

THE ART & SCIENCE OF CONNECTING WITH CONSUMERS

# MARKETING

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## Marketing, Technology & Empathy

How technology and creativity help brands become more human

### Discussion paper and agenda

**26 March 2020**

**FLUTES@NATIONAL MUSEUM  
93 STAMFORD ROAD  
THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE  
(S) 178897**

**Marketing Roundtables: Because it's important to share opinions**

### **Agenda**

12:00pm – Arrival of discussants, networking

12:25pm - Welcome from Rezwana Manjur, Regional Editor of *Marketing* magazine

12:30pm – Intro to the Brand Humanity Index

12:40pm – Round the table participant introductions

12:45pm – Commencement of discussion over lunch

2:30pm – End of lunch and networking

## **Discussion points**

*The following points are good indicators of what will be discussed over the luncheon. However, we are not restricted to these – constructive and spontaneous discussions are welcome.*

### **Definitions**

1. What does brand humanity mean to you and your business?]
2. How important is it to your brand?
3. Can you give any examples of ways in which you've been able to humanize your brand?
4. If yes, what tangible results have been achieved?

### **Creating Empathy and Personal Connection**

5. Digital marketing makes it easy for companies to deliver tailored communications but often brands struggle to deliver truly personalised experiences. Your thoughts?
6. In general, how do customers experience these personalised engagements, and how successful do you think brands are at delivering genuinely valued experiences in the Asia market?
7. Can we leverage a comprehensive view of the customer's brand experience, with a complete history across all touch points? And what can we do with the data?
8. How successful are organisations these days at managing and orchestrating content as a single entity across their brands and channels?

### **Technology, the customer, and your business**

9. How has the customer journey evolved as a result of today's rapid technology advancements?
10. How has advancements in tech changed the way customers interact with your business today?
11. How do you map your customers' journeys across multiple touch points and locations?
12. How sophisticated is the integration of online and offline touch points by marketers in Asia Pacific?
13. What role does tech play in developing a consistent tone of voice?

### **Humanising Brands - a closer look**

14. What attributes are important to humanising brands?
15. What are some common challenges that marketers can encounter when attempting to humanise their brands
16. How do you balance data privacy with personalisation?
17. What are you currently doing to drive empathy at scale?
18. Is there such a thing as over-personalisation?

### **Metrics & Measurement**

19. What metrics does your company swear by? Are there any you feel are over-rated or under-appreciated?
20. What customer satisfaction metrics are you currently tracking?
21. What are you doing to identify and engage with your best customers?
22. How do you keep up with new technologies and evolving best-practices?

All discussants and highlights of the discussion will be featured in a subsequent print edition of *Marketing Magazine*. Of course, all off-the-record, sensitive, and confidential information will not be published.

To have an idea of how you will be featured, here's a past article for your reference:

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### SUCCESS STARTS WITH ALIGNING YOUR SALES AND MARKETING TEAMS

With numbers and measurement playing a more crucial role for a marketer's KPIs, more are under the spotlight to contribute to the company's pipeline and sales. During a recent roundtable discussion hosted by Marketing, marketers in the room discussed how the focus on numbers has driven a greater demand for a deeper alignment between marketing and sales.

"Sales and marketing need to figure out which part [of the customer journey] is their responsibility and hold each other accountable. The alignment is critical in guaranteeing the result because no matter how genius your marketing is, if the sales alignment is not there you won't get the result," said Lynn Huang, head of Asia Pacific marketing at Honeywell.

The relationship between sales and marketing, however, has not always been the most integrated. Karen Kaur, senior digital strategist for Asia at Motorola Solutions, said this challenge has been around for decades, despite all the technology available today.

"It's all the same issue of marketing is generating leads, but sales is not progressing even though marketing has the insight," she said. "What is missing in terms of measurement is that no one seems to own the customer insight or data sets. This leads to a lack of understanding of a business' customer as no one seems to be talking to customers except the sales guys."

"Getting sales is not a linear process, but we are generating it under a linear model although we know people are not linear," she explained. This could potentially lead to a wastage of 70% to 80% of budgets for many companies, she added.

That being said, this challenge should be viewed as an opportunity which marketing can take on. For Kaur, if a marketer's metrics changes from just being about revenue growth to more about how he or she has taken the data and created marketing content that's relevant and helpful to the customer – this might be more effective from a branding and positioning standpoint.

Also weighing in on the topic was Martin Mackay, former president of APAC and origin at CA Technologies, who said having left much of a focus on the numbers can also put marketers at risk of falling into the trap of chasing numbers.

"You end up ensuring that your marketing metrics are in the green because of the amount of pipeline or sales leads being generated. However, sales may not be great because these leads may not have necessarily been converted or were not appropriate for sales," he explained, adding that these are major challenges for most B2B businesses.

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**EMBRACING NUMBERS**

Despite the challenges a focus on metrics brings, Shivan Prasadachari, head of marketing for EMEA and ANZ – Media at Avaya Technologies, said having numbers has forced marketers to have conversations with their sales teams. This allows marketers to find out how exactly their sales teams are going out to sell and what is working for them. In turn, enabling marketing programmes which fit the salesperson's style.

"Having a sales, I see a disconnect between marketing and sales which have two different styles. In many cases, marketing was running a support programme which brought in many leads, but no closed deals. However, you can't say the salesperson wasn't good [at their job] because maybe the way the marketing was handled was just not their preferred style," she said.

As such, it is all about having a good relationship with the sales team, which also means finding out what the sales team is prioritising as well as its numbers, then building the marketing strategy around it.

"This ensures sales teams are not looking at marketers as their assistant, but rather as a function which is there to help them close the deal. It also allows them to reach out to marketing a lot more after that," she added.

Meanwhile, another important part of the equation is also involving customers – both senior and junior – in the process. Jessie Chong, head of marketing for Singapore at Trend Micro, said this involves going beyond training junior marketers for the usual running of events and marketing communications activities to have the conditions to communicate with the sales team and be on the same page as them.

**A DEDICATED COLLABORATION UNIT**

One solution includes having a dedicated unit driving the alignment between sales and marketing. Chong said. For the case of Trend Micro, the company has an extended arm of marketing which sits between both sales and marketing called the "opportunity discovery team". This opportunity discovery team is responsible for looking into two different areas – existing customers with up-selling opportunities and new local opportunities. As such, there are two different strategies going into each different type of prospect in which the team works closely with sales leaders to figure out.

"This team works closely to align sales and marketing and also help our sales team be more educated about marketing initiatives and how they can leverage marketing in their jobs," she explained.

The opportunity discovery team also plays an important role in qualifying the leads and understanding whether potential customers have the right budget, needs and timelines. This team is also tasked with identifying prospects who are only looking to do more two years down the road.

"Although these prospects aren't looking right now, we still need to influence them at the present time because they might be doing research online to find out how to improve their own cybersecurity approach," she said. The earlier this is done, the more chances to influence decision makers.

Similarly for Motorola's Kaur, given the right budget, she would also ideally set up a team called the "customer experience management team" to take on the customer relationship management as part of its long-term strategy and not on an ad hoc basis. This includes talking to customers, understanding them and their pain points without selling them anything.

After analysing customer behaviours and understanding which channels they are on and the content they are consuming, the dedicated team can feed the insights to both the marketing and sales teams. This would allow them to better identify their customer and how to help them.

"If a conversion happens, great. But if you are not being tracked on leads, you don't have that pressure, allowing you to focus on creating a personalised experience for the customer," she said.

She added that this is what is missing right now in marketing because everyone is pressured with KPIs and deadlines.

"Everyone is focused on that right now and praying for customers with the mindset of 'putting out content and hoping customers download it,'" she explained.

At the end of the day, it is about going back to basics when it comes to meeting the customer's goals with your solutions. Ashish Nair, managing partner at GetIt Comms, said it is also time to go back to a "boutique-style" of operations when it comes to the B2B space and involve everyone in the company.

"Try and break down some of these artificial barriers which are there and go back to meeting the customer in person and identifying their needs," he said.

But, at the end of the day, be it in sales or marketing, what is crucial is to have the right attitude and know what you are looking for – it is pointless.

According to Stacy Seah, head of marketing at CenturyLink, with the huge amount of unstructured data to work with, if marketers don't know what they are looking for – it is pointless.

"Start with the outcome in mind, then go back, look at the data and figure out a solution from there," she said.

She added that insights can also be mined from across the organisation, mapped out and given to sales to help them better identify the triggers which cause action, as well as the "compelling events" which close deals. If your target persona is a financial executive, why not talk to your CFO and your financial controller to understand what are their pain points and what jobs need to be done. One could obtain insights from within their own organisation and apply that.

Doing so also helps the sales teams pre-empt what could potentially happen [in a prospect meeting] as well as the various customer challenges and common encounters.

"It's a lot more about collaborating with the information that is there," she added.

This includes helping them understand the different content being produced by marketing and how they can leverage that in their sales pitch. At the end of the day, success requires the two to work in tandem.

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### DOES PERSONALISATION NEED TO BE ONE-ON-ONE?



It comes as no surprise that consumer expectations are increasing. This is especially because, today, with more data being shared with brands, consumers expect a more superior experience. Nonetheless, finding the right balance between being there when the customers want you, and being creepy, is a challenge which keeps most marketers up at night.

Moreover, while one-on-one personalisation is important in ensuring a brand fosters a connection with its customers, personalisation is also costly. During a recent roundtable discussion hosted by Marketing, marketers in the room agreed that while one-on-one experiences are important, they shouldn't be the only end goal.

Speaking about personalised messaging, Navin Bains, head of customer and digital experience for APAC and EMEA at Citibank, said that while developing personalised messaging is extremely important, grouping people according to similar preferences based on specific needs or lifestyles, is still acceptable. For example, people on a certain earning scale tend to have similar demands, albeit not exactly the same.

"There will be people in banking who we can offer products to based on their lifestyle, so I do think that 'lookalikes' are very important, if you always wait for one-on-one you will be wasting a long time," she said.

Agreeing with her was Avia Easted, regional head of consumer at Luxavia. She added that in her role, a lot of marketing is done to get customers to the store – especially if the customer is someone who looks like they will visit the store, but haven't as yet.

"Of course, you need to personalise, but you don't have to personalise everything because it's about getting the person to the store – and this is where the real personalisation starts," she said.

**IMPORTANCE OF FEEDBACK LOOP**

Another important component when it comes to personalisation is having a feedback loop, said Tomasz Kurczyk, digital transformation director at AIA Insurance. Creating this loop will ensure an understanding of the customer, which in turn, improves how a brand advertises and communicates. It also ensures a brand is able to go back to the product's design. "One of the biggest priorities for us is not just a personalised communication, but also personalised products and services," he said.

He explained that for a long time, this was quite difficult for the insurance sector as insurance traditionally was about having policies with a standard set of benefits and allowing customers to "pick it or leave it".

But, in today's day and age, it is important for the brands to make it personalised and relevant to the customer to ensure the customer doesn't get "over" or "under" something relevant to consumers is paramount, he explained.

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For Cawson Lin, vice-president, regional bancassurance at DBS Bank, personalisation when done right results in a positive customer experience. "It increases engagement, builds loyalty and enhances the lives of our customers so they can 'live more, and bank less,'" he said.

There are many ways to personalise depending on the industry or segment the brand operates in. In the insurance business, for example, it may mean having a bespoke, yet flexible, insurance solution that allows customers to choose their preferred type of cover, premiums to be paid and payment frequency based on their budget and needs. "Brands need not be excessively concerned about 'where' personalisation is always achieved to the power of one," he said. He added what's important is ensuring a continuous feedback loop which can be achieved with data and analytics. "The customer needs to walk away feeling they have had the best experience, and no one else in the market being able to provide that same level of satisfaction. That is the holy grail of personalisation."

Also weighing in was Jeff Evans, vice-president of technology and digital experience for APAC at Epiphany, who said that marketers who are able to leverage technology to drive a personal connection are the ones who will get far.

"With personalisation at scale with technology, messages need to still have a purpose for technology to be effectively leveraged to create more engaging experiences," he said, adding it also comes down to localisation and how brands are able to leverage on that.

**A UNIFIED VIEW OF THE CUSTOMER**

On top of personalisation, having a unified view of the customer was also a common problem mentioned at the discussion. Struggled with "siloed" data, head of marketing at Directus, said although having a single view of the customer is much easier today compared with the past, not every organisation is blessed to have that view – while deriving insights and data from it.

"Data is useless if you don't apply it. Marketers have lots of data, but the question is how we actually amalgamate the data and synthesise it to make sense for our work on a day to day basis – I think that's one of the biggest challenges," she explained.

Echoing the sentiment was Sonali Verma, head of customer experience and innovation, regional bancassurance, at Manulife, who added that working with data in such a manner is easier said than done. This is especially when personal data protection is taken into account.

She added that given the amount of data present in every company now, the right management of data is the only way to create that personalised connection.

"For Vienna, it's 'virtually impossible' to not use data categories in order to connect with customers.

Also speaking about the importance of data privacy was Evelyn Pong, head of operations at SunLife Pacific.

"In the case of the healthcare industry, data security is high on the priority agenda of most, if not all companies, so marketing teams are extremely mindful and legal and compliance teams are always consulted so that comprehensive precautions are taken to protect the privacy of our clients, their patients and consumers," she said.

She added that marketers are now in an era where things are evolving rapidly with the help of technology to enhance personalised patient education, disease management and strengthen engagement between healthcare providers, patients and their caregivers.

"In the healthcare industry while all of us are gaining momentum in using digital offerings to bring innovation and customised solutions to patients, we are all facing the same challenges. Moving forward, strong partnerships are even more critical," she added.