

## WHAT CHANGE SHOULD MARKETERS MAKE IN 2015?

Marketing experts share their advice on what marketers can do differently to improve their performance next year.



It's tempting to keep doing the "same old" if it works. But even the tried-and-true can be improved—especially in marketing, with its abundance of new tools and technologies, and easier access to more customer data than ever before. Email, for example, may be mature, but marketers are still finding ways to enliven it. Most recently, with such approaches as behavior-based timed deployments (someone who opens their promotional email at 5 a.m. receives that email at 5 a.m.) and open-time personalization (messages change when recipients open them, based on such items as location, device, weather, and time of day).

And what better time than the New Year—when so many people are considering big changes, fresh goals, and life-changing resolutions—to consider how to improve marketing performance next year? Here, more than 20 marketing experts share their advice on just that: how marketers can take a new approach to their craft in 2015 to improve their results.

**-Ginger Conlon**



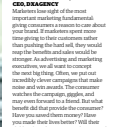
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# GET REAL



**DARREN GUARNACCIA, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER, SITECORE**

Restore humanity to marketing. In 2015 the art and science of marketing will be rebalanced, restoring humanity to this storied craft. Marketers have reached an unsustainable level of complexity with the universe of tools they need to sort through and use. This complexity has been building for some time, and marketers are now fed up with the all-consuming mechanics of data-centric marketing. To improve results, marketers must look to experience platforms to deliver more functionality more seamlessly to more easily engage customers in creative, meaningful ways.



**SANDY RUBINSTEIN,  
CEO, DXAGENCY**

Marketers lose sight of the most important marketing fundamental: giving consumers a reason to care about your brand. If marketers spent more time giving to their customers rather than pushing the hard sell, they would reap the benefits and sales would be stronger. As advertising and marketing executives, we all want to concept the next big thing. Often, we put out incredibly clever campaigns that make noise and win awards. The consumer watches the campaign, giggles, and may even forward to a friend. But what benefit did that provide the consumer? Have you saved them money? Have you made their lives better? Will their children be safer? You as marketers need to dedicate the same amount of energy spent on being clever to providing the consumer a benefit, a reason to care about your brand, a reason to choose you over the other guy. That's what builds brand loyalty, that's what keeps them coming back over and over again.



**PATRICIA MEJIA, CMO,  
SITEWORX**

Marketers will need to remember the old edict that people don't care what you know until they know that you care. Yes, genuine connections and consideration for your buyers' needs will trump data, trump automation, trump retargeting, trump every tool, technology, or scheme to get into buyers' minds and get them to spend. Believe it or not, being data-centric is just part of the equation. We need only look to Tesco's recent results to recognize the impact of putting all of your marketing chips on the promise of Big Data.

# BUILD CONNECTIONS



**WILLIAM WARD, PH.D., DIRECTOR, EDUCATION STRATEGY, HOOTSUITE**

Invest in social media education. Social media is no longer a pastime, it's a skill—one that is fundamental to a successful career and a successful business. As with any skill, social media abilities need to be learned, practiced, and honed if one is to excel on these networks and keep up with industry changes.

But social media education is often overlooked because social seems so inherent in our daily lives now. According to Altimeter, only 18% of businesses say their employees have the social media proficiency needed, a surprising number given the ever-increasing amount of people using social in their personal lives. For marketers to get the most out of their digital investments, they need to spend more time on training and educating their team on social best practices for business.

**JEFF FEDERMAN, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER OF DIGITAL, YP**

Think of your online presence as your business card. That means your digital, mobile, and print presence should always be current and cohesive. Many businesses are listed on numerous sites, and often the listings contain inaccurate or missing information such as the phone number, address, or even the name of the business itself. Business owners are consistently surprised to learn the extent of this problem, and that is only those businesses that are listed. Missing and inaccurate information can hurt the bottom line, and research backs this up. Manage and syndicate listings across a variety of search destinations, and make sure your online presence is mobile-friendly. This will ensure customers connect with you wherever they are.



**NATHANIEL PEREZ, GLOBAL HEAD OF SOCIAL, SAPIENTNITRO**

In 2015 marketers will need to focus on putting owned connections to work. Given the rising price of social media advertising and Facebook's increased control over brand audiences, marketers will have to dust off their owned media arsenal and put it to work. This means using creativity to drive more leads and loyalty through stickier websites and blogs, creating engaging content worth subscribing to, providing deeper contextual value via mobile Web and apps, and leveraging social media channels that still truly deliver content to followers, such as YouTube and Instagram. Taco Bell's recent move to go dark in social media to promote connections through its new mobile app is a perfect example of what's to come.



**CHRISTIAN JORG, CEO, OPENTOPIC**

Thanks to the proliferation of digital devices, channels, and the continually rising tide of original content, 2015 will be the year that consumers are officially inundated with content. Smart marketers, however, will recognize this opportunity to help their target audiences navigate the deluge. More specifically, in 2015, marketers should demonstrate their brand's expertise through relevant, curated content—instead of relying wholly on original content development for marketing. As a result, marketers will discover what those who are curating today already know: High-quality curated content effectively stimulates channel activity and increases customer engagement—and that it is critical for anyone who wants to cost-effectively scale an original content program.

# TEST AND LEARN



## **KARL WIRTH, CEO AND COFOUNDER, EVERGAGE**

Set a specific goal of conducting one website personalization test per week. This will help increase engagement and conversion rates. First, map out who visits your site by persona, relationship to your brand, and intent of each visit. Then, at the beginning of each month, ideate: How do we engage and convert our visitors better by targeting them with a really personalized experience? For example, what can we do to provide different visitors at different points in their journey with the most relevant information to get them to the next step? Next, make an iterative schedule to roll out one new personalized experience each week; look back at what you implemented the previous week, and keep track of how it's working against the non-personalized experience and what needs to be improved. Get in a rhythm. Bind yourself to this goal by making it known in your organization. Reward yourself for success.

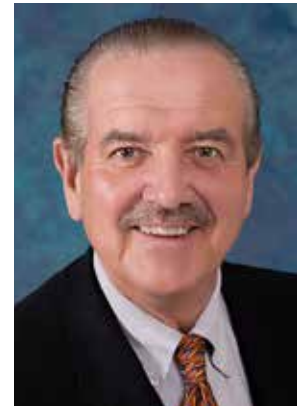


## **KIM ANN KING, CMO, SITESPECT**

One of the best ways to improve results is to experiment to discover what works and what doesn't. Direct marketers are familiar with A/B testing their direct response mailings, but I've found that extending testing across all marketing tactics and techniques yields even bigger improvements. For example, testing of headlines, body copy, and calls-to-action of ads, emails, direct mail, and websites. But don't stop there: Dive deep into site optimization to yield the best user experience, including testing not just content, but also features and functionality such as on-site search algorithms, pricing and shipping, new feature releases, whole site redesigns, process flow, and more. In this way, you'll be able to test new areas of your site to find new opportunities for conversion.

## **TED SHERWIN, PRESIDENT, IBS DIRECT**

Test your limits, intelligently. Marketers need to continuously test the limits of every program. Greater innovation, listening to customers, and identifying new ways to reengineer proven marketing programs to make them more cost-effective should all be driving forces in continuous program improvements. Given the pricing pressure most direct marketers face, you need to think differently; don't accept the status quo. For example, marketers need to push the manufacturing operation of marketing materials to test the limits, talk to other critical suppliers, and find new ways to manufacture that are more efficient. By focusing on the end game—a better process, greater quality, and reduced costs—you'll win more business and retain happy customers.



## **GLENN PINGUL, VP OF PRODUCTS AND MOBILE STRATEGIES, GLOBYS**

To improve their results in 2015, marketers need to change the results they're measuring. Although metrics such as take rate and month-over-month improvement are quick to calculate and simple to explain, they're inconclusive when determining real return on investment. In 2015 marketers need to shift to a new way of measurement, by adopting a scientific approach that aligns with the sophistication of data-driven marketing. This means calculating the delta between touching a customer versus not touching them at all. It means measuring impact versus control. And it means comparing the financial benefit of a lift to the cost it took to generate it. In doing so, marketers will trade "quick" reads on success for measuring with statistical significance the net financial impact of their marketing efforts. In return, they'll know for sure if they are making a difference, as well as how. Most important, they'll be able to defend it.

# BE RELEVANT



**LISA WEINSTEIN, GLOBAL PRESIDENT, DIGITAL DATA & ANALYTICS, STARCOM MEDIAVEST GROUP**

Marketers should evolve from thinking about campaigns to thinking about real-time consumer relevancy and start to budget accordingly. Most dollars spent are based on brand campaigns, e.g., quarterly or annual plans. At the same time, however, consumers are always in the market and on any given day there are potential relevant moments with which to associate a brand or product.

Marketers should put the consumer at the heart of planning—and inherently, budgeting—and budget marketing dollars for these everyday or “always on” opportunities to be relevant and engage. It’s not about moving entirely here, but it’s about a meaningful change that will result in more moments where brands can be relevant to consumers.



**RANDY BROWNING, CEO, BLAB**

Marketers should use predictive social analytics to target the interest-based conversations that their audiences are having. With access to this information and an ability to communicate in real time to massive audiences, nothing stays static and conversations about information surface, go viral, continue on, or wane. It’s important for brands to discover these conversations, to predict their path, and modify their marketing activities accordingly.

Google has created the knowledge graph—connecting the world’s digital knowledge via search; and Facebook has created the social graph—helping us to understand the world by mapping social connectivity. With the world’s knowledge and social connections indexed, marketers now need to implement a conversation graph to discover relevant conversations, how, where, and when they start, whether they will grow in volume and velocity, and how they will move from channel to channel. Armed with this knowledge, marketers can better target their campaigns, messaging, and content.

**ROB HEISER, PRESIDENT AND CEO, SEGMENT**

The necessity for brands to provide timely, relevant messages to consumers will only continue to increase in 2015. This trend reinforces the importance, and significance, of first-party data in campaigns. Most of today’s companies, including retail and financial institutions, have access to a wealth of first-party data but fail to analyze it. The use of first-party data will help marketers develop actionable customer insights to create better targeted marketing campaigns and increase conversion rates and ROI. Without leveraging consumers’ first-party data, brands and marketers will miss a key opportunity to drive their businesses forward and develop strong relationships with target audiences.



# BE RELEVANT



**OMER ARTUN, CEO, AGILONE**

Marketers must move away from mass marketing to individualized marketing, or otherwise risk alienating their customers. Junk marketing and irrelevant emails clutter 85% of our inbox and are becoming an unforgivable annoyance for consumers. Personalizing marketing efforts is a way to sift through the noise and reach customers. Industry statistics suggest that 86% of consumers—and 96% of retailers—say personalization has an impact on the purchasing decisions. But many marketers don't know how to successfully make that shift to hyper-targeting. Predictive marketing technologies are the key to unlocking one-to-one engagement, by better understanding customers through data. Once you understand who your valuable customers are and what it takes to retain them and keep them interested, it's possible to create marketing that's tailored, cost efficient, and effective.

**ANDREW MARTIN, PRESIDENT, METIA**

Listen more. Whether this is listening directly to their customer or the story that the underlying data is telling them, all marketers should listen more. By doing this, marketers will have a much better handle on being able to deliver the right content on the right channel to accelerate the customer lifecycle. On the data side of things, we don't need more or better data; we first need to understand what we have. Automating data listening, so triggered programs fire when needed, will enable marketers to meet the customer expectation of real-time, personalized communications.





# OWN OMNICHANNEL



**ERIC HOLMEN, PRESIDENT, INVOCA**

With more than 2 billion smartphones in use worldwide, the customer journey is becoming more and more complex, with people switching between mobile, desktop, clicks, and calls. Yet, most marketers still assume that it's easier to interact with their customers digitally, so they've continued to invest in creating great experiences for apps, email, search, social, and the Web. In 2015 smart marketers will start optimizing for the entire customer journey by investing in the tools that give them a clear picture into which campaigns—online and offline—are driving the highest quality leads to their business.

# GET SKILLED

**CRAIG HARRIS, CEO AND FOUNDER, HG DATA**

In 2015 it's imperative that marketers add team members with deep analytical skills, coding experience, software skills, and technical aptitude. If you can, hire or befriend an engineer. Marketing is going through a metamorphosis: from art to science, from retrospective to predictive, from activity-focused to revenue accountable, from intuition-led to data-driven, and from qualitative to quantitative.

CMOs are the new CTOs—with bigger budgets, and more APIs and integrations than most ERP systems. There's enough data being created every day to fill DVDs that could be stacked to the moon and back. Marketers looking to harness the power and value of this tsunami of information will be required to quickly transform the skills and profiles of their staff more than anything else.

I believe that the 4 Ps of 20th century marketing—product, pricing, place, and promotion—will be replaced with programming, pixels, personal, and predictive. So, hire wisely.



# SEE AND BE SEEN

## **CLARKE SMITH, CSO, BRANDMUSCLE**

Consumers today are looking for a personal touch from the brands they use. In 2015 it will be more important than ever for large national brands to deliver more localized and personalized campaigns. They need to shift away from a one-size-fits-all strategy and work with local affiliates to meet local demands while maintaining brand consistency across all channels. With the importance of local marketing elevated, effective CMOs will look for ways to consolidate and automate the management of fragmented local campaigns so they can respond quickly and precisely to changing local market conditions.



## **MARK HATCH, CEO, MBLAST**

In 2015 marketers need to look closely at the results from their digital advertising efforts and come to grips with the fact that the current model is broken. Consumers are tired of seeing ads for products they've already searched for and purchased. Brands are tired of paying for wasted impressions that don't generate sales. Even large brands like Kraft say they discard up to 85% of impressions as waste.

Instead of relying on click-stream data, which just isn't working, marketers need to embrace brand engagement. Part of this change in thinking is the rise of 'declared data' and technologies that analyze what users are saying across all of their digital and social channels to indicate their intent to buy a particular product or service. It's no longer about predicting behavior based on clicks, but on understanding buyers' intent at the moment it's most important: as they're about to make a purchase. This change—from relying on click-stream data to embracing brand engagement—is going to forever change the way brands find and market to their customers.



## **KIRAN GOPINATH, CEO AND FOUNDER, OZONE MEDIA**

Evaluating programmatic media buying is so last year. In 2015 marketers who look past the incorrect notion that automation technologies kill creativity, and understand that programmatic improves overall marketing strategies and campaign execution, will have a significant competitive edge, as it's a lethal marketing tool. Yahoo's recent acquisition of BrightRoll (a move to strengthen the Internet company's programmatic video advertising) has lit a fire under the feet of marketers who are on the fence about the technology to consider investing. As consumers' attention is increasingly divided across multiple platforms, marketers who embrace ad tech solutions like programmatic early on, will be able to more effectively—and, at least, faster than the competition—connect the dots of the near-infinite consumer data available to make more personalized and engaging stories (and offers) to consumers.

## **OPHIR TANZ, CEO, GUMGUM**

Mastering the visual Web will be critical in 2015. Consumers increasingly spend their time with, and communicate via, images rather than words (think Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr). As a result, brands have a unique yet underutilized opportunity to connect with consumers by naturally integrating their messaging into an increasingly visual world. Non-intrusive, highly relevant ads blended seamlessly into content provide tremendous sales lift potential for marketers. The trick is working with partners who are able to make sense of the billions of images uploaded every day combined with an actionable means of delivering messages in these environments at large scale.

