

Guest Column: Interactive marketing can be up to 12 times more productive than direct marketing: Ambika Sharma, Pulp Strategy

Ambika Sharma, Founder and MD, Pulp Strategy, gives the low-down on the most sought after strategy

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Subject teachers of two different sections have a completely different teaching approach. One prefers to interact with her class and create active engagement throughout the lesson. The other merely delivers the lecture and expects students to take notes. Using her own technique, the former knows if her students understand the topic and if need be, uses diagrams, charts and even animation to help her students comprehend it. The latter remains complacent throughout the year and thinks her job is done by frequently checking the given homework, which most of the students have copied from each other. Anyone who has been to school obviously knows which approach is better and more capable of giving positive results at the end of the year.

What is interactive marketing?

In the aforementioned example, consider students as the target audience and simply replace the first teacher with interactive marketing and the second teacher with mass marketing. Imagine homework as customer analytics and final result as net conversion rate. With this, you have a typical marketing scenario. Interactive marketing, with its captivating format, is known to generate higher customer traction as compared to the traditional marketing campaigns. It also increases the brand impact and is observed to be two to 12 times more productive than a direct marketing initiative. It is pivotal on the following fronts:

- i. **Customer Engagement:** Against traditional marketing approaches that merely convey the brand message to the customer (as depicted in the example), interactive marketing campaigns actively engage their target customers. The two-way interactive communication registers the brand image more firmly and aligns the prospective customer with the brand's core value proposition.
- ii. **Personalised Approach:** Mass marketing approaches become unviable to a great extent as they address a large section of the target audience with an identical approach. However, consumer perception and the buyer decision process can vary dramatically from one person to another. Integrated marketing devises a strategy to target each and every customer with a personalised approach. This approach also paves the way for higher customer satisfaction, brand affinity, brand salience and drives customer motivation.
- iii. **Customer Conversion:** The evolved and customer-centric tactic equips a brand with clinical precision to execute its marketing strategy. In this type of marketing, the behavioural pattern of the customer is analysed. Based on this information, the most suitable use case is preferred. This data-driven approach results in higher conversion rates for a brand. Moreover, it provides the customer a call to action, which promptly generates leads and increases sales, something which is not possible with conventional marketing initiatives.
- iv. **Cost-efficient and time-efficient:** Interactive marketing reduces overhead expenses and increases the return on investment. The agile marketing technique equips a brand with enhanced capabilities and increases the total number of campaigns executed in a specific period. It also optimises sales processes and generates a higher yield as compared to the traditional marketing campaigns.
- v. **Information Adequacy:** One of the biggest disadvantages of conventional marketing is that it does not fulfil the information requirement of the consumer. The customer is either provided limited information or is overloaded with it. In both cases, the brand fails to generate a purchase decision. On the other hand, interactive marketing extends layered information to prospective customers. This releases relevant information in increments, which can be processed by the customer as per their specific requirement to make the purchase decision.
- vi. **Feedback:** Interactive marketing, by design, generates enriched feedback through customer conversation. This feedback is not restricted merely to the product or service. It also addresses the shortcomings of a marketing campaign and the marketing initiative can be enhanced accordingly.

Interactive marketing, thanks to its innumerable advantages, is gradually grabbing the driver's seat in the marketing paradigm. It is providing higher control to brands while reaching out to their customers and is also helping them steer clear of bland marketing communications. This strategy is altering the dimensions of marketing across the globe and has become imperative for every brand in the current market landscape.

(The author is Founder and MD, Pulp Strategy)

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