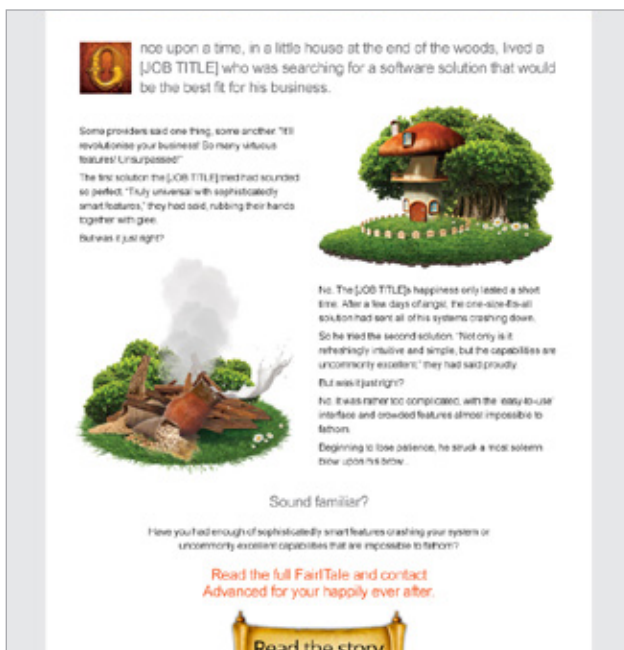
Clare Frost | Director of Field Marketing | Advanced
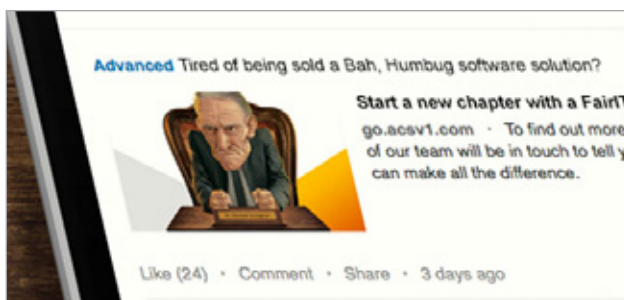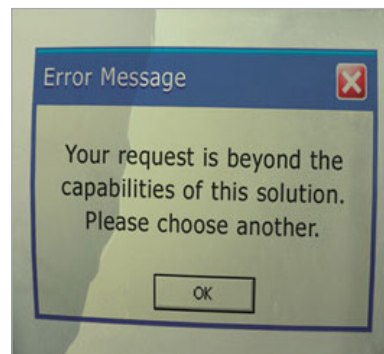
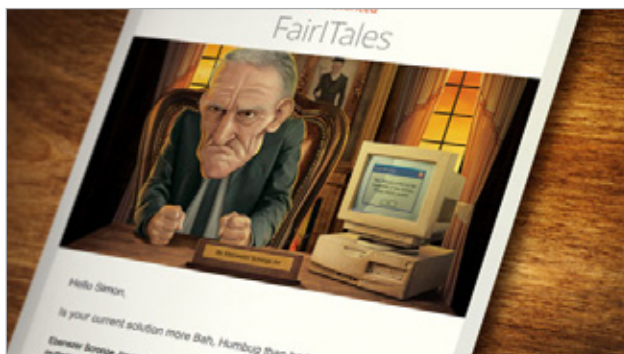**Christmas Carol specific testimonial:**

"We're delighted to have achieved our very own happily ever after with the Christmas Carol FairITale. In just a few weeks the campaign has generated a pipeline in excess of £1.4m, meaning a positive start to the new year with some exciting new opportunities."

Clare Frost | Director of Field Marketing | Advanced

The following pages show the campaign assets.

"No-one wants their solution turning into a pumpkin at midnight."

Happily ever after doesn't have to be a FairITale.

"Still trying to find a solution that's *just* right?"

"Is your current solution more Bah, Humbug than ho ho ho?"

Mr. Ebenezer Scrooge Jnr

Error Message

Your request is beyond the capabilities of this solution. Please choose another.

OK

Advanced Tired of being sold a Bah, Humbug software solution?

Start a new chapter with a FairIT

go.acsv1.com · To find out more, of our team will be in touch to tell y can make all the difference.
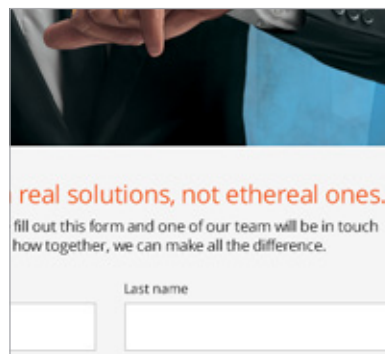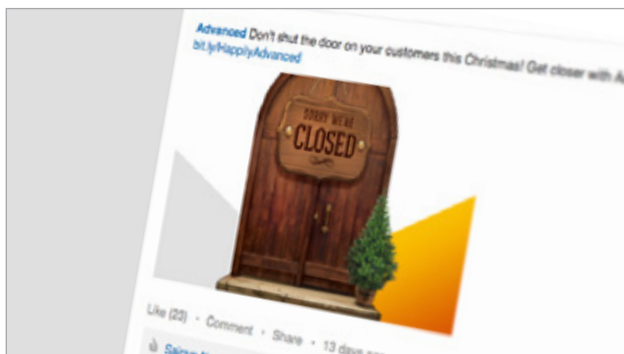
Like (24) · Comment · Share · 3 days ago

A miserably memorable 4 week Christmas special, featuring a grumpily lovable Ebenezer Scrooge Jnr. The back story to his sour demeanour being the horribly inefficient solutions sold to him.

nce upon a time, on a cold Christmas Eve, the snowflakes falling softly and swiftly, a miserable director sat at his desk.

Ebenezer Scrooge Jnr wasn't miserly or mean spirited like his grandfather, grumpily muttering "Bah! Humbug!" in response to "Merry Christmas!". Nor did he react with bitterness when it came to investing in his business in order to help it grow and thrive.

Instead, he treated his fellow human beings with kindness and warmth. But he was well-nigh exhausted from ill-willed software providers recommending IT solutions loaded with features that simply didn't suit his needs.

"Ever seen the
Ghost of Lost Opportunity?"

As Advanced set to work immediately, implementing a solution uniquely designed to meet the business needs, Scrooge Jnr was overwhelmed with joy at the chance to redeem his business opportunity.

As for the jolly merchant? His greed and flimsy solutions were his undoing, and he closed up shop, never to be seen again.

Having introduced the story, the audience were taken on a journey through Christmas past, present and future. A visit from the Ghost of Lost Opportunity and a jolly but villainous merchant who didn't deliver on his promises creating the back story for Christmas Past.
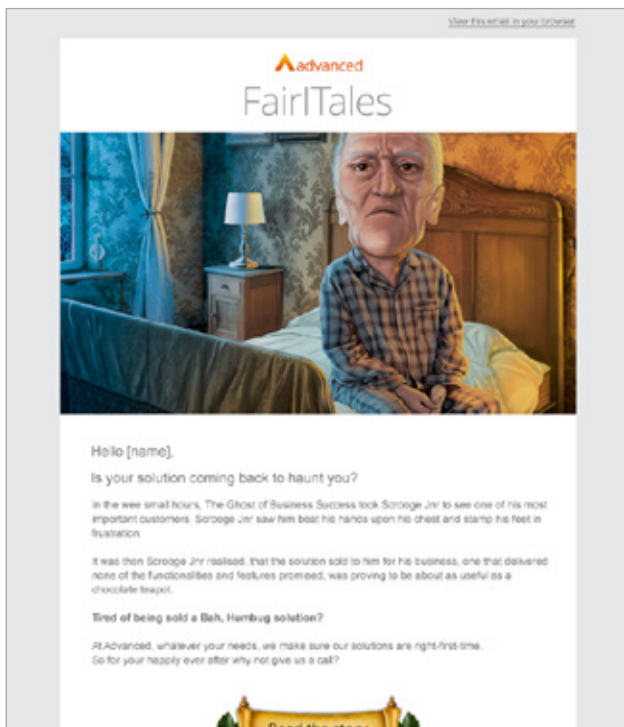
Moving forward in time to the present, no-one likes solutions that keep you awake at night and are about as useful as a chocolate teapot.
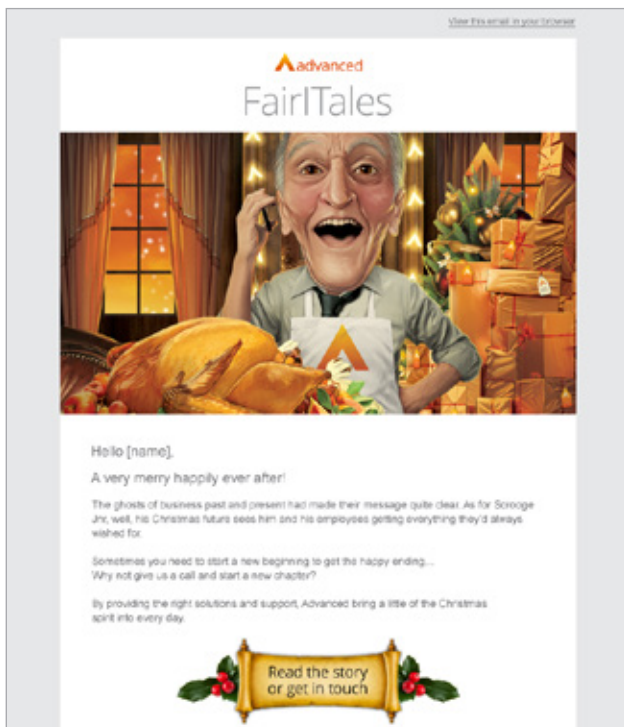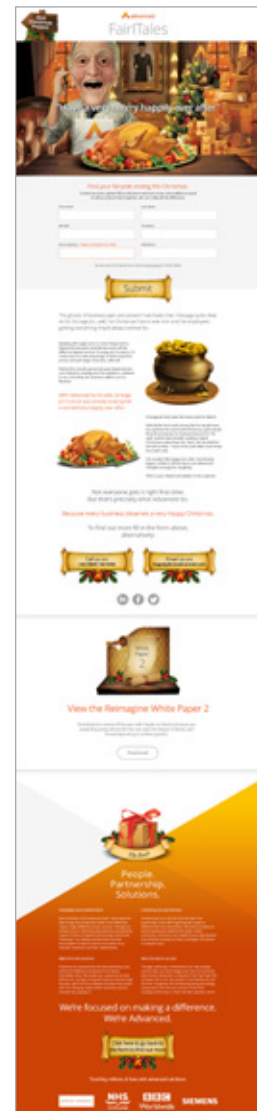
And finally the Christmas future conclusion.
Wishing every business a
very merry happily ever after.