

A return to marketing fundamentals

 By [Adene van der Walt](#)

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"Successful brand activities need to be based on powerful, authentic consumer insights."

There are five key strategies that marketers and advertisers need to embrace in the following year. The key take out: deliver products that are up to date and innovative, while remaining true to your brand's core values.

1. A return to marketing fundamentals

Successful brand activities need to be based on powerful, authentic consumer insights in order to build brand resonance. Campaign elements need to work in harmony in order to leverage and build seamless brand stories. Technology today has reformed the way consumers behave. Shopper marketing no longer refers to consumers walking into stores.

In an age of e-commerce and m-commerce, any consumer can be a shopper and marketers need to focus and discover what the emotional drivers are to influence consumer purchases. With this in mind, marketers cannot view digital marketing as a separate discipline but rather need to place emphasis and focus on the fact that we are now marketing in a digital world.

2. Demonstrate customer-centricity through tangible actions

Transparency is key to this. As consumers continue to exert power and influence, it is vital for brands to demonstrate this. It will allow for an accurate and real-time picture of what the brand is doing in the interest of its consumers. Communication can work hard to demonstrate a customer-centric proposition, but unless consumers can actually see the tangible benefits of your brand having their, and the broader community's, best interests at heart, the opportunity for consumer churn is that much more likely. Marketers and brands should be thinking about how they can implement real, meaningful change in society, which in turn will increase brand care and loyalty.

3. Enabling feelings to be turned into actions

Humans are emotion-driven... and emotive communication drives brand resonance and stand-out value in consumers' minds. Brands and marketers that develop ideas that allow for consumers to feel proud of their brand for contributing to a greater cause, whilst still advertising themselves, will drive greater brand ownership and resonance.

An excellent example of such an initiative is the newly launched Unilever "Bright Future Speeches" corporate-branding TVC campaign. It's an inspiring campaign demonstrating that Unilever is dedicated to a cause greater than just selling its products.

4. Rewarding good behaviour

We know we live in a digital world and in a time where wellness, strength, acquisition of new skills and superior knowledge is actively being sought out by consumers. We will see a trend emerging whereby consumers seek device-fuelled rewards that incentivise improving behaviours. Marketers and brands will need to evaluate and decide what behaviours they are trying to encourage in their consumers and how best to reward these behaviours. (i.e., personalised rewards, incentives, discounts).

5. It is (still) about personalisation and innovation

This is not a new trend... it is here to stay. As consumers continue to resist homogenisation, marketing will need to become more localised and even individualised. We can no longer rely on the old segmentation model of age, race and household income.

Consumers are fast defining their own identities due to rapid increase and innovation of technology and marketers need to delve deeply into this to understand who our consumers really are today and what their specific needs are. What is clear and important to note, is the prevailing consumer desire for brands to modernise and evolve but with the equal desire for these brands to stay true to who they are.

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