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QUARTERLY

STAND OUT ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

ISSUE #23 | THE GLOBAL MARKETING SPECIAL EDITION

Experience Design: The Next Evolution Of Brand Development

Don't Get Lost In Translation: Multicultural Market Research

Case Study: How Intel Makes Amazing Experiences Possible

When Regional Marketing Is Left To Fend For Themselves

Case Study: Lenovo Crowdsources A Global Gaming Brand

...and much more inside.

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Featured In This Issue:

From The Editor

Stand out on the global stage.

This bumper issue is packed from cover to cover with valuable insights from 30 respected industry experts, to help you do just that - achieve success in the global marketplace.

Yes, that's right - it's here! Our third annual Global Marketing special edition, in association with Brand2Global, the conference for global marketers.

We have a couple of interesting case studies from both Intel and Lenovo, plus great articles on the customer experience and experience design, theme-based marketing, cultural competence, multicultural market research, personalisation, data-driven storytelling, localisation, globalisation, and so very much more :)

Whether you're a CMO, CTO, content marketer, responsible for localisation, market expansion, or developing the brand experience, you are sure to something (most likely multiple somethings) that will benefit you and your brand.

A big thanks to the team at Brand2Global for introducing us to a number of this issue's contributors from their speaker lineup for Brand2Global Silicon Valley.

I am also happy to announce that nominations have now closed for 2016's '50 Marketing Leaders Over 50' list, and we're working hard to whittle the record number of nominations down to our 50 finalists. Keep an eye out for the complete list in November's 5th Birthday Issue.

I'll see you then ;)

Fiona

As the publishers of Brand Quarterly, we take every care in the production of each issue. We are however, not liable for any editorial error, omission, mistake or typographical error. The views expressed are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of their respective companies or the publisher.

History Comes Alive:
How Intel Makes Amazing
Experiences Possible

Louise Felton

I was listening to a podcast recently about how meaningful moments in our lives have become less salient because we are so busy capturing and sharing those moments that we don't actually deeply experience them. It got me wondering if we, as a society, are at a point where grabbing ahold of the moment to share or frame it has become more important than immersing ourselves more completely, experiencing the emotional impact, and reacting in a more spontaneous and multi-sensory way.

Our life experiences shape us and how we see the world. Experiences are today's cultural currency: what you've seen, where you've been, and what you've accomplished are the stories that make up your unique life. And while we often use technology to preserve those moments, when done right, technology can actually contribute to the creation of experiences that are deeper, richer, more dimensional, more memorable, and ultimately more shareable. Now, more than ever, technology plays a vital and integral role in making experiences better than ever.

Now, more than ever, technology plays a vital and integral role in making experiences better than ever

That's something that we have been laser-focused on at Intel, turning one of technology's greatest product brands into one of the world's more innovative experiential brands. For years, Intel had built its reputation and brand through the consistent and persistent focus on Intel Inside. But as technology evolved rapidly, with more and more brands and products entering the market and spending aggressively to grab mind and market share, Intel's role, brand visibility, and relevance became overshadowed. Intel went from inside to invisible.

We needed to revitalize the brand, and introduce Intel to a new generation of consumers who, despite Intel being inside many of the devices they use every day, had little relationship with the brand. The challenge was straightforward but required a new approach. Instead of focusing on where we were - Intel Inside - we needed to start talking about why we existed at all - to make amazing experiences possible outside.

This became our new brand promise: Intel Makes Amazing Experiences Possible. And we set about communicating that to audiences worldwide with a new integrated campaign. Yet to become an experiential brand, we knew that we couldn't just

talk about the amazing experiences Intel makes possible: we had to actually deliver tangible, visceral, emotional, powerful real-world experiences, where the role of Intel technology was not only integral but inescapable. Without Intel, those experiences simply wouldn't be possible.

We conducted research in eight countries to better understand our target consumers and their life passion points so that we could create culturally relevant, compelling, and unique experiences based on consumers' passions.

One of our most creative and successful programs debuted in China and was rooted in powerful insight about today's modern, young, and tech-savvy consumer.

Xi'an is a city in northwest China, rich in history, serving as the imperial capital for ten ancient dynasties. Today, Xi'an is a thriving, bustling modern city, home to more than eight million people. The old city, surrounded by the original 40-foot high and 40-foot wide city wall, is now dwarfed by the towering apartment and office buildings that have sprung up around the original city and spread widely beyond. And yet the original historic part of the city is still visible, with its impressive gates and massive walls that for centuries protected its residents from marauding armies.

Xi'an is, in many ways, emblematic of modern China, a country propelling itself headlong into the future, sometimes at the expense of preserving and celebrating its rich and storied past.

This dynamic led Intel's marketing team in China to uncover a powerful insight: despite being surrounded by centuries of history, many Chinese millennials are disconnected from the country's past. It seems remote, irrelevant, and uninteresting. They simply have no personal connection to it.

Despite being surrounded by centuries of history, many Chinese millennials are disconnected from the country's past

Intel's 'History comes Alive' in action, in the city of Xi'an

And that is where Intel innovation came into play.

Working with our agency and creative partners, we created a program we called History Comes Alive. Through a series of animated digital films, we depicted important moments and myths from China's past.

Epic battles and love stories told from generation to generation came to life. But in each one, many characters were faceless. Why? Because we wanted to transport people into the past, to blur the lines between centuries' old stories and modern day, and connect Chinese millennials with China's history by quite literally projecting them into it.

Using Intel® RealSense™ 3D facial-scanning technology, we digitally captured people's faces, pushed that data up to the cloud, and integrated them in near real-time to the films which were then projected onto the ancient Xi'an city walls in monumental, dramatic, and larger-than-life fashion. The audiences were captivated, as they saw themselves playing history's greatest heroes, princesses, warriors, and emperors.

The audiences were captivated, as they saw themselves playing history's greatest heroes

Because they were playing active and vital roles in the films, they weren't simply passive viewers in the experience. As people watched the drama unfold, seeing themselves in starring roles, yes, they did reach for their smartphones to capture and share the moment. But through the cloud, we also pushed customized video directly to their WeChat accounts for higher-quality, more personally relevant social sharing.

Modern Chinese became the historical characters, immersed in their worlds, sharing in their emotions, experiencing the adventure, tragedy, romance, thrill, and success of people who were otherwise remote or, worse, irrelevant. History became personal; history came alive.

Technology can unleash creativity and inspire experiences that leave a lasting memory and impact

Technology can unleash creativity and inspire experiences that leave a lasting memory and impact, far beyond just capturing a moment in time in a digital file marked .jpg or .mov. Those are the kinds of experiences we're investing in. And the kinds of experiences that we want the Intel brand to stand for.

Louise Felton

Sr. Director, Brand & Reputation Marketing | Intel Corporation

As a leader within the Brand and Reputation Marketing team at Intel, Louise is focused on repositioning, revitalizing, and transforming the Intel brand and delivering on the brand promise; Intel Makes Amazing Experiences Possible. She and her team develop the strategies, programs, and immersive experiences that enhance brand value, meaning, understanding, and engagement with employees, consumers, and other key audiences.

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Theme-Based Marketing:
The Art Of B2B Brand Relevance

Corey Olfert

You're the head of marketing for a $100 million B2B company. Your engineers have worked day and night for months to perfect the design, features, and functionality of the latest cloud platform. You've hired advertising and PR agencies to tell your story to the world, and you've prepared your bank for an onslaught of cash rolling in from customers.

If that describes you or others in your organization, here are some cold-water facts you need to know.

FACT 1:

No one cares about your product or service.

FACT 2:

No one wants to be marketed to.

And, **FACT 3:** As Theodore Roosevelt said: *"No one cares how much you know until you show how much you care."*

Facts 1 and 2 are harsh but true.
But fact 3 is something we can work with.

Welcome to theme-based marketing.

FACT 1: No one cares about your product or service
FACT 2: No one wants to be marketed to

What Is Theme-Based Marketing?

First, theme-based marketing is not the same as marketing themes. Businessdictionary.com defines marketing themes "a central marketing idea or message, or a product benefit or feature, that is known (or is likely) to have maximum appeal to a targeted market segment." It's focused on the brand.

On the other hand, theme-based marketing attempts to identify issues or trends impacting customers and develops long-term marketing campaigns. It's aimed at helping customers navigate change and difficult challenges, building trust with customers, and giving them a reason to believe you are best suited to help them.

Here's an example. At Avanade - a joint venture IT consulting company formed by Microsoft and Accenture - I created the company's thought leadership marketing program, which focused on key issues facing our customers. Top of mind topics for companies included cost reduction, greater efficiency, higher employee productivity, agility, and so on. We developed theme-based programming to address those issues.

One theme we developed dealt with how companies were trying to exploit digital technologies to improve how work got done. This included mobility innovations and the growth of the consumerization of IT. Our competitors were aggressively positioning themselves as thought leaders in this space, but Avanade was nowhere in the conversation.

Working with several marketing colleagues, executive leadership, and industry analysts, we created a way to inject ourselves meaningfully into the conversation. We called it Work Redesigned. After vetting the topic with customers and analysts to make sure we were unique and differentiated, we built a long-term campaign, which became the basis of our content strategy for the next two years.

How To Start Identifying Theme Topics

(Clearly, you need to know the customer personas you are targeting. Content Marketing Institute has some great resources, and I urge you to build out your personas first before proceeding.)

There are many sources of information that can aid your theme development:

Start At The Source

Customers. Include a cross-section or geography of your business to find out what they are dealing with now, and what's on their radar.

Pick Customer-Facing Brains

If you can't go to the source, talk with senior leadership, a few of your top sales staff, and channel partners. Ask them what is top of mind, and what topics are beginning to surface.

Tap Local Market Minds

What's important in the United States may not be important in France, South Africa or China. Speak with regional leads and listen for local nuances and differences.

Follow The Trends

Track industry analysts' forecasts and trend reports (e.g. Gartner Hype Cycle) to uncover emerging and potential topics. And, if you have a contractual relationship with analyst firms, schedule inquiry time and ask them what hot topics clients are requesting, what competitors are addressing those issues well, and what space your company should insert itself into.

Gain Social Enlightenment

Use social listening tools to determine what conversations are happening that are relevant to your business. Also, identify the long-tail queries people are searching for. This will shed light on how they are thinking about these issues, and searching for answers.

Use social listening tools to determine what conversations are happening that are relevant to your business

Map Media Trend Coverage

Look at what trends news outlets are writing about. Also, as trends become adoptions, look at issues the media are covering around implementation challenges, or investment levels, or cultural hurdles, as topical fodder.

Know Thy Competitors

As noted, Avanade's competitors were all over the digital workplace discussion. So, we identified fresh ways to address the issue.

Now that you've done your market research, ask yourself, "In two years from now, what topics are going to be most important to our customers that we must be strongly associated with?" As you identify these topics, make sure your perspective on the issue, and the guidance and recommendations you're providing, are differentiated and true to your business.

I find two to four themes to be ideal to pursue at a time. More than four themes may create market confusion. But also, I have found it's hard to scale effectively on a global level. Teams in other markets often don't have the staff or budget to truly localize the story to be effective.

Next, develop an abstract for each theme. It should cover the audience you're trying to reach, what you want them to know, what your perspective is, and the action you want the audience to take. It becomes a True North guide for all campaigns and teams.

Finally, vet your theme concepts with select customers and analysts to make sure they resonate and are unique.

Pulling Your Themes Together

Now it's time to put it into action. As an integrated marketing program, when you plan together, execute together and report together, you create a multiplier effect that produces results far greater than the sum of their parts.

When you plan together, execute together and report together, you create a multiplier effect

So start by assigning a senior theme lead to drive planning and integration. Pull together a cross-functional marketing team comprised of demand generation, web, social media, communications, product/services marketing, partner marketing, and other relevant functions.

After you've outlined your objectives, audience and goals for a theme, start building your campaigns over the next 12 months. Map out known corporate events, commercial/industry events, product/service roadmaps, speaking engagements, and so on, that align with each theme. Once complete, this plan will provide a full end-to-end integrated marketing approach by theme, and will become the basis for your content strategy.

How Will It Help Me Be More Effective As A Marketer?

Business is not altruistic, but neither should it be egotistic and self-serving. Theme-based marketing forces your business to put your audience's needs and their challenges at the center of your marketing.

Done right, theme-based marketing provides several benefits:

- It builds trust and demonstrates relevance by showing you understand your customer's situation. And you, as a business, have a perspective on how to address it with concrete guidance on how to navigate it.

- It helps your audience self-educate, and learn more about what your company offers that can help them ease their pain.

- And it strategically aligns your content to campaigns that support themes, and gives you a filter by which you say yes to content that aligns to those themes - and no to content that doesn't.

Theme-based marketing isn't new.

But it is a different approach that frankly few companies do well. And I believe it is the best foundation for building long-term brand awareness, trust with customers, and desired customer action.

Theme-based marketing forces your business to put your audience's needs and their challenges at the center

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Corey Olfert

Content Strategy Director | GE Digital

Corey Olfert brings over 20 years of experience helping B2B companies create unique voices in crowded markets. Currently, he leads content strategy for GE Digital, a $5b unit of General Electric. He is responsible for developing customer-centric content designed to entertain, educate and engage relevant audiences. Before GE Digital, Corey led social media and content marketing operations for Juniper Networks. Prior to Juniper, Corey spent five years at Avanade - an Accenture company. He led the company's global brand repositioning effort, created and executed its theme-based content marketing strategy, and built its social media function. He spent the first dozen years of his career within public relations agencies.

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5 Keys To Making Personalization Actually Work

Nico van Praag

Personalization is the greatest, most brazen, overpromise in the world of marketing today. Agencies promise to create personalized experiences for their clients' customers, while brands clumsily serve up content in an assumptive manner hoping to increase conversion and relevance.

Yet, nearly all efforts fall short. Why?

And how can we make personalization consistently deliver increased relevance and a higher value experience for our end customers?

Many confuse personalization with customization, and while there can be a direct relationship between the two, they are very different from each other.

Customization hands the controls to the customer and allows them to make all the choices themselves. Nike ID is a very clear example of customization, as it makes no assumptions about what the customer wants, but rather enables one to dictate all aspects of the design of the shoe; from the model of the shoe to the color scheme and included materials.

Personalization occurs when the marketer or brand provides a specific experience or set of choices, based on what they know about the customer. Netflix does this quite well with its "recommendations" list. Customer decisions in a customization experience can create very useful data that can inform curated choices in future interactions with the brand, or "personalized" experiences.

As marketers are in the relationship business, brands often are compared to people. Likewise, personalization is directly comparable to the process two people go through to get to know each other and become friends.

Not surprisingly, in personalization, we need to respect the same dynamics that exist in the creation of human relationships.

In personalization, we need to respect the same dynamics that exist in the creation of human relationships

In this context, below are five principles to make personalization something more than just a marketing catch phrase.

1. Treat Personalization As A Journey, Not A Destination

There's nothing more annoying than someone whom you just met pretending to truly know you. As the old saying goes, "you can't make old friends." So don't be assumptive. Creating a personalized experience is something that is perfected and focused over time, and frankly an effort without a conclusive end.

Customers are people, and people are constantly changing. They change their shopping preferences, their jobs, and even their life stages. Stop sending me *Thomas the Train* ads - my kid is nearly nine-years-old and wants his own laptop, not *Stanley the Steamer*. Personalization is a moving target, and that's okay. The goal is to get closer to the target each time in the interest of delivering maximum value for the customer.

2. Personalization Is A Means To An End

No customer is asking for a personalized experience - they are asking for things to be relevant to them and of high value. Marketers should reserve the term "personalization" for conference room debates, and instead concentrate efforts on how a personalization platform can increase engagement, relevance, and the effectiveness of each and every customer experience.

No customer is asking for a personalized experience - they are asking for things to be relevant to them

3. The Key Ingredient Is Feedback

Just like getting to know someone, the process of evolving interpersonal exchange depends on iteration. Without feedback, the journey of personalization is futile. Feedback represents the collective clues (i.e., data) that will allow you to further focus the curated experience for each individual and provide new offerings. Without feedback, the process stands still.

My favorite example of great personalization fueled by feedback is Pandora. Thumbs up and thumbs down are exchanged for immediate optimization of your experience. Don't like that song? You'll never hear it again. Based on the feedback, Pandora algorithmically informs future offerings. In my opinion, Pandora is the current gold standard of personalization - simply brilliant.

4. The Better I Know You, The Better I Can Get To Know You

If you make it easy to provide feedback and demonstrate an immediate "effect" of that input, then the customer will be encouraged to give more feedback. Again using the Pandora example, users are motivated to provide feedback because the effects of that feedback are immediately obvious. The customer clearly sees that the brand understands them; as a result, trust increases as well as their personal investment in the experience. It's that simple.

5. Without A Platform, There's No Foundation

The first step in the personalization effort is to create a purposeful platform. The complexity of this can vary greatly as I've personally experienced, from a relatively simple "schedule builder" for a corporate conference to the algorithmic genius that is the AudiUSA. com website. Regardless of the level of ambition, they share common components and functionality, including universal tagging of content, experiences, and intelligent feedback loops that inform future choices.

Platform also is critical. In the spirit of transparency, I will reveal this is the single most challenging aspect of personalized customer experience design. It's complex and requires upfront investment. I'll save the overview of what specifically makes an effective platform and the method of creating it for a future article.

If we keep in mind the end goal of personalization, our customers will better react to our efforts, and we will maximize our investments. We have the tools to curate experiences on an individual basis, which means we have the opportunity to deliver maximum relevance for each customer exposed to our efforts. If it's relevant, they will gain value. If they gain value, they will likely become more invested in your brand.

Personalization efforts can be hugely effective if we follow the same principles we use when making friends. Don't be the guy who does all the talking during the first date. Instead, be the one who listens and adjusts the conversation to further build shared interests and passions.

Make friends, and remember… customers are people.

And people change.

Personalization efforts can be hugely effective if we follow the same principles we use when making friends

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Nico van Praag

Partner, Chief Strategy Officer | Kenwood Experiences

Over the last 23 years, Nico has put his strategic fingerprint on some of the world's best brands including Audi, Nike, VISA, GAP, Microsoft and Xbox, General Motors brands, and Sega. He's driven by a belief that great strategy requires creativity just like the creative itself. And that smart strategy does far more than guide a brand's messaging, it should inspire its core behavior both internally and in a customer-facing way. Prior to joining Kenwood Experiences in 2013, Nico was lucky enough to work with some very smart people at great companies like Venables, Bell & Partners, AKQA, Goodby, Silverstein & Partners and Sterling Brands.

www.kenwoodx.com

Experience Design:
The Next Evolution
Of Brand Development

Brian Solis

Online expressions are influencing impressions. This is setting the stage for shared experiences to collectively shape how people view your brand, outside of how you define it.

Have you thought about what you most often share on social media? Usually, it's the experiences you have in any given moment. You reach for your smartphone and capture a moment to share with your friends, which incites engagement in real time. Whether you realize it or not, the experiences you share contribute to your brand. Yet, these branded moments are largely left to chance.

Basically, companies offer products and services in touch points that engender reactions. Executives want people to have delightful experiences, but I'd argue that reactions are left to chance and are not necessarily designed to elicit a given response... in each touch point... in every moment of truth. I believe the next generation of branding will not start with creative but rather experience design.

The next generation of branding will not start with creative but rather experience design

It starts with understanding the behavior, aspirations, and values of different of people. Then aligning your work and investments in technology, to deliver meaningful and shareable experiences, that form a more immersive and embracing brand relationship.

Technology Brings People Together Through Shared Experiences

Whether it's an amazing meal, a beautiful sunset, stunning architecture, funny signs, special events, whatever moves you; these experiences are shared with friends online, to include them in these moments. These shared experiences form a unique bond between those in the community, bringing people together through conversations, reactions, and of course, more sharing.

We don't only share the good things, though. We also share the bad experiences. We share when something doesn't go our way, when we encounter horrible service, when we're made to feel less valued, and the list goes on. At some point, these shared experiences influence the impressions of others.

And at some point, these people shared expressions influence the impressions of others, contributing to how people perceive your brand.

Experiences are at the heart of our online engagement with our friends. But what we share extends beyond that too. We all have a network of audiences... who have audiences... who have audiences... and so on. What we share also connects with strangers when they ask questions, search for options, or look to their online communities for guidance.

And since experiences are felt and shared, both good and bad, we now need to consider how people experience our brand, not just in any single moment or touch point, but throughout the customer lifecycle. Welcome to a new era of marketing, in which your brand is defined by those who experience it.

Welcome to a new era of marketing, in which your brand is defined by those who experience it

People Have Experiences Whether You Design For Them Or Not

It's been said that customers do not want products; they want experiences. Connected consumers are saying they want more than transactional engagements, clever gimmicks, or outright marketing. And customers are expressing their discontent by taking action. 89% of customers say they have switched brands because of poor customer experiences. But for those companies

that invest in experiences, customers are more than ready to stand by you. In fact, a staggering 86% of customers have said that they are willing to pay up to 25% more for a superior experience.

Let me ask you this. What is the experience you want people to have and share? Does the answer align with your brand promise? Do either align with the experiences people are sharing about you right now?

In my research, I've found that, more often than not, businesses are indeed investing in improving customer experiences. But they are not explicitly designing intentional experiences, in each moment of truth, and then driving the level of change and investments necessary to deliver them consistently throughout the customer journey and lifecycle. Instead, they are looking at ways to improve experiences that people have at transactional levels.

… Let's expedite the time for someone to talk to a representative.

… Let's retrain representatives to be more helpful.

… Let's get a fully loaded app to serve DIY customers.

… Let's make our website responsive for mobile users

… Let's improve our return policies.

… Let's invest in the latest media, in creative ways to reach people where their attention is focused.

… Let's find out what's happening with AI, chatbots, and messaging apps to engage people their way!

While these are important steps forward, they aren't examples of true experience design. They are acts to improve slivers of experiences. This is still important. But, fixing what's broken and removing friction in

the customer journey is just the beginning. That's iteration in customer experience, where customers do the same thing but better. This is also a time for innovation where you can introduce new things that create new value.

Experience design is an opportunity to both iterate and innovate to set the foundation, to write the book, for what people should think, feel, do; and how these human elements assemble the desired brand essence and experience.

Experience design is an opportunity to both iterate and innovate

Customers don't see departments or transactions independently. Each engagement, every moment, individually and then collectively, forms the universal experience people feel and remember - and share. When you look at each moment of truth, every department, whether it's sales, web, channel, social, email, even customer support, contributes to or takes away from the experience you set out to deliver.

Yet, knowing this, each function operates independently and often competitively, creating a disjointed experience as a result. This takes away from the brand experience and over time, opens the door for customers to find alternatives that better align with their expectations, behaviors, and values.

Experiential Brands Are Empathetic Brands

A more empathetic brand takes an elevated, holistic level of experience architecture, which defines not only the customer journey but also the relationship between people and the brand as a whole.

To some extent, the work companies are doing around customer journey mapping, and persona development is helping. It introduces them to real-world experiences from the customer's perspective. In many ways, this is still an iterative approach, as it mainly improves the journey so that customers can do the same things better. This is the time to start asking what would innovation look like?

What if you took a step back to explore, not just what the experience is today, but also how proactively designing an experience, much like you do with a brand style guide, can reshape your customer journey? The answers give your work purpose. And, it gives people, your customers, the sense that you thought about them, that you took the time to get to know them.

Everything must work together seamlessly and add value, of course. I believe that's going to quickly become table stakes, however. It's those companies that go beyond branding, marketing, and customer experience to create a complete world where every touch and each reaction was by design.

And, that's experience design. It's the standard, the sheet of music, the architecture to stimulate the senses in ways that bring the brand to life as intended. Each touchpoint should spark desired reactions and sentiment and consistently remind people why they love your brand experience, and why they can't live without it.

Tomorrow's Brands Need Experience Architects

Experience design takes vision and the capacity to visualize and articulate how the experience should be experienced. Not just physically, but also how it stimulates the senses and elicits desired reactions. The brand style guide we lean on so heavily today to stay "on brand" and "on message" is no longer enough. It's time to invest in an experience style guide and a holistic, top-down, inside-out, and outside-in experience architecture that inspires every aspect of the customer experience.

People are going to feel something, so why leave it to chance? Why not design experiences that add up to something meaningful, shareable and irreplaceable? The future of brand is shaped by experiences. And, experience architecture is the path toward developing a more empathetic and relevant brand for a new generation of connected customers.

People are going to feel something, so why leave it to chance?

Brian Solis

Principal Analyst | Altimeter

Brian Solis is a principal analyst at Altimeter, a Prophet company. He is also an award-winning author, prominent blogger/writer, and keynote speaker. A digital analyst, anthropologist, and futurist, Solis has studied and influenced the effects of emerging technology on business and society. His research and books cover digital transformation, culture 2.0, and innovation and are meant to help people better understand the relationship between technology and humanity. His new book, X: The Experience When Business Meets Design, introduces the experience as the new brand, bringing the worlds of CX, UX, and BX together to re-imagine the customer journey and lifecycle.

www.briansolis.com

Listening is important.
But it's only part of the solution.

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Really understanding your customers is more important than ever. They demand to be heard — and they want to see action. Whether it's a negative post gone viral or a fleeting sales opportunity, reacting quickly is critical to keeping relationships alive. Knowing before things happen is even better.

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Brand By Numbers: Building Brands With Demand Gen Strategies

Danielle Lepe

There is a lot of controversy around what place, if any, a demand generation team has in impacting your brand. Let me state up front that I am not advocating that demand generation and awareness building are the same thing. But demand generation, by definition, is all about driving a behavior and then, being able to effectively measure it.

So while I don't believe that demand generation is the Holy Grail in cultivating a brand, I do believe it's a critical component.

I have led product marketing at a variety of companies in the last decade - with the last three having been acquired. At each company, I was tasked with ensuring that our brand perception continued to grow post acquisition. At each company, this posed unique challenges. Some executives wanted to relaunch their brand, post acquisition.

The last two companies made the decision to leverage the start-up brand as the umbrella brand within the advertising tech stack. In hindsight, it would have been a lot easier to deprecate the smaller, start-up brands and lean on the brand equity that had been established around the acquiring brand (AOL or Yahoo), but that was not the game plan.

Anyone can throw money at sponsorships, billboards, bus stops and toss-out printed collateral but are you even targeting the right audience?

I believe the winning strategy lies within a strong demand generation knowledge base and incredibly focused execution.

You have to be able to track beyond a click through rate (CTR) and focus on measurable results - read clients/revenue. In the last decade, large companies are placing a higher importance on demand gen for brand building. Let's take a look at a few best practices, and conversely, worst practices when looking at establishing a new brand.

You have to be able to track beyond a click through rate (CTR) and focus on measurable results

So You Have A New Or Revamped Brand - Now What?

What does step one look like in building and communicating it out?

Establishing a brand is a multi-step process. Bringing in a creative agency can take three to six months. We've all been there - you sit in a room, close your eyes and answer questions like, "What does <insert your company> look like? Wear? Eat? Travel?"

Sure, you can leverage a social strategy and Tweet, LinkedIn, SnapChat, or Instagram your logo and website out there. Similarly, you can throw dollars at thought leadership opportunities - read, expensive sponsorships - but what does that buy you? How can you measure any uptick in brand perception?

Instead, one of the first things I would do is leverage your demand gen team. Don't have one? Hire at least one person that is skilled at using SalesForce, Marketo, Google Analytics/ Ad Words that has worked in a medium to large size company. You will need access to your current client list, which has been segmented out (by revenue, tiers, client size - whatever works for your business) and ideally, a prospective target list.

Ah, So Leveraging Demand Gen Means Email Blasting Your Clients?

At each organization I have been at, there has always been at least one executive in marketing that has asked demand gen to "email clients and report on open rates." That 2001 thinking, that the most effective way to inform your clients and prospects is via email still boggles my mind... but I digress.

Being in advertising, I can tell you our open rates are above average in some segments, on par in others, and below average in more categories than I would like to admit. My first piece of advice is creating a content strategy around how you will communicate your brand to existing and prospective clients. Your initial focus should be on:

- Building trust
- Establishing yourself as a thought leader in the space
- Your customer's needs - don't be in sell-mode. Prove that you know them well and show how you can meet their challenges
- Consider account-based marketing (ABM), which focuses on target companies and a personalized experience versus personas.
- Be consistent - great brands provide information regularly. Create a subscription newsletter that enables an opt-in functionality.

What Type Of Creative Activations Can Demand Gen Measure?

Another misnomer is thinking that your demand gen team can only be instrumental in measuring email campaigns and web traffic. I encourage you to lean on your demand gen

Lean on your demand gen team for more than just the basics

team for more than just the basics. Include them as a core part of your marketing strategy and even in creative sessions. There are many marketing activations that your demand gen team can measure. Within a quarter, we were able to effectively track revenue and follow sales interactions from the top to the bottom of the funnel.

Don't Get Lost At Tier 1 Events

When we rebranded part of our programmatic platform at one company, I contemplated spending a significant amount of our budget on sponsoring booths and logo spots at a large media and film event in Texas. In the end, we came up with an idea to brand cars with our new logo.

In each, we had chauffeurs that were trained on our boilerplate and had an iPad with a quick brand questionnaire. Clients and prospects alike were more than happy to answer for a free ride. And in turn, we aggregated over 1000 in-target audience questionnaires that enabled us to gauge our brand in-market. We also had over 30 qualified leads that yielded over $15M in new business in that quarter.

Our demand gen team was key in reporting out these metrics, and we used the results to tweak activations at other industry events that year. This is a good illustration of how you can think through options in marketing spend, and more importantly, choose activations you can actually measure.

We had the option to sponsor our new brand for over $150k inside the event but instead, spent $35k on the car idea and were able to track and measure incremental revenue.

Thought Leadership Boot Camps

Partner with trusted 3rd parties and invite key clients to learn more about your brand and products. Invite product leaders from your organization and make sure you have something educational on the agenda and not so "you" centric. Entice clients and perspectives around something they will learn that acknowledges their business challenge.

I have time and time again decided to invest in these types of $40-$50k marketing activations, versus a $200k sponsorship and speaking slot at an event - where you don't control the attendee list, or have the ability to measure ROI. Slot expensive sponsorships under my "worst practice" list. Don't get hustled by overly aggressive event organizers that try to lock you in for all of those "platinum" sponsorship opportunities. That is the quickest way to eat up your marketing budget and the most challenging way to measure effectiveness.

My hope is, after reading this you rethink how you use your demand generation team today. If you don't have one, hopefully, you see the value in how they can help prove marketing ROI and target your ideal clients.

Danielle Lepe

Head of Product Marketing, Advertising Products | Yahoo!

Danielle Lepe leads Global Product Marketing at Yahoo! for programmatic advertising and outbound B2B marketing for Yahoo's premium advertising technology solutions. She joined via the acquisition of BrightRoll in 2014. In her role at Yahoo!, Lepe's global team manages the go-to-market for all of the company's programmatic advertising and premium products, which drive over $500M in annual revenues. Danielle also leads a content and demand gen team that articulates solutions for advertisers and publishers and teaches them programmatic and native video strategies. Prior to joining Brightroll, Lepe ran product marketing for the video advertising division of AOL.

www.yahoo.com

Audience Intelligence Is Key To Storytelling Supremacy

Michael Brito

There is a surplus of information in the marketplace, and it's only increasing. With the proliferation of mobile devices coupled with internet penetration and social media adoption, there is no shortage of brands interrupting consumers with content overload.

This doesn't even include the conversations that consumers have with their friends through text, email, Snapchat, WhatsApp, and every other social network.

Consumers can only ingest a finite amount of information at a given time. It's the same psychology behind Twitter's 140 character limit or why Facebook users have an average of 145 friends. Most humans cannot manage their lives effectively with so much going in the world. The variance between all of the content vying for consumer attention and what they can actually comprehend is extremely high. It's no wonder why businesses are struggling to reach their customers online.

Because of this content surplus and attention deficit, most consumers have tunnel vision, so they only consume the content that is relevant to them at a very specific moment in time. Think about the last time you were in the market for buying a car. Do you recall the office conversations, radio ads, billboards, and status updates talking about interest rates, leasing options or hearing the "Nationwide is on your side" tune as you researched new car insurance? And then once you drove off the lot, all the advertisements and conversations went away. It didn't really go away though. It just wasn't relevant anymore.

Lastly, consumer purchase behavior is dynamic and very difficult to track. The old school way of thinking about the purchase funnel has been turned completely upside down. We can thank the Internet and social media for that. The purchase path is not linear; it's sporadic. Consumers may do research online, ask a friend, be influenced by a commercial or billboard, click through to a site from a banner ad, then not purchase the product until six months later in a retail store.

It's not easy reaching your customers online. But there is hope. And that hope starts with understanding your audience.

The way to break through the clutter of content proliferation and tell a better story than your competitors is to really understand your audience. I am not talking about building personas or saying that your audience is "everyone who works in IT." It's so much

more than that. It's about ensuring you dig deep to understand the conversations and characteristics that make your audience unique. This will ensure that you take out the guesswork and can be as calculated as humanly possible when telling your story.

Dig deep to understand the conversations and characteristics that make your audience unique

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Audience intelligence is an approach that starts and ends with the customers that matter to your business. If you work in B2B security, your audience is obviously in the IT space. Building an audience involves using a very specific set of criteria: self-identified IT professionals who work in security, maybe the CIO or CTO, people who follow companies in the IT Security space, share IT-related content, or people who use certain trigger words when having discussions online. Technology platforms like 'People Pattern' and Netbase's 'Audience 3D' product can help build, mine and provide insights into specific audiences.

Can you imagine if you had intelligence that could answer some of the following questions?

- What types of media is your audience sharing and from what websites?

- What kind of language and vernacular are they using when talking about IT security?

- What other keywords do they use in context with IT security?

- What hashtags do they use the most?

- What are interests and characteristics make them unique from everyone else?

- What channels are they spending most of their time on?

- What times are they posting online?

This intelligence is critical. If done right, you can take these learnings and apply it to a content program that matches or addresses what your audience is also talking about. Allowing you to tell stories that resonate with your audience and are brand relevant.

Whether it's an IT manager, CIO, a physician, millennials interested in film who live in NYC, mobile developers, or affluent consumers, you can't just launch a marketing campaign and expect results without listening and learning first. This is how you can break through the clutter and reach your audience with content and ideas that matter - to them, not you. This is how you tell data-driven stories.

> **You can't just launch a marketing campaign and expect results without listening and learning first**

Michael Brito
SVP, Head of US Digital Marketing | LEWIS Pulse

I am a social strategist, author, adjunct professor, and avid 49ers and Lakers fan with almost 20 years experience helping organizations solve marketing challenges. In all my experience working, teaching and writing about digital marketing and social business, I've learned that consumers are real people with real passions, not just target markets or segments. In order to turn followers into actual friends, I believe brands need to listen more than they talk, and social media provides an easy and powerful way to connect with them, personally.

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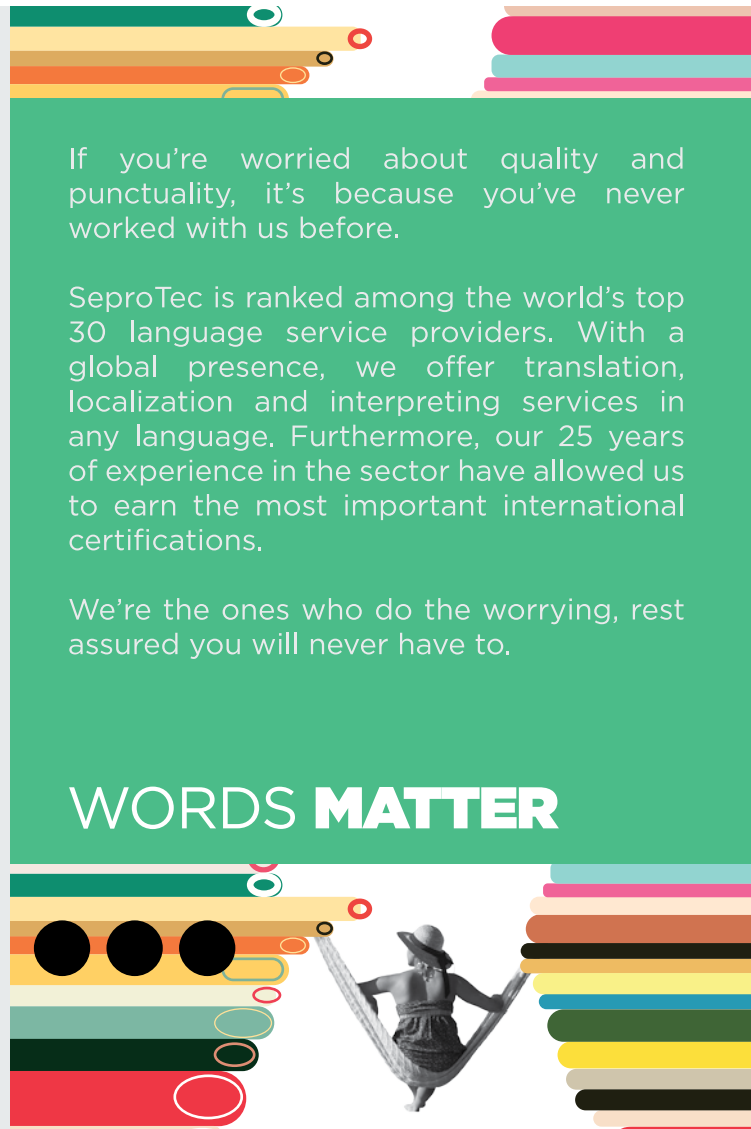
Don't Get Lost In Translation: Multicultural Market Research

Tom Webster

As a market research professional, I've conducted qualitative and quantitative projects in over 25 countries over the past couple of decades. In addition, I've been involved in projects in the United States that have had more than their fair share of multicultural components. Doing research in Miami, for instance, involves talking with people who might identify with multiple races and cultures. In that time, I've seen any number of wrinkles and potential landmines, almost all of which can be avoided with just a few simple communication tips.

First of all, it's always important to do your homework on not just the ethnic composition of the market you are researching, but the languages spoken. I've worked in Switzerland for over a decade, and depending on where you are conducting research, you'll want to be prepared to work in French, German, Italian, and even Romansh. Sometimes it is not feasible to work with a local partner, and we have for the sake of quality had to use interviewers from a neighboring country to interview in a target country.

Do your homework on not just the ethnic composition of the market you are researching, but the languages spoken

In those cases, it is crucial to get buy-in from your local client - even to the point of auditioning interviewers or moderators to be sure their dialect will be understood and not be off-putting. I have worked on projects in which interviewers from country A had an acceptable dialect, but interviewers from country B had a harsh, almost "country" dialect that native speakers in our target market didn't respond well to.

In all cases, conducting pilot studies - small samples to see where these problems might be occurring - is crucial.

Of course, these issues are not confined to international work. If you want any kind of US-based research to be representative, you certainly need to field in both English and Spanish! In addition, more regional research requires some local investigation to be sure you are covering your market adequately.

We recently conducted a consumer exit polling project in an area where there was a sizable population of Somali immigrants. Our local guide let us know that there was a

good chance that many of these immigrants would attend the particular event we were researching, so we had questionnaires translated into Somali. As it turned out, we had a number of Somali responses, and I am glad our local guide was truly in touch with that particular community.

This research was conducted off-line, but it's also important to note that if you are conducting online research in non-English languages, that you really have to be thorough - making sure that "error" screens and other non-question text is also translated appropriately.

Language is not the only norm that needs to be accounted for. Even in various English-speaking countries, connotations can vary wildly (the word "scheme," for example, has a very different connotation in England than in America). In a Canadian survey, asking people to identify as "Caucasian" is less offensive to many than asking them to identify as "White."

But my favorite translation issue isn't to do with words at all, but numbers. Here in the US, if I ask you to grade something on a scale of Five to One, you'll treat five stars as the best, and one star as the worst. Our entire education system is set up that way - you want a 4.0, not a 2.5. But in some countries, the educational system treats One as the best, so scale questions must be phrased completely opposite, to avoid confusion.

Religion is another important aspect to consider, and how it plays a role in culture whether you are studying consumers at home or abroad. I've spent many years conducting research in the Middle East, for example, and there are all kinds of cultural norms to follow. In some cultures, you can't talk to certain people one-on-one, and in others, men cannot talk to women.

A decade of research in Dubai has been like "Multicultural University" for me, and our methodologies for things like focus groups

have had to adapt accordingly to be sure that a representative population is comfortable with the research and that we get a truly representative sample.

Interestingly, in a market like Dubai, getting that representative sample can be quite challenging since Dubai is an incredible melting pot of expats from all over the world (in fact, the actual Emirati population percentage in Dubai is in the low teens!). To truly cover the market, you have to be prepared to use techniques that wouldn't be necessary in the US; such as door-to-door sampling (like the Census!) or what we call "Snowball" sampling - identifying smaller groups of individuals by recruiting a few, and then having those respondents recruit people they know, and so on.

This kind of sampling is not "representative" in the way that other methods might be, but if you are trying to reach a population of Westerners in Dubai, for example, it might be your only choice! All you can do is try to get as much sample, and cover as wide a spread demographically and socio-economically as you can.

As I mentioned "local guide," it is imperative that no matter where in the world you are conducting research, you engage someone local to serve as a consultant or guide if you really want to do the best research. While conducting extensive research in Japan, for instance, I had a local guide serve as a moderator for a series of in-person group

studies. We took the extra step of having him spend time with me for a few days before the actual research, to not only become familiar with the goals of the research, but also my thought process, how I ask questions, and my own quirks of speech. When the studies actually began, my "interpreter" was more than just a translator - he really was my Japanese alter ego. That's incredibly important to have when you are working in a culture that is truly foreign to you.

Finally, if it hasn't been made clear enough already, the whole point of this article is to stress having "local" guides wherever and whenever you can, whatever "local" means in the context of the research. In some cases, this means taking great pains and incurring additional expense. Not doing those things runs the risk of fielding consumer research that returns incorrect results - and results that are wrong in ways you cannot know or predict. The best way to approach multicultural research is to have a beginner's mind and assume you know nothing. In many cases, you're probably right.

The best way to approach multicultural research is to have a beginner's mind and assume you know nothing

Tom Webster

Vice President of Strategy and Marketing | Edison Research

Tom Webster is Vice President of Strategy and Marketing for Edison Research, a custom market research company best known as the sole providers of exit polling data during US elections for all the major news networks. He has more than 20 years of experience researching consumer usage of technology, new media and social networking, and is the principal author of a number of widely-cited studies, including The Social Habit, The Podcast Consumer, and the co-author of The Infinite Dial, America's longest running research series on digital media consumption. He is also the co-author (along with Tim Hayden) of The Mobile Commerce Revolution.

www.edisonresearch.com

Embers of War artwork. Courtesy of Lenovo

Inclusive Marketing:
How Lenovo Leveraged Crowdsourcing
To Build A Global Gaming Brand

Ajit Sivadasan

Gaming 101

Gaming is a deeply immersive, highly emotional and a very passionate commitment for many gamers. It is a highly competitive yet lucrative $86B a year segment worldwide, with roughly 15% of the overall population in the mature market playing some form of online games.

Consistent with their passion, gamers are also deeply committed to quality, innovation, and creativity of the games they play. On top of this, they tend to be affluent and well educated. It is not uncommon to see them reject corporate norms, unless these norms are aligned with their own views on gaming.

Needless to say, all of these data points led Lenovo and their partners to conclude that in this gaming space, to succeed, you need to invest time and energy into building real, long term, credibility with end users.

To succeed, you need to invest time and energy into building real, long term, credibility with end users

Finding Passion Points Are Key To Deep Engagement

As we thought through ideas on how best to combine the ideals of gamers; commitment, emotion, and innovation, it became apparent that we had a tremendous opportunity in leveraging the gamers themselves for ideas and creative expression.

Incidentally, our research (provided by our partner The Woo agency, out of Los Angeles, California) showed that gamers are heavily driven by four major factors. A community to belong to, a sense of involvement, healthy... well, sometimes fierce... competition, and a sense of advancement or progress through the engagement process.

This was the genesis of GAMESTATE. A unique initiative that enabled Lenovo to crowdsource an AAA rated Indie game. I am not a gamer myself, but I am told that AAA is the highest level possible for a commercially rated game, and Indie games - much like Indie movies - are born from game developers breaking the corporate ranks and creating games through independent means. The basic premise of GAMESTATE was to be a platform that enabled a significant number of gamers from several global markets to collaborate on game development, working closely with established game developers.

Lenovo's GAMESTATE platform

Influencers Are Key To Scaling Audiences

Of course, the challenge for Lenovo was to find these gamers in a meaningful and scalable manner. As we discussed, Lenovo was new to the segment and without credibility, gamers don't typically engage very well.

Enter, the Influencers.

Influencers, as the word would suggest, are individuals that wield tremendous influence and respect within a particular vertical. And within the gaming universe, influencers are sort of demigods.

Within the gaming universe, influencers are sort of demigods

We explored several online influencers that fit our brand profile and had large followership. Influencers we worked with like Felicia Day, Daithi De Nogla, Funhaus and Screwattack have a combined global reach of 35M gamers and engage with their fans almost daily on fun gaming projects. Who better to facilitate the task of engaging these audiences to drive the development process of the games?

Well, that's exactly what Lenovo did. Partnering with them and working closely with the development team, Dark Rift; an Indie Game development organization committed to making bold and audacious titles, out of Los Angeles.

Connecting Customers With Their Passion Points And The Brand

Once we had our influencers and their audiences identified, the key was to clearly understand the customer passion points, and what made them emotionally connected with the initiative. In other words, we had to understand how we could drive deeply emotional and meaningful interactions, which fuel the creative process.

Any game development process is often split into various stages, or missions, and developers build different aspects of the games through these stages. This structure lent itself well to our own ambition of soliciting and driving contributions from the audiences for various creative inputs; costume design, weapons design, background for sets and so on.

As I mentioned, gamers like to compete and engage, and these tasks provided the impetus for that creative sparring.

At the end of it all, the developers had multiple (more like 1000's of) ideas and designs to choose from - making the game that much more compelling. The game we co-developed and crowdsourced has since been named Embers of War, to be released in Sept/Oct 2016 to the public.

Leveraging The Power Of The 'Network Effect' To Gain Scale

The engagement and activity continue as new missions and projects are launched. At last count, we had some significant numbers to report from a reach, engagement, community standpoint.

Some 85M impressions in overall reach, of which 17M qualified as deep engagement. We have over 50,000 user submissions from the various missions they have participated in, and 15,000 gamers registered with us for further engagement with the brand. There were also over 1M likes and mentions on various social media forums.

These are significant metrics when it comes to driving awareness and getting a niche audience to engage in a deep and compelling manner.

Closing The Loop

The key takeaway from this is that this whole approach through co-creation is a sequential process, one that has a discreet set of steps. If you push certain aspects too soon, you may end up short-circuiting the process, leading to a set of very different results.

Co-creation is a sequential process, one that has a discreet set of steps

Collecting and optimizing the feedback about the brand, and its services and products in a nonintrusive and seamless way is an essential part of the engagement process.

Ultimately as the relationship matures and progresses, you put the brand in a position where it is part of the consideration. The transition from limited credibility to being in the consideration set, marketing pundits will tell you, is a big deal - and it is, for several reasons:

a) The process of co-creation gives gamers a chance to be recognized for their creativity and self-expression, likely leading to a favorable view of the brand as being inclusive.

b) It is also likely that their perception of the brand is also not a transactional one, but rather a longer-term relationship. Offering recognition to the fact that the brand is invested in the higher cause of gaming, beyond just hardware sales.

The ultimate success of this approach is the brand's ability to monetize this relationship, to successfully sell products and services that serve this audience. Initial results suggest that Lenovo is building credibility with gamers globally.

Ajit Sivadasan

VP & GM | Lenovo

Ajit Sivadasan manages the Global Web strategy for Lenovo across 70+ countries. In his role he manages Lenovo's online sales across its B2C and B2B channels. Over the last 9 years he has architected and built Lenovo's web capabilities working with an internal team spread across 10 countries, growing the business 4x and profits by over 8x. Lenovo.com has won several awards for Usability and Design recently. Ajit holds a bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering from India, a MS in Industrial Management from Northern Illinois University and a MBA from Claremont Graduate University's Peter F. Drucker School of Management.

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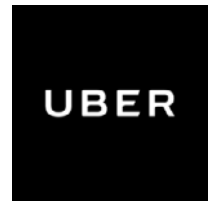
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The Benefits Of Niche Marketing For Global Reaching Brands

Kaaren Whitney-Vernon

In 1995, **less than 1%** of the global population had Internet access. Less than 1%!! Fast-forward 20+ years and nowadays, where 'the web' is second nature for anyone with an Internet connection, approximately 40% of the global population have it.

Despite this massive increase, many marketers are still setting up their budgets and objectives for regional markets or countries. And within these markets, there is the traditional model of trying to reach as many people as possible with one message. We are attempting to have mass reach in a confined traditional media market.

What if we flipped this around and had a small niche target reaching a worldwide digital market?

What are the advantages to this approach? First of all, this is how the digital world works - there are no barriers to digital content. Secondly, the consumer is now in control of their media and content consumption. They choose where, when and how they will get this content. It is no longer about "pushing" out a message, but rather now about engaging in a two-way conversation - more of a "push and pull".

The consumer is now in control of their media and content consumption

Brands are beginning to understand that advertising is now a dialogue, and we see greater success with a message that is being seen or heard through a connection in interest and passion points. Establishing your "tribes" in this way allows consumers to feel a part of a brand - like the brand is truly listening to them and is adding real value to their life.

As our technology advances, it becomes easier for us to find others that share the same interests, regardless of where we live. Brands can now use this information to locate and target a niche audience allowing them to market to an already existing community. Consumers become a community for the brand and (hopefully!) turn into long-term ambassadors for them.

Think what could happen if brands' media strategies focused more on a niche and less on age or country.

Carmilla

Carmilla is a story for the digital generation, for young women who don't watch TV live and who are passionate about their Netflix-style storytelling. It is a retelling of one of literature's oldest female vampires. Shown in vlog-style format, the show uses the YouTube aesthetic to tell a serialized story.

The first season of "Carmilla" tells the story of Laura Hollis, a freshman at Silas University investigating missing girls on campus while dealing with her less-than-agreeable and less-than-human vampire roommate.

Following the season one finale, fans demonstrated their love for Carmilla and U by Kotex, by igniting a 'Save Carmilla' campaign in an attempt to secure a second season. With zero paid media, #savecarmilla was tweeted 11.6 times per minute and generated 7.7M timeline deliveries in less than 24 hours.

In its second season, the series continued to follow Laura and the gang as the stakes were raised, and they had to save the University itself.

The series has struck a chord with the LGBTQ community due to its representation of strong, diverse characters, and is currently in production for its third season.

Carmilla also garnered media coverage and accolades from many influential media outlets, blogs and news sites from around the world.

The brand became the Executive Producer, their product and commercial programming, always integrated into the storyline in an authentic way. Through the power of strong storytelling and by forging a natural connection with the audience, the show amassed over 45M views in 2 years.

This resulting worldwide, vibrant "tribe", who call themselves "The Creampuffs", are encouraged to interact with the show and the brand behind it. This interaction takes place with the series through creation (fan art, comics, music videos, GIFs, and fanfiction) as well as real-life global meetups and group screenings.

With an overwhelming amount of audience interaction and engagement with the brand, Carmilla clearly illustrates the power of branded storytelling targeting a tribe in a global market.

Here are the top 3 steps to finding a niche market and enhancing YOUR global reach:

1. Research, Research, Research!

Reach out to and investigate communities and groups, that you feel will likely resonate with your content or product. Understand their emotional drivers and shared values. Find out how your brand fits into this tribe and how to communicate with them in a more natural way, so they will listen (and purchase!)

2. Engage

Make sure you are 'around' for your consumer tribe and strive to build long-term relationships with them. In this day of instant gratification, it is important to not only respond with immediacy, but understand the platform in which they most want to be engaged and conversed with - on their terms and when is most appropriate.

> **Make sure you are 'around' for your consumer tribe and strive to build long-term relationships with them**

3. Analyze, Pivot, And Change

Always make sure you are on top of changing trends or attitudes of your tribe and be flexible enough to change with them.

Your community of loyal customers will be a huge resource for your research, focus groups, and testimonials.

Kaaren Whitney-Vernon

CEO | shift2 Inc.

Kaaren Whitney-Vernon is CEO of shift2, a Branded Entertainment agency that drives profitable engagement with millennials using scripted series, enabling brands to become executive producers. A co-venture with Shaftesbury/Smokebomb, shift2's projects include U by Kotex®-funded series Carmilla (45+ million views and growing) and mystery series V Morgan Is Dead, brought to life by Canada's largest FI, RBC. With 15+ years experience as CEO of Youth Culture Inc., Kaaren has a proven track record for creating successful youth-targeted products, including popular lifestyle brand Vervegirl.

www.shift2.ca

Rogue Agents: When Regional Marketing Is Left To Fend For Themselves

Mike Colombo

If you've ever been asked, "How are you managing marketing globally?" you likely have answered with one of these typical responses:

"We give our regional teams localized content, but I'm not sure how they're using it."

"We only localize in a few languages with the marketing budget we have, so we send English content to all other regions, and hope they localize our messaging properly."

"I'm not an expert in other languages, so I generally hope the regional teams translate the new campaign messaging correctly."

Case in point, during a recent conversation with the head of demand generation at a leading, highly sophisticated global software company, I asked how they managed global content. His response, no surprise, was, "Oh, the regions know how to localize better than we do, so we leave it up to them to create country specific assets."

The Problem:
The Big Misconception

The mentality of staying out of the regions' way as "they know best" is no longer a winning strategy for global marketing on an enterprise level. Today, you're actually weakening your company's global go-to-market capabilities when you leave regional teams to ensure excellence in technology adoption on their own.

Staying out of the regions' way as "they know best" is no longer a winning strategy for global marketing

A globally connected team, leveraging the same sophisticated technology, gives companies increased ability to react quickly to emerging global market opportunities or competitive threats. Unfortunately, most marketing organizations are stuck in the past and under the illusion that pushing technology best practices and accompanying global processes are akin to eliminating regional go-to-market recommendations.

Without common technology platforms, you put speed and scalability of critical business processes at risk. The tremendous growth in global Human Capital Management, and Sales Force automation software is a testimony to the fact that today's technology

reduces inefficiency, expense, and lack of insights when systems are connected. You wouldn't run any other important business function on a series of disconnected or non-optimized regional systems, so why shouldn't global marketing and localization benefit from the same approach?

Customers Expectations Have Changed

In today's fast-paced, always-connected world, customer expectations are rapidly evolving. The new buyer's journey demands personalized content that is both consistent across multiple channels, and globally. Sophisticated marketing technology is required to meet these evolving expectations. Technology and processes must scale to deliver relevant and engaging content that is localized to the right audience, at ever-increasing levels of speed and context.

The reality is, marketing at the head office is better outfitted to address changing customer expectations. They have greater access to staff, more technology expertise, and larger budgets than regional marketing teams, and their marketing armies are able to assemble sophisticated technology stacks that match assets to each phase of the purchase funnel. When you witness it all come together, it's impressive. But what happens when you work in a region without the same resources, and with multiple languages to deal with?

The Answer: Bring Regions Closer, Not Further

There is no one right way to market globally; there are nearly as many different approaches to global marketing as there are marketing automation technologies to choose from (and there are a lot!). In my career, I've employed different strategies based on company position, market factors, and available

technology. I've led global marketing teams that ranged from the extremes of every major decision made centrally, to the regions calling all the shots.

Until the past few years, I've leaned toward a model where regional teams were more independent. But today I'm convinced our digital world craves a model where corporate teams are closer to regional teams, not further away. The need for much closer alignment is all about global marketing speed - the kind of global marketing speed that is only realized through common technology platforms.

Our digital world craves a model where corporate teams are closer to regional teams, not further away

The days of rolling campaigns and taking quarters to localize and deliver static assets at a snail's pace are over. The need to deliver a personalized experience to a prospect or customer wherever they are in their journey is the new norm. Think that's easy? Today's customers come from 200+ countries and speak one of 50+ primary languages.

Unfortunately, content localization is still often a "last mile" task, and remains one area of the marketing technology stack that hasn't been optimized by many. The approach, tools, and manual workflow have generally remained the same for the past ten, even twenty years (i.e. there's still a lot of "cut and paste" happening). If operational effectiveness is the key to managing global marketing efforts across teams and continents, how can you develop a global marketing strategy that incorporates technology, collaboration, and localization?

Best Practice: Transition To A Modern Global Marketing Process

It's not about stepping over reporting lines or taking away longstanding regional decision-making abilities when it comes to who's responsible for localizing marketing content. It's about connecting systems and sharing resources to improve regional teams' abilities to deliver localized campaigns and content, with the same speed and sophistication as corporate.

It's about connecting systems and sharing resources to improve regional teams' abilities

What does that look like? One of the world's largest software companies has transformed its global marketing strategy by connecting teams through technology. The company's centralized marketing services team has created a common request portal and implemented a set of automated processes connecting regional teams, language service providers, and in-region reviewers. In their own words, "the corporate team builds the engine and the field teams supply the fuel."

Workflow automation and project management technology connecting its marketing systems, key stakeholders, and localization processes have allowed the team to successfully transition from disjointed marketing teams operating independently, to a best-in-class global engagement program, enabling the company to efficiently and quickly deliver dynamic customer journeys in 20+ languages.

True global marketing power!

Result: Teams On The Same Digital Page

When it comes to technology, operating under the mindset that local teams are better off without intervention from the head office is no longer a winning strategy. Empowering regional teams with common, connected platforms helps eliminate the silos and outdated processes that inhibit global marketing speed, while maintaining their power to make decisions about the type of content that best supports their regional marketing strategy.

Today's sophisticated marketing and localization technology interrupts the need for your regional marketing team to "go rogue" and cause you to miss opportunities for your company's global growth. Instead, your teams will be in-sync and on-message, allowing deeper engagement with buyers throughout their journey and broader geographical reach across countries.

Mike Colombo

Chief Marketing Officer | Cloudwords

Mike Colombo is CMO at Cloudwords, a software provider transforming the way companies manage global campaigns and localized content. As an experienced global marketing leader, Mike appreciates the complexities of marketing to multilingual audiences and has a unique perspective on how technology can address its core challenges.

www.cloudwords.com
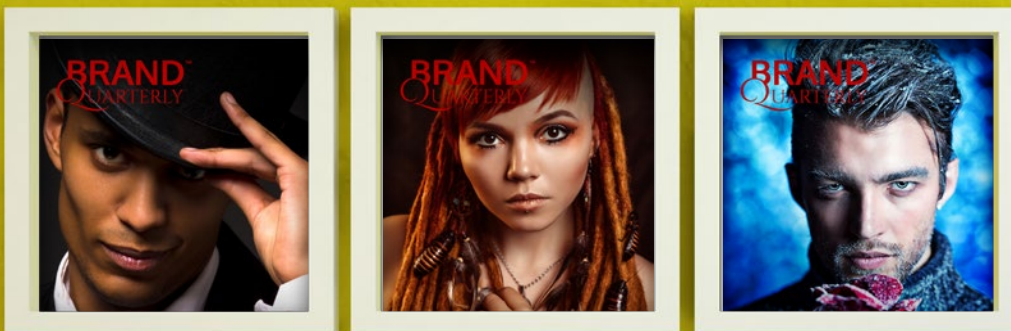
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Globalization Meets Localization Meets Personalization: The New Era Of Brand Leadership

Larry Light

We are experiencing three over-arching colliding forces: increased globalization, increased localization, and increased personalization… happening simultaneously. Even though the world feels closer, brand leaders cannot ignore the increased importance of relevant local differences and the compelling desires for personalized experiences. How can organizations build strong brands in this more global, more local, and more personal world?

Globalization represents coherence, reliability, and certainty. Globalization addresses collective, shared truths such as hunger, family, status, performance, and acceptance. Yet, as the world becomes more global, people become more protective of local differences. Brands need to behave respectfully relative to geographic, country-specific, community-oriented, neighborhood-focused variances. Customers resist standardization and fear homogenization. Personalization respects each of us as individuals: personalization addresses our individual needs and our individual differences. It enhances our aspirations for respect, status, and positive self-image.

Brand success will be determined by how well organizations manage at the intersection of these three forces of globalization, localization, and personalization. Enduring profitable growth in today's world requires a new marketing approach… The Collaborative Three-Box Model - an organizational mindset responding to the current challenges.

Marketing has evolved from 1) Global Standardization: the One-Box Model that focuses on global brand standardization of product, strategy, and marketing worldwide; to 2) The "Think Globally, Act Locally" Approach: the Two-Box Model enforcing a common, central strategy where regions have responsibility for global execution of the common strategy… and now to the most effective approach, 3) The Collaborative Three-Box Model.

The once popular, standardized approach to global marketing recommended that a global brand should be the same everywhere. Marlboro and Coca-Cola were used as iconic examples as the way forward. British Airways adopted this standardized marketing approach with the launch in 1989 of their global slogan, The World's Favourite Airline. According to this model, global brands are squeezed into a standardized, single brand box. With the One-Box Model, local markets merely executed directions from central headquarters. This resulted in globally centralized and locally indifferent organizational cultures. In a fragmented, segmented, and fractionalized world, homogenization of marketing thinking is a formula for brand sickness.

For most brands, the limitations of the One-Box Model led to the development of the Two-Box Model: "Think Globally. Act Locally." Marketers recognized a need to respect local differences and to execute global brand strategies in locally relevant ways. Regrettably, this approach often became just another means for the center to keep control. We will do all the important strategic thinking at the global center. You merely execute what we say in local ways.

It was a hand-off model, merely transferring central brains to regional brawn. As a result, there was no accountability. When the results were poor, the center complained of poor brand strategy execution, while the regions complained that poor strategy, and lack of resources to implement it, were the reasons for failure. No one took responsibility.

Global brands and the organizations that own them need to adopt a new, collaborative approach

Global brands and the organizations that own them need to adopt a new, collaborative approach. The Collaborative Three-Box Model is a shared responsibility model, focusing on making brands and organizations bigger, better, and stronger. It is a strategic and organizational approach and mindset that:

- Clarifies the role of the global teams and those of the regional/local teams

- Generates a collaborative brand-business culture

- Stimulates a return on global learning

- Creates brand frameworks to guide actions

- Encourages regional and local creativity within the brand frameworks

- Builds internal pride and accountability in all brand functions worldwide

It provides structure and processes and also allocates responsibilities, so the central global *and* regional teams know what each has to do and is accountable for. Each box has a series of procedures with corresponding, essential tools that must be followed.

Here is a brief précis of this new model:

Box #1:
Create The Brand's Common Global Ambition, Its Vision Of Perfection

A brand's global ambition crosses geography. Global brand leadership has the ultimate responsibility for this step with the input of the regions. The responsibilities are shared 80% global and 20% local/regional.

Box #2:
Define The Global Plan To Win

The Plan to Win is built by defining the priorities for each of the 8 P's: Brand Ambition (Purpose, Promise), Action Priorities (People, Product, Place, Price, Promotion), Measurable Milestones (Performance). The responsibilities for developing the Plan to Win are shared 50/50 between global and local/regional teams. This cross-functional team requires complete collaboration and trust.

Box #2 sorts out the priorities and provides direction for successful collaboration. This team also defines the brand framework. This brand framework specifies the non-negotiable boundaries that guide all action on behalf of the brand.

Box #3:
Bring The Brand To Life

This must be the responsibility of the local/regional teams. It is the local responsibility to create regional/local plans because all results are local. The regional/local teams

must creatively implement the 'Plan to Win' in creative, locally relevant ways. It is important to note that all local/regional creativity must be within the brand framework and in sync with its brand ambition from Box #1. We call this approach Freedom Within the Framework.

In Box #3, responsibility is 80% regional/local and 20% global.

The new Collaborative Three-Box Model means that marketers must abandon the idea of "Think Globally. Act Locally." Local marketers must "think locally" not just "act locally." Local marketing is not just about implementing the ideas from the remote, central big thinkers.

Local marketers must "think locally" not just "act locally"

Using cross-functional, cross-geographic teams, The Collaborative Three-Box Model reorganizes relationships between global and regional teams. It optimizes and restructures their roles and responsibilities. By properly assigning accountability, this new model celebrates the fact that regional teams know the local customer best.

Regional/local needs must be catered to while keeping the integrity of the brand intact. Reading lists may be different by country, but the Amazon brand retains its brand essence even when delivering regional and personal relevance. There is no question that in a world where there are three colliding forces of increasing globalization, localization, and personalization, organizations must build global brands that are both locally relevant and respect personally differentiation if they want to experience high-quality revenue growth.

The Collaborative Three-Box Model is more than a mere process. And it is more than marketing communications. It is the best way to run a global business. It is a business culture. How you run your brand is how you run your business. When there is a conflict between culture and strategy, culture always wins.

The Three-Box Model is how we will work together better, worldwide. It is the best approach for managing the tensions that arise from global and local decision rights, clarifying the role of the center, relative to the role of the regions. It is the best approach for managing at the intersection of globalization, localization, and personalization.

Adapted from 'New Brand Leadership: Managing at the Intersection of Globalization, Localization and Personalization,' by Larry Light & Joan Kiddon, Pearson, 2015.

Larry Light

Chairman | Arcature

Larry Light is Chairman of Arcature LLC, a management consulting company founded in 1988, focusing on creating, building, managing and revitalizing both global and local brands. He has experience as an advertising agency executive, client marketer, and consultant. He served as Executive Vice-President responsible for marketing and media, member of the Executive Committee and Board member at BBDO. At Ted Bates Advertising, he was Chairman and CEO of the International division. As a client, he was the global CMO of McDonald's. More recently, he was the Chief Brands Officer of the InterContinental Hotels Group. Light and Kiddon are the co-authors of several books on marketing.

www.arcature.com

How Cultural Competence Helps Your Bottom Line

Apoorva Gandhi

The numbers don't lie. The changing demographics of the United States and the world are creating new markets for us to understand. According to some, the middle class of India is larger than the entire US population. What does that mean? Businesses have a unique opportunity through cultural competence to learn how to interact, do business and delight their customers.

Why should we spend the time to understand this?

Well, inclusion is always the right thing to do, and there are also significant business benefits. For example, travel spend from Latinos in the US is about $70 billion a year according to the American Hotel and Lodging Association. The LGBT travel spend is $63 billion a year. That's billion with a capital B! Those are numbers that cannot be ignored.

The idea of cultural competence isn't political correctness… it's a business imperative to understand a changing marketplace. New customers have different needs and requirements to earn their business. By understanding the 'differences that make a difference,' you can open up new revenue streams and earning channels. But this requires some effort and time. You can't just show up and say, 'hey we have discovered you, come spend your money with us!'

Cultural competence isn't political correctness... it's a business imperative to understand a changing marketplace

Take time to do the research, understand the cultural norms, and solicit feedback from your employees of that culture (who are critical and valuable), to get the ROI that you want.

Cultural competence also reduces risk. Words matter. Imagery matters. History matters. The wrong word choice or image can hurt sentiment, revenue, and your corporate reputation. How many times have you seen a snafu where you say "if they had just talked to the right individuals this could have been avoided." In today's zero attention span world, a PR crisis can soak up valuable media attention and leave you to defend your company instead of promoting your campaign. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

In my business, hospitality is all about welcoming everyone.

It's about understanding the steps of an Indian Wedding, what a Quinceañera is or what Kosher means. By taking the time to understand a culture, its background, social and business norms, and holidays, you can leapfrog your competition. It's a compliment to us when we hear, "Wow you know more about our celebration than we do!"

Why? Our hotels understand that welcoming different cultures and ethnic celebrations is the right thing to do, and makes good for business. In recent years, ethnic celebrations have generated many millions of dollars for the company – and even more in word-of-mouth business.

Two years ago, we created a Culture Days program to build cultural competence and confidence with the growing number of multicultural travelers and their spending power. We demonstrate the basics of many cultures, including social norms and business etiquette, and we trade best practices between our hotels.

Through education and awareness, individuals feel comfortable planning a Quinceañera, an Indian wedding or Bar Mitzvah. We want our staff to know how to present a business card to a Chinese guest (with both hands and a bowed head), and we want individuals to understand the importance and expectations of various cultures. We find that being culturally competent fits perfectly in our business as we welcome guests from all over the world.

Apoorva Gandhi

Vice President, Multicultural Affairs | Marriott International

As Vice President for Multi-Cultural Affairs for Marriott International, Apoorva Gandhi is responsible for creating and executing an externally-focused global strategy that builds preference and loyalty from diverse customer segments for the Marriott portfolio of brands. He helps ensure the company's marketing, sales and operations consider and reflect multi-cultural markets and alliances as Marriott continues its aggressive growth throughout the world.

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Shining A Light On 'Dark Maps': Why Global Brands Should Care

Gideon Rubin

Do your mobile and online marketing campaigns go dark just when your target customers are ready to buy? If you are a multinational brand whose digital marketing efforts stop working in places where Internet access or smartphones are the exception, rather than the norm, you may be missing the chance to reach more than half of the world's population.

According to mobile carrier industry alliance GSMA, 10 percent of the world's 7.2 billion people lack access to basic voice and text services, and about a third lack access to 3G or 4G mobile broadband Internet.

If your brand caters to global travelers or consumers in regions with low Internet penetration (e.g., fuel services, hotels, restaurants and many others), you need your business to be found even when navigation users don't have Internet connections.

Enter 'Dark Maps'
- maps designed for use offline.

Offline 'Dark Maps' offer a way to connect with target consumers on the go, throughout the world - even if they don't have the use of a smartphone, or when they are out of range of an Internet connection.

Offline 'Dark Maps' offer a way to connect with target consumers on the go, throughout the world

What Type Of Consumers Use Offline Maps And Why?

Lack of Internet access is not the only reason people use dark maps. Most users of dark maps don't have access to high-speed Internet. Many don't have smartphones. So they need low data connections that work on the most basic devices. There are also millions of smartphone users who conserve data and reduce costs by moving from online to offline modes while they travel. This is where offline maps typically come into play as a marketing and visibility opportunity.

The majority of the uncovered populations live in the rural regions of Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, which together account for 3.4 billion of the 4.8 billion people not yet connected

to the Internet. Few own smartphones in Africa (15%). However, basic cell phones are common (65%). Compare with the U.S., where 64% own smartphones and 25% own basic cell phones (source: Pew Research Center surveys).

Locals, travelers, and even Pokémon GO users around the world turn to offline maps for a number of reasons:

They're Cheaper

Updating maps in real-time on a mobile device can eat up monthly plan data. In some countries, 500MB of data costs a week's wages. With offline maps, there's little to no data usage, which can mean huge savings for local consumers and travelers.

They're Fast

Offline maps are faster to load as they are not downloading and displaying at the same time. All data is stored on the device.

They Require No Internet Connection

Consumers can use maps without Internet service in rural areas or while traveling. This is also important even in areas with above average connectivity. We've all experienced dropped or interrupted connections. This always seems to happen at the most inopportune times. If it happens while using an Internet connection-dependent map app, it could cause a user to become lost. Offline maps keep a user on the right path, without concern for Internet connectivity.

Offline maps keep a user on the right path, without concern for Internet connectivity

Users Can Conserve Battery Power

In remote areas, without the ability to recharge, conserving battery power is critical. Often the processing and battery power required to run offline maps is much less due to the previous download of the information. Offline map usage is also becoming popular among Pokémon GO users who are looking for ways to conserve battery power while playing the mobile game. The augmented reality app, mobile data, and location services that make the game possible are not battery-friendly. Users can conserve battery power by downloading maps for the geographic areas they expect to be playing in. This is not only important for players, but also for brands and local businesses that have an active role in the game.

How Can Marketers Work With Offline Maps?

With offline maps, your phone uses its built-in GPS radio (which works independently of your data plan) to figure out where you are, then simply plots your route on a map that's stored in your phone's memory.

Since the points-of-interest (POI) layer is offline during use, as a marketer, you need to make sure your brand or business is included within the downloaded data set. Engage a navigation business listings specialist to help

you in this effort. Given that many different apps have an offline capability, you need to focus on getting good brand visibility across the mapping world, which means starting with Google Maps, Waze, Apple, and HERE WeGo, then moving to TomTom, Sygic, Navmii, and others.

We saw an evolution from offline navigation maps (think early Palm Pilot) to online maps (often without offline capabilities until the last few years). As global marketers, it is now necessary to take a second look at offline maps because more than half of the world is without Internet access today.

If your business is a hotel, convenience store, gas station or restaurant, your best opportunity to gain new customers may be from the on-the-go audience of travelers, and even augmented reality game-players, who rely on offline maps.

As global marketers, it is now necessary to take a second look at offline maps

Gideon Rubin

Chief Strategy Officer | NavAds

Gideon Rubin is Chief Strategy Officer and head of U.S. operations for NavAds, the leading provider of location content to the databases that power the navigation and mapping industry. He is a successful entrepreneur and marketing strategist, with deep expertise in mobile and local presence and reputation management solutions.

www.navads.eu

How A Tiny London Coffee Company Stole My Heart

Alex Hunter

67

A few Decembers ago, on a gray Saturday afternoon about a week before Christmas, I was slumped in a rather musty-smelling wingback chair at my grandmother's house in rural England. Nursing a moderate hangover, I was idly flicking through twitter on my phone trying to move as little of my body as possible, when a sponsored tweet flashed by.

"Proper coffee hand-roasted and delivered fresh to home or work. Have a go for £1"

I was familiar with Pact, the upstart coffee subscription service based in South East London. I liked Pact. We used their service at the office, and every week an envelope of coffee beans appeared through our letterbox. I'm no coffee connoisseur by any means but my co-workers, who all have meth-lab like coffee set ups at home, rated Pact's offerings highly and we were pleased with the service. Considering they were just three or four people in a warehouse in London, they were doing well.

But something, maybe it was the hangover, maybe it was the pre-Christmas stress, but something about that tweet made me disproportionately angry. Something about that tweet plain pissed me off.

Proper. That word. That damn word.

Everybody has one word that makes them bristle. "Bespoke", "moist", "guesstimate", that sort of thing. You're thinking of yours right now, aren't you? Mine is "proper".

I loathe that word. It's so smug, so self-aggrandizing, so superior, so lazy. It implies, without a hint of evidence or qualification, that you're better than everyone else.

Of course, any normal person would have shrugged and continued idly thumb scrolling, but no, not today. Action was required here. So I did the unthinkable. In a fit of social media sociopathy, I replied to a sponsored tweet. Who does that? Someone who irrationally hates the word 'proper', that's who.

".@pactcoffee -1 for using the word "proper". You're better than that. Love, a loyal subscriber."

And, AND, I even did the total jerk move of putting a period before my reply so everyone who followed me could see how maladjusted I am. But I didn't care, I had satisfied the angry old man inside me and pocketed my phone with a self-satisfied grunt.

But not even 5 minutes later, there was a disturbance in my trousers. A ding. I fished my phone from my pocket and was surprised, perhaps even shocked, at what I saw. A reply. On a Saturday. Days before Christmas. From a tiny little company. To my unnecessary and silly reply to a sponsored tweet.

"@cubedweller Sorry! We didn't mean to sound snobbish. Looking for a word that conveys good taste. Maybe just 'tasty'?! Love, Pact."

Well then. Well played, Pact. That they replied at all is a very positive signal, especially on a Saturday right before Christmas.

But confidence in a brand, just like confidence in a person, is attractive. If you believe you have a great product, then don't be afraid to say so. If you think it's great, then say it's great. If you think it's delicious, then say it's delicious. Don't be bashful. And that's exactly what I told Pact.

Confidence in a brand, just like confidence in a person, is attractive

"@pactcoffee I think you could even legitimately refer to yourselves as "great!" - love the product, keep smashing it."

They sent back a quick and polite reply, and we went on with our lives.

A nice little case study of a real, human conversation between a customer and a brand. But that wasn't the end of it - not by a long shot.

Back in the office, in an "up and coming" part of London a couple of days later, the door buzzer rang and the usual "I'll get it!" sprint to the door ensued. A wide-eyed courier, still a little shaken by the excited stampede, handed over a recycled Amazon box. Curious. No one was expecting any deliveries. So we tore it open in a fit of collective curiosity. The box was filled with bags and bags of Pact Coffee.

No way. No freakin' way. Did they… they couldn't have… could they?

At the bottom of the box was a Christmas card, with a handwritten message inside:

"Dear Alex, we hope you and your loved ones enjoy this over the festive period! "Great" coffee sent fresh. Love, Pact x."

I was floored. They did, they actually did.

Even after that Grade A back and forth on Twitter, which was solid customer engagement in itself, they took the time to figure out who I was, where I worked, determine that I wasn't mentally unstable (just a bit hung-over), what our address was (no mean feat either, as we'd worked hard to suppress the location of our shared warehouse digs in a rather shabby part of South London), package up the coffee and write out a note.

Not only that, the message in the card was so perfect in its tone and context; simple but very funny too. And the craziest, most wonderful part of this little story is that Pact did all this, went through all this effort, for someone WHO WAS ALREADY A CUSTOMER.

Wherever in the world you and your customers are, this is what separates good businesses from great ones: not assuming customers will always be customers.

Understanding that the relationship is a delicate one, one that needs, attention, creativity, and a human touch if the bond is expected to grow stronger over time. Pact didn't just rely on a great product; they spent time on the experience.

Alex Hunter

Customer Experience Expert

Alex Hunter is a branding and customer experience expert, keynote speaker, and angel investor. He is also the creator and host of Attaché, an award-winning online travel show, aimed at showing frequent travellers all they need to know before visiting a city on company business. Previously, Alex served as the global Head of Online for the Virgin Group, overseeing the Virgin brand's global digital strategy in its entirety, as well as Sir Richard Branson's personal digital strategy. Before joining the Virgin Group, Alex was based in California where he was part of the founding team of award-winning US airline Virgin America.

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Colin Strong

@Colinstrong

Head of Behavioural Science
at Ipsos

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We now live in an environment where we have unprecedented access to consumer behaviours, emotions, and intentions in a highly granular way, from a wide variety of first and third party data sources.

This gives brands the opportunity to move beyond the use of data for basic targeting and instead use it to shape the customer experience. Alongside this, Artificial Intelligence is advancing at such a rapid rate that we will soon see the ability for companies to engage with consumers in a highly personalised way.

Brands, therefore, need to rapidly acquire a deep understanding of the psychology of effective customer experiences. Data literate behavioural scientists are needed to identify and design the customer journeys that generate profitable growth.

At the same time brands will find the boundaries of personalisation - too far one way and customers are 'creeped out,' too far the other way and customers feel as if they are not seen or understood.

Fundamentally, we now need to better understand the humans behind the data.

{ – – Open Mic – – }

Kathleen Bostick

@KathleenBostick

Executive Vice President, North America
at SDL

www.sdl.com

Speak Their Language - Everywhere

Many companies underestimate the complexity of going global. They know they want to grow, and global expansion is usually a good avenue for them. The problem comes when they fail to create a proper launch strategy.

Globalization is usually not part of their plan. Many companies create their content in English without considering if that content and messaging will be relevant in their global markets. They overlook important related elements such as graphics, colors, images, measurements and more. They also forget to include all of their channels in their planning - things like video, customer support, user-generated content, social media, and mobile.

As customer communication evolves with the trend toward greater personalization, remember that nothing is more personal than language. Companies should not expect to engage with customers effectively if they aren't speaking their language across every touchpoint.

The key to global success lies in partnering with a trusted globalization advisor who can help to develop the right strategy and execution plan for taking a business global.

{ – – Open Mic – – }

Wayne Bourland

Director, Global Localization Team at Dell
www.dell.com

Which Socks Are You Wearing?

People in other parts of the world don't *think* the way you do.

I know, it sounds like common sense, but often corporations overlook this very simple truth. They get so wrapped up in the belief that *their product has a broad appeal* that they forget to listen to their regional counterparts. Or worse, the belief has become so ingrained in the corporate mindset that the regions either believe it themselves or have given up on relaying the same old message and often want to avoid being seen as holding up progress on a new campaign.

Let's take something we all are familiar with - socks.

An American might not give much thought to what socks they put on in the morning, outside of not wearing sports socks with slacks; but in Japan, socks are a big deal, they are going to be seen when you go for a traditional lunch or enter someone's home. There are stores in Japan that sell just socks. Who knew?

Invest time in your relationship with regional counterparts, seek outside guidance, and spend time learning the culture of your biggest markets.

Don't be "that guy" that wears holey socks to dinner with a Japanese client.

{ – – Open Mic – – }
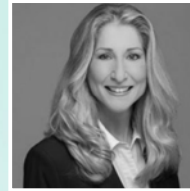
Tiffani Bova

@Tiffani_Bova

Global Customer - Growth & Innovation Evangelist at Salesforce
www.salesforce.com

Embrace Change - Invest In It

With the accelerated pace of technical advancement and business transformation facing every industry and geography, we are confronted with an unprecedented reality that change has become the new normal in business. However, we can't forget that in order to change our businesses, we must also become proactive personal change agents ourselves.

Many companies often focus on the internal changes that need to happen in order to transform the company, while neglecting the human, cultural changes that must occur in tandem. The right approach to dealing with incoming change is to change before you have to, versus waiting until it is too late. Disrupting ourselves, and the status quo, is difficult and uncomfortable, but in this new reality of business - necessary. Successful leaders will invest in employee development, put in the hard work to support cultural transformation, and inspire purpose within the entire company.

Don't fear change, find a way to embrace the opportunity it presents each of us - otherwise, you risk missing out on all that is possible both personally and professionally in this age of disruption.

I think this quote sums it up quite nicely:

"It is vital that we are equipped with the humility to understand that changing the world and keeping innovation alive require that we change ourselves." - Whitney Johnson, Disrupt Yourself: Putting the Power of Disruptive Innovation to Work.

{ – – Open Mic – – }

Lidia Lüttin

@LidiaLuettin

Chief Marketing Officer
at Bynder

www.getbynder.com

Market Maturity: Play Global, Act Local

Bynder is active in Europe, North America, the Middle East and Australia, and we have a different strategic approach for each market - and many times, for each country. However, looking beyond the cultural nuances and language barriers, every region also has a different market maturity.

Of course, there are many similarities in these markets regarding stages of the buying process; however, there are big differences when creating relevant content. For example, we offer a cloud-based solution for marketing and brand management. In the US, cloud technology benefits are widely recognized making it a very mature market for us, whereas businesses in Europe are battling lower budgets and are still hesitant about the cloud in general - therefore we are still in an educational stage.

Knowledge of local culture and market climate is therefore very important in establishing a reliable global brand, which is why it is important to me to work with a very international marketing team.

{ – – Open Mic – – }

Brian Lischer

CEO at Ignyte | Brand Psychologist |
Author | Speaker

www.ignytebrands.com

Questions Are The Answer

It may not be the sexiest part of the branding process, but brand research is one of the most often overlooked, yet powerful keys to global success.

In order to effectively position your brand in the competitive landscape, you first have to understand how it's perceived - by external and internal stakeholders alike. These perceptions may not be pleasing, but an honest portrait of your brand is essential if you want to correct what's holding you back.

Rigorous, in-depth research is the only way to paint this portrait.

External brand research is essential to understanding what your customers think about your brand. What words are they most likely to choose when describing your brand? What common themes rise to the top in your analysis of interview responses? Just as important, however, is internal brand research. You have to know how your employees perceive your brand if you hope to achieve global success. A brand's positioning and promise are only as effective as the employees who embody them.

{ – – Open Mic – – }

Clint Poole

@clpB2B

Senior Vice President, Corporate Marketing at Lionbridge

www.lionbridge.com

Empowerment - Not Control

To achieve global success, marketers must empower their local teams to drive in-market engagement. Ultimately, global customer experiences are a collection of universal and extremely local micro-moments. However, the mix for one geographic market or customer segment will not be right for another. To create effective micro-moments, marketers must balance local relevance and global consistency when making decisions.

Winning global marketers have mastered a governance model that accommodates this, something Stefan Tornquist at eConsultancy dubbed the "hub and spoke" model. Through this, marketers maintain central governance while relying on local talent to customize plans. They empower in-market teams to create content and manage programs locally, but require a certain level and cadence of corporate approvals.

To enable the use of the "hub and spoke" model, you must plan for and invest in digital maturity. Technology and process management are key to a leader's ability to maintain global standards in brand management, omnichannel content, and measurement.

{ – – Open Mic – – }

Ben Sargent

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Younger Brands Do it Better

To identify best practices in global digital operations, the analysts at CSA Research visit thousands of brand websites each year, cataloging languages, navigation schemes, and social media use (among other things). Of the 2,657 globally prominent websites tracked in 2016, 12 companies supported customer experience in 45+ languages. Among this hyperglobal group, Microsoft is the oldest brand. There are plenty of 100-year-old brand websites with 30 or more languages, such as Ford, Nestle, and Nikon. Why are none of these greybeard companies using 60, 80, or 120 languages online?

Structural differences in international operations play a part - old-school distribution entails in-country subsidiaries and partners. Digital delivery of products and services makes it a whole lot easier for Facebook and VK to go global, compared to Honda or GSK. But this year we noticed something else. There's a big difference in how young brands design their global customer experience.

Rather than post a unique set of pages for each country or language - a publishing nightmare - digital-era companies build websites as apps, with user controls for country, language, and other settings. This streamlines global content production, making digital operations scalable and cost-efficient.

Eleven of the 12 brands with 45 or more languages use this approach. Such best practices can help even the oldest brand rapidly scale digital operations across languages and markets.

{ – – Open Mic – – }

Jascha Kaykas-Wolff

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Chief Marketing Officer
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The Audience Is Always Right

There are more tools, channels and 'hacks' for Marketers than ever. While many believe this phenomenon is of great value to marketers - myself included - the 'shiny objects' often distract from a powerful, necessary step in any marketing plan: audience research.

As opposed to biasing to the marketing tactics that resonate best for you (and taking advantage of the myriad of tools available), I've found repeated success with our teams by pausing our ship-test-learn methodology long enough to truly define our audience's locations, pain points and how we best solve for them.

{ – – Open Mic – – }
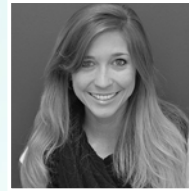
Cynthia Johnson

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Entrepreneur | Business Adviser | Columnist | Speaker

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Find Your Onboard Influencers

In my experience, organizations tend to overlook their own people.

We have entered into the era of the "influencer".

And instead of finding influence within their own teams, most companies are paying for it. I think that this is a poor use of their marketing budgets. It is similar to paying for PPC ads and running your entire marketing strategy around those ads. Once you stop paying for them, they go away. Working with influencers is no different.

The other part of working with influencers that is not working is that there are no real restrictions. When we work with talent agencies to shoot commercials, the talent is not allowed to work with competing businesses during the time that their commercials air. With influencers, no such restrictions have been put into place.

The alternative is to promote your business through your team. Find out their stories, what they care about, and use those things to boost the company and its reputation. Over time your reach will increase without having to continuously pay for it.

{ – – Open Mic – – }

Rachel Klein

Director of Strategy
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### It Starts - And Succeeds - From Within

In my experience, the key to global success, which is often overlooked by executives, is the importance of involving the entire organization in the development of the corporate strategy. Too many try building it in a silo and then wonder why the organization is not all rowing in the same direction once the edict has been passed down.

This is because global *alignment* (buy in) and *understanding* (including the understanding "how do I contribute?") come not through hearing the strategy repeated at town halls, nor reading it in executive presentations. In fact, alignment and buy-in come mostly through the process of engaging employees and allowing them to have a thumbprint on the strategy in some way - so that they can internalize it and make it personally actionable and practical.

Sorry to be cliche, but I often think about this quote by Benjamin Franklin when reminding CEOs and other executives of why it's important to engage and involve their employee base in strategy development:

"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." - Benjamin Franklin

{ – – Open Mic – – }
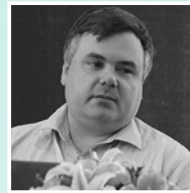
Bruno Herrmann

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Understand, Then Engage

Holistic customer understanding and effective localization come up more often than not. These factors are key drivers and enablers that are sometimes still considered as options or afterthoughts. However, these requirements must be met upfront to deliver international experiences and delight customers globally. This plays out more than ever in the digital age as products, services, and properties must be designed, localized, and deployed for customers collectively and individually.

You must fully understand and engage with customers in a way that reflects who they are, what they do, and where they move. All facets must be considered. It avoids making assumptions and helps plan subsequent localization and deployment efforts.

Localization must be executed according to crafted experiences that are simple, relevant, and memorable. It is focused on speaking the language of customers; which encompasses the words, styles, visuals, and ecosystems that are naturally meaningful to them. While translation remains important, digital globalization requires going way above and beyond.

Agile localization needs world readiness and granularity. Both challenges require organizational and process enhancements within globalizing organizations in addition to leveraging technology. Calls to action often cover globalization leadership, alignment, and governance both locally and globally.

There is no success outside without excellence inside...

{ – – Open Mic – – }

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Cultural Awareness:
Humble Listening Pays

When expanding your brand globally, being aware of local cultural differences is vital in your marketing and at every touch point. Sometimes, marketers are more concerned about global consistency of their brand voice than about making sure their voice resonates with local audiences.

Entering a new market with humility and the wisdom to listen to local experts can save you millions. LEGO, for example, have nailed this approach: their customer service team want to make every interaction with their main customers, children and their parents, fun, engaging and playful. But while they address parents by their first name, as it's common in the English-speaking world, it would feel inappropriate to most German customers. Adapting to this, LEGO use 'Herr' and 'Frau' along with the surname in their German brand communications when addressing adults.

{ – – Open Mic – – }

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Don't Just Do Global - Be Global

Having traveled the world working with some of the world's largest companies for over 30 years, and being a 1.5 Million Miler on Delta Airlines alone, I feel that I have a very good sense of what is key to global success. It is something that is so overlooked in today's social media world. This is, namely; strong personal relationships developed via face-to-face meetings and interactions.

I hear content this and content that and it makes me nauseous. Yes, content has a place, but without strong relationships, it is very difficult to be successful on either a global or local basis.

Knowing people personally and being able to judge what their needs or wants are, then satisfying these with individualized solutions is what it's all about. Furthermore, by having a connection, it makes it much easier to get around the gatekeepers and have your message be heard.

My message is that if you want to be successful globally, don't be afraid of getting on a plane and meeting people face-to-face. You'd be surprised at what it will do for your business!

{ – – Open Mic – – }

Gráinne Maycock

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Organisational Perception Is Reality

How translation, localisation, and global content are viewed within your organisation (i.e. as a cost, or as a revenue enabler linked to global growth goals), can be the key to successful expansion and surpassing internal challenges.

If they are viewed as a revenue enabler and closely tied to international expansion goals, then the conversation - and results - become very different.

If you are unsure about how you can change the dialog around global content for the better at your organisation, I highly recommend you seek the assistance of a language service provider.

Truly global organisations see global content as a key to unlocking international market success.

{ – – Open Mic – – }

Paige Williams

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Keepin' it Real

I have learned that "be true to yourself" are not just wise words to live by personally, but also can be applied to represent your corporate identity and values.

When I joined Microsoft in the Spring of 1991, I walked in - Seattle-born and raised, with an English degree from Washington State University in my pocket, and straight into a multicultural world with a diversity of assumptions, challenges, educations, and languages. But, what we all shared was the idea that we could change the world with new ways of connecting people and ideas.
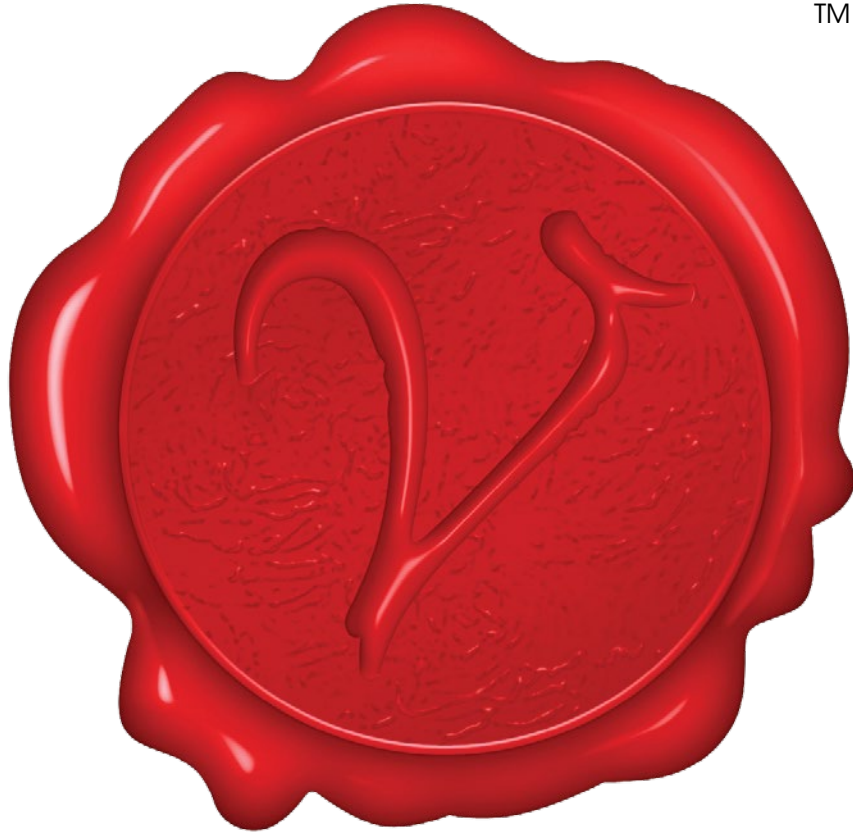
My chance to have an impact on the world came when I took on the role of creating a new discipline; today called Global Readiness. Global Readiness started with just making sure we got our geographic renderings correct - today it's grown into a team of experts that ask deep, careful questions about how our brand and our products show up. Are we accurate but also impartial? Does our brand show up in an honest and authentic way? Do our products reflect our values, respectful of all?

In global readiness, staying true to the values of the local marketplace is always foremost in my decision making, balanced with seeking the best, most authentic local market contexts. Representations of people are some of the more challenging, and intricate, areas to ensure authentic representation. One campaign that did a brilliant job is Dolce&Gabbana's Learn Italian Hand Gestures, embracing culture-of-origin while also being interesting on a global stage. Even so, the comments (while NSFW) provoked further thought about how culture can be more broadly inclusive than might be readily recognized. The symbolism of hand gestures is an area rife with the potential to go sideways very quickly, but I would give this spot a "two thumbs up" - in the context of 'approval' vs 'up yours', of course.

If cultural symbolism is not true to self, it can be construed as cultural appropriation instead of appreciation - which will provide you the kind of brand visibility that you don't want. Especially in a digital world; where any misstep is just a snap and a chat away from infamy. Authenticity, done well, can be a competitive differentiator and a major advantage.

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