

Marketers, challenged to meeting digital priorities

Dr. Costel Iliuță NEGRICEA

Ioan Matei PURCĂREA

Abstract

There is a real need of talent and leadership to approach digital marketing challenges, by having a more active digital agenda, doing periodic assessments and developing action plans to improve company's execution, raising awareness for digital marketing among the executive staff. Marketers must avoid mistakes in the process of realizing digital marketing success, and reflect the brand and consumer interest, also paying attention to right managing their company's reputation online, fixing the problems signaled by customers and ensuring customers know marketers care and they are just looking for relief. Marketers are also challenged to create an integrated marketing experience across multiple channels, building the proper capabilities to support digital marketing operations accordingly, taking customers' insights and developing and delivering a seamless omnichannel customer experience.

Keywords: Digital marketers; Digital agenda; Manipulated; Omnichannel customer experience; Digital marketing operations

JEL Classification: L86; M15; M31; M37; O33

For a more active digital agenda

In our previous article we talked about the emergence of new ecosystems thanks to digital disruption, the marketers' need of bringing marketing operations into the digital era, by enhancing the customer journey and shifting consumer behavior with the help of the digital tools (while actively encouraging feedback from users, and building a circle of trust with the company's audience), and by better understanding the connections among business functions and applications and identifying the digital opportunities. (Negricea and Purcarea, 2015) Right after publishing this article we came across the results of "Cracking the digital code: McKinsey Global Survey results", September 2015.

According to this new valuable McKinsey Global Survey, digital's promise seems more of a hope than a reality because of insufficient talent or leadership (which tops a longer list of complex challenges), only digital "high performers" having a more active digital agenda, that is confirmed by a triptych: taking more risks in their digital programs; moving faster to implement initiatives; reallocating their resources and their best people to digital work. (Bughin, Holley and Mellbye, 2015) McKinsey's representatives showed, among other aspects, the following: digital trends are changing fundamental aspects of the ways that companies do business, the digital engagement of customers being the top priority on their agendas, and automation and/or the

improvement of business processes climbing (automation being a greater focus in manufacturing, while big data being a top priority in healthcare, for example); in response to digital companies have adapted products, services, and touchpoints to better address customer needs, the review of the portfolio for opportunities and challenges caused by digital trends being the most common change to corporate-level strategy; there is a variety of hurdles reflecting the complexity and difficulty of implementing a successful digital program (a lack of leadership or digital talent – and here especially analytics, data science, mobile development and user experience – as shown above, a limited understanding of how digital trends affect the company and industry, difficulty keeping pace with digital development, an inability to adopt an experimentation mind-set, misaligned incentives between digital and traditional businesses). On the other hand, for developing a successful digital program it is recommendable to learn lessons from high performers, by following practices such as: building a risk-taking culture; putting your money (and resources) where your mouth is; dedicate the best people to digital, and then keep them engaged; move quickly; lead from the top. McKinsey’s representatives concluded by highlighting the companies’ need for perspective on: scaling up digital with an integrated approach; getting the board involved; bringing a digital rhythm to corporate strategy.

Digital marketers, challenged to systematically review key areas while assessing themselves

As a recognized valuable digital marketing software company, Silverpop (constantly focused on helping marketers transform the customer experience, increasing engagement and driving revenue) pledges for periodic assessments done properly, comparing to benchmarks where possible and developing action plans to improve company’s execution, raising awareness for digital marketing among the executive staff and helping get budget buy-in for new campaigns. (Silverpop, 2015) In this respect, Silverpop recommends marketers:

- *to take a closer look at the following areas:* **Target Market** (the “email magnet” - the offer company make to encourage anonymous website visitors to sign up for company’s email list - should contain some of company’s best content and educate prospects while providing information about company’s culture and brand); **Pipeline** (*B2B marketers*: how many companies and people at each stage in the buying cycle, time it took to progress through each step, new content, incentive or other tactic, new communication channel introduced into the mix etc.; *B2C marketers*: lifetime customer revenue for every customer, purchase frequency, average time from opt-in to first purchase and from first to second purchase, a scoring model etc.); **Content** (*inventory*: content piece name/ stage in buying cycle it’s being used/ who is consuming?/ how often accessed or downloaded this year or time period/ action needed - update, promote, educate, retire; think about content in terms of three considerations: *Format* - white papers, webinars, videos; *Channel* - email, social media, SMS; *Buying cycle phases* - interested, educated, lapsed); **Engagement** (how well marketers are communicating with contacts, customers and prospects separately; if that is the case, consider initiating an “early reactivation”

program that would “listen” for early signs of disengagement, fostering interactions with those contacts; consider tapping the power of behavioral marketing to deliver more relevant content); **Technology and Skills** (current use of marketing department’s digital platform as well as marketers’ skill levels in each of these areas; continuous education for staying on top of both industry trends and technology enhancements); **Mobile Marketing** (how mobile-engaged is company’s audience; processes in place to capture telephone numbers; how engaged is company’s mobile app audience etc.; mobile worksheet: mobile email experience/ email performance, desktop vs. mobile/ preferred mobile device types); **Social Media** (processes and resources in place to listen, evaluate and respond to social conversations; encouraging customers to share their experience on social media; using social to drive database growth; social campaigns of the marketing team aligned with other team members’ initiatives ; adding advertising tools that enable marketers to connect with prospects that meet certain key criteria; striking the right balance between promotional and nonpromotional posts);

▪ *to sidestepping a few mistakes marketers commonly make when performing a self-evaluation* (a list courtesy of Rich Wilson, creative director at Big Scary Cranium): *not thinking about overall goals; neglecting to tie features to goals; ignoring the metrics that matter; underestimating company’s database; overlooking the customer’s buying process; not testing assumptions.*

Within this framework allow us to also note that right at the beginning of December this year significant mistakes made in the process of realizing digital marketing success were highlighted, such as: lack of audience understanding, lack of planning and focus, unrealistic expectations, unrealistic budgeting, too many social media platforms, forgetting the importance of content and of mobile, forgetting to measure results, using old-school SEO (not providing valuable content and non-creating natural inbound and outbound links), failing to use a combination of offline and online marketing strategies. Today, when print advertising includes digital marketing information, and multilevel campaign not only reach consumers but connect with them on a deeper level, marketers are challenged to reflect both the brand and consumer interest, by developing digital marketing practices accordingly. (Moyers, 2015)

In what concerns *Mobile Marketing area*, let us note that this year, according to eMarketer’s first-ever estimates of *mobile phone messaging app usage* around the world, nearly 93 million people in Central and Eastern Europe will use such apps at least monthly (up 49.3% over 2014 usage levels), this being *the highest growth rate of any region in the world*. Central and Eastern Europe region is also characterized by *the second-fastest-growing mobile phone internet market* overall, with a 16.3% increase in users this year. (eMarketer, 2015)

On the other hand, with respect to *Content area*, it is worth underlining that according to a recent report from Apester (based on data from over 250 million monthly page views, engagements, and social media shares of content from major online publishers), which examined which types of content were most often shared on male-orientated websites compared with female-oriented websites, men are more likely to share online content pieces that are shorter in

length, have the potential to spark debate, and are about timely topics. This analysis also found among others that content pieces with a high number of shares on the male-orientated sites tended to ask debatable questions and/or include controversial opinion-driven commentary. (Nanji, 2015)

Another recent report (based on data from an ongoing survey of thousands of Internet users in 34 countries) from GlobalWebIndex (Nanji, 2015) found that men and women are equally likely to own a tablet (44% of each group say they do), 44% of global online adults age 16-64 saying they own a tablet, but only 70% of tablet owners saying they have been online using their device in the past month (compared with 92% of desktop/laptop owners in the past month and 83% of smartphone owners), older age groups leading for tablet ownership.

From “Manipulated” to “Manipurated”

According to the opinion expressed on Jul 1, 2012 by a Forbes Contributor, Nir Eyal (Lecturer in Marketing at the Stanford Graduate School of Business; blogger about the intersection of psychology, technology, and business at NirAndFar.com; founder of two startups; advisor to several Bay Area companies and incubators), we have all experienced manipulation, which is a designed experience crafted to change behavior, all those involved in the consumer web industry being in the manipulation business. Eyal cited the famed game creator and professor Ian Bogost, who called the wave of habit-forming technologies the “cigarette of this century” and warned of its dangers. Eyal also offered a “Manipulation Matrix” (as a simple decision support tool), which seeks to help you answer not the question, “Can I hook users?” but “Should I attempt to?” Also other two questions to ask are needed in order to use this matrix: “Will I use the product myself?” “Will the product help users materially improve their lives?” (Eyal, 2012)

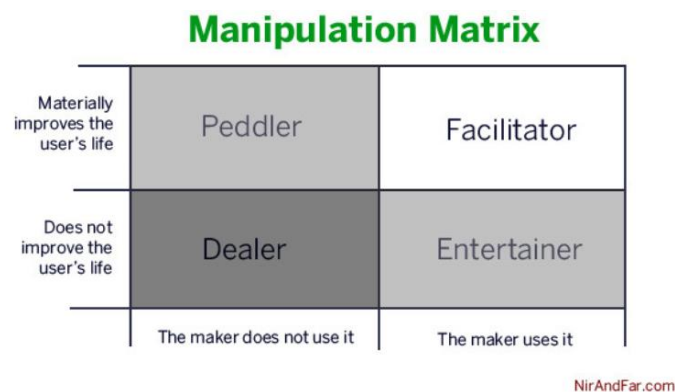


Figure no. 1: Manipulation Matrix

Source: EYAL, Nir - *The Art of Manipulation*, Jul 1, 2012, <http://techcrunch.com/2012/07/01/the-art-of-manipulation/>

On December 1, 2015, Daniel Lemin, digital marketing and online reputation strategist (at Convince & Convert), published his book entitled “MANIPURATED”. (Lemin, 2015) Lemin explained clearly that *amazing businesses can be permanently damaged with a few bad reviews, managing a reputation online requiring skills and tactics that are not always intuitive to business owners*. This book authored by Lemin, “Manipurated”, is considered *a manifesto for business owners struggling against an online ratings and reviews industry that is holding their businesses hostage through manipulative practices*. (manipurated.com)

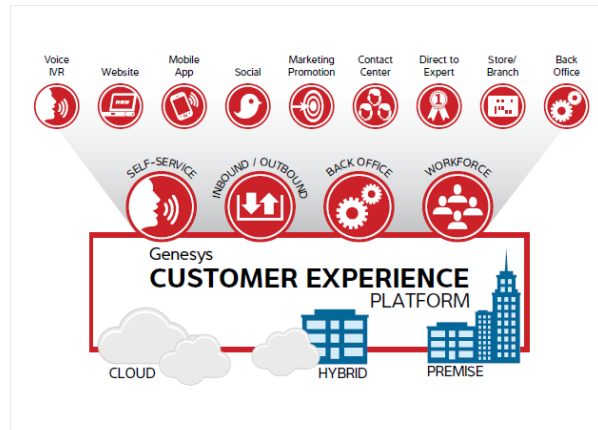
Next day, on December 02, 2015, MarketingProfs revealed that Lemin was invited by Kerry O'Shea Gorgone (instructional design manager of enterprise training at MarketingProfs; hosts and producer of the weekly Marketing Smarts podcast) to a challenging conversation to Marketing Smarts about online reviews and ratings (episode brought by Experian Marketing Services). This conversation revealed among others that: negative comments must be seen as helpful feedback rather than as unjustified whining; to avoid a bad review, make it easy to get in touch with you and fix the problem first; no response is the worst response to a negative review, just ensure that your customers know you care and you're just looking for relief; follow the money, because there's money to be made with fake reviews. (O'Shea Gorgone, 2015)

Digital marketers, challenged to create an integrated marketing experience across multiple channels. The Big Five Capabilities to support digital marketing operations

However or whenever customers decide to interact with companies' brands, marketers have to be ready to offer them a seamless experience, and in today's data-driven marketing world that means to create an integrated marketing experience across multiple channels, and – pay attention - with a personal touch. Email, Display Advertising, Social, Direct Mail, Mobile, SEO (Organic Search) are already usual marketing channels (of course, in order to get your message across various touchpoints, print advertising, telemarketing, tradeshow, and broadcast may also be effective), the most effective channels varying by industry. (Bedgood, 2015)

The market leader in omnichannel customer experience (CX) and contact center solutions in the cloud and on-premises, Genesys, (eBook, 2015) recommends *six best practices for a seamless omnichannel customer experience* (its Customer Experience Platform powering optimal customer journeys consistently across all touchpoints, channels and interactions to turn customers into brand advocates): *Design* (identify your target customer segments & what matters to each of them; baseline the current customer journey for each segment; prioritize your focus & map out the “to be” customer journey) ; *Implementation* (use context; identify the customer experience (cx) & operational metrics to measure success; adjust “the 3rs” - resources, routing and reporting - to operationalize the experience). Just take a look at the “big picture” of how “Genesys delivers a seamless omnichannel customer experience”:

GENESYS DELIVERS A SEAMLESS OMNICHANNEL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



www.genesys.com

Join the Conversation

Figure no. 2: Genesys delivers a seamless omnichannel customer experience

Source: Genesis - Best practices for a seamless omnichannel customer experience, eBook, 2015, retrieved from: <http://www.genesys.com/about-genesys/resources/best-practices-for-a-seamless-omnichannel-customer-experience>, 12/4/2015

And allow us to consider that within this framework it is the proper time and place for remembering “*The Big Five Capabilities to support digital marketing operations*” according to the vision exposed by McKinsey&Company’s representatives in July 2015, (Edelman and Heller, 2015) as shown in the figure below:

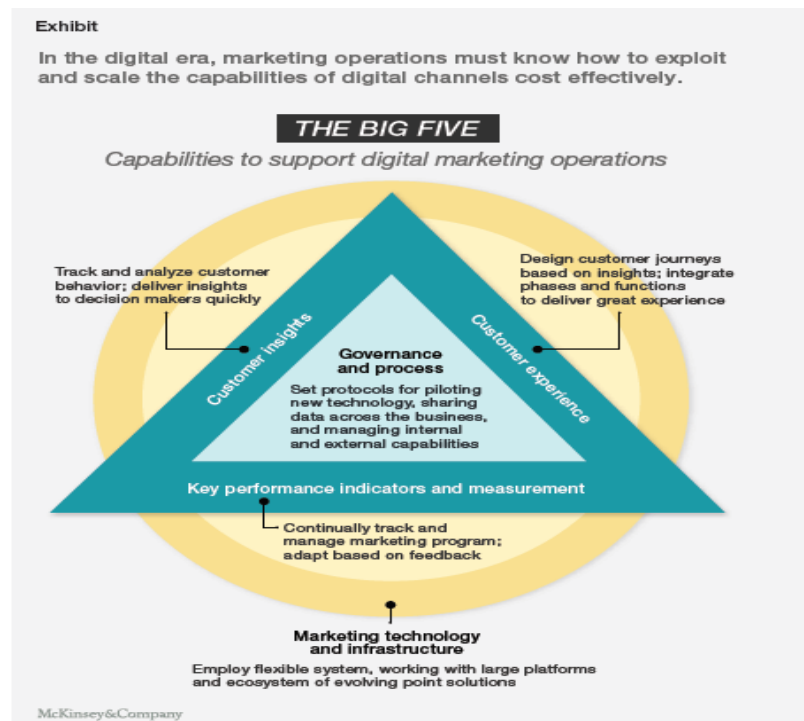


Figure no. 3: The Big Five Capabilities to support digital marketing operations

Source: EDELMAN, David and HELLER, Jason - *How digital marketing operations can transform business*, McKinsey & Company, McKinsey Digital July 2015, p. 3.

And as a **conclusion**...

Indeed, as the above mentioned McKinsey&Company's representatives concluded: "... *it's never been more important to use data to map customers' DNA, understand exactly what they want, and then take those insights to develop and deliver a superior (and flawless) customer experience*".

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