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THE SECRET WEAPON OF MODERN BRANDS

WHY COMPANIES MUST EMBRACE EXPERIENTIAL AND WORD OF MOUTH MARKETING

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THE SECRET WEAPON OF MODERN BRANDS

WHY COMPANIES MUST EMBRACE EXPERIENTIAL AND WORD OF MOUTH MARKETING

Advertising has been the lifeblood of the marketing discipline since the age of mass media. Add to that the accelerant of the internet age, and advertising spend reached \$581 billion dollars in 2018.

But the model? It's fundamentally broken.

Despite the dollars spent on advertising, a full three-quarters (76%) of consumers who have been exposed to digital ads don't remember seeing them, and their unaided brand awareness – in other words, their memory and knowledge of the brands behind the ads without prompting – is low.

The problem is that the digital world creates noise. More of it than ever before.

As a result, people block digital ads with increasing frequency, and regulations like GDPR mean that companies have to be incredibly thoughtful – and careful – about how they target audiences with advertising online.

So where's the disconnect? And what can marketers do about it?

“
**THE DIGITAL
WORLD
CREATES
NOISE**



BRAND IS MEANINGLESS WITHOUT EXPERIENCE

Ultimately, we have to stop treating ads as the beginning of the customer journey. They're not.

But too many brands make that mistake.

A clever slogan, a brilliant turn of creative; brands will have spent \$408 million dollars in advertising during the Super Bowl alone in 2018. And yet how many of us can recall a witty ad or one that made us laugh...but can't for the life of us remember the company behind it?

In order to spark interest from new audiences and solidify trust from old friends, we need an enduring, lingering aftertaste for our brand that sits in the minds and hearts of our audiences and customers. And we don't get that without something different.

We must create something immersive. Something tangible. Something our audiences can remember beyond a moment of entertainment that gets them not only talking about what they've seen but remembering it for years to come.

The heartbeat of a modern brand is its ability to create experiences.



HOW TO CAPTURE HEARTS, MINDS, AND WALLETS AND GET PEOPLE TALKING

Among Millennials alone, 78% of them say they'd spend money on a desirable experience over buying something, and nearly 8 in 10 say some of their best memories are from a live experience.

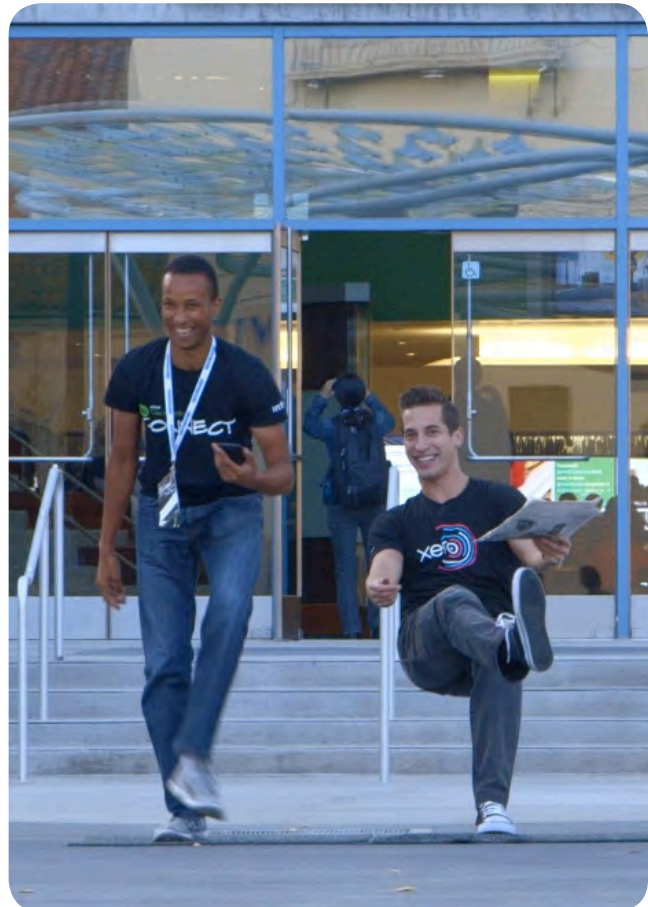
But whether you're trying to reach younger generations or those who have been in the market for a while, there are a few things you can do to design experiences that inspire people, that make them think or laugh or love, and that create the word of mouth that propels modern companies into iconic brands.

DOUBLE DOWN ON YOUR FANS

The "influencers" that will accelerate your brand uptake aren't just celebrities with mega-audiences. In fact, for most brands, those are exactly the wrong people to foster credibility and connection among communities you want to reach.

Instead, double down on reaching the people who are already loyal to your brand. [Increasing your customer retention by just 5% can boost profits by anywhere from 25 to 95%](#)

And creating experiences that establish positive emotional connections – whether those are live events or highly-personalized individual outreach campaigns – can encourage your most loyal customers to deepen their relationships with your products and your company.





Hubba is a marketplace and platform that helps independent retailers find, purchase and sell-through unique products for their stores. We wanted to do something big and bold to help people learn about them, but we started in the most important place: with Hubba's customers.

Through our [Hubba Across America tour](#), we drove from LA to NYC helping these craft brands create great video content (in many cases the first pieces of branded content they've ever had!), and helping get those videos out through our network. The result? An average of 13K views per video and, yep, actual sales.

In large part, advertising really is about strengthening the connections with the people who already know you. They associate your brand with emotions – from nostalgia to comfort to excitement to aspiration – and their familiarity and continued business is what will ultimately drive your success.

EMBRACE POLITE DISRUPTION

Worried about the competition? Tiptoe onto their turf. Politely, of course.

We created an opportunity for accounting software company Xero to quietly but definitively create a memorable moment for attendees of Intuit's QuickBooks Connect event and introduce them to their add-on partners.



During a short two-hour period, [we parked a levitating magician](#) just outside the event on the public sidewalk. He wasn't obtrusive, he didn't shout, he didn't do anything but say hello to passerby on their way into the convention center.

But his unconventional appearance was a conversation starter, and inevitably people stopped to talk, to ask questions, and ultimately to find out that he was here to introduce people to Xero and the partners we had at the event. Our team was



on standby with t-shirts and cupcakes, and this polite-but-present activation meant that other conference attendees were asking where they too could get connected to this brand.

It takes a bit of courage to create moments like this, but they're just different enough to create the kind of buzz that most brands would pay big bucks to generate.



CREATE UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS

While most brands spend big, hard cash on Super Bowl ad spots this year, Skittles decided to do something completely unexpected.

They approached their agency DDB to come up with a fresh idea because, well – as they admitted – Super Bowl ads, while buzzworthy for a moment, don't really do much for candy sales since most game-day snacks are purchased in advance of the game.

So instead, they decided to create buzz before the big day, and in an unconventional way. They created an entire Broadway show of their own.

They signed on legit Broadway playwrights, directors, and big-name actors, released



teasers, and even put out an Original Cast Recording of the soundtrack on Spotify. Tickets for the 30-minute show went for as much as \$200 each, and completely sold out.

“It is by design and definition an unrepeatable, once-in-a-lifetime event and sometimes those things are good,” said Brian Eno, the musical’s writer, whose lyrics poke fun directly at the advertising industry they’re meant to disrupt.

And while it’ll take some time to determine the impact of the event on Skittles sales, one thing’s for sure: the spot got people talking and even debating the merits of advertising while lauding Skittles’ ingenuity as a brand.

That kind of word of mouth is simply impossible to buy.



**THAT KIND OF WORD OF MOUTH
IS SIMPLY IMPOSSIBLE TO BUY**

WANT TO CREATE YOUR OWN BUZZWORTHY EXPERIENCE?

Word-of-mouth recommendations drive modern commerce, and your brand doesn't need to be left out.

Whether you're a small B2B company trying to break through or an established organization wanting to do something different, it's worth considering how you can create truly breakthrough experiences that create conversation about your brand.

Maybe it's a big-splash moment in time, or maybe it's an [ongoing effort to create a community and conversation where it's needed most.](#)

In a noisy, crowded world of advertisers shouting over one another for attention, you can be the company that does something distinctive, something memorable, and something that delivers an experience for your customers that they'll not soon forget.

Experiences and word of mouth marketing can be your brand's secret weapon in a digital age. And we're here to help.

If your company is in need of something to start a conversation, or is just plain boring, we should chat and make something beautiful together.

