

Most marketing divisions cannot effectively move from evolution to execution

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Globally, executives have woken up to the fact that we now find ourselves in an evolved marketplace where customer experience (CX) has emerged as the key driver of sustainable business growth. In fact, a study commissioned by Accenture Interactive, *Expectations Vs Experience: The Good, The Bad, The Opportunity*, indicates that a mere one-point increase in experience scores can translate into millions of dollars of annual revenue (the "good").



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The "bad" is that the customers' expectations are not driven by their average experience, but by their best one. Simply delivering good enough experiences, is therefore simply not good enough anymore. Therein however lies an "opportunity," which, as indicated by the same paper, is still greatly underutilised.

Today, companies who continuously transform their CX efforts to consistently wow their audiences at all touchpoints, are the ones who most successfully win, serve and retain their customers.

Simply put, the way customers experience and engage with our brands today, is very different. To successfully take marketing from evolution to execution, therefore also requires for us to start thinking and doing things differently.

The three lenses we need to look through to stimulate the right thinking

When planning on taking products or services to the market, we first need to evaluate it from the following three angles:

- **Viability:** Will the product or service add tangible value to the business?
- **Feasibility:** Can this product or service be taken to market quickly and cost-effectively?
- **Desirability:** Will customers truly want or need this product or service?

3 cornerstones that form the foundation for doing things right

To meet the ever-increasing expectations of modern customers, companies must deliver always-on, immersive CX that shape and transform an individual's entire path-to-purchase in real-time. To rise to the challenges and deliver in

this complex new marketing landscape, companies require scale, and that scale needs to be delivered via three critical components:

1. Technology

Every time that a customer engages with your brand, it creates a data point. A data point that must be collated and analysed to help you personalise and improve your CX. When you have 10,000 or so customers, this becomes a daunting task. The right technology will increase your capacity to interpret complex data sets exponentially and to do so in real-time, which in turn, holds a multitude of business benefits.

It will, for example, enable you to understand exactly who your clients are and help you to deliver exactly the right message, to the right person, at the right time and on the right platform. This will, in turn, ensure that your campaigns are more targeted and focused, which will naturally yield a greater return on investment (ROI).

Another common aspect of marketing that can be addressed via technology, is media buying. Traditionally, companies have made use of media buying agencies, who not only charge a premium for their service, but who also earns commission from the media they're buying from. Today, through the use of technology, we can set up trading desks for companies so they can buy directly from the relevant media, at a significantly reduced cost.

2. Processes

Gone are the days where marketing can be regarded as a business component that is not accountable for achieving measurable, bottom-line results. In fact, the ultimate success of a marketing campaign today is measured by whether it has been executed in the quickest and most efficient way that generated maximum sales at minimum cost.

To achieve this today is much more difficult than it used to be a decade or so ago, as society moves on much quicker. Your ad could be the top meme today and completely forgotten tomorrow. So, your content always needs to be current and relevant.

To effectively execute such a marketing campaign that ticks all the boxes, that is relevant and that can be rolled out with speed and efficiency, requires formal marketing governance. In other words, you need a solid structure of processes, procedures and policies in place to support and optimise the management of all your marketing functions. This will, in turn, ensure that your business and marketing objectives are aligned, that the success of your campaign is determined by quantifiable metrics and that swift decision-making and prioritisation is enabled.

3. Scale

Seamlessly executing integrated multi-channel campaigns, requires scale of capacity and you need the ability to determine how to allocate your human and technological resources optimally. Basically, you need thinkers and doers and technology can be a great enabler to enhance the efficiency of both.

For example, technology can provide the thinkers and creatives with the relevant consumer data to help make sure their “big ideas” are on the money for your specific target audiences. Technology can also improve the productivity of doers. Say for instance you sell cars in 150 different countries; you will have to consider whether translating your content for all these markets are best done by your staff or through utilising artificial intelligence (AI).

Apart from leveraging your existing resources optimally, it is also worth asking whether you have enough resources to quickly and effectively implement end-to-end marketing campaigns across your different markets. Let’s continue using the example of a company that sells cars in 150 countries. To deliver always-on CX and convert your customers, your content will have to resonate 100% with hundreds of thousands of different clients who speak at least 150 different languages and have different cultural and social backgrounds.

In practise, this means the original “big idea” must be adapted for each market, the ads must be translated in different languages, using a voice and tone, as well as a look and feel that will appeal to each market. At this point, we have not even touched on the functionality to track and monitor the performance of your campaign at each touchpoint yet, not to mention the ability to adapt it as and when necessary, for sustained performance.

In a nutshell

Essentially, to move from marketing evolution to execution, you must consider whether your products or services add business value, whether it can be taken to market easily and cost-effectively, and whether your customers will love it. When you can respond positively to all that, you will need enough technology, people and scale of resources to take it to market.

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