



Neil Edwards, managing director of The Marketing Eye gets asked all sorts of questions on marketing. In this article, he shares some of them with you...

What's the number one brand challenge facing B2B companies today?

The number one challenge for any brand, be it B2B or B2C is to build trust and advocacy in the mind of the consumer. A brand travels along a road from awareness to understanding to trust. Strategies need to be in place for each step of the journey.

Is content the most important area of marketing at the moment?

Yes, but arguably it has never been any different. Marketers have always needed fresh, relevant and well-targeted content to attract the attention of the target audience and motivate it to action (AIDA is as relevant today as it ever was). What has changed are the mechanisms to deliver the content. Whereas once we would have been limited to direct mail and advertising, now there is a plethora of online channels to choose from. In our permanently connected world, there is a seemingly insatiable demand for knowledge and entertainment. The challenge for brands now is to keep the quality of their content high and original.

With so many media channels feeding buyers constant messages, how do you pick the right mix?

The starting point is always 'who are my customers and what are their needs and habits?' Once these have

Marketing Q&A

Marketing questions answered by Neil Edwards

been defined, identification of relevant channels is relatively straightforward and there is a lot to then be said for omni-presence across those channels with messages tailored accordingly. For example, some forms of social media are more geared to initial engagement, possibly in a buyer's downtime, while others are more suited to detailed explanation and lead generation. The marketer's skill is in matching the right message to the right medium.

How do we create seamless multi-channel experiences?

A brand needs a clear set of values and a recognisable style that translates across all customer contact points. By investing appropriately in the development of a brand strategy, businesses give themselves the best possible chance of creating a seamless multi-channel experience.

Notably, the brand strategy must not remain the preserve of the marketing department. Instead, it should be bought into at the highest levels within the organisation and communicated widely and often to the whole business.

By living the brand and using it to inform everything from process changes and recruitment to marketing messaging and media choices the seamless multi-channel experience will emerge naturally.

Is marketing automation proving effective and how can it be used more effectively?

Yes it is and, used intelligently, it can be helpful to both the marketer and the customer. There is nothing wrong in using automated techniques to help move a willing customer efficiently around the buying cycle. Where it falls apart is when human intelligence is removed from the equation.

Careful thought has to go into the desired customer journey and the consequent drip marketing

programme. Failure to plan effectively leads to spam and inappropriate or mis-timed messages, which can be extremely damaging for brands. As the saying goes: 'a box of spanners does not a mechanic make!'

With social media dictating trends and conversations, has marketing become too reactive?

No, marketing is about recognising trends and conversations and adapting the techniques to match what people are interested in at a particular point in time. Social media simply amplifies the conversations and accelerates the trends. Listening and monitoring is an integral part of the marketing process. Used wisely, it gives marketers the tools they need to make better and more informed pro-active marketing decisions.

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About the Author

Neil is a Chartered Marketer and Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing with many years' experience in marketing, brand and communications.

His experience includes being a Director of Marketing in The Royal Bank of Scotland Group where he was responsible for brands in the UK, Ireland and US. Those brands include: Lombard, Jamjarcars.com, Angel Trains and Dixon Motors.

Entrepreneurial, creative and energetic, Neil's success has come from a pragmatic and intelligent approach to combining marketing with business needs.

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