

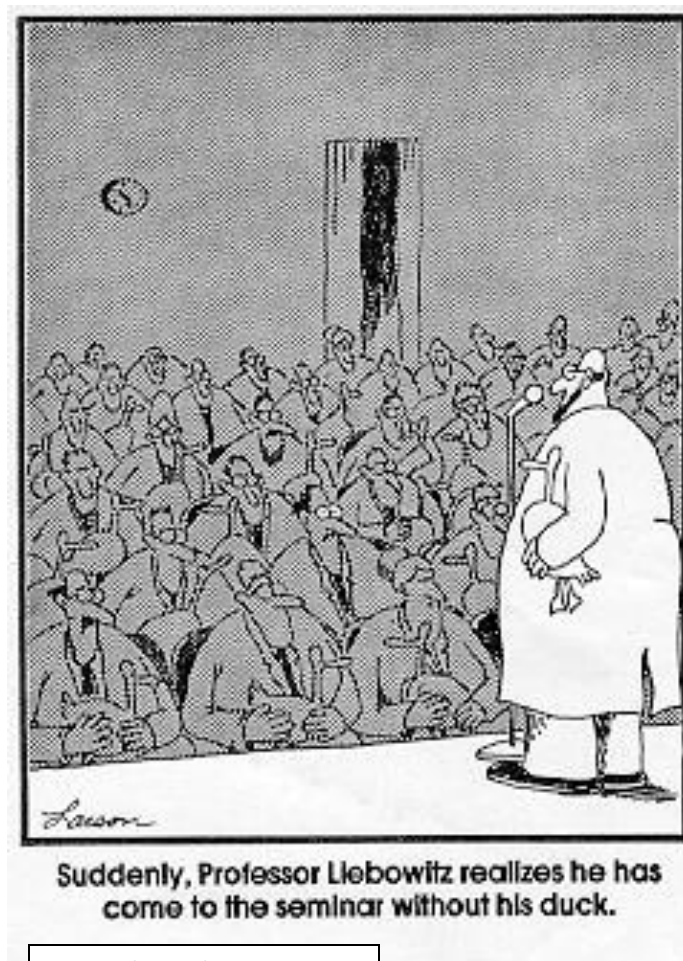
Candidate #4010

Question: I Believe the Future of Brand Communications is.....therefore....

ABSTRACT

Efforts to exert control are all around us but with disruptive forces on the rise, fueled by technology, control isn't as dependable as it was. Brands are feeling the effects of these forces and are responding with greater focus on customer understanding, service and the entire end-to-end experience they deliver. Expectations of this approach are high and getting it wrong can be a humiliatingly public disaster. This paper proposes that considering these new-found pressures, the future success of brand communications depends on those CMOs and marketing teams who can nurture a softer and more sustainable alternative to control, namely, influence.

Influence, Gary Larson style



Source: TheFarside.com

THE AGE OF INFLUENCE

With high expectations of the customer experience as a driver of future business growth, marketing is in pole position to lead the charge. I believe that building influence is a marketer's masterstroke to turn those expectations into reality.

INTRODUCTION

We live in a world where everybody seems to want to take control. Whether it's the Brexiteers with their #takecontrol hashtag; Mr. Trump with his wall to control immigration paid for by Mexico; taxi regulators attempting to control the rise of the cab service Uber, or Pepsi's in-house creative studio, Creators League, established to wrest back control from creative agencies. The issue with control is that it's not always a given (unless perhaps you're Kim Jong Il), and we humans have a natural tendency to overstate our ability to control events. At the time of writing it's hard to see who's got the controlling hand in the Brexit process. It's the President's own party who are stalling on his wall idea. Uber now operates in more than 650 cities across 83 countries (1) and the release of Pepsi's first major piece of home grown creative, that Kendall Jenner video, kicked off an uncontrollable PR storm that forced the brand to pull the video within 24 hours of its release (2).



Source: The Express - <http://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/681706/Boris-Johnson-vote-Brexit-take-back-control>



Source: BBC - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-39509419>

This paper will argue that with brand communications increasingly dominated by the notion of the customer experience, despite the current allure of control, it is not an approach today's marketers can rely upon. Instead, I will propose that a more effective way to develop and manage brand communications is through internal influence, by that I mean the capacity to affect the character, development, or behaviour of someone else. Successful customer experiences require a high degree of internal alignment across the business and I believe the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) and his / her marketing team who can apply an influencing approach across their organisation will be the ones best placed to turn the notion of the customer experience into a value creating reality for themselves, their brands and their customers.

The age of influence explained in five sections

1. This paper opens with a look at the pros and cons of control, illustrated with examples of its use in the past by industries, ideologies and brands. We see how subverting and shifting control has become more widespread, challenging the way categories and businesses behave.
2. For brands, a consequence of empowered consumers is the rise of the customer experience. While this doesn't change the fundamentals of brand communications, it does mean CMOs and marketing teams face new challenges.
3. With these challenges come conflicting expectations and a need for marketing to build influence rather than exert control as the best way of achieving customer experience success.
4. There are six forms of influence, all familiar to the world of brand communications.
5. By turning these techniques on themselves as a way address to challenges highlighted in section 2, influence can be a marketer's masterstroke. I conclude by affirming the CMOs and marketing teams who incorporate influence into their ways of working, will be the ones most likely to see their brand flourish and their business grow.

SECTION 1: COMMAND AND CONTROL UNDER ATTACK

The Good side of control

Control as just illustrated can feel like a negative thing; but it can also be a force for good, with regulation providing a robust framework within which competition can thrive. It acts as a counterweight to our natural behavioural biases, which can otherwise lead to markets being dominated by a single player. In the UK, successive governments have used a blend of legislation regulation to ensure markets remain dynamic and competition stays healthy. In 2015 the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) enforced a range of measures to make switching accounts much easier resulting in record numbers of customers moving their accounts in 2016 (3). But like many things, too much control can be also counterproductive and sometimes lead to catastrophic results.



Source: BBC - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-37383259>

Storing up trouble for later

Launched in the summer of 1999 Napster, a pioneer in the early days of digital disruption, quickly gained huge popularity, and heralded a revolution in the way music was listened albeit illegally. In less than a year it had 20 million users and by the end of 2000, six times that number (4). Seen as an existential threat, the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) successfully sued Napster, and the digital upstart was forced to pay millions of dollars in unpaid royalties. The business subsequently folded, the artists were compensated and The RIAA vindicated. It had regained control. But in hindsight it was a hollow victory. It did nothing to reverse the industry's fortunes that went from bad to worse, and it was widely regarded as a missed opportunity by the industry to pull itself into the digital age (5). Those were lost years before legitimate, revenue-generating services emerged like iTunes and Amazon Music. Rather than use their enormous control as a positive force to evolve and reshape how music was consumed, it used that power to stifle change, protect vested interests, prolonging the pain of an industry that was in desperate need of total reinvention.



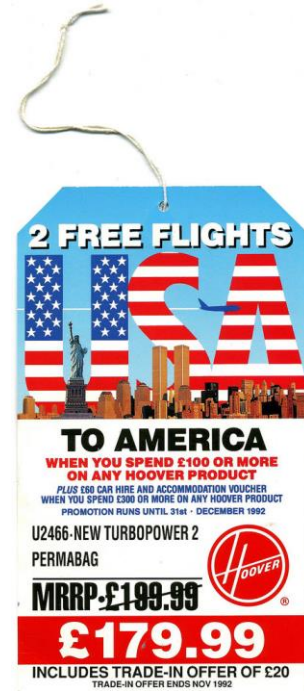
Source: Napster <http://gb.napster.com/>

Extreme control subverted

On an altogether different level, way beyond the kind of control seen from corporations and civilised societies, the Islamic State ruthlessly controls every element of the lives of those living within its so-called caliphate. Access to media, phones and the Internet is hugely restricted to tightly manage the image it portrays to the outside world. Yet, despite ruling through fear of death, even it is not able to prevent people defying that control. A radio station based in northern Iraq, transmitting into Mosul, prior to its liberation, regularly received 60 calls a day, 80% of them from inside Mosul (6). The radio station gave a voice to people who risked their lives to subvert the regime and tell their story about life under such harsh repression.

When control fails marketers

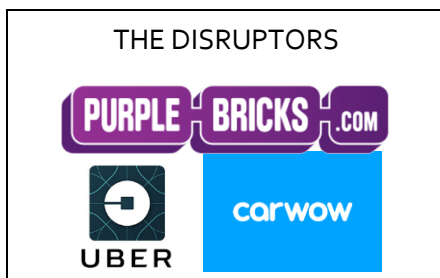
The old days of marketing and brand building were characterised by a “command and control” approach - the ability to dominate an area or situation (7) - and it was, by and large, achievable. Marketing touch-points were limited, and there was much less transparency and accountability. Markets were often regulated in favour of the producer/retailer rather than the consumer. The Net Book Agreement, for example, fixed the prices of books in the UK from 1900 and wasn’t abandoned until the 1990s when it was ruled illegal (8). The ability for customers to call foul did exist but limited and not at all visible. It was much easier to contain problems, with less opportunity for things to go awry. But it wasn’t impossible to still lose control of a situation. Readers of this paper may recall the disastrous Hoover promotion of 1992 that offered two free flights to the US when shoppers bought a Hoover product. It was a no brainer and with mobiles and the internet both in their infancy, photocopies of the promo leaflet spread like wildfire as thousands of people rushed to their local electrical retailer to snap up a Hoover vacuum cleaner or washing machine they didn’t need just to get the flights that were worth more. It was an epic miscalculation. Hoover lost complete control of the situation, and it cost the business more than £50 million. (9)



Source:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/neilvance/2516236716>

Disruption is just a click away

Today we are seeing control and regulated practices being challenged and disrupted all around us. Uber may be one of the most well-known cases, but it seems no category of business is immune. PurpleBricks, an online estate agent founded in 2014, challenges the percentage-based charges of traditional agencies, preferring to operate under a model in which home sellers pay a fixed fee. The business grew over 400% in 2015 (10). In the market for a new car? You might want to consider CarWow, a digital business that has upended the car buying process. Buyers register their car preference on the website, then sit back and wait for the dealers to come to them with their best price. No more trawling around numerous showrooms, or feeling guilty that you should but couldn’t be bothered. Shifting the power from dealer to buyer, CarWow sold 25,000 cars worth £600m in 2015 alone (11). But it’s not only disruptive business models challenging the status quo; companies (often the big, established ones) are finding it harder to control the narrative around their brands. Volkswagen’s emissions scandal in the US, Samsung’s exploding battery story which exploded across the internet (12), and most recently United Airlines’ shocking treatment of a passenger, forcibly dragged off a flight in front of horrified passengers, recorded and posted online within minutes for the whole world to see.



Sources – Uber.com; PurpleBricks.com; Carwow.xom, www.samsung.com; www.volkswagen.com; www.unitedairlines.com

SECTION 2: SAME FUNDAMENTALS, FOUR NEW CHALLENGES

Rise of the Customer Experience

The dominant drivers in all these recent examples are technology and the Internet empowering people in ways previously unimagined. Much has already been written about the empowered consumer and as such is not the main area of focus for this paper. However, it does need to be acknowledged as an important consideration to understand the biggest single factor shaping the future of brand communications today - the rise of the customer experience. Empowered consumers along with greater competition have eroded pure product-based advantages, requiring brands to build more service-based advantages. The capability for direct interactions between brand and consumer is greater than ever and customer journey is less much less predictable that it was. The fact that a purchase or booking can happen at any point in that journey, means that every interaction is opportunity not to waste. So, it's not surprising that CMO's told Ernst & Young the customer experience is top of their to-do list (13), as they seek to deliver greater value to customers and prospects where and whenever those interactions happen. Evidence points to the fact that great customer experience pays back, with experts seeing a 14-point advantage (17% versus 3%) in their compound average revenue growth compared to those less advanced practitioners (14). This hasn't escaped the eye of CEOs who, according to Gartner, cite improving customer experience as their number one expectation of their chief marketing executives. (15)

The Customer Experience as the Sum of All Interactions



(Source:Oracle.com)

Same Fundamentals, But New Challenges

It's clear the customer experience has become a major focal point and while I believe the fundamentals around building effective brand communications remain unchanged, it does present marketers with new challenges that require a way or operating that's different from the past. To illustrate, I outline below what I believe to be four of those fundamentals and their new challenges.

1st Fundamental: Communications is more than advertising

We experience brands in lots of different ways, with advertising being just one element. What a brand does is just as important as what it says. One of the UK's greatest advertising planners Steven King said a brand had to be a "coherent totality not lots of bits" (16), meaning each interaction, no matter the touch-point, must be logical and consistent. Any inconsistencies will only compromise the efficacy of the communication.

New Challenge #1

Brand communication is evolving from a purely product focus to a more service orientated view. Points of interaction like in-store experience, after-sales service, head office staff, all usually beyond marketing's scope, must all support that service view. **The challenge is to ensure a consistent and coherent customer experience to which the entire business can be aligned.**

2nd Fundamental: Start from your audience's point of view

Madmen era ad exec, Howard Gossage once said, "people don't like advertising, they like what interests them and sometimes that's an ad." The best marketing has always set out to achieve the promise of right message, right place, right time and it has always been the case that good consumer insight, knowing their interests and motivations, is the foundation to achieving this objective.

New Challenge #2

The many more ways to reach and interact with consumers, coupled with the exponential growth of data generated by these interactions creates more complexity. **The challenge is to stay true to a consumer-centric approach so all brand communications remain relevant no matter how it is experienced.**

3rd Fundamental: Evaluate thoroughly to prove effectiveness

Planning a measurement framework should be a prerequisite for all brand communications so its impact on the brand and business can be fully evaluated. As evidence of its importance, the IPA has a course entirely dedicated to the topic of advertising effectiveness and return of marketing investment (ROMI).

New Challenge #3

The growth of digital within the customer experience generates ever-greater amounts of data that's all measurable. At the same time businesses have become more short term in their view of brand communications and its expected returned (17). **The challenge is to raise the bar on how marketing accountability and effectiveness is represented.**

4th Fundamental: Benefits from a diverse pool of talent

Marketers have always looked beyond their own capabilities and internal resources to agencies and partners for specialist skills that don't exist within the business. Along with these skills they also bring an objective eye, different perspectives and the ability to challenge internal corporate thinking.

New Challenge #4

Orchestrating the customer experience requires new and different expertise from outside the business to support marketing that go beyond traditional creative and media. **The challenge is to create an ecosystem of partners and agencies that can lead, support and adapt as needed.**

SECTION 3: THE NEED FOR INFLUENCE

What brings the customer experience into sharper focus is this heightened expectation of its potential as a growth driver for the business, something CMOs are keenly aware of (18). However, the same research also draws attention to the fact that despite these expectations, CMOs continue to prioritise brand-centric and campaign-focused actions over activities that are more revenue focused. The #1 revenue driving priority was “utilising data for effective campaign spend” (44%), while “implementing data-driven revenue optimisation to improve lifetime value” came seventh out of ten (21%). This inconsistency can partly be put down to the day-to-day, traditional responsibilities that come with the role, like budget setting and creative reviews. But, it also suggests activities that could have greater impact on the bottom line (business strategy, customer experience improvements, strategic alliances) are not getting the focus they deserve, despite what these senior marketers claim (10). It could also explain why the tenure of the CMO is the shortest of the C-suite and getting shorter, currently at an average of 18 months (20).

These are testing times for marketing and the CMO as they evolve within the business, and also at board level, to that of leaders having to continually perform a delicate balancing act between the customer-centric growth strategy of the business with the financial and operational targets and shareholder expectations. Tightly bound with that is the need to align the board to a brand communications strategy that will deliver growth over the long-term, while showing sufficient incremental short-term gain to keep that alignment intact (21). It’s here in particular the CMO needs to be able to exert a strong level of influence and use persuasive skills to prevent the board from falling back to older ways of sacrificing long-term growth for short-term success (22).

The 2017 Forbes report, *The World’s Most Influential CMOs* sums up the challenge well. “They must orchestrate better, more personalised experiences for their customers. They must be the eyes and ears of their enterprise – and increasingly capable of responding to what they see and hear. They have to be curious. They have to be courageous, and influential in every sense of the word.” (23)

Brand communications has moved a long way on from the days of brand-centric, set piece, one-way communications, and the command and control approach that marketers relied on the past has been superseded by the need for influence.

SECTION 4: THE SIX SIDES OF INFLUENCE

So how can marketers make influence work for them? To help answer that question, who better to turn to than Robert Cialdini, one of America's top professors of psychology, business and marketing. Cialdini has worked with governments and businesses to develop behaviour change programmes based on influence and behavioural economics (24). His best-selling book *The Power of Physiology of Persuasion* identifies six forms of influence.

1. Authority

We tend to respect and obey authority, conveyed through characteristics like knowledge, confidence, tone of voice and body language. Even simple visible cues of authority can trigger deference. The Apple Geniuses at your local Apple in their distinctive blue t-shirts, convey a sense of authority by communicating their expertise in all things Apple and insinuating their heightened mental powers.



Source: Daily Mail - <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2195050/Top-secret-Apple-Genius-handbook-revealed.html>

2. Consensus

We view a behaviour as more correct in a given situation to the degree we see others performing it. Also called social proof; think canned laughter in a sitcom or how travel sites like Hotels.com display dynamic messaging saying how many people have just booked the same hotel.

3. Reciprocity

We feel an obligation to repay in kind what another person has provided us. Being the instigator creates influence as the other party feels the burden of reciprocity, and is obliged to offer something in return. Walk into any Kiehls and you're sure to be offered complimentary product samples, it's something they are well known for (8), and increases the probability of you buying something.



Source: Kiehls - <https://www.kiehls.co.th/en/samples.html>

4. Liking

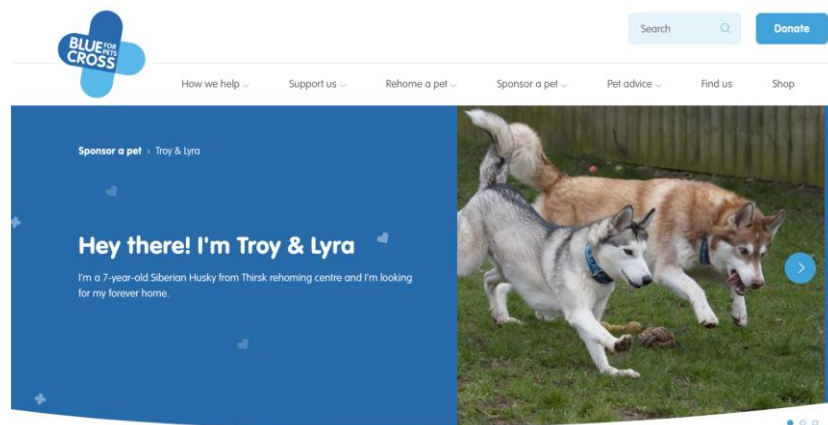
Seems obvious, but it's still an important form of influence. Physical attractiveness (better looking men receive lighter sentences (9)); similarity (people like us); compliments (aka flattery); familiarity; conditioning and association (men driving expensive cars are seen as being more attractive (10)); these are all factors that cause liking. Adidas's sponsorship of the 2012 London Olympics is as an illustration of how popularity for the brand was influenced through its association with the Games, contributing to a 15% uplift in year on year sales (21).



Source: Creative Review - <https://www.creativereview.co.uk/the->

5. Consistency

After making a choice or taking a stand, personal and interpersonal pressures forces us to behave consistently with it. Agreeing to small requests may appear inconsequential in the beginning but they act as precursor to gaining commitment to bigger requests in the future. The Blue Cross regularly encourages me (with the help of Lyra, the Siberian Huskey) to increase my original £10 direct debit commitment to something more substantial. They are fully aware of irresistible qualities of a puppy!



Source: Blue Cross - [/www.bluecross.org.uk](http://www.bluecross.org.uk)

6. Scarcity

The thought of losing something motivates us more than the thought of gaining something of similar value. We believe things that are difficult to own are usually better than things that are easy to own. Thus, scarcity of an item indicates that the item is worth having. Amazon uses this to great effect when it highlights stock levels next to the item you're thinking about buying. Swoon Editions an online 'direct to consumer' furniture business does limited runs of its pieces to influence a must buy now shopper behaviour. (25)

SECTION 5: ACTIVATING INFLUENCE

As illustrated, these influence techniques identified by Cialdini aren't strangers to the world of brand communications and are regularly deployed externally across different audience touchpoints. It's my belief that if marketers take these same techniques and apply them internally to their own ways of working, they can build the influence across the business required to tackle the four brand communications challenges highlighted earlier.

CHALLENGE #1: Ensure a consistent and coherent customer experience to which the entire business can be aligned.

"There is more of a need for articulation of an integrated, holistic approach than ever before, because there is a myriad of channels and contact points." (Jamie Moldafsky, CMO Wells Fargo) (26)

i. **Authority – Everybody loves a champion**

Jeremy Bullmore, one of the UK's most famous admen said many years ago "the way people build brands is in their heads... from the scraps and straws we chance upon", (27) in hindsight uncannily prophetic. It's neither possible nor practical for one single person or department to be responsible for every scrap and straw that people encounter, yet the customer experience needs a senior sponsor to champion it as a priority across the business. Given marketing's expertise in customer understanding and the fact that many of the digital points of contact are either managed or monitored by the marketing team, the CMO should use that authority as leverage to be first among equals and orchestrate the customer experience. In this way, he or she can better influence how the experience comes to life across all points of potential interaction.

ii. **Consensus – Be part of the in-crowd**

One key element to achieving that consistency across the brand experience is to have a clear, simple brand idea around which every department can coalesce. The social proofing of seeing other departments acts as influence and impetus to bring the rest of the business in line. John Kennedy CMO at Xerox did exactly this to align the marketing efforts across a number of enterprise business units; each with their own marketing departments, but with only dotted lines into him. Undeterred, he worked with those marketers to find a single idea that would provide focus to the marketing efforts across a range of products and services – "improving the flow of work for businesses and government". Once one or two business units committed to it, it soon caught on, bringing cohesion and consistency to the entire enterprise marketing activity. (28)



CHALLENGE #2: Stay true to a consumer-centric approach so all brand communications remains relevant no matter how it is experienced.

“Today, the primary task of CMOs is to deeply understand customer buying behaviour and intent; deeply understand the context of where someone is in their decision journey; be able to predict what they’re most likely primed to do next; and be ready to influence them at the right moment.” (Jonathan Martin, CMO Pure Storage) (29)

i. Reciprocity – I’ll show you mine if you show me yours

In the age of brand experience, the CMO’s job isn’t just to lead marketing in service of the customer; it’s also about increasing and using their knowledge and marketing’s influence inside the organisation to improve the end-to-end customer experience. On a practical level this means the CMO and his/her team stepping outside of the marketing department to understand how the business functions operationally and appreciate their priorities and challenges. Influence comes through reciprocity where marketing identifies and prioritises other departmental challenges where marketing can be part of the solution, co-author a plan to make it happen and relationships for which there is plenty of evidence suggesting it produces significant, measurable benefits (30). A little more ‘consumer first’ thinking permeating throughout the business could have helped Starbucks and Sports Direct avoid the damage caused by their offshore tax arrangements and below minimum wage policy, respectively. From the customer’s viewpoint these were seen as extremely negative and both brands suffered (31, 32).



Sources: www.starbucks.co.uk and www.ie.sportsdirect.com

ii. Liking – You say potato, I say potato

In the rush to analyse the mountains of data generated across the customer experience, it’s easy to forget there are real people behind those numbers each with their own reasons and motivations for doing whatever it is the data is recording. The language of marketing adds texture and real-world context to data, while the language of data adds rigor and evidence to what customers are feeding back directly. Senior management teams are rarely convinced by numbers that aren’t financial, but a good story that illustrates an issue and creates empathy—with data that backs that story up—is a convincing package (33). eBay realised this some years ago and created an app that integrated quantitative data from across its ecosystem, with business opportunity information and qualitative customer insights drawn from interviews and focus groups to give employees insights into how and why people used the site. The app brought customer needs to life using words, images, and video interviews from select research participants. The power of that experience prompted eBay to overhaul its website giving it a fresh, human-centered appeal. “Everyone, even the CEO, has it downloaded on their iPads,” claimed Richelle Parham, eBay CMO (34).



Source: IDEO <https://www.ideo.com/case-study/putting-a-human-face-on-big-data>

CHALLENGE #3: Raise the bar on how marketing accountability and effectiveness is represented

“The key point is that marketing must not be isolated if you want to be successful. You need the communication, innovation, and creativity part as well as the business part. Marketers have to be on a par with the business people.” (Erich Stamminger, Board Member Global Brands, adidas) (35)

i. Consistency (part 1) – Be a show-er...

With 78% of CEO’s thinking marketers too often lose sight of what their real job is: to generate more demand in a business quantifiable and measurable way (36), marketing is already at a disadvantage. To counter this perception CMOs and their marketing teams must commit to getting familiar with KPIs their boardroom colleagues are judged by and then build simple models that can demonstrate the relationship between marketing and movement of those KPIs, logically and consistently. Gaining commitment to the model through collaboration with finance and sales adds greater clout with the CEO, who trusts the CFO more anyway. This is exactly what Kimberley Whitley did on becoming CMO of the US’s largest bridal business



Source: Oncewed.com <https://www.oncewed.com/new-sponsor-blog/new-spring-collection-davids-bridal/>

David’s Bridal. She worked with her CFO to develop a marketing dashboard that finance could support since it was a collaborative effort. The objective of the dashboard was to show incremental lift and by working together to establish success criteria, definitions and formulas, the outputs were consistent, unambiguous and respected across the board (37).

ii. Consistency (part 2) - ...and a grower too

Taking a far more scientific and evidence-based approach to measurement will also develop marketing’s knowledge of what success and failure looks like. The emergence of the customer experience has made brand communications much more complex, so it’s even more important to avoid moving forward based on untested assumptions. Convictions, insights and consumer led narratives can all be very compelling but, as Matthew Sayed puts it in his book Black Box Thinking, “in the end they are no more than rhetorical devices that require empirical validation” (38). I believe there’s a real opportunity for CMOs to encourage a culture of test and learn, where evidence is presented as fact rather than a belief, and where progress is accelerated by facing up to failure and learning from it. Referred to as a ‘growth mentality’, practitioners of this approach are 34% more likely to have a strong sense of ownership and commitment to their organisation than those with more of a fixed-mindset (those who view intelligence as static) (39). Such an approach would go a long way to counter perceptions of marketing’s lack of accountability, no matter how unfair, and arm CMOs with the ammunition to challenge unrealistic expectations (40).

CHALLENGE #4: Create an ecosystem of partners and agencies that can lead, support and adapt as needed.

“The CMO can play a crucial role in building eco-systems where clients, partners and research institutions work together. It requires not only understanding from the market, insight in the future, developments and innovations, but also an open and inquisitive mind to boldly go where no CMO has gone before.” – (Marianne Hewlett, CMO, Atos) (41)

i. Scarcity (part 1) – It pays to be popular

The customer experience is blurring the lines between business strategy, marketing, sales and customer service, but clarity around the customer experience comes from connecting each one to a consistent understanding of the consumer. This is a huge opportunity for marketing, as the primary sponsor of the experience, to have much greater influence both upstream and downstream: upstream to shape and articulate truly customer-centric strategies and downstream to turn complex services into offerings that customers find easy to understand (42). In 2016, Mars Australia created the Snickers “Hugerithm”, an algorithm to measure levels of frustration expressed online. The angrier the Internet got, the cheaper the snickers bar became. The price changed 5,000 times in 5 weeks.

The campaign impacted many parts of the customer experience, stretching marketing beyond media and creative to align



Source: Marketing Magazine -<https://www.marketingmag.com.au/news-c/snickers-campaign-adopts-pricing-model-tied-online-sentiment/>

business strategy, commercial, PR, shopper marketing as well as a national retailer, 7-Eleven, behind the idea. The result was a tightly integrated piece of brand communications, built around the customer experience that delivered both brand fame (a D&AD pencil award) and business results (67% sales increase) (43). Marketing teams able to do this consistently, acting as prime mover behind the customer experience, are valuable resources the business will want to retain.

ii. Scarcity (part 2) – Share the pain and the glory

The Snickers example demonstrates that with this stretch both upstream and downstream marketing teams need to be a fusion of communications, technical, analytical, data and business skills. In response, agencies are also adapting to this changing landscape and moving further upstream too in expectation of the imminent arrival of their clients. In 2016 Omnicom launched its ‘Hearts and Science’ agency, offering not only data driven media planning and buying capabilities, but also services such as shopper marketing, marketing innovation and content activation (44). Digital transformation specialist, Neil Perkins suggests the future of agencies is also as “sense makers” helping clients make smart decisions around the ever-expanding world of marketing technology (45). But to make the most of this, marketers need to open up to their agencies, encouraging them to shift from answering the brief to diagnosis of the challenge; from providing services to creating experiences and facilitating tangible business transformation. Reaching beyond the campaign brief to address the underlying knotty business challenges, agencies can multiply the value they bring to the relationship, and be the partner clients retain for the long term.

CONCLUSION

Control is all around us, sometimes it's good, other times not. It can be reliable, but it can also be subverted. Over the last two decades technology and the Internet have facilitated a shift of power away from traditional sources of control be that governments, businesses, even estate agents! As a result, people are more empowered today than ever before. In the face of this change, brands and the way they communicate have had to shift fundamentally from a brand-centric outlook to a customer-centric view of marketing; one which is organised into a coherent and consistent whole, called the customer experience. This shift presents marketers with a new set of challenges, which require a break from the old command and control way of working in favour of influence. I believe the future of brand communications will be founded on CMOs' and marketing's capacity to influence the behavior of their colleagues and in so doing create an informal source of power that permeates and transcends the business. Activating the six forms of influence identified by Cialdini, is the key to addressing the challenges marketers face in brands communications today. Only through influence can CMOs and their marketing teams align everyone around a unifying vision of the customer experience that drives the kind of growth the business is expecting of them. Welcome to the Age of Influence.

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