

Unpacking brand activation for FMCGs

By [Joseph Neusu](#)

22 May 2015

Changes in the power dynamics along the path-to-purchase have introduced a new world order in which customers reign and love flaunting their freedom.

They are always on and the ease with which they can find information, in seconds, has given them control of their own experiences. As a result, brands have been left with their work cut out for them in terms of gaining and retaining market share.

In order to maintain a competitive presence in the marketplace, brands need to rethink their strategies and be very smart about doing their business in the new marketing landscape. For instance, brands need to adopt activation campaigns that target digital audiences specifically. Digital is the natural habitat of their present and future customers.

Moving out of the comfort zone

It is worrying that whilst most clever marketers know the principles of brand activation, their strategies lack creativity and the inherent potential to engage.

This is understandable. The pace of the digital revolution has been so intense that most brands are now a country mile behind. Most South African brands are reluctant to move out of the comfort zone of traditional campaigns but they risk missing the boat, with drastic results.



Image via [123RF](#)

Any forward thinking brand should seek to exploit the opportunities that digital activations provide. After all, mobile is cheaper, provides a wider reach across all demographics and its engagement ratios are very high as customers prefer mobile-based interactions.

The last point is the ace in the pack. The purpose of any activation campaign should be to establish pro-active customer engagement that is authentic and is based on holistic service excellence. It is imperative that FMCG brands remain cognisant of the importance of engaging with their leads, prospects and customers at every touch and curve in the marketing funnel.

Undoubtedly, customer engagement is the new battle ground, thanks to digital technologies that have surfaced new suppliers of products thus creating more supply than demand.

What is customer engagement anyway? According to Lior Arussy, a leading industry expert in customer relationships, "Customer engagement are the efforts that companies make to reach out and obtain some form of customer connection. The engagement may be limited to a purchase or a whole detailed discussion." Triggering profitable customer responses is the way to go.

Successful brand activation

An example of a successful brand activation campaign can be seen in Volvo's go-to-market strategy. It utilised customer engagement to penetrate the American market when the brand was still a relatively unknown quantity there.

By making use of consumer engagement marketing channels, such as memorable ad campaigns, experiential events, viral growth, and consumer participation strategies, Volvo was able to gain the acceptance of the American consumers.

Most campaigns excel at creating the right kind of awareness, generating interest and stimulating desire but they fall short on the action part of the Awareness-Interest-Desire-Action (AIDA) framework.

Creative customer engagement takes care of this by facilitating interaction between customers and a brand where customers get to understand the brand better and accept it as part of their lives.

To understand the mechanics of this process, lets go backwards one step. In order for passionate interaction to take place, brands should seek to stimulate emotional bonding through the creation of a Big Idea. What is the rallying point within the marketing messaging? What is the hook that grabs the fish or the catalyst that makes conversion faster and simpler?

A winning brand activation campaign is predicated on a Big Idea whose objective is to create familiarity between the brand and its customers. This connection to the customers' decision making process unlocks immense profitable outcomes.

So how can brands make product/service adoption easier? Try Coupons! These make great activation buttons and they increase engagement and sales. Digital coupons can be easily integrated in digital campaigns and they are also flexible as they support different objectives. Adding digital coupons to an online brand activation campaign increases the number of product trials and purchases.

Customer engagement should be part of the organisation, from the management philosophy to the actual product itself. Coupons are the answer to activation challenges of conviction and acquisition.

ABOUT JOSEPH NEUSU

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