Staying Connected Through the Customer Journey With American Express

Inspiration awaits at Brandweek. Join C-suite leaders from Glossier, Nespresso and Diageo in Phoenix, Arizona this Sept. 23–26 for exclusive insights and hot takes. Last chance save 20% (ends July 15)—register now.

Welcome to this episode of the Marketing Vanguard podcast. A big welcome to our special guest today, Elizabeth Rutledge, the CMO at American Express. Join us as we explore her journey from a biology teacher to an experienced marketing leader.

Rutledge shares her insights on the importance of learning and staying connected to customers, supporting the next generation of marketers, and driving and responding to culture change. She discusses American Express's initiatives for small businesses, the impact of AI on marketing, and their commitment to community and leadership development.

Rutledge has been with American Express for over 30 years in a variety of roles that afforded her the opportunity to gain a deep knowledge and understanding of its customers. She's passionate about cultivating an environment of inclusivity and collaboration, where everyone is encouraged to bring a diversity of perspectives, backgrounds and experiences to the table.

Stream the new episode below and subscribe on Apple Podcasts or find it on Spotify.

Key takeaways:

06:03 – Supporting the Next Generation of Marketing Leaders: Rutledge looks back fondly on her collaboration with Julia Goldin, CMO at Lego, to create a leadership development program. Her proudest achievement is launching the Day of Learning, which has produced an incredible global curriculum. This curriculum covers foundational skills and new technological advancements, benefiting both new and experienced marketers. She explains how at American Express they have implemented "Amex Marketing You," a year-long program of workshops and seminars. The objectives are to explain the importance of curiosity, continuous learning, and building valuable connections for career growth.

13:52 – Are B2B and B2C Marketing on a Converging Path? Rutledge highlights that, ultimately, marketing is about the human connection and understanding your audience, which is the foundation of both B2B and B2C marketing. Remember who your customer is and where they are in their journey with your brand. Ensure your products and services demonstrate tangible, differentiated value. Use personalized communication channels effectively, considering the relevance of your message and the delivery method. The integration of media and content is crucial. In B2B, leverage sales channels and word of mouth for impactful communication.

15:22 – The Role of AI in Marketing at American Express: The company has been using machine learning since 2010 to combat fraud and achieve best-in-class fraud rates. They've since expanded AI to automate processes and personalize customer experiences. Recently, they are also exploring the use of generative AI to benefit customers and colleagues, enhancing productivity, data protection, and customer experiences. Rutledge sees significant potential in using AI for personalized content and streamlining marketing processes. Despite the excitement, she emphasizes the importance of thoughtful and careful deployment, respecting customer privacy

and intellectual property.

Recommended articles
https://www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/staying-connected-through-the-customer-journey-with-american-express/