

Zero moment of truth - future of marketing

By [Alistair Duff](#)

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There is a single moment where Google clearly showed the future of marketing. The 'Zero Moment of Truth' (ZMOT) was introduced to us in the one and only Google presentation that I had the good fortune to attend. At the time it seemed quite harmless to most marketers.



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The research Google had done proposed that the decision-making process amongst consumers had changed. It introduced a final step suggesting that many consumers would first compare products online before making a purchasing decision.

To their credit, Google acknowledged that other means of marketing still had the same relevance with a single new step to consider. The idea that people would use the internet as a final check was a very generous way of explaining the future and that is where the word 'best' came into play.

It seemed both obvious and ominous that consumers could type 'best' with the full description they chose with little to no input from brands and advertising campaigns. They were able to specify the exact thing they were looking for and they could review what other consumers recommended.

Nowadays there're an alarming amount of people remembering brands with no recognition of their latest advertising. This is simple recall based on how strongly the brand cache has been built. Your average lounge has multiple screens used simultaneously. Who doesn't respond to WhatsApp just because their show is on?



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Engagement at the right time and place

In leading markets the most important question asked of media companies is no longer the share of voice enjoyed by excessive advertising. It is far, far sharper than that, marketers want to know how to find their audience in the exact right

place and time. A very good example of this is pharmaceutical companies who have entered into partnerships with WebMD. Anybody who knows a doctor hears about the exponential increase in self-diagnosis.

Big pharmaceutical companies have recognised this and now buy space by symptoms. If you have a cough, runny nose, and feel a bit headachy do not be surprised if an advert for 'flu medicine' appears on the page. The copy will explain how much quicker you will feel better with their medication and suggest you order it at the click of a button.

As this trend continues, brands must ensure they are at the right space and exact time they are needed. The consequence of not thinking this way will cast you back into your shark pool of competitors all fighting for that one single word - best.

Alistair Duff will be speaking on the topic 'Meet and keep the new South African real-time shoppers' at the [Shopper Insights conference](#) in Johannesburg on 7 November.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alistair Duff is the chief innovations officer at The Black Swan Theory Company.

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