



In Marketing, Relationships Trump Trendy Techniques

By Jim Shea for Media Post
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Is NBA superstar James Harden's endorsement worth \$200 million? Adidas thinks so. In August, the company announced it would pay Harden that much over 13 years for his allegiance to the brand. Today, it is standard practice for retail brands to offer multimillion-dollar celebrity endorsement deals under the premise that star power will drive sales. But despite the big budget spending, a celebrity's influence doesn't necessarily move the needle with consumers.

A recent consumer report shows that fewer than 10% of consumers say they are more likely to buy an item because of an athlete or celebrity endorsement. This statistic raises a significant red flag for the marketing industry, as it questions what was once one of the most tried-and-true methods of reaching key audiences.

Evaluating Traditional and Trendy Marketing Methods

With the emergence of new marketing methods, it's become more important than ever to evaluate your strategies, even those that have stood the test of time.

Like celebrity endorsements, fashion magazine advertisements are an enormous marketing expense. The reality is that only a tiny fraction of millennials — 5% — identifies fashion magazines as the way they keep up with fashion trends. These numbers suggest that marketing spend on print ads should be primarily reserved for a senior demographic, as a healthy 40% of consumers aged 50 and up still look to print for their promotional materials.

Intimately knowing your audience is key to any great marketing campaign, but don't just rely on generalizations of a group to guide your strategy. For example, though common sense might suggest that digital native millennials would be game for anything tech-related, they, too, have limits. More than 60% of respondents say they never interact with a retailer's social media platforms while in store, despite the discounts and promotions they may provide.

Beacons are another new way marketers are trying to communicate promotions to

consumers, but the vast majority of customers still aren't familiar with the technology. Major retailers like Target and Macy's have already rolled out their beacon programs, but is it too soon for their shoppers? The retail industry has been interested in the use of beacon technology for some time, but more efforts need to be placed on communicating the major benefits of the technology and spreading overall awareness to consumers, as 70% of respondents don't know what a beacon is. Consumers can excitedly embrace tech, but marketers must pay attention to what resonates with them, and what they can do without. Consumers accept new technology when they understand and value the benefits it brings to them.

What Do Consumers Really Want?

The best price and experience for their money. In fact, more than 40% of millennial respondents identify price as the most important factor when purchasing an apparel item. Choosing marketing and in-store technologies that



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provide these benefits will surely be decisions that stand the test of time. For example, nearly 50% of respondents find the price barcode scanner to be the most helpful in-store technology. Although it's a dated technology, it still serves its purpose and communicates the information consumers really want.

The Take-Away

The truth is, marketing methods will always be evolving, and we must constantly find new ways to connect with today's consumer and refine our strategies accordingly. Marketers must intimately understand their key audiences, which isn't always an easy task to accomplish. What works today might not work with tomorrow's consumer, so you can't be afraid to take risks with emerging marketing techniques and technology. At the same time, you don't want to count out the traditional methods that may still resonate with a portion of your audience.

Developing a strong relationship with your customers is the key to

success, and providing them the personalized resources and technology they need to make decisions is critical.

Take the time to learn what your customers want most and keep their top priority in mind: the best price and experience for their money.