

Broad targeting, penetration strategies key to brand awareness in 2016

Author : Tom Knox

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New Year's Resolution: Why getting noticed in 2016 is all about being disruptive, challenging and entertaining

Five years ago professor Byron Sharp from The Ehrenberg- Bass Institute in Australia published a book called "How Brands Grow". Part two has just been published. (Oxford University Press).

Whilst it has already caused quite a stir in marketing circles, I predict that 2016 will be the year that his evidence –based laws of marketing go mainstream and really start to influence the decisions that marketers and agencies make.

In many respects what he says is revolutionary and extremely challenging to conventional marketing wisdom. If it's not properly understood it can even seem to undermine much of what we deem to be 'clever marketing strategy'.

I won't try to summarise all the brilliant learnings contained within these two books here (suffice to say that if you haven't yet read them and you work in marketing you are not taking your career sufficiently seriously). But I will focus on rule three of his "seven simple rules for marketing" because it's vital for advertising agencies and what we do.

Rule three is "Get noticed". Sharp talks about creating memory structures via distinctive branded assets that are consistently applied over time but he also acknowledges the fact that consumers don't pay much attention to brands or to advertising.

To get noticed there is "considerable empirical evidence showing the link between ad liking and ad awareness".

When you add the weight of Byron Sharp's data to the work of Daniel Kahneman in understanding how human beings process information you arrive at some fundamental conclusions about what effective advertising looks like.

So in 2016 I expect we will be talking a lot more about penetration strategies versus loyalty strategies, a lot more about broad targeting versus micro targeting, a lot more about emotional

engagement and that one of the big beneficiaries of all this will continue to be television (the surprise success package amongst media in 2015).

Digital advertising and particularly mobile will continue to grow but we will be asking better informed questions about what role different elements of the channel mix should play and in particular mobile advertising will need to respond to the rise of adblocking and realise that irritating consumers is the very opposite of good marketing.

Of course my New Year's resolution has to be to live more by the rules that Byron Sharp has identified.

At Mullen Lowe we talk about getting brands “an unfair share of attention”. This means being disruptive, challenging and entertaining. So in 2016 I'll be trying as hard as possible to live by that mantra. I'll also try to do it in a way that considers every possible media avenue available and delivers a communications solution that genuinely maximizes what Sharp calls “mental and physical availability”.

<https://youtu.be/X7Lnox3renk>

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