

Q & A with Jon Cano-Lopez

Marketing and Integration

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Q: In your opinion what is currently the important issue that Marketers are facing?

A: One of the hottest topics, as well as the biggest challenges, is Integration; however, it's being so vigorously debated by the industry at the moment that the definition of what we actually mean by Integration is often confused. To me it means putting the consumer at the heart of the campaign, rather than the creative or the media channel. The huge growth in digital media and the consumer's growing ability to be interactive, through social networking sites like Myspace, means that there is a stronger connection between consumers and brands. A truly successful campaign can no longer be solely above the line or direct marketing led - all elements have to be married together to present the consumer with a unified message across all of the channels. Tailoring your message; engaging on a one-to-one basis; understanding your consumer preferences and motivations are all real possibilities in the new world of integration, acting on this information can however be problematic.

Q: Can you provide some tips on how Marketers can achieve successful integration?

Tip one: Organisations don't just need an integrated marketing strategy they also need to integrate their own internal departments and their suppliers. Brands that are really seeing the benefits are those which are not only pulling their internal digital, direct and data departments together, but are also ensuring that their direct, digital and data agencies are integrating their efforts as well. This can be a difficult cultural shift for some suppliers, as battles have often been fought over specialities; we do on-line, you do DM, he does advertising and they do data.

Tip two: Another area where Marketers still need to maintain focus is customer insight. Digital campaigns can't afford to be fragmented from other marketing activities; the introduction of new channels and technologies has also created a variety of response options making it difficult to easily record consumer responses. Applying customer insight to gain a holistic view of your on and off-line customer is critical. Times may have evolved with the development of both channels and technology to touch the customer, but it is still imperative that the message is relevant, up to date and consistent with their preferences. This can only be achieved by recording, selecting, refining and integrating multi-channel and multi-task data on consumers and a database marketing plan that delivers on this is critical.

Tip three: Finally, be careful when selecting who you work with. Size does not necessarily bring with it the levels of service, flexibility and dedication that clients need in today's world, where the consumer rather than the brand is setting the agenda. Although bigger organisations may shout a little louder, what's more important is that they can actually deliver what is required. Younger, more nimble companies often find it easier to develop with today's ever-changing requirements because they have a less complex structure without the numerous internal processes which can lead to delay.