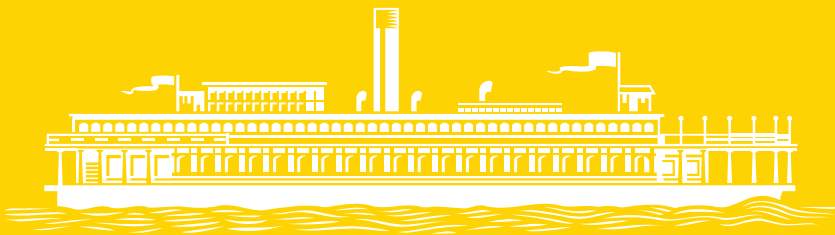


Five trends for marketers to watch

by Lois Jacobs

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Five trends for marketers to watch

In marketing, it can be hard to distinguish between a fad du jour and a real, game-changing shift. To help you cut through the clutter, the top minds at Landor have identified five major trends that will shape the industry for years to come.

1. Big data: A race to be first

Big data is unavoidable; as GE chief marketing officer Beth Comstock puts it, “If you don’t like data, you won’t like the future.”¹ Every day we read new articles about how big data will help us track the customer journey, build loyalty, predict behavior, and ultimately help drive sales. For all big data’s promise, however, few are prepared to take advantage of it. According to IBM’s recent C-Suite Study, 82 percent of CMOs don’t feel ready to take on the data explosion.² This leaves marketers racing to be the first to master the new resources available—whether this means building up an in-house team or partnering with an outside agency.

T-Mobile USA worked with a big data partner to integrate massive amounts of customer data. By

combining and analyzing customer information, web logs, billing data, and social media engagement, the brand was able to identify which customers were likely to switch to another company. Using these insights, T-Mobile was able to cut defections in half in a single quarter.³

2. Rethinking retail to battle showrooming

Showrooming is the retailer’s scourge. Shoppers are still visiting brick-and-mortar locations to sample wares, but they’re going online to buy the same products less expensively or determine if another store is offering a better deal. Retailers are making in-store experiences extraordinary in order to convince customers that it’s worth paying a little extra to buy their goods on the spot. Experience retail is here to stay.

BMW recognized that its customers were demanding better retail experiences and set about creating a more inspiring dealership. It opened its first reconceptualized BMW Brand Store in Brussels in 2014, introducing a multisensory interactive customer experience that is careful to be free

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¹ “PR lessons from the ANA Masters of Marketing Conference,” Landor Associates (7 November 2013), landor.com/#!/talk/articles-publications/articles/pr-lessons-from-ana-masters-of-marketing-conference/.

² Jack Loechener, “Marketing playing a larger role in business,” Research Brief (3 April 2014), mediapost.com/publications/article/222555/marketing-playing-a-larger-role-in-business.html.

³ Paul Taylor, “Crunch time for big data,” *the Financial Times* (19 June 2012), ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/bd5a5ce2-aa57-11e1-899d-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2yQK8LX1I.

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of sales pressure.⁴ By highlighting BMW's customization options, benefits, history, and post-sale services at all touchpoints, the new retail model lets customers know there's no need to comparison shop.

3. Putting brand purpose into process

Since the 1970s, leaders have paid lip service to corporate social responsibility (CSR) by adopting an ideal, but supporting it only infrequently. Recently, a more authentic CSR strategy has come into vogue. Companies are weaving social and environmental solutions into the earliest stages of not only brand strategy, but also operations.

Although the tech industry has accomplished many incredible feats, its products rely heavily on energy, which saps natural resources. Google Green acknowledges this and creates a web "better for the environment" by investing in renewable energy and focusing on energy-efficiency projects. By utilizing cloud services and optimizing data center and server efficiencies, Google has been able to provide one month of products (such as Search, Gmail, Chrome, Drive, and YouTube) to an active user in a manner that emits the same energy as driving a single mile.⁵

4. Green packaging

In many cases, the package that customers hold in their hands is the one touchpoint in which a company's sustainability policies can be seen in action. Recognizing that consumer concern over the environment is growing, brands are taking

a second look at their packaging standards. Some are using recycled or sustainable materials; for example, Method with its reclaimed ocean plastic containers and Coca-Cola with its bioresin bottles. Others are simply using less packaging, thus reducing shipping space and the size of their carbon footprint.

Procter & Gamble reduced its detergent packaging by 50 percent when it introduced Tide Pods, which come in either a recyclable tub or a lightweight plastic bag.⁶ The premeasured Pods achieved over \$500 million in sales in the first year, demonstrating that consumers have put their seal of approval on ecofriendly packs.⁷

5. Authenticity and social media

Although the basic tenets of branding haven't changed, a brand manager's role has become more complicated in this era of social media. At one time, brand managers had to keep up with only a handful of media platforms, but today they need to create consistent content for traditional media as well as for a wide array of social outlets. Furthermore, social media has turned our world into a transparent one, bringing with it unprecedented public commentary on all activities surrounding businesses, products, and marketing. Smart brands aren't shying away; they are taking advantage of social platforms to commit to their brand promises in authentic and publicly accountable ways—and engaging in conversations with their customers.

American clothing retailer J. Crew showed its mastery at social listening when it quickly

4 "BMW Brand Store Brussels," BMW Belux (2014), bmwbrandstore.be/be-en/.

5 "The Big Picture," Google Green, google.com/green/bigpicture.

6 "Enabling consumers to conserve," Procter & Gamble (2014), pg.com/en_US/sustainability/environmental_sustainability/conservation_resources/conserving_home.shtml.

7 Jack Neff, "Tide Pods winning \$7 billion detergent wars by redefining value," Ad Age (18 December 2012), adage.com/article/news/tide-pods-winning-7-billion-detergent-wars-redefining/238779.



responded to a loyal customer who took to the blogosphere to beg for the return of her favorite discontinued one-piece. Jenna Lyons, J. Crew creative director, promised to see what she could do. Two months later, the swimsuit reappeared with a two-page ad in *New York Magazine* along with a note to the blogger: “Your wish is my command...within reason. XO Jenna.” Not only did J. Crew make one customer very happy, it also achieved a PR coup, taking social outlets by storm and attracting significant media coverage.⁸ ■

Method’s 2-in-1 dish soap packaging is partially made from recovered ocean plastic.

⁸ Véronique Hyland, “J. Crew resurrected a swimsuit because we begged them to,” *New York Magazine* (7 April 2014), nymag.com/the-cut/2014/04/jcrew-resurrected-a-swimsuit-because-we-begged.html.

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