

Why do some brands still shy away from giving consumers experiences?

By  Khangelani Dziba

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Give the people what they want! Give the people what they want! Give the people what they want! Give the people what they want! My word, just give the people what they want!



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I think that brands giving consumers experiences as a way of marketing their brands, building brand love and affinity is definitely one that needs to start dominating the discourse of most marketers. In theory, I think we know this, but we are not seeing much of this in the main.

Why is this you may ask? Well, in my experience it has been quite evident that as marketers we still operate in an industry that is working with so much red tape around it and many times we have to jump through many hoops before getting to where we need to. Call it bureaucracy if you will, but it always poses a challenge.

Secondly, we cannot seem to avoid the realities around business objectives and bottom line set by adamant shareholders who merely want to see the returns of their investment. Tragic, but very true, we can't plead ignorance to this one.

Difficult challenging the status quo

Thirdly, challenging the status quo is not as easy and requires that much more conviction from us as marketers who are in tune with what is going on, on the ground regarding consumer trends. This is crucial in order for us to be able to shift perceptions about what we do with those that we report to and for us to showcase that much more value.

It may seem like a no brainer, but it actually isn't; and as a practitioner in this space, I have been privy to how some brands are resistant to admitting to this and start drawing from these insights as a result of this.

A conversation I had with a client recently, however, made it clearer than ever that, without an understanding of who we are speaking to and what they are looking for from brands, that is not going to help our cause nor will it win us new consumers along the way. Not by a long shot!

So, I'm sure at this point you are asking yourself, what is the point of this article and what am I getting at? Well, it's simple. It aims to answer the question around who is the target market we are speaking to in this day and age and what are they looking for from brands.

The truth is, the millennial generation is fast becoming the consumer we need to tailor our marketing solutions to; and they are highly driven by the idea of what they stand to gain from the brands they choose to support. In other words, what is the experience am I going to get with the brands I choose to support and why should I pledge allegiance to it?

In comes experiential marketing.

Experiences are gold

As a millennial, myself I can assuredly say to you that experiences are gold. This is ultimately what they looking for from brands and we cannot ignore it. Pleading ignorance to this with an international market that is ever-evolving and is at the core, driven by the experiences they are able to offer their consumer, is not going to help our cause.

We need a reimagined approach that is balanced by the understanding and appreciation of both the consumer and the business objectives.

Over the past couple of years, I have worked with brands who have demonstrated an understanding of this, albeit it took convincing and much nudging, they've been able get it and continue building on that insight.

Equally in the same breath, I have worked with those brands who have been resistant in their approach and understandably because they still operate and approach their consumers in the traditional sense of doing marketing. This may work for now but the reality is simple, the consumer space is ever-evolving and brands need to decide whether they are going to continue to shy away from uncharted territory, sink or swim. I'd much rather the latter.

Millennials and Generation Z are fast influencing marketing trends and we cannot ignore this. Instead we need to heed the call and start approaching things in a way that will authentically yield results, even if it means having to do this over and over again.

So, who is with me?

ABOUT KHANGELANI DZIBA

Khangelani Dziba is the divisional head of PR & influencer partnerships at Rapt Creative. They are a Master in Brand Leadership graduate from Vega School and are passionate about gender, diversity, and inclusion in brand advertising.

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