

MULTICHANNEL

## Unified customer experience integral for brand marketing: Forrester

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By RACHEL LAMB

NEW YORK – Since consumers look at advertising as a connective process rather than device-by-device, brands need to start unifying the customer experience against all channels, according to a speaker at the 2012 Forrester Customer Experience Forum.

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Creating a unified experience will help to build loyalty and keep the brand image clear for marketers, which is especially relevant in the luxury industry. In addition, brands need to make sure that they are creating platform-agnostic content and imagery to make the experience more enjoyable for consumers.

“We have the opportunity to engage consumers at any time and any place, but the scary side of that is that they can also engage with brands whenever and wherever,” said Ron Rogowski, San Francisco-based vice president and principle analyst at [Forrester Research](#), at the forum this week.

“When customers engage with you, it is increasingly over complex journeys, and all of these things are being generated across different touchpoints,” he said. “People do not think about a specific device or platform, they just want to get things done.

“Consumers think more holistically and broadly, which is the way that brands need to

think.”

Step on the platform

Consumers do not think about what type of content goes on what platform or device. However, it is the brand's job to market that way.

Brands need to achieve a unified customer experience. However, this does not mean uniform.

A cross-channel uniform experience means verbatim visuals and messaging, the same depth and breadth of content on every device and every feature everywhere, per Mr. Rogowski.



*Mr. Rogowski*

Meanwhile, a unified customer experience means visual patterns and linguistic tones, content sized for context, contextual features and functionality and leveraging channel capabilities.

This way, brands are matching context and needs, but also expectations of the brand and brand personality, Mr. Rogowski said.

For example, some brands put the same exact information on a Web site as they do on a mobile site.

However, the way consumers act on a smartphone is different than how they act on a PC.

Consumers on a smartphone likely already know about the product, so they are just looking to buy. Brands may want to just put a few bullet points about the product, the price and a click-to-buy feature on a mobile site,

Meanwhile, consumers often use PCs to research. Therefore, marketers should offer more in-depth content, imagery and information on a Web site.

Fashion-forward

However, mobile and PCs are just part of the pie. Brands have a variety of channels on which to reach consumers, including digital product, Web site, mobile site, mobile application, tablet app, email, IVR and social media.

Brands need to have a unified customer experience across all channels.

For example, Burberry's main digital effort right now is its men's spring/summer 2013 collection. The brand has the same images and content running on each of its platforms, but with tailored content.

The Burberry Web site has a running video of the show that plays different clips, which could entice buying on its ecommerce site.



*Burberry's Web site*

Meanwhile, its mobile site has still images of the show with large images that can be seen on a smaller smartphone screen. Also, its Facebook page has behind-the-scenes images and an opportunity to watch the show with sharing capabilities.



However, each platform is catered to the specific uses of each device.



### *Mercedes Facebook*

Everyone at a brand is in charge of creating a unified customer experience, per Mr. Rogowski.

To get started, marketers should find out where they have gaps and align adjacent touchpoints across a single journey.

“Start by focusing on people, choices, engagement and innovation,” Mr. Rogowski said. “Also think, ‘How do we serve our customers better when they are not in front of a Web site?’”

“Right now, map your key customer journey and focus on frameworks, not standards,” he said. “Also, embed your entire team in new customer experience projects that accentuate the right brand attributes at the right time.”

Final Take

*Rachel Lamb, associate reporter on Luxury Daily, New York*