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ENGAGING MARKETING MINDS

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2023

SCARCITY EFFECT

WHY A LITTLE BRAND MYSTERY MATTERS

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THE SPIRIT

The spirit of marketing is under attack, but great brand owners understand that their mission starts with the community they serve. They know that engaging directly with other people will never go out of style. Technology after technology and tool after tool can be invented, but human beings need connection. The greatest brands in the world have a relationship that matters much more than the vehicles of communication. While AI is the latest widget that has threatened to destroy our jobs and disintermediate marketing, the only thing that truly matters is the relationship with the market. AI may be a fine tool to use, but it cannot replace the interaction that takes place between people.

We have always believed that there is nothing better than having a direct conversation with someone else. In order to have a conversation, you must listen intently. Contrary to digital pundits, AI cannot listen like you. It cannot feel and, therefore, cannot build depth to a relationship. Due to the relentless inundation of technology, digital communication, and artificial intelligence, it seems appropriate to provide a reminder that it still comes down to relationships.

By all means, if the tools are available to help you organize or craft a business plan or even eliminate some tedious work, take it. But don't think for a minute that a robot is ever going to understand how to connect with others. Collectively as marketers, we are committed to building relationships, maintaining those relationships, and trumpeting the benefits of those real connections going forward. The spirit of marketing lives on!

Our cover story, "Scarcity Effect," taps into the spirit of marketing by discussing how creating a little mystery and curiosity in our brands can go a long way. And our feature article, "Personalized Print," continues the theme by detailing why the haptic nature of print still matters and how it is a tool that can truly capture the spirit of marketing.

Enjoy and warmest regards,

Gina M. Danner
CEO



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is in the chase*

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PERSONALIZED PRINT

CONTENT STRATEGIES THAT ENGAGE

A travel magazine featuring immersive and visually stunning photo essays, coupled with detailed insider guides and personal travel narratives, captivates readers and sparks their wanderlust.

A quarterly health and wellness publication combining expert advice, inspiring stories and interactive challenges helps readers achieve their fitness goals. The magazine establishes a community of like-minded individuals and encourages readers to share their progress and experiences.

An educational children's book series uses captivating storytelling, colorful illustrations and interactive elements to make learning engaging and enjoyable. The content not only educates but also entertains, creating a memorable experience for young readers.

The strategy has always been as simple as it is brilliant: Print strategies uniquely engage audiences through their tangible nature and customizability, standing apart from digital methods by offering a sensory interaction and a break from digital overload. The specific techniques can include things like using personalized messages that make the reader feel special

“CRAFTED WITH PURPOSE AND CREATIVITY, PRINTED PIECES WEAVE NARRATIVES THAT RESONATE DEEPLY, BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER AND SPARKING MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS.”

— MLADEN MAKSIĆ,
FOUNDER/CEO, PLAY MEDIA

and understood, QR codes or augmented reality that can be integrated into print materials, which help provide a bridge to digital interaction and maintaining audience engagement.

“Print strategies are more tangible than digital ones,” says Elisa Bender, co-founder at RevenueGeeks, a committed and indispensable resource for individuals navigating the Amazon and e-commerce landscape. “While they may sound traditional, audiences enjoy something that they can hold on to. To have a printed copy of something is a great way to grab your customers’ attention.”

Operating within an online marketplace can be tricky, to say the least. The RevenueGeeks team understands that using the right sort of content will help you connect with your target audience. The site is filled with content that discusses how-to and whys. If your content and how you present hits the mark, your audience won’t be lost in the rabbit hole. “Making content according to customer preferences is the right way to drive engagement,” Bender says. “It’s like a confirmation of content being viewed by who you want.”

There is no denying that a campaign without a strategy will never be successful. Your target audience’s engagement will only rise if your strategy is focused on what they prefer. A content strategy helps create a roadmap of what will benefit a company. Moreover, it also creates results based on the efforts made. This helps give marketers a fair idea of how successful their campaigns will be.

“Your content strategy is like a guide that helps you reach your goal in reality,” Bender says “A strategy includes all practices that will lead to an increase in sales, engagement, and growth. It’s based on what customers expect. Following a strategy also brings order to the campaign. Plus, that is



what is needed to instantly connect with your target audience. Content strategies give enough space to make edits according to the target market.”

An excellent strategy would be to invite customers to become a part of the process. Their views will be taken seriously and future campaigns will be based on them. That is how content resonates with customers. The best part is that they continue to support brands only because their strategies are superb.

“PERSONALIZATION IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST KEYS TO ENGAGING AUDIENCES THROUGH PRINT. BY UNDERSTANDING YOUR AUDIENCES’ DEMOGRAPHICS, INTERESTS AND NEEDS, PRINT CAN BE TAILORED TO SPEAK DIRECTLY TO YOUR COMMUNITY.”

— VIKRANT SHAURYA, CEO OF AUTHORS ON MISSION

LIVING—AND THRIVING—IN THE DIGITAL AGE

In today’s digital age, print strategies offer a unique depth of message, emotional resonance and enduring impressions. They effectively engage audiences and differentiate themselves from other tactics through their tactile presence and the physicality they bring to the marketing mix.

Vikrant Shaurya, CEO of Authors On Mission, says that personalization is one of the biggest keys to engaging audiences through print. By understanding your audiences’ demographics, interests and needs, print can be tailored to speak directly to your community. For example, personalized direct mail campaigns can significantly stand out amid the generic advertising noise, creating a deeper connection with the brand.

“Content is the heart of any marketing strategy and its power to capture and

maintain engagement is unmatched,” says Shaurya, whose company, a comprehensive, 100% done-for-you service, has empowered more than 500 authors to transform their ideas into bestselling books. “A crucial advantage of content over other formats is its storytelling potential. A well-crafted narrative can evoke emotions, enhancing brand recall and fostering deeper connections. For example, brands that share their journey or showcase customer success stories in their print materials create a memorable experience that resonates with their target audience.”

Print strategies also offer an immersive experience—that physical act of holding a printed material, turning its pages and engaging with its content creates a multisensory interaction that enhances audience engagement. “Practically, to develop compelling print strategies, it is vital to consistently offer valuable, relevant and engaging content. Embrace the storytelling aspect, weave in your brand’s values, and create a connection with your audience.”

Mladen Maksic, founder and CEO of Play Media digital agency, says that brands employing effective print strategies are like fine artisans—they work with words and ideas, not just paper. The key is to:

- ▶ Go beyond simply informing to create an immersive experience.
- ▶ Enable a narrative that hooks the audience’s attention and sustains their interest.
- ▶ Set your content apart from the crowd.

“Crafted with purpose and creativity, printed pieces weave narratives that resonate deeply, bringing people together and sparking meaningful conversations. They embody the power of content, which lies not just in what it says but in how it makes the audience feel and react.”

Regardless of your approach, the power of content lies in its ability to engage, connect and create memorable experiences. Despite the digital shift, print content, when used strategically, can effectively capture audience engagement and create a unique impression in a landscape filled with brand noises. ■



USPS Tactile & Sensory Promotional discount-eligible mailpiece NextPage produced for The Folly Theatre in 2022.

BUILDING THE PERFECT PRINT STRATEGY

Print content strategies can engage people effectively and stand out by leveraging the unique qualities of the medium. Here are a few ways they can help your brand stand out:

VISUAL APPEAL

Print allows for creative and visually compelling designs, typography and layout. By utilizing visually appealing elements, such as eye-catching graphics, illustrations and quality paper, print content can capture attention and create a distinct identity.

TANGIBLE EXPERIENCE

Unlike digital content, print offers a tactile and physical experience.

Incorporating engaging elements like textured paper, interactive inserts or even scents can enhance the sensory experience, making it memorable and distinct.

TARGETED DISTRIBUTION

Print content can be strategically distributed to specific locations, events, or audiences. By tailoring the distribution channels, such as placing magazines in waiting rooms of relevant professionals or distributing brochures at industry conferences, you can ensure your content reaches the intended audience directly.

SOURCE: MATTHEW COOPER, NYT CROSSWORD DAILY

SCARCITY EFFECT

WHY A LITTLE BRAND MYSTERY MATTERS

In 2016, a popular fashion brand released a limited edition collection in collaboration with a renowned designer. With only a limited number of items available for purchase, the brand heavily marketed the collection as being extremely scarce and highly coveted.

But there were challenges. For starters, due to high demand and limited production, the brand faced challenges in meeting customer expectations. In addition, the website experienced significant technical difficulties after customers rushed to make purchases. Scores of outraged, frustrated and disappointed potential buyers made their presence known.

To make matters worse, even customers who were able to get products reported encountering errors, crashes and long waiting times during the checkout process.

The situation caused negative feedback and backlash on social media platforms, with customers accusing the brand of creating artificial scarcity to generate hype. To quickly try to make amends, the

“WHEN CONSUMERS PERCEIVE A PRODUCT OR SERVICE AS LIMITED, THEY ASSOCIATE OWNING IT WITH A HIGHER SOCIAL STATUS OR MEMBERSHIP IN AN ELITE GROUP.”
— HALEY SLADE, FOUNDER, COPY HOUSE

brand apologized to affected customers, and provided compensation or alternative solutions to rectify the situation. It also implemented measures to improve its website infrastructure and customer support for future releases.

Haley Slade says the story highlights the challenge of managing customer disappointment and the potential risks associated with creating a perception of scarcity. Slade, founder of Copy House, believes that brands must carefully plan and prepare for high demand scenarios, ensuring their systems can handle increased traffic and communicate transparently with customers to manage expectations effectively. Failing to do so can be the mother of all brand catastrophes.

“If scarcity is not properly executed or perceived as artificial, it can damage your image,” Slade says. “Brands need to ensure transparency and authenticity in their scarcity strategies to maintain customer trust and loyalty. Implementing a scarcity strategy requires careful management of production and supply chain processes. You must consider the ability to scale production, meet demand, and maintain consistent quality while still creating a perception of scarcity. Failure to handle these challenges can lead to product shortages, delays or compromised quality.”

More than anything else, scarcity can create a sense of psychological ownership among consumers even before they buy a product. When consumers believe an item is scarce, they tend to feel a stronger

sense of connection and attachment to it. This emotional connection drives their interest and desire to possess the product, increasing demand.

Scarcity also enables a brand to create a sense of exclusivity and status. When consumers perceive a product or service as limited, they associate owning it with a higher social status or membership in an elite group. This desire drives customer interest and demand.

Anna Stella, founder of BBSA, says that brands use scarcity to influence consumer behavior by capitalizing on their desire to be admired and coveted by others. “When individuals aspire to be envied, they are naturally drawn to exclusive products in limited editions. Humans have wants, needs and desires that form our consumer behavior’s foundation. The notion that something may be accessible today and gone tomorrow instills a sense of urgency among the consumers, influencing the decision-making process.” ■

THE MYSTERY IS IN THE CHASE

One of Toby Dao’s favorite examples of the effective use of scarcity is the luxury watchmaker Patek Philippe. The brand famously never rushed to meet demand. Instead, it always insisted on making a limited number of watches each year, regardless of demand.

The approach has helped create a perception of extreme exclusivity, with consumers often waiting for years and paying high prices for the privilege of owning a Patek Philippe. Dao, marketing manager at e-commerce and web development company Tigren, says this underscores the fact that scarcity, if used judiciously and strategically, can significantly enhance a brand’s perceived value and desirability.

“While effective, a scarcity strategy comes with potential challenges and risks,” Dao says. “Brands must manage the balance between supply and demand carefully—too much scarcity can frustrate customers and harm brand reputation, while too little can diminish the perceived value and exclusivity. Also, it might create a negative perception of the brand as being manipulative or too commercial if not executed well. Moreover, relying too heavily on scarcity can risk commoditizing the sense of exclusivity, ultimately devaluing the brand’s allure.”

An example of a brand that does it right is streetwear brand Supreme, which has garnered legendary status for its limited drops of new products that sell out immediately. This strategy has helped it cultivate a dedicated fanbase willing to queue for hours and pay high prices. Another example is Apple, which often limits initial quantities of new product releases, driving up demand and creating a sense of urgency.

“The concept that brand scarcity

significantly enhances the perceived value mainly is due to the psychological principle known as the ‘Scarcity Effect,’” Dao says. “This suggests that people attribute more value to items that are rare, hard to obtain or available only in limited quantities.”

And there is an additional benefit—loyalty. Slade says scarcity can create a stronger emotional connection between customers and a brand. “When customers successfully acquire a scarce item, they often feel a sense of accomplishment, exclusivity, and pride. This emotional connection builds customer loyalty and differentiates the brand by fostering a deeper relationship that competitors may struggle to replicate.”

In the end, by adding a little mystery to the availability and aura of your brand, you are creating an impression that can have a lasting impact on how your brand is viewed in the marketplace. ■

“WHILE EFFECTIVE, A SCARCITY STRATEGY COMES WITH POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AND RISKS. BRANDS MUST MANAGE THE BALANCE BETWEEN SUPPLY AND DEMAND CAREFULLY.”

— TOBY DAO,
MARKETING MANAGER, TIGREN

THE BENEFITS OF TAKING CONSUMERS ON A MYSTERY RIDE

01. Increases demand

The scarcity mentality has considerable influence over human behavior and a prominent role in economics. When perceived as scarce, a product or service’s perceived value increases and triggers more interest.

02. Increases prices

When a product appears highly valued and in high demand, customers are more willing to accept it at higher prices. Creating a perception of scarcity through limited offerings makes it easy to command a higher price.

03. Increased Sales & Revenue

Limited editions are based on the principle of scarcity marketing that can drive increased sales and revenue. Instilling a sense of urgency encourages customers to take swift action and make purchases before the limited supply runs out.

04. Competitive Advantage

Scarcity marketing allows businesses to gain a competitive edge over their rivals. By cultivating a sense of urgency and exclusivity, you allure customers to take immediate action and purchase before the opportunity slips away. The strategy can help boost sales and reinforce your brand image.

05. Building a Brand Image

The scarcity principle helps a business establish a powerful brand image. A limited supply of products and services helps you create and foster a perception of exclusivity surrounding your brand that appeals to customers seeking to be part of an exclusive group.

SOURCE: ANNA STELLA, FOUNDER, BBSA



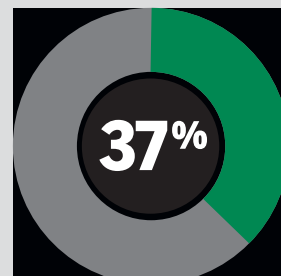
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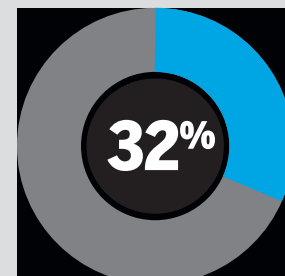
WHAT CMOs WANT

BRANDING STRATEGIES AND CONTENT CREATION TOP WISH LISTS

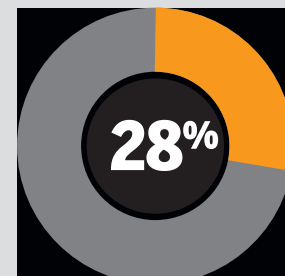
To stay ahead of the curve and maintain a competitive edge, today's CMOs must be able to adapt to new challenges and opportunities with lightning-fast speed. B2B solution provider GDS Group polled 712 senior marketing professionals across North America and Europe to highlight some of the strategies and challenges ahead.



say that without a branding strategy, your brand is going nowhere, with 60% citing it as their top challenge



say that enhancing brand engagement is critical, particularly creating an emotional connection with your customers



say streamlining content creation and production—and its ability to attract and convert customers—is a priority this year

ON TRACK BEST PRACTICES FOR BRAND HEALTH

Brand Tracking builds and maintains a healthy brand. According to Hanover Research, tracking 90% of brands that track the health of their brand commands higher prices and reduces customer acquisition costs. When marketers track brand health, they are able to measure the impact of launches and leverage their competitive advantage to improve customer satisfaction and market share.

BRAND TRACKING BEST PRACTICES

Understand Your Business Goals:

- Strengthen market impact.
- Promote new products/services.
- Increase sales and enhance brand image.

Assign KPIs and Set SMART Goals:

- Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-Bound.

Identify Your Target Audience:

- General population sample for overall brand awareness.
- Specific customer segments based on demographics or product usage.

Determine Key Questions to Ask:

- Define survey questions carefully to avoid skewed results.
- Measure aided and unaided awareness for brand recognition and recall.

Assess Your Competitor Pool:

- Track KPIs in comparison to key competitors.
- Gain insights into competitor preferences and adjust your brand accordingly.

Source: <https://www.hanoverresearch.com/insights-blog/5-things-to-do-to-before-brand-tracking/?org=corporate>



FOCUS

MARKETING TRENDS TO WATCH

1

Operational AI will enable smarter, data-driven decisions in marketing.

2

Automation in the creative process will improve image and video quality.

3

A content authenticity team will combat misinformation.

4

80% of enterprise marketers will establish a dedicated content authenticity function.

5

Product placement and sponsored content will replace traditional digital ads.

6

Loyalty programs will be established by one in three businesses to retain customers.

7

70% of enterprise CMOs will prioritize accountability for ethical AI.

8

Concerns over manipulative and biased uses of AI are raised by regulators and advocacy groups.

Source: Gartner.com

“Hiring coders who can’t code, salespeople who can’t sell, or architects who can’t design is a waste,” he wrote, adding: “[But] what actually separates thriving organizations from struggling ones are the difficult-to-measure attitudes, processes and perceptions of the people who do the work.”

- Seth Godin

QA

What makes a compelling story in today's content-saturated world?

In order to tell a compelling story in today's content-saturated world, it must be original—something that separates the story from others. It is certainly not easy to create organic work these days. Authenticity will be the critical factor, since the story needs to be able to connect with the audience on a personal level. Relevance is also important because for a story to be compelling, it needs to align with something currently going on in the world.

Storytellers can grab and hold the audience's attention by starting off with a powerful or provocative statement—something to capture their readers and make them eager to know more. Use visual elements to help paint a picture so the audience can properly visualize it.

With the rise of social media and short attention spans, what challenges do storytellers face in delivering their message effectively?

With the rise of social media, one of the big challenges storytellers face is having too many choices in how they want to tell their stories. That's why it's so important to stand out from the pack.

Storytellers will sometimes need to alter their message depending on the audience. It's important for the storyteller to understand all the social media platforms and the different algorithms they use so the message can be altered for different types of audiences who learn and retain information in different ways.

How can one overcome these challenges to ensure their stories are heard and understood?

Like a great song, you need to have a

PUBLICIST AT OTTER PR

DAVE PURDY

THOUGHT LEADING PUBLISHING
EXEC ON STORYTELLING IN THE
CURRENT LANDSCAPE



Dave Purdy is a proud veteran of the U.S. Navy and a graduate of the University of South Florida. He spent many years in radio broadcasting as a DJ, traffic reporter, news anchor, show host, producer, and sold radio and digital advertising for a couple of years. Purdy made the transition to public relations in 2018 and specializes in getting great radio and podcast interviews for his clients. His clients have been featured on ABC Radio, Westwood One, Bloomberg Radio, and many more. As one of the top 100 PR agencies in the nation, Otter PR brings fresh content and perspectives to the table. They've been featured in *Yahoo Finance*, *Forbes*, *Entrepreneur*, and many more.

"hook," something that will grab readers' attention. Adapt your storytelling to fit social media by cutting out unnecessary details and keeping your message short,

impactful, and brief.

Also, use visuals like images, videos, and graphs whenever possible, as this will grab the audience's attention



better than just using text. You have to understand your audience and deliver content that is targeted toward them.

How can aspiring storytellers differentiate themselves and stand out from the crowd?

You need to promote yourself and your work on social media, which begins by finding your niche. What are you passionate about? When you answer this question, be as genuine and honest with yourself as possible. People can easily spot a fake, so don't try to be someone you aren't!

As a storyteller in today's digital age, you have to be patient and persistent.

But remember that you likely won't see immediate results. You have to keep creating content until you find what works best for you and your audience, so don't give up!

How can storytellers strike a balance between these different objectives to create impactful narratives that resonate with the audience?

Have a strong story that is relatable and engaging. Be clear about your story and what you want the audience to take away from it. Don't be afraid to ask for feedback, as this could help you improve. Try different things, and don't be scared to get a little creative.

Are there any particular techniques or approaches that can help aspiring storytellers find their unique voice and style?

Always make sure you do your research! Listen, watch, and read how other storytellers get their point across.

When you're sharing your personal story, keep the focus on whatever it is you are passionate about. You can use strong language, but remember to keep it professional. Use words that have an impact on people, make them think, and keep them engaged. Whatever technique you use here, remember to be as concise and confident as possible.

82.6%
of people *recall*
the company and
brand name on their
promotional product.



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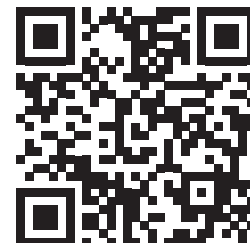
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