

COLUMNS

5 ways your brand can be authentic

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By A LUXURY DAILY COLUMNIST

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Authenticity is an overrated term in the marketing and advertising industry. As marketers, we all vie for that deep relationship between our brand and our consumers, but many campaigns seem to fall flat.

So what does authenticity really mean? What should be top of mind when developing these campaigns?

We recently held a panel in New York with several high-profile advertising agency, brand and technology experts on the topic of authenticity where we identified five key traits to being an authentic brand.

Brands need to speak to their consumers, not speak at them. Advertising is evolving. Consumers are getting more in tune with the messages that they are being served.

With the explosion of media variables from the growing adoption of ad block global usage of ad blockers grew by 41 percent year over year, according to a PageFair report and continuous algorithm changes in reach on social networks such as Facebook, the only way to break through is to develop campaigns that entertain, speak to and resonate with its consumers.

Consumers nowadays choose brands that reflect who they are and behave as an extension of how they like they see themselves.

Authenticity is about staying true to a brand's identity. When asked who they viewed as brands that were brought to life in an authentic way, our panelists touted brands such as Apple, Arby's, Red Bull and even Donald Trump.

What is the common thread amongst all of these brands? Aside from being globally recognized brands, they all stand for something more than just the products or services they sell.

Brands can try too hard to fit in. There are so many different channels for brands to connect with consumers, especially with the advent of numerous social media networks.

On top of choosing which channel has the right reach to our network, the channel's culture is an important aspect that needs to be considered when developing content.

We need to be bold and admit our mistakes. The marketer's toolkit is bigger than ever.

Unlike traditional media, we no longer have the ability to rely on years of past data to inform our decisions. We have

to test and iterate and not be afraid to admit when things do not work.

Our panelist, Izzy DeBellis, made a reference to one of my favorite Tom Hanks movies, Big: "Be that kid from Big and ask those tough questions like: I don't get it."

Authenticity requires close collaboration between agencies and their partners. I saved one of the most important messages for last.

Brands need to trust their key advisors to have campaigns be brought to life in an authentic way.

Every brand's agency and the partners they bring on have been entrusted to drive the marketing strategy, so include them in the development stage of the planning process so that all the right groups can be rallied together.

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