

COLUMNS

Key question: Why spend more marketing dollars on digital?

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Behind-the-scenes shot of Josh Whitehouse for Mr. Burberry Eau de Parfum

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This is the year. 2017. The year that Internet marketing is projected to overtake television as the largest United States advertising medium.

According to Zenith Optimedia, U.S. advertisers are poised to allocate 34.9 percent of their marketing spend to the Internet versus 34.6 percent for TV.

It is no secret that digital is the present and future of marketing. So whether you are a luxury brand selling cars or handbags, watches or shoes, cosmetics or clothes, digital marketing is obviously critical to your marketing strategy. Or is it?

Fools rush in

Luxury brands have been famously slow to adopt digital marketing. They were generally the last to build Web sites, the last to try ecommerce, the last to adopt social media. But now, they are rushing to digital the way their customers rush to sample sales.

"We must spend more on digital," is a statement often uttered by luxury CEOs and marketing professionals in recent years. And they are not just saying it they are doing it.

The luxury advertising expenditure forecast by Zenith predicts that digital media ad spend by luxury advertisers will have increased by \$837 million from 2015 to 2017. Meanwhile, outdoor will have shrunk by \$10 million, and print will have shrunk by \$150 million in that time.

Should luxury brands be spending a greater share of their marketing dollars in digital? Yes, they probably should. But do they know why?

Why ask why?

In his book "Start With Why," Simon Sinek profiles leaders who inspire because they started with why.

Legends such as Steve Jobs, the Wright brothers and Sam Walton understood and could clearly articulate why they

were doing something, thus inspiring others to achieve great things.

This can be applied to marketing as well.

Inspired marketing starts with why. Uninspired marketing starts with a mandate to spend more on digital.

When you do not know why, you end up running display ads that are never seen.

When you do not know why, you end up building applications that no one actually uses.

When you do not know why, your marketing suffers.

Remember, digital is a tactic, not a strategy. It is just one more tool in the toolbox you use to build awareness, or engage your customers, or develop your brand image.

But before you reach for that tool, you might want to learn how to use it.

More importantly, you need to know why you are using it.

3 questions

To get to why, you must first ask three critical questions. 1) What message do I want to convey? 2) Who is the target for that message? 3) What is the purpose of that message?

When you know what you want to say, why you want to say it and who you want to say it to, the choice of medium becomes much clearer and the chance of success, much greater.

Do you want to engage millennial males and convey that your brand is hip and stylish, but still luxurious? Use Snapchat Snapcodes to unlock exclusive style guides and grooming tips, such as Burberry did for its Mr. Burberry cologne campaign in 2016.

Do you want to reach a broad audience and build your brand image through storytelling? Post videos on Facebook that beautifully detail your brand history, such as Chanel did its Inside Chanel campaign last year.

Supercar for women

To further illustrate the path to why, let us look at Aston Martin's launch of its DB11 supercar last spring.

With sales lagging the automaker knew it needed to appeal to a broader audience, especially wealthy female millennials, a demographic it was sorely missing.

The brand used traditional methods such as direct mail, private events and in-store materials to generate buzz, but also turned to digital, realizing that was where its target went for information.

The automaker knew its message: Aston Martin is not just a racing machine for men it is a balance of beauty and performance that can be appreciated by everyone. It knew its target: affluent young women. And it knew the purpose of the message: convince these women to consider Aston Martin.

Next, Aston Martin had to find the right digital tools to deliver its message to its intended target.

The company chose two primary tactics.

First, it created a microsite with a special configurator, which offered more than 40 options to customize the car, focusing on body color and interior appointments.

Then it created short films for social media, highlighting the rich interior and the brand's craftsmanship. It matched the message with the medium to speak directly to its target and the result was a launch that exceeded all expectations.

NOW YOU ARE ready to allocate that budget.

You know your target, crafted the message and know your goals.

You have chosen the digital media for your campaign and you know exactly why.

So now that you know why, you will not just spend more on digital marketing, you'll spend more on inspired marketing.



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