

MARKETING

Delivering creative content means rethinking art of personalization

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Personalization is key to the future of marketing but it comes with problems of scale and content creation. Image credit: Sephora

By DANNY PARISI

NEW YORK While modern advertising is often focused on data, it is equally important, if not more so, for marketers to understand how to create effective, personalized content at scale.

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Speaking at ad:tech 2017 in New York, a marketing executive from Kimberly-Clark spoke about the way he and his company think about content and the constraints placed on the modern marketer. The talk concluded that understanding who your audience is and rethinking how content is created is key to a more flexible, adaptable marketing strategy.

"You need to understand who your audience is, what the content you're creating is, how they are getting the content and how you're making the content," said Cameron Friedlander, head of marketing technology and integrated media at [Kimberly-Clark](#). "For each one of these things, we have to create nonlinear narratives that can change and become more relevant based on who the audience is and what's relevant to them."

Content at scale

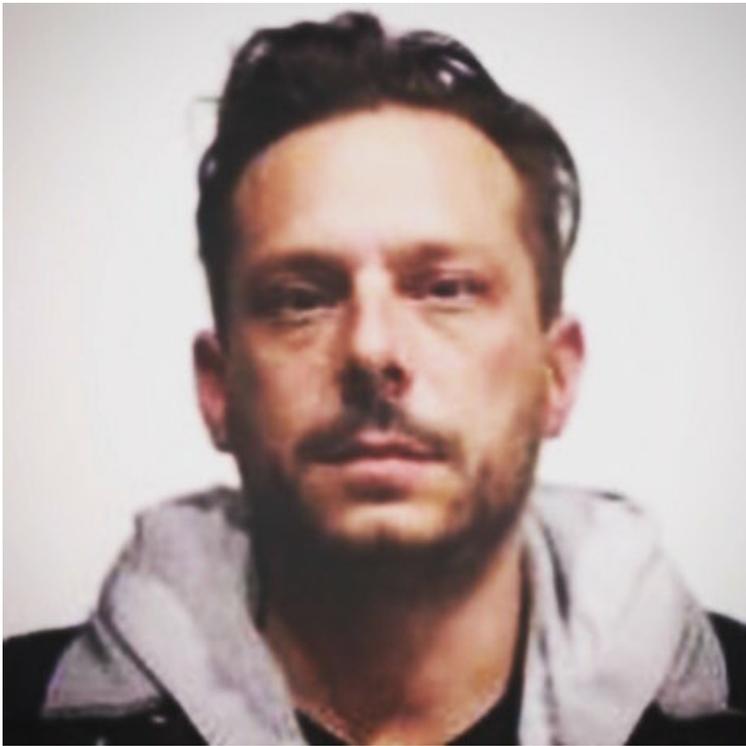
The advertising industry is in a tough spot.

Today's consumers are saturated with advertisements all day everyday, and ad blocking is one the rise in response. Eighteen percent of United States consumers use an ad blocker and that number will likely grow.

This has put digital advertising in a difficult situation. The average consumer sees about 3,000 ads per day and yet they can only notice 52 and remember just four of them.

"Nobody wants to see all this noise," Kimberly-Clark's Mr. Friedlander said. "I stared at a screen recently that had one of our ads displayed on it and I didn't even see it.

"My biggest fear is that we are delivering the right message at the right time at the right place and nobody cares," he said.



Cameron Friedlander. Image credit: Twitter

One of the things that Mr. Friedlander stressed is that content is currently created with the idea that each piece of individual content needs to tell the entire story of a campaign.

This can lead to advertisements all looking the same or being muddled and unremarkable. This is supported by the fact that images that appear to be "stock," generic, feel-good pictures that come in many standard campaigns and do little more than fill up space, are hardly noticed by consumers.

To create better content, Mr. Friedlander points to the various constraints that modern marketers face as a catalyst for creativity.

"Strict constraints often inspire the most creativity," Mr. Friedlander said. "You need to understand the technology in order to design against it."

Personalization works

Mr. Friedlander spoke at length about how personalization is key to the future of marketing.

As customers are increasingly bombarded with mass-produced ads from thousands of brands every day, it becomes increasingly hard to catch their eye and give them a reason to pay attention.

Some brands have already spent significant resources on new personalization efforts to successful results.

LVMH-owned Sephora is ranked as the top customer experience provider as it continues to stronghold the digital and in-store retail experience, based on what its audience wants.

The beauty retailer is finely in tune with what its audience finds exciting and is making the customer experience more enjoyable and convenient, earning its spot as Sailthru's top brand in its Personalization Index rankings. Net-A-Porter and Nordstrom also rank in the top five, but mass-market brands and startups are holding the majority ([see story](#)).



Sephora is an example of a brand that does personalization right. Image credit: Sephora

"Personalization works," Kimberly-Clark's Mr. Friedlander said. "We know this.

"I know that if I put something in front of you that has some sort of salience to you, that you are more apt to look at it than if it didn't," he said. "That's all we can ask, is that you just look at it for a few seconds."

But as Mr. Friedlander explains, personalization requires rethinking how brands create content and scale it up to go out to potentially tens or hundreds of thousands of customers in a way that appeals to each of them uniquely.

"In order to personalize, you need to scale," he said. "That means we need to rethink how we create and put out assets."

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