

The human era of marketing

 By Jodene Shaer

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Clean-up in the marketing aisle! Social media has swiped its hand across B2B and B2C and left marketing in disarray. Watch your step, because H2H is demanding shelf space.



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When social media stepped in as the new guy in marketing, he brought with him a term, which no one has taken seriously enough. Human-to-human (H2H) marketing is not new, but business to business (B2B) and business to consumer (B2C) certainly is old.

Honestly, I'm feeling old. I feel it most when I have a brainstorming session with my content and community manager for our social media clients. My business hasn't crossed over into the digital marketing space because my passion is most definitely the social of media. There is the occasional clash with my team over content strategy and online engagement, and it's not our fault. My role as middleman between my youthful team and clients needing to make sales has dug a trench in the sand. While we all squabble about targeting the correct 'audience' or talking to each human as an individual, our potential customers are finding cover in the trenches.

Brands consume more tweets on my timeline than the connections I genuinely made when Twitter began. Facebook is the biggest advertising platform on earth, and Instagram has moved from being the only place where we were free of marketing, to a brand haven for new promotional opportunities. I know this because strategy meetings are swamped with the demand to find brand voice through the swarm of marketing noise. Yet, all the while, the consumer is hiding in the trenches, ducking the bombardment of outdated marketing and old school advertising.

In a quick strategy, I reached out to my disheartened Twitter community. I asked them for their expectation of a brand, online: 53% said they wanted acknowledgement as an individual; and over 20% said brands didn't care about them, so why should they care back? The remainder were interested in what a brand has to say, yet millions is pumped into reaching 'target market' and not enough attention is paid to the human being who cares to listen.

H2H is not a strategy, it is a demand. Social networks were born from the human elements of connection, curiosity and communication. Marketers ourselves are frustrated with being treated as consumers within the social space, yet as we step into a strategy session, we leave our humanness at the door and send out the army to invade 'consumers', 'audience', 'target market' and 'demographic'.

The human era of marketing is one of encouragement to share relationships online. For the brand to become a friend, with a listening ear and a story to tell. For the consumer to desire a connection to the brand, just as they would with their family and friends. Emotion, support and commitment are human desires which should be the foundation of any brand strategy, with the ultimate message being, 'I am your brand and I hear you, I see you, I care for you'.

ABOUT JODENE SHAER

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