

Intelligent consumers influence sales, marketing tactics

 By [Daryn Smith](#)

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You will have difficulty finding an organisation that gives you a non-biased story; they are not going to tell you the negative points about their product or service, only the positive points.

Being interrupted by a brand so that they can give you their sales or marketing pitch is a pet peeve of many consumers. Online media platforms, such as Facebook try and resolve this by offering advertisers contextual advertising, whereby consumers only see adverts that are relevant to what they are currently doing. And on the personal engagement front, how often do you have to tell a store assistant that you are "just browsing" when they interrupt you in a store, resulting in you being able to avoid the one sided sales pitch.

Let's face it, people do not want to be sold to anymore, they want to feel like they are in control of their buying decisions. Even if you see a contextual ad on Facebook, you probably still feel irritated with that brand and may make a subconscious decision not to buy from them, like I do.

Online research

For most purchases, both for individuals and for businesses, the average buyer conducts a fair amount of research online to narrow down their choices and allow them to make an informed decision. This is why, so often, when you are approached by a sales person, and you ask an intelligent question, they then need to refer you to the product specialist to answer it, because they are not ready to deal with your intelligent questions.

The fact that buyers now turn to the internet and become educated before they begin looking at potential suppliers means the job of the marketer has changed. Marketer's need to educate potential buyers through content that can be trusted, they need to add perceived value to the buyers and they need to capture the buyers attention way before they begin evaluating suppliers.

Marketing strategies need to evolve from incumbent outbound marketing whereby messages are pushed out that interrupt people, hoping to find someone wanting to buy, to inbound marketing strategies whereby buyers find brands through the outstanding content they have provided.

Likewise, sales strategies need to evolve from the outbound approach whereby potential consumers are approached in-store and hurled with the standard sales pitch, or randomly cold called and also flung a sales pitch.

Larger responsibility for revenue generation

With an inbound sales and marketing strategy in place, marketing teams take a much larger responsibility for revenue generation. Not only do they take care of creating awareness and generating leads, but once that lead is found the marketing team can nurture that lead until they are ready to purchase, and only then hand over to sales to conclude the deal.

Globally, inbound strategies are being adopted by marketing teams and in many cases the separate functional areas of sales and marketing are being merged to form a single powerful revenue-generating unit.

For these new content driven strategies, and particularly for those brands adopting them in Africa, special consideration needs to be given to mobile platforms. A large portion of research would take place on a mobile device, and so awareness building, lead generation and lead nurturing content must be mobile device friendly.

ABOUT DARYN SMITH

Daryn Smith is the Executive Director of Product and Marketing at MPULL, a Marketing Software start-up based in Cape Town. He has lead Marketing teams in Africa for Global brands before joining MPULL, and now merges two of his passions Marketing and Tech.

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