

UCT to teach golden rules of social media marketing

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Research recently released by Forrester Research, one of the leading market research companies in the US, has found that during this recession marketers are finding interactive marketing more effective than traditional advertising, per dollar spent.



Dave Duarte - director of the Nomadic Marketing course running at the UCT Graduate School of Business (UCT GSB) this October - says the same is true for marketers in South Africa, although many businesses do not use and understand Web 2.0 and social media opportunities as well as their American counterparts just yet.

“Facebook, for example, is currently one of the most popular websites in South Africa, which proves that Internet users here are generally pretty clued up when it comes to social media. However, I suspect that while many local marketers want to leverage the medium and recognise its massive potential, they are still a bit unsure of how to use it effectively,” said Duarte.

The Nomadic Marketing programme - which has become known as South Africa's leading social media primer for marketing executives - aims to help delegates to get the most out of Web 2.0 by sharing the golden rules of online marketing.

Indeed, Duarte said the programme has progressively become more hands-on and practical over the past two years.

The technical component of the programme equips delegates with the resources, tools and know-how to execute comprehensive online campaigns incorporating email, blogs, wikis, social-networks, podcasts, widgets, tagging, Search Engines, Social Media Optimisation, and Mobile applications, he said.

However, despite the increasing awareness of the importance of Web 2.0 and Mobile applications for today's marketers, Duarte warned that simply applying traditional advertising strategies to these new interactive channels is a sure strategy for failure and warned of some potential pitfalls:

“Firstly, don't expect to have as much control over your message online as you would with traditional platforms,” said Duarte.

“Secondly,” says Duarte, “don't do traditional advertising online and expect to win big. Companies that simply place banner ads or pop-ups on Youtube or Facebook are not playing the social media game and won't reap the benefits.

“Conversations are what really count on this new playing field - as was recently highlighted in a poll by the Opinion Research Corporation which found that, compared with banner ads, pop-ups, email offers and sponsored links, articles that include brand information were more likely to influence US-based Internet users. Marketers that can get people to talk about

their brand online will reap the biggest rewards.”

Third, he said, be sure that brand promises really do deliver.

“Companies that make false statements about what they do can be caught out more easily today than just a few years ago - and will pay more dearly than ever. Brand honesty and trust are big factors for online success.”

Lastly, don't treat an online, social media campaign in the same manner as you would a traditional advertising campaign in terms of the work process involved.

“A standard above-the-line campaign requires a lot of up-front work and ends in media placement. The opposite is often true of social media marketing,” explained Duarte.

“Participation has been hailed by many as the major factor for online success - and the more you participate in the conversation, the more you stand to gain,” he explained.

Nomadic Marketing is offered by the Executive Education unit of the UCT GSB and runs from 14 to 16 October. SMS 'Nomadic' and your email address to 31497 for more information or call 021 406 1268.

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