

eBook

TOP FOUR TRENDS IN PRODUCT MARKETING FOR 2016

INTRODUCTION

As a marketing professional, you're the company's trend monitor and forecaster. You thrive on staying ahead of the curve by trying the latest market trends. You're constantly thinking of what the next exciting, creative and innovative step is in how to push your product forward.

With the advent of the New Year, every product marketer is strategizing ever more powerful ways of capturing people's attention in 2016. The up-and-coming marketing trends in 2016 will dictate the way you'll use your content. There are all types of creative ways that you can itemize and repackage your content. After all, as Einstein so famously said, "Creativity is intelligence having fun."

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Let your creativity run wild, come up with imaginative ideas. Package these ideas into the four top trends that market insiders have predicted will dominate the market in 2016. So, here they are – the four top trends in product marketing for the new year.

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TREND #1: VIDEO ADS WILL REIGN SUPREME THANKS TO GOOGLE

Embedding Video Ads in SERP

Google is testing out new ways of embedding video ads in its SERP (Search Engine Results Pages), alongside traditional text-based ads. Starting in 2016, when you search in Google, instead of just textual based results, you will have video streaming advertisements. "This functionality could allow videos to emerge as thumbnails, which could then be expanded upon when clicked, or could introduce auto-played videos" (Forbes, 2015). This is big. 77% of consumers believe that companies who create online ads are more engaged with their customers and 58% believe that companies are more trustworthy when producing video content.

"77% of consumers believe that companies who create online ads are more engaged with their customers." [Click to Tweet.](#)

Bing and Yahoo have already been testing this for a while. However, with Google implementing video advertising in SERP, this is surely going to take off in a big way. It's kind of like Beyonce retweeting your comment on a new hit song. As the largest search engine, Google jumping on the band wagon is validating the importance of this tool.

Not to mention that it's a clear indicator of consumers becoming accustomed to visual media.

Get in the Game -- Making Your Video Ad

In 2016, creating a video that embodies your product is the new standard in creating good content. It's imperative that your company communicates your brand's worth with multimedia formats that can be visually presented to customers. Why?

We are visual beings. According to research conducted by 3M, the brain processes visual information 60,000 times faster than text. It's no surprise then that 72% of in-stream video ads are watched in their entirety. Consumers are 27 times more likely to click through a video ad than a standard banner. The numbers here are self-explanatory. Images speak volumes but videos have the ability to create a multi-dimensional experience, ensuring that your brand is no longer perceived as simply a company, but a personality or an experience. Now that you know the FORM in which to produce future content, the question is -- how will you create a video that embodies your brand, its mission, its meaning and its uniqueness.

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“According to research conducted by 3M, the brain processes visual information 60,000 times faster than text.” [Click to Tweet.](#)

User-Generated Content

The videos shouldn't come from you alone. User-generated content carries a power that surpasses brand content. Think of it as a co-creation.

How can you engage users and encourage their content production on your behalf? Engage users in campaign contests or competitions.

Target, for example, launched a college acceptance letter competition. Customers simply had to submit videos of themselves opening their college acceptance letters. The best videos were then used in a new commercial which helped draw attention to Target's philanthropic campaign- their pledge to donate \$500 million to education.

Even without philanthropic initiatives, giving consumers an opportunity to be part of your creative production draws them in. Starbucks launched a White Cup Contest in where customers sketched a design on a Starbucks cup and uploaded a photo as an entry. The winning template was actually used as a limited edition cup! Great for publicity and a solid mechanism for showing customers you appreciate them.



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TREND #2: PERSONALIZING COMPANY MESSAGING

With a large consumer base, personalization can seem like a difficult challenge. Don't fret. There are easy, simple tactics to personalize your interactions.

Start with addressing your audience as you would a friend, rather than a mass consumer database. You wouldn't send your friend an email addressed to 'friend'. In fact, according to a recent study on brain activation, people tend to like you more if you use their name a few times throughout the conversation. This is true for emails as well. According to a report conducted by Experian, personalized marketing emails receive 29% higher open rates and 41% higher click-through rates. Those are some solid KPIs for just including a name.

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Moving beyond name personalization, segment your audience by time zone. Schedule email blasts so that they're optimized per time-zone. This will make sure that emails don't get lost in the email blast

overloads that takeover customer inboxes while they sleep.

Segment content to customer type. How so? Take Boca Java for example. As a gourmet coffee retailer, they segmented their email lists based on how many bags of coffee customers ordered. In this way, they were able to offer relevant discounts according to customer's individual purchasing habits.

Even beyond purchasing habits is actual customer needs. Doggyloot- a website strictly for dog products- seems segmented enough, right? Wrong. There are numerous types of dogs and a plethora of ways to care for them, each unique to the specific needs of that particular canine friend. Doggyloot therefore segments their leads by the size of your dog. So simple, yet so effective. There is no use in offering large products, like a 10 pound bone, to an owner of a 5 pound dog; the same way a small business owner doesn't need enterprise level software.

Don't stop there. Personalization needs to be built into your website - something that most companies don't do yet. 71% of companies

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fail to personalize their websites! Don't let your users get lost in the masses. Online guidance systems that are overlaid onto your website can identify incoming traffic and guide users to specific areas of the website depending on their needs. Targeted landing pages can be customized to the specific needs of a group.

Perfect example: Amazon. As a site that seems to have a limitless global database, in theory navigating your way through should be almost as nightmarish as a Bergdorf's pre-season sample sale. And yet, Amazon is successful because the site is personalized for each visitor. Directly on the homepage is an analysis of your behavior with recommended products and reviews based on your previous purchases and browsing habits, ensuring an easy conversion rate, a pleasant experience and an almost guaranteed return visit.

A personalized web experience results in an average 19% increase in sales. [Click to Tweet.](#)



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TREND #3: BIG DATA PUTS YOUR GUT FEELING TO THE TEST

Big Data is revolutionizing business operations the same way the Internet did. That's because Big Data is a tool that provides quantifiable information on every human action and stores it in an endless and ever-growing database. It is the convergence of enterprise and consumer information.

In fact, 79% of companies agree that companies that don't embrace Big Data will, not only lose their competitive edge, but cease to exist. Geoffrey Moore, management consultant and theorist, explained it with the following analogy, "Without Big Data, you are blind and deaf in the middle of the freeway." Without this tool, your company cannot fully comprehend the needs of your customers on a deep enough level to keep them happy, let alone keep up with competitors.

The Big Data phenomenon impacts various aspects of business operations. The top 3 being, impacting customer relationships, redefining product development and changing the way the company operates on an organizational level.

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organizational level. [Click to Tweet.](#)

For a business, information on customers is gathered, retained and applied through Big Data. Applied being the key factor here. It's crucial that relationship building is done properly. Using the data to throw suggested products in your clients' faces aka spam is a big marketing faux pas. Rather, approach your customers in a way that tells them 'we've done our homework', we know what you want. After all, 90% of consumers find custom content useful, while 78% percent believe that custom content is the company's way of showing their customers that they care about the relationship and are committed to building it.

Behavior-driven data enables us to give customers exactly what they want. Although this will require an even greater investment in advertising production, market spending will become significantly more precise since leveraging insights from big data to accurately targeting prospects will include providing exactly the right message in the most appealing format. However this will render an improved return on investment since the strategies will be much more precise based on the specific and effective information retrieved.

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TREND #4: “MOBILEGEDDON” AND THE DEFEAT OF THE DESKTOP

In 2015, mobile traffic overtook desktop traffic in 10 countries! It's expected that over 2 billion users will own smartphones in 2016. This gives companies unprecedented leverage to connect directly with their customers. Talk about domination.

Google's Algorithm + Tim Cook's Prediction

For 2016, availability is becoming synonymous with mobility. Say your company has recently invested money in revamping your website -- the full blown makeover -- including parallax and interactive user content. Sure, aesthetically it looks great and may even produce a wow factor, but if your site is not compatible with mobile devices, you're going nowhere fast. Google released an algorithm that severely penalizes websites that aren't mobile responsive. Mobile is no longer a suggestion, but a requirement.

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This is so true that Tim Cook, the CEO of Apple, even said: “I think if you're looking at a PC, why would you buy a PC anymore? No really, why would you buy one. Yes, the iPad Pro is a replacement for a

notebook or a desktop for many, many people. They will start using it and conclude they no longer need to use anything else, other than their phones.”

Why is mobile so important? According to USA Today, 87% of the digital generation admits to never being without their phone. Fifty percent admit that it's the first thing they reach for in the morning, forming an integral part of our daily lives. Not only have 14% of people said that they wouldn't do business with a company that didn't have a mobile presence, but customer ratings for e-commerce websites are nearly 10% higher.

Moreover, according to a recent article in the Wall Street Journal, digital-marketing firm IgnitionOne, found a 44% increase in the number of clicks on mobile search ads, compared to the same period a year earlier. There has been a significant increase in mobile use. If your website isn't compatible with mobile devices, you're digging your own grave here.

This is a vital piece of information for strategizing. As you plan your 2016 budget, keep this mantra in mind: Desktops get ditched. Mobile makes money.

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APPS: THE FUNCTIONALITY OF THE FUTURE

As a leading company, you may already have joined the mobile trend and update your mobile site constantly, even employing a team specifically dedicated to mobile marketing. According to Salesforce, 58% of companies surveyed in 2015 already do. However, you should strongly consider going beyond the mobile capabilities into app development. And when I say strongly consider, I mean do it. In-app functionality is diversifying. Facebook is leading the way through its current development of M, a digital assistant, providing the user with extended services, so that users never having to exit the app.

Picture this likely scenario: You're out and about and decide you want to see a movie. There are plenty of apps that list movie and theater information times. But then you have to exit the app to watch the trailer, read reviews and decide if this movie is in fact worth your precious time. Enter Flixster, an app that provides an all-in-one platform for your movie-viewing needs. It's designed efficiently to give you all relevant information from movie times, locations, reviews and ratings- from platforms such as Rotten Tomatoes in addition to social media integration, all the way through to purchasing tickets. It even goes as far to let you purchase and watch movies inside the app itself. Now that's a scenario I'd be happy to play out.

As you learn more about your customers and what their needs are, on a personal level, you'll be able to start anticipating their needs, even before they realize something is lacking. And THAT is really the name of the game.

Adjusting to these current trends can be daunting, but as a marketing professional- this is where you shine. Use this opportunity to show your company the amazing and incredible facets of creativity and innovation. Market trends are not only informative -- they're the key to your success.

As you budget and strategize for 2016, just think of DAVE. Data. Accessibility. Videos. Emotions. Happy Planning!

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ABOUT WALKME

[WalkMe](#) gives SaaS providers an indispensable tool to onboard trial users and to “be there” with existing customers. Leveraging the WalkMe interactive self-guidance technology, SaaS providers can ensure their prospects and existing customers have a simple, smooth & burden-free experience with their software, thereby increasing usability, eliminating confusion and frustration.

SaaS providers use WalkMe to increase free to paid conversions, reduce churn rates and highlight new features. Customers of WalkMe report lower acquisition costs, as well as reduced training and customer service costs.

Through a series of interactive tip balloons overlaid on the screen, tasks are broken down into short, step-by-step guided instructions, which help users act, react and progress during their software usage.

As a result, SaaS providers can feel assured their customer will be able to focus on what they want to do using your software, and free from the confusion of how to do them. They can also empower their customers to self-task successfully even through the most complex processes.

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Product Marketing
Champion**

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