

Report to STEPPENWOLF



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Executive Summary

Introduction

As one of the nation's most respected cultural brands, Steppenwolf Theatre Company faces the need to grow its next generation of audience members. This report addresses Steppenwolf's challenge to attract Millennials to its productions. As many established brands are discovering, this is no small hurdle. But for a performing arts presenter, it is especially vexing, since the theater-going experience is filled with rituals and signals that conflict with Millennials' attitudes and behaviors.

Theater is similar to television in one important way: the viewer is passive. This poses a barrier to connecting with some Millennials' lifestyle. Because Steppenwolf has built a highly respected brand based on quality acting by a well-regarded ensemble, it isn't easy to begin tinkering with the artistic product, let alone the patron experience, and not compromise the art. Therefore, we offer specific action items for management to weigh as part of its overall strategy to engage the generation that represents Steppenwolf's future.

This report points the way to approaches Steppenwolf might take based on lessons gathered from other well-established, respected brands that are making inroads with Millennials. Our aim is to provide you with meaningful analysis and a usable tool to guide Steppenwolf's growth.

Project Objectives

- Define key success factors in creating a customer journey that result in conversion.
- Capture winning campaign tactics that incorporate new media and online social networks that drive traffic to bricks-and-mortar destinations.
- Identify case studies of start-up and established brands that have earned the participation of the target segment.
- Track top trends and hot spots that point to where the action is for this age group.
- Identify best practices for measuring outcomes of marketing programs aimed at Millennials, with particular emphasis on how to track digital media interactions.

Methodology

To gain perspective for this report, we undertook the following research activities:

- An environmental scan of organizations that have successfully engaged audiences in the target segment
- Literature search on the topic of marketing to Millennials
- Competitive review of the target's entertainment options in Chicago
- Interviews with marketing officers to unearth lessons learned from their own brands and campaigns
- Review of marketing innovations to discover promising features from which Steppenwolf might borrow
- Analysis of cultural phenomena impacting the target segment's lifestyles and beliefs
- Customer journey: as single-ticket buyers, website visitors, and special-offer ticket buyers at Steppenwolf
- Customer journey at competitive venues: Mia Francesca's, Schuba's, Zanies, and Pitchfork Music Festival

Trends

The marketers we spoke with who are achieving the most success are able to creatively bundle and manage elements of three things to meet the needs of Millennials:

- a lifestyle connection
- a knowledge transfer
- a platform for participation

Lifestyle connections

In the performing arts, producers for years have tended to assume that their offerings are a “lifestyle” choice. A theater subscription is hardly a necessity, even for the connoisseur. The arts bestow an immediate sense of taste and discernment upon ticket buyers. Subscribers can feel downright clubby. Success in lifestyle marketing among Millennials rests on its ability to make them feel connected to the people, images, and signals that make up their associated lifestyle. The challenge is that the culture is so fragmented that consumer behaviors for Millennials is also fragmented. And it is dynamic, meaning that how they think and behave in one venue may be very different from how they think and behave in another. So it’s valuable to consider lifestyle as a world, and to understand the variety of roles you can play within that world. Also, bear in mind that Millennials favor lifestyle brands that emphasize experiences that are personal, emotional, evoke grander ideals, and that allow them to discover something fresh or surprising. Price and convenience become less important in these environments.

Knowledge transfer

In its stores, Apple creatively bundles products and services in a way that underscores the genius of Apple for the educated consumer. Other retailers transfer knowledge by giving the consumer a peek into the production process—a chance to witness their expertise in action. Krispy Kreme allows customers to watch the entire delicious process of mixing, frying, and glazing their doughnuts. Inherent in the knowledge transfer is a sense of “authenticity.” Knowledge empowers the consumer and imbues a sense of confidence in making their purchase.

While searching for brands that connect well with Millennials, we found that authenticity is important to the knowledge transfer. This “rough magic” of witnessing products or services being produced helps Millennials see a brand as a friend, fellow artist, and content creator. It is an egalitarian, not “sage on the stage,” social model.

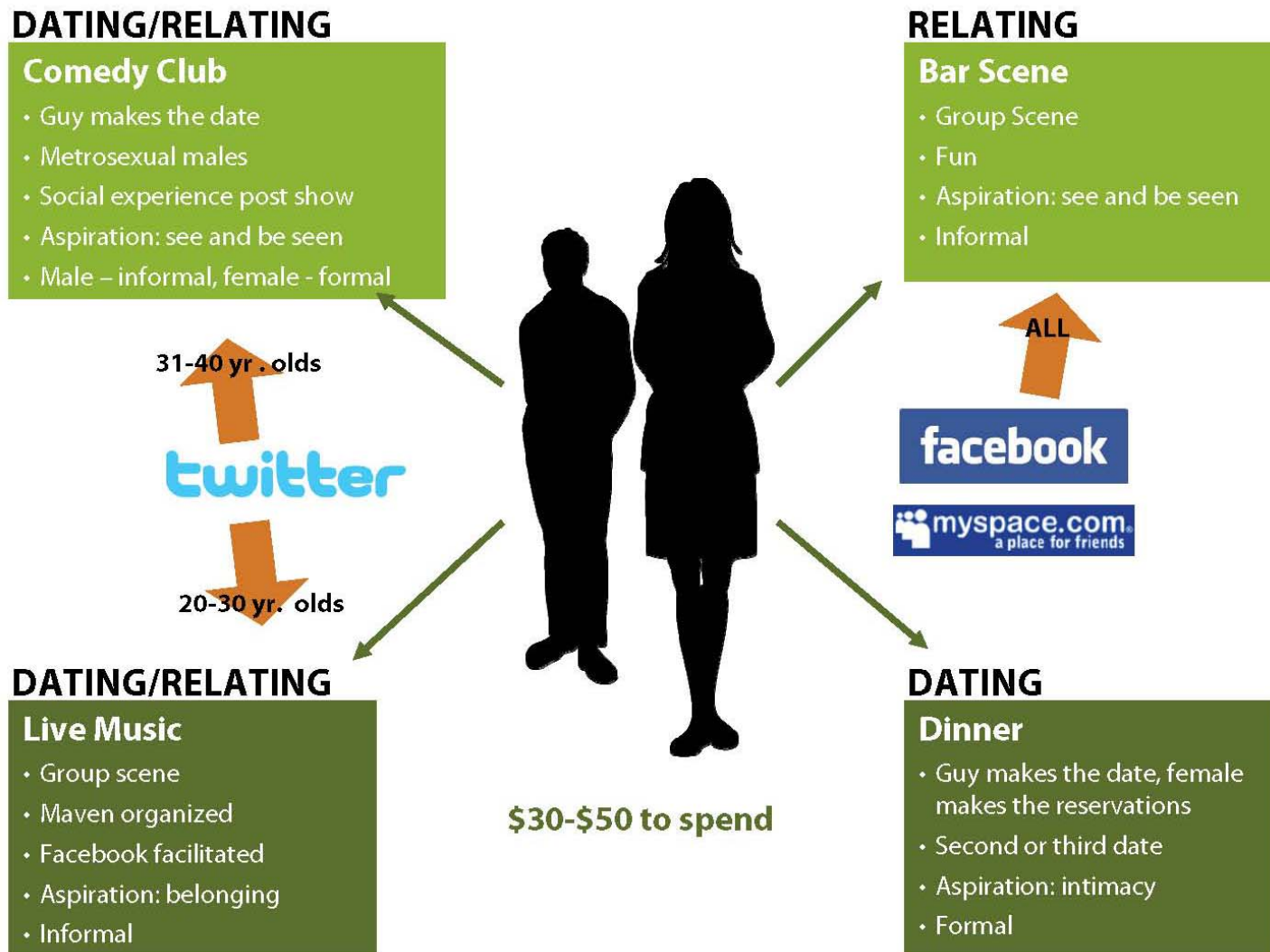
Participation platforms

The hottest, stickiest, most viral online experiences share one key component: People can participate in the creation of content. Chris Anderson, editor of *Wired* magazine, puts it this way, “My kids aren’t really interested in *Stars Wars* created by George Lucas. They’re more interested in *Star Wars* as created by their peers, never mind the shaky cameras and fingers in the frame.” There is no amount of marketing one’s way out of this reality. Yahoo’s VP for media, Ian Rogers, addressed a group of music executives gathered at Aspen Institute with this hard news: “Kids are going to watch exactly what they want to watch, not what’s marketed to them.” Participation connects with the deeper emotional needs of Millennials to be seen and heard, to create something, to make one’s mark.

Competitive Environment

Steppenwolf’s competition is considerable. Chicago is rife with things for young people to do. And in warmer months, some of it is free. Faced with this cornucopia of offerings, we focused on those aspects of lifestyle linked to the social purposes of going out for an evening—specifically, dating or relating to peers and potential partners. From that perspective, it becomes clear that the purchase consideration for live theater is laden with cues about depth of involvement between two ticket holders, length of the evening, cost, and similarity—meaning there is some certainty the couple will have a similar “take” on the play. This is a complex social matrix. However, we believe that Steppenwolf need only be sensitive to the dynamics and not burden its decision-making with the nuances of Millennial dating behaviors. The following chart provides a snapshot of the competitive landscape.

Competitive Landscape



Best Practices

Marketing to Millennials:

1. Surprise and delight. Overall, this segment likes to discover new things and be invited at the last minute. Spontaneity is pleasurable.
Brands that deliver: Red Bull, Starbucks
2. Two-way communication. Twitter, Facebook and comment replies for blogs facilitate this. Essentially, marketing to Millennials requires mastery and participation within social media.
Brands that deliver: ALL!
3. Teams and tribes, friends and family groupings. Millennials like to team up. Host contests that require them to create content or collaborate in some way. Offer tools or apps to self-organize. Facebook is a self-organizing platform.
Brands that deliver: Facebook, Red Bull's Flugtag, Lollapalooza kids emphasis
4. See and be seen. Millennials exploit outlets for expressing their ideas and showcasing their talents. They crave attention. Double layers of participation may involve creating a video with a voting feature.
Brands that deliver: PepsiCo, Red Bull
5. Justify my purchase. Incent me, invite me, hug me with a free fan T-shirt. Offer a discount, special premium, sneak-peek experience. The product alone is not enough. It's not just about offering a discount, but a providing a value-related benefit.
Brands that deliver: PepsiCo, Starbucks
6. Embrace fusion/remix culture. Millennials are omnivorous. In a post-modern culture, nothing is new. Fusing genres, technologies, art forms not only lends an element of surprise, but it energizes the experience with the spirit of experimentation.
Brands that deliver: Scion, PepsiCo, Google

7. Emphasize humanity. Speak in a real a voice. Millennials are huggers, interested in embracing ideas and organizations that represent grander ideals. And they prefer that these ideals have spokespersons with whom they can relate or whom they can admire.

Brands that deliver: Kenneth Cole, Ford Fiesta, Starbucks

8. Stay sticky. Millennials are also content creators. They need fodder for the Facebook pages and tweets. It's all about the ideas, content, photos, videos that make people come back to you or your site for something: a download, application, comment, vote. Plot out the reasons to stay engaged.

Brands that deliver: Facebook, Twitter, Red Bull, Lollapalooza, Ford Fiesta

9. "Consider me dynamic. Don't assume that I need to have something the same way all the time. Give me lots of choices."

Brands that deliver: ALL

10. Pimp your peeps: Seek out users who already have their own networks and create bonds with them. Bring them into the conversation. Invite them for post-show drinks with actors. (See note below.)

Brands: Google, Ford Fiesta

Note: Theater bloggers in the Chicago area seem to be a tight group whose audiences lack breadth. Better to connect with Millennials who also happen to blog, tweet and use Facebook, but not as would-be theater critics.

Top-Level Recommendations

- Help Millennials feel they belong. Load a slide show of the customer journey through the eyes of a Millennial user. Feature younger faces on your website to emphasize that Millennials belong.
- It's all about Facebook. It's used as a lifestyle management tool. Consider advertising on Facebook. It is low-risk and easy to use. Build additional apps for Facebook that people could download and use. For example, a ticket-purchasing app, or one that shows seat location, or the stage views from the seat location, or a way to sign up for dress rehearsal discount tickets. Upload videos from your site to Facebook.
- Begin listening. Twitter is a research tool. Track what people are saying about theater, and then contact them or @reply about specials or new shows. It's also a way of providing customer service. You can follow and be followed. Make more out of celebrity actors who are tweeting. (Harris Theater for Music and Dance gave deep discounts to people who agreed to "follow" it on Twitter.)
- Be real. Speak in a real voice. Kenneth Cole believes in blogging and has created a cadre of bloggers to be its brand ambassadors, serving as the voice of the brand. Have auditions for brand ambassadors of your own and hold the potential bloggers to a high standard. Perhaps use the bloggers as volunteers. That way, they have an outlet and credentials.
- Embrace fusion. In a post-modern age, nothing is new. What makes something fresh is the way in which an artist remixes, mashes up, and fuses various forms and genres to create something new. Millennials thrill at such experiments.
- Surprise, surprise! Millennials love immediate gratification that comes out of the blue. Tweet the day before a dress rehearsal, saying you have a few rare slots for pre-viewers, for instance. Can mature subscribers donate unused tix to "sponsor" a future audience member?
- Show up in lots of places. Make sure to be listed in local event guides: Goldstar, Groupon, MetroMix, CenterStage, Eventful, Yelp, Gaper's Block. Make sure all the social stuff Millennials use can be easily read and downloaded on iPhones and Blackberrys.
- Put annual themes more up front. The lobby experience is profound. Find ways to extend that thinking online. Ask people in advance to respond to certain themes. People could engage with these themes through social networking.

- Let go in order to grab on. If you truly want to go after this target, you must give up some control of your brand, and open up. It's about letting the audience participate by finding an appropriate and meaningful way to do so.
- Stay committed. It speaks for itself.

Overall...

The insights we gathered from other marketers yielded one universal finding: that Millennials are re-ordering the universe for marketers. In the "old" way of marketing, the brand was at the center of the universe. The "new" order puts the user at the center of the universe. Operationalizing this new order will spur innovation. Anticipate that it will also demand a change in organizational culture as decisions are weighed through the eyes of the user.

Full Report

Situation

Cultural brands in the previous century were about art-the making, producing, and presenting of art. Cultural brands fell into two basic categories: They were either hothouses for new work created by talented individuals with bold visions, or they were temples of art.

Today, culture is more fractured. Consumers define it more broadly. Technology has made it possible for more people to express themselves creatively and attract their own audiences. The outpouring of creative product has glutted the market. This phenomenon has threatened the very business model upon which the arts rest: talented people performing great work for paying customers.

Amid this ocean of creative expression rise the Millennials. They form social groupings, establish rituals, send signals, and derive a sense of identity from creating and distributing their own content.

Millennials crave connection. They form tribes online and off with a wide variety of people. They relate to a perplexing number of issues and ideas, some of which are utterly paradoxical. With all this in mind, we kept asking ourselves: Why do they need a night at the theater?

This report sets out to answer that question, based on lessons taken from other well-established, respected brands grappling with the same need to reach and relate to Millennials.

Relevant Cultural Trends

Enter the Age of Enlightenment

Scratch the surface of a Millennial's hopeful idealism and you'll expose a deep cultural longing to feel connected to something larger than themselves. It's partly spiritual, and partly a psychological need. So, connection, warmth, immediacy, humor, authenticity, intensity are all elements that shape the values of enlightenment. And they are often scarce in American life.

What is valued in this new age of enlightenment is the intensity of experience—it's visceral, gritty, emotional. These deeper values offer an important opportunity to connect with Millennials in a way that helps them discover a soulful connection.

The marketers we spoke with who are achieving the most success are able to creatively bundle and manage elements of three things to meet the needs of Millennials:

- a lifestyle linkage
- a knowledge transfer
- a platform for participation

What Makes Up A Lifestyle?

Lifestyle worlds consist of three interrelated elements—social context, experience, community—according to sociologist Harvey Hartman. Think of these as “contact points” between the brand and the patrons.

Element 1: social context

An important key to our understanding anything that is happening in the economic or political spheres of American society is understanding what is happening in the cultural sphere. The cultural sphere of a society is where people derive meaning—their ideas about what makes their lives worth living. The economic sphere concerns how they make a living; the political sphere, how people with competing interests work out a way of living together. For Millennials, ideas matter. Values matter. And ideas and values develop and evolve within the cultural sphere. The changes currently underway within the cultural sphere in the United States are profound. Seismic shifts in the way we communicate, develop belief systems, and form community are radically changing our

way of life. The culture is reorganizing the way we will govern and how business will get done. Cultural brands like Steppenwolf are uniquely positioned to guide the conversation within a changing social context and be intensely relevant to a younger audience riding the crest of these changes.

Element 2: experience

Millennials favor experiences that are laden with emotional factors that engage the senses, evoke laughter, and spark personal growth. Consider these elements when planning the experience:

A. interaction—A valued experience depends on interaction. The theater experience is inherently social; people rarely come alone, so plenty of interaction occurs during intermission and after the show. But the act of taking in the artistic product is about monologue more than dialogue. Consider that Millennials will want to find a way to contribute something to the experience. Finding meaningful ways to invite contribution will help you create a bond with the Millennial audience.

B. knowledge—Millennials crave knowledge. Knowledge contributes powerfully to a patron's sense of identity. Fundamentally, knowledge empowers. By going beyond the *Playbill* format and adding photos of Millennials to its website, staging post-show video testimonials and discussions where Millennials can share what they've learned from a play, you can increase your emotional appeal.

C. authenticity—Authenticity, like knowledge, is a consumption dimension. We want it real, just not too real. Consumer research can pinpoint potential problems and reveal the essential elements necessary to convey authenticity without fear. Authenticity conveys information, insofar as the term "authentic" connotes good craftsmanship, shared values, etc. More important, however, authenticity instills trust.

D. relevance—An experience that feels personalized carries greater weight than one that caters to some common denominator. To make an experience connect on a personal level, it must somehow relate to consumers' lifestyles. For example, the marketers we spoke with have found that any experience relevant to Millennials will allow them to participate on their own terms, in effect, creating their own brand. Thus, experiences that increase consumer comfort by allowing consumers to express their individuality and by fitting into their lifestyles will appeal more than experiences that essentially dictate the terms.

E. surprise—In a knowledge economy, the act of discovery delights. Surprise is not synonymous with change. In fact, change can often provoke negative reactions by confusing and frustrating consumers accustomed to a particular routine. Surprise does not mean, for instance, changing the store organization every few weeks. That's inconvenient for the shopper. Surprise means finding something different alongside other things that consumers expect to find. Surprise means getting an e-mail from Zappos saying it is “overnighting” your shoes at no cost.

Element 3: connection to community

Millennials want to feel a part of something. One of the first questions anyone asks when entering a venue for the first time is, “Do I belong here?” For Millennials, the answer can make or break you. When entering a brand community, a person should recognize that there *is* a community. If attracted, he or she will probably (gradually) move from the periphery of the world toward its center of interaction. And any deeper involvement will require becoming part of its community. This is an important consideration in attracting repeat users. What distinguishes a peripheral participant from those who participate more frequently and with more passion is the degree to which the individual feels a part of the lifestyle or brand culture's community. In either case, the individual finds others with whom he identifies to share his experience within a brand community.

When Millennials connect to each other through your experience, it has a multiplier effect. Consider that 60 percent of people ages 18 to 24 describe the biggest influence on their purchasing decisions as the opinions of people in their social circle whom they respect.

Most people need to have some social connection—a feeling of belonging, a sense that others *do* know their name. Identity, one's sense of self, one's sense of being a “somebody,” depends to a large extent on how that is reflected back. To say with confidence that I am “this kind of person,” means that I need others to affirm it. In the lifestyle world, that means going somewhere where there are people who are like me, and who potentially know me. It takes one to know one.

Marketing and Social Media

Being a young person is nearly synonymous with the use of digital media. America's youth are developing important social and technical skills online—often in ways that older people do not understand or value.

In a 2009 MacArthur Foundation report, researchers identified two distinctive categories of engagement among young people using digital media: friendship-driven and interest-driven. While friendship-driven participation centered on “hanging out” with existing friends, interest-driven participation involved accessing online information and communities that may not be present in the local peer group.

Significant findings include:

- Youth understand the social value of online activity and are generally highly motivated to participate online.
- Youth are navigating complex social and technical worlds by participating online.
- The social worlds that youth are negotiating have new kinds of dynamics, as online socializing is permanent, public, involves managing elaborate networks of friends and acquaintances, and is always on.
- Young people are motivated to learn from their peers online.
- The Internet provides new kinds of public spaces where youth can interact and receive feedback from one another.

The experts we spoke with reiterated these findings based on their own experiences marketing with social media. They openly shared their frustrations and hard-won lessons. We include them here:

- “At MySpace, we distinguish between advocacy and engagement. Advocacy is getting people to get up and do something (create, attend a show, and act on something outside the digital world). The only way to get to advocacy is participation. There has to be a way for people to participate. Engagement is to participate, but not at the same level as advocacy.”
- “Facebook creates veracity. It’s about peer cred.”
- “If you get into it, stay into it. Don’t let your content go stale or they will stop trusting you.”

- “Social is a cocktail party. It’s not a broadcast medium. You need someone who is credible for the brand speaking from within the community.”
- “[With] Web-based advertising [it’s] easy to track ROI. But social media is hard to track, money in/money out. Social media will have more commercial messaging, but not at the moment. It’s better to get in and start the conversation to gain an audience. When it gets more commercial, you’ll be in a good position.”
- “It’s all going to push to mobile. Phone companies are in the way of progress, but that will be a forced change for the better. We design all our marketing with an eye toward how it will render on mobile devices.”
- “Facebook is better for loyalty and engagement than direct sales. We have analytics that tie to sales volume. But we aren’t here to get direct conversion. Social networks aren’t good for that.”

Conclusion: Even sophisticated, well-funded marketers are seeing social media as a place to interact, not sell. They are investing time and resources to explore the possibilities. None of them were convinced it could be used to directly enroll or sell users. But several were convinced that it would evolve into a more commercial tool.

Measuring Social Media

Overall: Facebook is a primary tool for Millennials; other media are secondary.

General agreement among marketers that social media are not conversion vehicles, but rather about loyalty and engagement.

Medium	Purpose	Measurement
	Lifestyle management, community event postings and invitations. Central hub for most. Friends and family.	Advertisers get real time numbers on people they've reached. Can also track members who join your group page or fan page.
	Bio-photo journalism. Swap/share photos. Make photos easily available to bloggers. Improves search engine optimization (SEO).	Creative Commons trackable through Google Alerts.
Email/E-newsletters	Formal offers. Discounts. Coupons. Surveys. Recognition of partnerships.	"Open" rates. Trackable through click throughs, forwards and subscriber sign ups.
	Music and entertainment platform. Used by bands. More diverse ethnically.	Advertisers get analytics based on impressions.
	Immediate news. Replacing texting slowly. Linking to Facebook makes Tweets convenient. Drives event traffic on short notice. Good as research tool.	Search terms and "follow" reveals who is engaged. Number of followers.
	See and be seen. Increases SEO.	Number of views and embeds by bloggers. Trackable by YouTube and Google Alerts.
	Drives local interest. Can go hyper local.	RSVP and foot traffic.
	Post local events. Builds groundswell.	Reviews and comments from the community.

Case Studies from the Field

Next, we'll share insights from corporate marketing executives to learn from their successes, and in some cases, failures. Interviewees did not stint on advice. We boiled it down into some key trends and best practices that were common threads in our interviews. The companies we researched are already pursuing the kind of strategies that we are proposing. Some are doing it without necessarily being aware of the larger process at work.

Steppenwolf is a rare entity. It already has an expressed commitment to its community, and its artistic vision reveals a depth of understanding about the human condition. That's why we propose that it consider this "experiment" to reach Millennials as part of a larger process. In reaching out to this group, you are not simply tweaking your marketing efforts. You are experimenting with the way you think about your work, and your relationship with your audience.

Online

Facebook

www.facebook.com

Facebook Insights

Target consumer

Facebook's target consumer is a big-mouth who spends much of the day online. Facebook initially targeted students on college campuses (originally, you needed a valid .edu e-mail address to join). It branched out to high schools next and then opened up to everyone.

As of January 2009, the largest population on Facebook was still 18- to 24-year-olds (40.8 percent), but that cohort is losing its hold as older people join. The 25- to 34-year-old population on Facebook is doubling every six months, and CNN reports that the site's fastest-growing population is women over 55.

For many Millennials, Facebook and texting are the ways they communicate. They don't use e-mail. "E-mail is for old people." (Pew 2005 "Teens and Technology" report).

Executive remarks

Our working environment is like skiing a very steep, icy slope: You don't have much, if any, time to plan your turns. You're just trying to stay on your feet.

Most of the folks who work at Facebook are sub-30-year-old engineers. Engineers don't instinctively think about how their actions are going to be perceived. They think: "Do I have the data and tech know-how to make this work?" That's why we are taking our time building the communities' commercial opportunities.

There are parallels with Google's rise. I think about gmail, for example. The world went nuts when Google released it, saying that it was going to put contextual ads next to our inbox. Pundits said it was a violation of privacy, etc. etc. But people kept using Google—and gmail—because the products were good. What this probably means is that the Web has changed the rules of marketing: If you have a good product that lots of people like to use, it's much harder to be derailed by bad press. Online, people get to try stuff out, typically for free, and see if it works for them. They don't have to make a commitment upfront to go to the store and buy something. So if you have something that solves a

problem and is easy to use and understand, you can get traction quickly.

Even though older members are joining, the number of Millennials is not shrinking. Nothing suggests people are leaving Facebook to jump to something else.

Recommendations based on this brand

- Build additional apps for Facebook that people could download and use. For example, a ticket purchasing app, or one that enables buyers to see where seats are located, or the stage view from seat locations.
- Upload videos from your website to Facebook.

Facebook in Depth

User experience

Many Facebook users log in first thing in the morning and check the site throughout the day. They want to see what other people are doing and update their profile with insights or greetings to the world. A typical user might post photos, watch other's videos, join a geographic or work-related group, give a gift, wish a friend happy birthday, receive unwanted friend requests from people they went to high school with, and the like.

Facebook's mobile platform gives 30 million "always on" Gen Y and Gen Xers a way to let people know where they are, what they're doing, and what they're thinking. (These mobile-device users are almost 50 percent more active on Facebook than non-mobile users.)

Participation model

People participate by going online and friending other people, commenting on other people's status, finding causes, joining groups or finding activities they enjoy, or by adding third-party apps.

Thirty-seven percent of respondents to a February 2008 online survey of Facebook users (90 out of 241 people) indicated they belong to fewer than 10 groups, and 68 percent (164 people) indicated they actively monitor fewer than five groups. It suggests that Facebook groups coalesce when they're interesting or in vogue and then fall away again.

Online/offline components

Facebook is an online view of your offline life. It gives people a forum for their inner monologue—an online “stage” and “microphone” they might never have had in real life.

Facebook can be used to organize events like political rallies or unConferences that then happen in person. People will post updates/photos/commentary before, during, and after the fact. Groups and causes are also popular pages on Facebook.

Killer app

Facebook connects people online, immediately. It’s the immediacy and reach that make the medium so compelling. Your far-flung friends feel close. Facebook makes a small world even smaller.

Secret sauce: things that delight, surprise, differentiate

Facebook has two main distinctions:

- It’s one of the first companies to encourage external developers to build apps for it and then incorporate these apps into the primary site functionality.
- It’s significantly pushed the boundaries around personalized branded social advertising through “social ads.” It’s where your friends do the advertising for products. For example: On Facebook, an advertiser can target specific demographics and psychographics within a person’s self-declared profile—and can get real-time feedback on exactly how many people will be reached and at what cost.

The brand is open and engaging but has made some very public missteps with policies on privacy settings and claims on content ownership that have infuriated its audience. (But despite protests, few people have deleted their Facebook pages.)

Brand background

Founded in February 2004, Facebook is a website that helps people stay in touch with their friends, family, and co-workers. Facebook makes it easy for everyone to share information with friends by creating digital maps of people’s real-world social connections. Anyone can sign up for Facebook and interact with the people they know in a trusted environment.

More than 100 million people use Facebook every day to keep up with friends, upload photos, share links and videos, and generally learn more about people they know.

Twitter

www.twitter.com

Twitter Insights

Target consumer

Twitter is for tech-centric people who like to share their opinions. These are typically people whose cell phone is permanently affixed to their hand. Interestingly enough, Twitter is most popular with 45- to 54-year-olds, according to comScore Media Matrix.

Celebrities do Twitter. Among the most famous: Ashton Kutcher, Jon Stewart, and Oprah.

As of March 2009, Twitter had 14 million users who visited its site 99 million times.

Executive remarks

Evan Williams, co-founder

Our whole philosophy is making technology more human, more accessible.

Twitter is lots of things. It's a real-time news feed from the community. It's a customer service tool. It's a research tool to find out what people are thinking and saying about a topic or a brand. It's a micro-blogging platform.

Recommendations based on this brand

- Make more out of celebrity actors who are tweeting.
- Track what people are saying about theater, and then contact them or @reply about specials or new shows as a way of providing customer service.
- Experiment with customer service messages and offers pushed out via Twitter.

Twitter in Depth

User experience

Twitter is a micro-blogging service. You can go to the Twitter Web site or use a Twitter aggregator such as TweetDeck, Twhirl, or a host of other services such as mobile phones to send a "tweet" to your friends. Then you can track anyone's conversations through search and hashtags.

Twitter is designed mostly for text.

Participation model

Twitter is all about relationships and respect. You follow people you're interested in. You unfollow them if they post too often or are not interesting. It also gives a "back channel" view for brands or support—@comcastcares, for example, there is a place to go if you're not receiving good service from your cable company through the traditional support channels.

The great thing about Twitter is that you gain a sense of what your friends/people/brands are doing, but you're not expected to respond unless you want to. So Twitter lets you float along, with conversations as a sort of ambient background.

Silicon Valley futurist Paul Saffo was quoted in the *New York Times* as saying, "Twitter reverses the notion of the group. Instead of creating the group you want, you send it and the group self-assembles."

Online/offline components

Twitter is all online. It's the collective answer to a single question: "What are you doing?"

It lets bloggers point people to their latest entry/photo upload. It can give you the inside scoop on what's going on with a brand, or a place to go to find a human face for a monolithic brand.

Killer app

Simplicity. The 140-character limit that puts messages out from a PC or hand-held device to a broader community that you form for yourself.

Secret sauce: things that delight, surprise, differentiate

Immediacy. As a user, you get immediate conversation and feedback.

The most delightful thing about Twitter is that it supports what the communities of Twitter users have organically decided among themselves. Twitter didn't set out a convention of RT-retweeting someone else's idea-or of @ to indicate you were replying to someone, or of hashtags. It simply watched how people were using the service and embraced those conventions. It watched where the people walked, and then paved the paths.

Brand background

Twitter started as an experiment in March 2006. It has grown into a real-time short-messaging service that works over multiple networks and devices. It is a privately funded startup with headquarters in San Francisco. Fewer people stick with Twitter than Facebook. The retention rate is 40% versus 60% for Facebook. Even with a streamlined staff of 40 people, Twitter currently spends more than it makes.

Some companies have embraced Twitter as a way to reach customers. Zappos asks for email and Twitter account information from every customer. Because their customer service is legendary, Zappos uses it to let the buyer know where their order stands and simultaneously Zappos is broadcasting that to the buyer's followers.

Google

www.google.com

Google Insights

Target consumer

Google's target consumer is anyone and everyone who's looking for information on the Web.

Executive remarks

Irene Au, director of user experience

Tactics: Practical empowerment—operationalizing the user experience

We had to get Maslow about it. What is the most important stuff to focus on? What's the most likely to succeed? We have big bets that are risky and costly; others are more practical and can be acted on right away.

Organizing the team around hierarchy of needs was crucial. We had to insert design team upfront to earn more credibility. We set standards for the user experience that everyone shares. What are the style guides? It had to be reverse-engineered based on what the user needs and wants in the end and work backward from there. It gave us something to push off of.

Hack Day: We put out to the open source world that we are working on a problem, and does anyone want to participate. So users get to participate with the staff at Google. Sometimes it lasts one day, other times it lasts up to two weeks. We believe we need to create a culture that is open to critique, to create a better service; the power of the idea is everything.

Walked around to do a "health check" among the stakeholders, who include a cadre of super-heavy users.

The power of ideas is forceful. Launching early and often is our motto. We perceive failure as tuition—the cost of learning. Toddlers stumble when they try to walk.

Recommendations based on this brand

- If Steppenwolf truly wants to go after Millennials, it will have to give up some of the control of its brand, and open itself up. It's about letting the audience participate by finding an appropriate and meaningful role (not actually getting up on stage, but somehow being a part of the productions).
- Having standards for the user experience online will help Steppenwolf grow the web as a participation platform more thoughtfully. It can grow a community online and allow people to participate in the brand without affecting the artistic product.

Google in Depth

User experience

Most Googlers have come to count on Google's fast, relevant results sets—whether on a full-size computer or a mobile phone.

Google revolutionized the online ad world with simple text ads on results pages, blogs, and Web sites; users have come to expect them. Google Maps' functionality is a standard for trip planning, and no brand manager starts her day without checking the morning's Google Alerts message in her inbox.

Participation model

Google loves to have contests, and held a \$10 million project in October 2008 to solicit ideas to make the world a better place. It's also held contests for the first NGO to send a robot to the moon, for developers to create apps for the Android platform and designs for plug-in electric hybrid cars.

When Google went to the U.K., it did a doodle-for-Google campaign sent to 8,000 schools. A total of 180,000 students sent back doodles, which then were voted on by millions of people online. Winners' work was showcased on the Google homepage.

Google also recently collaborated with other tech organizations to launch *All for Good*, a search engine for volunteer service projects in specific local areas.

In addition, products like the Google App engine gives software developers a way to share and build on each other's work very quickly. Google Calendar lets you maintain a shared public calendar for your civic group.

Online/offline components

Google is the king of online—at least for the time being. Until quite recently, Google had never run TV spots, but it did to promote Chrome, its recently launched Web browser.

Killer app

YouTube. (Google acquired it in October 2006 for \$1.65 billion, even though it already had a video program.) Many people watch YouTube at night instead of television, and it has democratized video.

Secret sauce: things that delight, surprise, differentiate

Google continues to disrupt old models and has helped create change across the economy. Whether its TV network executives worrying about YouTube or publishers raging against Google Books or ad agencies needing to decipher a Paid Search campaign strategy, Google's penchant for approaching things from a simple user-centered philosophy helps it continue to innovate.

Google subscribes to a philosophy of branding by doing: creating products that many people love rather than shouting about them in ads.

It emphasizes its quirkiness, too: its motto of "Don't Be Evil," employees sitting on yoga balls and having lava lamps in their work areas, encouraging special logos for holidays...in other words, it humanizes its success.

Brand background

Google is a public, and profitable, company focused on search services. Named for the mathematical term "googol," Google operates Web sites at many international domains, with the most trafficked being www.google.com. Google is widely recognized as the world's best search engine for its speed, accuracy, and ease of use. The company also serves corporate clients, including advertisers, content publishers, and site managers with cost-effective advertising and a wide range of revenue-generating search services. Google's breakthrough technology and continued innovation serve the company's mission of "organizing the world's information and making it universally accessible and useful."

Food and Beverage

Starbucks

www.starbucks.com

Starbucks Insights

Target consumer

Starbucks' target consumer is young and socially aware. This consumer loves coffee (or tea) but wants to feel he or she is contributing to something bigger. To-go cups boast being made of recycled materials, coffee is deemed fair trade-certified, and both Ethos water and Starbucks Red give money back to combat global crises such as lack of clean water and the AIDS pandemic. Photos on the website show smiling young men and women. Music displayed in the store is new and fresh. Quotes on the sides of cups are witty and serve as modern-day fortunes.

Executive remarks

Terry Davenport, senior vice president of marketing

Starbucks is not just a product, it is an idea. The idea is that sense of community and conversation that can happen over a great cup of coffee. That's why our brand has such relevance.

Customers and employees are looking for the truth behind what their company stands for and want to get behind brands that share certain values.

When we go out and have good traction with Facebook, it's because of those types of messages we put out. It's very important to our value strategy. It's been very successful at the store level, but that's why we communicate that at the store level. A tie-in with Facebook on value pairings isn't something you're necessarily going to run out and share with your friends. But learning that Starbucks has a tie-in with Red and that on World AIDS Day we'll contribute a nickel for every beverage we sell-for people in the Red community, that's big news, and they'll pass it on to their friends.

Starbucks in Depth

User experience

Although mainly catering to those who need their daily morning coffee fix, Starbucks has expanded by extending hours and providing wireless Internet connections for doing business/studying. Starbucks' slogan, "It's not just coffee. It's Starbucks," demonstrates the overarching idea that its brand is not simply a product, but an experience. Photos on its website of women chatting and laughing in comfy chairs, as well as the appearance of board games in some stores, reinforce the sense that Starbucks is a place to connect, to stay, to experience. Many large bookstores contain Starbucks within, encouraging the user to sit and stay awhile while reading a book or browsing through a magazine.

Participation model

Starbucks invites users to participate in a variety of ways, many of them centered on rallying for various causes. The Starbucks V2V is a social network accessed through the main site that provides a place where people can find and act upon causes that matter to them. The site claims, "This special place fosters creativity, collaboration amongst new friends, and inspiration to make our world a better place to live."

Another clever way Starbucks has captured consumer participation is through the My Starbucks Idea blog. The new campaign invites users to contribute creative ideas about how to improve Starbucks and then to discuss and vote on these ideas. The site also provides a link that enables visitors to see how the ideas have been implemented-giving contributors proof that their feedback was taken seriously.

Starbucks has also partnered with several organizations and presented various events to get people involved. For example, an event called Avante Grande in several cities around the United States features visual and spoken-word art from Starbucks' employees, with the tagline, "Experience the art behind the apron."

Online/offline experience

Starbucks invites consumers to get involved through the previously mentioned online campaigns, as well as through other social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and a YouTube channel featuring videos of Starbucks history, baristas sharing their experiences working there, accounts of how Starbucks is giving back, and other videos about campaigns Starbucks supports (like Project Red). Additionally, the My Starbucks Idea blog provides an outlet for users to comment on their in-store experiences and suggestions for improvement. And Apple has teamed up with Starbucks to feature songs recently played in Starbucks stores in the iTunes store.

Killer app

Starbucks' killer app is its emphasis on being an idea and experience, not just a coffee shop. Everything from the socially conscious campaigns to fair trade coffee to the trendy ambiance sets it apart from the coffeehouse next door and appeals to a different breed of consumers-those who are environmentally and socially aware.

Secret sauce: things that delight, surprise, differentiate

Starbucks' emphasis on creating a "third place" for people to go every day. It's a place where customers are welcome to hang out, employees are "partners," and where values such as social activism and creativity are openly promoted.

Brand background

Starbucks began as a single small store in Seattle in 1971, founded by two teachers and a writer who wanted to sell high-quality coffee beans. In the early '80s, Starbucks increased its offerings to include freshly brewed coffee and espresso drinks. By the early '90s, Starbucks had over 100 locations, including stores in Canada. Popularity increased as the company began offering fair trade beans, providing generous benefits to employees, and incorporating socially responsible practices into its mission. Today, Starbucks boasts over 8,000 locations in countries around the globe.

Pepsi

www.pepsiusa.com

Pepsi Insights

Target consumer

Is Pepsi still the Choice of a New Generation? The company hopes so. Pepsi is targeting the Millennial who is at least mildly socially aware and wants to feel like he or she is part of something bigger—someone who is making change happen through his or her choices. The Pepsi Optimism Project surveyed 2,000 Americans to examine the mindset of Millennials. What came out of the survey was a multiyear brand campaign to “Refresh Everything,” aimed primarily at this demographic. For example, the Refresh Everything site is labeled “The ultimate Buzz Feed for Revolutionaries.”

Executive remarks

Bonam Bough, social media manager

I’m on Twitter, monitoring reports across the brands, making sure we’re reading influencers so we can see what’s breaking, what things we should be focusing on or reading about, including trend reports, and there are always lots of meetings and planning sessions. We also have a lot going on with South by Southwest [PepsiCo-sponsored live coverage of the 2009 music, film, and interactive festival through tweets, blogs, and live interviews on SXSW’s BlogTalkRadio].

You have to take a deeper and longer view, and you dig in and get a lot closer to the business. It’s a totally different mindset and it’s really exciting. But here, we’re looking at the sustainability of programs—I mean across a number of years. It’s not just about moving from campaign to campaign. It’s about, how do you develop processes and—results year after year, and that you actually have sustainable programs that you are creating and crafting that have a lot of elements, but especially digital communities.

I’m also focusing on our relationships with bloggers. I sponsor BlogHer [the leading women’s blogging community]. We definitely see women bloggers as an amazing group of folks with whom we’d like to build long-term and lasting relationships.

The next big component is, how do we continue to bring those influencer voices inside an organization? We did that at South by Southwest, where we started learning from the conversation and the

major trends that are out there. We launched PepTrends [where top PepsiCo communicators, influencers, and Twitter users gathered for a day to tweet about emerging global trends].

So, it's about, how do you bring these voices from the outside in? We are bringing the outside in and the inside out. . . . There are so many great ideas in this space and by no means do we have enough good ideas. It's just, how do we start working with them?

With so much to worry about over the next several months, maybe we would all be better served taking on this group's optimism.

Bonan Bough, is also spending time cultivating "dads as the new moms" and works a lot with daddy bloggers. He actually sponsored their participation on a panel about dads blogging at SXSW.

For Pepsi, there's always a sales platform to any social networking platform. Online and offline at events. Only uses e-mails for ticket giveaways, contests, promotions. This generation sees e-mail as more formal, and uses e-mail for contests because those usually have rules. The digital realm keeps Pepsi in touch. It makes Pepsi relevant. Mainly, it keeps Pepsi young.

Lessons:

PepsiCo has taken a brand with a lot of history (and competition) and forced it to be relevant. Changing the logo, seeing opportunities in emerging markets—it must stay fresh, and close to the culture, to be authentic. If it enters the market and isn't relevant, it won't be adopted. The approach is the lesson. It has also diversified the brand portfolio to offer more entry points for Millennials.

Recommendations based on this brand

- In order to reach the target, you sometimes need to find a less ambitious, less saturated situation.
- A secondary stage or venue might become a gathering place for the target. You may never get 30 percent of the main stage audience to be Millennials, but a secondary space could become their place (and they'll be satisfied with that).

- Offer options and entry points.
- Make sure the elements relate back to the core brand. Social media isn't an end. It's a means for interacting.

Pepsi in Depth

User experience

On the Refresh Everything site, Pepsi has put the structures in place to upload videos, show off a live Twitter feed, submit photos, and shop for merchandise—but, as of WHEN? Most things were still labeled “coming soon.” This effort has great potential but being half-finished made it a lackluster user experience.

Pepsi offers five sections on the Refresh Everything site: Rock Band, Good Works, Music, Culture, and Sports—something for everyone. Each section showcases ways to get involved. For example, good works details the positive change two guys brought about when they spearheaded a plan to revitalize a derelict urban area in Manhattan—the New York High Line—into a neighborhood garden. The Sports section showcases Mr. Irrelevant—the last draft pick of the NFL or the first day of the baseball season in New York's two new stadiums. It's all about providing a “refreshing” point of view that's a bit irreverent but gives visitors to the site a way to connect in through their interests.

Participation model

Pepsi plugged into the energy surrounding the Obama election victory with the Refresh campaign, playing off the hopeful, optimistic spirit of the nation as a new generation prepared to take the reins of leadership. .

It offered regular people as well as celebrities the chance to submit video messages to Barack Obama during the run-up to the inauguration. Pepsi received 100,000 submissions on its website, on YouTube, Facebook and through man-on-the-street interviews, and loaded a four-minute “inspiration” montage clip on the website.

Pepsi also has a section for “causes” on its brand site, listing the Pepsi Eco Challenge, Live Earth, and Youth Empowerment. Pepsi and Live Earth are partnering to deliver 500 million specially marked cans in October. Visitors to the site can e-mail friends about recycling, thereby becoming part of the solution to the global climate crisis.

Online/offline experience

As a drink, Pepsi is an offline experience. But online, there are plenty of ways the brand draws you in. From a YouTube channel to Facebook promotions to Pepsi Rock Band and the Refresh Music station, Pepsi wants to be a part of your digital world. It's having an impact: There are 205,897 Pepsi fans on Facebook.

Pepsi also attends and sponsors offline festivals such as Coachella Music Festival and SXSW Festivals for film, music and interactive.

Killer app

Integration of elements. Tagline: Every generation refreshes the world. Pepsi's 2009 Super Bowl ad pairs Bob Dylan and Will.I.Am. and shows scenes from the '60s cut with scenes from today showing updated versions of people doing the same things. The company followed up the generational celebration with a product called Pepsi Throwback-a version of Pepsi using real sugar and incorporating elements of '60s and '70s iconography. And it's only available in certain locations. It gives Millennials a chance to engage with the brand as a hip retro activity, and adds scarcity to the allure. The Pepsi NASCAR entry at Talladega Superspeedway also played on this theme and featured the block Pepsi logo from the '80s.

Secret sauce: things that delight, surprise, differentiate

Timing the optimism campaign and keeping it from becoming saccharine. In the midst of a failing economy and an ongoing war, Pepsi showcases optimism about the future and plugs into the larger cultural movements around Obama's "hope" campaign, followed up by the summer retro '60s theme.

Brand background

PepsiCo is a world leader in snack foods and beverages, with revenues of more than \$39 billion and over 185,000 employees. PepsiCo maintains a "Performance with Purpose" agenda to add social and environmental emphases to the 18 brands in its portfolio, which include grocery store staples such as Frito-Lay, Quaker, Gatorade, Tropicana, Mountain Dew, and Pepsi. The company's product fact sheet calls Pepsi, "the bold, robust, effervescent magic cola."

However, massive rebranding begun in spring 2009 has not brought Pepsi the hordes of soda drinkers it craved.

Red Bull

www.redbull.com

Red Bull Insights

Target consumer

Red Bull's primary targets are young consumers with active lifestyles. College students needing late-night energy to study for exams are the sweet spot. Red Bull sponsors extreme sports, snowboarding, cliff diving, and surfing. In addition to sports, it also features an arts and culture section that details photography, music, and other creative competitions the brand has hosted internationally.

Executive remarks

Scott McAndrew, Director of Digital Strategy, Red Bull. Partner, Terralever, an Internet marketing consultancy. Red Bull's digital strategy and execution have been outsourced to Terralever for several years, and Scott is considered part of the Red Bull marketing team.

Digital, digital, digital! Millennials are digital natives. It's about instant, on-demand entertainment. Incredible multitaskers. They would give up TV in an instant. Be in the places where they go.

Know your purpose [for using social media]. Red Bull uses social media to drive attendance at events.

Events are promoted and set up to be viral:

- Blogger outreach kits
- Event-based means looking at similar content on Twitter and for news feeds.
- Facebook is good for posting events—local is huge, so Yahoo! Events, Yelp! help to build groundswell. Hyper-local is key.
- Flickr tags for Flugtag help us find images for the website and credit the teams and fans taking the photos. (Only applies to Creative Commons licensed photos.)

Social media is a cocktail party. Need to really have someone who speaks for the brand and is credible with Millennials, and has to participate in the community. It is not a broadcast medium. We must be having a conversation.

It's challenging. The difference between Gen X and Millennials [is that Millennials] don't mind something being picked up by the masses. The Gen Xers want to be special. Millennials like to belong.

- Hopeful
- Diverse
- Goal-oriented
- Impatience they act on

Gen Xers look at the planet or big corps and are frustrated but didn't do anything about it. Millennials are much more political and vocal. They are willing to stand up. Gen Xers were taken care of by the boomers.

We consider Millennials people born between 1978 and 1995. Millennials are more well-versed than Gen X chose to be. They are choosy about the brands they will align with, and punish or reward more swiftly and more vocally.

They don't seem to be afraid of exposure of private information.

Marketing is not pooh-pooed. If you show them that the brand has humanistic characteristics, they will adopt. Flugtag site put a face behind the event. We wanted it to be sincere. Flugtag Roadies self-organized and reached out to us. Teams put up videos. Leading up to the events, they blog about it. This has increased foot traffic at events. We are experimenting with little apps. Flugtag game "twitch" happens in 20 seconds. The user tries to launch craft as high as possible. Make the engagement short, satisfying and quick bites. You can play it on the website.

Millennials see the inbox as a place where formal communication happens. When they see an offer, they want it made clear that it's a commercial offer. We can offer a special discount or a special offer. You can offer rewards, but not it's necessary. Disposable income is not an issue, and ideals are more important.

In the future, if we don't push to mobile, we will miss the boat. If there is a blog, make sure it renders well on an iPhone and Web browser.

Brands that are inclusive and can embrace ambiguity will win. If you have a brand that flies in the face of values, [you] will have a hard time. Consumer re-evaluation of brands is going on, across the board. Are you in line with their values?

Web 2.0—if you get into it, stay into it. Don't let things go stale or they will stop trusting you.

How are you tracking success?

Social is not good for direct sales. We have analytics that tie to sales but we aren't here to get direct conversion. Facebook is better for loyalty and engagement than direct sales.

At its core, social media are hard to track-money in/money out. Online is trackable. The medium is changing rapidly, but so is the consumer. The future is: Social will have much more commercialization.

Recommendations based on this brand

- Make sure to be listed in local event guides: Goldstar, Groupon, MetroMix, CenterStage, Eventful, Yelp, Gaper's Block
- Facebook is incredibly important to this generation; Red Bull couldn't stress that enough.
- Make sure all the social media can be easily read and downloaded on iPhones and Blackberrys.
- Promote the social mission more. Steppenwolf's values are authentically in sync with Millennials. Let your audience know your social mission and unfold those messages over time so they are credible.
- Have a simple goal for each new media channel.
- The first step into social is to listen. Listen and search about the brand. Twitter, Google alerts help.
- Develop a brand ambassador strategy that can go digital.

Red Bull in Depth

User experience

The slogan, "Red Bull gives you wings" emphasizes the drink's ability to provide stimulation and sustaining energy. Although commonly consumed during late-night hours, Red Bull can serve as a coffee replacement in the morning. Many young consumers also use Red Bull in alcoholic beverages.

Participation model

Red Bull invites users to participate in ways that are both extreme *and* creative. It invented the popular Red Bull Flugtag event, which encourages groups of “everyday people” to build homemade flying machines. During the event, which is held yearly in Chicago; Portland, Ore.; and Tampa Bay, the teams leap off a 30-foot deck in hopes of flying. The entries are judged not only on their ability to remain airborne, but also on creativity and showmanship. (<http://www.redbullflugtagusa.com/>)

On the arts and culture front, Red Bull has sponsored many events that invite creatives to use their talents. In Amsterdam, the Red Bull Rooms project is transforming the Red Light District into a creative hub for artists and musicians by giving them space to display whatever kind of art they want, with no restrictions. The motto of the project is “Inspire-Create-Expose.” (<http://www.redbull.com/en/ArticlePage.1244552918793-648761991.0/htmlArticlePage.action>) Also, a music competition in the United States called Red Bull Big Tune aired on BET as the search for the musician with the next “big tune.” The winner was a 17-year-old boy from Chicago.

Online/offline experience

The consumption of Red Bull is an offline experience, but Red Bull’s many interactive competitions and events accept online applications and encourage users to visit the brand’s various independent sites. For example, Flugtag has its own site with its own unique capabilities, and Red Bull Music Academy and Red Bull’s Soapbox Race both accept applications online.

Killer app

Proprietary events make the brand an experience. The use of social networking to make the connection and build hype around the events delivers young digerati. At every event Red Bull sponsors, it is selling product on site.

Flugtag is unique and appeals to the young, creative, energetic consumer. Red Bull has associated itself with a creative, alternative, hip, and trendy culture. It has let go of the Flugtag experience to allow customers to jump in and make it their own. In the last two years, the Red Bull Roadies emerged. These self-forming groups began blogging, then Twittering their stories about following Flugtag across the country and/or supporting a Flugtag team. Red Bull embraced the innovation by creating a place for Roadies on their site and getting them some media attention. It’s good for the brand and good for the bloggers. The Flugtag has become its own movement, and the Roadies are a subculture or tribe within the movement.

Secret sauce: things that delight, surprise, differentiate

Intense fun. Red Bull's essence is simple: intensity that's fun. The website advertises Red Bull energy drink, a sugar-free version, and a less pumped-up cola. Even the retail presence is simple: barrel coolers that help the brand stand out, but are simple for the retailer.

Brand background

Founded in 1984 by Austrian entrepreneur Dietrich Mateschitz, Red Bull entered the United States in 1997 and has since exploded as the leading energy drink in the country. Although it began as a popular beverage among blue-collar workers in Thailand, Red Bull's primary target is now young people around the globe. More than one billion cans are sold each year in over 100 countries. Red Bull's clever and creative sponsorship of extreme sporting events and edgy competitions in which consumers are encouraged to participate help to perpetuate the brand's popularity worldwide. It holds nearly 70 percent of the world market for energy drinks (<http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/Red-Bull-GmbH-Company-History.html>).

Automotive

Ford Fiesta

www.fiestamovement.com

Ford Fiesta Insights

Target consumer

The Ford Fiesta Movement is targeting Millennials born between 1979 and 1995 who have not yet established a brand loyalty and who use social media on a daily basis. The Fiesta is specifically designed for “savvy customers who value fuel efficiency, technology, and aesthetics.”

As part of the Fiesta Movement social media initiative, 100 young trendsetters will test-drive and live with a European-spec Fiesta for six months, traveling as agents on special missions, and then relate their experiences through a variety of social media sites. As of June 10, 2009, the agents had generated 4,672,121 consumer impressions through various social media platforms, including YouTube, Twitter, and Flickr.

Executive remarks

Sam De La Garza, Ford Fiesta brand manger

We’ve got people out there who are naturally vibrant, socially vibrant, who have influence in their own communities, whether it’s YouTube or JustinTV or Twitter or Flickr or whatever, and we’ve tried to disperse it across the country so we get into as many markets as possible.

We’re giving them guidelines in terms of what to avoid when driving the vehicle, just to stay safe and make sure they don’t do anything illegal. In terms of the content they upload and produce, we have no say in it.

We want their unbiased, unfiltered opinion of the vehicle-good, bad, or indifferent. It can’t be in-your-face branding or they’ll be turned off.

The Twitter environment is like getting focus group feedback every single day.

The authenticity piece was really, really crucial for us. Would they have been turned off by a more traditional brand approach? It's hard to say. For most of the agents, the Fiesta brand was a blank slate. But about 15 percent of the people saw this opportunity [the Fiesta Movement] as a way to help Ford Motor Co. in general, which is a brand they did know. They expressed sentiments like, "I want to give back, and give an American car company a chance again. Maybe I could help them somehow."

We have to open up our lives to this. Ford is learning that we have to be part of the conversation. Just by interacting with people, we've tapped into their curiosity. I tweeted, "Hey, I am going to have an event in Chicago at Hotel W!" and 10 peeps showed up at 9:00 p.m.

Millennials convince their parents what is cool. We have to allow for enough personalization.

When we give the cars to the agents, we get an incredible reaction. They love the car. That makes their experience authentic. We give them free gas and insurance. We are not paying for any content. We give them themes monthly. If we had an agent in the Northeast, we would come up with an idea: Midnight ride of Paul Revere, Route 66. They are obliged to create one video per month talking about them and the car. They use this as a vehicle for improving their own following.

Teams are important. I've read about how friends are so important to the Millennials. We were completely amazed that we would attract so many teams. People collaborated to enter. Friends, couples, siblings—this says you can get relational discussions going.

The Fiesta Movement gives people an outlet as well as credentials. Ford touches base with them monthly, which keeps it going. The missions keep the movement going forward.

Ford Fiesta list tweets, Flickr posts, Facebook, and YouTube videos—all the channels are on one page.

Recommendations based on this brand

- Ford is using the Fiesta and the Fiesta Movement to transform the company. They have to let go of certain inhibitions in order to reach the target consumer group. Understand that it takes time and experimentation. Ford will spend 18 months building a community through social media before the car is even available for sale.

- Ford uses Twitter to drive attendance at test-drive events. Tweet free dress rehearsal tix or a backstage talk with actors.

Ford Fiesta in Depth

User experience

Ford has gone deep into social networks to select 100 tech-savvy, socially networked, car-loving Millennials to become “agents” for the brand.

If you’re one of the lucky 100 agents, you have six months to complete six missions with a Ford Fiesta on loan. If you’re one of the 4 million people with connections to one of these 100 agents (or anyone else), you watch their missions unfold through social networks.

Participation model

More than 4,000 potential agents applied online, sending in videos describing why they should be selected. Selections were based on applicants’ strong social network, ability to tell a story, and vibrant personality.

The Fiesta Movement agents are given monthly assignments to complete, which they document through YouTube videos, Flickr photos, tweets, and blog posts. Ford calls it “lifestreaming.” Agents are encouraged to bring their friends along for the ride to share the experience and pass their comments along to Ford.

Ford has also set up open test-drive sessions all across the country, so anyone can participate in the Fiesta Movement and post their own TwitPic up.

Online/offline components

This campaign is a unique blend of online and offline. The Fiesta Movement agents create online engagement opportunities (bloggable, tweetable moments) wherever they go in their offline life in their car. One agent got pulled over by the police just so they could check out her ride.

Killer app

Pimp your peeps. Ford loaned people with established online networks the Fiesta with seemingly only one string attached—go be social with your car.

Secret sauce: things that delight, surprise, differentiate

The blogger missions. Ford didn’t simply give blogging agents the car for six months and ask them to blog and tweet about it. It co-created with them specific missions to complete, so that each person was tasked with something personal and individual to document each month.

When the rest of the U.S. car industry is in free-form meltdown, Ford demonstrates that it has shifted its marketing emphasis to reflect the two-way communication reality of our society today.

Brand background

The Fiesta Movement is a social media experiment by Ford Motor Co. The goal of the program is to create early excitement and interest in the Ford Fiesta—very popular in Europe already— before it re-launches in the U.S. It reaches out to a new generation and demonstrates the progressive marketing ideas that are happening at Ford.

Scion

www.scion.com

Scion Insights

Target consumer

Scion's stated mission is "to satisfy a trendsetting, youthful buyer." Actual customer demographics (as of May 2009) show that the median age is 35, 51 percent of buyers are male and 72 percent are new to Toyota. But the target is definitely young, hip, and (likely) male.

To appeal to a younger buyer, Scion offers things like a \$1,000 rebate to recent college graduates, and has set up a Gen-One Finance Program to help buyers with no credit history.

Executive remarks

Targeting Millennials, yes, we do that a bit, but our median consumer is 35. What we are finding is that young is a state of mind. Lots of things that appeal to creativity: photo contests, art gallery, sponsor bands. The essence of the brand is to be creative with your car, which becomes an extension of your personal identity.

Recommendations based on this brand

Create special experiences for repeat users or groups that deem them fans.

Scion in Depth

User experience

Scion is trying to change how you think about your car. It's intended to become a creative expression of your own individuality. Scion has redesigned the experience of buying a car to (try to) eliminate negative price negotiation.

Whether you own a car or not, you can stream Scion radio, see a Scion art exhibit, or get your groove on at a club.

Participation model

Scion owners can join a local club whose members get together to show off their cars, do test drives, and simply socialize. There is also a monthly magazine for Scion owners.

Online/offline components

The Scion website is definitely intense, with online activities like a photo contest and a build-your-own Scion feature. But creative offline activities seem more Scion's style. The Scion X-perience tour offers a way for Scion to support creative causes through fundraisers while raising general brand awareness. Scion is deep into music with a streaming Internet radio station, an in-house record label, sponsorship for metal (band) shows, DJ sessions, and more. There are also Scion racing events for NASCAR fans.

Scion shows are typically no-cover and feature Scion giveaways. They create exclusivity by requiring an online RSVP to get in the door.

Killer app

Scion makes it easy to pimp your ride to make it look custom.

Secret sauce: things that delight, surprise, differentiate

Scion events and collaboration with creative activities. There is a dedicated art installation space in Los Angeles called Scion Space that is "dedicated to fostering independent artistic expression." It hosts art shows and art-related events for cutting-edge contemporary artists from around the globe.

Since when does a car brand care about art? Or maintain its own music label? Scion takes the idea of being a part of someone's creative identity and pushes it as far as possible.

Brand background

Launched in 2003, Scion is Toyota's entry-level brand. The name means "descendant," and the brand was developed with a new generation of youthful buyers in mind. Scion's mission is to provide distinctive products, the opportunity to personalize, and a buying experience focused on the customer. Scion has three models: the xD urban subcompact five-door, the xB urban utility vehicle, and the tC sports coupe.

The brand often applies new practices in all aspects of its business and pushes the creativity envelope with non-traditional advertising and marketing to engage young consumers. Scion also supports originality through its programs in the artistic community.

Fashion/Apparel

Kenneth Cole

www.kennethcole.com

Kenneth Cole Insights

Target consumer

The Kenneth Cole customer likes to wear black. She/he wants moderately hip, uncomplicated clothes that are classic but with an urban edge. Other brands the Kenneth Cole set would wear include Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger, HUGO Boss.

The target consumer for Kenneth Cole is the socially aware, politically astute urban shopper. The brand has engaged in causes, such as AIDS awareness, since 1985. It set up the Awearness blog to encourage “relevant and inspiring dialogue for social change.”

Executive remarks

Samantha Cohen, senior director of corporate communications

It’s critical that we be consistent and committed to our cause platform. That is the road to authenticity.

We recruited a handful of bloggers because we wanted real, honest, useful content about ways to change the world. We selected them for the stand-out voices, and we encourage them to be the face of Kenneth Cole’s Awearness site.

We treat Awearness like our other brands. We invest. We promote them. We groom it to do more than one thing for us. But we do it because we believe in it.

There is no ‘veiled’ marketing agenda. We are open with our community. We never sell on the Awearness site.

Content is marketing-free. Our ads frame the Awearness site because our research told us our followers were okay with it.

Twitter is a research tool for us. We monitor it. It also helps people discover Awearness. Our bloggers occasionally link to it so more people discover our brand.

Our relationships with volunteer agencies have really boosted our traffic. It's part of our mission to motivate Kenneth Cole shoppers to get involved, but we needed partners to help us manage that. Our volunteer management non-profits have turned out to be a great resource. We did it to be practical, meaning we didn't want to be in the business of matching volunteers with opportunities, but it turns out it has helped us cross-grow audiences.

Insights:

- Social activism is written into the brand. Kenneth Cole provides volunteer opportunities on its website.
- The company believes in blogging and has created a cadre of bloggers to be its brand ambassadors, serving as the voice of the brand.

Lessons:

- Have a voice.
- Have a purposeful brand.
- Use bloggers to become ambassadors to Millennials and be the face and voice of the brand.

Recommendations based on this brand

- Put your mission-related messages more upfront.
- Consider auditioning a cadre of responsible, talented bloggers to serve as digital ambassadors.

Kenneth Cole in Depth

User experience

Kenneth Cole was known originally for shoes. The three Kenneth Cole brands (Kenneth Cole New York, Reaction Kenneth Cole, and Unlisted) are carried primarily in mainstream department stores such as Macy's and Nordstrom.

Once a user engages with the brand's activism components—through the blog or by volunteering—it becomes clear that Kenneth Cole is trying to raise the level of discussion in America on challenging topics, an approach that most brands wouldn't attempt.

Participation model

At one point, Kenneth Cole advertising declared, "What you stand for is more important than what you stand in," and "To be aware is more important than what you wear." These snippets speak volumes about how the company wants to engage its users. It's a playful

dynamic—self-consciously blending the shopping urge with social consciousness. For example, a recent T-shirt declares, “Some Are Born Great, Some Achieve Greatness, and Some Know Where to Shop.”

The Awearness Alliance provides volunteer opportunities for people who want to make a difference. Or people can help “write the wrongs” by contributing to the Awearness blog. It gives options for both doers and thinkers to contribute their talents.

The Awearness site features “Change Agent” profiles—people who have a desire to act in specific areas: political activism, human rights, civil liberties, homelessness and poverty, well-being, HIV/AIDS, criminal justice, the environment, youth and education, volunteerism.

Online/offline components

The Awearness site profiles charity shopping events in which people can shop retail stores and have a portion of the purchase proceeds go toward a cause they believe in. (And they RSVP for these events on Facebook.) So online listings drive offline activities, and offline activities are fodder for online content.

Killer app

Change agent. Creating an online space to express social activism in relation to their clothing. You can buy Kenneth Cole T-shirts to express your political views, all the while feeling good about the 20 percent of your purchase that goes towards helping a worthy charity.

Secret sauce: things that delight, surprise, differentiate

Kenneth Cole’s humor in advertising and willingness to take on difficult topics. The puns and witticisms mean that Kenneth Cole never takes itself too seriously and yet always delivers an extremely strong message.

The Kenneth Cole brands work on multiple levels:

- The hip, urban style sells just fine to customers in stores who are looking for a good pair of shoes and have no idea of the breadth of social activism embedded in the brand.
- But for those in the know, there’s a whole other level of respect and engagement that comes with buying the shoes—it’s basically like voting with your dollars to support charitable activities.
- Customers engage through the brand—but Kenneth Cole acts more as an amplifier/connector for conversation in the various topics.

Brand background

Kenneth Cole Productions Inc. was born in 1982, when Kenneth Cole went broke. The designer had spent all his money making shoes in Europe, but when he came back to his native New York, he had no place to sell them—and no money to open a store. Enlisting the help of a friend with a giant truck, Cole nabbed permission to park it in midtown and sell shoes by applying for a film permit (hence the ‘Productions’); the fictitious film had the audacious title ‘The Birth of a Shoe Company.’ The stunt helped sell 40,000 shoes in two days, and created a company, a legend, and an empire. Kenneth Cole now encompasses three lines. The primary label, Kenneth Cole New York, has a price range of \$60 to \$795 and is a visual manual in contemporary urban style, with black jeans, crewneck sweaters, and classic lace-up loafers in deep colors. Kenneth Cole Reaction is more playful but still very urban, and ranges from \$35 to \$395. Unlisted Kenneth Cole is even cheaper, with products from apparel to shoes in the range of \$25 to \$80. The company went public in 1994, and is reportedly worth over \$1 billion.”

J. Crew

www.jcrew.com

J. Crew Insights

Target consumer

J. Crew appeals to the mid-market young professionals crowd—people who look for good value but are willing to pay more for nicer clothes. It's not designer, but the brand promises to deliver better-quality clothes than typical mall chain stores. It hits the middle ground between looking frivolous and looking frumpy.

Executive remarks

Heather McAuliffe, senior director of public relations

We do have the benefit of having stores, the Internet, and our catalog. We still mail quite a few catalogs, and it drives traffic to the Web. We also have the opportunity to capture information. As a great customer, we capture your information and you opt in to e-mail. So we e-mail you on a regular basis about ideas, different things that drive you to the Web. We find an enormous synergy between the customers that shop retail and the Web.

Our strategy and how we're running this business is not going to change. The great style, the fabrics that you're recognizing, it really is about timeless style and quality and it doesn't have to cost a fortune. . . it's Old World details that we're putting into these garments. We're not going to take that away.

Insights:

In a down economy, J. Crew has been a middle ground for consumers seeking quality products. It's tuned in to life events and incorporates J. Crew clothing. Weddings are common among Millennials, and J. Crew has made buying a wedding gown simple. Similarly, for Steppenwolf, a theater date is a rite-of-passage date.

Recommendations based on this brand

Simplify and de-stress going to the theater as a dating experience.

J. Crew in Depth

User experience

J. Crew gives a clean and fresh feeling, whether in stores, online, or in the catalog. Stores are bright and well-lit, and green is the signature color, with wood accents. Clothes are typically arrayed in rainbow hues.

It's as though the retailer wants to take the quintessential elements of a beachside clambake in Nantucket and marry it to lunch in the sunshine at a Parisian café.

Participation model

Brand devotees outside the company have set up websites and blogs to give fellow J. Crew-aholics a place to congregate: <http://jcrewaficionada.blogspot.com/>
<http://jcrewaholics.com/>.

With the J. Crew weddings line, the company took a life event and decided to own it completely. But it turned the much-dreaded/much-anticipated wedding dress shopping trip into an online-only activity. However, it added personalized customer service—a dedicated consultant (Ashley@jcrew.com)—who will track the entire wedding party with sizes, items, gifts. So J. Crew removed the personalization of the store interaction, but replaced it with a high-human-personalization-touch online.

To promote the wedding line of gowns and accessories, J. Crew partnered with TabletHotels.com to sponsor a five-star Happily Ever Honeymoon in Greece.

Online/offline components

Born as a catalog company, J. Crew still uses the catalog heavily, in addition to stores and the Internet. For the consumer, the avenues are interchangeable: If you bought an item online, you can return it to a store; if you like something in the store but need a different size, there's a phone in the store to use for placing an order, and shipping is free.

J. Crew pays attention to window displays and practices tasteful, classic retailing. For example, it does not emblazon clothes with its logo.

Killer app

J. Crew weddings for the younger (18- to 26-year-old) cohort. J. Crew weddings have changed the game for bridal wear, bringing designer style to gowns with an off-the-rack price-point-and it all happens online.

Secret sauce: things that delight, surprise, differentiate

Attention to detail that's affordable. Mickey Drexel is the company's secret sauce. His fanatical attention to detail—ribbons on the inside, diamante buttons—gives it the edge over rivals Gap and American Eagle, among others. J. Crew earned the top slot in the PeopleMetrics Customer Engagement study of March 2008.

Brand background

J. Crew began in 1983 with catalog sales of khakis and rollneck sweaters. Since then, it's become an iconic American brand that is preppy without being stuffy.

J. Crew opened its first retail store in 1989 and now has 206 retail and 69 outlet stores across the United States. JCrew.com provides the backbone of company sales.

Mickey Drexler (the man behind the Gaps incredible success) joined J. Crew as chairman and CEO in 2003 and started building the powerhouse brand we know today. He improved the quality of fabrics and brought a laser-like attention to detail, to create a signature J. Crew look.

Concerts/Festivals

Lollapalooza

www.lollapalooza.com

Lollapalooza Insights

Target consumer

The festival targets people who are interested in alternative rock, hip-hop, punk, and other non-mainstream styles of music. Photos from previous years' events indicate a young (mainly under-35) crowd with a fairly even mix of males and females. It targets those interested in non-profit and green initiatives; this year's festival earnings will benefit the Parkways Foundation, a non-profit that seeks to enhance Chicago's parks. Additionally, the festival targets social activists. It is recruiting people who are interested in eco-friendly practices, as the "Green Lolla" movement features eco-friendly vendors and non-profits from around the city. The festival also appeals to those with young children with a "Kidzapalooza" and free entry to kids under 10 (accompanied by an adult), as well as vendors and merchants with craft tables.

Lollapalooza in Depth

User experience

The festival lasts for three days, and tickets are valid for all concerts at various stages during that time. It's designed as an "all-day, get up and wait in line and go home after the sun sets (for three days)" kind of experience. Bloggers writing about attending previous Lollapaloozas indicate a high level of interest in music, and seem to have attended as many concerts as they had time for. They speak of high energy, plenty of age diversity in the crowd, and lots of music.

Participation model

This year's Lollapalooza is asking the user to experience the festival in a different way. The Rock & Recycle movement gives festival attendees a chance to win a Honda Insight—but not without first showing their commitment to green living. Inside the festival's program is a "Green Ticket." By participating in different green activities around Grant Park, participants get their program stamped. These activities include filling a recycling bag with items and bringing it back, riding your bike (presenting a helmet as proof), or refilling your water bottle at a free H2O station. Once the user gets three stamps, he or she can enter to win the Insight Hybrid.

Offline/online components

Most of the Lollapalooza experience prior to the actual festival is Internet-based. The website is modern, easy to navigate, and features images of performers. Participants are encouraged to create a list of artists they want to see and share it with others, and to utilize social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and MySpace, as well as sign up for an e-mail newsletter. The offline experience is mainly the concert, but the experience can be enhanced by connecting with other attendees online and learning more about the festival beforehand. The emphasis on arts, crafts, and other local vendors is reinforced on the website, and attendees are encouraged to visit the vendors' tents at the festival.

Secret sauce: things that delight, surprise, differentiate

One thing that sets Lollapalooza apart from other rock music festivals is the kid-friendly emphasis. When parents know they can find activities for their children as well as themselves at a festival where a kid would otherwise become bored, young families they may be more likely to purchase tickets. Additionally, the site has biographies of every band that will be playing, as well as songs from their albums to listen to online. You can also see how many people have added the band to their online lineup of bands they want to see.

Brand background

Lollapalooza is a music festival held each August in Chicago's Grant Park. The festival began in 1991-created by Jane's Addiction lead singer Perry Farrell as a final tour for the band-and ran until 1997. It was revived in 2003 as a touring festival, and since 2005 has been held in Chicago. Three-day passes range from \$175 for an early-bird purchase to over \$1,000 for a VIP pass. The performers at Lollapalooza appeal to younger consumers, especially those who are interested in the rock and indie rock scenes. However, it includes a few bands that have been in existence for several years, to appeal to an older demographic.

Kidzapalooza: My kids can be cool too; as Millennials age, they don't have to give up attending entertainment events.

The Green Lolla movement emphasizes eco-family practices and green vendors from around the city.

Pitchfork Music Festival

www.pitchforkmusicfestival.com

Pitchfork Music Festival Insights

Target consumer

The target is young, music-conscious individuals who closely track the indie music scene. By building upon its base of consumers who read reviews and news on Pitchfork's main site, Pitchfork Media recruits young men and women who value diverse and eclectic styles of music. The website and photos from previous years' events indicate a demographic around 20 to 35.

Recommendations based on this brand

Photos on the Pitchfork website are Millennials. Place some photos on your website that indicate that Millennials belong there too.

Pitchfork Music Festival in Depth

User experience

Pitchfork presents an easily accessible, affordable music festival in the less-busy West Loop neighborhood of Chicago. The festival offers several tents with various types of music, from indie pop/rock to experimental, so attendees have choices. Consumers are given various hassle-free options regarding transportation, as bike parking is provided, and the location is steps from public transportation.

Participation model

Pitchfork invites festivalgoers to join the experience not only by attending the festival but by participating in the Write the Night project. After purchasing a ticket, attendees can vote for the songs they want their favorite bands to play. Pitchfork gives attendees a sense of ownership in the music, a sense that they helped determine the course of the concert by selecting the set. It invites further involvement through Facebook and exclusive e-mail updates.

Online/offline components

Although the festival is offline, the online components help build anticipation and increase awareness and preparation for the event. Attendees can buy tickets, enter contests to win free tickets (which helps drive traffic to the site) and read news and reviews about the festival and bands that will be playing. Consumers can also vote online for the songs they want bands to play, and attend those specific shows to hear the results of the vote. The site also gives ample suggestions for transportation, lodging, and other logistics that will come in handy offline.

Killer app

Pitchfork has two killer apps:

1. Price. The fee is broken down per day, while many music festivals charge for the entire length of the festival. Attendees can pay for one day, or receive discounts on two- or three-day passes.
2. Pitchfork's Write the Night feature enables festivalgoers to vote for songs they would like specific bands to play. By purchasing a ticket to the festival, attendees can feel involved in the process and a sense of connection with the bands.

Secret sauce: things that delight, surprise, differentiate

Pitchfork is comprised mainly of indie groups, all of which are considered in part for their ability to market themselves and draw crowds (pimp your peeps). Hence, the event's fast-growing status as one of the biggest indie rock festivals in the nation. For being a fairly new festival, it has drawn crowds as big as 48,000 and sold out in the past two years. It offers a specific bike parking lot and in another appeal to environmentally conscious consumers, recycles 50 percent of the trash produced at the festival.

Brand background

Pitchfork Music Festival is a gathering of popular independent artists held annually since 2006 in Chicago. It sold out in 2007 and 2008 with over 48,000 attendees. The festival is produced by Pitchfork Media, a Chicago company that provides reviews, samples, and interviews with emerging and established indie pop/rock artists.

More Quotes from the Experts

Our research was a winding path that led us to other pioneers who are marketing to Millennials. They were typically referred to us by the first round of leaders we interviewed. We include their comments here.

MySpace

Matt McRoberts, former marketing director at MySpace. Currently Account Executive and Chief Strategist, Iris Integrated Marketing. Mr. McRoberts still supports MySpace with marketing services.

Situation:

Our role at MySpace is giving youth the platform to be seen and heard. Many of our members have offline music properties—bands, DJ rave events. We decided to create our own event series to position ourselves as a peer, put a face on our brand, but also to give people a reason to connect with us over music.

The business objective:

Leverage tremendous music equity of MySpace. Music is a source of credibility among Millennials.

Tactics:

We worked with the DJ band *Justice* and traveled them around the country. We brought them to small venues. We allowed members to enter to win tickets for the live shows. Attracted a micro audience: live 5,000 and close to 200,000 visitors online. A new media producer traveled with show and blogged, took pix and videotaped members interacting with the band and playing their own riffs. Then he gave MySpace members content from the event.

Comments:

What people don't get, don't appreciate, is how dynamic they are as a group. There are a few principles you need to live by:

1. Be real.
2. Know where you can go and where you can't—saying something doesn't make it so.
3. Stay committed. Keep content fresh. Keep at whatever you start.
4. Stay close to the target. Nike does ethnographies and testing to stay on top of it. Underinvestment in insight is unwise.

Why are Millennials so influential?

Because they are tipping culture. Setting trends and pointing people to what's cool. Look at Apple Ipod. The core proposition was for the young. Look at it now. Everyone has one.

Which channels work best?

Digital is very much the scene. If you want advocacy and engagement by youth—it's got to be participatory. Managing the entire retail journey is essential. For example, for Coty and Adidas, they key all campaigns back into retail and reinforce it there.

Campaigns need to live in digital and analogue. Kids are savvy. Promotions are very successful—discounts, special offers, events, ticket giveaways. But if we want them go into retail, then we need to give them something of value. They need content. They see something in Beckham or Stefani. That is what they crave. Access and affinity with peeps they respect and they can re-use for their own content. Stefani created a juggernaut online with her Coty fragrance. So many girls blogged and posted on Facebook, it was huge.

How are you tracking success?

Digital is trackable. We ask, "Are they opening stuff? Sending it to friends? Are the downloading coupons?"

At retail we track sales and traffic driven into stores during promotional periods. If we are only running the promotion via new media, it's a clear signal how it's going. It's tougher when it's fully integrated with traditional media.

Unaided awareness is also something we do. Long term brand tracking: passion, advocacy (what would you be willing to do for the brand?). We have a panel of Millennials who tell us these things. We also survey at our MySpace events.

What advice would you give Steppenwolf?

There's a give and take. You must figure out the value equation. Talk to them to figure out what they value. Offer that if it makes sense for your brand.

Don't overreach. It's tempting because you want to try a bunch of things. They don't want to be burned by a brand and so they will tell you what they want.

These kids are idealists. Have something meaningful to say.

Takeaways:

At MySpace, they distinguish between advocacy and engagement. Advocacy is getting people to get up and do something (create, attend a show, act on something outside the digital world). The only way to get to advocacy is through participation. Engagement means people check you out, read your blog, but not at the same level of advocacy.

Tip: Allow people to engage with your season theme or programming choices. Ask people in advance to respond to certain choices. People could engage with these themes through social networking.

Deloitte Consulting Worldwide

John Copulsky, Senior Partner, Deloitte Consulting Worldwide

Situation

We have 45,000 people in the US working for Deloitte. Roughly 25% are under 25. We have to sell to clients and we have to recruit. We are marketing ourselves in two ways. We have a classic B2B task.

Tactics

We use social networks, bloggers and influencers (web mavens) who work for us. We realize you have to be agile to take advantage, keeping a finger on the pulse. That means making people responsible for tracking emerging communications, technology and setting aside seed budgets for emerging media.

We created an internal "Born to Consult" YouTube video. We also created a Deloitte film contest and got several thousand submissions. Some were very funny. We offered cash prizes and heavily promoted it. Projects like this help us generate new revenue, engage employees, and retain talent. Internally and externally, these opportunities will flourish.

Comments

Millennials are highly motivated, mobile, and goal-oriented. It's less about money and status and more about adding value and making an impact. They are willing to question things. They are much more comfortable with digital interactions in getting things done.

We found that with Millennials, it's less about money and more about recognition and unique experiences. Fame is a big motivator.

Some risks include:

- Brand can get watered down, hijacked, "communications game," and the message gets altered.
- ROI isn't there.
- Legal risk. If you are in a regulated industry, such as pharmacology, to what extent do you incur risk when peeps recommend unauthorized use of a drug product?
- What do you do if a blogger goes off message?

Das Foods

Katie Das, president, Das Foods

Ms. Das was formerly the head of innovative confections at Wm. Wrigley Co. which is currently outsourcing their Millennials innovation taste lab to Das Foods.

Situation:

Das Foods makes all natural lollipops. We specifically and exclusively target Millennials and only sell to this group. We develop unusual confections like: Naughty Ginger, Carmel me Happy and Carmellini.

Tactics:

Millennials want to be recognized as being smart and on-trend. They want attention. We don't have a lot of resources, so Twitter has been easier to manage than Facebook (which is more time consuming). We use Twitter to attract Millennials using control words, like "bacon." Someone is saying something about bacon every two seconds. They follow the word "bacon." We reply, "Hey have you tried bacon lollipops?" and offer them free samples of the lollipop. We do this about once a week.

We track bloggers who are commenting on fashion, music, and gadgets. We send them samples and they blog about it

Tip: They [Steppenwolf] have to decide where they are going to invest their resources. Once they start something, they need to commit to it.

Gaper's Block

Andrew Huff, co-founder and managing editor

Situation

We built Gaper's Block to be the city's virtual bulletin board. Lots of little opportunities and events that don't have a place in traditional media, "Come to the open mic in my basement" kind of listings.

We have 75 writers that maintain our content and who also draw their own audiences.

Tactics

We sell ads and rep ourselves. People don't mind ads. We did a little survey of our audience. They believed having ads meant we might stick around, so they backed the idea.

Chicago is a "heads down" culture among young technorati. People love doing their work. It's not a hang out and schmooze type of scene, or "be seen" culture, so much.

I think our success has to do with the hyper-local trend that's out there. People don't want to read the *Chicago Tribune* to hear what's happening 20 miles away. But they do care what's going on down the block; things that they can control and nourish. It effects them personally.

Addendum

Customer Journey- *The Tempest*

Katie Darr is a 24-year-old graduate student. She is an avid reader, uses social media, and enjoys live entertainment, especially music. Katie and her date attended *The Tempest* at Steppenwolf and she describes the experience below.

Does it transact smoothly?

After receiving a discount e-mail from Goldstar, I quickly and easily purchased tickets online for *The Tempest*. Following directions, I printed out the e-mail and brought it with me, in case there were any problems. That was not the case. Immediately upon our arrival, a staff member asked which show we were seeing and directed us to the exact line at the box office to pick up our tickets. From the moment I stepped in the door and encountered the first employee, I had the sense that I was in good hands and being taken care of. Navigating the new environment was made simple.

Is there an incentive?

The main incentive to attend was the discounted price of tickets. Otherwise, I wouldn't have been initially attracted to Steppenwolf specifically. The experience itself didn't yield any direct incentives, besides a survey that could be completed after the show for a chance to win gift cards to a nearby restaurant.

Does it make me feel smart?

Although I purchased tickets through an outside vendor, that simple process set the tone for my experience at Steppenwolf. They were easy to purchase, and if that hadn't been the case, it would have reflected poorly not only on Goldstar, but also on Steppenwolf for selling their tickets through Goldstar. At the theater, the staff were helpful and friendly, but not babying or condescending when I asked questions about the whereabouts of the bathrooms. They never assumed I was a seasoned patron. The box office [personnel] seemed to know the exact location of my reserved tickets before I finished saying my name, and were very polite. After only my first time at Steppenwolf, I now feel confident and capable of knowing my way around.

Do I belong here?

I never felt out of place during my visit to Steppenwolf, although most of the customers were older. However, there were several younger people seated around me in the balcony section, and many of the staff were young as well. It was difficult to see the customers seated in the lower section, although those in the front looked middle-aged or older. There were no red flags that made me feel as though I stood out, and I wasn't treated any differently than the other customers, as far as I could tell.

Does it make me feel cool?

At first, I felt a little anxious about going to a new and unfamiliar theater. Upon entering the door, my fears were calmed and I began to feel more confident about my visit. After seeing the play, I felt like I was part of something innovative and interesting, a fresh take on Shakespeare that was contemporary, perhaps a little risky, and very cool. The atmosphere, with a warehouse feel and minimal décor, was different and much trendier than the classically decorated theaters downtown. Leaving the show (and later telling friends about my experience), I felt a sense of pride knowing I had experienced a quality performance.

Does it give me content I can use?

The Tempest provided interesting conversation on the ride home, from the acting and music to Steppenwolf itself and the general ambiance. It would have been easy to blog about, or tweet experiences, especially during the show. However, with no Internet or phone capability during the show, I had to wait until after to let people know about my experience.

What role did it play in my social life?

My night at the theater served as a night on the town with my husband. I noticed other couples, groups of friends, and families at the theater as well. Although I could see myself going with a couple of girlfriends, the experience was enriching as we talked through the acting, music, costumes, and general experience on the ride home and over the next few days. It provided a basis for conversation, and a shared enjoyable experience. However, there didn't seem to be a way to connect with Steppenwolf again online through social networking, at least not readily provided in the program.

Goldstar www.goldstar.com

Goldstar is a company reaching out to eight major cities around the United States, offering significant discounts for live entertainment, including theater, music, comedy, and more. Because not every show sells out, Goldstar helps to ensure a packed audience at venues around the country. In addition to offering tickets, it also offers user reviews, suggestions of where to park and how to dress, and detailed directions for each event. A weekly e-mail details the most popular events, and another offers comp tickets. Although it charges a small service fee for each event, the cost is significantly less than the cost of paying full price for a ticket.

Website User Experience Recommendations

1. Rework “Join e-mail list” (because e-mail is for old people) to something like “Connect with us.” Consider listing the icons on the home page in the upper right navigation bar (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube).
2. On the links page, rework the content to include all forms of contact, including social media outlets. Match incentive to medium and set customer expectations-give them a reason to opt-in to each venue. (i.e., “We tweet and post day-of-show discounts on Facebook; get more in-depth coverage of new actors and visiting performers from the blog and the twice-a-month e-mail.”)
3. Make it easier to buy day-of-show tickets online. Give a sense of how many tickets are left. (“Only two remaining,” etc.) Make it easy to impulse buy, or give options if I go to the theater only to find that the event is already sold out. Post information on discounts on your Facebook page.
4. Include volunteering in the list of ways to get a discount. If volunteers/ushers receive complimentary tickets, it’s a way to fulfill the Millennial need for service and giving back, while also giving them the incentive.
5. Create a mobile app (at least for iPhone) enabling users to see if tickets are available and spontaneously purchase.
6. Showcase Millennial Interns more often. If someone is looking to see if “I should be here,” seeing a fellow fresh face might help.
7. Consider adding a space/page for love notes from the audience in all forms: online, letters, photos, videos, tweets. Or even easier: incent this activity on Facebook and then pull it into a wrapper through the Facebook API.
8. Put your calendar out as a downloadable widget or API.
9. Also, consider posting events to Eventful or other local event listing sites.

Discussion Guide

Client: Steppenwolf

Date: June 5, 2009

Voice style: professional, but informal and friendly

Intro:

My name is _____ and I am talking with brand managers on behalf of Steppenwolf Theatre Company's marketing department. I'd like to ask you a few questions about your marketing experiences reaching 20- to 29-year-olds. The entire call should take only 10 to 15 minutes of your time. If you are willing to share your thoughts, we will provide you with a "best practices/case examples" from our discovery. As for the bigger picture, your contribution will be used to help Steppenwolf Theatre Company, one of America's most celebrated arts organizations, bridge into the next generation of theatergoers.

Tell me a little bit about your role at your company.

How much of your time do you spend on marketing to Millennials?

Good news/bad news:

What tactics have you found the most successful in marketing to this segment?

What tactics have you found to be unsuccessful in engaging this segment?

What do you think makes this audience particularly challenging?

Can you think of a time when you got an unplanned demographic shift-meaning you were aiming at one target audience and earning another? Please describe...

What new tools, technologies are you using that have gotten good results?

What messages have produced successful results?

How are you tracking success?

Report to Steppenwolf

This 20 to 29-year-old segment-seems attracted to promotions and experiences that allow them to participate (YouTube, voting on reality TV shows, Twittering) What kinds of things have you done to invite them to participate in the brand?

Did you offer rewards or incentives?

What advice would you give Steppenwolf to better engage with 20-to 29-year-olds?