

THE ART & SCIENCE OF CONNECTING WITH CONSUMERS

MARKETING

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Delivering on Engagement

Making Every Interaction Count

Discussion paper and agenda
2 May 2019

GARIBALDI - ITALIEN RESTAURANT & BAR
36 PURVIS ST, SINGAPORE 188613

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 – Round the table participant introductions

12:35pm – 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.

Technology, the customer, and your business

1. How has the customer journey evolved as a result of today's rapid technology advancements?
2. How has advancements in tech changed the way customers interact with your business today?
3. How do you map your customers' journeys across multiple touch points and locations?
4. How sophisticated is the integration of online and offline touch points by marketers in Asia Pacific?
5. How has your marketing mandate changed over the years?

Creating a Personal Connection

1. Digital marketing makes it easy for companies to deliver tailored communications but often brands struggle to deliver truly personalised experiences. Your thoughts?
2. 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?
3. 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?
4. How successful are organisations these days at managing and orchestrating content as a single entity across their brands and channels?

Social Engagement and Personalisation

1. In addition to technology that empowers consumers, intelligent systems that will enhance our lives, and the continued blurring of digital and physical mediums, what other trends are you looking out for?
2. As a marketer, how are you assessing the impact that new technologies and trends have on consumer behaviour? How does it manifest itself in your marketing practices?
3. What challenges do you face when it comes to implementation and scale? What's your brand journey when you're delivering on customer's gold-rated standards?

Metrics & Measurement

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

Focusing on growth and retention

1. You're under pressure to deliver quantifiable competitive advantage to your business by acquiring valuable clients, while also ensuring their loyalty long term. How are you balancing both short term and long term strategies?
2. How are you identifying and targeting clients who will be the most valuable to your brand?
3. Are you seeing an uplift in loyalty and a corresponding improvement in ROI in cross selling and increased client value?
4. How should we be tracking and assessing ROI?

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 this 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 still the same issue where 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 insights 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 Masley, former president of APAC and Japan at CA Technologies, who said having too 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.

EMBRACING NUMBERS
Despite the challenges focus on metrics brings, Shwari Prasadharshi, head of marketing, ASEAN and ANZ – Media at Avaya, Technologies, said having numbers has forced marketers to have conversations with the sales team. 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.

"Usually, if a salesperson's biggest 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 bit more often than," she said.

Meanwhile, another important part of the equation is also involving marketers – both senior and junior. In the process, Jesse Chong, head of marketing for Singapore at Trend Micro, said this means going beyond training junior marketers for the usual running of events and marketing communications activities to have the capability to communicate with the sales team and bring the same page as them.

A DEDICATED COLLABORATION UNIT
One solution is to have a dedicated team aligning 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.

"The 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 fit the right budget, needs and timelines. The 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, this dedicated team can lead 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. Ashroah 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 in an era of data overload.

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 closes 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 concerns.

"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?

"You can personalise your message as much as you want, but at the end of the day, once the purchase experience is a disappointment, it will be gone over," he said.

For Clarence 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 tailored to their budget and needs. "Banks used not be excessively concerned about whether personalisation is always achieved to the point of one," Lin said. He added that what's important is ensuring a continuous feedback loop which can be driven with data and analytics. "The customer needs to walk away feeling like they have had the best experience, and no one else in the market being able to provide customer loyalty can be achieved with data and analytics."

Also weighing in was Jeff Evans, vice-president of technology and digital experience at APAC at Epsilon, 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 in the discussion. Staggered with Lester Loke, head of marketing at DineAsia, 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 Verma, it's "virtually impossible" to not create data categories in order to connect with customers.

Also speaking about the importance of data privacy was Evelyn Pang, head of operations at Sanofi Pasteur.

"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.

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