BUSINESS INSIGHTS }

LATEST HAPPENINGS, DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH IN MANAGEMENT

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Marketing technology: Top trends shaping B2B marketing in 2024!

The significant role of mobile-first strategies and content marketing in regional languages should not be overlooked given the array of languages our country has.

By Gopika Nair

The landscape of B2B marketing is a rapidly evolving segment in India. There is no denying that this growth is driven by digital transformation, the adoption of emerging technologies, and personalised customer service. Industry leaders are identifying key trends that are reshaping strategies and defining the future of B2B marketing.

92% of B2B marketers consider account-based marketing (ABM) a key strategy and 60% have seen increased engagement from their ABM efforts, according to a study by Sirius Decisions. **"ABM is gaining traction, especially among large Indian corporations and IT services companies targeting global clients,"** Hariom Seth, founder, Tagglabs, told BrandWagon Online. With the rapid digital transformation in India, there's a strong focus on personalised customer experiences. Indian B2B firms are investing in CRM systems and data analytics to better understand their culturally diverse clientele, he added. Personalisation results in a measurable lift in business outcomes for 88% of companies, boosts conversion rates by 63%, enhances overall customer experience by 61%, and increases visitor engagement by 57%, according to a study by Aberdeen Group. The significant role of mobile-first strategies and content marketing in regional languages should not be overlooked given the array of languages our country has. WhatsApp is uniquely popular for business communication in India, and social selling on LinkedIn is gaining momentum, he added.

AI and machine learning: A growing influence

From what is understood, emerging technologies like AI and machine learning are transforming B2B marketing practices.51% of B2B marketers are using AI to enhance their marketing efforts, with 58% of those seeing improved targeting and personalisation, reveals Salesforce. "AI and machine learning are revolutionising B2B marketing by enabling better audience segmentation and personalised campaigns. Large IT services companies are leading the way in leveraging AI for predictive lead scoring and personalised marketing." Saif Ahmad Khan, founder, LEDSAK, said. Chatbots and AI-driven analytics are becoming integral to the B2B landscape, helping marketers understand customer behaviour and optimise campaigns. "AI-powered tools are making marketing messages more effective and improving ROI through programmatic advertising," he added,

Effective lead generation strategies

When it comes to generating high-quality leads, the approach is multifaceted. "Gated assets like whitepapers, eBooks, and case studies are highly effective for attracting interested prospects. Webinars and virtual events offer real-time engagement and demonstrate expertise, while LinkedIn remains a key platform for B2B lead generation," Khan said. 61% of B2B marketers consider LinkedIn their top channel for lead generation, reveals Hubspot. Consistent, authentic engagement is crucial for generating high-quality leads. B2B decision-makers seek companies that provide valuable content and flexibility. "Leveraging existing client relationships for referrals is also becoming increasingly important," Arunima Singh, COO, Asymmetrique, said.

Content that resonates

Content remains a critical element in engaging B2B audiences. "Case studies with local success stories and whitepapers on Indian regulatory environments are in high demand. Video content, especially in regional languages, is gaining traction, along with webinars and interactive infographics," Seth said. Webinars, podcasts, and interactive formats are proving to be effective as they recreate the engagement of physical discussions and build confidence among decision-makers, Singh added. The current trends in B2B marketing in India are marked by a focus on personalization, the growing influence of AI and machine learning, effective lead generation strategies, and content that resonates with diverse audiences. As digital transformation advances, B2B marketers must evolve their strategies to keep pace with changing client needs and remain competitive. (FE03092024)

How E-Commerce has driven the surge in India's festive gifting market

A study by Redseer Strategy Consultants suggests that India is expected to witness an increase of 18–20% in online shopping during the festive season.

By Suman Patra

With the arrival of days-long regional festivals, the Indian gifting industry is set to witness an unprecedented boom. The market currently boasts a considerable size of $30 billion, with e-commerce platforms emerging as a key player, contributing to market growth in recent years. The convenience and comfort of online shopping and the appeal of grabbing exclusive limited-time deals are the two prominent factors relating to consumers' changing purchasing habits during the festival period.

The boost in consumers relying on e-commerce platforms suggests that they now expect smooth and effortless shopping experiences across online and offline

channels. With the integration of an Omni channel strategy, retailers can bridge this gap between digital and physical space. Even offline stores are bound to reach a potential growth of 20%. Hence, employing an Omni channel approach becomes critical for brands to cater to the rising demands of consumers during this period.

A study by Redseer Strategy Consultants suggests that India is expected to witness an increase of 18–20% in online shopping during the festive season. Owing to 14 crore enthusiastic online shoppers, this surge is anticipated to result in INR 90,000 crore worth of Gross Merchandise Value (GMV). A considerable portion of this increase in value is driven by the sale of high-value products such as smartphones and appliances.

According to a recent report by Axis My India, 23% of consumers are looking forward to increasing their shopping activities during the festive season. Interestingly, Tier 2 and Tier 3 regions are also showing promising growth for online platforms. A major e-commerce player reported that 80% of its sales alone during the festive season were from small towns, which brought about 40 lakh new consumers for the brand.

In addition to this, the quick commerce industry in India is also gaining momentum as the festive season approaches. The augmentation of quick commerce is bringing a paradigm shift in consumer behaviour in terms of moving from traditional marketplaces to quick commerce transactions. According to the TeamLease report, the quick commerce industry is poised to witness an increase of 35% in sales during the holiday season. Major players in the sector are planning to hire more professionals to meet the rising demand for goods and to ensure smooth operations.

From beauty products to electronics and home decor items to the trendiest apparel, consumers are bombarded with multitudes of deals across different e-commerce and quick commerce platforms during the festive season. These discounting features create a sense of urgency and excitement in the minds of consumers and also implant a feeling of missing out on the greatest deals they could possibly get, which ultimately results in higher sales.

With high demand, the cash on delivery orders also increases, which can lead to a higher RTO (return to origin). However, by offering special payment discounts such as 10–20% off on the product by paying through debit or credit cards, brands can ensure a constant cash flow, curbing this issue as well.

In a country where celebrations are high-spirited and gifting is a vital part of the culture, e-commerce brands are presented with the golden opportunity to leverage this festive fervour and increase their sales. In India, they do not just serve as a marketplace but also as a catalyst for exponential economic growth. The peak season is not just a period for e-commerce platforms to heighten sales but also for developing enduring consumer relationships, strengthening brand loyalty, and making a profound impact in the minds and hearts of customers. (FE01092024)

In-feed shopping: A new frontier for e-commerce

Businesses can utilise this extensive user base and engagement levels by incorporating e-commerce functionalities within their social media platforms to facilitate transactions through shoppable posts and user-generated content.

By Kumar Saurav

Consumer shopping behaviour has undergone tremendous changes in the past few years. Brands are constantly trying to find innovative ways to make the shopping experience more seamless, engaging and personalised. Integration of e-commerce into social media platforms helps brands tap into the user segment who research products on social channels. According to the Global Web Index, around 54% of social browsers scout for products using social media. Businesses can utilise this extensive user base and engagement levels by incorporating e-commerce functionalities within their social media platforms to facilitate transactions through shoppable posts and user-generated content.

Unlike traditional e-commerce, social commerce allows users to complete their transactions within the social media environment without being redirected to a separate website. This enhances the user experience and helps boost sales. In-feed shopping helps users discover, research and purchase products within their social media feed. This harnesses the casual browsing patterns of users and helps showcase products/services in a non-intrusive manner by weaving it into the user's context.

Strategies That Pave the Way for Social Commerce Success
Create Engaging Content

Creating high-quality engaging content is crucial to grasp the attention of users, especially in a world where they are constantly bombarded with information. Images and videos would be of high quality so as to retain the attention of the user. Also, instead of relying only on images and video posts, interactive formats like polls, quizzes, and live Q&A sessions should also be explored to foster user engagement. Livestream shopping where hosts showcase products in real-time and answer questions related to it are extremely helpful in connecting with audiences at a deeper level and enhancing brand loyalty.

Collaborating with Influencers

Influencers help humanise a brand and add to its authenticity. Brands can leverage the targeted audiences of influencers to drive awareness for their products and services. When influencers endorse a product or service, it becomes more relatable and trustworthy and drives conversions.

Mobile Optimisation

Since the majority of social media users rely on mobile to scroll through their feeds, optimizing for smartphones is no longer an option, it is a necessity. A seamless mobile experience ranging from mobile-friendly content and quick page load times to easy navigation, facilitates a hassle-free user experience that improves conversion rates. Also, incorporating high-quality visuals alongside limiting the number of steps that a user has to take to complete the transaction process works wonders in streamlining the purchase process driving more sales.

Leveraging Data Analytics

Almost all social platforms have inbuilt analytics that help track customer behaviour and comprehend which content resonates well with the target audience

and which doesn't. The insights drawn from analytics can help track customer behaviour and identify trends to drive more effective campaigns. Brands can create more personalised experiences for their customers with detailed data on engagement, demographics and purchasing behaviour.

The Benefits of Integrating In-Feed Shopping Into E-commerce

- **Seamless Integration** – In-feed shopping reduces friction in the purchasing process, and allows users to stay on the platform they are already using without redirecting them to external websites, reducing the abandonment rates and improving conversions. The seamless integration between content and commerce facilitates the buying experience right in the user's feed.

- **Capitalises On Impulse Buying** – The modern consumers want instant gratification, They hate it when they have to leave the app that they are engaging on and take additional steps to complete a transaction. In-feed shopping entails shoppable posts where a product's video or image can be clicked on and purchased seamlessly. This streamlined process capitalises on impulse buying and fosters better conversions.

- **Enhanced Product Discovery** – Unlike traditional marketing, in-feed shopping transcends in-market audiences and helps tap into the consumer segment who is not actively looking for a product or service. Since products and services are embedded in the content that users are already consuming while scrolling through their feeds, this process promotes organic visibility and drives swift purchase decisions.

- **Better Customer Engagement** – Brands can enhance customer engagement by capitalizing on the visual appeal of social media and presenting their products and services in a more lifestyle-oriented manner through shoppable posts, ads and stories. This makes the shopping process more integrated and bridges the

emotional gap between the consumer and the brand, which subsequently increases the likelihood of conversion. (FE15092024)

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Fake social media handle threats to brand reputation

Social media accounts are an integral part of a brand's online presence

By Amit Relan

A brand takes several years to build a strong reputation and image. When it comes to social media, innovative strategies, intriguing content, consistency, and a lot more goes into establishing a strong digital presence. Social media accounts are an integral part of a brand's online presence. They help build connections between the brand and its followers and consumers and develop brand loyalty. As much as social media is a boon to our online presence, malicious activities need just a few seconds to destroy it. In one moment, brands have a strong image,

and in the next, their reputation is at stake, and they have lost their customers' trust!

Brand infringement: A threat to brand value and image

In today's social media-savvy world, brand infringement is a pertinent issue. Unauthorised and illegitimate use of a brand's identity, whether name, trademark, logo, product design, social media accounts, or any other intellectual property can cause confusion among customers and potentially dilute its value. What's the worst that can happen? Brands can incur financial losses, end up in legal battles, and even lose their customers' trust and loyalty, further tampering with their reputation.

Brand infringement can take various forms, such as counterfeit products, cybersquatting, and unauthorised online advertising. Digital infringements include identifying and blacklisting fake sites and social media handles, listing fake customer care contact numbers, fraudulent brand communication monitoring, APK copycat apps, protection from account overs, and more.

The 'fake' social media scam

Brand impersonation on social media is a common instance of brand infringement nowadays, usually carried out through phishing and spoofing (brand hijacking). Fake media social accounts fall under the second category and are used to deceive and troll people. They impersonate brands for several reasons, including spreading false information, increasing their followers, conducting financial frauds, etc. Scammers also drop negative comments, engage with audiences, harass them online, and post inappropriate content. It would appear to people that the brand is doing this, which can cause a dent in brand perception.

Any negative experience with the brand can strain its relationships with its customers and lead to loss of customer loyalty and negative publicity. For every misconduct by scammers, the brand has to pay a hefty price, which could include maligning its reputation. Hence, staying vigilant in identifying such issues and taking preventive measures is essential.

Today, social media handles are the brand's face for the consumers. However, challenges pertaining to social media scams are coming to light. While brands across sectors are at risk, BFSI, real estate, and FMCG industries are highly vulnerable. Take, for instance, a leading real estate brand that was able to identify fake social media handles impersonating it and track unauthorised Facebook ads using its logo/IP detected. Using state-of-the-art solutions, it conducted scans for similar URLs, pages, and websites about similar keywords, content, or visuals in the global digital ecosystem. Another multinational manufacturer could detect fake job promotions promoted on social media platforms to mislead job seekers with the help of such advanced tools.

In another incident in February this year, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) warned students and parents about fake social media accounts spreading false information about the body. 30 fake accounts impersonating the CBSE were identified, and the board cleared its stance to combat the spread of misinformation and protect its image in the public eye. This is the ideal approach to follow. However, in order to be prepared to deal with such malicious activities, what brands require is a robust online reputation management (ORM) framework in place.

Safety and protection is one's own responsibility

As much as brands must be vigilant against evolving threats, it is equally important to educate audiences about such incidents. This will create awareness and encourage them to be cautious and trust only the official accounts. Zerodha addressed this issue two years ago on its LinkedIn profile. This was a smart move to connect with audiences and share their opinion on such a pressing issue while

simultaneously educating people about the company's legitimate social media handles.

It is not only the brands, but even the government and several nodal and regulatory bodies have been victims of such malicious activities. Addressing a recent alarming situation, the Union Home Ministry's cybercrime unit issued an advisory for the citizens to verify the authenticity of suspicious e-notices received via email. The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) then released a public ad urging people to cross-check the officials' names mentioned in the notices and call the department listed to confirm its legitimacy. The I4C warned the public to be cautious against such fake emails disguised as government notices, as they could lead to cyber fraud.

To sum up

Brands invest years in building their image and online presence. Threats to brand image and safety are increasing rapidly, and there is a looming concern. It's crucial that they know and evaluate the impact of fake social media accounts. Brand reputation damage and shakeable customer trust have a long-term impact but can be prevented with a proactive approach and strong online reputation management strategy.

Maintaining brand integrity in the digital ecosystem requires a multifaceted approach combining technological solutions, proactive monitoring, and public education. As threats continue to evolve, brands must stay vigilant and adaptable to protect their hard-earned reputations and maintain trust with their consumers in the ever-changing digital landscape. (FE22092024)

How experiential marketing companies harness the power of micro-influencers

Unlike traditional advertising, which broadcasts a message to a passive audience, experiential marketing encourages active involvement, creating a two-way interaction that leaves a lasting impression.

By Prateek N Kumar

In today's hyper-connected, digital-first world, brands are increasingly seeking innovative ways to engage with consumers on a deeper level.

Traditional marketing strategies, while still relevant, are no longer sufficient to capture the attention and loyalty of a savvy, selective audience. Experiential marketing has emerged as a powerful tool in this landscape, creating memorable and immersive brand experiences that resonate with consumers. However, the real magic happens when experiential marketing is combined with the influence

of micro-influencers—an approach that amplifies impact and drives authentic connections.

Experiential marketing, often referred to as engagement or event marketing, is a strategy that directly engages consumers by inviting them to participate in a brand experience. Unlike traditional advertising, which broadcasts a message to a passive audience, experiential marketing encourages active involvement, creating a two-way interaction that leaves a lasting impression.

The goal is to create memorable, shareable experiences that forge a strong emotional connection between the brand and the consumer. This can take many forms, from pop-up events and immersive installations to product sampling and interactive digital experiences. The key is to offer something that consumers will not only enjoy but also feel compelled to share with others—whether through word of mouth, social media, or both.

While macro-influencers and celebrities have long been used in marketing campaigns, the spotlight has increasingly shifted to micro-influencers. These individuals, typically with followers ranging from 1,000 to 100,000, offer a more intimate and relatable connection with their audience. Micro-influencers are often seen as experts or enthusiasts in a particular niche, and their recommendations carry significant weight within their communities.

The authenticity and trust that micro-influencers build with their followers are invaluable assets for brands. Unlike traditional advertising, which can sometimes feel impersonal or insincere, micro-influencer endorsements come across as genuine and trustworthy. This is particularly important in today's market, where consumers are increasingly sceptical of overtly commercial messages.

When experiential marketing companies collaborate with micro-influencers, the result is a powerful synergy that amplifies the impact of both strategies. Here's how this partnership works:

1. Enhanced Authenticity

Experiential marketing thrives on authenticity—creating experiences that feel real and meaningful to the audience. Micro-influencers, with their genuine connections to their followers, can amplify this authenticity. When a micro-influencer shares their experience at a brand event or with a product, it feels less like an advertisement and more like a personal recommendation. This authentic sharing can drive deeper engagement and trust than traditional marketing efforts.

2. Targeted Reach

Micro-influencers often have a highly engaged and specific audience. When experiential marketing companies partner with the right micro-influencers, they can tap into these niche communities, ensuring that their brand message reaches the right people. This targeted approach is far more effective than broad-reaching campaigns that may not resonate with everyone. By focusing on micro-influencers, brands can connect with consumers who are genuinely interested in what they have to offer.

3. Increased Engagement

Experiential marketing is designed to be engaging, but the reach of a live event or activation is often limited to those who are physically present. Micro-influencers can extend this reach by sharing their experiences on social media, inviting their followers to engage with the brand in a more personal and meaningful way. This not only increases the number of people who interact with

the brand but also encourages more meaningful engagement—likes, comments, shares, and even attendance at future events.

4. Real-Time Feedback and Insights

One of the key benefits of working with micro-influencers is the access to real-time feedback. Micro-influencers are often in tune with the needs and preferences of their followers, making them a valuable source of insights. Experiential marketing companies can leverage this feedback to refine their strategies, tailor future campaigns, and improve overall customer experience. This ongoing dialogue between the brand, the influencer, and the audience can lead to more effective and impactful marketing efforts.

5. Cost-Effectiveness & ROI

Collaborating with micro-influencers is often more cost-effective than working with macro-influencers or celebrities. Experiential marketing campaigns can be resource-intensive, but by partnering with micro-influencers, brands can maximize their return on investment. These influencers typically charge lower fees while delivering high levels of engagement, making them an ideal choice for brands looking to stretch their marketing budgets without sacrificing impact.

Glossier, a beauty brand known for its minimalist products and customer-centric approach, has successfully leveraged the power of micro-influencers to build a loyal community. By hosting exclusive events and product launches with a select group of micro-influencers, Glossier has created a buzz that extends far beyond the events themselves. The influencers share their experiences on social media, creating a ripple effect that drives brand awareness and loyalty. This strategy has helped Glossier grow from a niche startup to a globally recognized brand, all while maintaining a strong, authentic connection with its audience.

Nike has long been a pioneer in experiential marketing, but its partnership with micro-influencers has taken this strategy to new heights. By collaborating with fitness enthusiasts and amateur athletes who have a strong following within their local communities, Nike has been able to create impactful, localized marketing campaigns. These micro-influencers host events, lead workouts, and share their experiences with Nike products, all while fostering a sense of community and inclusion. This approach not only boosts brand visibility but also strengthens Nike's reputation as a brand that empowers and supports everyday athletes. Airbnb's success in experiential marketing is well-documented, but the brand's use of micro-influencers is a key factor in its continued growth. By inviting micro-influencers to stay at unique properties and share their experiences, Airbnb has been able to showcase the diversity and authenticity of its offerings. These influencers often provide detailed reviews and recommendations, which resonate strongly with their followers who are looking for authentic travel experiences. The result is a powerful combination of experiential marketing and word-of-mouth that drives bookings and brand loyalty.

While the benefits of integrating micro-influencers into experiential marketing campaigns are clear, there are challenges to consider:

1. Finding the Right Influencers

Not all micro-influencers are created equal. Experiential marketing companies must carefully vet potential partners to ensure they align with the brand's values and goals. This requires a deep understanding of both the brand and the influencer's audience. Choosing the wrong influencer can lead to a disconnect between the brand and its target audience, resulting in a campaign that feels inauthentic or forced.

2. Maintaining Authenticity

As the use of influencers in marketing continues to grow, there is a risk of losing authenticity. Followers can become sceptical if they feel that an influencer is promoting too many products or brands, or if the content feels overly commercialized. Experiential marketing companies must work closely with micro-influencers to create content that feels natural and genuine, rather than overly scripted or promotional.

3. Measuring Impact

Measuring the success of experiential marketing campaigns can be challenging, especially when micro-influencers are involved. Traditional metrics such as impressions and engagement rates are important, but they don't always capture the full impact of a campaign. Experiential marketing companies must develop more sophisticated methods for tracking the long-term effects of these campaigns, including brand sentiment, customer loyalty, and sales impact.

Brands have long been at the forefront of creating memorable and impactful brand experiences. By partnering with micro-influencers, they can amplify these efforts. (FE22092024)

How impactful regional campaigns are changing the game of marketing in India

Regional campaigns act as a catalyst for fostering deeper connections with the local target audience helping the brand and the organisation increase its penetration.

By Mayuresan Gurukkal

Regional campaigns are significantly transforming the marketing landscape in India by leveraging the country's diverse cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic fabric. The regional approach of curating the campaigns and execution has seen great relevance over a period which was observed with a series of campaigns executed at Brand Street Integrated.

In regards to the impact on the business, it's been extensive and very much permeating in several aspects of operations and long-term success and growth rate. It has been proved in various projects that we have been curating, conceptualising and implementing – this regional approach not only ensures business but vastly helps in brand perception and its to-the-point relevance within specific markets. The regional approach not only drives positive brand perception but takes the next step of creating better opportunities for brands to build meaningful strategic partnerships and helps further amplify the impact and reach the campaign's objectives

Regional campaigns act as a catalyst for fostering deeper connections with the local target audience helping the brand and the organisation increase its penetration. Let's have a quick look at the various ways it helps brands:

Cultural Relevance and Local Connection play a major role in tailoring the campaigns as they resonate with local customs and traditions ensuring better emotional connection. To add to this, if there is the right usage with budget permitting, then working with local celebrities would make a greater impact on the campaigns.

Leveraging India's Diverse Background: Being a multi-lingual country, campaigns in local slang and action help brands reach a wider audience. With smart conceptualization, it results in a Translation vs Transcreation strategy which enhances the relatability.

Hyper-local Campaigns

Hyper-local campaigns are a great way to increase the penetration of the brand's products & services. A campaign should focus on optimizing the budget allocation and improving the ROI as it has been done based on geographical segmentation. With this segmentation, brand reach is well received by the Tier-2 and Tier-3 markets as it gives the brand the flexibility to make personalized promotions and offers to ensure ROI.

Regional Insights and Analytics

Regional campaigns when done on the ground allow clients & sales teams to interact with the end consumers and give great consumer insights. We as an agency get to understand their behaviour which helps us to give analytical inputs to brands that help their marketing team change or customise their strategy and then move to market. The decisions are now data-driven as the feedback

mechanism is robust at every stage by leveraging technology to make it accurate and reliable.

Adaption

Yes, it's not always easy to taste success in every project. That's the most exciting and enticing part of any agency which helps the brands achieve what they want. With diverse preferences when doing a PAN India campaign the challenges that we as an agency face are a lot more as we have to cater to the needs of the brand by following the guidelines to make a great impact regionally. These are challenges but it's always rewarding if the preferences of that region are studied well and then conceptualized.

Success Stories

To encapsulate all the above and help with examples that share "How impactful regional campaigns are changing the game of marketing in India", here are a few case studies that Brand Street Integrated proudly can speak of. These projects have not only been great on the curation and implementation part but also have helped brands see the ROI at the end of the day which matters.

Conclusion

Regional campaigns in India are not just a trend but a necessity in the evolving marketing landscape. They allow brands to connect authentically with diverse audiences, driving engagement, loyalty, and ultimately, business growth. (FE21092024)

Brand Management

The Engagement Sage: The long route to creativity in the age of digital!

It all begins with an idea. Nowadays there is no dearth of sources when it comes to researching for one. However, while researching one needs to keep

in mind what business objective the idea can meet, or for that matter the business problem the idea can resolve.

By Anushree Bhattacharyya

It said that the simplest ideas can turn the tide in your favour or against you. But then what happens to the concept largely borrowed from the Generative AI platform? Is it still yours? The question that looms is how can one be creative enough and what are the key pillars of creativity? Not to mention is an idea just enough; what about taking the idea to users?

It all begins with an idea. Nowadays there is no dearth of sources when it comes to researching for one. However, while researching one needs to keep in mind what business objective the idea can meet, or for that matter the business problem the idea can resolve. As a result, it is very important to first identify the problem or the issue. To put it in the famous words of David Ogilvy, "The best ideas come as jokes. Make your thinking as funny as possible. The consumer isn't a moron."

Idea versus targeting

Once the idea is finalised the next task that resides in hand is targeting the right set of users with the right messaging. Yes, there are two important keywords here – the right audience profile and the right message. In this digital world – email marketing has been a regular way of marketers when it comes to taking

their ideas to consumers. However, industry estimates show email open rates are around 20% and drive an average of two percent CTR. This means that 80% of the time, the email is ignored. Despite this, email is believed to be an effective re-engagement channel that delivers great ROI. One of the reasons behind email marketing struggling to gain consumer's attention is limited creative optimisation. It has been observed that in a few instances, there is a limited amount of creative formats available, besides an inability to dynamically personalise creative, which can hurt ad engagement rates.

Brands can also tap into various strategies including tapping into lapse consumers. For instance, discounting is said to be an evergreen winning tactic to re-engage shoppers. The advantage of this approach is that brands can focus on disengaged segments and fine-tune their campaigns accordingly. Likewise, RFM (recency, frequency, and monetary value) modeling allows targeting customers based on their lifetime value. If a customer was once a high spender, offering tiered discounts can be an effective strategy to encourage higher spending. For instance, offering $10 off for purchases over $50, or $30 off for spending over $100.

Additionally brands need to focus on creating a loyal customer base. This can happen through various loyalty programmes. Loyalty programmes are also a way for brands to boost engagement and drive product sales using paid display promotions that target premium members with exclusive offers based on purchase history. Interestingly, brands can also use loyalty programmes to target customers who haven't joined yet.

SEO and creativity!

In the digital world, SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) plays an important role and at times it has been seen to overshadow creativity. So the challenge is to

maintain a fine balance between creativity and SEO. What SEO allows you is with the use of the right keywords, your content can rank on Google search. Google typically uses four to five parameters to rank a website including content, backlinks, local SEO, technical and design and UX (user experience). Not to mention, typically users broadly search under four categories. The first one is called informational intent; in this case, users search with an intent to acquire knowledge about something. Second is navigational intent; in this case, users seek to locate a specific website or page, while when it comes to commercial intent users research for a potential purchase. Lastly in the case of transactional intent users search with the aim to buy a product or service. The style of writing SEO-driven copies is largely the same, keeping in mind that it is a keyword play. Often it is felt that writers need to compromise on creativity. Also, a reason why now more and more importance is given to humanise SEO content. One way is to remain true to the idea or the brand story. So writers can in the beginning make a copy SEO heavy, but always in the second read trim it down, thereby balancing the narrative.

PS: As ironic as this may sound, we ran out of creativity and had to resort to AI to get the display image and title hehe. (18092024)

Advertising Management

The Engagement Sage: Influencer marketing versus Celebrity marketing- And the winner is?

To be sure, celebrities no longer have the field to themselves and will have to learn to live with their bitter halves.

By Anushree Bhattacharyya

There was a time when a brand would rope in a popular actor, singer, or athlete dubbed as a celebrity to promote the product. Remember the ever-popular Pepsi ad featuring Michael Jackson in the '80s? Just to give a background, in November 1983, one year after his album Thriller was released, Michael Jackson (and his brothers) struck a $5 million (£3.1 million) deal with Pepsi to become the first pop stars to front campaigns for the brand. Back at home, one can easily remember Aamir Khan and the Coke ad, with the tagline, "Thanda matlab Coca-Cola" to actor Shah Rukh Khan being one the few male actors to promote the beauty soap brand Lux. But that was then, in today's world, celebrities have strong competition with influencers. From Kusha Kapila to Nancy Tyagi, Ankush Bahuguna, among others are some names brands are cashing in on to create a buzz.

What is celebrity advertising?

Also known as celebrity endorsements, this format of marketing strategy includes brands using celebrities in this case the person need not be just an actor, but also a singer, athlete, sportsman or sportswoman, in other words, the definition of celebrity at one point in time was a popular figure among consumers, so politicians at times have also been roped in to promote brands or products. Marketers rope in these celebrities to leverage their fame and create a short-term brand recall.

Besides brands not-for-profit organizations leverage a celebrity's fame to raise awareness or funding around a cause. Typically two very basic criteria determine how a celebrity is chosen – does the celebrity represent brand value and how large is the fan base?

What is influencer marketing?

Here comes the new breed of celebrity called influencers. These have gained popularity thanks to social media. From YouTube to Instagram – these content creators started their journey either through comedy or by creating beauty tutorials and even for that matter sowing dresses. What sets them apart from regular celebrities is that content has remained a constant aspect of their growth. It is through their content that they drive engagement, which seems more real when compared with a celebrity. This is also a reason why some of the more successful influencers have a high number of followers on their social media channels and drive high engagement. Brands rope in these influencers to not only drive product tests and tutorials but also to promote products from time to time.

Earnings!

The cumulative number of product brand endorsements by the top 20 celebrities increased

to 484 in 2023, reflecting an increase of 14.2% from 424 product brands in 2022. This growth can be attributed to the increase in the number of TV and digital endorsements which grew by about seven percent and five percent, respectively. Further, this represents a CAGR

of 6.9% over the last five years growing from 370 product brands in 2019, as per a recent KROLL report.

The report further stated that in the first and the more popular model, a celebrity will be contracted for a specified term (usually one or two years) for a fixed-fee payment that may be

made through an initial signing amount with the balance to be paid upon completion of specified activities. These agreements may also involve a royalty

component. These celebrities are called "brand ambassadors" owing to their long-term association with the endorsed product.

The second and less popular form of engagement is a one-time appearance by a celebrity for a specified event, as per the report. This may be in the form of a single photo or video advertisement shoot or a single post on a social media platform or attendance at an event. Apart from the regular fee payments, celebrity endorsement contracts may also include an 'in-kind' payment. The product being endorsed is supplied to the celebrity for free for a specific term. This is particularly prominent in the case of high-end luxury brands, the report stated.

Coming back to influencers as per a recent McKinsey report, an influencer is paid a flat rate per post to feature a product or service. This is known as a brand deal. The study further revealed that flat rates can be anywhere between three to five figures, even for an influencer without millions of followers or a global profile. As per the McKinsey report, an influencer posts about a product or service, with a link to a purchase gateway. Every time a viewer buys the product by clicking through the link or using a promo code, the influencer earns an affiliate commission.

Swimsuit model and influencer Alexa Collins, who has about three million followers on Instagram, in 2020 told Insider that she charged at least $1,000 for a sponsored story on her Instagram account.

The rate card is based on the reach of each influencer. For instance, nano influencers are the once who have fewer than 10,000 followers, while micro influencers have from 10,000 to 50,000. Meanwhile, medium influencers have from 50,000 to 100,000 followers and macro influencers have more than 500,000. Lastly, mega influencers have over one million followers.

To be sure, celebrities no longer have the field to themselves and will have to learn to live with their bitter halves. However, will there a day come that influencers will charge more than celebrities, only time will tell. (FE25092024)

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

How is adtech tackling carbon impact with AI and sustainable strategies?

With increasing reliance on data centres, programmatic ad bidding, and content delivery networks (CDNs), adtech is becoming a significant contributor to global carbon emissions.

By Gopika Nair

With the growing demand from consumers for products, there also comes accelerated growth in the digital advertising industry, and so does its environmental impact. With increasing reliance on data centres, programmatic ad

bidding, and content delivery networks (CDNs), adtech is becoming a significant contributor to global carbon emissions. The average carbon footprint for a person in the US is 16 tonnes, according to The Nature Conservancy. Furthermore, an average digital advertising campaign released 5.4 metric tonnes of carbon into the atmosphere, according to Statista. However, industry leaders are starting to address these concerns with innovative strategies and technologies aimed at reducing their carbon footprints. "Reducing carbon footprint is still at a nascent stage in the adtech space, especially in the Indian market. Our focus has been on data optimisation and minimisation, content optimisation, and focused ad targeting to reduce the carbon footprint to a certain extent," Mihir Mehta, managing partner, 0101, told BrandWagon Online.

What exactly is the carbon footprint?

The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector, which encompasses adtech, contributes approximately two to four percent of global CO_2 emissions, according to experts. Within this sector, data centres account for roughly 1-2% of global energy consumption, with adtech contributing a notable portion through programmatic bidding and content delivery. Research suggests that digital advertising alone may contribute up to 10% of the ICT sector's emissions, translating to around 0.2-0.4% of global CO_2 emissions. For perspective, a single ad impression can emit between one and seven grams of CO_2, depending on factors like ad format and complexity.

Mehta highlighted steps such as using green data centres powered by renewable energy, compressing ad content, and working with sustainable partners as part of their strategy. Although 0101 has not yet begun measuring its carbon footprint, Mehta outlines their goal for 2025-26 to start evaluating it. "Our strategy involves tracking server and CDN usage, performing data transfer calculations, and collaborating with sustainability measurement platforms such as Scope3 and

Good-Loop to accurately assess the carbon impact of our ad campaigns," Mehta added.

It is believed that artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning are playing a crucial role in optimising ad delivery while reducing energy consumption. AI can enhance efficient ad targeting, predictive bidding models, and intelligent load distribution. "AI-driven algorithms can compress ads, especially video, which reduces the amount of data that needs to be delivered," Mehta cited. This not only optimises ad performance but also contributes to lower energy consumption.

AI can also help create more energy-efficient models and reduce data processing overhead. "AI models can improve the efficiency of real-time bidding and content personalization processes, minimising unnecessary data collection and processing," Anup Garg, founder and director, World of Circular Economy (WOCE), said. WOCE uses tools like esgpro.ai to measure greenhouse gas emissions, breaking down Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions to better understand the carbon impact of their operations, he added. From what is understood, WOCE's approach includes tracking direct emissions from company-owned data centres (Scope 1), indirect emissions from purchased electricity (Scope 2), and other indirect emissions across the value chain (Scope 3). This comprehensive measurement allows them to assess and address the carbon footprint of various adtech activities, including programmatic ad bidding, CDN usage, and end-user device energy consumption.

As the digital advertising industry continues to evolve, so too will its strategies for reducing carbon emissions. By embracing sustainable practices, optimising data usage, and leveraging AI technologies, adtech companies can significantly reduce their environmental impact. The industry's shift towards more transparent and eco-friendly practices will be crucial in addressing the growing concerns of climate change and ensuring a sustainable future for digital advertising.

In conclusion, while the ad tech industry faces challenges in minimising its carbon footprint, the combined efforts of key players and innovative technologies provide a promising path forward. By focusing on sustainability and measurement, the industry can make meaningful strides in reducing its environmental impact and contributing to a greener digital ecosystem. (FE17092024)

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Data-driven sales: Leveraging analytics to boost sales performance and customer satisfaction

Leveraging predictive analytics and personalisation to drive sales growth and enhance customer experience

By Saif Ahmad Khan

In the current global environment sales intelligence approaches are crucial for mainly organisations that seek to increase the level of sales performance and increase overall consumer satisfaction. Through analytics, firms can come up with a better understanding of their customers' behavioral patterns, needs and

wants and this will enable firms in coming up with the right sales strategies and customer experience. This move from hunches-based decision making to insights-based decision-making is revolutionising the way businesses operate especially in the sales discipline to increased sales, better conversion rates and customer engagement.

Data plays an important role in the today's sales environment in the following manner:

Information is the blood of contemporary approaches to sales. It is relevant in analysing the interactions that a customer has with a firm starting from the time when he/she first gets in touch with the firm to the time when he/she is following up on a previously purchased service or product. Most importantly is that real-time data is vital in helping the sales teams to get insights on the trends, forecast and improve on how to reach out to customers. For instance, using past purchase histories, firms can discover signs that a particular customer is about to reorder, or, in contrast, is considering a competitor's product. Such information lets the sales teams approach the customers before they develop a problem then help them to solve the issue while still being their customer.

Using Tools of Sales Performance Analytics

It stands to reason that one of the most effective forms of big data for selling is predictive analytics. The data analysis enables predictive models to give insight on the future sales results, this can aid companies to direct resources to the probable profitable leads. For example, predictive analytics can help in scoring the leads to the likelihood of conversion, and as such, the salespersons sell to the companies most likely to make the purchase. Apart from that, it also helps to raise

the general conversion rate since sales representatives can devote more time to the leads who are actively willing to make a purchase.

Also, predictive analytics allows the sales managers to see potential problems long before they must escalate to other stages. For instance, once a manager has reviewed sales performance figures, he or she is likely to realise that a specific sales staff member is under achieving. With this insight, the managers can find out early that the representative requires extra assistance or remedial training to correct his or her behaviour. This was because in reserving resources, potential problems are addressed before they cause major greatly effects on the company's bottom line.

Personalising Customer Interactions

This is probably one of the biggest strengths of data-driven selling: it fosters personalisation of the customer engagement. The customers of today's economy are no longer satisfied with a simple exchange with businesses; they desire to be recognised and appreciated. In this manner, the sales force can ensure that it designs and executes a customer experience that will suit each of the customers.

For instance, information regarding a customer's behavior regarding a certain brand can be used to dictate how the sales representative communicates with the client. If a customer has indicated especially an interest in a specific type of products within the company, he or she can be reminded of newer products of the same type by the sales team. Finally, knowing the kind of communication style that a customer prefers such as emails, phone calls or social media will assist the salespeople.

The benefits of personalisation are therefore not only improvement of the customer experience but also increases in sales vales. That being stated, customers who have a feeling that they are valued by the brand will continuously patronise this particular brand and recommend it to other clients, thus improving on the sales of the brand over the long run.

How to Increase Customer Satisfaction with the Help of Data Analysis

Satisfaction of consumers is directly proportional to the suitability of the sales plan of the company. Through data analysis organisations can identify needs and wants of the customers hence causes sales efforts to meet customers' needs. The clinical alignment is essential for achieving customer experience, which will result in customer satisfaction and advocacy.

For instance, it is possible to identify that customers complain about long time between action and reaction, or long time it takes to make a sale. Solving these problems enables the companies to enhance the happy path for the customers helping the customers to have a smooth time dealing with the companies. Further, some dynamics that otherwise remain unnoticed can be seen and used to serve customers even better, e. g., by providing some percent off a selected product/service or changing the offer in response to possible customer complaints.

Conclusion: The Future Sales Is Digital and Is Based on the Analysis of Big Data

While organisations will gradually carry on striving in this highly competitive environment, there are critical success factors that will also remain highly

important. Sales insights enable firms to make sound decisions for improving the sales mechanisms and offer value appealing to consumers. Striving for concrete results of analytics, companies aren't only going to increase their sales even more, but they will also be building successful and durable partnerships with the customers. Ultimately, it will be those organisations that are capable of absorbing and leveraging this commoditized power of data that will flourish. (08092024)

Thank You...