

MARKETING

Marketing planning needs a makeover: Forrester

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Marketing plans have not transformed beyond TV. Image credit: Printemps

By SARAH JONES

NEW YORK Traditional marketing planning has become outdated due to changes in channels, calling for an updated approach that allows for more flexibility, according to an analyst from Forrester.

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The "Deploy a Customer-Obsessed, Comprehensive Marketing Program" keynote at the Forrester Consumer Marketing Forum on April 5 posited that the linear, infrequent and set-in-stone planning process does not account for today's marketing environment. Incorporating planning more frequently into operations can help future-proof marketing.

"Marketing has made so much progress," said Joe Stanhope, vice president and principal analyst at **Forrester**. "Without the right kind of planning processes, we're not going to be able to continue to evolve and progress in the pace that we have been."

Outdated approach

Marketing planning today still largely relies on a format that was developed for television, before channels such as social media or digital marketing were developed.

Typically the process starts with tactics such as a SWOT analysis or an assessment of who the target audience is. Budgets are also taken into account as marketers plan.

Presenting a challenge for the current fast-paced world, plans are often locked in place far in advance. Further complicating matters, different teams on the same project might have different goals.

Instead of planning once and locking it in, Forrester suggests making planning to part of the day-to-day activities. Some early moving brands have already taken this into account, leaving double-digit percentages of their budgets flexible.

Mr. Stanhope advised moving away from campaigns, which can be limiting.

The analyst also said that brands need to think of people rather than audiences, making their approaches more

personalized. Marketers should think about who their likely best customers are and focus their efforts toward them.



Marketing should be focused on serving up personalized appeals to individuals. Image credit: Roger Vivier

This consumer-led approach gets away from budgets and media towards experiences.

Modern planning should be cyclical, with consistent measurements and automated actions for orchestrating and measuring programs. It takes into account the fact that brands are not just selling products anymore, but rather an experience.

Technology tactics

Artificial intelligence, the Internet of things and identity resolution technologies are three of the best ways to future-proof consumer marketing tactics in the immediate future, according to a report from Forrester.

The report, "Top Emerging Technologies For B2C Marketers," examines the ways that technology is influencing marketing tactics in this rapidly evolving era. From this chaos, Forrester has pinned down some of the technological areas that marketers should keep an eye on to make sure they are not left behind by the marketing tech revolution ([see story](#)).

Panelists at Luxury Interactive in 2016 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.

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 ([see story](#)).

"I don't think planning has to be a one-off that you do once a year or sequentially or periodically during the planning period," Mr. Stanhope said. "I think if we made planning an everyday part of our work, and take up the next level and close that gap, use it to support everything we need to do as marketers, I think an effective planning process helps us engage consumers.

"It helps improve the value of marketing internally as well as externally," he said. "I think it helps future-proof marketing."