

An Evidence of the Seamless Experience: Touchy Promotional Campaign

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Abstract

In recent times, the notion of consumer emotional and sentimental engagement through promotional campaigning has drawn increasing attention from practitioners'. Different types of strategies are being employed by the marketers for capturing emotional sentiments of consumers' and also attempting to modify consumers' behavior towards the company's goal. However, present academic advertisement literatures do not have many evidences of currently used marketer's advertisement tactics. The focus of this study is to examine the underlying reasons on what draws consumers to participate and engage in promotional activities. This study highlights a marketer proposed promotional ingredients that is called seamless experience and also to come across upon its evidences in successful advertisement or promotional campaign. Seamless experience is one of the three components of invitational marketing concept; a new concept of the promotional campaign that is sponsored by marketers.

INTRODUCTION

Promotional campaign is a form of communication that is becoming more integrated whenever marketer thinks in depth to get the maximum effectiveness coming from an optimal promotional investment; marketer hardly tries to make sense from the total promotional course of action. They can use an integrated type of tactics or in isolation. Once marketers set a promotional tactics, they are not only developing and launching a modest campaign, but also employing a well-planned and rational tactic to remedy a volatile market or business situation. Scholars acknowledge that promotion is an important component of the marketing mix because it generates awareness for the product and persuades consumers to buy it (Wolf, 1997). A promotional campaign is similar to a planned system of communication considered to lasting long term and modifying consumer purchase behavior and company's goodwill.

Marketer operates in highly competitive markets and a volatile environment, where customers' purchasing behavior is inconsistent and difficult to predict. According to the Advertising Age, "the oft-quoted statistic that consumers make 70% of brand decisions in the store boosted shopper marketing and made other advertising seem almost pointless" (Rao, 2006). In such competitive context, promotional campaign and its connection can transmit a signal that is a source of truth that also summarizes the objectives, strategies,

tactical overview and assumptions holding a brand or a company. A consumer touching story or campaign that reflects customer emotion and sentiments can modify consumer purchase behavior through direct and indirect marketing channel execution and straight forward sales and marketing roles and practices.

A pleasant campaign may involve in many media outlet, many people and functions and so large an investment at stake. A high acceptance of promotional campaign can be achieved through a process which includes identifying customers' characteristics and to recognize their market values and to predict the likelihood that they will respond to marketing campaigns (Bose & Chen, 2009; Kim, 2006) In other words, it is critical for marketer to create a unifying construction that is much more than simple promotional activities. Moreover, to design a mind blowing touchy promotional campaign it may involve large resources, many participants' engagement and the uninterrupted transmission of the core message for the target audience. This process may require galvanizing an organization around a single effort to make goodwill for the company.

Marketers continuously study promotional campaign ingredients that can deploy to achieve incredible level of success in promotional campaign. However, marketers are facing many challenges in assuming which would be the best ingredients to be included in their upcoming promotional campaigns. In contrast, the complexity of advanced analytical tools such as data mining makes marketers more reluctant to utilize the resulting models due to their difficulty, poor comprehensibility, and trust issues (Cui, Wong, & Lui, 2006; Chen, Chiu, & Chang, 2005). In searching for available innovative ingredients of promotional campaign, some scholars acknowledged that direct marketing has become a key method to enhance promotion campaigns as well as to develop strong customer relationships (Martínez-López & Casillas, 2009).

However, looking at practical scenario, in 2013, the Microsoft launched "Scroogled" campaigning program that is anti-Google promotional campaign, Google is the top rival of Microsoft and they are publishing several videos criticizing Google's Chrome books and selling t-shirts and coffee mugs bearing slogans like "Keep Calm While We Steal Your Data." For ordinary consumers' it may appear to be an arrogant promotional campaign. However, since a top brand like Microsoft launched this campaign, it is therefore assumed that there should be certain basis of the concept especially as Andy Hart of Microsoft are terming the context, new promotional mood as "invitational marketing". This concept is defined by a combination of three ingredients: first, seamless experience; the marketing campaign is integrated with the experience itself, operating through direct engagement rather than distraction. Second, imminent value; the marketing campaign provides value that relates to the extant user experience. Finally, self-determination; the marketing experience celebrates greater levels of transparency and information such that consumers better understand the value proposition of the advertisement.

Given the above-mentioned current phenomenon, the invitational marketing process evidently needs a sound foundation to be used effectively within organizations. One of the benefit of evidence based searching for understanding invitational marketing is taken this concept in academic form.

SEAMLESS EXPERIENCE

Seamless experience can be explain as the marketing campaign that is integrated with the experience itself, operating through direct engagement rather than distraction. Currently, there is no theoretical basis for the concept of invitational marketing concept within the advertisement literature. Some available literature has been writing about seamless experience but all are other than marketing field. However, if a strong theoretical base can

be developed for the concept, it may offer a possible framework with which is more closely examine the formation and development of customer–promotional campaign relationships. Moreover, there is a need to investigate the extent to which the seamless experience components have been using in real field. This paper attempts to narrow this gap by evidenced based searching of seamless experience in the practice of current promotional campaign.

Seamless experience can be classified into two sub elements that are (1) customer experience (2) customer engagement in the promotional campaign. Lasalle and Britton define “experience” as “an interaction, or series of interactions, between a customer and a product, a company or its representative that lead to a reaction.” Other scholar’s views experience management as a systematic approach to measuring and managing customer feedback (Schmitt, 2010). Pine and Gilmore refer to commodities are fungible, goods tangible, services intangible, and experiences are memorable (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Experiences are the event that engages individuals in a personal way (Gentile, Spiller, & Noci, 2007). Based on the review of the state of the art literatures contain in experience marketing, (Kahn, 1990) following finding: the customer experience originates from a set of interactions in between a customer and a product, a company, or part of its organization, which is provoked a reaction. This experience is strictly personal which implies the customer’s involvement at different levels (rational, emotional, sensorial, physical and spiritual). Its evaluation depends on the comparison between a customer’s expectations and the stimuli coming from the interaction with the company and its offering in correspondence of the different moments of contact or touch-points. Traditional advertising (radio, print, television) verbally and visually communicates the brand and product benefits, experiential marketing is tried to immerse the consumers within the product by engaging as many other human senses as possible. There are many propositions in favor of customer experience. However, based on the following circumstance, consumer experience can make personal bond and consequences of that is positive image building of the company and enhance goodwill. Therefore, it would be interesting to know the relationship in between consumer experience ingredients uses in recent promotional campaign;

Proposition 1: To what extent promotional campaign is integrated with the consumer experience?

On the other hand, customer engagement has been defined as task behaviours that promote connections to work and to others, which are expressed physically, cognitively, and emotionally and which stimulate personal development and increase motivation (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). Other scholars also stress the dual roles of cognition and emotion in the creation of a situation of engagement. For an instance, engagement is termed as a pervasive affective, cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual or behaviour that acts to enhance organizational productivity (Salanova, Agut, & Peiró, 2005). Salanova, Agut, and Peiró, also add that emotional engagement may act to further increase group morale, cohesion, and rapport via positive psychological contagion processes. Brodie *et al.* (2011) define customer engagement as a psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative customer experiences with a particular agent/object (e.g. a brand). Other academicians posit customer engagement occurs under a specific set of context-dependent conditions generating differing customer engagement levels (Hollebeek, 2011). Some scholar also state customer engagement exists as a dynamic, iterative process that co-creates value, and that customer engagement is a multi-

dimensional concept subject to a context- and/or stakeholder-specific expression of relevant cognitive, emotional and/or behavioural dimensions (Gummerus, 2013).

However, the dynamic force behind the concept of engagement is linked to a number of optimistic consequences at both individual and organizational levels. Engagement can play a vital role in the advertisement formation as well. It is recommended that engagement may be used as a proxy measure of the strength of a company's customer relationships based on the extent to which customers have formed both emotional and rational bonds with a brand (Bowden, 2009). Therefore, other proposition is:

Proposition 2: To what extent consumer engagement involves in promotional campaign.

SAMPLING AND APPROACH

The sample size consists of three different advertisements produced from world leading three brands. These sample selection is based on top most three memorable advertisement campaigns of 2013 that are adopted from the Forbes "The Most Unforgettable Ad Campaigns Of 2013". Study approaches are literature review and case study.

CASE STUDY AND DATA ANALYSIS

Case- A

"Dove Real Beauty Sketches" is scored top in the unforgettable campaign category in 2013. It is acknowledged that only 4% of women around the world consider themselves beautiful, Dove decided to conduct a compelling social experiment that proves to women something very important: You are more beautiful than you think, the advertisement maker said. Several women were invited to a San Francisco loft, where they were asked to describe themselves (specifically their facial features) to Gill Zamora, an FBI-trained forensic artist who could not see his subjects. After Zamora sketched each woman, he did another drawing of the same subject—this time based on how a stranger described her. The two sketches were later shown to the subjects, revealing that the second sketch was in all cases more flattering than the first. Their reactions were recorded and the experiment was made into an online video.



Figure 1: Dove real beauty

Analysis

In this campaign; first, fusion of daily life objects like women consider themselves that they are not beautiful, although they are pretty. This true concept is brought up and tried to visualize by the emotional and sentimental issue included in the advertisement. That is easy enough for audience to understand and effortless to believe. The advertisement is

more on emotional and psychological proposition and no requiring any physical item to establish communication; moreover, audience can get unforgettable moment, based on the concept of using the psychological affects, which can be a mean to conduct the direct communication in between audience and these campaigns. That is experience.

As it is based on real facts and most of the audience perception, therefore, audience believes is transformed into an interface, in which all kind of elements as mental, behavioral components and attitudinal objects have a relation with the information transmitted by this advertisement. It is clear that consumer interaction (invites in a hall to make sketches) gives them a chance and proves their beauty. Later on sharing emotional feelings of the perception beauty versus actual beauty gives pure motivation to the audience as those elements have already identified but unfulfilled human requirements. This is the concept of customer engagement.

Eventually, the message of this advertisement is simplified and standardized based on human natural movements. After having this emotional touching story which is experience, one can build specific intuitive actions inside the mind, transformed into trigger actions that is engagement, coupling existing pattern behaviors to new meanings. Dove is really working for beauty. This is the success of seamless experience.

Case B

Extra Gum's "Origami" that scored second position in the most unforgettable advertisement campaign in 2013. The heart warming spot advertisement campaign shows a father teaching his daughter how to make origami cranes using gum wrappers. As the girl grows up, the father continues giving her these birds. At the end of the 60-second spot, as the parents are packing the car to send their daughter off to college, the father accidentally drops a box to find that it's full of his paper cranes. The ad closes with a voiceover saying: "Sometimes the little things last the longest."



Figure 2: Origami

Analysis

This is a beautiful, touching story about a father and his daughter, the bond of the two of them shares through this advertisement and it also make unforgettable. It captured real sentiment and emotion and then employing that to share a story about the brand. The fusion of sentiments in between a father and daughter of this advertisement does not need the use of much effort to understand or realize. That is seamless experience concept. Use of gum wrapper to make origami is simplified and standardized based on natural human movements (experience). It also shows that specific intuitive actions like origami is make touching audience inside workflow and transformed into trigger actions, coupling existing

pattern behaviors to new meanings sometimes the little things last the longest that is motivation or in other word engagement. In this advertisement, a seamless experience is built based on the concept of using the participant's or every fathers' emotion as a mean to conduct the direct communication with their daughters' love and that can realize through this advertisements. The in-depth meaning of this story created on the basis of practical life of mainstream consumer and this advertisement are linked through the emotion.

Case C

The Scarecrow is a 2013 animated short film and advertisement by the American restaurant chain Chipotle Mexican Grill. "The Scarecrow," a three-minute-plus animated short film, a scarecrow goes to work at the "Crow Foods Incorporated" factory, where he is visibly upset after witnessing chickens being injected with a green fluid, packages being labelled as a "100% Beef-ish," and cows in too-small metal crates. Upon going home to his farm after work that day, he gets the idea to harvest natural vegetables; to "cultivate a better world." Fiona Apple's cover of "Pure Imagination" plays in the background.



Figure 3: The Scarecrow

Analysis

A seamless experience is built based on the concept of using the participant's emotion as a mean to conduct the direct communication between the advertisements. Here, the in-depth meaning of this story mixing together with animation, the music, games object, sentiment, and emotional proposition creates a memorable atmosphere that is experience. On the other hand, current consumers' one of the major concerns of go green or pure products creates direct communication in between mainstream consumer with this advertisement; moreover, this made it stand out and effortless to engagement with consumers. The execution itself is linked to an app game that is famous and consumers may have certain experience of playing it before the advertisement seen. Overall mixture of this experience and the engagement makes seamless experience.

FINDINGS

Invitational marketing is a new promotional strategy that is explored and deployed by practitioners in the market. Seamless experience is one of the three components of it and can be divided into two fraction; customer experience and engagement. Here, by customer experience we mean promotional campaign should contain some touchy story; simultaneously promotional campaign also desires to contain positive motivation that can be termed as customer engagement. By mixture of this two touchy story and positive motivation which can form seamless experience. This study has evidenced that seamless experience is widely using in recent successful advertisement campaigns.

LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This is small scale and three sample size based study. However, the success of this study is confirmed that seamless experience is useful. That also opens the door for further academic research on seamless experience as well as invitational marketing concepts.

This study shows that all top three most unforgettable advertisement campaigns in 2013 contains both customer experience and engagement that creates seamless experience, moreover it is one of the three components of invitational marketing concepts. This study attempted to identify linkage of seamless experience in successful promotional discourse. However, this study has done in small scale and is not sufficient enough to define seamless experience or invitational marketing success. Further broad scale studies are needed to establish this notion. Significance of this study can be classified in two ways. First, highlighted there is huge opportunity in invitational marketing as all top three touchy advertisement in 2013 has contained seamless experience components so it can be a source for further research and invent other components as well. Second, this study can be a learning lesson for practitioners to know about the success of seamless experience and how to adopt it in their future promotional campaign to enhance company's success and take position in consumer mind.

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