

Relevant and effective marketing methods

If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that the only constant in life is change - which is also true in marketing.



Peter Geysler, Brent Haumann and Glenn Gillis

To keep up with the needs of the customer, marketing priorities have been adjusted. Of course, if a business today is not focusing its efforts on digital it will likely be left behind by its competitors.

The modern customer is more sophisticated and expects a more personalised experience, which, when done well and with an awareness of the consumer's many platforms, may help a business differentiate itself from its competitors.

However, just because consumers are becoming more reliant on the digital world does not necessarily mean that traditional marketing methods should be abandoned. Too many marketers these days are focused on declaring something 'dead' while also investing in the latest platform that emerges as the 'next big thing'.



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When done correctly, marketing should not be about chasing the next trend, but rather about getting back to the basics of strategy. What is best for your business, and how can you engage with your customers most effectively?

The customer loyalty card is dead, but loyalty isn't

A Mastercard study conducted in 2019 found that only 42% of surveyed executives felt their customer loyalty strategy was effective, and 53% said omnichannel access would be key in the next five years. "Why then, four years later are people still walking around with wallets stuffed with loyalty cards that do little to keep customers loyal?" Glenn Gillis, CEO of Sea Monster, questions. "And are customers really loyal, if what they seem to do is chase short-term cashback incentives?"

It's true that since that survey was released, many retailers have introduced apps, but the problem is that the app, just like the card, is more of a rewards programme than a loyalty one. "The rewards offered by these cards are extrinsic - things like discounts or points to be spent in-store whereas loyalty is based on intrinsic value - which is built through interaction and how you make your customer feel," said Gillis.



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Interestingly, in the Mastercard study, 57% of respondents said that forging emotional connections was a primary reason for investing in loyalty initiatives. So how do retailers build this into their loyalty efforts to get it right?

According to Gillis, gamification creates engagement with customers that facilitates a feeling of achievement and of having earned their rewards which helps build a community and increase brand loyalty.

"As an example of this, in a 13-day campaign we ran with a major retailer, we tracked over 100,000 hours of voluntary engagement, with an average of five minutes spent engaging. Most importantly, people chose to return without the short term promise of only cashback for their transaction - which is ultimately what loyalty is about."

Email is not dead, the way you're using it is

Everything from SMS to instant messaging, social media, and office productivity solutions has threatened to kill email at one point or another.

"In reality, the idea that email is dead couldn't be further from the truth. In 2021, nearly 320 billion emails were sent a day. Additionally, 99% of the world's 4-billion-plus email users check their inboxes at least once a day, with some checking as many as 20 times a day. Add in the fact that email has a return on investment of around 4200% and it becomes easy to see that email is very definitely not dead," said Brent Haumann, managing director at Striata Africa.

So, if you're not seeing results from email and everyone in your organisation is convinced that it's dead, what's really going on?

Haumann explains that in all likelihood, the problem isn't email but the way you're using it. "There are some tools and tactics organisations can use to ensure that they're achieving these goals. These include making email hyper-personal, automating, integrating into a multi-channel experience, and remembering mobile first, always."



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The next time someone tells you that email's dead, know that there's a very good chance that they don't know what they're talking about. "Utilised correctly, email promises to continue to be a high-performing, cost-effective way to increase customer engagement. That's true now and it's likely to still be true for some time to come."

Multiple channels for multiple audiences

"When the VHS video player was introduced to the world, everyone anticipated that cinema would die - yet, it didn't. In fact, worldwide, cinema has grown steadily since the launch of the device that was predicted to be its demise," said Pieter Geysler, head of marketing at Irvine Partners.

"More recently, Pokemon Go launched using augmented reality technology, and everyone got on board, proclaiming that virtual reality and augmented reality were going to revolutionise the way we market. It didn't. Pokemon was a children's game that was popular for a few months before the hype died down. When TikTok gained global popularity, brands flocked to it, believing that users would abandon Facebook and other social media platforms in favour of TikTok. It didn't," Geysler continued.



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There is no channel that can be said to 'kill' another, according to Geysler. Social media did not eliminate email marketing, WhatsApp did not eliminate SMS marketing, and YouTube and online streaming did not eliminate television or radio.

There are multiple channels for marketing, and each channel has its own audience. Facebook grew at a breakneck pace during its first decade of operation, and if they made projections for the coming decade based on the prior decade, they would be badly disappointed, because growth is not continuous.

According to Geysler, what is important is that businesses identify the channel that is best for their audience, rather than identifying channels based on what is fashionable or new.

The consumer first and foremost

It all comes down to strategy. Understanding your customer, their shopping habits, and what motivates them is essential. You can then choose your channel and modify its use to improve your return. Determine what you want to achieve, who you want to sell to, and how you want to approach them, and then move forward.

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