

MARKETING

With silos now dismantled, disseminating metrics next marketing frontier

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Image courtesy of 3:1 Phillip Lim

By JEN KING

NEW YORK Panelists at Luxury Interactive Oct. 18 agreed that the use of new technologies has presented brand building challenges, as quantitative and qualitative balance is not always clear from the get-go and metrics tend to go without practical understanding.

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During the "Heads of Marketing Panel Discussion: Brand Builders and Online Revenue Generators," panelists spoke to how digital marketing has altered their internal approach. Taking time to understand how strategy is changing and where the market is headed in a constantly changing climate has presented its challenges as the right path is not always clearly marked.

"I think a challenge we all face the industry itself is becoming more complicated for all of our partners whether that's finance, the supply chain or our buyers," said Mike Chi, vice president, marketing and ecommerce, **Intermix**. "It's constantly evolving. I think a piece of it is taking the time to understand the challenges because you can more effectively send in a solution.

"A piece is spending time on educating partners, but also spending time on educating yourself on your challenges as well," he said. "I think as technology evolves, the measurements of it does as well.

"I've been retail my entire career, and it's a very metrics-driven business and we all have certain metrics we really rest on as our true north. One of the challenges of emerging technologies is that the effects of those are not always reflected in those true north' metrics."

Moving metrics

In the past marketers needed to think creatively and understand a brand's unique vision. While still an intrinsic part of a marketer's role, they must now be well-versed in digital technologies for brand building and generating online revenue.

But, without a culture of education and support, justifying the use of new tactics can be tricky to implement. The panelists discussed challenges they have faced at their respective brands.

One such challenge described by the panelists was having to work with international partners. Valerie Tomasello, vice president of marketing at [3:1 Phillip Lim](#), explained that dealings with international partners is complicated by a brand's online voice.

When marketing online, brands work to curate a visual and "handwritten" voice that does not always translate properly to a foreign market. For example, 3:1 Phillip Lim adds a dash of humor to much of its content, but the comedic value does not always transfer in ways that consumers in Japan or China, for example, can understand.



Image courtesy of Intermix

Maintaining a centralized voice is needed, and brands cannot stray from this DNA when presenting to other cultures, but must be aware of cultural differences.

Brand voices go hand-in-hand with brand building, and Sharon Osen, former CMO at [Perricone MD](#) explained that today's marketers should be excited that these new creative tactics to build out a brand exist, but the metrics must be respected.

Now that there are a vast number of areas a marketer needs to focus, it can be difficult to find the proper tools to fine tune and balance the information at hand.

All panelists agreed that an ecosystem of technology and tools is best to contextualize the available metrics. Without these tools, such as data aggregators and feeds, it is too much track.

"We've build an ecosystem of tools and partners," said Audrey Yu, vice president of global digital at [John Hardy](#). "Previously, we invested in different tools to provide the metrics, but we lacked the internal capabilities to follow up and disseminate the data."

Ms. Osen, formerly of Perricone MD and La Prairie, suggests holding forums and workshops to discuss available data and insights, even if there are negative trends. This provides marketers, who know how to best steer their brand, an opportunity to plan well thought out initiatives rather than quick, gut reactions.

Personal POV

A new challenge for marketers, brought forth by social media and consumer expectation of transparency, is a newfound interest in the creative director or designer as the face of a brand.

As luxury houses are becoming more active on social media, so are their creative directors, many of whom have established their own accounts separate from their brands, featuring a mix of personal and professional content.

The social media profiles of fashion brands are carefully orchestrated to portray a certain image, which may or may not be upheld by their creative heads as they post on their own ([see story](#)).

For 3:1 Phillip Lim, Ms. Tomasello explained when the brand launched this was not part of its marketing strategy. As an aside, Mr. Lim is a private person, and did not market his brand via his own lifestyle in the ways of Tory Burch or Balmain's Olivier Rousteing, for example.

Although Mr. Lim wanted separation between his personal life and the 3:1 Phillip Lim brand, consumers began to expect an insider point of view.

To better understand what its consumers had an interest in, 3:1 Phillip Lim held a survey and had an "aha" moment from the responses, resulting in Mr. Lim becoming open to the idea of sharing his influences, muses and daily life.

It's interesting because when Phillip started the company it was a different time," 3:1 Phillip Lim's Ms. Tomasello said. "The designer didn't have to be this big public figure, exposing his lifestyle and all that. He's a very private person. In contrast, when I was at Tory Burch, she really used her lifestyle as the main marketing gig.

"Phillip had a different mindset. The brand is 3:1 Phillip Lim because that was the age he was when he started the company. It was really to make a subtle distinction that he is not the brand, there's something else at play here," she said. "He always wanted that separation. But now this day of social media, people are craving that insider POV, so we decided to do a quick online survey with our email list just talking about what we were putting on the site.

"[Our survey respondents] kept saying we just want to hear more about the stories behind this, the inspiration, inside the office it sounds really obvious but Phillip had this aha' moment, and was like, I really need to have a little more personal touch on this. Maybe our language is too corporate, maybe we have to be more conversational.' This was six months ago."

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