

7

The Analogue Antidote.

Taking a marketing campaign ‘back to basics’ is not about rejecting the technological advances of the 2000s, it’s about finding a memorable and positive way to interact and engage with consumers.

Technology has the power to connect people, boost productivity and streamline project management. And in terms of marketing, it presents an opportunity for brands to interact with consumers in a digital space. As a result, many organisations have transformed their approach to advertising and relationship-building in recent years. Even traditional media outlets have woken up to the allure of online with CRM-driven personalised direct mail and addressable TV adverts.



UK adults spend seven hours and 56 minutes a day consuming media

But for many, we have reached a point of digital saturation. UK adults spend seven hours and 56 minutes a day consuming media – an increase of 9% from 2016¹ – while the majority of Millennials look at their phone within the five minutes after waking up (65%) and the five minutes before going to sleep (60%)².

According to a study by UK regulator Ofcom, one in three (34%) people seek a period of time offline, using their digital detox to do other things (44%) and spend more time with friends and family (38%)³.



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In a bid to break free from their handset habit, people are increasingly searching for ways to return to a more authentic way of communicating with others, consuming information and interacting with the world around them. This means taking a tech-free holiday, or at least logging off at the weekend. And instead of staring at a computer, people might choose to pick up newspaper or magazine, watch TV or conduct their conversations face-to-face.

Brands need to pick up on this shift and bring old-world sensibilities to the online space – as well as boosting their offline offer – if they are going to have an enduring impact on consumers.

¹ http://www.ipa.co.uk/news/adults-spend-almost-8-hours-each-day-consuming-media#.Wl_iaahI82x

² <http://ipa.us4.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1f2c3c8034116a764afbdc0a5&id=e6d608e522&e=cf106b3443>

³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-36964081>

Cutting Through Tech-fatigue.

Tech fatigue. Digital deluge. Whatever you call it, the sheer volume of online information is causing some people to switch off. This means the 'spray-and-pray' approach to digital communications can no longer be relied on as 26% of desktop-users rely on ad-blockers⁴ to cut out unwanted noise. Our 2018 Global Marketing survey found 29% of respondents cited the rise of ad-blockers as a major concern for 2018.

The message to brands is clear. When it comes to uninspiring adverts or marketing messages for irrelevant products and services, consumers have lost their patience. With this in mind, perhaps it's not surprising that 39% of marketing decision-makers cited the possibility of consumers losing trust in advertising as a major concern for 2018.



...analogue formats still have the power to inspire and inform...”

Some international brands have already expressed their intention to cut back on online advertising: **Procter & Gamble** cut between \$100m and \$140m from its budget last quarter because of 'ineffective' ads and brand safety concerns⁵. While **Unilever** reduced the number of sites it advertises on by 11% between January and May 2016 and the same period in 2017. While online advertising spend continues to grow overall, it seems these two brands – like several others – have become increasingly suspicious of the 'spray and pray approach'. They might just represent the early pioneers of what could turn out to be a dramatic shift in the marketing industry's focus. They represent a small minority now, but as consumers get increasingly fed up with sites being saturated with ads it seems likely that other brands will follow suit.

Facebook has already pledged to reduce the marketing messages and news articles appearing in its news feed after its research showed that people are generally happier and have a better 'well-being' when they use social media to 'connect with people they care about' rather than reading articles or watching videos⁶.

⁴ <http://www.adweek.com/digital/iab-study-says-26-desktop-users-turn-ad-blockers-172665/>

⁵ <https://www.marketingweek.com/2017/08/04/brands-digital-pitfalls/>

⁶ <http://fortune.com/2018/01/12/facebook-news-feed-change/>



Quality Not Quantity is Key.

Our survey revealed 23% of marketing decision-makers plan to allocate more of their budget to traditional media outlets (TV, radio, outdoor, print, direct mail) in 2018. However, tech can still play a part by helping marketers create audience-centric adverts by collating and analysing data behind the scenes to offer actionable insights into where and how people consume information.

Brands that recognise people's disillusionment with digital and remember that analogue formats still have the power to inspire and inform will thrive. For example, **Persil's** 'Dirt is Good' campaign acknowledged many parents' concerns about the digital world distracting children from the power of outdoor play, while **Chipotle** championed offline reading with its 'Cultivating Thought' series, which saw the food brand print specially commissioned essays by literary heavyweights – including Jonathan Franzen and Toni Morrison – on its packaging.

Targeted messages are more likely to cut through online clutter, however, with the advent of GDPR – data protection legislation issued by the European Union – and recent data breaches that have compromised customer data, it's important not to cause further consumer concern. Sending a personalised message or revealing just how much insight your company has into a person's shopping habits and preferences might have the undesired impact of turning them off rather than gaining their attention in a positive way.



Making Human Connections.

It's not just about detoxing from the digital world, it's also about creating old-world experiences within today's online space. This is something that's essential to Helsinki-based Neverthink's philosophy – an online video-viewing platform that's intent on recreating a more 'old-school experience' of watching television.

Co-founder Aviv Junno explains the inspiration behind the company: "People have a misconception that video on demand is the future of TV. It might be the future of DVDs in terms of high-intent consumption, but low-intent consumption still exists and we didn't feel platforms like YouTube provided an adequate solution when compared with a 1990s TV viewing experience. We wanted to mimic what we were familiar with – a hands-free, limited choice experience. So ultimately, Neverthink is a platform that lets you watch online videos with a TV experience."

Recognising that there's an infinite amount of content online, Aviv says people – especially the younger generation – are less attached to it. "Snapchat has raised the appetite for one-time, non-committal viewing. Hoarding content is an old-fashioned way of thinking – that kind of behaviour doesn't exist any more and we tend to now think of content as disposable."



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But instead of trying to compete with other video platforms, Neverthink have gone back to basics in their approach to curation. "People are tired of algorithmic recommendations and instead they want to be surprised. We want to take users out of their digitally personalised bubble. We will not show them a video twice – what is available on the platform today will not be available tomorrow – and our curators watch 3,500 videos a day to handpick content to build the channels.

Essentially, we want to provide background watching, for when someone simply wants to grab a sandwich or do their make-up. There is a kind of old-school culture around it, the product is designed to look like a remote – it's a retro product for the Millennial generation."

Digital Minimalism.

In a landscape where ‘digital minimalism’ is the new buzzword, brands need to embrace a ‘less is more’ attitude when engaging with consumers. Above all else, they need to appear authentic. Substituting ‘brand’ for ‘human’ when devising a marketing strategy can go a long way towards driving real-life connections, as can learning from ‘old’ media – such as print and TV – which many consumers see as more reliable and accessible. People want to understand what a brand stands for, and see that brand live by its values.

We examine how brands can embody their values further in *Leading by Example* on page 4.

We have also seen a number of brands strip back their messaging to focus on their core competence, that is, the product or service on which the company is founded. It seems obvious, but incoming **McDonald’s** chief executive Steve Easterbrook’s decision to put the customer experience of ordering and enjoying a burger front-and-centre looks set to boost falling profits and restore the brand’s heritage status.

⁷ <https://www.openmarket.com/resources/millennials-still-love-text/>

⁸ <http://www.adweek.com/digital/report-92-of-online-consumers-use-emoji-infographic/>

This desire to go ‘back to basics’ is increasingly giving rise to technology and applications that enable more authentic connection or mimics analogue behaviours. For example, it might be a desire to connect on a human level that has given rise to the popularity of emojis among younger generations. While Millennials are happy to converse via their devices – 75% would prefer an SMS-only phone to a voice-only phone⁷ – 92% of online consumers want to add a human element in the form of an emoji that conveys a facial expression or body language, or a GIF that sums up an emotion⁸. Similarly, where conversation is tech-driven – as in the case of artificial intelligence-powered chatbots – people are looking for an engaging conversation where the respondent can adequately and realistically address their queries and questions.

It’s Good to Talk, page 28, highlights the lengths brands are going to in order to have real-life and real-time conversations with consumers.



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Online and In-store Integration.

In a bid to support real-life connections and foster a seamless customer experience, a number of innovative online companies have rolled out brick-and-mortar offerings. Perhaps the most significant is **Amazon**, which sounded the death knell for many independent book retailers when the site launched in the mid-1990s. Today, the shelves of its Amazon Books shops are stocked according to a title's customer rating and online sales figures – making it clear that these physical stores aren't intended to replace or even offer an alternative to e-commerce sites.

Similarly, some companies with an e-commerce and a brick-and-mortar presence make a portion of their products and services only available via e-commerce, in order to drive online traffic. The overall message? Companies need to embrace complementing offline and online elements with a view to offering a holistic shopping journey – and the same can be said to be true of a successful marketing strategy.



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CROSS MEDIA DELIVERY PARTNERS .

In addition to digital media, Freedman also specialises in TV, radio and print production and localisation. And while digital remains an essential tool in the marketing mix, many clients opt to support their strategy with printed materials and outdoor advertising. With more than 27 years' experience of print production, we offer clients a comprehensive advertising production service, managing the planning, production and delivery of materials across languages, markets and media.

