

Current State of Marketing

by Those Who Know

MARKETING OPINION SYSTEMS THINKING

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MediaCom posed five questions to three seasoned senior marketers from around the world asking them about the current state of marketing, including their most important challenges and opportunities. Here's what they had to say.

Q&A with Anton van de Putte, Vice President, Area General Manager North & West Europe, GSK

1. Where do you look for inspiration into what's next for your customers and your business?

I actively follow the media, read newsletters and use GSK's clippings service. GSK also has a reverse mentoring program in place (where senior managers are paired with more junior staff) to ensure senior management is exposed to trends in digital. We also reach out to small companies like Smartclip on a regular basis; they help us understand what "the next big thing" might be.

2. How are you leveraging content and data to engineer the success of your marketing programs?

Much of our content is created globally and then adapted for local markets. We back this up with clear ROI measurements for most activities to ensure we are making the most effective investment choices.

3. How are you listening to and prioritizing your customers within your communications system and ensuring they stay loyal?

We track all the social media mentions of our brands in the GSK Social Listening Lab. It's open to everyone in our office, so we can all access the results and interact.

4. How do you ensure the integration and collaboration between marketing disciplines and specialists within your organization?

All our people work side by side, and we bolster this by having a digital specialist on every marketing team. We also have quarterly cross-functional workshops to ensure that everyone is exposed to the latest and most important ideas and tools, and can apply what they've learned.

5. What does our marketing future look like? What organizational changes do you believe the industry needs to make to succeed?

For us, the marketing future is about three things: (1) striking the right balance between global and local teams; (2) continuing to shift investment to digital (and having the right

digital KPIs in place); and (3) constantly upgrading our digital expertise.

Alongside us, our agencies must also evolve to continue to add value.

Q&A with Jacob Sten, Vice President, Product Marketing, SONY Mobile

1. Where do you look for inspiration as to what's next for your customers and your business?

Our inspiration is to empower and enrich the life of the consumer, providing offerings to enable new and richer experiences. We talk to consumers constantly and generally find two end-states: either a consumer has a need but doesn't know how it can be fulfilled or, sometimes, we can create a demand for new products and services.

2. How are you leveraging content and data to engineer the success of your marketing programs?

Data and content is fundamental to our success, and direct consumer interaction gives us further leverage. I think we can do more with data in three key areas: data from digital and direct consumer interaction can help us better understand consumer needs and cultural differences; data can help us plan our media mix and optimize ROI; and data can inform the consumer journey and help us tailor our activity by target audience. As part of the SONY family, we have access to a wide range of content that can be used to inform both product development and marketing communications. This is an important advantage, but – in a world where content is everywhere – we must strive to create unique and powerful offerings that only Sony can provide.

3. How are you listening to and prioritizing your customers within your communications system?

We've worked very hard to identify the target audience for both our brand and our product offerings but, of course, we know that consumers are constantly evolving. If we are going to stand out in an increasingly crowded landscape, we need to be very targeted, thoughtful

and consistent in how we communicate. Saying no and being selective is increasingly fundamental to our success.

4. How do you ensure integration and collaboration between marketing disciplines and specialists within your organization?

Organizational structure alone will not ensure integration and collaboration; a vibrant culture is also key. SONY Mobile has a collaborative, open culture in which everyone can speak freely. It's about understanding each other's expectations and objectives, and recognizing that we all have the same ultimate goal. You also sometimes need strong governance during execution phases when tight coordination is vital.

We also make sure that our marketing activities are closely tied to overall corporate goals. This reinforces the importance of marketing and gives everyone a shared context.

5. What does our marketing future look like? What organizational changes do you believe the industry must make to succeed?

Two thoughts... one is that marketing will become much more focused on the consumer journey. This will necessitate deeper, more direct engagement with the consumer, and marketing organizations may need to be reshaped to facilitate these conversations more quickly and more easily.

Marketing and consumer engagement will also be much more "always on," as the pinnacle will no longer be one single purchase moment, but rather a more distributed level of attention on the entire cycle up to purchase and then repurchase and recommendation.

Q&A with Juan Pablo Gómez Macfarland, Head of Marketing, SEAT, Mexico

1. Where do you look for inspiration into what's next for your customers and your business?

Digital platforms are an important way to discover innovative ideas and new ways of doing business. Social networks are a big focus group for learning, and we believe that the closer we are to our customers, the more chances we have for success.

2. How are you leveraging content and data to engineer the success of your marketing programs?

Clear strategic vision, along with KPIs to measure success, give us the power to focus any marketing program and create relevant content for our target markets.

3. How are you listening to and prioritizing your customers within your communications system and ensuring they stay loyal?

One team, one voice: Having two agencies in one – CRM and Digital – is the best way to build a 360° communication system with the proper focus, relevant information and targeted messages. Moving in one direction together also provides a more efficient and less costly way to track and maintain customer loyalty.

4. How do you ensure the integration and collaboration between marketing disciplines and specialists within your organization?

Never stop reminding the team what the goals are, how they will be achieved and the role that each and every person plays and achieving our objectives. We hold quarterly marketing check-ins on and align our strategy with our KPIs.

5. What do organizations need to do to succeed in the future?

Three things: First, organizations must have strong, clear brand values and communicate them across the right channels; second, targeting your message will increase the likelihood of capturing the highest-quality prospects possible; and lastly, information is power, so the quicker it comes to you – both from within and outside the company – the faster you can move ahead.

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