How Personal Values Will Shape the Future of Marketing

August 4, 2021 6 min read

Opinions expressed by *Entrepreneur* contributors are their own.

Stewards, champions, advocates and builders. These are some of the new archetypes marketers are embodying. We're doing far more than sales, promotion and brand building. We're driving innovation, bolstering capabilities and assuming responsibility for company growth.

We've all been forced to take on the unexpected over the past year and a half. It can be tricky to make sense of things when even fundamental daily norms are disrupted. Yet, we're beginning to see a certain pulse within the turbulence.

The current state of affairs

As always, everything begins and ends with the customer. Knowing the customer is the key to understanding the general state of things.

My company, Valux, has a definite edge here since we have enough collective experience to form an intuitive connection with our market. We're completely tuned in to their hopes, fears and emotions. We've been able to pick out emerging values, behaviors, moods and trends. You can't get that level of understanding from tools alone.

Related: 10 Marketing Strategies to Fuel Your Business Growth

Datasets and marketing tools are great for verifying and

validating these instincts. However, they don’t provide the magic spark needed to go beyond the edge.

Here are a few sentiments we’ve picked up on:

- Feelings of loss, fear, separation, anxiety and economic uncertainty.
- A deep hungering for closeness, authentic bonding and human connection.

Covid-19 restricted parts of life we took for granted: hugs, impromptu outings, visits with friends and family celebrations. Our attention and values have shifted towards the basics of life.

The ethical consumer

Quarantine gave us time to think. Social restrictions, political tension and racial conflicts gave us things to think about. We’re now more socially conscious, value-oriented and aware of our personal impact on the world. The most prominent concerns are based on racial equity, inclusivity and sustainability.

Shoppers are looking for the ethical choice. They want to purchase from brands that share their values. Brands that are value-aligned create trust and customer loyalty.

At this point, we’re also a little jaded from observing brands rush to vocalize support, then fail to fulfill their promises. Brands that profess ideals without taking action risk destroying their reputations and any trust.

Price sensitivity

Of course, 2020 was an economic disaster. Millions of Americans visited food banks for the first time. Almost 100,000 businesses shut down. And almost 10,000,000

jobs were lost.

Unsurprisingly, this has made consumers far more value conscious than they were pre-pandemic. Almost everyone is actively hunting for a great deal. Online businesses that can offer promotions, discounts, loyalty rewards and flash sales are the winners here.

Hype is dead

We've reached a point of innovation maturity for upcoming technologies. The novelty factor is down. And many applications are disappointments. At the same time, we've shifted our focus away from shiny new objects and back onto the fundamentals of life: staying healthy, maintaining relationships and daily work.

Our interest in technology is related to its human value, not the thing in itself.

Related: 6 Instagram Marketing Strategies for Small Businesses

From digital to "phygital"

Covid-19 gave the digital transformation an unexpected acceleration. Not all brands were ready. Those offering poor digital customer experience are experiencing customer losses.

We're already seeing peak digital penetration. People retain the desire for human connection and physical interactions. This can be for security, convenience or ease of access.

Brands can't be solely digital or physical. Brands must become "phygital" and provide a fluid omnichannel customer experience.

Thriving in a crisis

Every crisis has its own set of winners and losers. Our company was uniquely positioned to thrive during Covid-19 because we've always operated as a nimble, tech-forward firm. We were able to adjust quickly and give our clients clear direction.

There are around 8,000 MarTech tools available. You need to begin with a well-considered MOps (marketing operations) strategy.

We prefer to work with next-gen tools that incorporate AI, automation and robotics in an elegant and seamless way, always with the intent of forming closer customer relationships.

Conversational marketing is a perfect case study.

Conversational marketing

Conversational marketing is interactive, personalized and engaging. Customers who participate in meaningful, self-directed interactions develop feelings of investment and brand loyalty.

Automated conversational marketing is omnichannel. It doesn't live on websites alone. These interactions can take place via SMS or be integrated into a company app.

And you can integrate it into your entire customer lifecycle.

This isn't the clunky, time-wasting chatbots of the past. As AI capabilities improve, conversational marketing becomes even more natural, intuitive and insightful.

Tools like this deliver real value. This form of low-pressure engagement brings brands and customers together more naturally.

Related: The 6 Online Marketing Strategies Every Entrepreneur Needs

The next normal

We've barely settled into the so-called "new normal" and the "next normal" is already here.

It's a digitally integrated world, one that eliminates technological siloes and physical barriers while roping individuals off into like-minded clusters.

Brands will have to be digitally borderless, nurture through community and remotely bring their offerings to life.

Digitally borderless

The digitally borderless brand is omnipresent. It knows which podcasts its customers listen to, influencers they follow and physical retailers they prefer.

This brand offers automated service across devices and tracks the details. It offers white-glove personal service and self-directed options. It forms partnerships with other companies to extend its reach and value.

It's fully integrated into the customer's online and offline ecosystem.

Hyperlocal community

Brands need to integrate themselves micro-regionally. People are still moving around less. There's concern around the safety of the direct physical environment and appreciation for personalized connection.

Brands with hyper-localized marketing create more affinity with customers. Localizing any CSR initiatives boosts goodwill

and trust.

Digital experiences

Virtual events and augmented reality (AR) experiences should be in every marketer’s arsenal. These compensate for in-person restrictions.

Virtual reality makes our brand experience personal and far more accessible.

We can expect more tech that integrates directly into our lives. These technologies are personalized in ways we haven’t experienced before, and this empathetic connection gives them lasting power.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/378714