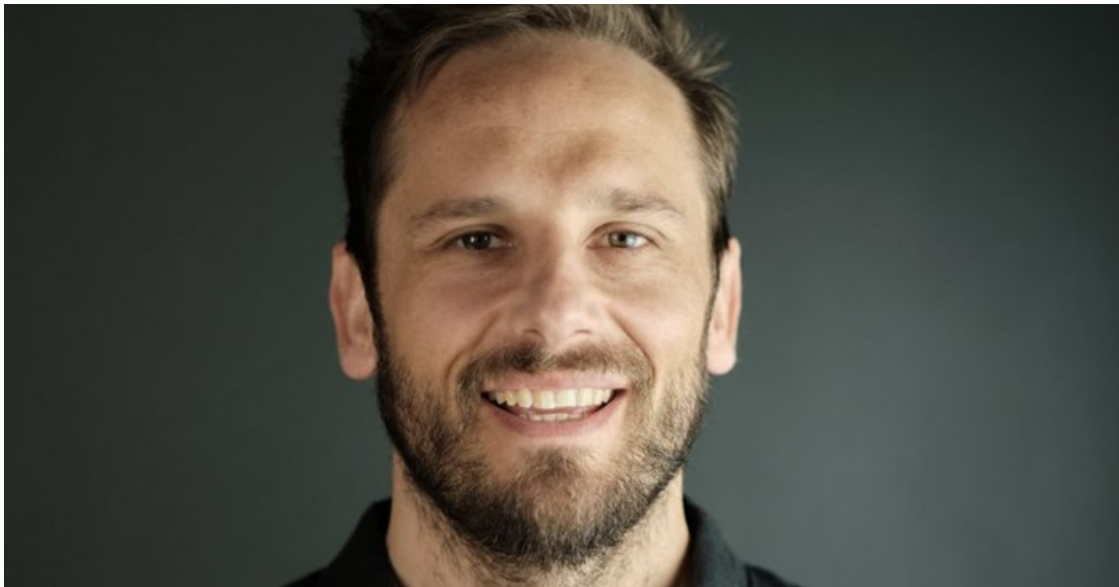


Experiential marketing's future: Integration and innovation anchored in data

By [Grant Fleming](#)

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Despite the rising inflation and the looming possibility of a recession, brands continue to show commitment by investing in creating real-life experiences for their target audiences



Grant Fleming, managing director of the Racket Club. Source: Supplied.

These experiences allow brands to engage directly in ways that other channels do not and since moving past the pandemic years, this channel is back in full force.

Consumers crave interaction, and brands that use data and insights and build on with innovation and integration, will be the ones that own this space by building long standing relationships with their target audience and fostering love for their brand.

Here's what you need to be aware of when it comes to succeeding in the experiential space:

Data first... please

It comes as no surprise when I say that data and insights should be at the forefront of all experience based work, yet there is so much work I see which certainly doesn't take this important step into consideration. This very data and insight helps us understand our target audience, it assists us in developing personalised experiences, and of course measures the success of the campaign.

But it doesn't stop there, data helps us to identify what's most important and how the budget can be divided so as not to waste a cent, and thus increase project value. This is before I even get into the creative and strategic advantages of having this data. In order to obtain this data we (agency or brand) need to invest in the right tools (these tools are dependent on what your KPIs are and vary from data and insights to tracking and executional tools), research, experience and of course insight teams to build this data - Having a deep understanding of the brand in question is also extremely important.

These all need to be in place for us to get the rest right.

Innovation translates to seamless execution

At first glance, one may think innovation directly translates to technological advances. This is in part true, but what if you are not the first to use this technology or way of working? Can innovation still exist? The simple answer to this is yes. If it has been done, just reinvent the way it's done - or as some would say do it differently. Think about different applications and executions. That in itself is innovation.

New ways of executing, stripped back or working out a way to react quicker are great examples of innovation in the experiential space.. Innovation is about ease of getting it done, and of course doing that seamlessly and better than before. Sometimes the most simple execution can be the most innovative. Taking old technology or ways of working and using it differently is where innovation can really come to life, especially as budgets continue to shrink.



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In a recent campaign for Cipla we used old technology in the form of lenticular printing and brought a print ad to life in-store by having the campaign key-visual move through this old printing technology. Lenticular printing is a form of printing where you create frames and print over each other resulting in the print moving as your eyes move over it.

The result was a less bulky, cost effective execution and by stripping back the thinking and simplifying the execution we were able to execute meeting all objectives of the brief. This is a great example of innovation and reinventing the way something was applied or used.

Integration provides the golden thread

Integration should really be the buzz word of 2023, like "Hybrid" was in 2020 and 2021, you really cannot create an experiential campaign in 2023 without merging live and digital in one of the following two ways:

1. Integrating channels - Consumers want to engage in the real world and connect in the digital world. Creating experiences that merge live and digital channels is a great way to increase reach and awareness, speak to a wider audience and of course entertain across platforms.

The Doritos Scavenger Hunt that took place across the U.S is a great example here. They created a live hunt for Dorito triangles and made it interactive through augmented reality whereby using your phone you could turn buildings into Dorito triangle chips. They then took the campaign even further by integrating the takeover of a level on Fortnite. This is just an example to showcase the power of integration in experiences.

2. Digital touch points - These allow for far more impressive personalisation and further learnings. Everything from live filters, photo moments and gamification on stand will help immerse your target audience into the experience and keep them

coming back for more. Experiences like this encourage shareability with your audience posting their experiences on their own social platforms.

In a nutshell, the trajectory of experiential marketing is tied to the twin pillars of integration and innovation with data reigning as their fundamental bedrock. And to succeed, it's important that integration unites physical and digital realms, magnifying reach, and nurturing those lasting engagements every brand or agency so desperately wants. In the experiential space, success will only emerge when these forces come together seamlessly, and I'm looking forward to seeing how this plays out both locally and globally.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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