

INCITE



THE EXPERIENCE OF MARKETING ISSUE

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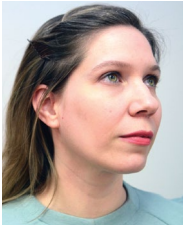
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We are a product of our experiences, personal and professional. Some of them are predictable – linked to life stages, career paths and business trajectories. Others sneak up and surprise us [you know what I'm talking about]. As we travel through life, our experiences – good, bad or indifferent – are at the heart of growth. When they shine, shared experiences create strong connections, while memorable experiences captivate and inspire.

What's true for us as individuals is also relevant for us as marketers.

This issue takes you inside the relationship between marketing and customer experience [CX]. It explores why we need to spotlight brand and creativity to turn CX into an ecosystem for growth. All eyes are on the customer journey, where context is everything. It's what allows us to empathize and leave a lasting impression. With a focus on context, marketers earn opportunities to build their brands and carve out competitive advantage.

B2B customers are people too. Customer experience is just as valuable to them at work as it is at home. But where do marketing and CX meet? At the intersection of content, which plays such a vital role. To make effective connections with customers, marketers can enhance experiences with timely content in the context of customer needs.

Read about third-party-cookie culture and how cancellation will put pressure on brands to get closer to customers, delivering more value in exchange for data. We look at how e-commerce acceleration is speeding toward a unified shopping experience across channels, using more human ways to sell. And we reveal how direct mail can improve customer experience to better connect, captivate and convert customers in the messy middle.

Marketers play an important role in ensuring that everything a brand says and does enhances CX. It's time to close those costly gaps between what we say and do and what people expect and experience.

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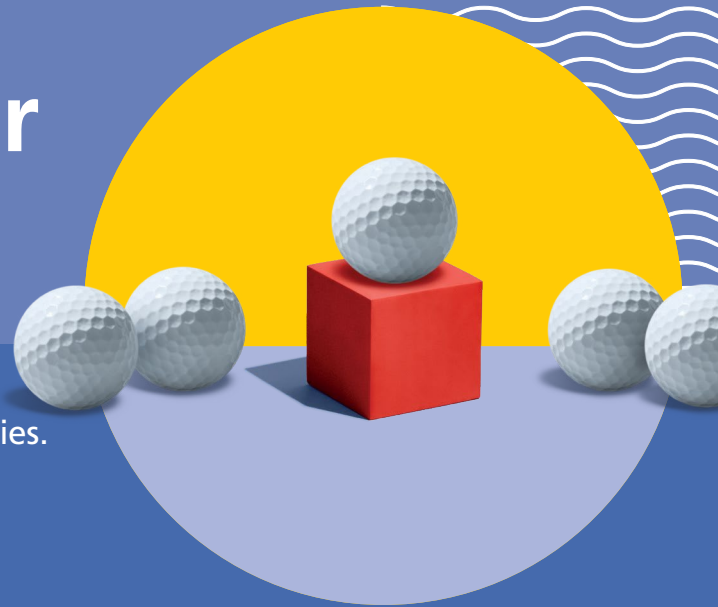
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Get your e-commerce strategy up to par



E-commerce is evolving and so are your opportunities. Canada Post recently asked Canadians how their shopping habits are changing. Here are some of the recent results that can help you Think Like an E-commerce Leader.

The game changers



76% will wait longer for a package if the shipping is free.



93% of shoppers plan to maintain or increase their online shopping this year.



32% of shoppers are loyal to a retailer that offers reviews and user-generated content.



73% will shop more often with retailers that ensure their packages are secure – even when they're not home to receive them.



80% will stop shopping with an online retailer after a bad returns experience.

Canada Post, 2020 Fall Survey, 20-214, October 2020

Get these insights and more at canadapost.ca/EcommInsights



THE EXPERIENCE OF MARKETING



Once upon a time, brand building was about a logo, a positioning and a product. With a mass message, paid advertising tried to persuade us to buy. Now, from marketing to corporate culture, we've entered an era of brand building that has a more human face – one that reflects the world in which companies do business aligned to the values, needs and desires of consumers.

Today, consumers expect brands to #dobetter – to leave behind marketing that doesn't enhance brand experience. There's also pressure on customer experience [CX] to move beyond the basics of channel optimization and frictionless journeys because it's no longer differentiating.

People want convenience and meaningful experience. Convenience is easy to copy; meaningful experience is not. Delivering a meaningful experience requires brands to understand why, how and what people want. With so many choices, people will naturally filter out anything that doesn't make meaningful connections or enhance their lives. An isolated combination of ads, optimization and e-commerce won't be enough to grow brands. Unified brand experiences require marketing and CX to live side by side – shifting the focus toward enhanced customer experiences that are infused with meaning at every interaction.

In *Business of Experience*, Accenture says growth "comes down to experience. Right now, an experience renaissance is afoot – one that is galvanizing companies to push beyond

the CX philosophy and organize the whole business around the delivery of exceptional experiences. These experiences must respond to customers' new, often unmet and frequently changing needs and enable them to achieve their desired outcomes."

To become more responsive and personalized, the way people experience marketing will be more closely integrated with CX. In turn, marketing will inject CX with the storytelling, activism and purpose that create emotional connection along with brand affinity.

THE SHIFT TOWARD HUMAN EXPERIENCE

As we continue to cut out the middlemen between people and brands and there's an even greater need to stay close to customers, human experience will dominate value creation. Commenting on their *Best Global Brands 2020* report, Interbrand points out that "consumption choices act as a vote of confidence and people are demanding more of businesses they buy into. The deepest

form of relevance is increasingly being driven by an uncompromising approach to fundamental human issues."

Human experience is multi-dimensional [functional, emotive, social, cultural, personal], and brands are increasingly having to take on many different features to sustain relevance and growth. Experience encompasses everything a brand says and does. This has expanded to include every aspect of the company, from employee experience, manufacturing and sourcing ethics to business models and data privacy. Nowadays, people have greater expectations about brand accountability, consent and fair play. When brands fail to meet consumer expectations, perceptions change about the value of a brand and being valued by a brand. Ipsos has found that "fair treatment is a key predictor of churn, particularly when things go wrong. Misaligning the promise and experience may effectively be priming consumers to feel unfairly treated and to churn, even without anything going wrong, per se."

THE PROMISE OF BRAND EXPERIENCE

Brand is central to translating human experience into a differentiated customer experience that closes gaps between brand promise and brand reality. Interbrand explains, *“Great brands lift us from indifference and make our choices meaningful. They build coherence in feeling. As brands permanently live across multiple intertwining virtual and physical platforms, the inside-out view of making things look the same is being replaced by the outside-in view of making people feel the same. Coherence today is about moves that express in surprising ways a single worldview and attitude.”*

As defined in *Design Thinking for Strategic Innovation* by Idris Mootee, *“Experience design is a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to creating meaningful contexts of interaction and exchange among users and products, services, systems, and spaces.”* While technology is important to delivering on customer experience design [CXD], it's creativity that brings meaning to the experience of a brand. A CX study by global digital experience agency Isobar found that four fifths of senior marketers believe that creativity will be critical to creating emotional connection, transforming CX and business overall. The same study also found that less than half will focus investment here in the year ahead. In the October 2019 issue of *Admap*, Laurence Parkes observes, *“Organisations continue to struggle to deliver consistent, connected and differentiating experiences.”*

EXPERIENCE AS A PREMIUMIZATION STRATEGY

Experience is a premiumization strategy – emphasizing superior quality and exclusivity. As share of wallet moves online, direct-to-consumer [DTC] competition accelerates. Large online marketplaces dominate search and traffic. How brands use their assets, marketing and owned channels to create an emotionally engaging experience is a priority. Companies are moving away from cheaper and toward better – prioritizing quality, speed, personalization, story and values such as authenticity and purpose. The development of brand-driven experience is a premiumization strategy that Pine and Gilmore outlined in *The Experience Economy*, first published in 1999. They describe it as a progression of economic value that wraps around how people experience

a brand and everything it says, does and offers, and how brands can emotionally fulfill consumer aspirations through transformative experiences. The quality of experience a brand offers is hugely significant to consumers: Salesforce research indicates 84 per cent of customers say a brand's experience is as important as its products and services, and PwC research says 86 per cent are willing to pay more for a better customer experience. For instance, Lululemon's strong growth performance is based on the experience it provides customers through brand purpose, community-based services and product innovation, resulting in a differentiated brand that can command premium prices when there are so many lower-price copycat brands available online.

Understanding which premiumization levers to prioritize and pull will help you differentiate brand experience and create value. Curation, sensory design, exclusivity, freemium, subscription models, editorial shopping and craftsmanship, are all examples of premiumization levers.

THE PEAK-END RULE

How people experience and engage with brands might be evolving, but at the centre of competitive advantage are fundamental brand truths like emotional appeal and memorability. In an opinion piece for WARC, Paul Feldwick argues that *“customer experience and advertising build brands through the same fundamental truths related to creating meaningful patterns of emotionally driven associations, which drive our perceptions and behaviours.”* When it comes to addressing how people experience marketing today, creating deeper integration between marketing and overall CX is crucial to delivering a consistent and memorable omni-channel brand experience – especially as so many people's daily routines and consumption patterns have been disrupted. Marketing and CX need to create consistent feelings about brand experience. A forgettable or negative experience impacts the ability to create brand preference in the short term and reduces the ability to create future brand value.

The value of creating positive brand feelings and appealing to emotion isn't new but is often overlooked in the way many organizations practise CXD. People's expectations, attitudes

and behaviours are closely tied to their experiences – in the memory of those experiences. People tend to remember the final moments of an experience and the most or least enjoyable parts throughout – that's the peak-end rule. It's a rule that can help marketers elevate the human experience, focus on influencing the moments in the customer journey that really matter, improve the emotional impact of efforts and create alignment between marketing and CX strategies. Understanding these moments and creating small changes can have a big impact on improving brand memorability [all the positive associations we have about a brand that sustain affinity over time].

THE YIN AND YANG OF FRICTION

Tension in human-centered design [HCD] is the gap between two factors or conditions that need resolving. It is at the core of value creation. In user experience [UX], we talk about friction – something we strive to erase expeditiously from customer/brand interactions in order to get people to the buy button faster. As marketers, we talk about frictionless UX and the need for brand engagement in the same breath. If we think about how brands need to operate today to attract people and sustain relevance, creating friction [growth] is as important as reducing friction [optimization]. Getting the balance right is important to creating an overall CX that is both differentiated and usable across paid and owned touchpoints.

The IPA's EffWorks report, *Positive Brand Friction*, states, *“When experience is defined this way, then it highlights the tension particularly between Brand Experience and Customer Experience; the importance of creating moments of ‘positive brand friction’ which don't negatively impact the perception of how effortless the experience is.”* Positive brand friction is about the role brand plays in shaping CX to make interactions more meaningful, engaging and memorable. Marketing has an important role to play in cultivating brand friction. How a brand uses marketing and CXD to do this will be as unique as the brand itself. Nike took a stand against racism in support of quarterback Colin Kaepernick – a calculated risk by the brand to create positive brand friction that succeeded in refreshing the brand and stimulating growth - remaining strong

through 2020. It's also why Tesla has higher Interbrand 2020 brand valuation than Toyota, despite having a fraction of Toyota's production. Tesla provides a compelling vision of the future that people want to share.

EMERGING ECOSYSTEM BRANDS

The rise of ecosystem brands further requires marketing and CX to be aligned and integrated around brand experience.

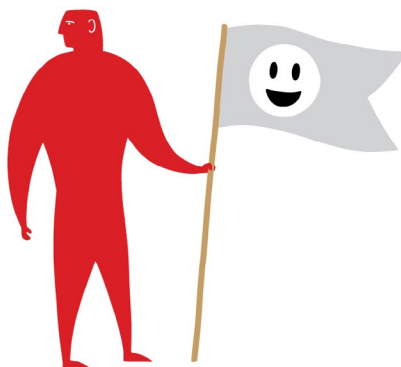
Kantar's Victoria Sakal and Dr. Emmanuel Probst explain that ecosystem brands are *"reorienting from a proposition and product view to an ecosystem view that is organized around brand experience and that serves as a one-stop-shop for multi-faceted consumer needs."*

Ecosystem brands align their brand purpose with CX, using story to design, not just communicate. This ensures that the entire brand system operates to enable growth. Brand stretch seeks to define new growth opportunities through brand/product extension into unrelated categories based on core capabilities and brand equity [Dyson or Evian]. Ecosystem brands apply the same logic but aim to create an interconnected set of services and products within an integrated experience that often crosses traditional category lines. Microsoft, Apple and Amazon give a decidedly digital and technology-forward impression of what an ecosystem brand is. However, brands like IKEA and LEGO leverage digital and technology to build platforms but equally promote offline connection as a core part of the brand ecosystem experience. In all cases, these brands surround their products and services with responsiveness and personalization. They aim to design

ahead of customer expectations to sustain relevance and capture more value through connectivity and integration. They treat the customer journey as a shared journey and treat consumers as collaborators and participants, showing empathy and gratitude along the way.

CLOSING EXPERIENCE GAPS

Brands need to close the gaps between what they say and do and what people expect and experience. This is what unifies marketing and CX within the brand ecosystem. Marketing and CX are coming closer together as brands cozy up to people and the human experience. With so much of value tied to what people experience, it's important to design to be memorable and deliver in the moment. Although not the only element, marketing is part of the customer experience. From a brand-management and customer-centric perspective, marketers have an important role to play because so much of what they do influences consumer expectations – shaping perception and creating emotional connection. Instead of just optimizing CX, marketers can orchestrate communication in every direction to enhance brand experience.



CANCELLING THE THIRD-PARTY-COOKIE AD CULTURE

With third-party cookies being cancelled, the way we experience marketing will certainly change for both brands and consumers – and many experts are saying it's a change for the best. In 2018, according to a report by Flashtalking, 64 per cent of cookies were rejected manually or through ad-blocking software. Apple, Microsoft and Firefox already have opt-out protocols in place. Google Chrome is the biggest player to finally phase out cookies. The idea of consent plays strongly into the post-third-party-cookie marketing conversation. All eyes are on the renewed relevance of first-party data and, with it, an opportunity to refocus data on curating audience, enhancing CX and deepening contextual relevance. Although they're not new ideas, contextual targeting and native ads will overtake behavioural targeting. Matching audience composition to interests and intent, contextual ads mirror the expectations of the audience, don't invade anyone's privacy and provide brand safety.

Read More >>

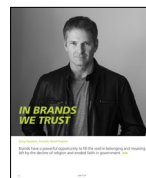
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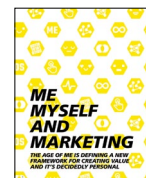
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CONTEXT IS EVERYTHING

Shari Walczak, Co-Founder, The Garden

For decades, marketing has been equated with advertising and communications. The dictionary definition reinforces the traditional notion of marketing as *“the action or business of promoting and selling products or services.”* Yet, the most intuitive organizations have known that marketing is the sum of all interactions that customers and prospective customers have with you.

When we launched our agency over five years ago, The Garden’s website opened with a statement that *“it’s no longer about the impressions that you buy. It’s about the impression that you make.”* Our belief was rooted in the idea that making an impression is not just a function of telling people what they should think and feel about your product or service. In fact, the classic advertising adage, *“nothing kills a bad product faster than good advertising,”* gets at this very notion. What’s most important is how people experience your brand overall. While one poor experience can cause someone to reject your brand outright, building a positive impression is generally the result of a journey that happens over time and across spaces that today are both physical and virtual.

For customers in the real world, that journey involves acknowledging a need or problem, discovering remedies or solutions, learning, evaluating options, making a choice, purchasing, anticipating, engaging in a product or service experience, reflecting and evaluating. In some categories, people traverse this journey quickly, moving through stages [and even skipping some] at a pace facilitated by the digital tools that are embedded in daily life. For many others, the journey happens over months and even years before a person actually becomes a direct customer of a company’s product or service.

START WITH CUSTOMER CONTEXT

Understanding the journey first and foremost through the lens of your customer is so critical. Many times, I’ve seen the customer journey mapped primarily from the business’ point of view, highlighting their existing touchpoints and focused on the *moments of truth*: a phrase coined in 2005 by A.G. Lafley, President and CEO of Procter & Gamble, to describe what he saw as the two most critical points of influence:

1. When a customer is first exposed to your product
2. When they purchase and experience it

Identifying and mapping these trigger points in a journey is heavily reliant on behavioural data that identify the *where*, *what* and even the *how* of a customer’s interaction.

Yet, 95 per cent of this data collection is missing the *why* – the insights into why people do the things they do, their motivations, what they value, their personal situation, who they go to for advice – and even their social connectivity.

Fundamentally, customer context is all about the *why*. Without this understanding, *moments of truth* are just *moments of transaction*.

Direct-to-consumer [DTC] brands seem to have an intuitive understanding of customer context throughout their journey, perhaps because it’s built into their business model from day one. Casper, for example, realized early on that if they were truly going to upend the traditional mattress industry

“Fundamentally, customer context is all about the why. Without this understanding, moments of truth are just moments of transaction.”

with an online buy-and-try model, they needed to overcome customer fear of being disappointed by a product they didn’t have a chance to poke, prod and lie on prior to purchase. This led to the development of the revolutionary 100-night trial, along with the guarantee of a hassle-free return and removal by the company with a commitment to *“try their best to donate your product to a charity or recycle it.”*

Away, a successful luggage brand founded in 2015, was created with the needs, wants and [no pun intended] journey of the avid traveller in mind. In fact, after her own bag broke mid-travels, Founder Jen Rubio began her journey to purchase a better suitcase only to find that nothing stylish, affordable and functional seemed to exist. Most importantly, she was astonished that people who loved to travel had very little connection to this object that went with them on every single trip. So she took on the challenge to design a better travel bag.

With Away's first product, a versatile carry-on, ready for manufacture, production delays meant their bag would not be ready for sale until February 2016, missing out entirely on the key holiday gifting period. Instead of delaying their launch or implementing a waitlist, they executed the ultimate customer journey innovation. They created a beautiful limited-edition hardcover travel book called *The Places We Return To* and began selling it in November 2015 for \$225, including a gift card that would be redeemable for a suitcase in February. It was essentially a preorder with a complimentary book that sold out rapidly, generating \$450,000 in revenue.

While the lack of product availability could have caused a significant friction in the customer journey, they understood their customers' mindset around travel as an experience that begins long before ever setting foot in an airport. It starts in their imagination as they dream about the upcoming trips they will take. This allowed Away to effectively introduce their brand to prospective customers long before they were conducting an internet search for luggage brands or exploring shelves of indistinguishable bags in a store.

THE ROLE OF BRAND

A well-defined customer journey, even one filled with valuable insight into the customer's situation, mindset, desires, influences, behaviours, expectations and challenges, provides one half of the toolkit required for commercial success. The other half requires the brand context – *why* it exists and *what* makes it different and compelling.

A powerful brand understands its *why*, which in turn provides:

Focus: a clear sense of purpose and a POV that anchors decision making

Relevance: a shared emotional connection that goes beyond functional proof points

Uniqueness: that sets a brand apart in the hearts and minds of people

Motivation: that transforms employees and other internal stakeholders into brand believers and advocates

“In order to make lasting impressions on customers demanding deeper contextual understanding, today’s marketers must shift from ‘How can I get my message out?’ to ‘How can I create a better experience throughout the customer journey?’”

Knowing what a customer wants and needs is one thing. The next step is understanding what role your brand can and should play in a way that is meaningful, authentic and differentiating.

Imagine you were given the challenge of creating a completely new library experience for customers. Think of the different decisions you would make if the *why* for your library brand was to *“inspire local and global change by empowering people to discover and learn something new,”* versus another brand that was all about *“creating a haven from the chaos of real life through an escape from the daily grind.”* While the functional need of a library patron is to find and borrow books and other materials, and both brands may boast catalogues with tens of thousands

of resources, the experience of each library would actually be quite unique.

The best marketers are those who can connect the dots between customer context and brand context to design a customer journey that delivers meaningful value throughout, not just at the point of transaction. This is what fundamentally ensures a brand stands out in an otherwise cluttered sea of customer choice.

THE COVID CONTEXT

Customer context is always in flux, whether we're moving in and out of different life stages or facing other changes in our personal situation. However, during a global pandemic, we found ourselves confronted with repercussions that caused the most significant shifts of our lifetime – in consumer behaviour, attitudes and psychology. Other than the First and Second World Wars, there has never been an event that has had such a universal impact, reaching people in every corner of the globe.

There is no better example of the impact of customer context on the consumer journey than in an extreme situation like this where we witnessed all of the following:

- › An unprecedented acceleration in digital adoption. Consulting firm McKinsey has called this the *“decade in days”* for the speed at which consumers have altered their digital behaviours.
- › A psychographic shift from the fear of missing out [FOMO] to the fear of going out [FOGO]. Cocooning behaviours have affected how people view their living circumstances, with many struggling under the stress of constant life in a small space, and others reducing their spend on out-of-home experiences and travel while increasing their investment in products and services directed toward at-home comfort and indulgence.
- › Digital entertainment has grown at warp speed, with Netflix surpassing 200 million paid subscribers at the end of 2020 and new service Disney+ gaining over 90 million customers by early 2021 – a number they originally projected would take four years to achieve.
- › At-home fitness surged in popularity as people adjusted their exercise routines to the realities of life under lockdown.

Faced with drastic reductions in revenue, the fitness industry, much of which depended upon in-person service delivery, began to offer on-demand fitness at scale – a trend that is not likely to reverse.

While a number of companies have benefited from these massive shifts, the majority of organizations are facing an upending of the customer journey as they had known it. And, while everyone would agree that a world without COVID-19 would be a better one, as Stanford economist Paul Romer once stated, *“A crisis is a terrible thing to waste.”*

“Understanding customer wants and needs and designing for a customer journey that delivers value against them creates competitive advantage.”

Those who survive this economic upheaval are the companies that adapt to this entirely new customer context, examining every aspect of their customer journey and making both necessary and innovative changes to survive and potentially thrive as the economy opens up.

Drybar is the wildly successful U.S. hair salon business with 150 locations, providing blowouts to a primarily female clientele. They describe themselves as a brand that delivers happiness and confidence in physical spaces that offer an escape for all the senses. When COVID forced a full shutdown of all salons, they found new ways to continue connecting with customers, empowering them to feel like their best selves, even when stuck at home. Not only did they lean heavily into e-commerce product sales, but they created an extensive library of videos and tutorials to teach people how to style their own hair at home.

The Ikon Pass from Alterra Mountain Company gives skiers and snowboarders access to 44 mountain resorts around the

world. They found customers unwilling to commit to a big-ticket purchase more than eight months in advance of a ski season that could be completely cancelled. To offer peace of mind to customers, they introduced Adventure Assurance, the industry's first free program designed to provide flexibility to pass holders to opt out of the 20/21 ski season and roll their passes over to the next season without penalty.

Countless other examples exist, from retailers offering virtual clothing fittings, to restaurants creating DIY gourmet dinner and cocktail kits, to museums and art galleries allowing children and adults to book virtual tours and field trips with digital activity kits to allow the learning to continue at home.

JUMPING INTO THE NEW NORMAL

Your future-forward planning will undoubtedly be impacted by this disrupted customer context. As you weigh adjustments your brand will need to make across the entire customer journey, here are five buckets of questions to consider:

- › Which changes are temporary versus permanent when it comes to customer mindsets and behaviours?
- › Are there new expectations of your brand and business that have impacted the customer journey?
- › What opportunities have arisen for your brand to deliver customer value in the new economy?
- › Are there new drivers of customer loyalty in your business? How can you think differently about building loyalty and developing trust with your customers?
- › How will you show you care and deliver the proper emotional response to meet your customer's new context? How might you find solutions to new customer problems and concerns?

Why should all of this matter?

First, understanding customer wants and needs and designing for a customer journey that delivers value against them creates competitive advantage. In fact, 73 per cent of customers say that one extraordinary experience with a brand raises their expectations of other brands.

Second, the status quo will no longer suffice and it would be a mistake to believe there will be a return to business as usual. Almost 80 per cent of people expect that the COVID-19 pandemic should be a catalyst for real business improvements. When those improvements are meaningful and tangible across the customer journey, there is a good chance you will transform prospects into fans who often end up being worth ten times their original purchase.

In order to make lasting impressions on customers demanding deeper contextual understanding, today's marketers must shift from *“How can I get my message out?”* to *“How can I create a better experience throughout the customer journey?”*

Because buying those impressions gets harder every day.

Shari Walczak is co-founder of The Garden, one of Canada's top independent creative and brand strategy agencies, with clients including Samsung, Roots, SodaStream, Mama Earth Organics, Alida, Loopio, Jack Astor's, FitTrack and the HRP. Combining an M.S. in Creativity and Change Leadership from SUNY Buffalo State and an HBA from the Ivey Business School at Western, she has built a reputation as a brand strategy expert, skilled facilitator and passionate advocate for creativity in education and the workplace. <https://the.garden/>



***WHY CX MATTERS
IN B2B MARKETING***

Andrew Au, Co-Founder, Intercept Group

We are living in the experience economy. Demanding more than a useful product or service for a reasonable price, customers now want a memorable experience to surround their purchase – and they are willing to pay a premium for it.

A PwC report found 65 per cent of customers consider a positive experience with a brand to be more influential than great marketing, and 42 per cent were willing to pay more for a friendly and welcoming experience. It's no wonder marketing teams are actively shifting their strategies to focus on the customer journey. According to an SAP report, the experience economy presented a \$1.6 trillion opportunity in 2020 – a figure likely to increase.

Often, we think about customer experience [CX] in a B2C environment, where a great experience can foster loyalty, inspire word-of-mouth marketing and generate social media influence. However, CX is equally vital to B2B and can have a much more significant impact on the B2B organization.

Take a customer who leaves after encountering a less-than-stellar experience with a consumer brand. That lost household could have a significant lifetime value [LTV], but will ultimately only impact a business in a relatively small way.

In B2B, however, acquisition costs are higher, sales cycles longer and LTV larger. Losing one customer to a negative experience could have much greater consequences across the entire organization.

Most B2B companies believe they are successfully executing a customer-first strategy and delivering great CX. With marketing technology becoming ubiquitous, companies are analyzing customer data and more effectively targeting prospective customers, providing relevant offers at the right time.

But is this enough to qualify as CX? According to SAP, 80 per cent of CEOs think their organizations are providing excellent CX. Unfortunately, only 8 per cent of customers agree. The disconnect could result from a lack of understanding of what CX means in a B2B world.

WHAT EXACTLY IS CX FOR B2B?

The experience economy is not new. It began gaining momentum more than 20 years ago when B2C companies disrupted markets

by offering customers something more than just a high-quality product or service. Instead of a simple cup of coffee, Starbucks offered a hand-crafted beverage you could drink in a cozy atmosphere. Instead of selling functional computers, Apple offered sophisticated devices with aesthetic appeal, intuitive features and access to a very different sales and support experience.

Delivering great CX in a B2C world is simple – do what makes customers feel special.

In B2B, what constitutes a great CX is more nebulous. CX isn't just one value-added piece layered onto your offering – it's the sum of the interactions between you and your customers.

CX is how customers perceive your brand, your products or services, and what they expect to get from you. It includes the interactions that occur before and after the sale is complete and involves every aspect of the buyer's journey from inquiry through the sales cycle, onboarding and advocacy.

Considering that B2B purchases involve, on average, 15 stakeholders – each with differing expectations, priorities and perspectives – it's not difficult to see why designing CX is so much more complicated. To be successful, marketing teams and the rest of the organization need to prioritize customer needs.

By aligning with three CX fundamentals – technology, process and people – companies can be better prepared for the current landscape and rewarded for ultimately delivering better CX.

CX FUNDAMENTAL #1: TECHNOLOGY

In the past decade, the proliferation of marketing technology has been astounding. In 2011, there were about 150 tools on the market as the category of marketing automation was still in its infancy. By 2020, that number was 8,000.

Marketing tech stacks are constantly growing, collecting more and more data on all aspects of buyer journeys. Yet, most marketers are less than satisfied with the customer data they can access and call into question whether they are able to leverage it fully.

Two significant challenges preventing companies from getting full value from their

marketing technology are quality of data and difficulty integrating it.

Quality data fosters trust in the insights derived. Without confidence in the quality, there is little chance that decisions can be made on the back of it.

Individually, data stored in marketing technology databases can deliver useful insights about customers' tendencies and preferences. However, greater value is found in bringing customer data together into a single platform.

Customer data platforms [CDPs] offer a single persistent database to house customer data and make it accessible to other systems. They pull data from other platforms, cleaning and combining it to create a single customer profile. CDPs can be the single source of truth, lending confidence to decisions made based on the insights it provides. The ability to leverage a richer data set is another benefit, providing additional context and leading to deeper insights.

“CX is equally vital to B2B, and can have a much more significant impact on the B2B organization.”

A unified platform of customer data allows the predictive capabilities of artificial intelligence [AI] and machine learning to uncover buyer intent and anticipate customer needs that may otherwise have gone unnoticed. Marketing teams can use this knowledge to design positive customer experiences that differentiate the company from the competition – for example, reimagining content delivery or designing unique ways to engage and involve customers in the brand pre- and post-sale.

CX FUNDAMENTAL #2: PROCESS

Many organizations have developed processes based on traditional principles to leverage economies of scale and efficiency, such as Frederick Winslow Taylor's scientific management theory. Well-established and mature companies used these processes to

their advantage for some time, developing siloed departments and individualized roles in which people specialize in one aspect of marketing or one type of customer interaction [think social media manager and demand-generation marketer].

However, these processes make it difficult for marketing to keep up with the fast pace and rapid change of modern business.

In particular, this type of organizational structure doesn't adapt well to a CX mindset, which requires rapid innovation and feedback from multiple channels.

An example from an article by Steelcase on the future of workspace compares legacy processes to a team of swimmers. Each swimmer sticks to their own lane, trying to achieve a personal best. When one wins, the others share in the success.

Modern processes are much less structured. They're like a basketball team made up of players who each have individual strengths, which, when used together, get a winning result. As the game progresses, other players may be substituted in and out as needed to lend their particular expertise in response to the other team's actions or to serve as a set of fresh feet on the court.

The basketball model aligns more closely with today's non-linear workflows and the speed and agility needed for companies to unlock creativity and innovation.

Does your marketing organization operate more like the swim team or the basketball team? Does it sound overly ambitious to think that you could make the change?

Consider the evolution of DevOps and DevSecOps. These teams are comprised of IT and development members, as well as security. These cross-functional groups have evolved in response to rising customer demands for new features and faster development. In doing so, they have often been able to unlock creativity while speeding up the creation and execution of innovative ideas.

Silos need to be removed to allow for more cross-functional collaboration. People across your organization have unique perspectives and ideas about CX. Removing silos and affording them the ability to work together encourages them to create something special.

CX FUNDAMENTAL #3: PEOPLE

Being focused on CX is a popular strategy for organizations today. However, adopting it has deprecated the most valuable asset of any organization – its people.

As discussed in CX fundamental #1 about technology, listening to customer cues, as well as collecting and analyzing customer feedback, is of great importance. However, the people within your organization perhaps hold the greatest wealth of information and valuable insight into exceptional CX.

Therefore, in an organization's quest to be CX focused, people need to be encouraged and empowered to think the same way.

“Look to the experts within your organization and the people on the front lines of your business for ideas and guidance. Most of all, give people a voice in designing the customer experience.”

Ensure marketing teams have the technology needed to do their jobs effectively. Give them the power to be creative; encourage the development of new skills that ultimately allow them to evolve into new roles and add to the capabilities of the organization. Deloitte's 2021 *Global Human Capital Trends* report shows that companies are on track to do this, with 60 per cent of respondents saying that they intended to leverage AI capabilities to assist workers with their jobs in the future.

Look to the experts within your organization and the people on the front lines of your business for ideas and guidance. Most of all, give people a voice in designing the customer experience.

SUMMING IT UP

Business is changing at a pace almost difficult to comprehend. The recent global health crisis has forced change on many companies, but the reality is we were on that path already.

It's a challenge for every organization, and some haven't been able to manage it. We've seen companies generally regarded as too big to fail do so in stunning fashion. On the other hand, we've also seen small companies, which no one would have bet on, disrupting industries. In many cases they've done this by offering experiences that speak to the true needs of the customer.

CX is driving growth and loyalty, and your company's relevance could be on the line if you can't deliver. The good news is the resources you need to design and deliver great customer experience already exist within your organization and are waiting to be unleashed.

With enabling, unified technology and supportive processes, you can make good on the promise of being customer-centric, delivering experiences that delight customers, foster goodwill and create loyalty to your brand.

Andrew Au is the co-founder of Intercept, a marketing agency that specializes in revenue-based marketing strategies. When companies like Microsoft, Intuit and HP want to evolve their B2B marketing, they call Andrew. As a keynote speaker, he shares his perspectives on leadership and emerging tech in the media, on podcasts and on stages around the world. Andrew is one among the few Canadians to be named to *Forbes' 30 Under 30* list and the recipient of over 40 domestic and international awards for marketing excellence and thought leadership.

CASE STUDY

Golf Town tees up customer experience with an integrated approach to data and an optimized channel mix that makes every touchpoint count. >>

DRIVING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Golf Town is the largest specialty golf retailer in Canada, with 47 stores and an online presence at golftown.com. For more than 20 years, they have offered the quality gear, clubs, clothes and accessories that golf lovers need to make the most of the game.

The company's stores are more than places to make purchases: Golf Town gives visitors the chance to hit balls in their bays and putt on their greens, to road-test purchases before committing and to ask questions of the expert sales force, who share their customers' love of the game.

CHALLENGE

Golf Town is investing in enhancing e-commerce operations, so maximizing the online experience is a priority. The company also knows how important it is to connect with customers by whatever means necessary – whether at home, online, in store, out of home or on the golf course. Golf Town wants to meet its customers wherever they want to be engaged.

Being active in multiple media channels can make it more of a challenge to bring shoppers through the doors of brick-and-mortar locations for an immersive in-store experience. So, while traffic to golftown.com is strong and steady, the company wondered if more visitors could be converted to in-store shoppers for the peak golf season. They also wanted non-Golf Town golfers to experience the benefits of shopping in their stores.

RELEVANCE

Aligning customer experience with marketing strategy requires an integrated approach to data and an optimized channel mix that makes every customer touchpoint count. Fred Lecoq is Vice-President of Marketing and E-commerce at Golf Town and Sporting Life. In an interview with *Strategy Online*, he's quoted as saying that he believes retailers need to play with being transactional, functional and emotional. "If you're not playing with these three, you will at some point disconnect with customers."



INCITING ACTION

A compelling website can generate robust traffic and sales, but could Golf Town convert online browsers to in-store shoppers? Working with remarketing platform Mitaa Data, the sports retailer launched a triggered marketing campaign to find out.

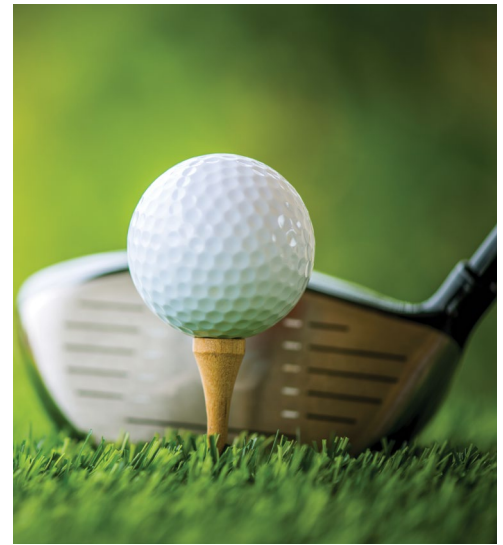
Golf Town identified the most popular of its product categories – clubs, balls, shoes, apparel and bags. For nearly three months, visitors to those product pages were greeted by a pop-up window asking them to share their location information. If they clicked yes, Mitaa captured their location.

At the end of each business day, Mitaa collected the addresses of those people who agreed and printed 6 x 9 in. cards based on each of the five product categories. Each card contained an offer of \$25 off a \$150 in-store purchase or \$50 off a \$250 in-store purchase. Within three days of browsing the site, each visitor who opted to share their

location information received one of those offers in their mailbox.

And the active golfers who weren't shopping at Golf Town? To track them down, the company teamed up with Pelmorex and used the *follow me* function on its weather app to aggregate user locations in real time. Golf Town was able to geofence their stores and Canadian golf courses. Pelmorex analyzed the data using their *Location Insights* platform, revealing golfers who didn't visit Golf Town stores.

Golf Town was already using direct mail media as an effective way to reach customers and drive business. Typically, when a new customer makes a purchase, they're asked for their postal code, which is then used to determine where to send flyers. By partnering with Pelmorex, Golf Town hoped to sharpen its geolocation targeting and send flyers to neighbourhoods with the greatest clusters



of “golfing non-Golf Town customers,” as Lecoq describes them. It was a move that helped the sports retailer turn flyers from a retention tactic into an acquisition tool.

RESULTS

For the retargeting campaign, 40,000 cards were sent via Personalized Mail™. The offer could be redeemed at the Golf Town location closest to their address. The conversion rate was 3.17 per cent, representing sales

revenue of just over \$158,000. “That, in my opinion, is a great performance, knowing this was an in-store-only play,” says Lecoq.

Redemptions continued throughout the 11-week campaign. That constant activity confirms that, when combined with the right offer, delivered at the right time to the right audience, direct mail grabs attention and drives action. “Mitaa’s solution enabled us to better commit, connect and engage with anonymous browsing in a truly omni-channel

way,” says Lecoq. “We were able to determine that retargeting doesn’t need to be seen as an online-only marketing tactic.”

With Pelmorex, Golf Town was able to work out where flyers weren’t getting the results they wanted. They reduced distribution and shifted attention to the new areas the weather app data had identified. By targeting flyer distribution more effectively, Golf Town saw double-digit sales growth immediately following the campaign.

Case Study Debrief

BRAND Golf Town

INDUSTRY Retail

Inciting Action

Golf Town used data to track the customer journey and combined online with offline strategies to enhance customer experience.

Results

A triggered marketing campaign with programmatic mail resulted in more than three per cent conversion and \$158,000 in sales. Weather app data led to double-digit sales growth following a precisely targeted flyer campaign.

Conversion Funnel

Dots indicate where direct mail was used to incite action.



Data Sources

Third- and first-party data

Media Formats

Personalized Mail™ postcards
Flyers

Activation Pillars

- Physicality
- Data
- Connectivity

Key Takeaways

- > Data insights can produce clearer customer journeys, better use of budgets and greater growth.
- > Marketing strategies need to enhance customer experience emotionally, functionally and transactionally.
- > When online and offline channels work together, results are amplified.
- > Innovation can be as simple as changing how media is used in the mix.

“We keep building walls when we need to build bridges. It’s not about online versus offline. It’s how you combine both so that the customers can really decide what channel they prefer, and then we meet them there.” – Fred Lecoq, Vice President of Marketing and E-commerce, Golf Town and Sporting Life

CASE STORIES

A collection of inspired work from around the globe and across industries showcasing the many ways modern marketers are using direct mail media to deliver on customer experience.

Get inspired!
Scan here for *INCITE*
direct mail cases from
our digital archive.



A SMART DEVICE IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

Half of Kiwi houses are too cold and damp, but how do you solve the problem?

According to the WHO, a healthy home temperature is 18-21°C and under 65 per cent relative humidity. Some New Zealand homes are as cold as 10°C and half have visible mould, causing 1,600 premature deaths every winter.

As the nation's largest home lender, ANZ is committed to changing this. Introducing Mr. Humfreez, a little sheep that steals hearts and lets New Zealanders know when their homes are too damp and cold.

Powered by nature, the technology behind Mr. Humfreez is the brainchild of Professor David Correa and his team at the University of Waterloo in Canada. Programmable hygroscopic wooden horns mean the ram responds when air gets too humid. Thermochromic ink changes his face colour when temperatures drop below 18°C.

ANZ launched the *Healthy Homes Initiative* with a multi-channel campaign promoting interest-free loans for insulation and heating. The lucky winners were selected from over 52,000 entries and the cute Mr. Humfreez was mailed in his sustainable cardboard home. This smart device in sheep's clothing generated five times more search than any other ANZ campaign. Three times more Kiwis now know who to turn to for a healthy home.

By combining digital channels with a tangible at-home reminder, Mr. Humfreez created an emotional response among New Zealanders, which had them flocking to ANZ.



COMPANY: ANZ | PRODUCT: Healthy Homes | COUNTRY: New Zealand | AGENCY: TBWA | TEAM: Chief Creative Officer: Shane Bradnick | Executive Creative Director: Guy Roberts | Creative Directors: Wiktor Skoog, Ashwin Gopal, Julian Andrews | Art Director: Watchara Tansrikeat | Designer: David Correa | Senior Producer: Mark Paisey | Design Contributors: Ye Sul Elly Cho, Jim Shi, Ammar Ghazal | TV Producer: Jodie Hari | Head of Post Production: Blair Walker | Executive Producer: James Moore | Director: James Solomon | Producer: Camillo Spath | Mac Operator: Laura Callan

TORN FROM THE PAGES OF CREATIVITY

This genius mailing serves as a master class in securing training budgets for emerging creatives.

Design & Art Direction [D&AD] promotes design and advertising excellence. How does the not-for-profit survive? Masterclasses, taught by today's creative stars to inspire tomorrow's leading lights.

For 57 years, the D&AD Awards have appeared in their legendary bible of the world's best work. As the budget to promote D&AD Masterclasses is tiny, they borrowed from their biggest asset.

To get attention, D&AD targeted industry leaders, found their award-winning work in the pages of the annual and then committed sacrilege. They ripped it out.

D&AD mailed each torn page with a personalized message, "Emma, you know where great work ends up. But does the rest of your agency know where it begins?" The call to action read, "Search D&AD Masterclasses now."

D&AD then surrendered budget to other awards shows – their best media channel. By entering their campaign for awards, D&AD had the eyes and ears of creative leaders who control the training budgets that fuel the new blood of emerging creatives.

Out of the gate, the campaign achieved a nine per cent response rate and a projected ROI of almost 13 to one. The campaign video was seen by awards judges. In winning gold at the Caples Awards, D&AD reached many creative directors. That's what we call a masterclass in direct mail and media strategy.



COMPANY: D&AD | PRODUCT: D&AD Masterclass | COUNTRY: U.K. | AGENCY: MRM | TEAM: Chairwoman & Chief Creative Officer: Nicky Bullard | Associate Creative Directors: Michael Poole, Andrew Pogson | Studio Manager: David Hunt

THESE COMPANIES ARE FOLDING

The iFOLD is saving paper and delivering a sustainable experience.

In 2008, India – with a population of 1.2 billion – had 638 million telephone subscribers, 310 million bank account holders and an internet penetration of less than five per cent. Communication relied heavily on millions and millions of letters being mailed every day.

So how do you get more than a billion people to save paper while still making an impact? By folding it inside the envelope.

The iFOLD is half the size of the standard business envelope. It saves half the paper and a proportionate amount of trees. These envelopes were mailed to companies that send countless letters to customers, along with a request to change their envelope size. Corporate India sends out huge volumes of letters every day. Switching to iFOLD would mean saving a whole lot of paper and trees.

Vodafone, Cadbury, Coca-Cola, KFC, Asian Paints, Pidilite and Platinum Guild all signed up to change their envelopes. In fact, following the initiative, it was estimated that Vodafone India alone was saving 800 trees a month. With more companies signing up, this mini-movement was able to create a wave of change that saved environmental and financial resources. It made large-scale direct mail more sustainable without diminishing customer experience. Sometimes it pays to do things by halves.



COMPANY: Various | PRODUCT: The iFOLD envelope | COUNTRY: India | AGENCY: Ogilvy | TEAM: National Creative Directors: Rajiv Rao, Abhijit Avasthi | Executive Creative Director: Sumanto Chattopadhyay | Creative Directors: Mayur Varma, Louella Rebello | Copywriters: Eugene Rebello, Karn Singh | Art Directors: Namrata Gosavi, Mandar Wairkar, Aswin Sridhar

ROGER WILCO AND OUT

Radio kits in the mail test student skills and boost recruitment.

The Royal Australian Air Force wanted to find the most skilled radio technicians. George Patterson Y&R Australia heard the call. They created a clever and effective integrated campaign anchored by a dedicated Air Force radio station. But, this station maintained radio silence unless you could build a receiver.

After collecting names and addresses at university events and engineering expos, they mailed packs with everything students needed to construct a functioning FM radio – except the instructions. Candidates proved their problem-solving and technical skills by wiring, soldering and assembling the radio. Then they tuned in to Air Force FM – the station created just for this campaign by putting an idle radio frequency to work.

The station broadcast the hiring ad on loop, giving students a code and URL. It invited the students to register their details online, so they could be contacted by Defence Force Recruiting. By creating and combining a live event, a radio station, radio content and a website, this finely tuned, integrated media experience found the best recruits.

Air Force FM hit its target – discovering students on the right wavelength for a rewarding military career – and put the Air Force brand into homes across the country.



COMPANY: Defence Force Recruiting | PRODUCT: RAAF | COUNTRY: Australia | AGENCY: George Patterson Y&R Melbourne | TEAM: Chief Creative Officers: Ben Coulson, Marcus Rebeschini | Copywriter: Psembi Kinstan | Art Director: Adam Miranda | Production Managers: Bruce Patterson, Else Trenorden, Kirby Ho, Benny Quak | Sound Designer: Paul Baxter | Technical Director: Brett Harris | Head of Account Management: Julian Bell | Account Director: Alice Mason Account Manager: Sally Borda

EAT YOUR TWEET

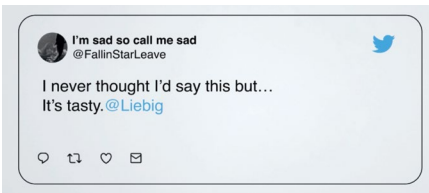
Soup brand flips bad publicity, using direct mail to turn haters into eaters.

In September 2019, a prime-time TV documentary investigated mass-market soups and revealed to six million viewers the hidden sugars, additives and artificial flavours they were consuming. Bad buzz erupted all over Twitter, and there was talk of boycotting packet soups.

This was doubly bad news for Liebig: the soup maker had planned to launch a range of 100 per cent natural soups only a few weeks later. The challenge was to get people to try the new soups despite the damage done to the brand's reputation.

The idea was to flip the bad publicity and turn Liebig haters into Liebig eaters. Hundreds of those who had tweeted bad things about Liebig ["I'll never buy Liebig again," "Honestly, Liebig soups make me want to puke."] were mailed a carton of the new soup along with their tweet printed in alphabet pasta. Liebig's critics were asked to add the pasta letters to the soup, eat their tweets and discover for themselves that the new soups were completely natural and very tasty. Spoonful by spoonful, critics became fans.

The idea led to more than 20 million media impressions and was widely praised in the French media. Sales went from -8.6 per cent to +4.6 per cent. Boldly inviting people to eat their words turned a food crisis into an appetizing opportunity.



COMPANY: Continental Foods | PRODUCT: Liebig soups | COUNTRY: France | AGENCY: CLM BBDO | TEAM: Creative Directors: Benjamin Dessagne, Stéphane Santana
Creatives: Ronan Coursin, Damien Veillet | Art Director: Francis Pluntz | Head of TV Production: Isabelle Darroman | Producers: Pierre Boudin, Adam Araujo | Production
Company: WOLFGANG | Strategic Planning Director: Corentin Monot | Commercial Directors: Meigge Sauvaget, Ani Radonova | Group Leader: Antoine Victor | Strategic
Planners: Bastien Beuriot, Margaux Grenouilloux | Communication & Influence Manager: Marion Weill-Collange | Head of Social Media: Fabio Iazzetta | Social Media
Consultant: Youcef Boualem

CREATIVITY THAT'S A PERFECT FIT

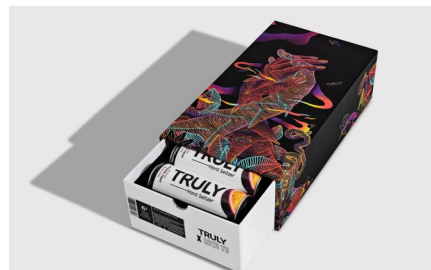
Direct mail delivers cool to sneaker influencers, spreading flavour across the internet.

How do you get to be the seltzer of choice for the cool kids, the downtown creative class? Truly Hard Seltzer wanted to stand out from the crowd of competitors – brands like White Claw and Bud Light Seltzer, who were doing everything they could to blend in with masses of homogenous drinkers.

To get sneaker influencers – the coolest of the cool influencers – to share the experience of Truly's new, crisper, fresh-tasting hard seltzer with their followers, the beverage brand turned to proven media that predated this chill generation. They mailed bespoke packs that looked like sneaker boxes. Using the tangible visual language they were familiar with, this vocal audience was wowed by world-renowned illustrators, who were briefed to bring Truly's unique flavours to life.

Participating talent included Alex Trochut, Bang Sangho, Alva Skog, Eero Lampinen, Justyna Stasik, La Boca, Mike Willcox, Rich Tu, Sophy Hollington, Shawna X, James Dawe and Sean Freeman.

In addition to generating in-depth unboxing videos and flavour reviews from each of the targeted influencers, *Truly Flavor Drop* started conversations around the brand's willingness to embrace the creative class. Setting the stage for future collaborations, Truly Hard Seltzer infuses marketing with a dose of customer experience that truly kicks.



COMPANY: Truly Hard Seltzer | PRODUCT: Hard seltzer | COUNTRY: U.S. | AGENCY: 360i | TEAM: Chief Creative Officer: Menno Kluin | Executive Creative Directors: Sam Shepherd, Frank Cartagena | Group Director, Social Creative Lab: Peter Wood | Creative Directors: Doug Murray, Andrew Hunter | Senior Copywriter: Robert George | Art Directors: Taylor Roberts, Brittany Ellison | Copywriters: Christian Napolitano, Sage Lucero

MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD

A pen is weaponized as a symbol of freedom of speech in the hands of leading journalists.

Reporters Without Borders [RWB] is an international NGO based in Paris and linked to UNESCO and the Council of Europe. Its role is to defend and promote freedom of information and stand up for journalists who pursue those ideals.

But in troubled times, journalists all around the world are victims of violence. In 2015, 144 journalists were killed.

RWB wanted to highlight the dangers faced by journalists. DDB Hamburg's idea was based on the pen as a weapon – or *Weapen* – of information and truth.

Using spent bullet casings, 144 limited-edition pens were made by hand – one for each lost reporter in 2015 – and packaged up in ammunition boxes. The pens were made available to buy from RWB's shop, with proceeds funding the NGO's projects.

This integrated campaign included an online video documentary, print ads and social media, but it all started with a direct mail piece to leading journalists. They adopted the *Weapen* as a symbol of free speech, telling their readers what personal freedom of information meant to them and why it was in danger. The experience of receiving the symbolic pen stirred advocacy across Europe, reminding people of the fundamental truth that the pen is mightier than the sword.



ERTEILEN SIE DEM WORT
DAS LETZTE WORT.

Pressefreiheit ist das Recht
zu erfahren, was geschieht,
warum es geschieht – und
was schief geht.

Es ist ein Menschenrecht.
Überall. Und für alle.

 Georg Maschke, Leiter der Arbeitshilfsorganisation
von NDR, WDR und Süddeutscher Zeitung



THE WEAPEN
Im Jahr 2015 wurden weltweit 144 Medienjournalisten getötet. Und mit ihnen ein Stück unserer Informationsfreiheit. Um ein weiteres Zeichen gegen gewalttätige Unterdrückung zu setzen, entwickeln wir von Reporter ohne Grenzen: THE WEAPEN.
144 limitierte Kugelschreiber für 144 ermordete Reporter.
Setzen Sie ein Zeichen gegen Zensur mit Ihrem WEAPEN. Erhältlich auf THEWEAPEN.COM

Geschrieben mit der Waffe für Informationsfreiheit.
THE WEAPEN
Setzen auch Sie ein Zeichen gegen Zensur mit Ihrem WEAPEN.
Erhältlich auf THEWEAPEN.COM

**REPORTER
OHNE GRENZEN**

**REPORTER
OHNE GRENZEN**



COMPANY: Reporters Without Borders | PRODUCT: NGO | COUNTRY: Germany | AGENCY: DDB Hamburg | TEAM: Executive Creative Directors: Fabian Roser, Jan-Hendrik Scholz, Nicolas Schmidt-Fitzner | Senior Art Direction: Christian Baur | Art Director: Eva Schramm | Junior Art Directors: Vitali Wachramejew, Pascal Rößler, Quentin Frémont | Senior Copywriter: Thimon Machatzke | Junior Copywriter: Nicolas Berg | Production Project Manager: Carolin Sonnenschein | Head of TV: Meike van Meegen
Pen Production: Mike Marek | Box Production: Beinder Schreinerei, Wohndesign | Client Service Director: Sönke Bruns

A PUZZLING EXPERIENCE

570 Heinz-red pieces frustrate, delight home-bound audiences.

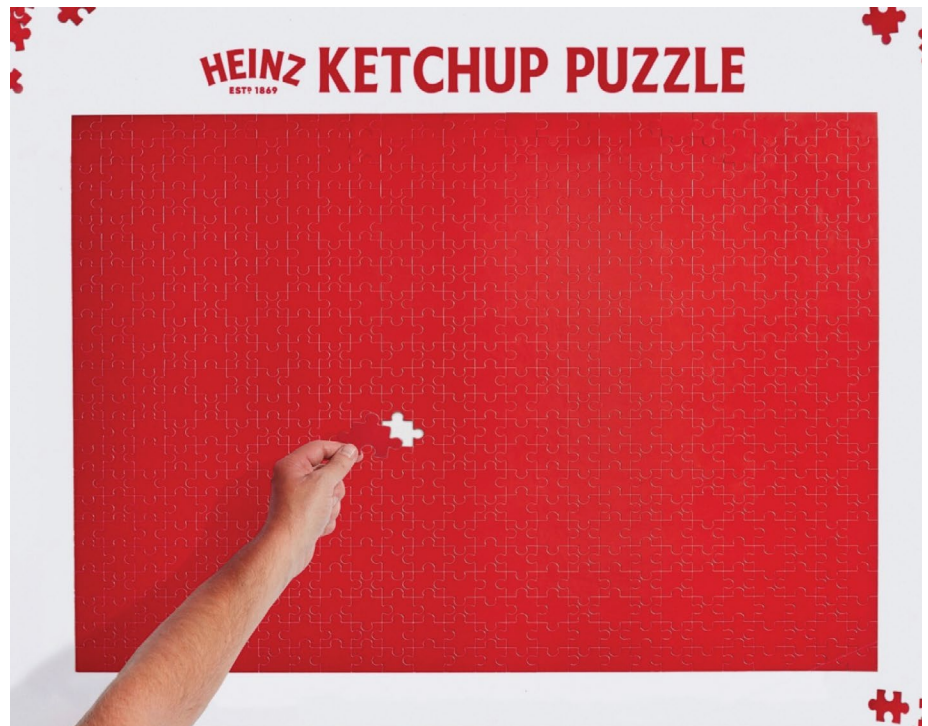
Lockdown catapulted us back in time, as old pursuits became popular again. People are playing board games and cards, reading books and piecing together puzzles. For many, family time has moved from concept to reality.

At a time when home-bound audiences had more time on their hands, and less appetite for staring at a screen, Heinz wondered about reinforcing nostalgia in a fun, relevant way. So it launched a pandemic-inspired social media contest with promotional puzzles for winners.

Contestants were asked who they'd most like to finish the puzzle with, and 57 winners were chosen. *"Fifty-seven has been associated with the Heinz brand since 1869 and using it in the campaign gave a nod to the company's legacy,"* says Brian Neumann, Heinz's senior brand manager.

The puzzle's 570 pieces are all the same monotone red. The campaign went viral, effectively linking the relaxing pastime to Heinz's slow-pouring ketchup. The puzzle was so successful that Heinz brought it back for the holidays, with a promotion supporting Food Banks Canada. Rolling it out to another 16 countries, the puzzle generated \$22 million in earned media, and ketchup sales increased by 17.9 per cent in Canada.

Heinz knows that all good things come to those who wait and recognizes the power of marketing when all the pieces fit together. This engaging idea boosted emotional connection by bringing together context, marketing and customer experience.



COMPANY: Heinz | PRODUCT: Tomato ketchup | COUNTRY: Canada | AGENCY: Rethink Toronto | TEAM: Chief Creative Officer: Aaron Starkman | Creative Director: Mike Dubrick | Art Director: Zachary Bautista | Copywriter: Mike Dubrick | Designer: Erin Maguire | Producers: Anna Tricinci, Todd Harrison | Print Producer: Narine Artinian | Account Services: Amy Greenspoon, Kai de Bryun Kops, Allie Kennedy | Strategist: Julian Morgan | Senior Brand Manager: Brian Neumann

EVERYBODY'S CUP OF TEA

Changing the channel stirs emotions and increases redemption rates.

Tea – considered the world's most popular drink after water itself – is an evocative beverage. A few sips seem to slow down time and summon comforting memories of past conversations.

From its modest beginnings with one store in 2008, DAVIDsTEA has offered great selection, quality products and unparalleled customer service. Throughout its first decade in business, DAVIDsTEA spent almost all of its advertising budget on digital marketing. When it turned to Canada Post to help with a direct mail campaign, its initial success encouraged another, which resulted in a redemption rate of 40 per cent.

Fast forward to the 2019 holiday season when DAVIDsTEA combined its own data with Canada Post targeting to send samples to lapsed customers who had not made a purchase in the last 275 days [a long time to go without great tea!]

DAVIDsTEA mailed 20,000 tea samples to customers, as well as a coupon for 20 per cent off their next purchase. The campaign elicited more than 3,200 redemptions.

For DAVIDsTEA, reallocating budget to combine data with direct mail steeped consumers in the product and encouraged conversion. With a steaming cup of tea in hand, they could taste the difference, and that beats simply telling them about it.



COMPANY: DAVIDsTEA | PRODUCT: Tea | COUNTRY: Canada



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INCITE



AIMING FOR E+

E-COMMERCE EXPERTS DISCUSS HOW CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE CAN PLUS UP MARKETING STRATEGIES TO CONNECT WITH AT-HOME CONSUMERS. >>

INCITER Q&A

[CB] Carl Boutet, Chief Strategist, Studio Rx

[LG] Lindley Graham, Director, Parcels & E-commerce Enterprise Marketing, Canada Post

[RH] Rashel Hariri, Social Media & Marketing, Shopify Ecosystem

[CW] Carol Wong-Li, Associate Director Lifestyles & Leisure, Mintel

HOW DO CANADIANS SHOP ONLINE AND WHAT CHANGED WITH THE PANDEMIC?

RH Over 2020, e-commerce growth accelerated by 10 years. With the temporary closures of brick-and-mortar stores and restaurants, more Canadians have become accustomed to shopping online. There has been an increased demand for e-commerce solutions like curbside pickup, online ordering and online storefronts. Canadians are looking for a trusted and easy shopping experience. With the rise in online competition, brands must ensure their end-to-end customer experience [CX] is reflective of their online brand persona.

CB The primary influences of online shopping are still convenience, ease of use, speed and price. The pandemic accelerated the adoption rate for online purchase of commodities such

as grocery, as well as those goods considered non-essential that are only available via online channels. We've also witnessed a substantial increase in the rate of curbside pickup due to these factors. All this has deep impacts on how every facet of commerce operates.

LG Online shopping has reached beyond the core convenience motivator of days past. Canadians are increasingly invested in their shopping experiences and the brands they choose. Canada Post research revealed the influence of at-home consumers. Canadians are shopping more online – up 19 per cent in 2020. During the 2020 holiday season, 27 per cent purchased more online for in-store or curbside pickup – strengthening

the online/offline connection. Canadians also value transparency – 78 per cent will choose a retailer that manages expectations.

CW Consumers don't think of their shopping journey as delineated. Most are searching and purchasing across online and in-store channels. The use of mobile in stores, plus services like click-and-collect, is further blurring the lines. The pandemic has accelerated multi-channel shopping and abbreviated the overall buying experience. With uncertainty surrounding the pandemic, reliance on multi-channel shopping is something consumers have grown comfortable with, and some of these behaviours will become habits that stick moving into the future.

WHAT'S IMPORTANT WHEN CONNECTING WITH AT-HOME CONSUMERS?

CB It's important to look beyond the transactional and search for ways of strengthening a longer-term, recurring relationship. This means building communities rather than consumers. Focusing on metrics like customer lifetime value will help build the company culture that will bring you there. This course of action will also make your business more resilient and sustainable.

RH Buyers are looking for a clean and simple shopping experience – one that provides them with convenience and value. Marketers should assess and improve the strength of their online brand and aesthetic across all media. They must have a strong understanding of

their customer segments and the various touchpoints in the customer journey that lead to conversion. Marketers need to ensure their content and advertisements have clear CTAs and that their storefronts are easy to navigate. Marketers need to have a clear POV on the buying experience.

CW Marketers need to focus on leveraging channel strengths and integrating tools to deliver an efficient and seamless experience between touchpoints. Consumers ultimately want good service from a brand. Modernizing the concept of customer service to incorporate tech and omni-channel tools is key to differentiating a brand's ability to meet consumer needs wherever they are. Retention

strategies also need to evolve, as our research shows that consumers are much less likely to cite loyalty programs as a top consideration when shopping online.

LG This is definitely the decade of the home. If your product line is oriented toward home life, lean in to that advantage and amplify it with your marketing messaging. It will help you make the right connections and drive sales. If, today, you are not geared toward at-home audiences, consider aligning or diversifying your products for greater impact. Think about how your brand is experienced by at-home consumers so you are best equipped to break through the digital noise.

HOW CAN CXD HELP CREATE A UNIFIED SHOPPING EXPERIENCE?

RH Customer experience design [CXD] affects everything – from a poor site setup and navigation to missed conversion triggers. It is a key component to understanding each customer's interactions with your business, from the top of the funnel right down to making a sale and beyond. Bottom line, the CX should be prioritized above everything. Great CX creates loyalty, advocacy and repeat purchase.

LG Based on how Canadians expect to interact with retailers in a frictionless, multi-channel way, CXD is becoming essential for winning over shoppers. Lean in to the first-party data you already have and the technology at your fingertips to deliver personalized experiences across all channels. Start by locating and understanding your biggest friction points and what kind of changes will drive the most impact.

CB Investing the time and resources to properly understand customer journeys and how to best meet expectations and needs will significantly increase your chances of creating value – iterating your responses to meet always-evolving needs.

WHY SHOULD E-COMMERCE BRANDS THINK BEYOND TRANSACTIONAL EXPERIENCES?

LG Customer journeys today are more fragmented than ever before. With transactional experiences, it's important for brands to understand that a consumer may meet you in a mix of channels. That makes consistency and connectivity an important element of your marketing strategy. From the moment you engage with them, aim to facilitate the ideal browse-and-buy experience, keep them informed until the item is in their hands and then close the loop to encourage repeat purchase.

CW At Mintel, we ground our research in what we refer to as *Trend Drivers* – motivations behind consumer behaviour. The *value* driver explains that consumers want tangible benefits when they invest their time/money. Looking at e-commerce through this lens shows that meeting consumer

needs – and ultimately driving them to purchase – is about communicating the total value of a brand. This is particularly important for Gen Z as they have a more personal relationship with brands. The brands they use literally represent their identity and values.

CB Unless you have a unique and global-scale offering, this is the only course of action that will allow your business to differentiate and thrive. A transactional customer relationship lasts mere moments. A deep, community-based connection allows for a much richer, more contextual and rewarding relationship.

RH Your buyers are not one-dimensional. They expect their online shopping experiences will reflect their preferences and values. They

understand their buying power and have more access to information than ever before. E-commerce brands that will win and break through the market noise are focused on weaving a brand story and narrative across all customer touchpoints. While brick-and-mortar storefronts remained closed in many cities due to the pandemic, consumers made buying decisions based on the online experience a brand offered them.



TO IMPROVE E-COMMERCE PERFORMANCE, WHERE SHOULD MARKETERS FOCUS?

CB Value proposition

Why it matters: The *Great Acceleration* provoked by the COVID-19 pandemic showed just how important e-commerce became to building a resilient business model.

What's happening? From the first digital touchpoint [social, owned, promotional], which builds that crucial community engagement, all the way to post-purchase follow-ups, there must be a coherent and, ideally, differentiated value proposition.

The big picture: It's imperative that marketers clearly and consistently communicate their value proposition regardless of channel.



LG Data-driven insights

Why it matters: Connect at a deeper level with your shoppers through behavioural data. Serving up tailored communications based on actionable insights will boost relevance – guiding consumers toward the conversion point.

What's happening? Personalized experiences are becoming the norm. Consumers expect you to tailor their online experiences consistently wherever they interact with your brand – on social channels, on an e-commerce website, at home and even in store.

The big picture: The brands that take the time to tailor customers' experiences will ultimately deepen their relationship and amplify e-commerce performance.

CW Emerging technology

Why it matters: Investing in emerging tech is an integral aspect of e-commerce, as consumers are floating across a variety of platforms – often simultaneously. They have come to expect cross-channel functionality to shop, connect and engage with brands.

What's happening? COVID-19 accelerated tech adoption for businesses and consumers. Once nice-to-have tech options – such as AR, digital showrooms and virtual consultations – are now becoming must-haves across generations.

The big picture: Positioning emerging tech that supports e-commerce should be done to meaningfully bridge gaps for shoppers. From giving information to adding experiential elements and creating new ways to discover and interact with products, everything must feel relevant.

RH SMS and video selling

Why it matters: These are emerging trends for 2021 that have higher engagement and response rates, surpassing traditional methods of customer communication, like email marketing.

What's happening? Current methods of communication are saturated as more brands compete for attention. Increasingly, brands are opting to reach customers through a more personal approach with SMS marketing. Through video selling, consumers get to see the full details of a product and make a purchase in the moment. This creates urgency and exclusivity.

The big picture: In the very competitive e-commerce and digital marketing space, it's important to look at emerging opportunities to connect with customers and sustain communication beyond traditional methods of social media and email marketing.

ENHANCING CONTENT EXPERIENCE

In 2020, the time we devoted to media and content increased dramatically. Media measurement company DoubleVerify shows that daily global online content consumption doubled on average from 3 hours 17 minutes to 6 hours 59 minutes. Ads interrupt content and paying for attention is becoming increasingly difficult. Accenture's *Global Broadcast Consumer Survey* indicates that 49 per cent of consumers would rather pay for content online and avoid advertising.

With attention at a premium and content abundant, the onus is on brands to create content that reflects the changing dynamics of marketing economics. The emphasis is on human value – brands creating content that people actively want to spend time reading. Content is where customer experience and marketing come together. Enhancing the experience of content, and its context, is essential to making effective connections with customers.



ENHANCE CUSTOMER JOURNEYS

Map content to the customer journey and the opportunities for enhanced experiences. Creating content requires a holistic view, defining its intent and function. This needs to happen from a business/brand perspective as well as from a customer-centric perspective that considers the context of interactions.



ENHANCE CULTURAL FIT

People are increasingly interested in culture and engaging around shared values and interests. Meaningful content that can embed the brand in culture – while enhancing community and affinity groups – can create social currency. Content needs to build an audience and create communities of brand users who encourage active appreciation and co-creation.



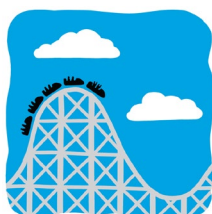
ENHANCE BRAND

Design content to create brand immersion, not just to promote products and services. Search, voice and marketplace product display pages [PDPs] increasingly commoditize brand exposure online. Ad blocking and cookies limit exposure. As an antidote, immersive content can increase brand affinity and sustain attention.



ENHANCE SHOPPING EXPERIENCES

By blending commerce and content, brands can shorten the path to purchase. Shoppable content formats enhance the customer experience through curation, editorial story and interaction while removing barriers to conversion – taking people from window shopping to buying faster.



ENHANCE STORYTELLING

Storytelling isn't just about a single piece of content. It's about creating a story arc for content that helps orchestrate storytelling across the customer journey. This improves alignment between brand narrative, marketing communications and customer experience. Storytelling improves emotional memory and creates a more useful basis for customer collaboration and user-generated content.



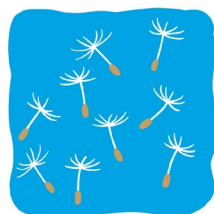
ENHANCE FORMAT USE

Content can take any form. Limited-time, short-form and low-fidelity content is on the rise, but that doesn't mean longer formats and higher production values are ineffective. When content is visible and accessible in many different ways, it fits many different consumers and contexts. Ease of interaction can make content more relatable and engaging.



ENHANCE TANGIBLE CONNECTION

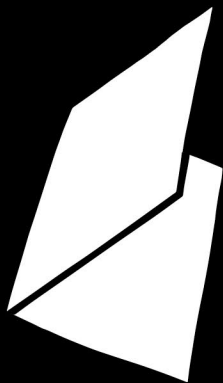
Content can make experience more meaningful, but brands need to think beyond digital-only formats. Content anchored in the physical world amplifies IRL experience and makes a brand experience interactive. Tangible content can increase brand involvement, create more conversation, encourage sharing and turn passive content consumers into active brand users.



ENHANCE HUMAN AGENCY

Ije Nwokorie, talks about creating seeds, not customer solutions. Applied to content creation, this notion puts the focus on content as self-enhancement. You aren't solving a problem for people but allowing them to be their own agents – giving them the means to self-direct their custom solutions.

***A COOKIELESS WORLD
ISN'T GAME OVER***



We've all read the news: *"The death of the third-party cookie...The cookie is crumbling...RIP to the cookie."*

As these headlines multiply, marketers are increasingly thinking about how they will operate in a cookieless world while ad platforms double their efforts to develop solutions for the post-cookie era. The crumbling of the third-party cookie is arguably the most profound change in digital advertising since its inception.

Over time, cookies have become the backbone of the ad-supported internet by enabling advertisers unrestricted, cross-platform access to users for retargeting, optimization and attribution. By placing a third-party cookie on their website, an advertiser follows visitors throughout their web journey, inviting them to come back at every turn with the goal of attributing a conversion to their efforts. On the flip side, third-party cookies allow ad platforms to collect limitless information about a user and, in return, offer precise targeting.

Meanwhile, users ask, *"How are you managing my data?"*

Data breaches and privacy scandals, combined with digital ad fatigue, have pushed the industry to reset. With nearly half of Canadians blocking ads, and Safari and Firefox already blocking third-party cookies, Google's announcement that its Chrome browser will stop supporting third-party cookies by 2022 will essentially end the practice.

But where something ends, something else begins.

With control back into the customer's hands, and with privacy and transparency playing a pivotal role, the industry will be forced to course-correct to find new privacy-centric approaches that support the digital economy. It will not be without disruption, but as bright minds work to reinvent web advertising, a new equilibrium will be reached between customer privacy and personalization.

This shift will bring web advertising to a level playing field with other media channels, encouraging a more balanced mix. It will force marketers to discover solutions that support a fully omni-channel

marketing approach [including online and offline channels]. In this new world, first-party data, aggregated data and attribution will become more important than ever.

FIRST-PARTY DATA

Whereas data is the new currency of the marketing world, first-party data is now the new gold.

Now is the time to start collecting data about your customers, with their consent, and invest in building real relationships along with website visitors. If they aren't already, modern authentication and CRM platforms should become the anchor of your marketing strategies.

"This shift will bring web advertising to a level playing field with other media channels, encouraging a more balanced mix."

In fact, first-party, permission-based customer data has been at the centre of direct marketing since its beginning. Digital can now steal a page from the offline world to power a rich marketing strategy focused on the collection of signals across the path to purchase, cutting through walled gardens for a more comprehensive cross-platform, omni-channel view of customer behaviour.

AGGREGATED DATA

The move away from third-party cookies to track and collect individual information across the web means we must start inferring characteristics, behaviours and preferences via data aggregation. Postal-code-level data, a marketer's tool of choice for precise consumer insights, is well suited for the task.

A postal code provides insights on the demographics, interests, behaviours and lifestyles of a household in a way that anonymizes the individual. Not only is it small enough to offer the precision marketers need to maximize results from their investments, but it lends itself well to scaling up reach across multiple dimensions and geographies.

The postal code also supports effective look-alike acquisition strategies, because your new customer likely shares similar characteristics with your best customer. Not only does it increase relevance and reduce waste, the postal code can also be effective in driving existing customer engagement and loyalty with more targeted communications and customer experience programs.

ATTRIBUTION

Data clean rooms are emerging as the new privacy-centric platform for marketing analytics and measurement. If you've been measuring direct mail using traditional match-back or key-coding methodologies, you are ready for the digitization of this process. The post-cookie world will create opportunities for enhanced multi-channel marketing-attribution models that provide better insight into channel performance. Future models will look beyond single-event attribution of results, to a place where direct mail and offline channels get commensurate credit for contributing to a conversion.

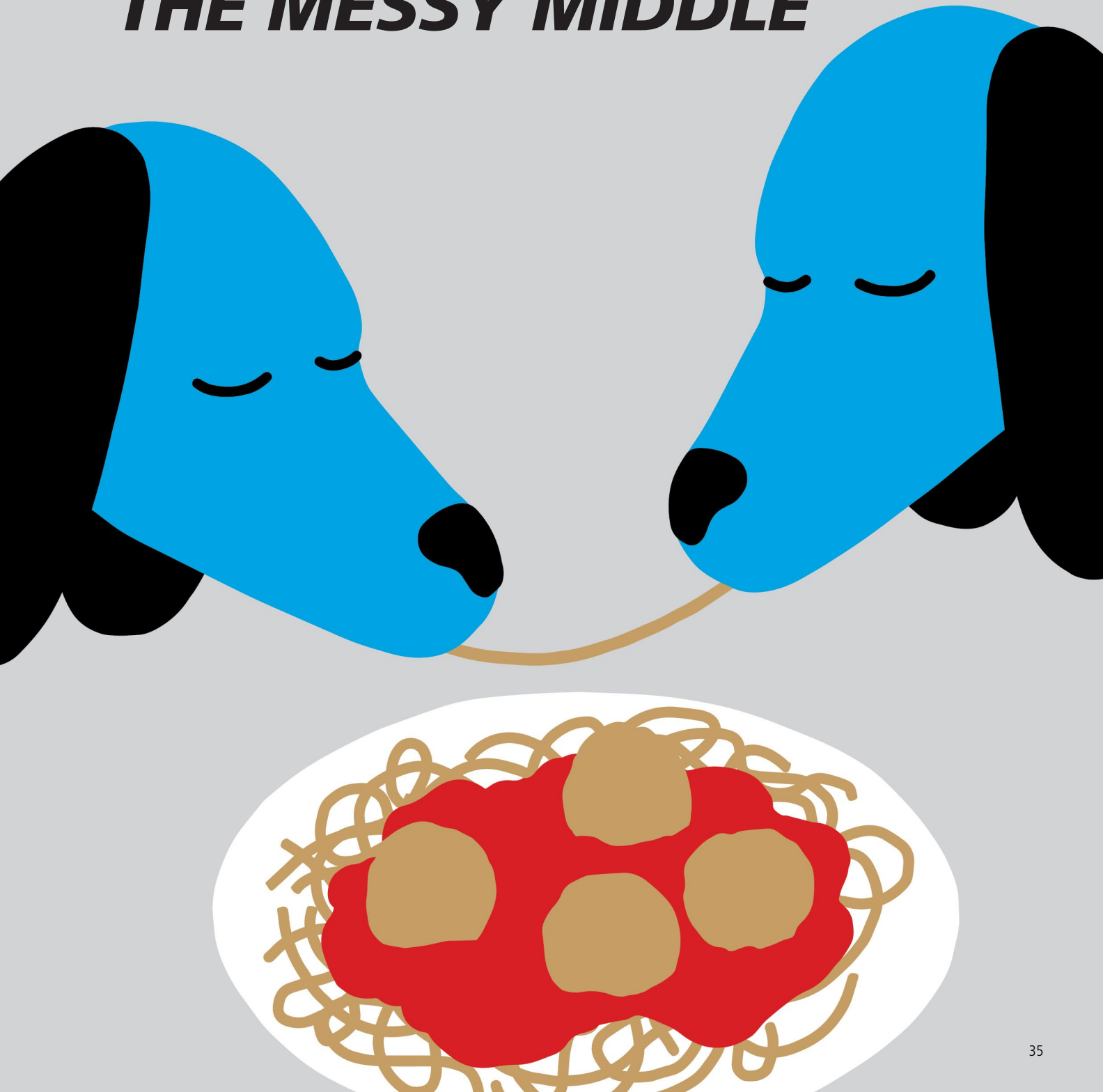
With third-party cookies going away, the digital advertising world as we know it today will change. It will create new opportunities for marketers to create customer-centric programs anchored in data etiquette and actionable insights that stimulate engagement and curate relationships across channels for more effective marketing.



Sophie DeLadurantaye leads Smartmail Marketing data solutions at Canada Post. With a background in digital

analytics, she has developed and taught Algonquin College's first Digital Analytics online learning program. Sophie holds an MBA from Carleton University and a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Ottawa.

CONNECTING IN THE MESSY MIDDLE



INCITER HOW-TO

In *Design Thinking for Strategic Innovation*, author Idris Mootee reminds us, “Every company provides a customer experience. You may not have a customer experience strategy, but you have a customer experience regardless of whether you create it consciously.” The question is, do you approach customer experience [CX] the way your customers live it?

Enhancing CX through context, content, creativity – and even a measure of chaos – is essential if you want to nurture the connections that grow healthy brands and build sustainable businesses. Convenience and experience are both important to consumers, who are willing to walk away from brands for the lack of either.

Customers don’t think in channels or follow linear paths. The authors of Think with Google’s study *Decoding Decisions: Making sense of the messy middle* point out that there are no typical journeys, “Instead there is a confusing web of touchpoints we likened to spaghetti, not least because this would be a real mess to clean up.” To build relevant, connective customer experiences, marketers must venture into the messy middle.

DIRECT MAIL AND THE MESSY MIDDLE

Consumer decision making has become way more complex. The Google study suggests that much of consumer influence exists in “a space of unlimited information and abundant choice where brand and performance overlap.” It highlights two distinct consumer mindsets in the messy middle – exploration and evaluation. The consumer jumps back and forth between them – against a dynamic and ever-changing backdrop of the overall category and brand exposure over time. Brands that can design good customer experiences that delight, inform, simplify exploration and make evaluation easier will convert faster.

Making sense of the messy middle underlines three principles to keep in mind. Direct mail delivers on all three in spades:

SHOWING UP

Simply being present in moments of deliberation can be enough to win or retain consumer preference. Direct mail makes it

easy to show up and stand out in the hands of the right consumers. Direct mail is also primed for the messy middle. Binet and Field’s Institute of Practitioners in Advertising [IPA] report, *Media in Focus*, demonstrates how direct mail can effectively deliver on brand and performance impact, making it a good channel to address the messy middle.

BEHAVIOURAL ECONOMICS

Use this to become more compelling, improve CX, reduce customer effort, incentivize profitable behaviours and enhance customer lifetime value [CLV]. Direct mail is the OG of behavioural economics – already adept at reducing cognitive load, increasing memorable delivery and activating behaviour. Rory Sutherland, Vice Chairman of Ogilvy & Mather Group and author of *Alchemy*, has said, “the best practices of direct marketing have been getting absorbed into the bloodstream of advertising for some years.”

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Optimize experience to shorten the distance between purchase intent and actual purchase. Direct mail can do this while at the same time enhancing brand experience by complementing or filling gaps in digital exploration and evaluation. Direct mail is a customizable channel that, although paid, acts like it’s owned. It’s shoppable, makes people feel valued and increases trust.

With a renewed focus on home as our hub for decisions and connections, direct mail presents marketers with an ideal opportunity to unravel the messy middle and emerge with a clearly differentiated brand plus an enviable competitive advantage.



HOME IS THE NEW EXPERIENTIAL FRONTIER

According to Accenture, we’re entering the decade of the home. Fifty-three per cent of people who never worked from home previously now plan to do so more often. Accenture’s Oliver Wright says home has “become the workplace, the schoolroom, the place to try new hobbies, the place to socialize and a safe sanctuary – so companies must account for this reality.”

Over the course of one week in March 2020, Google saw search volume for curbside pickup grow by 70 per cent. According to *McKinsey Quarterly*, in the space of eight weeks, digital adoption skipped five years – with some companies reporting year-on-year surges of as much as 400 per cent. By the time we closed the door on 2020, Shopify

Ecosystems was reporting that Canadian e-commerce was ahead by a decade.

This acceleration in e-commerce, the expansion in direct-to-consumer [DTC] choices and the increase of purchase influence, as well as decision making, in homes has influenced the expectations we have of brands and how we experience them. The pandemic

changed the patterns of our daily lives, from driving routes and in-store habits to where and how we shop. As consumers, we expect convenience but we also want, and miss, the experience of discovery, browsing and tangible IRL interactions.

There's no doubt that Canada's at-home consumers are now supremely connected shoppers who channel-hop [online and offline] to fit their lifestyle, expectations and shopping needs in the moment. With

all eyes on at-home audiences, marketers have been gifted an opportunity to deliver new experiences and find innovative ways to bond with these consumers, using data that already dwells in our home addresses. Curated at-home experiences are not only possible but welcomed. By integrating the right mix of media, with direct mail as an anchor, marketers can create hybrid marketing experiences [XM], dive deeper into subscription models and give people

the combination of convenience and experience they so value.

Highlighting a new role for direct mail in the digital marketing era, the IPA worked with Peter Field and found that *"campaigns that include mail were 27% more likely to deliver top-ranking sales performance and 40% more likely to deliver top-ranking acquisition levels than campaigns that didn't."*

MARKETING HAS A NEW PARTNER

While direct mail media is often thought of as a linear channel, it's a place where marketing and CX naturally coexist to build experiences beyond sales conversions and calls to action. It can play a highly adaptive role in enriching customer experiences – bringing online, out-of-home and at-home contexts closer together. Although direct mail has always

been data driven, now it can be seamlessly plugged in to digital channels and mobile data in ways that make it more responsive within the ever-shifting customer journey.

Tracking and measuring are essential to being responsive, but the idea of response should first focus on human experience and be supported by purchase triggers. Designing through a CX lens reduces the

number of interactions required to generate a response, and the experiential nature of direct mail makes it a prime candidate for brand exploration and evaluation. It's important to meet connected shoppers with unified marketing and CX strategies before, during and after purchase. When people are looking for enhancement, optimization is the wrong response.

DM AS A MEDIA MULTIPLIER

Direct mail media sits at the intersection of marketing, customer experience and shopping – giving it a unique ability to connect, captivate and convert. It's part of an integrated media mix that moves shoppers toward buy buttons. According to Digiday, DTC marketers looking for a more diversified marketing mix are focusing on direct mail. Media agency ForwardPMX reports that many advertisers tried out direct mail for the first time, and those with established programs in the channel saw strong results in 2020. *"All of [those] clients are up 20-25% [in direct-mail-driven revenue] over last year."*

From a media perspective, direct mail delivers all the essentials to attract attention and extend dwell time. The tactile experience of interacting with a piece of direct mail improves engagement and recall, while providing creative flexibility to fit the experience to customer needs, context and the happenstance of touchpoints.

Treat direct mail as content, and you'll get more from it. Content isn't just digital. Use direct mail to increase the value and impact of digital content, generate

word-of-mouth, leverage socially generated reviews and amplify peer-to-peer influence. Exploring the rise of experience-driven immersive content, Digiday suggests the *"solution is to create content that draws the audience inward, delivering entertainment and education in ways that truly stand out in a crowded landscape. This requires a high level of creativity and innovation, and can only be achieved when marketers and designers come together around their customers' unique needs."* The article continues to explain that content designed to create an experience performs better, and an overwhelming majority of marketers and creatives said more immersive content, designed to encourage active participation and a higher level of engagement, works better as well.

It's important to give customers a connected and personalized experience wherever you meet them. Keep them at the heart of the experience so your brands can grow and evolve with changing needs. It's about using touchpoints to reassure customers they're seen and encourage them to move along the path to purchase.

According to *Harvard Business Review*, the most successful companies focus on users, not buyers. This mindset concentrates on how users experience the brand, whether or not they have purchased it – on how the brand fits into their lives. It puts the onus on brands to pay closer attention to their relevance, utility and value. We need to reposition retention as a catalyst for growth and profitability, rather than considering it a drain on resources, because competitive advantage in a fast-paced and saturated marketplace requires a focus on consistent experiences that create renewable value.

Take a look at the habits of your browsers and buyers to determine how you can use direct mail to multiply the effect of your existing media. Start by identifying audience segments. Do you know what's changed for them? Are there new segment opportunities? Are there ways you could create closer connections with opportunity segments? You might be sitting on data gold. Mine for first-party insights, then ask the data multiverse for more and layer third-party insights, such as postal code data, to get to know your audiences better.

To design experiences that resonate with customers, you'll need to keep assessing changes in consumer behaviour. In an article entitled *Meet the next-normal consumer*, McKinsey suggests using the following questions as your framework for assessing any changes you may need to make so that consumer experiences sing.

How do consumers get their information?

Do you need to shake up your media mix and compensate for fewer in-person experiences?

Where do consumers make their purchases?

Can direct mail step in to fill gaps in other channels?

What are consumers buying?

Are there new needs, buying patterns and priorities you may have overlooked?

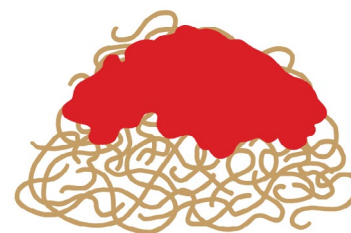
How are consumers experiencing you?

Are you aligned with what consumers value and do you meet their expectations?

HERE ARE 10 WAYS TO CREATE BETTER DMX

Direct mail is fully customizable to enhance CX, fill gaps and reduce friction, delivering content, shopping, customer service, brand engagement and personalization.

1. Create physical brand experiences with, for example, catalogues or samples when in-store opportunities don't exist, are limited or need a lift.
2. Create hybrid experiential marketing that brings direct mail, virtual events, AR and VR together.
3. Give people a sense of empowerment and brand participation through tools to create user-generated content.
4. Increase relevance through personalization or go deeper with individualization [individual-level data and comms].
5. Use digital behaviours and direct mail remarketing to reduce cart abandonment or increase value per conversion.
6. Enhance moments of truth, such as travel anticipation or post-purchase affirmation, with physical reminders and echoes.
7. Target social media followers to heighten engagement around physical experience.
8. Complement time-sensitive email reminders with direct mail to deepen exploration and engagement.
9. Use direct mail to learn about customers, provide after-sales support or say sorry.
10. Add direct mail to experiential learning programs to communicate complex ideas or sensitive topics to build trust or create new behaviours.



Read More >>

Go to canadapost.ca/incite to download these articles from our archive for more on how direct mail can enhance customer experience.



INCITE 2021 01
The Path to Sustainable Media



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The New Face of Experiential Marketing



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The Channel Is Not Your Audience



INCITE 2019 03
Performance of a Lifetime? It's All About the CX-Factor



INCITE 2019 02
The Loyalty Role Reversal

DATAGRAM

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE x DIRECT MAIL



Increased attention

Campaigns that use both digital media and direct mail receive **39% more** attention than their digital-only counterparts.

Source: Canada Post, *Connecting For Action*, 2016

Must-read lists

GenX (**50%**), Y (**40%**) and Z (**42%**) think catalogues are a great way to provide a brand experience.



Source: Canada Post/Phase5, *Fall Omni*, 2020

Media lift

Not-for-profits that add targeted direct mail increase their donations by an impressive **40%**.



Source: Direct Marketing Association [DMA], MSP, *10 Direct Mail Marketing Statistics That Will Surprise You*, 2020



Consumer engagement

+33% growth in web visits attributed to ad mail in Q3 2020.

Source: JICMAIL, 2020



Tangible content

Print is **59% more** engaging than online articles.

Source: Ball State University survey, *printisbig.com*, 2016

A source of enjoyment

56% of Americans consider it a real joy to receive mail.



Source: Direct Marketing Association [DMA], MSP, *10 Direct Mail Marketing Statistics That Will Surprise You*, 2020



Window shopping

A piece of direct mail is like window shopping. Catalogue recipients bought **28% more** than those that didn't receive the same catalogue. Plus, websites that supplemented their sales strategy with catalogues saw a 163% revenue spike.

Source: USPS, MSP, *10 Direct Mail Marketing Statistics That Will Surprise You*, 2020



Amplified buying experience

15% of consumers have signed up for one or more mail-based subscription experiences. *"The idea of getting something customized for us in the mail is exciting and can be a great way to make the buying experience feel like more."*

Source: McKinsey, *Thinking Inside the Subscription Box: New Research on E-Commerce Consumers*, 2018 and SMARTERCX, *4 Ways Snail Mail Is Redefining Customer Experience*, 2019



IN THE NEXT ISSUE

MEDIA REMIX

- › The changing media landscape
- › Rethinking the attention economy
- › The new dynamics of paid, earned and owned
- › Overcoming bias in audience and media relevance
- › Direct mail in the media mix

"If you're looking for an insightful and inspiring take on Canada's marketing landscape – you've found it."

– Nabil Rachid
Creative Director, The&Partnership

"I love INCITE. A source of inspiration for me."

– Joanna Wiseberg
President, Red Scarf Gift Co.

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