



Welcome to BLINK #12 – The Brand Issue

JOSH KRICHEFSKI, CEO, UK 28 FEB 2018

Building the brands of the future

Brands are facing a challenging future. Some marketers are unsure how they fit into a world powered by algorithms, data and fast sales. Others are worried about connecting with consumers in the age of voice control. All want to know how to build brands of the future, not relics of the past. It's key to financial success in any consumer-facing business.

In this edition of BLINK, we address these issues and more as we explore how brands are evolving in the digital age, and share advice for those looking to stay relevant in this ever-changing world.

Changing consumer behaviour is at the heart of these new challenges. Voice assistants such as Siri, Cortana and Alexa are shortening the traditional path to purchase, and the

increasing number of connected devices in our homes are merging the points of engagement and transaction. But to overcome these challenges, brands need to focus on three key areas as part of their broader response plan: data, purpose and innovation.

First, its often said that data is the new oil, and the brands that have it are most likely to be able to adapt and thrive. But, as Zohar Plan explains, getting data right is a complex task- which is why some brands in Latin America are finding new ways to target consumers more precisely.

Second, purpose gives people a reason to believe in a brand. Consumers are increasingly expecting brands to give something back to society and, as Camilo Plazas writes, there are many ways of doing this. Shell is certainly one company committed to making a difference and, as senior marketer Chris Hayek tell us, it is working this message into its campaigns in a number of interesting ways.

Finally, while brands have always had to innovate to keep pace with changing trends, that skill is becoming even more essential in the digital age- especially for large organizations. That's why it pays to have a formalised innovation programme. As Hannah Mirza explains, it can help you negate risk and leave you free to experiment with new technologies.

One company already on this journey is Mars. As Gary Arora tells us, its Launchpad initiative is helping the business form new relationships with start-ups and develop innovative marketing solutions quickly and successfully.

Building brands for the future won't be easy, of course. It will require marketers to learn new skills and, in some cases, restructure their businesses for the digital world. But while that might sound like a daunting task, it's a wholly necessary one.

I hope you find our thoughts useful and inspiring.

Regards,

Josh Krichefski

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