

MOBILE

## Moët Hennessy exec: Leveraging social influencers is paramount for audience-targeting

April 29, 2016



*One of blogger Julia Engel of Gal Meets Glam's sponsored photos for Chandon*

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NEW YORK – A Moët Hennessy executive at Forrester's Marketing 2016 Forum affirmed that tapping social influencers is imperative for reaching Champagne brand Chandon's primary audience of women, underscoring the need for brands to constantly monitor mobile channels for potential advertising partners.

During the "Leadership Question" session, executives from Moët Hennessy, VH1 and Pypestream detailed how marketers should prioritize their digital marketing efforts in a way that promotes consistency across the organization. Social and mobile channels have significantly transformed the marketing space as of late, requiring brands to consider how best to leverage these platforms and serve enticing, relevant messaging to consumers.

"The key thing is, don't start with the channels, start with the consumer," said Jon Potter, managing director of Chandon North America at [Moët Hennessy USA](#).

Identifying primary influencers

While consumers' past experiences and word-of-mouth marketing are certainly important to Moët Hennessy, social channels also provide optimal ways to showcase its Champagne beverages to ideal consumers in a favorable light.

Chandon's primary customers are women, meaning that one of Mr. Potter's biggest challenges is to convince this audience to think of Chandon products when considering what type of Champagne to drink. This can be accomplished by pinpointing what is important to women in the moment of consumption, regardless of whether they are going out on the town or staying in for the night.

The brand looked at a variety of social channels to help reach target consumers after realizing that many women enjoy following influencers such as fashion and lifestyle bloggers, who are typically available for sponsored content opportunities.

Chandon recently teamed up with popular fashion blogger Julia Engel of Gal Meets Glam, who embarked on a sponsored trip to the brand's Napa Valley vineyard, accompanied by several friends. Ms. Engel uploaded a slew of Instagram photos depicting the group having a wonderful weekend while sipping Chandon Champagne, which received positive – and envious – responses from fans.

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*Ms. Engel updated her Gal Meets Glam followers on her Chandon-sponsored weekend activities*

Uncovering best ways of driving customer engagement should be a top priority for senior-level marketing executives in any organization. One of the panel speakers even called for the title of CEO to be changed to chief engagement officer to better reflect the current marketing climate.

"There's this continual evolution that takes place when you think about how your brand speaks to the consumer," said Michael Williams, former chief marketing officer of The Grand Prix of America, Formula 1 and president of sports, media and entertainment at [Pypestream](#).

While Moët Hennessy's most effective advertising channel is television, the brand is aware that digital marketing is increasing in terms of audience reach.

"We've accelerated [in digital] significantly," Moët Hennessy's Mr. Potter said.

The company also developed a more cohesive U.S. strategy for its Chandon products by giving consumers more reasons to drink Champagne, which was accomplished by building better distribution and display, and differentiating Champagne from sparkling wine.

Brand consistency above all

Meanwhile, the VH1 executive stressed the importance of fostering innovation within both

lower and upper echelons of organizations. The television network, for instance, hosts an innovation contest during which employees are tasked with pitching creative marketing ideas, with the best proposal receiving full funding.

“Our biggest priority at the moment is maintaining brand consistency across a range of touch points,” said Caralene Robinson, executive vice president and chief marketing officer of **VH1**. “We deal with linear, we deal with digital, we deal with social, and having to deliver that across the mix is really a priority for us right now.”

Quick response times are also paramount for marketers wanting to integrate their brand with major current or cultural events.

“Speed, I think, is incredibly important,” Ms. Robinson said. “You have to understand what speed means for your respective category.

“For me, it’s real-time response. Do not miss the cultural moment that is relevant for your business.”

For VH1, this strategy was put into effect over the weekend, when Beyoncé’s visual album “Lemonade” aired on HBO. Widely considered a major event and disruptive moment in pop culture, the album saw a frenzy of activity on social media from excited fans.

VH1 executives were asked to come up with a response to “Lemonade” by the following morning, but were able to deliver content two hours after its premiere on April 25. The network uploaded a Twitter post inviting users to browse “16 Looks from Beyoncé’s ‘Lemonade’ That Are the Sweetest Revenge.”

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### *VH1 joined the social conversation surrounding the "Lemonade" album*

Similarly, when musical icon Prince passed away last week, Chevrolet was quick to post a tribute on social media by uploading a photo of a red Corvette with the phrase “Baby, that was much too fast” superimposed over a dark background.

This was a nod to one of Prince’s biggest hits, titled “Little Red Corvette.”

The Twitter post was retweeted thousands of times and received appreciative responses from consumers.

Ultimately, brands seeking to foster long-lasting connections with consumers must meet them on their most frequented channels.

“Social plays a way more important role than it did years ago,” Ms. Robinson said.

Additionally, placing consumer concerns at the forefront of all company efforts will pay off in the long-term.

“Yes, you need data, but spend time out,” Moët Hennessy’s Mr. Potter said. “Get close to the consumer. I think it’s a forgotten art; being out in the market, listening to people.”

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