



PRESS RELEASE: THE MORALE OF MARKETER HAS NEVER BEEN SO LOW

Mechelen, 22nd March 2012: The Yearly Marketing Survey looks at the challenges, threats and opportunities for the marketer. Which tactics and which media does he use to try to achieve its goals and what skills should he show? The results of the YMS are quite shocking: while last year marketers were still (too) optimistic, it now appears that their confidence has completely disappeared. They seem to have lost ground, paralyzed by the economic situation.

Confidence is even lower than during the 2009 crisis

2012 promises to be a difficult year: a year where even more focus will be required, and where you will have to do more with less. The "Marketing Confidence Index", combining the expectations for the size of both the budget and marketing teams, reached an historic low (5.7%). Optimistic forecasts of last year not only have not come true, but we have even witnessed new budget cuts and a freeze on investments in marketing teams. The marketer also seems influenced by the index of consumer confidence, which is also very low.

Social media, mobile marketing and ROMI: confusing buzzwords

It is unthinkable not to include social media in a media plan, but it remains complicated. We are measuring more and more - and this is good news - but the results do not meet expectations. Marketers do not yet master the social media strategy; they choose the wrong KPIs and often underestimate the related additional workload and organizational consequences.

Mobile Marketing should have boomed this year, but nothing happened yet. Marketers still do not know how to integrate mobile marketing in the communication plan in a relevant manner.

For the fourth consecutive year, the term "ROMI" (Return On Marketing Investment) is gaining in importance. And legitimately since, with budgets under pressure, it seems essential to better analyze the performance of marketing efforts. But at the same time, it is still surprising to find "ROMI" among these buzzwords: the discipline should already be widely integrated into the overall marketing approach.

The biggest challenges of marketers are related to customers

Offering relevant products and services, engaging with the customer, getting his attention, are the three biggest challenges that faces the marketer. It's not a surprise when you see how the customer is better informed and "empowered" through the Internet.

In addition, a new challenge has emerged in the top five: do more with less, because of budget restrictions. And 38% of marketers think it is not an easy task. But it is in line with other findings.

In a world of uncertain economic conditions, it was expected that the customer becomes more price sensitive. He is better at looking for information, is able to compare easily, which leads to a diminished trust towards brands and stores. Increasing competition is also mentioned as a threat to the marketer.

Short term marketing tactics dominate, which is not without risk

The marketer is under pressure, he must be able to deliver short-term results, so he tends to invest more in brand activation and direct marketing. At the expense of traditional advertising, sponsorship or other more expensive media. This trend seems logical but it can be dangerous in the longer term: indeed, in many cases, brand activation actions rather reward disloyal customers and therefore do not help to build a loyal customer base.

The same question applies to the Direct Marketing: data are often used at random and there is a proliferation of online messages with irrelevant offers. Therefore, the success rate of such actions just keeps diminishing. Direct Marketing seems to become a mass medium.

“Owned” media win, “paid” media loose

Online, Mobile and own brochures are gaining importance in the media mix. Being able to address its own customers through its own media naturally presents many advantages. This is even more true with reducing budgets in an increasingly complex media world.

And traditional media are suffering the most. Unlike last year, we might expect a decline in investments in newspapers, magazines, radio and television. This is a worrying evolution because the strong and selective media brands find themselves under pressure. Such a development could lead to an impoverishment of the media landscape.

The new role of marketers: equilibrists wanted!

Marketers seem surprised by a rapidly changing world and are not able to anticipate these changes sufficiently. The skills are missing while demands are heavier and heavier. A marketer must not only be creative but also able to demonstrate an analytical mind. He should have a general view of all marketing tasks but also needs more and more specialized knowledge, often driven by technological innovation. He must remain curious, be constantly listening to his client and ready to adapt its way of working. The passion for marketing is a must, but passion for business even more.

In summary: the challenges are large but the opportunities are many!

Marketers need to find inspiration, develop more focus and creativity. Flexibility, both in terms of the organization and in their head, is essential. It is more than ever their duty to generate the impact and value in the long run, a role in which the marketer has never actually been quite comfortable.

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