

dmexco 2016 review – the Human Factor in Digital Marketing

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Once again, the [dmexco](#) broke all records: More than 50.000 visitors, over 1.000 exhibitors and 250 hours of programme. No matter how well you were prepared – it was impossible to see every panel. Eventually, the conference and fair are not only about inspiring presentations and debates, but also about meeting up with colleagues and business partners. In case you missed exciting parts of the conference or couldn't attend this years' dmexco at all, we're happy to wrap up our highlights for you.

Digital is everything...

Sir Martin Sorrell and Twitter

Almost 19.000 dmexco related Tweets in only two days – the digitalisation was

omnipresent at the fair grounds. The appearance of Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey was therefore very convenient. Even more convenient was that he wasn't there in person due to a scheduling conflict, but that his conversation with Sir Martin Sorrell took place via Skype – digital is everything! Sorrell and Dorsey talked about Twitter's new content plans (they have recently bought NFL streaming rights) and the platform's role in the US election year. The packed Congress Hall got excited when WPP's CEO negotiated a special deal: Dorsey promised to attend the dmexco next year (not just on screen) if Sorrell has an own Twitter account by then.

Longer available than 24hrs: Snapchat's Imran Khan about mobile advertising

Did you know that Twitter has turned ten this year? A whole decade, which feels like an eternity, in a time that bears new social networks in an enormous speed. Right now, the hottest platform is Snapchat. It is, however, not really a social network, but a “camera company” – at least this is what Snapchat CSO Imran Khan explained to the visitors, who poured in large numbers into the Congress Hall to follow his keynote. To be fair, he also admitted that the app enables community experiences, which is a great opportunity for brands in terms of storytelling. At the end of his speech, Khan couldn't resist to give a little side blow to Facebook: he claimed that sound matters and noted that video ads without sound are just moving banners.

Social Media means data, data means insights and both connected means huge opportunities

In the age of social media, there is more consumer data available for advertisers than ever before. The challenge is to handle data dynamics and by that to create value, which is exactly what the industry experts Greg Glenday (Shazam), Warren Jenson (Acxiom International), Bob Lord (IBM), William Swayne (Carat) and Lisa Utzschneider (Yahoo) discussed. Not only did they talk about how to connect customer data through all channels, but also about treating the data with serious respect for the consumers' privacy at the same time.

Collaboration is key

Valuable data management is a very complex procedure that requires advanced technology – no wonder that technology companies like SAP have entered the ad technology competition. One might think publishers and agencies fear this development, but actually quite the opposite is the case. Tina Beuchler (OWM), Matthias Brüll (GroupM Germany), Dr. Wolfgang Faisst (Sap Xm), Björn Kaspring (AGOF) and Martin Lütgenau (BurdaForward) shared one stage in the Debate Hall and all of them agreed on one thing: the rise of new technology players is a benefit for the whole industry because in the end it's the advertiser who profits. But only – the participants agreed on this point as well – if a new technology range really leads to a common trusted marketplace with reliable KPIs. For the future this means that advertisers, publishers and agencies have to work closer together in order to create maximum relevance for the consumer.

...not every thing is digital.

TV and digital, digital and TV

Video in the digital age was one of the hot topics of this year's dmexco. Facebook's Will Platt-Higgins talked about the social network's video first approach and Twitter starts streaming football games. However, remember the motto that "not every thing is digital"! The biggest marketing budgets are still being spent on linear TV campaigns. Is this going to change as the digitalisation moves forward? That's what Petri Kokko (Google), Martin Michel (Sky Media), Martin Krapf (Screenforce) and Marianne Bullwinkel (Facebook) discussed in the Debate Hall. Bullwinkel and Krapf had a heated debate about whether traditional TV stations or digital players have more valuable numbers and KPI's for advertisers. Both sides had plausible arguments and in the end they found a common denominator: there is no one or another, both linear TV and online video find their place in a balanced media mix.

Be creative – and stop thinking in silos

Lindsay Pattison from Maxus and Linda Yaccarino from NBC came to a similar conclusion: linear TV is not dead. Instead, TV has left the living rooms and consumers want content everywhere they go and on every device. This is why traditional broadcasters and new media should work together. NBC showed what this can look like during the Olympics in Rio: the TV station cooperated with Snapchat and BuzzFeed. Whilst the main action took place on NBC, sports fans were provided with additional behind-the-scenes-material on the online platforms. Cross channel content will gain even more relevance in the future and marketers must not forget an important ingredient in the media mix that is still a unique human feature: creativity. Winning the data race is one thing, the other is to produce exciting content that reaches out to the consumers emotionally.

Authenticity!

“Where’s Humanity in Ad?” Travis Johnson, Global President of Ansible, and Chad Stoller, EVP of IPG Mediabrands discussed this question in the new Experience Hall. Their theory was that we can use the achievements of marketing technology and still hold on to the “good old gut feeling” in order to keep an emotional connection with the customer. Johnson and Stoller mentioned that advertisers shouldn’t forget that there’s still a need for authentic, relevant human connections and that conversational commerce is a big opportunity for brands.

And how to go on with these insights and turn them into daily business?

Our “answers” are four questions which you may use as a guideline to the upcoming challenges of digital transformation:

1. Rising complexity: The rising complexity of digital marketing of roles: Who takes the driver’s seat? Have these roles already been defined in your set of colleagues, agencies and partners?

2. Artificial intelligence versus human creativity: Are you sure you (still) have enough “human” creative input to amplify the great opportunities of “smart algorithms”, which help you to bring messages faster and more targeted to your consumers? “Programmatic advertising” does not mean “automatic advertising” – there is still a need for insights, ideas and innovations provided by humans.

3. MAYA – most advanced, yet acceptable Is your media mix well balanced, especially between TV and digital video content? It’s always about your consumers. Thus, always use their “yet acceptable” as benchmark.

4. Age of collaboration and empowering Collaboration of clients, agencies, publishers and technology providers is key for a transparent ad eco-system. Which role do you play? And how do you give and take in this system day by day?

That’s it – this is our wrap up of this year’s dmexco! Of course, we couldn’t cover every fascinating panel or ask every question that pops up here, the dmexco and digital marketing are simply too huge to be summed up in one piece of text.

Thus, feel free to browse the [dmexco YouTube Channel](#) to find further highlights or talk to and discuss with us. Furthermore, read about what our global colleagues have identified as the “3 key themes in ad:tech” [here](#). Any questions? Don’t hesitate to contact us:

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Thanks for reading & see you soon!