

Ten Amazing Marketing Thought Leadership Discoveries from IMPACT17

IMPACT17 lit up Las Vegas recently, bringing together hundreds of marketing professionals from all over the globe to share ideas, talk up what's new in digital marketing and hear from the industry's thought leaders. The settings were beautiful, Las Vegas is exciting and the attendees were motivated to learn new and groundbreaking concepts from marketing gurus representing a broad range of products and industries.

Here are 10 findings presented at IMPACT17. Each is a masterpiece on its own, but together they represent the most innovative and exciting marketing event anywhere!



Gen Z On The Rise!

Marcie Merriman, Executive Director at Ernst & Young, gave a fascinating look into the newest generational cohort, Gen Z. Her presentation was titled "Move Over Millennials: How Generation Z Is Shaping the Future." The interesting thing about Gen Z'ers is how they differ from anyone we've seen. This "generation of ambitious realists" is technology focused, divergent from their parents and consider themselves savers.

As Marcie continued, she offered a view of Gen Xers as a prepared, aware and independent group that experienced today's technologies at an earlier age than ever before. Many of the generation-shaping artifacts of the millennial generation (VCRs, CD players, Mapquest) are now gone, and new tools have taken their places. Marketers must beware of this different nomenclature in order to win the hearts and minds of this emerging and increasingly powerful group.

Focusing on "State Consciousness"

Mark Samuel, Founder & Chief Executive Officer of IMPAQ, shared a passionate presentation titled "Leading Above the Noise: Transforming Your Organization and Yourself." Mark's firm helps businesses execute on the plans they've developed and establish accountability. The method Samuel shared is called the "State Consciousness Model." Through this approach, he establishes the goals of the organization and executes his "state transformation process" including meticulous examination of results and fine-tuning of process. Mark's experience in making change happen was a welcome and useful topic for the IMPACT17 attendees.



Marketing and Cybersecurity

Eric Lundbohm, the IMA's CMO-Lead and a long-time cybersecurity CMO, shared observations and tips for improving the cybersecurity of marketing departments. While marketing departments are not the owners of credit card information and other sought-after cyber bounty, many of the keys to the corporate brand are

protected only by user names and passwords that are shared liberally with marketing employees and outside vendors, creating a huge risk. Eric presented four tips for marketing departments to improve cybersecurity:

- Have a meeting with the whole marketing team and discuss the issue
- Get passwords under control
- Work with the IT Department
- Consider a password management program

4 Gen Z Content

The emerging Gen Z group received more attention as Jason Neubauer presented “How Brands Win Gen Z with Content Marketing.” Jason went through several case studies of how brands as diverse as Sprint and Netflix use paid influencers, while aligning traditional and digital messages and incentivizing consumers for specific programs and activities.

Working with today’s top influencers and important business personalities, Jason has collected people who are both interested in helping others and also have substantial social reach. These are the qualities that bestow celebrities to the Gen Z construct. The project is called “The Santa Clause Affect” and focuses on online content that is oriented toward social impact. As individuals see and read more about doing good, they will be more likely to jump into a campaign.

Brand Advocacy

Mercer Digital Global CMO Jeannine Mullen brought her “Marketing from the Inside Out; Brand Advocacy Secrets” presentation to the IMPACT17 stage. Her thesis was clear: “As a brand, you are fighting a wave of rapidly evolving technology, and you cannot outspend innovation. You must employ a People Marketing strategy to thrive.” Jeannine then shared some of the industry-leading people marketing examples from Mercer’s UK messaging. The key challenge is how to achieve a unique message, with a differentiating position and point of view that will attract positive attention and drive conversation and engagement. Based on the examples shown, it looks like Mercer has risen to the challenge. Jeannine ended by imploring all of us to go out and catch “A.I.R.” (authentic, inspirational and relatable marketing).



6 Keeping Influencers Legal

One of the most eye-opening presentations was given by Perry J. Viscounty, a partner at Latham & Watkins. Perry covered “10 Legal Basics Governing Influencer Endorsements.” Paid influencer relationships are now key to product and brand promotion, and there are legal aspects all marketing people need to beware of. The issue focuses on the disclosures required for even the smallest of financial incentives. Even receiving a product for free without expectation of future social media posts on that product must be disclosed. Ultimately, the brand is responsible for its influencers and must reasonably monitor its network for compliance.



Amazon innovates like no other

Jay Symonds, Amazon Account Manager, spoke on Amazon’s Innovations. Amazon has made innovation a strategy from the first Amazon website to becoming the leading cloud service today. The Amazon secret, according to Jay, is starting with the customer and working backwards. Amazon’s innovations have been substantial, from the line of devices it offers to delivery and shipping. The integration of content, convenience and transparent shipping continues to transform retail purchasing and has fuelled Amazon’s rise to a half-trillion-dollar market capitalization. The company’s recent purchase of Whole Foods is another area where Amazon will innovate to the point of reformulating an industry.



Becoming and Staying Diverse

One of the most memorable presentations of the IMPACT class of 2017 was given by Evite CEO Victor Cho. Victor's topic was diversity in the workplace, an area he cares greatly about, which showed in the results he shared. As a peer group, he presented the percentage of men/women at five leading companies (Facebook, Uber, Apple, Google, Twitter and Microsoft) for overall employees and also those in management and technical roles. Then he overlaid Evite's results, which showed that Evite's results are much more balanced and actually skewed toward more women employees than men. As a summary, Victor attributed the success at Evite to three internal processes:

- Divergent decision making
- Holistic hiring and promotion
- Explicit conversation

Putting Big Data To Work

Magento CMO Andrea Ward gave the IMPACT17 attendees what they came for in her presentation titled "Data-Driven Marketing: Hype vs. Reality." After setting the stage by reviewing the massive amounts of data created in the world today, Andrea described the characteristics of "top performers" based on experience with Magento clients.

One campaign she reviewed in detail was the "Making of a Smarter Coke" that included the personalization of the label with customers' names. The program, highlighted by the hashtag #ShareACoke, captured more than 600,000 names, experienced a 22% increase in average order value and sold 125,000 gifts purchased directly from their ecommerce site.

After reviewing some of the technical changes in consumer purchasing, such as Alexa-based ordering devices, Andrea closed with these conclusions:

- Being a top performer means outsized returns and opportunities.
- Top performers are using data-driven marketing to make smarter growth decisions.
- Data is a powerful first step in unlocking value.

It's All About The Taste

Bill Eldien, CEO of Ketel One Vodka, graced the IMPACT stage and brought some of the most logical and demonstrably successful advice the attendees heard. Ketel One is part of Nolet Distilleries, and Bill shared the 325-year history and lineage of that company, piloted by nine generations of the Nolet family. Of most interest to the marketing folks in attendance was the careful and considered way that Ketel One has gone about building its brand.

Central to Ketel One's success was the required brand seminar and taste test that every server in every location went through. This allowed bartenders to appreciate the quality and refinement resident in Ketel One and share that with prospective customers. This "upside-down marketing" has helped establish the product as a high-end premium vodka and grow volume at a rapid pace. Bill closed his presentation with a tribute to and some great stories about golfer Arnold Palmer, who was an endorser for Ketel One.

However, the highlight of this presentation (and maybe all the presentations) was an actual taste test that put Ketel One against its key competitors. The tasting was narrated and enhanced by Bill's colorful descriptions of each vodka. All in attendance were impressed by the level of class and sophistication in Ketel One's marketing.

These incredible thought leaders are just a small sample of the learning that took place at IMPACT17. IMA members interact, share ideas and positively influence each other, and the discussions are often fuelled by these presentations from industry experts. This year's event had more than its share of exceptional speakers covering fascinating topics. We all look forward to IMPACT18!

