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ENGAGING MARKETING MINDS

MARCH/APRIL 2019

EMBRACING
RISK IN
MARKETING

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REPEAT & REVILE

W

hile many leaders describe their legacy as forward looking—such as the desire to solve a problem, improve an industry, or protect and grow something meaningful—many of them either repeat the past or revile it.

Those who keep repeating the past are essentially playing it safe. They prefer to stick with what they know rather than change things and risk screwing up. After all, they reason, even if they fail, who could fault them for doing what always worked in the past?

Those who revile the past see it as an obstacle to making their mark now. Eager to validate themselves and highly conscious of how little time they have to demonstrate results in light of receding corporate life spans and employee tenures, they see themselves as change agents racing to capture attention before time is up.

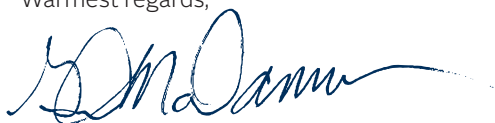
As different as both of these approaches seem, they are similarly myopic and shortsighted. They both mismanage the past by either clinging to it or disregarding it outright. In turn, those who anchor to the past risk becoming irrelevant on a changing landscape. And those who brand themselves as change agents toss away heritage that threatens the loss of their identity.

Short-term thinking is killing our culture. Therefore, finding the balance between respect of tradition and new ideas is paramount for any brand. In fact, the best short-term strategy is most likely a long-term one. Committing to the bigger, longer view gives a brand and its stewards purpose each and every day. And it takes a lot of guts to embrace such a mindset.

Speaking of guts, our cover story, “Jump—Embracing Risk in Marketing,” looks at inside strategies for fostering and nurturing originality by recognizing great ideas, partnering with strong allies, launching at the right time, and removing fear and doubt in marketing. In our second feature, “The Prosumer Handbook—How Brand Messaging is Evolving,” we examine how and why marketing must change in the age of the online influencer.

These articles speak to embracing risk as the theme of our marketing lives. Thinking bigger and longer requires the risk of choosing a new mindset in a new year.

Warmest regards,



Gina M. Danner, CEO



Simple is best
04



*Live your story;
don't just tell it*
09

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SHORT-TERM THINKING IS KILLING OUR CULTURE. THEREFORE, FINDING THE BALANCE BETWEEN RESPECT OF TRADITION AND NEW IDEAS IS PARAMOUNT FOR ANY BRAND.

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Embracing risk in marketing

JUMP

T

he ad couldn't have been any clearer: "Our Blades are F***ing Good." That's the message that Unilever wanted to deliver to shaving consumers when it bought Dollar Shave Club in 2016. At the time, the direct-to-consumer brand was all the rage, and Unilever wanted to build on the product's momentum by mocking existing brands that pandered to consumers through endorsements from celebrities like tennis star Roger Federer.

Dollar Shave Club was not only disrupting how consumers bought razors, but it also ramped up the unconventional bent in its marketing, which once featured a man surfing on a wave of shave butter. But it wasn't just risqué words or videos driving the Dollar Shave Club brand; it was about leaping above a traditional marketing mindset.

It's 2019 and the marketing world continues to be driven by new technologies, new ways of connecting with customers and new forms of data collection.

So, should marketers start taking more risks?


It's an interesting question. The answer lies somewhere between what defines your brand and who your customers are. The safe bet tends to lean toward starting with what your customers are willing to accept. While it is tempting to push your inner marketing to the limits, there are benefits to avoiding the temptations of out-of-the-box strategies.



Or are there?

There's a quote in Shaun Belding's book, "The Journey to Wow," that says, "Complacency is the enemy. Be as vigilant with your customers as you would your dearest friend."

Let's take a snapshot of today's marketing landscape. You have to fight for consumer attention. That said, now is not the time to ignore the latest and greatest marketing solutions. And if that means jumping over the shark, so to speak, so be it.

"With so much global competition, there is a lot of perceived parity in almost all products and services, so originality is essential to standing out," says Belding, CEO of The Belding Group of Companies. "Brand messaging used to be a one-way push strategy. It used to be more generalized, relying on consumers to connect the dots to their individual needs and lifestyles. Consumers now are less inclined to connect the dots themselves and expect messaging to relate directly to them." 

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SHAUN BELDING
THE JOURNEY TO WOW

SIMPLE IS BEST



One of the key words in today's marketing speak is originality. Take brands like Warby Parker and Chick-fil-A. Warby Parker is an eyewear company with a social conscious focus, while Chick-fil-A continues to outsell most of its competitors three-fold while holding true to its philosophy of closing on Sunday.

John Waid says that this type of creativity can lead to long-term payoffs. Sending a message that you care about what your consumers care about is a risk worth taking.

"Consumers are expecting to be respected and treated fairly, so marketers showing they care about them, and not just making money, is important," says Waid, founder of C-3 Corporate Culture Consulting and author of "Reinventing Ralph." "Consumers expect not to be tricked and overcharged. The return to more human marketing and selling is a wave that marketers and companies need to embrace."

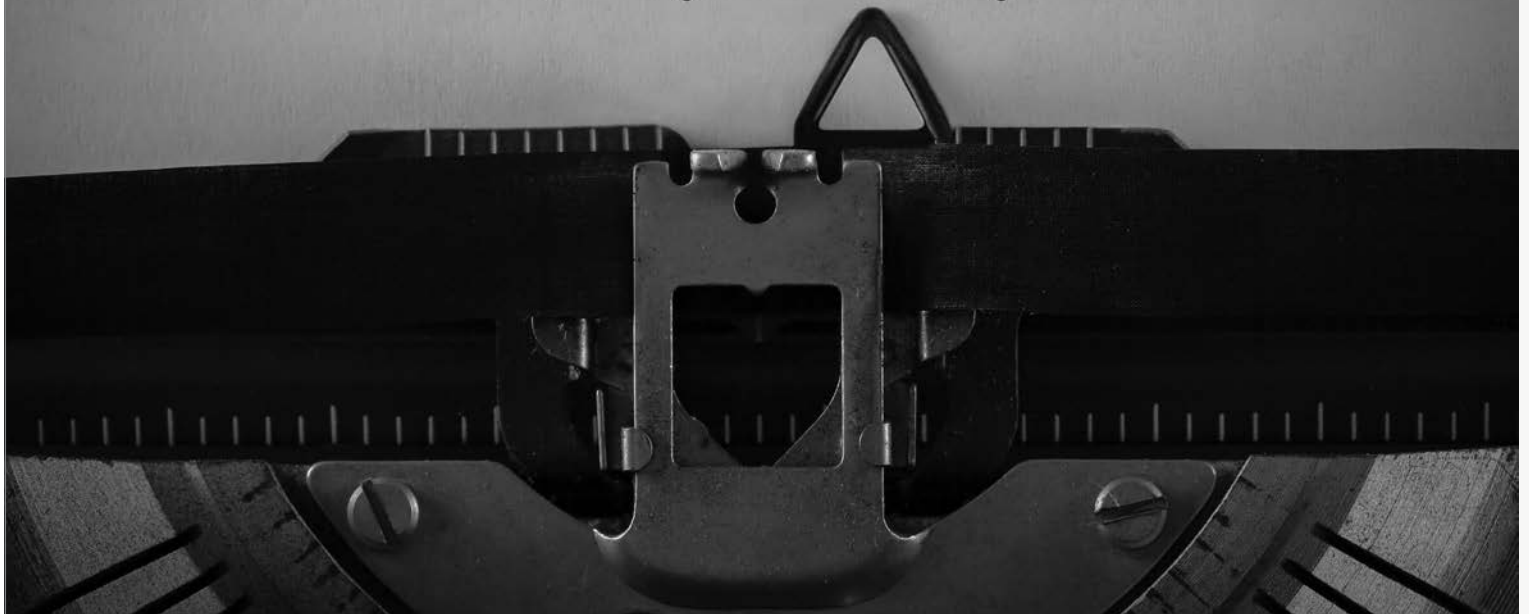
Take Southwest Airlines. Its baggage fee policy hits at the heart of consumer trust. The airline also has a steadfast rule of not closing the boarding door to leave on time if it means helping a passenger. "Social consciousness and an importance on employees, combined with cultures that care about people and results (in that order), is fueling some of the most innovative and best-performing companies in the world today," Waid says.

With a specialty and passion for corporate culture, sales and global business, Waid believes culture is the engine that is helping to drive today's marketing prowess. "This

**"THE CONCEPT OF
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SHAUN BELDING,
CEO, THE BELDING GROUP OF COMPANIES

What's your story?





is where companies need to go because consumers are getting sick of 'money hungry' brands offering higher prices and worse service. Consumers have a choice and they will vote with their wallets."


Belding says we are in a time when we can no longer create annual or quarterly plans, then just push the strategic dominoes and watch them fall. Brands can no longer assume that the things that made them stand out a year ago will make them stand out today. In addition, marketers must remain diligent to deliver campaigns that are creative and passionate, not ones that do the opposite. Consumers know that difference.

So the question again becomes, "Can traditional marketing tactics control how customers perceive your brand?"

In the end, it all centers on the customer and what kind of experience you can deliver and promote. More than anything, customers want opportunities to interact with the brands they follow, as well as with other customers. So no matter how you approach your marketing, customer ratings, reviews and discussions are all part of how consumers make their decisions.

Being able to tap into that type of data will be critical. "Big Data and the ability to finely target customers is only going to become more relevant," Belding says. "When used properly, it can improve cost-effectiveness dramatically. As AI continues to

mature, the ability to target will become even more refined. The concept of creating campaigns for broad consumer segments is a thing of the past. Personalization and instant relevance to individuals is the future."

To risk or not to risk? In this time of ever-changing technologies, being an early-adopter of new technologies has its merits. But so does remembering that at the end of each campaign is your audience. Learning how to better engage—and stay engaged—with them is the best type of marketing your brand can offer. 

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JOHN WAID,
FOUNDER,

C-3 CORPORATE CULTURE CONSULTING



THE PROSUMER HANDBOOK

'I'VE BEEN USING THIS PRODUCT FOR

a while now, and I love it. Click the link in my bio to get 20 percent off using my special code." Does that pitch sound familiar?

The online influencer has become ubiquitous in the consumer space within the past decade. And get this: The experts say this era is not even close to ending. If we had been paying attention, we could've predicted it as long ago as 1980.

In his book, "The Third Wave," futurologist Alvin Toffler introduced the term "prosumer." The word is a mix of

"producer" and "consumer," pointing to the active roles that consumers play when using a product or service, and then producing content around that product or service to make it more accessible to their own circles or audiences. Toffler suggested that prosumers are the informed consumers who fill in the gaps between your business and the average consumers—"professional consumers," if you will.

Susan Gunelius, president and CEO of KeySplash Creative, doesn't believe prosumers are even a trend at this point. "It's the world we live in and it's

not going away," she says. "Whether a prosumer's sphere of influence is large or small, they're here to stay."

Suffice it to say that the prosumers of 1980 have been magnified and multiplied by the millennium's invention of social media. While word of mouth used to be supplied via in-person conversations between friends and family, it now has extended to a potentially global reach, with strangers seeking recommendations from prosumers they identify with online.

"To me, a prosumer is a person who is capable of processing a lot

HOW BRAND MESSAGING IS EVOLVING

By **ALYSSA RUANE**

of information from a lot of different sources,” says Jeff Fromm, president of Futurecast and author of three marketing books focusing on millennials and Generation Z. “They’re all doing it from the palms of their hands—they want to co-create their story, use reviews, make an informed decision quickly.”

Any marketer who chooses to ignore this shift is probably already dealing with the consequences.

MAINTAINING BRAND CONTROL IN A PROSUMER’S WORLD

One of the fundamental rules of marketing is that consumers build brands, not companies. Gunelius says that while companies can nudge perceptions and conversations in specific directions to move

their agendas forward, it’s the consumers who make the brand their own, become loyal to it, and advocate for it that control the brand’s success or failure.

With today’s content-driven fast touchpoints, it’s easier than ever to reach a broad audience with your brand experiences—whether fantastic or terrible or anywhere in between.

One of the best ways to explain the prosumer’s ownership of a brand is to examine the brands that have been irreparably burned by experiences spread throughout social media. Take United Airlines’ big no-no that was amplified by a simple tweet in 2017, tarnishing the brand’s reputation at viral level. After a man was violently dragged off an overbooked plane, the drama was caught on video. As

Twitter users are known for, brand roasts ensued at a ridiculous volume, both for the inhumane incident and the CEO’s less-than-satisfactory response to the incident.

What can brands learn from United’s graceless fall? For one, how to handle social media pile-ons. More specifically, how to prevent these pile-ons from snowballing in the first place.

Social media can be used for producing on-brand content and educating audiences strategically. But a more useful tactic that brands often overlook is the listening component. Social media cannot be one-sided, with your brand producing content but not engaging or listening to the content pointed at your brand.

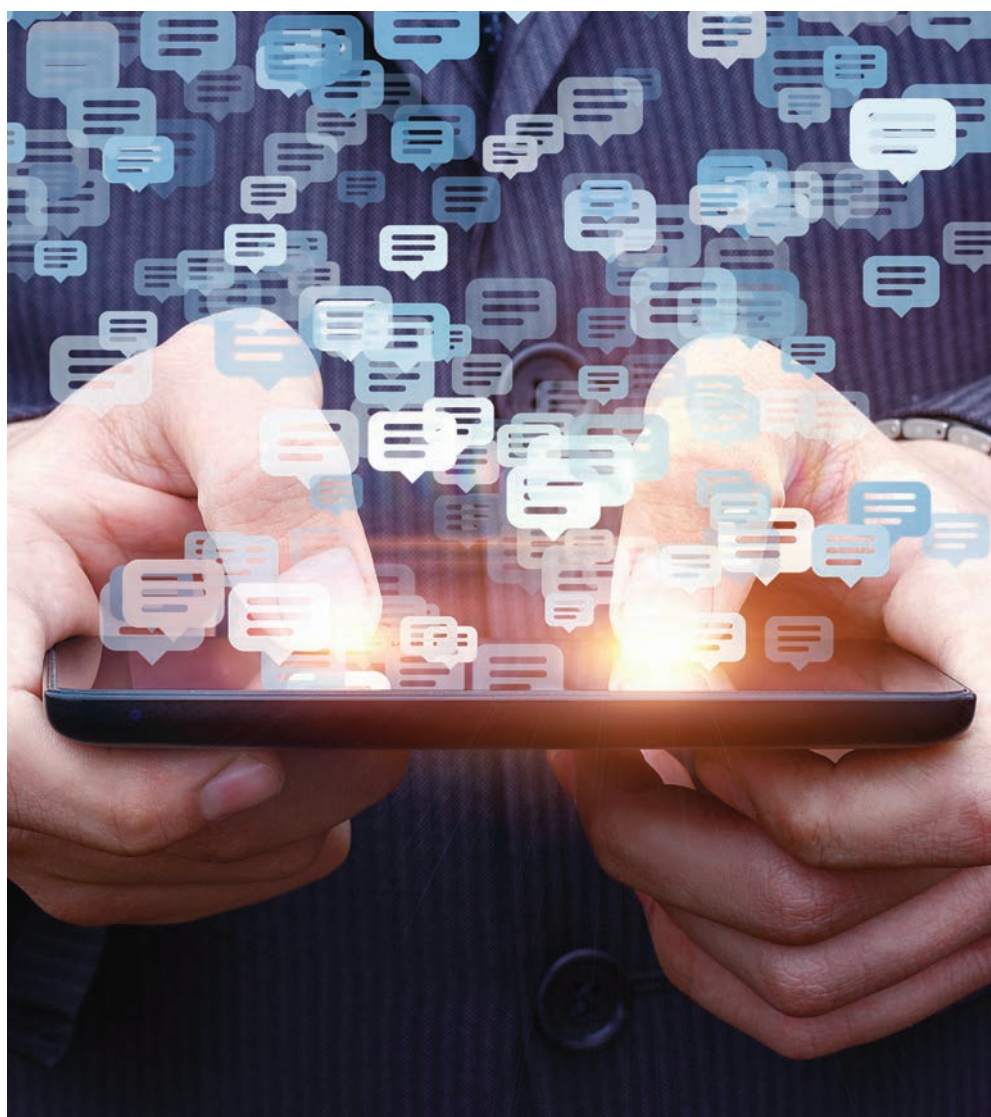
Marketers must be diligent in listening to the conversations happening about their brands—whether or not you’re tagged in the tweet or the post. Furthermore, they need to engage with the negative and positive comments online to protect the brand’s reputation. Review sites are not to be forgotten in this arena.

According to a Forbes article written by Skybell Video Doorbell founder Andrew Thomas, it takes roughly 40 positive customer experiences to undo the damage of a single negative review.

Unfortunately, human nature lends itself to amplify negative experiences much more than positive ones. Thomas says, in his experience, only one out of 10 happy customers share their positive experience. Unhappy customers, on the other hand, are highly likely to share their negative

“WE LIVE IN AN ERA WHERE MOST OF THE BRANDS WERE STORYTELLING. TOMORROW, SOME OF THE WINNERS WILL BE STORY-LIVING BRANDS—THEY WILL TALK TO PROSUMERS WHO WILL CO-CREATE THE STORY.”

— JEFF FROMM,
FOUNDER, MILLENNIAL MARKETING




experiences—they typically tell nine to 15 other people about their experience, with some telling 20 or more (White House Office of Consumer Affairs).

“The reality is that prosumers have the ability to lift a brand or destroy it,” Gunelius says. “Companies need to closely monitor

the online conversation and be ready to respond instantly.”

She also says it's important to deliver on your brand promise consistently. “Importantly, companies can't be afraid to let prosumers take control and spread your messages as well as their experiences. If

you're providing value and living up to your brand promise, those experiences should be positive. That's where the power of the social web and online influencers to drive word-of-mouth marketing comes into the picture, and that's where the power of prosumers comes from.” 



LIVE YOUR STORY; DON'T JUST TELL IT

As prosumers continue to carve out their influence in the average consumer's buying journey, marketers need to shift their strategies. A brand advocate in 2019 is not just someone who likes your product; he or she is someone who believes in your product's mission and purpose.

Jeff Fromm owns Millennial Marketing and is a partner at Barkley, a Kansas City-based ad agency. In 2010, along with Barkley and the Boston Consulting Group, Fromm helped lead a study on millennials as consumers—what he says was the first large-scale public research study on the buying power of consumers born between the years 1981 and 1996.

As a result of that study, Fromm

says we're now having fact-based conversations. A lot of millennials are key influencers in the key buying cycle.

Fromm provides the example of the B2B buyer, noting that the 35-year-old woman is making that decision. Millennials are currently the largest age group in the workforce according to Pew Research Center, making up 35 percent of those in the labor force as of 2017, the most recent data available.

According to Fromm's research, millennials are most concerned with the environment and collaboration. But as Generation Z gets older, marketers would be remiss not to consider the next wave of consumers as well, which shares “clear

differences and clear similarities” with their millennial counterparts.

“Gen Z are about competition,” Fromm says. “Millennials are naive about social media; Gen Z are old souls in young bodies, more cautious but tech-focused. Generation Z are about equality. The reality is, consumers today are not monogamous. They have a group of brands they prefer, not just one.”

Because the internet and prosumers have made it simple for anyone to research a brand before buying from them, it is more imperative than ever for brands to live their mission, not just tell it. “We live in an era where most of the brands were storytelling,” Fromm says. “Tomorrow, some of the winners will be story-living brands—they will talk to prosumers who will co-create the story.”

Examples of story-living brands would be Tony's Chocolate, who only uses fair labor, or Mod Pizza, which hires folks who were felons. As a brand in this age, Fromm says you must have a great product and price point, a purpose and align yourself to values. You need to have all of the above.”

Working with the prosumers to bring those brand characteristics to life is where companies will win. Why? At the end of the day, the prosumer is your direct-connect to the consumer, which is still your target audience. “They both play a role in the future,” Gunelius posits. “Prosumers can jumpstart word-of-mouth marketing, but it's the consumers who buy. And there are a lot more consumers than prosumers in most cases.”

To have prosumers on your side, you're getting pointed content that ultimately informs consumers on behalf of your brand. As Fromm says, “Content makes a better buyer.” 

TACTICS

WRAP IT UP

STANDING OUT WITH STRONG PACKAGING

It's loud out there. In a time when getting a product's message to stand out above the noise is getting harder and harder, brands are committing more resources to product packaging-related design, marketing and materials. If done correctly (and strategically), packaging can help your product make a connection with the crowd. Here are some straightforward tips from ANA (Association of National Advertisers) to get you going:

SIMPLICITY

Keep it simple. There's no need to make the consumer work so hard. Today's consumer mindset is wired to images, not words, so work from there.

SUSTAINABILITY

More of today's consumers are more likely to choose a product that uses eco-friendly/sustainable packaging over one that does not. The key is to offer a message that communicates sustainability objectives and reflects consumer values.

AUGMENTED REALITY

Why not use your package to interact with your consumer? On a website. An app. On the label. Thank you augmented reality. AR creates long-tail novelty with packaging that makes the experience fun and interesting.

CUSTOMIZATION

Consumers want to personalize their experiences, and they want you to help them. Finding ways to personalize their experience is the mother of all marketing today.



UNIQUE EXPERIENCES

Packaging that provides unique experiences and logistical efficiencies will get your brand noticed. Think out of the box and stay ahead of the curve.



TOTAL RESET **3 ways to redefine your marketing acumen**

What defines today's CMO? Great question. Because today's consumer is smarter than ever before (thanks technology), brands don't need push marketing any more. They need ways to engage with their customers. Enter today's CMO, an enterprise-minded, customer-centric tactician. If you haven't switched gears, "Deloitte Insights" study offers three ways to reset your role:

STEP NO. 1

Relentlessly pursue customer expertise — By positioning yourself as a customer expert, trade your tactical responsibilities for enterprise-wide strategic influence. That means bringing the benefits of your expertise to other functions in the organization.

STEP NO. 2

Make marketing make sense — Make your voice heard by translating marketing insights into the language of your C-suite peers, be it financial, strategic, sales-oriented or talent-related.

STEP NO. 3

Establish a "center-brain" mentality — Much has been said about the increasing need for strong data-analytics capabilities in marketing. But that doesn't mean undervaluing your creative, right-brain skills. Bring your insight and actionable guidance, and forward-thinking, strategic mindset.

BLAST OFF...

3 WAYS TO BOOST YOUR PERSONALIZATION STRATEGY

Personalization. The key to any strong marketing campaign starts with personalizing the customer experience—in every channel. The issue is that few actually take this step. To do so, you must have an acute understanding of your customers' preferences and create conversations to engage with them. You also have to better align your marketing and sales relationships. To help put you on the right path, Kristen Alexander, CMO at Certain, offers this three-step plan to getting results:

Step 1: **Marketing + Sales = Success**

Alignment is everything, so combine sales' art of the relationship with the tech know-how of marketing. If you can get them to agree on something simple, like core target accounts, they can work together to open up those accounts. That means marketing casting a net of opportunity to engage with buyers at each account, and sales using every interaction to build a highly personalized relationship.

Do this now: One of the best channels to drive sales and marketing alignment is events, especially field events like customer dinners, lunch-and-learns or product roadshows. Work together on the invites, and orchestrate conversations with other customers and thought leaders to build confidence in their products and company.

Step 2: **Uplevel the data**

Data drives personalization, which means marketers need a rich and broad bank of customer data to truly know their customers and understand what they're looking for. Understanding the intent of your prospects—such as who's on the buying committee, what are the pain points and where they are in the buying cycle—is critical to success.

Do this now: Have marketing work concertedly toward unlocking this type of data from every digital and physical channel. If advertising campaigns are tagged by product interest (a pain point or stage in the buying journey), aggregate that data to create smarter segmentation and messaging that meets the buyer where they are in the discovery or decision-making process.

Step 3: **The ABM Approach**

Precise campaigns. Deeper engagements. If you're looking to up your marketing campaign, account-based marketing is the ticket. Thanks to its ability to scale personalization, marketers can quickly launch campaigns based on intent data to nurture a relationship earlier in the buying cycle. In addition, they can craft messaging based on preferences. These touchpoints help sales to create relevant conversations when buyers are ready to seriously engage.

Do this now: Sell your internal customer first—the sales team. Write a pitch they can't resist and present it with confidence. When they see the real potential of ABM, they'll get on board without hesitation.



YOUR 7-STEP GUIDE TO DIRECT MAIL NIRVANA

IF YOU WANT TO BE A SMART marketer, go back to the basics. That means adding a little direct mail to

your strategy in 2019. To offset the oversaturation of myriad electronic channels, more marketers are looking

for new ways to use direct mail. Here are seven ways the experts at Chief Marketer suggest you try:

1 MAKE IT MULTICHANNEL

Direct mail works well when it ties to other triggers, such as an email alerting recipients to watch their physical mailbox, and then another email after the direct mail piece drops, all with alignment in the call to action to drive people to the same place.

2 BE ON TARGET

Segment your audience to make sure your message is on target, and use personalization, but make sure you get it right. People expect personalization today, so if your data is bad, you can actually do more harm than good.

3 REMEMBER THE CUSTOMER

Your creative should be about the customer, not the company. Customers want the focus of communications to be on them and not what you're selling.

4 TRY DIFFERENT FORMATS

Test different package sizes, colors and textures. Try mixing up your copy.

5 KNOW YOUR VERTICAL

Different markets respond to different types of creative approaches, so make sure you know your audience.

6 MAKE IT MEASURABLE

Have a way to track response. For example, use a URL, QR code, dedicated 800 number or some other type of personalization.

7 GET THE DATA RIGHT

Make sure your data is on target and that you target the right audience. Your list is the key. Also, conduct a digital test before you roll out your initiative.





On strategies to keep on eye on...

This year will be a year focusing on strategies integrating AI and machine learning. Artificial Intelligence is becoming increasingly prevalent in almost every industry, including advertising and marketing. It can provide more personalized marketing opportunities through relevance and scale. AI allows marketers to better interact with their brands, services, technology and audience. AI and machine learning technologies have already integrated into our day-to-day platforms like Google to tailor campaigns to consumer intent “in the moment.”

On how print fits into the cross-channel mix...

Traditional print will always have a role for in-store or in-office marketing. Hybrid campaigns using paid media and print can be powerful. The role of print will change from an awareness and consideration tactic to a retention and advocacy play.

On why customer-centric marketing is key...

You can't expect to launch a successful campaign until you understand your customer. Every marketing initiative should be consumer-centric. Understanding core attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of customers drives activation and conversion. With the sophistication of insights available, there is really no excuse for marketers who do not understand their core audiences. Platforms in market today can provide valuable consumer insights across paid, earned, owned and shared media. When you put yourself in the

ON THE RECORD WITH... JULIA GARDNER

BRAND STRATEGIST JULIA GARDNER
DISHES ON WHAT 2019 HOLDS FOR
MARKETERS



Brands cannot win with a divide-and-conquer strategy. This is one of the talking points that Julia Gardner, founder and CEO of the New York City marketing agency MAAST Digital, emphatically stresses to the brands she has worked with over the years. In order to grow, brands must build their communities. That means adding more buyers.

And while the philosophy seems pretty clear cut, Gardner says that too many brands get it wrong. By choosing a side, they can alienate a large percentage of their buyer base. Brands only win through unification. Successful brands are successful because they unite a diverse group of consumers.

Through MAAST, Gardner has created a firm that helps transform brands through a trifecta of effective platforms, strategy and user experience. The formula has helped build successful strategies with Fortune 500 companies in the United States and abroad.

Here are her secrets to success in 2019.



shoes of your customer, that's when the magic happens—lower spend and higher ROI.

On why paying attention to customer engagement matters...

Customer engagement drives ROI. A core goal of any marketing campaign is to push a customer from initial awareness to conversion. Customer engagement should be strategized at all points of the customer

journey. Marketers need to understand what activates customers at each stage of awareness, consideration, conversion, and retention as part of the ongoing funnel strategy. The insights gathered at each stage can be used to refine core audiences for future campaigns.

On why you should take more risks...

The marketing industry is changing. Traditional agencies that don't take risks or push the status quo won't survive without innovation. The biggest gap with marketers today is the lack of knowledge or understanding of emerging platforms (AI) and the value they can bring to teams. The marketing team of the future is one that combines platforms and people—a small, nimble team that can strategize and execute using the power of platforms, but also apply human insights to support campaign success.

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