

COLUMNS

## Transitional marketing and the connected screen

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There is no first, second or third screen there are only screens. Regardless of their uniqueness in form factor or function, these connected screens are simply humanized interfaces allowing us to communicate with and experience a digitally optimized world.

While much has been made of defining the distinctions between the various connected screens, be they mobile, tablet or connected television, what has been lost in the debates over how best to use each distinctly is how best to address the radical shift in digital user experience expectations and screen agnosticism.

How do we address this fundamental shift from a technology-centric marketing model to one of experience-centricity?

On point

In ignoring this experience-driven revolution, marketers and technologists alike have chosen the path of least resistance and created additional siloed channels for consumer engagement, dismissing the subtly nuanced gray matter that exists between disparate channels made up of situational determinants and connected consumer behavior.

Existing models of cross-channel engagement, from a user's perspective, render no more than a dizzying array of disconnected experiences, like random staccato plots on a digital map void of navigational directions for how to get from one point to another.

Connected consumers require a seamless transitional experience from device to device, therefore marketing strategies employed specific to a single device are fundamentally flawed.

Each device sojourns the journey between consumer and brand, but this momentary device-specific experience does not define the experience.

Marketers in this new order of constant connectivity must devise strategies for a multi-screen consumer experience, allowing for the narrative of the brand to be transported from touchpoint to touchpoint in a transmedia engagement model where the technologies used are no longer the focal point.

The consumer experience is the primary consideration and that experience is, by its nature, transitional. The success or failure of any future marketing effort will be defined in the execution of transitions the transitions from medium to medium, dialogue to dialogue, and from context to context.

Great expectations

This new model of transitional marketing is dependent on accessibility and anticipation.

Accessibility is the foundational concern addressed by mobile sites, tablet apps and optimized campaign microsites, but the key to successful transitional marketing is anticipation. Anticipating that a consumer is on her tablet device when your commercial airs. Anticipating that the needs of consumers before 8:00 a.m. and after 5 p.m. are more time sensitive and experiential in nature. Anticipating that entries in a consumer's calendar could benefit from an additive offer.

Accessibility requires an understanding of connectivity and content. Anticipation requires an understanding of character and context.

To flourish in this new transitional multi-screen environment, marketers must be prepared to provide the tools to allow consumers to pull information from them when required, but they must also be prepared to initiate engagement with contextual relevance and personalization.

Anticipating transitions and communicating with consideration of context is where the battle for consumer hearts and minds will be won. Technologies and products can be commoditized, experiences cannot.

It is important to remember that experience is not a product of technology it is a product of emotion. From positive emotions come connections, and from connections come relationships. And isn't building relationships with consumers the end goal anyway?

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