

COLUMNS

## How brands must adapt to shifts in digital marketing

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By A LUXURY DAILY COLUMNIST

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I believe it has now become an official tradition to predict the upcoming trends in any given industry. For me that means looking ahead to what the key trends will dominate the digital marketing industry.

As we enter 2016, leading brands and smart marketers alike must adopt the proper strategies to navigate through the increasingly complex and competitive world of digital marketing.

In 2016, three industry trends will not only dictate the strategies for marketers, but they will also determine what brands win valuable connections with their consumers.

### Mobile first

The first of these industry trends is what I call mobile first.

The so-called third screen is now the first screen. Brands need to start treating it as such by developing creative that is intended for the mobile screen and experience. This means that not only must the message be tailored, but brands must take into consideration the bandwidth and processing constraints of today's mobile networks and devices.

Consumers will reject mobile environments whose experience is not optimal and gravitate to platforms such as Facebook's Instant Articles and Google's AMP, which do away with intrusive, data-guzzling mobile ads.

The brands that can deliver a viewable, high-impact experience on mobile that takes into consideration bandwidth and processing constraints, and does not disturb, but enhances, the user experience will engage and connect with consumers.

### Great storytellers

The next trend that brands will need to take into account when developing their digital strategies is the advent of content marketing.

With standardized media placement under pressure from evolving consumer behavior, marketers this year will produce more content than ever. However, only those who tell the most relevant stories to the most applicable targets on the appropriate platforms will get ahead of the competition.

Consumers listen to great storytellers because their messages are relatable, recognizable and resonate. Therefore, marketers must tell their own brand stories in ways that are relatable and add value through content.

Additionally and equally as important, brands need this content to drive scale. Here is where social distribution and mobile play a key role.

Simply put, the brands that tell the best stories, and are able to do so at scale through partnerships undoubtedly will win hearts and business.

Real-time marketers

The last trend that I believe will dictate how marketers approach their digital strategies is real-time marketing, or what I believe is the beginning of the end for the digital ad campaign.

It can take months to develop marketing and advertising messages, but when it comes to initiating conversations that take place on social media, those marketers who are willing to have less structured, but much more impactful, real-time conversations will appeal most to their target markets.

Marketers who are prepared to have social conversations 24/7 will win out against their more calculated counterparts, because today's consumer is always on and socially active.

DIGITAL AD SPENDING has hit critical mass and mobile is no doubt eroding television viewership.

In 2016, it will be more important than ever for brands to understand the mobile user, create content that is relatable and deliver everything in a real-time, mobile-friendly manner.

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