IDENTIFYING AND ACTIVATING DIGITAL MOMENTS TO UNLOCK GROWTH

Behavioral Science & Design Perspectives
MARCH 2020

fractal

COVID-19: A need to re-look at digital

In light of the COVID-19 epidemic, businesses across the world are slowing down. Sectors such as travel and hospitality are already experiencing severe slowdowns. Others like retail, consumer goods, financial services will face pressures on demand and supply-side with social distancing and work from home policies in effect[1].

While the US Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated that only about 29% of workers could work from home, this is skewed towards the more educated and some industries, like tech and finance[2]. But the COVID-19 pandemic has surely forced an increase in that number - even if for the short term. An interesting side effect of work from home and social distancing policies is the increase in online services such as:

• **streaming:** Netflix sees usage ≥ by 60%[3]
• **e-commerce:** average weekly revenue growth rates ≥ by 52% (but with many complications)[4]
• **remote collaboration and teleconference:** Microsoft Teams usage ≥ upwards of 200% to zoom stock price shooting up 42% since January[5]

Of these, the impact of e-commerce is of most concern to CPG manufacturers because of its twin threat: on the one hand, many CPG categories have been laggards in e-commerce, and on the other hand, e-commerce decreases brick and mortar shopping trips (a main-stay for impulse categories such as confectionery, for instance). In this situation, it is imperative that CPG manufacturers re-look at their digital strategy towards areas of growth.

Digital Marketing: Beyond Consumer Journey
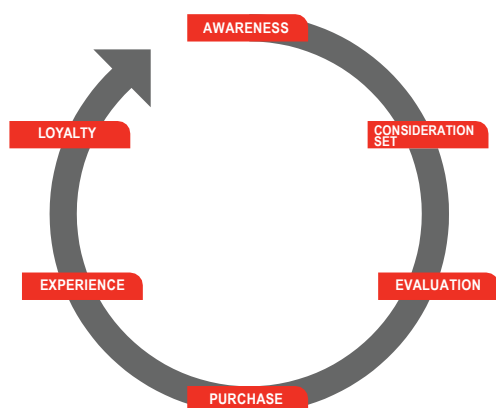
Traditional consumer journey models detail out 'ideal consumer journey' across various milestones, and allows the creation of customized experience-based models. This macro, milestone-based model misses micro-moments that underlie real-life consumer experiences.

Across these moments, consumer preferences are constructed and reconstructed, making the real-life journey non-linear, contrary to what is traditionally assumed.

Emotionally Congruent Micro-Moments

Most moments are relevant to categories and brands because of their emotional congruence with the category, product, or brand. For example, when feeling cognitively depleted because of a long meeting or reading multiple articles on COVID-19, the resulting emotional low of depletion is relevant for a whole category of products which can be used to get a dopamine refill - from coffee to snacks and so on.

But, unlike a consumption milestone or a purchase milestone in a journey, many of these moments are not apparent or activated by CPG manufacturers whose focus remain on milestones.

Identifying and Activating Digital Moments

People have specific action tendencies in various emotionally charged moments. Various digital 'action tendencies' of consuming, connecting, sharing, engaging etc. can be interpreted, along with other signals, as a digital fingerprint of moments. For example, we are likely to be mindlessly browsing content when depleted, than deeply engaging in a Twitter-war.

Activating these moments is not a category level job - CPG manufacturers have to think sub-category. For instance, while liquid soap is functionally similar to a bar of soap, it is quite psychologically distinct - liquid being more apt for social distancing. Activation of social distancing moments for soap has to incorporate a behavioral understanding of such moments of doubts, the appropriate digital signals across different channels, and a context-appropriate messaging - a new form of digital marketing.

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[1] https://fractal.ai/covid-19-impact-on-cpg/

[2] https://theblog.adobe.com/how-covid-19-is-impacting-online-shopping-behavior/

[3] https://techcrunch.com/2020/03/17/nielsen-explains-how-covid-19-could-impact-media-usage-across-the-u-s/

[4] https://marketingland.com/coronavirus-and-e-commerce-its-complicated-277480

[5] https://www.geekwire.com/2020/zoom-ceo-coronavirus-outbreak-will-change-landscape-work-communication/