

MARK**E**ZINE

August 2019

ISSUE XXI

WOKE
MARKETING

MILLENIAL
MARKETING

ART OF
INTEGRATION



FROM ^{THE} EDITORS' DESK

Dear Reader,

We welcome you to the 21st edition of Markezine - the annual magazine of MarkUp, the Marketing Club of IMT Ghaziabad. With the release of this edition we promise to give you a deeper insight and an interesting read into the world of marketing.

"Be where the world is going" - Beth Comstock
This edition of Markezine encapsulates the idea of the aforementioned quote in its theme of "Millennial Marketing". Millennials are tricky to market to; given it is such a diverse and large group with much wide-ranging demographics, hobbies and values. However, it is not impossible. In this edition we have made an effort to present the ideas of professionals from the corporates along with academicians and students from various different colleges across India.

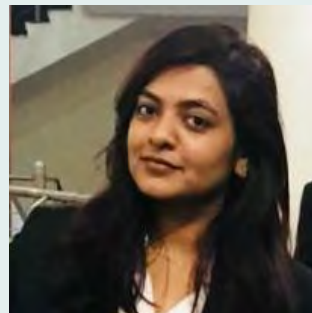
Under this theme, we explore two avenues - "Woke Marketing" and "The Art of Integration". Woke Marketing delves into the changing millennial approach from purchasing not only the product but also buying in the values of the brand.

Second theme "The Art of Integration" talks about how a well-executed multichannel campaign with creative that is more data-driven can help target the millennials better.

The editors of this magazine acknowledge and appreciate the efforts and dedication of the

writers of each and every article. We received an overwhelming response for this year's edition and kudos to the entries that made it to the final.

With such exciting content awaiting you, we hope you have a great time reading the magazine. All the views expressed in the articles are of authors themselves and we are not responsible for the same.




Anwasha Raj
PGDM 2018-20



Kusha Sharma
PGDM 2018-20



Ruchin Jain
PGDM 2018-20

A photograph of a person's hands holding an open book, with a green overlay and text. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with trees and a bright sky. The text "HAPPY READING!" is written in large, bold, dark green capital letters across the bottom half of the image. The book's pages are visible, showing dialogue from a story.

**HAPPY
READING!**

content

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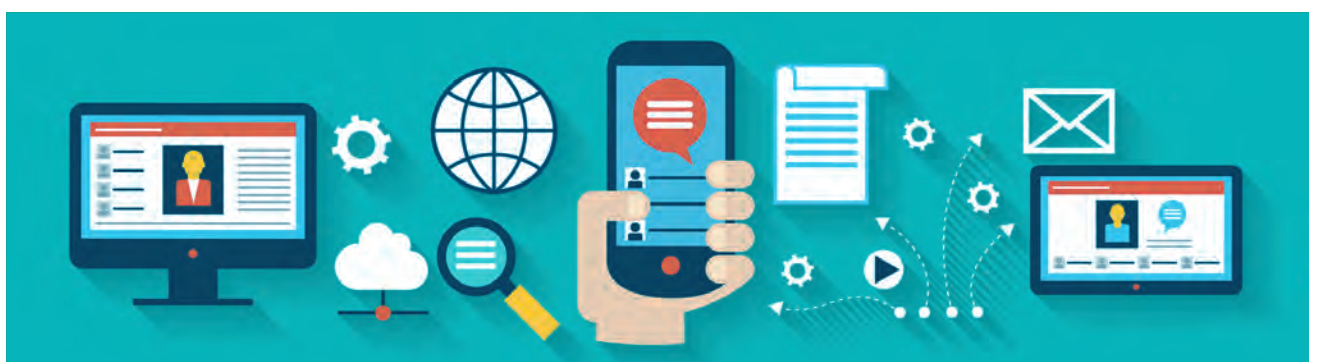
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IMT GZB



CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR & DATA

In the coming years, the extent of integration of analytics and decision making will drive an organisation's success. However, this path isn't a well-trodden one. The question then arises -how do organisations obtain the ends they seek, how do they derive meaning from data? How do they strategize in order to stay ahead; what will define their view of matters, the perspective they take, the purpose, the directions and the actions stemming from these views. Which policies will define the concrete actions and which ones will fill the gap between ends and means?

If the answer to maintaining a competitive edge and defining one's strategy is - understanding consumer behaviour, then what is better than studying it through data analytics. But is it really that simple?

The stakes are high as the International Data Corporation estimates global business investments in D&A will surpass \$200 billion a year by 2020.

A research conducted by Duke University and Deloitte LLP, suggests that even though the spending on analytics has increased and is set to increase manifolds in the coming three years, the effect of analytics on company wide performance has been modest. Why do then organisations plan to increase their spending on analytics without seeing any concrete difference in company's

performance.

Analytics may define our thoughts, give us ideas and insights, define our goals, expertise and perceptions, set our performance and expectations besides providing general guidance for specific actions in pursuit of particular ends. It also is the key contributor to development and execution of business strategy as it supplies information across channels such as untapped markets, emerging trends across functions etc. But then, what is stopping companies from leveraging this key resource?

The answer to the paradox lies in the details.

Today, data is ubiquitous; the differentiator then becomes finding the right insights from the junk or creating value out of the mass available. It also means having a clear well-defined goal in place, having concrete tools to measure success, understanding "which data points" will help us drive to the answers we seek. This last step, though seems obvious, is often ignored; as organisations tend to first access or create data and then decide what is to be done with it. In such a scenario, having clearly defined marketing goals in the first place will define the best use of data. This starts with asking questions - Is the goal to help improve business performance? To jumpstart process and cost efficiency? To drive strategy and accelerate change? To increase market share? To innovate more effectively? Or all of these?

Further, harnessing the power of

Swasti Arya

About the Author

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Markezone 2019

analytics across various functions requires integration. If data is disjointed and lacks coherence and variables through which it can be matched across functions of an organisation, that too in a timely manner, it loses its meaning and usefulness.

Further, to understand consumer behaviour, one also needs to be have a 360 degree view, ie, understanding of each and every possible touchpoint for communication and purchase and ensuring brand's presence at each of the relevant ones. In order to develop consumer friendly and customised experiences which ensure customer delight, it is important to understand the drivers behind behaviours and analytics provides the impetus for this.

An equally important role in integrating analytics is played by the data scientists, who help the organisation to reach those insights challenging business decisions. Too often, having a focus on the right technology and tools overlooks and underestimates the significance of

the people and organizational components required to build a successful D&A function.

Choosing the right people for this role, then, becomes crucial. A good analyst must be able to look beyond the set expectations and help define the problem rather than take requests as they are stated. Having a detailed understanding of how algorithms work, being clear of strategy and objective, understanding market requirements by interacting directly with consumers and ensuring that IT , data analytics and marketing are all aligned makes for a good analyst.

Another important aspect not to be missed is the online channel , through which we can separate, cost effectively ,the suspects from the prospects and accelerate customer conversion through the sales funnel along with optimizing "data-driven marketing" by tying each piece of content to metrics like opens, reads, downloads etc. Data doesn't necessary always have causal effect and a good analyst needs to map the different drivers to business questions.

Understanding the nature of markets being analysed helps in ensuring that drivers lead to outcomes ; instead of outcomes leading to drivers. Today , buying is a continuous and dynamic process and the way an organisation forms, formats and sequences its content must adapt accordingly with the goal of capturing interest and generating awareness.

But just having insights and integrating data analytics doesn't guarantee success; leadership and stakeholders need accountability as well courage to undertake actions and course corrections which may require deviation from current paths. The right structure and internal environment along with the alignment with future goals and strategy becomes paramount.

Today companies have immense scope for customization and delivering customer delight with the presence of exponential growth in markets , competitors, and consumers within a challenging environment .Delivering the best experiences , then, at the right time through the right channel requires a proactive approach in order to realise gains and inferences from the right set of data, the systems operating it , and the people analysing it . Having competing priorities for limited funds, organisations need a clear commitment to improve experience for each stakeholder involved. The ones who are able to anticipate and provide even before customers know that they need something, will achieve growth.



WOKE MARKETING

Every marketer dreams of developing a brand that resonated with people, and people also want to be like that brand. To grab a hold on the future market, marketers prefer to stay with children. They believe in the fact that what children need today will become the demand for prospective consumers later on. Consumer market always keeps on changing so do our marketing strategies. So, let's segment the market based on people who have the same chronological location in history and share the same experiences and have similar beliefs and behaviors based on their experiences. After segmenting, we can observe our consumer fall into either of these categories:- Traditionalist (Born before 1946), Babyboomers(1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1979), Generation Y(1980-2000) and Generation Z(born after 2000).

We all have heard about the buzzword "Millennials,"

so who are these millennials and why everyone around the place is concerned about them. A millennial is a group of people who are born between 1980-2000 and grew up with access to smartphones, social networks, and all the other digital technology in use today. Studies indicate that by 2020, Millennials or Gen Y are to be 50% of the workforce and by the year 2025 this number is expected to jump to 75% . Moreover, if we talk about millennials in terms of the population, then this statistic will give us an idea about why millennials are so much on hype.

We observe that contribution of millennials in the consumer market is high and they are technologically well advanced. To cater such consumers marketing companies play around two traits that make up the fundamental DNA of most Millennials, these are sociability and urgency. To give everyone a sense of understanding lets see the bird's eye view on influence factors which influenced our Indian population from time to time.

Due to change in the consumer's influence factors, people are becoming more and more interested in righting the wrongs of the past, social causes and supporting brands whose values align with their own. So, companies, who used to think only about creating product or services, and marketing and selling them, are now being forced to make social, political and human decisions and statement to keep their existing customers and attract their target audience. Being corporately responsible it is not the new thing, but due to the invention and continual evolution of social media, the organization has to market their CSR activities to maintain and develop a connection with their followers. Nowadays, consumers have a positive image for



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companies who supports a social or environmental issue, the company can gain high revenues from the customers whose ideologies match with the company's vision and thus serves as a great incentive.

Loyalty among millennials is very less, and millennials connect with the brand, and if the brand is not able to represent their personality then they will switch, and if the brand is not socially accepted among millennials, then reachability of those brands among millennials is poor. Today, if you want a millennial customer to stay loyal to your brand there is a mantra, you have to make them believe in you, in your brand and everything you represent. You present them a personal touch that radiates through the sale. Now brands are no longer selling an item, they are selling their team, their values, and their idea. And if brands can figure out how to achieve this sense of belongingness through messaging, they've uncovered the key.

Transparency has never been more relevant and essential. You cannot fake, the people and the team behind a brand are no longer different from the brand itself. In today's landscape,

brands have been granted their wish and are judged like people for the things they stand up for and for the things they stand up against. You can't fake wokeness, sooner or later the truth comes out, and fakeness can destroy the brand's image, and customers might lose faith in the brand, and they might lose its customers base forever. The problem that many brands face is ensuring that when they come in front and take a position of being woke; it doesn't miss the line.

Brands are now inspired and rewarded for showing their customers who they are and what values they follow. However, it is not always straight and dry. And therein lies the danger when you take a stand and try to be a woke brand. Let's take an example of Gucci; when Gucci made a donation to "March For Our Lives," and they said that they are proud to join this movement and made a donation of \$500,000.

Some people hated it.
Some people loved it.

Taking such a stance is not easy. However, it can be scary sometimes. You're going to have your critics, but the win is when you know how to handle them and just need to be part of your plan. Many digital marketing networks have started offering filtering measures so brands can choose where they would or would not like their ad to appear, one such that that facility is provided by Google AdWords. This could be one possible solution for

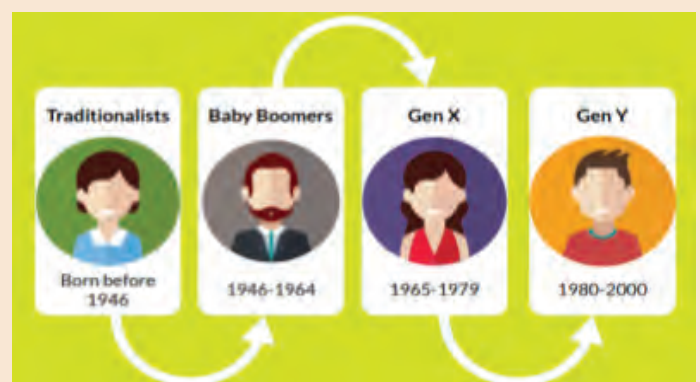


the brands so that they do not fall into any controversies and can stay from backlashes. In the end, people don't want the brands that capitalize on a crisis with an ad. In opposite people just want brands to take a stand against something and take a bit of risk. In response, the brand should remain real and not fake in the name of wokeness, their CSR should not become a marketing strategy to attract customers on the contrary they should believe in what they are doing and align it according to the company's vision. Stay Alert! Stay Woke!



Country	Gen Y * in million	Total in million	%
US	70	340	21%
India	426	1200	36%
China	218	1300	17%

Steeplase Research on Gen Y in Asia (India and China)
 *Numbers indicate people in age group of 10 to 30.
 **India has a large population even younger than Gen Y



Examples



THE PERFECT WOKE MIX

About the Author

Piyush Mishra recently graduated from UPES (Dehradun), armed with a degree in Computer Science. A technical guy with equal interest in business management, he maintains a blog, www.thebrainwrites.com, publishing content now and then on issues that leave him musing for hours at a stretch.

Indian news publishers are banking on a newfound recipe for delivering masala filled content—failed woke marketing campaigns by the big shots. For the audience not familiar with the woke model, it's a strategy wherein brands leverage consumer sensitivity and opinions on current happenings for product promotion. The issue could be anything under the sky—entertainment, politics, socio-economic matters, etc. The advertisements of Dove [1] are synonymous to this marketing strategy; the brand focuses on racial discrimination, a dark chapter in world history. However, viewers are split on the response, with some thoroughly impressed by the bold initiative and others utterly disgusted by Dove's gimmick. If this example has piqued your interest, then trust me, there are umpteen other stories on the internet you should read now!

Before diving in further, let me discuss briefly about woke marketing to ensure the reader doesn't go astray. Documented history shines light on the Americans as the pioneers of woke advertisements, selling on the quintessential 'American dream' concept during the great depression of the nineteenth century. Moving a few decades ahead to the seventies and eighties, political upending across the globe (Ronald Regan's antics are discussed in inner circles even today) allowed brands like Coca Cola [2] to come up with contentious slogans and product

launches. The marketing was effective enough to unite people in the name of beverages, giving Coke windfall profits and dominance over Pepsi in the Cola war. Speaking of the modern day, 'woke washing', an urban slang for publicity via associating with a cause, has picked up pace and popularity; it's now a primary arsenal in the marketing toolbox. I could go on with a plethora of other case studies, but these seem enough to emphasize on the presence of woke marketing. Brands need to focus on how to play with this double-edged sword. The strategy helps rake in the moolah and leads for some organizations, while for others, it's the easy way to downfall [3]. The failure stories are the endgame of not playing the woke card cautiously.

Like any brand conscious consumer out there, I'm not impervious to the influence companies exert through marketing. So, I now put forth a few words of enlightenment for organizations indulging in brand activism or toying with the consumers' sentiments—to save themselves from the backlash of a disastrous marketing attempt. First and foremost, companies should go with woke branding if and only if their product or service consummates with the message they want to deliver. Gillette in the beginning of 2019 released a short film on YouTube with the slogan 'the best men can be'. The ad failed spectacularly and ended up in the list of the most disliked videos on YouTube! Hell, moderators of Gillette's channel

even started deleting brutally honest comments on the video [4]. The company should have resorted to making men's grooming products instead of preaching how men should behave.

Secondly, brands should analyze the sensitivity of the topic they want to demonstrate their stance on. For example, woke marketing on cow, pig, etc. in India means death knell for the brand. Similarly, a plan of liberalism-centered marketing in a country like Saudi Arabia is not worth the time and money. Brands should get the stats on demographics right before aligning with customer values.

The field of statistics lays great emphasis on the terms sample and population. A sample is small section representative of the population in general. And this brings me to the third suggestion. I'm sure creative designers take feedback from the brand's loyal fanbase before scaling the advertising campaign's reach. The success/failure of the campaign greatly depends on the feedback received. I humbly request any marketing executive reading this to consider diversity and

inclusion when choosing the sample for reviewing the campaign. The review is imperative for last minute improvements before the advertisement goes live. While the sample won't be a mirror image of the global population's reaction, it won't be a bland simulacrum.

Finally, a brand shouldn't go overboard in affecting the audience. An effective, manipulative marketing engagement ought to be subtle in connecting with the viewer; a larger-than-life gimmick is unwelcoming and annoys the intended consumer. Nike's promotion featuring Colin Kaepernick [5] is mind-blowing when it comes to tugging at the viewer's heart without any melodrama. Other brands could take a lesson or two from Nike's publicity techniques. The shoemaker has not only seen a

rise in revenue, but the advertisements helped cast a shadow on the imbroglio that recently troubled the company—the revelation of pathetic working conditions in Nike's offshore manufacturing units. A double whammy? Certainly.



On a concluding note, we viewers shouldn't be overtly sensitive to woke marketing. Take such advertisements with a grain of salt. And no, I'm not siding with the advertisers on this topic. They need to understand the implications of toying with the consumer's feelings. Sympathize with the audience, but only within limits. And never take an ambiguous stand, for it crushes the brand's individuality!



About the Author

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BEING WOKE

Is it Worth It?

Standing in front of a mirror as a brand, analysing every angle to make my face known, I ask myself what is it that I am doing? What is it I can do more? Should I take a stand on the social affairs? Will it help me in long run?

In this competitive market what am I even selling now? Is it just the products or along with that I'm selling myself (brand). According to Forbes a person's first impression is formed in just 7 seconds even before he opens his mouth. Same goes for the brand, even before a customer buys the product, but how does a brand forms its image? Is woke marketing a way to go about it. Woke marketing is the brand's decision to take a stand on current affairs which are unjust, it can result in both cheers and backlash. So one might think that why go for woke marketing when it might result in backlash but greater the risk, greater is the reward.

Let's take an example of Airbnb when in its ad called "We accept", they made a bold statement against President Trump's temporary order of banning refugees to enter America. They showed the ad with the words 'We believe no matter who you are, where you're from, who you love or who you worship, we all belong. The world is more beautiful the more you accept.' This helped the brand to state that it has no-nonsense policy on race and

gender.

Taking another example of Yoplait a yogurt brand who took a stand against mum-shaming where women face the criticism and judgement over breastfeeding, working or drinking alcohol. Yoplait in its campaign 'Mom on' tells the audience to celebrate the way we want to in our unique ways. The ad campaign connected deeply with the moms and helped to increase the brand interest by 1461%. This number makes eyes fall from our head but this is what genuine concern over social issue does to your brand.

Consumers have become smart these days, in fact smarter so trying to fool them with a mask of CSR will definitely result in the end of the brand (doomsday for the brand), in another terms 'Goodwashing' won't work for them instead they will be called upon and shamed. Pepsi's ad of Black Lives featuring Kendall Jenner is the classic example of the backlash, a brand can receive. So, it's imperative for the brand to strike a balance between consumer values and being credible. 92% people view a brand in positive light if they take a stand on social issue.

The next issue a brand faces while following the concept of woke marketing is deviating from the path and making CSR a primary objective rather than secondary. If this happens the company will lose track of what it was actually formed to do. So the 'proliferation' opinion of people states that CSR activity actually helps in increasing the profits of the company along with employees' commitment towards the company, failing which will add to the opportunity cost to the organisation.

Let's look at Nike to understand further when the new spokesperson of Nike,

Kaepernick, knelt during the National Anthem as a leader of movement among National Football League to protest against the police violence against people of colour incurring the attack of Mr. Trump, when he was still a candidate. The ad ends with a tagline 'Believe in something even if means sacrificing everything'. It resulted in Nike's stock being all time high after this ad.

Hence, company's stand on a social issue is as much a boon to company as to society though it might receive some backlash from some group of people but in the long run, the company can project its image however it wants to.



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IT'S TIME TO 'WOKE' UP

Woke marketing is a well-known term in the present world, which is greatly influenced by social media and other equivalent platforms. Woke is to be aware of the wrong things happening in and around your surroundings. It has become easier to get connected to every part of the world and know any happenings taking place in any corner of the world with the advent of social media. It has not only helped our connectivity but has also given us a platform to share and stand against any wrongdoings in the world.

Origin

Earlier brands were not engaged in social controversies for fear of losing customers. Nowadays, in every business school, 'Corporate Social Responsibility' is a compulsory unit in marketing. It mainly describes the impact on the business on actively participating in social, environmental, and economic issues. Even before the evolution of the internet and social media,

people were aware of scandals and incidents, they also shared their opinion but around their dinner tables or among their friend circles while shopping grocery or playing cards. Their idea could not be heard or supported by masses.

But now be it any political issue, riots or movements, the discussion starts online, continue in your workplace, flow into your evening tea breaks and appears again during your weekend activities.

Brands nowadays should reflect the moral values and ideologies that their consumers pursue. This is a way to get more attached to consumers. They are bringing social agendas through advertisements. But in India, it works quite differently.

In 2015, Anouk- a clothing brand, in its campaign 'Bold is Beautiful' advertised a lesbian couple waiting for their parents seeking their approval for each other. In 2017, Urban clap, in its campaign 'My first Women's Day' showed a mother bringing her transitioned son in front of the society, and seeking approval for the same. In 2018, All Out, in its campaign 'Stand by tough moms' advertised a mother trying to discipline her son and getting



humiliated by her family, but her toughness is shown when she quietly takes the abuse and wait for approval from the male head of the family, showing a typical Indian patriarchal family.

Impact on People

Creating controversies- The Nike controversial ad which featured NFL football player Colin Kaepernick, who did not stand for their national anthem, depicting the message that “If you believe in something, stand for it even if it means risking everything.” The ad resulted in boycotting Nike products, but it also earned revenue of \$6 billion for the company and increased its brand awareness to a great extent.

Authenticity-In recent research about the same Nike’s advertisement, 60% of respondents said they felt positive about the advertisement. This shows consumers expect brands to take their stand on issues and consider it as their responsibility. Out of these respondents, 73% said it was appropriate for Nike to take its stand on the topic, and only 45% of the 60 % Nike genuinely commits to the values it introduces in its advertisements.

Impact on Brands

The recent campaign by Gillette influenced by the #MeToo movement and the poisonous masculinity promoted men to support women, to be the “Best a

man can be” and not just be the “best a man can get.” The campaign brought a mixed response from the viewers some supporting the initiative while some are arguing it to stay out of the matter. But whatever response the brand receives may it be good or bad it always results in favor of the brand as it creates publicity and increases brand awareness for the company.

Opinion

Brands now days are also equivalent to humans. Advertisement campaigns are a mirror to both the best and the worst that a society can be. To completely abandon the responsibility on the brands would not be correct but not allowing them to participate in trying to shape the prevailing perceptions in the society would also be unjust. The primary responsibility lies on us as we are the victims as well as the culprits of such mishappenings in our society.

Seema Behera
IIM Rohtak





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INDUSTRY BUZZ

A PERFECT DEFENCE TO



Aditi Syal

Founder & Director



Right at the start of this year, I met a person who owns a retreat in one of the farms in Nasik, Maharashtra. He got connected through his dear friend, who recommended us for taking care of his Resort's brand marketing. Since the customer lived in the capital city, our team met him enough times before signing off the proposal.

The campaign kicked off pretty well, and in the first week itself we began designing thoughtful creative for social media.

What do you think happened next?

- The perfect case of customer expecting us to cast a spell for increasing traction from the next day. As a result of this, we agreed to run promotions, boosted posts and replicated copies devised by the customer as against the newly crafted strategy.

The Result

- Increased irrelevant followers and trashy content, which was published without studying analytics and audience behaviour.

The Customer Mind-Set

All this while, we have been reading articles that are biased towards the customer. Very little or close to no content is available that speaks about the reasons for failures of marketing strategies despite genuine hard work by marketers. With just a few years of experience of running a content agency, I sometimes pity brand managers, and my heart goes out to the content marketers.

Customer loyalty is the long haul. Loyalty is what helped brands survive the last decade. With the boom in the adjacent industries,

marketers should also master the art of emotional intelligence. The more technical marketing gets, the more human it must become. As creative folks, we must learn to acknowledge our strengths, our expertise before preaching our associates that customer is always right.

Content Is King, Not The Customer

Raise your hands if your client is unhappy with your performance the day 1.

Relatable, isn't it? You must understand client psychology. He comes with his baggage of failures and skepticism. He will put across unreasonable questions, pester you to bring down the service quote and demand A++ quality. And, what lets him down again is you believing in his wrongly built marketing strategy before another attempt to failing him once again.

What? Are you scared of confronting the customer as an expert in your domain? You think you will shoo him away by telling tell him in his face that his plan is shoddy and one cannot aim for the stars with contemporary content ideas? In my opinion, the customer is waiting for you to be unequivocal while showing him the causeway to producing better content than his rivals.

Content Gestation Period - Heard this before?

The best content has a gestation period! You heard that right. Each content piece comes with a gestation period, and you need to try out different forms of content before setting your content boat to sail in the marketing pool.

Trying out forms of content

There is nothing like 'Bad Content' or 'Good Content'. All content is good; you should know WHO WHEN HOW to market it well.

-Aditi Syal

'WHY CAMPAIGNS FAIL'

means doing the simple math of A/B testing and choosing the best result that suits the variance of your marketing strategy. Each content theme fades out and fades in given the circumstantial dynamics of the industry. Keep producing content that is industry specific and at the same time orderly.

Learn the art of delayed gratification - a term that defines why you need to change the way you think and wait for beneficial results.

Take the single elusive study of Zomato. They have been unifying their content with current trends and produce some fantastic, chirpy, and value-adding content so much so that you are compelled to go and order. Don't leave out Swiggy! They are doing some tremendous TVC's - the next affluent content segment after print media.

The Power of Organic Content

In the age of consumerism and materialism, we need to traffic in the fresh air. That fresh air is organic content. While they say, anyone who stops learning is old! Same is the case where - you can not unlearn the art of organic

material. It is there and will always be the age-old form of marketing. NO matter how much you spend on boosting your content on social media pages - it is only going to increase your burn rate with no value. Do you not want to repeat customers? Are you not game for genuine followers?

Instead of forming hopes for an unrealistic set of followers on your page, why not trend the organic way? Build something that lasts forever and not just trends for a day!

People don't find content by mistake, or by accident. Every content plan needs a complementary promotion plan that combines paid, owned, and earned media

-Matthew Gratt



CONTENT MARKETING

FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE



Ashutosh Kumar Singh

Co-Founder & CEO

TSD The Social Digital

If we speak about the myriad of dimensions of marketing, today businesses are working hard to change people perception from “Why should I watch this ad” to “Oh, this ad belonged to that brand, right? These people are bringing out important topics through their advertisements”. And to a large extent, they are becoming successful as well, thanks to a new marketing strategy that is founded on the key principle of creating advertisements around trending social topics.

This involves taking up a topic that is currently the talk of the society, and then connecting it with your brand. The resultant content is then used to promote the said brand through newspapers, hoardings, video clips.....you get the idea. However, the fact that these advertisements are working and that companies are spending their millions on them, leads to a very important question. Why? Why is the strategy of creating ads around social issues working out so well?

Typically, there are two schools of thought around any trending social topic, both of them are in 9 out of 10 cases vehemently opposed to each other. Brands take hold of one of these, usually the more popular one, and create their advertisements in a way that

it supports the same. As for the other, less popular viewpoint, the adverts typically have a sarcastic take on them. With this strategy, regardless of whether you agree or disagree with the brand's opinion, you are definitely going to stop for a look the next time you come across one of its ads.

Of course, sometimes these strategies backfire and brands end up losing more than they gain.

The question then becomes: Why do brands take this huge risk? Why do they delve into matters that are not directly related with their products. The answer is Woke marketing.

Today, most brands in the market have multiple competitors that offer similar or better quality products and similar, or lesser prices. As such, what makes a consumer choose one brand over the others? The deciding factor in these cases is usually something marketers call “Brand Value”. Today, the most successful companies in the world, whether you consider carmaker's or electronic appliance manufacturers, or companies in some other domain - are those that complement high quality products with compelling brand narratives. And this is something which is achieved by “Woke Marketing” as discussed in the preceding paragraphs. As far as the issue of damage to the brand

is concerned, smart marketing teams can always sidestep the danger by avoiding contentious issues and only creating advertisements around social-emotional topics, that have a very clear definition of what's right and what's wrong - and going with the right, of course.

Whether it's surf-excel with its “Daag acche hain” theme of ads, or whether it's the King of advertising “Coca-Cola” with its specially created bottle series (Share it with your XX, where XX can be your dad, crush, or a friend), smart brands have brought their Woke marketing game on point and are reaping the rewards.

Startups are rapidly adapting to this novel marketing strategy as well. For them, it has the added advantage of not requiring significant marketing budgets, as the most important factor that ensures the effectiveness of the strategy is the content. As long as the content is good, short, snappy (it can be text, video, images, audio, or literally anything else!) a good response is almost certain - thanks to a ready-to-consume audience, which are key to Woke Marketing.

Companies like Paytm, Zomato, and Flipkart are highly relevant examples of startups that have used Woke Marketing to great effect.

While there are people who are of the opinion that Woke Marketing requires the backing of a big budget to make it successful, I disagree. Content and creativity is the key to this marketing strategy rather than only deep pockets. However, as someone with a long association with the startup ecosystem I can tell you this: While charting out a roadmap, please make sure that you balance the information about your services/products, with the creative/social aspect of the post. The ideal ratio is 60:40, subject to some variance depending upon

the nature of the campaign. After all, creativity and social awareness is all well and good, but it's important not to digress from the fact that ultimately, good marketing should bring in more sales.

If you are a marketer and new to Woke Marketing, I hope I was able to give you some food for thought.







IN IT TO WIN IT

Candid Reflections

Mahindra & Mahindra



Preet Inder Singh Kahlon
PGDM Marketing 2018-2019

My experience with Mahindra began on a positive note several weeks before reaching the headquarters for the first day of induction. Mahindra was very prompt in sending across information about my project, exact deliverables and the “Good to knows” weeks before starting. So, the bar was set extremely high from the get-go and what I expected upon my arrival was an extremely professional work culture.

On the first day of induction, I realized that it wasn't just a quality project experience that I would witness but also an environment that fosters interpersonal growth. I was surrounded by some of the most brilliant minds from other top business schools. The induction program focused on exposure to the leadership of the group through various sessions, highlighting what the group stands for and what to look for in the future. This entire experience showed me how seriously the management took the GMC program and how they expected absolute quality work from everyone involved.

Upon my interaction with others, I realized that the projects allocated to my colleagues were as challenging as mine, if not more. Over the next few weeks, all of us are going to be put through tough situations and be given

tasks that are almost impossible to accomplish, with the expectation of completing them, but then that's what you expect from a group who's philosophy is to push above their weight and become the best version of oneself, to truly Rise.

What stood out for me was the philosophy of not just going after profit in the business decisions but explore avenues that make the world a better place. The top management getting behind such decisions, focusing on business areas that aren't conventional and giving them the required time to grow is also a big boost for ambitious employees that want to make a difference.

Our interaction with Mr. Anand Mahindra was also extremely fruitful. He is hands down, one of the best orators I've had the pleasure of meeting. His eye for detail and ability understand the hidden meaning from words being

spoken is outstanding. Upon moving into my particular sector and role, I met experts in their particular domains who had important insights for me to apply to my project and towards the understanding of the industry in general.

The next few weeks at Mahindra were a strong reality check. The goals and objectives you set for yourself initially seem easy to achieve and realistic at first

but only once you start the process, you realize where you stand. The first few weeks for me were about the company giving us a glimpse of where we can be, the level of work and responsibility we can eventually earn, post which, the field is where your grit is really put to test.

It's just as they say, nothing worth having in life comes easy. The nature of my assignment was extremely travel intensive and



Mahindra

while it's physically and mentally draining, it gives you the chance to gather something more valuable than can be expressed in numbers. What I had the privilege to gather is an in depth understanding of who our customer really is, how they think, what they associate the product and company with in their minds.

On my journey through multiple cities across the country, I understood how people of certain regions could differ immensely from the same segment in another city.

I learnt how to never classify who our customer is or why they buy the brand. I learnt that being an Indian brand is one of the most powerful assets of the group and how much potential lies in leveraging that. I learnt exactly how much trust and faith people put in homegrown brands. I made new friends; in places I would have never expected. I learnt how to deal with various kind of personalities, from people who were exceptionally aggressive to some that required a lot of push to voice their concerns. I learnt how to manage time; how much difference 10 minutes can make for traffic congestion. I learnt how if you don't keep yourself hydrated, the sun in the hottest markets can take you down.

I learnt that while travel for work seems very fancy from the outside, it's by no means easy. It's this grind that makes the final prize seem worth it. I learnt that weekends don't exist if your objective is to deliver quality results. I learnt how to push myself to work through 12-hour days. I learnt that no matter how good you are at your work, sometimes you need the help of other people, and how sometimes asking for that help is the best decision you can take.

The main takeaway has been that the road less travelled is so for a reason and should you choose to wander out on it, be prepared mentally. Something that was certain was that when it comes to Mahindra, the way to crack the internship is to find the calm between the chaos.



Candid Reflections

Abbott Healthcare



Arnob Ghosh

PGDM Marketing 2018-2019

The MBA-life, a phase of two years that every starry-eyed boy or girl enters with a bag-loaded with preparation, expectations and above all, aspirations. In essence, it is an infliction point from where your life has an infinite number of possible paths to follow. Every decision made, every prioritization has an impact on what value these two years are to add to your life.

The first major infliction point for an MBA student comes at the time of the summer placements- a phase of constant pressure and internal conflict between being placed early and relieving yourself of the stress, and mustering enough courage to wait for the right fit for you. The campus comes alive with opinions, feedbacks, mentoring, anything and everything that the peers and the seniors can provide to help you go through this process smoothly. In such a situation, one often finds himself more confused than not, overwhelmed with so much invited and uninvited information, which may or may not be true.

It is important for any first-year student to prepare oneself properly for this situation. The simplest solution would be to keep your own eyes and mind open, attend all the guest lectures and pre-placement sessions done by the recruiters so as to get a better understanding of not just the organization, but also what the firm believes in, what kind of

people they are looking for, and finally, whether you see yourself as a right fit for them.

My journey towards Abbott started in a very similar fashion. Before the summer placement season, Abbott was just a fancy brand to me, one I knew very little about, barring the large PediaSure bottles that you find in practically every pharmacy these days. Once I got to know that the company is visiting the campus for recruitment, I found myself genuinely interested to know more about it and find out if it could be the ideal place for me to spend my summer. The pre-placement session was a very well-organized presentation that spoke loads about the company, as well as the dedication and perfection with which the organization delivers. The experiences shared by some of the students from our senior batch who interned in the company was the icing on the cake, and before I went to bed that night, I had one company shortlisted in my priority list.

Being fortunate enough to get through to one of my top three companies for a summer internship program, I arrived in Mumbai with a whole lot of expectations, and an opportunity to apply all that I had learnt over the last ten months, both inside and outside the classroom. The first couple of days of the program was spent in induction programs,

getting to know the leadership, the company, how it operates, the environment it's currently functioning in, the main challenges it is currently facing- essentially a crash-course to get the interns from six reputed B-schools from across the country up to speed so we can make the most of the coming two months. It was clear from these two days that the summer internship program in Abbott is a very well structured and thought out system, with every intern allocated one guide and one mentor from the management and senior management teams respectively.

The very next day, I was put in a meeting room with the Regional Training Manager for the company, and my training started- this included learning about the company's presence in the concerned market space, as well as the therapy that I would be working on for the next couple of months. Being a scientifically superior brand, understanding the medical therapy was a key factor for anyone working for Abbott, and I was treated no differently. A grueling couple of days, with close to 14 hours of near classroom lectures, followed by countless more hours of self-study put me in a position where I could comprehend the instructions given to me by my guides. The great thing about my

experience with Abbott was the level of independency the management allowed me, despite the fact that a two-month schedule was already drafted carefully by my guide, I was at liberty to make changes wherever I felt necessary based on the requirement and progress of my project. It was clear to me that at the end of the day, it was my project, and I could call the shots whenever I wanted. The next few weeks saw me meeting and interviewing the veterans from the healthcare sector, top doctors, distributors and other channel partners, and even representatives from competitor organization. All in all, an overflow of information and knowledge, which all played a key role in not just the project that I had undertaken, but also for the overall development of my understanding of this industry and this organization.

The final week of the internship program was probably the most stressful,

as the final presentations were being scheduled and the hard work, ideas, concepts, and results, all were to be evaluated by people who hardly miss a beat. The minutes spent within that meeting room full of years upon years of experience and expertise was one of the biggest takeaways for me from the entire internship program. The way the senior management looked at the business problem, how they analysed it, how they brought it down from an idea in that starry-eyed intern's mind to a reasonable and actionable business solution is, in my opinion, the most valuable learning experience I've had till date.

In hindsight, all the hustle, the stress, the mania of the first year of MBA boils down to this wonderful two-month period where you get to not only showcase all that you've got, but also learn so much more. One can only hope that more and more companies treat their summer internship programs the same way, and help mould the leadership of tomorrow.



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