



Five Marketing Trends That Only a CMO Contemplating Career Suicide Would Ignore

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Marketing is changing and evolving at a rapid pace. To keep up, [chief marketing officers](#) (CMOs) need to consistently look into their crystal ball to keep their companies in the spotlight—and ahead of the competition.

Here are five major changes taking shape in 2012 that only a CMO willing to commit career suicide would ignore.

1. A Return to Strategy

The marketing world has been abuzz about every possible digital marketing tactic in the book, including mobile couponing, augmented reality, and real-time bidding by digital media exchanges. Many CMOs become entranced by those bright and shiny digital marketing options. However, the smartest CMOs understand that tactics come and go, and those CMOs are going to be the ones leading a movement back to *strategy*.

Focus on the right strategy, and you'll develop a winning marketing formula. Look at successful companies such as Apple, Procter & Gamble, and Nordstrom. Their clear strategies get real business results—regardless of the tactics they employ at any given moment.

One national food brand invested in every imaginable new marketing tactic to drive traffic to its website. However, the site experience was so out of sync with what site visitors wanted that they never returned. (Analytics showed a dismal 1:1 visit-to-visitor ratio for the brand's site.) Consequently, the company's marketing campaigns delivered a bad brand experience, doing more damage than good. Ironically, as the company implemented more tactics, it did more damage.

Instead, the food brand needed to thrill customers and prospects by showing—on its site, in its ads, and at the supermarket—how it helped them achieve their goals. And that starts with a clear strategy. Follow the lead of companies like Apple: Unlock what thrills your customers, and your tactics will be much more effective.

2. Channel Integration

Once you've nailed the strategy, it's time to integrate, integrate, integrate.

Today, we talk about mobile, social, search, video, email, and display marketing as if they're in silos. In 2012, expect to see massive integration of those areas. Consider the mom market, for example. Moms are completely social, mobile, and local. Their lives, though, are not just "mobile" or "social" or "local." *They're all of those things, all the time.*

If you're trying to get moms to purchase your brand of kids' shampoo, for example, clarify how you're going to make their lives easier, simpler, and better. You don't necessarily need to "be social" and get them to "Like" your Facebook page. Rather, you need to demonstrate how you'll solve their problems. Period. Are you less expensive? Can your shampoo clean icky, sticky gunk out of kids' hair?

Sure, use social, mobile, and local platforms to explain how you'll solve their problems, but don't stop there. Solve their problems via your website and parenting and partner sites. Use every possible customer touch point, and moms will *love* you, not just "Like" you.

3. Vertical Integration

Every industry has its favorite marketing "Hot List," which typically comprises piecemeal items. In 2012, we're going to see more comprehensive vertical solutions rather than individual tools.

For example, within the real estate market is a great deal of excitement surrounding Facebook, Twitter, Trulia, Zillow, Google Places, Foursquare, and other tools. But realtors have hectic schedules and lack the time to manage those individual platforms, and they need solutions that go beyond mere property-listing syndication. They need to be able to integrate their marketing with supply-side lead capture, buyer-side lead capture, and customer-relationship-management activities.

Expect the rate of vertical-specific integration to accelerate, making it easier and more effective for professionals across a range of industries to generate results via streamlined digital marketing initiatives.

4. Offline-Online Integration

When was the last time you walked into a store and people around you weren't holding smartphones? Years ago, right?

Get ready. You're going to need to understand that each customer's day is a zig-zag experience through the online and offline worlds. Customers no longer have simply offline or simply online experiences; they have integrated brand experiences.

In the future, you should assume that customers will be checking their smartphones while in your store and that they'll be reading print magazines in hardcopy and on their laptops or tablets. You should expect that your billboard will lead prospective customers to the destination website, Facebook page, or customized QR code experience.

But offline-online integration requires consistency. For example, a Fortune 500 retailer was conducting its holiday marketing campaign with different messaging and promotions in every marketing channel, including its website, community site, social properties, online display ads, weekly circulars, TV ads, email blasts, and in-store displays. But customers were experiencing a disconnect. The different messages in each marketing vehicle confused consumers.

It's not surprising that the retailer can't seem to produce breakout results even though it has the financial resources to do so: After all, it's not using proper marketing integration.

In 2012, those that effectively integrate offline and online will reap the most significant marketing gains.

5. Multiplatform Marketing

Today, when segmenting, as marketers we look at smartphones, tablets, laptops, and desktops. Every day we see more articles about a cool new mobile or iPad campaign. That's so 2011. The reality is that we're already a multiplatform society. Many of us use a smartphone and a laptop concurrently, or a smartphone and a tablet, or a tablet and a desktop.

Some 86% of mobile Internet users are using their mobile devices while watching TV. During this year's Super Bowl and Grammy Awards, 17,000 tweets were generated *per minute*. It's not that digital marketing in 2012 will need to factor in the multiscreen experience. Digital marketing in 2012 will need to *be* a multiscreen experience.

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Get ready for the future of marketing, and get your strategic, integrated, multiplatform marketing plans in shape. The digital landscape is changing fast, and the insightful CMOs who adapt their marketing efforts to those changes will be successful in 2012.

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