

It's a match! What online dating can teach brands about agency value

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THE STIGMA OF DATING APPS HAS SOMEWHAT DISSIPATED IN THE LAST FEW YEARS – PAVING THE WAY FOR MORE DATERS, MORE USER PROFILES, MORE “HEY’S”... MORE “HI THERE’S”... LESS LUCK.

Last year in 2016, we experienced what a few digital content managers have described as a ‘content shock’ – a kind of kneejerk reaction to a message that was repeatedly bounced off the walls in most PR and marketing departments in years prior – “we’re not producing enough content”.

Well, it seems as though that message was received loud and clear, with a [36% growth in](#)

[brand stories YoY since 2015.](#)

But after 2016, we're now at a stage where the proliferation of content has taken that already uncomfortable noise to a deafening level, making it even harder to get your brand's content voice heard.

Much of this noise is just that, noise; failing to deliver a unique message that [resonates emotionally with the desired audience](#) – and just like the many whimsical 'openers' we may have sent or received on Tinder, Bumble and Happn, a lot of brand content is lost in the swathes of competition.

The data-led approach

Now, a paid dating [site](#) is different to a free dating [app](#): you pay a premium for a service, a monthly subscription for their data-led expertise on what is potentially your perfect match.

Take eHarmony – you're subjected to a 400 question personality survey and qualified against 29 key dimensions of psychological compatibility and a third algorithmic layer of interpersonal chemistry.

And while the credibility of some of these match algorithms is sometimes under scrutiny – what you can be sure to encounter, is a more targeted environment less likely to inhabit Jonny Ego and his shirtless mirror selfie.

Dating sites know their users, and they have enough data to match potential partners with a higher chance of a long lasting relationship. They also use their insights to provide subscribers with advice content and tips on how to not be a total disaster in your opening exchanges. In the online dating world, the dating sites did it first. They created the rules.

Media agencies vs DIY content

The rules that the online dating originators like eHarmony and Match.com created, were replicated by apps such as Tinder, Bumble and Happn, but their match parameters are

pretty basic in comparison, usually built on gender, age and distance from your current location.

Profiles on these apps are created with the intention of being noticed without an optimised match in mind. The game plan is to be unique and capture a few milliseconds of attention – so that picture with a tiger in Cambodia should surely set you apart from the crowd, right?

Without the data, strategy and expertise, your message will likely fall on deaf ears. Many content marketers and the organizations they work for often don't have the resource to shout over all the noise – also, anyone who has used free dating apps can vouch, there's always the temptation to say a little bit too much about yourself, or something that just doesn't resonate.

What we see many times when embarking on the task developing a digital content strategy for a new client, is a strategic positioning that is far too close to brand objectives, disregarding the needs of the audience, and subsequently, the sweet spot for great content and engagement.

The extensive vetting and data collation that dating sites carry out to find a more suitable match, could be comparable to a well-planned content strategy – the notion that there is no 'one size fits all' solution to capturing the attention of a brand's desired audience.

So what's the link to agencies and brand content?

Media agencies work as data-driven, expert intermediaries in a similar way that dating sites do. [MediaCom Beyond Advertising](#) as part of the content and connections agency: have the knowledge of the media climate, pre-existing relationships with media owners and creative networks and sophisticated tools to obtain a granular understanding of our client's target audience.

This data driven, audience first approach, coupled with the expertise of how content is digested differently across a myriad of client projects, allows agencies like MediaCom to

connect brands with their consumers in a way that is more congruent with who they are and what they're looking for.

The value of media agencies lies in the ability to use data and expertise to cut through noise in a way that is natural and informed by insight. When high quality brand content is brought in front of the right audience, there's no need to shout.

In 2017, and going forward, the emphasis for content marketers will be proving value and ROI – the tools, experts and data at the disposal of agencies will allow us to do this, to provide that ROI, and bring tangible value to something that has been traditionally hard to quantify in a monetary sense.

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