Review

Marketing transformations: Re-thinking marketing, digital first

Implications for marketers

With an agenda shaped by readers of Marketing Finder, this conference on 23 September 2014 at London's Silicon Roundabout was themed around Marketing Transformations — in social, data, email and marketing automation. The implications of these developments for marketers are myriad — and the audience were understandably both excited and mildly fearful about the constant change that surrounds them.

Commercial opportunities

We heard from solution providers (Oracle, Adestra), media companies (Guardian, Channel 4), agencies (ClearPeople, EngageScience, LikeMinds) and clients (Game). They explored commercial opportunities for connecting brands with their users through data, but the consensus among them all was that the human element is essential to implement insight-driven transformations.

Oracle Marketing Cloud

The first part of the day focused on the creation of integrated and personalized experiences. Sylvia Jensen, director of EMEA marketing for Oracle Marketing Cloud, introduced the concept of digital body language. Just like in real life, she explained, digital clues are essential to understanding consumers. Many of the behavioural traces are coded into seemingly trivial social media sentiments, yet the value of understanding the insights they hold can make or break a campaign. Recent research conducted by Oracle on 'Connecting Customer Journeys' provides more evidence of the challenges marketers face when trying to gain an integrated view of customers across channels. This is echoed in a recent article published in this very journal (Wolny & Charoensuksai, Vol 15.4 2014) highlighting the benefits of customer journey mapping for channel attribution and marketing automation. The goal (or even Holy Grail), it seems, is the ability to create individualized customer experience at scale.

Channel 4

Channel 4's chief marketing officer Dan Brooke provided a bird's eye view on digital transformation behind the scenes of one of the country's favourite TV channels. He explained how digital has taken a firm grip on most aspects of broadcasting — production, distribution, visitor engagement and marketing. Brooke pointed out how the entertainment industry — known for its creativity — embraced the science behind numbers. Apart from viewership figures providing more accurate targeting to advertisers, data is also increasingly being used to serve up seemingly serendipitous recommendations based on predictive modelling. And it's great to hear that our top broadcasters are collaborating with universities to

help them achieve this faster (Channel 4 has partnered with University College London to fund five-year PhD courses).

Leading from the top

The human side of digital transformation was illustrated with a quote from the *Financial Times*' CEO, John Ridding, recognizing how important the data collected from the paper's subscriber base was in shaping its digital footprint and serving the most relevant and timely content. Leadership from the top such as this clearly helps the message filtrate through the ranks and greatly helps digital transformation efforts.

The Guardian

Another recurring theme of the day was the utility of mobile, dubbed 'the most personal and habitual technology ever invented' by the product manager for mobile and devices at *The Guardian*, Tom Grinsted. He highlighted two major marketing opportunities. First, providing users with the ability to control and discover the world around them at arm's reach makes mobile the go-to piece of equipment, even if a desktop is nearby. Beyond mobile, marketers should be grasping the opportunity to create micro-interactions during micro-moments (waiting for a bus or for the kettle to boil) on what are increasingly micro-devices, such as watches and wearables.

Technology v marketing

In the afternoon, the attention shifted to the link between technology and marketing departments, as well as risk compliance and marketing — departments with traditionally less-than-cosy relationships. Arguments have been made by some for integration and by others to disentangle decision making between those departments. What became clear, however, is that any organization that can get these departments well aligned will be scary to the opposition, if only because it is such a rare thing.

Game

Client-side experience was perfectly illustrated by Fred Prego, insight and reward director at Game, which has gone through a real-life transformation from a declining business 3 years ago to a re-invigorated, multi-channel operation. The main driver of this change was insight. Not only was a new insight team created, but all data was brought in-house, rather than remaining in the hands of external agencies and providers.

LikeMind

The afternoon continued with LikeMind's head of social business Andrew Gerrard calling for all businesses to become social businesses. The sentiment was picked up by Jerry Daykin, global digital director, Dentsu Aegis Network, who advised brands to build on user-generated content (UGC) to create stories and make content go further, as well as building relationship with content creators. The UGC theme continued in the talk by Michael Wrigley, chief marketing officer at Engage Sciences, who stressed that UGC-driven websites perform better, increase dwell-time and generate more web traffic.

Understanding customer journeys

The day finished with a fascinating panel discussion of a highly experienced group of marketers, chaired by Professor Tony Patterson from the University of Liverpool. Three themes were addressed — content marketing, insight marketing and metrics. What became evident is that clear and nuanced understanding of customer journeys is the key to effective implementation of all of the activities and tools discussed during the day.

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