‘Shared Media’ Is the Future And Will Disrupt Media Buying As We Know It

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“Shared media” is outperforming traditional **digital advertising** by 10 times. So what exactly is shared media, and why is it so successful?

In traditional media buying, the advertiser buys audience exposure from a publisher, broadcaster or ad network. The publisher or ad network shows the ad to its audience and is paid by the advertiser according to the number of people reached.

With shared media, the advertising brand provides tools to its own loyal audience to create and share **branded** marketing with their peers, a form of guided word-of-mouth marketing. Snapchat, for example, with its branded filters that enable users to create and share **branded** selfies or videos with their Snapchat friends, has proven that, given the right tools, consumers will market on behalf of the **brands** they love.

And, shared media is far more watched and trusted than any conventional advertising message can ever be because a company’s loyal followers have a lot more pull with their own friends than a brand (or anyone else for that matter–that’s the definition of a friend).

To set a broader stage, **digital advertising** is poised for disruption. For years, the only way for **brands** to reach a broad audience was to pay the TV networks, for example, for ad time. And then when the Internet took off in the 1990s, **brands** began to buy ads from websites and ad networks the way they’d always bought TV ads–simply moving budget to the new medium.

Now that mobile is taking over as the consumer’s primary screen, brands are using the same tactics–but the old playbook is failing badly. Consumers hate interruptive ads on mobile eight times more than TV ads (AdReaction “Video Creative in a Digital World” Global Report from Millward Brown) and consumer trust for ad in general is declining, which means **brands** need to radically shift the way they reach their target audience.

And yet **brands** continue to funnel more and more of their media budgets to **digital** channels to follow the eyeballs, because it’s what they know.

Mobile presents **brands** with both a huge challenge and a tremendous opportunity. While the challenge of traditional ads proving ineffective on mobile is real, the opportunity for brands is real, as well. In fact, it's right in front of them.

Their own audience is now connected everywhere they go, and they're sharing moments with their friends and family nonstop. The brands that are able to join these conversations (without interrupting them) are the brands that will win on mobile.

It's time for brands to stop thinking about which network to spend this year's ad budget on and instead turn the focus to activating their own existing audience.

All **brands** have reach–some to millions or even billions of consumers. That reach may come from their own web visitors or application users, from within their product experience itself, their packaging, their retail presence and, for some, their live events. A **brand's** reach–not its budget–is its biggest asset for growing its business.

Activating a **brand's** audience is as simple as giving its loyal followers the tools to promote the brand to their friends, just as Citi did with its Today Show Concert Series sponsorship withSelena Gomez.

Concert goers could create and share **Selena-branded** videos which served as a force multiplier for Citi, enabling it to, for every one person attending the concert, engage over 150 more not attending with branded mobile video.

In today's connected world, consumers themselves have reach to a highly targeted, lookalike audience of friends and followers. The average consumer connects with hundreds of friends on places like **Facebook** and **Twitter** and several-hundred more contacts in their mobile phone's address book. And when a consumer shares something of interest, their friends engage at astonishing rates–rates far higher than when a brand interrupts a consumer with whom they have no real relationship.

When the power of a **brand's** existing audience is combined with the reach of each of their customers and the influence those customers have on their own networks, the opportunity for brands is massive.

So how do **brands** join the conversations that are happening all around their products? The key is to offer the consumer something fun and frictionless that adds value to the conversation without interrupting it.

Like Taco Bell, **brands** like Citi, Maybelline and Lilly Pulitzer have begun testing shared media campaigns, and the results are blowing away traditional mobile **advertising** response rates.

Audience participation rates are often as high as 10 percent. That means up to 10 percent of consumers reached create and share videos with a brand filter. For each video shared, more than 200 unique individuals view the videos. 65 percent of those views are to completion and always in full-screen and with full audio.

When those videos include shopable calls-to-action, the friends who view the videos engage with those calls-to-action at rates of 2 percent to 11 percent These metrics far outperform any other ad type on mobile today. This shared media truly provides **brands** with the opportunity to abandon the old way of **advertising** and focus on their own, existing audience as the driver of future growth.

Looking at the bigger picture, mobile has very quickly become the consumer's first screen. And **brands** can no longer afford to fail on this ubiquitous and personal device. With mobile phones in consumers' hands wherever they go, brands now have the opportunity and the incentives to connect with their audience at emotive, highly targeted moments and, in turn, activate that audience to grow reach for them.

It's a game-changing opportunity for the brands that capitalize on the perfect storm of creative self-expression, **social** connectivity and an entertaining and welcomed engagement with **brands.**

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