

The Goldilocks role of targeting in evidence-based marketing

By [Leigh Andrews](#)

7 Nov 2019

Spark Media recently held its annual seminar roadshow across Johannesburg and Durban, ending at Cape Town version's River Club on 29 October. Dr Carl Driesener, senior marketing scientist with a focus on consumer behaviour and the effect of advertising on loyalty at the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute (EBI) of marketing science in Australia - the home of evidence-based marketing - showcased little-known traps of targeting to assist in achieving better marketing results.



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the past 17 years and sponsoring the annual EBI presentation in South Africa is proof of their investment in bringing the knowledge, guidelines and frameworks needed for effective marketing.



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Randall added that Spark Media's Roots research serves as a lens of the South African population in various clusters.

There's never been a more important time for this, as marketing plays an incredible role in building and sustaining business, so the country and economy benefit.

Driesener expanded on the topic of smart targeting, in particular, stating it was a no-brainer as the current plethora of trends is taking many marketers down a rabbit hole, so it's useful to focus on what we now know for sure.

Evidence-based marketing's origins

Driesener's talk focused on what works and what doesn't work when it comes to marketing, as well as what matters and what doesn't matter.



Evidence based marketing - what is it and why do we need it?

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He mentioned that targeting is a significant aspect of evidence-based marketing and has been around since the 1960s and 1970s.



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The concept of target marketing came out of psychological literature and disciplines of economics, both of which have since moved on considerably, but Driesener says marketing itself hasn't necessarily kept up with these changes.



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Joan Osterloh 30 Oct 2019



A classic example of this is that while marketing theory does acknowledge System 1 and 2 thinking, overall it still holds to the idea of the rational consumer, whereas purchase decisions are often “quick and dirty”.

With evidence-based marketing, Driesener says consumer behaviour analysis covers not only how consumers choose one brand over another, but also how they buy in the category overall.



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That’s where we find the commonalities in behaviour that really tells us something about how decisions are made in the consumer market – and it’s usually much less rational a process than we think.

The basics of brand loyalty and growing your customer base

Driesener covered the basics of targeting and segmentation, as well as the power of word-of-mouth and the importance of both mental and physical availability, but first up was the topic of market penetration.

“ Growing the size of your customer base is the best route to sustainable growth because if you’re you’re not thinking about growing your customer base, you simply won’t grow in the long-term. ”

Driesener says this doesn’t mean customer loyalty is not important, rather that it’s not the only thing: The size of your customer base and loyalty are two sides of the same coin, because as you grow the size of your customer base, you also increase your customers’ brand loyalty.



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And you grow the size of your customer base by doing two things: Building mental and physical availability for your brand, both of which have distinctive assets.

The importance of building your brand’s mental and physical availability

Building mental availability is about enhancing how easy it is for consumers to think of your brand in relation to not just the category, but also to the reasons people buy the category, while physical availability is about having the right product in the

right place, at the right time in the right format, making the brand easy to find in the buying context.



Talking 'mental availability' for brands with Spark Media

Leigh Andrews 10 Oct 2017



Focusing on both mental and physical availability makes it easier for everyone to buy your category, meaning you're also growing the size of your customer base as people who haven't tried your brand before may do so, and it's easier for existing customers to display loyalty.

“ People actually spend very little time making purchase decisions as they buy from repertoires, so if they can't find your product, they don't throw a tantrum, they just buy another product from their repertoire and get on with their life. ”

Distinctive assets that tie mental and physical availability together are the branding devices people recognise that help them locate your product on the street, online, and on shelf.

Marketing 101: Though shalt segment and target!

Segmentation and targeting are 'marketing 101' ideas, but that doesn't mean they're easy to get right.

Breaking the market into small units based on different needs, then developing the marketing mix to service one of those units and marketing to them exclusively to build brand loyalty is a textbook idea, but it doesn't often play out that way in the real world.

In fact, Driesener shared a case study of segmentation targeting gone wrong, when Doritos looked to launch a special range for women in early 2018 that would be “less messy, less crisp and less noisy.”

Driesener agreed that women generally want a lot of different things to men, but this isn't necessarily one of them...

Instead, people construct voluminous repertoires they buy from, and they're quite polygamous in their buying behaviour, so we often forget that a specific consumer may well appear in multiple segments. Instead, you need to look at the evidence of how people actually buy.

Segmentation marketing gone wrong

To illustrate this, Driesener went back a few years to share the example of the short-lived Delta Airlines segmentation target positioning a low-cost brand, Song, which offered organic food and multiple entertainment options onboard.

The airline took to the skies in 2003 but was permanently grounded by 2006. Driesener quoted author Mark Twain who said that history doesn't necessarily repeat itself, but it sure does rhyme as Air France also launched new airline Joon, having "identified a segment of the market that wasn't being served by existing airlines" – millennials...



Air France's Joon officially takes over Cape Town route

Ilse van den Berg 11 Apr 2018



The name 'Joon' is a play on the French 'Jeune' or young person. The brand went to a lot of trouble to segment, target, and position themselves for millennials yet also recently closed down, with Air France CEO stating at the time that the launch had merely fragmented the brand.



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Driesener says there are many, many examples of this, where the overall market place is broken up to target a particular group, but when we look back at consumer behaviour, we realise that's not really how people buy and can irritate and even anger them.

“ The truth is, people buy from repertoires, and choose different brands at different times as they have different needs on different occasions – yet that purchase behaviour all boils down to the same person in the category, and that's what's not recognised. ”

Driesener said this is not to say that targeting shouldn't happen, as it definitely has some value, but to treat it much like salt when cooking – if you add a little, it vastly improves the flavour. If you add too much salt, it starts to taste terrible, and

if you add way too much, you'll kill yourself.

Targeting is much the same – a little bit is useful and adds some flavour to help your brand stand out from the crowd, but too much can cause all sorts of problems.



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Driesener also shared the five steps to being a smarter target marketer, which I will share in my next article. Keep your eyes peeled!

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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