

Communicating with your global customer

The biggest challenge to marketers today is mobile technology, as the consumer can access anything from anywhere at anytime, says Alexander Schmidt-Vogel, CEO Worldwide, MediaCor speaking at the annual Financial Mail Adfocus conference in Sandton this week.

 By Louise Marsland 12 May 2004

"In the old days, the Medium was King. In the new world of digital freedom and personalised content, the Consumer is in control and Content is King." Schmidt-Vogel says marketers and advertisers should therefore be thinking about content planning as well, not just media planning.

Mobile phones have radically changed the world, as have MP3 players like the iPod, and personal data organisers (PDAs) with mobile push button 'Net access, like the Black Berry from US.

Yet despite this explosion in alternative and interactive media options which were creeping towards a high share of media consumption time amongst consumers, there was little or no research available and advertisers are not even using the new medium:

- Mobile: SMS – no advertising.
- Games – no advertising.
- DVD – no advertising.
- DVR/TiVo – can wash out advertising for TV viewers (which an estimated 65 percent of TiVo users in the US now do).
- iPod – effectively a radio with your favourite songs, and without any advertising.

"Consumers are locking out advertising. And we need to return to school to find out how to make ourselves welcome again."

Schmidt-Vogel predicts that the communication volume will explode, but advertising share will go down, leaving your most precious resource for future business, as ACCESS, not tangible ingredients or products or services.

"Access to attention is a shrinking resource. Access to attention and access to relationships is on decline. We have to relearn how to become welcome as a messenger. Access to consumers will have an increasing value, but a shrinking resource. And the bad thing is that communication will become much more expensive but it will allow us to be more effective. And we will have to sell twice: first the message and then the product/service."

He says marketers need a deeper understanding of what is inside your consumer:

1. We have to look at utilizing break-through advertising that is unconventional, connects with the program, inside the programme, creates your own programme - anything but advertising that is disturbing or boring.
2. Create branded content around the product, branded lifestyle, add brand competence, activities/lifestyle. The brand has to become a daily ritual in your consumers' life. Build its own world around the brand and let it shine.

3. Build real relationships – in the past we spoke to consumers where and when we wanted. Now it's on the terms.

Most of the speeches at the conference will be available at www.adfocus.co.za for reading only.

ABOUT LOUISE MARSLAND

Louise Burgers (previously Marsland) is Founder/Content Director: SOURCE Content Marketing Agency. Louise is a Writer, Publisher, Editor, Content Strategist, Content/Media Trainer. She has written about consumer trends, brands, branding, media, marketing and the advertising communications industry in SA and across Africa, for over 20 years, notably, as previous Africa Editor: Bizcommunity.com; Editor: Bizcommunity Media/Marketing SA; Editor-in-Chief: AdVantage magazine; Editor: Marketing Mx magazine; Editor: Progressive Retailing magazine; Editor: BusinessBrief magazine; Editor: FMCG Files newsletter. Web: www.sourceagency.co.za.
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