

COLUMNS

When digital and analog meet

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Needless to say, our lives have become more technologically enhanced. While one might be hard-pressed to find someone who does not appreciate the ease of connectivity, it is clear that many of us still value and desire tangible experiences.

We look for the gratification and intimacy that the physical world provides us, while at the same time demand digital experiences that fit with our on-demand lifestyle.

Businesses, borrowing from the tip that multichannel campaigns tend to perform better, are applying a similar strategy to overall brand experiences to address this consumer attitude.

Noteworthy

Brands are now offering more holistic experiences that incorporate digital aspects into physical interactions and vice versa. The result is a more immersive experience that stands to benefit both consumer and brand.

To create the perfect blend of digital and analog, Moleskine, which has recently launched a broader spectrum of writing materials following the success of its classic leather-bound notebooks, has now joined forces with Evernote, the digital note taking software and app that allows users to “clip” notes, articles and photos into digital “notebooks” that can be archived and viewed on their devices.

The Evernote Smart Notebook by Moleskine is specially designed to allow for easy transfer of hand written notes to digital clipping using the Evernote app's Page Camera feature.

Included with the Moleskine notebook are stickers that can be placed on pages that are recognized by the app, which appropriately tags the note once the photo of the page is taken.

While both companies have found success in their respective analog and digital note-taking products, their partnership has created a combined product that provides the best of both—it satisfies consumers' need for a solution that facilitates easy capture and archiving without taking away from the experience of pen and paper.

In the trenches

In a recent study by Ipsos MediaCT, it was revealed that affluent customers (\$100,000-plus) are strongly connected to the digital world – more than half own a smartphone, while social media, entertainment and shopping sites have seen significant growth amongst the segment.

It may be no wonder, then, that one of the world's most high-end brands is adopting a more digital experience in its physical retail stores.

Burberry's Regent Street location in London is being touted as the brand's most technologically advanced store in the world.

The store is already considered a pioneer amongst luxury brands in the digital space – its user-generated "Art of the Trench" campaign drew in a new base of young, affluent millennial enthusiasts.

Angela Ahrendts, Burberry's CEO, says the new flagship store "brings [the brand's] digital world to life in a physical space ... customers can experience every facet of the brand through immersive multimedia content exactly as they do online."

The store features a slew of digital screens capable of broadcasting live events and choreographed audiovisual takeovers. Furthermore, select products in the store are equipped with RFID chips that trigger interactive mirrors in the store to play content relevant to the particular product.

Given the fact that the analog world is where we began, it is more likely to find digital experiences being added to a physical product. However, there have been instances of the reverse.

Nice Berg

A project by Berg, a design studio based in London, is bringing the slew of feeds from our digital lives together in a quirky, completely analog mini-newspaper with The Little Printer.

The device gathers information from users' content feeds including Google tasks and The Guardian newspaper, as well as daily weather updates, puzzles from The Times

newspaper, and birthday reminders, printing them on-demand onto grocery-receipt-style sheets—slender strips of ink-free and BPA-free thermal paper that you can read with your morning coffee or place on your refrigerator as a friendly reminder.

Content is customizable using the Berg Cloud Remote application and uses the Berg Cloud Bridge to connect The Little Printer to the Web.

While at first blush this may seem to be bit of a novelty, it is indeed a clever and attractive way to bring our interactions and engagements back to the physical world where, some would say, they arguably belong.

The device brings back the satisfaction of checking off tangible to-do items and the delightful experience of actually physically skimming the morning's headlines, showing how a digital experience is made better through an equally engaging analog interaction.

As these examples have shown, purely analog experiences are quickly fading. And, likewise, purely digital experiences may not be the end all be all.

Even in the most unlikely of places, such as Burberry's bricks-and-mortar shop, brands are finding ways to incorporate digital into many touch points.

A digital experience may have become the ante to creating truly immersive experiences for consumers. However, marketers should remember that digital cannot always be relied upon to fully engage consumers on its own.

AS THE LITTLE Printer has shown, consumers are also looking for physical interactions that stem from their digital lives.

The challenge for marketers is to understand how their brand can leverage the complementing aspects from digital and physical to benefit the consumer, and how it can use both mediums advantageously.

Learn from these brands that have found ways to satisfy consumer needs in both realms and have managed to provide truly holistic experiences that engage consumers from many angles.

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