

COLUMNS

## Need for less data and more exclusive content

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By [Dan Israel](#)

Advertising Week this year showcased the full gamut of 2013 buzzwords Big Data, personalization and brand authenticity as well as company pitches billed as "insights" on a range of panels. Cynicism aside, a few comments caught my attention, and refined my point of view on immersive experiences.

At his IAB MIXX session in New York last month, Brian King, global brand officer of Marriott International, shared insights from an ethnographic research study entitled Video Lives 2013. Marriott partnered with Tremor Media to develop the study.

What resonated most with me was Mr. King's statement that "children are the CIOs of the household." Any parent knows this is true, but Mr. King has embraced this insight to map out a key strategy for the company: co-creation.

No kidding

Many companies pay lip service to this idea of letting customers and employees co-create content, experiences and even product development.

To truly realize co-creation, Mr. King states it has to begin at home. Which leads us to the children, our de facto CIOs. The kids do the research, and they bring the knowledge to their parents, who then apply their wisdom to the decision-making process.

To draw the children into the Marriott orbit, the hotel chain seeks to enable immersive experiences, which primarily relies on video.

For instance, Marriott provides videos about what to do in the city of the Marriott you are thinking about, not just from the company itself, but also from "real" non-Marriott people and sources, which further legitimizes the experience.

Less data, more insight

Another interesting insight came from Bozama Saint John, head of music and entertainment marketing at PepsiCo.

While the buzzword today is Big Data, Ms. Saint John presented a contrarian viewpoint she wants less data.

My interpretation of her comment is that data alone is difficult enough to interpret today. Getting even more data can potentially make matters worse.

The PepsiCo executive's point seemed to segue nicely into something BuzzFeed chief revenue officer Andy Wiedlin said on his panel: Content is what matters most.

Putting more assets out there to get more data for instance, banner ads will not help the customer or the company.

However, if the content is contextually relevant, people will act on the content, share it with others, and drive revenue, which is all that matters at the end of the day.

Bottom line: Big Data in and of itself is a solution for a company. Rather, the most important dimension for brand marketers to think through is how to make contextually relevant and rich content.

Greyer lady

Mark Thompson, CEO of The New York Times, shed some light on what I see as the importance of self-contained ecosystems.

According to Mr. Thompson, in 2012 print and digital subscription revenue overtook revenue generated from all forms of advertising, print and digital. He also addressed the idea of the ubiquity of mobility.

Mr. Thompson stressed that advertising revenue remains critical and will not go away altogether, but publications like his cannot rely solely on advertising anymore.

By creating unique content only available from a single source, but able to be accessed from multiple mediums both offline and online, will provide the revenue streams they will come to rely on.

Think HBO and even Netflix as examples, and we see where publications like the New York Times have to go.

ALL OF THESE insights have led me to adjust my point of view on the importance of video for the creation of immersive experiences.

What Marriott demonstrated is that video becomes the draw to win over the influencers i.e. the child as the chief information officer, the CIO.

Pepsi and the New York Times stressed the need for less data and exclusive content.

Couple these insights with the increasing availability of broadband speeds on mobile devices, and it becomes evident that video should play a bigger part when thinking through holistic immersive experiences.

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