

MICRO MOMENTS MARKETING – TENDENCIES IN THE BRANDS MARKETING

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Abstract:

To succeed in the highly competitive actual environment, every minute needs innovation. The innovation communication as the innovation in communication does not imply, necessarily, up to date technology, but it can start from a simple idea with strong impact, implemented using the offline and online media, each one holding a well-established role. In an innovation era, just a few organizations seem to integrate the communication management in innovation processes. Thus, there is missing the central premise to move from the position of information about innovation to the strategic approach, absolutely indispensable in any endeavor of innovation communication. If the television is undoubtedly the most effective in generating awareness and familiarity with the brand, the online space is the place of strategies application, where we are encouraged to act, spurring the purchase intent.

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1. The current consumer behavior

Even if the current customer is behind the brand, he wishes to transpose himself into a character of the "story" transmitted by him, to interrupt when he considers it necessary to do so, but also to contribute to it. In turn, the companies that have strong brands and manage to find their purpose in their consumers' life will benefit in the long term.

Although they seem eager for new and different, the consumers do not change their behavior unless they motivate themselves, unless they consider that what they do is good. In general, people are worried about change, then they ask themselves what they gain or lose if they change something and overstrain causes them not to wish for more. But, as usual, curiosity wins. And so, in order to go further convinced that they made a good decision, they turn to the online media. Here they inform themselves, they make comparisons and ask for advice, while in the offline media they are in direct contact with the product and they possibly test it. If 20 years ago the TV was only available screen to the general public, at this moment, it only matters 25% of the time that people spend in front of various screens (excluding the conversations on the phone or using the PC for office work).

Lately, the purchases made from mobile devices have increased (most of the website visits are recorded on mobile devices with the Android operating system, but most transactions end on mobile devices with the iOS operating system).

And the preference for video content and platforms like YouTube began to increase and the highest rate of involvement and conversion on this segment are registered by the tutorial type materials.

In terms of behavior there are two types of consumers (Spătaru, 2015):

- *a consumer-collector centered on experiences*, who lives in an economy of the same type, while the brands are responsible to mediate its experiences; thus desire to "know" appears;

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- *a consumer who proactively engages*, aiming to influence the group of people he belongs to; the ideas of "transmitting" or "sharing" or expressing emotional and intangible values are expressed.

Those who have such ideas are motivated by personal development, they engage in communities that actually help them to deepen certain levels of personality. Only the brands that offer consumers these new values, that manage to involve them in the daily life and to really connect with them, will be able to keep a long-term relationship.

On the other hand, consumers no longer react to elements of the 'unique selling proposition' type, because differentiation becomes more important, thus it is sought. In this context, marketers are obliged to make the product available and easy to remember, to make it physically and mentally accessible (Bădoiu, 2015a).

Thus, it can be said that the communication strategies today have the consumer as their central element, and numerous contact points that he has with the brand forces the latter to build a special approach, to be quick, in order to encourage the interaction with the customer in the online media.

2. Orientations and reorientations of the brand content

The current consumer is no longer content only when he listens, but he also wants to get into the story, to be one of its characters, to be able to stop it if he wishes, but also to contribute to the brand story. For brands to be relevant, the story they transmit must also be adapted to each platform.

Innovation in communication should not necessarily involve the latest technology, but it can start from a simple idea with a great impact. The brand generates social impact, respectively a combination between the utility dimension in the consumer's life and the importance of that significance (Bădoiu, 2015b).

Orientation to finding a purpose has been initiated by the consumer, as the "engine" behind the brand, and those companies that manage to find purpose in his life will be those which he will remember. This means that the brands' stories should be well-created and that the brand content should be used to change the consumers' perception and to get them to have a certain behavior, the ultimate objective being the sales.

Content marketing has become, therefore, an important component in the purchase decision. Content helps companies train communities and keep them close, and, this way, users receive information and get the feeling of belonging to the group.

There are three types of content brand (Bădoiu, 2015c):

- *of conversion* - created at the brand request or even by the brand itself. This kind of content must assist a transaction and it promotes evergreen ideas, which means that it influences the purchase decision and it promotes some lasting values;

- *of campaign* – created on the brand culture in order to generate a peak for a certain period of time. The objective does not need to be transactional, but the consumption of content on different channels (views, shares, etc.);

- *journalistic* - content which creates brand relevance on certain territories. When a brand chooses a territory, it is good that relevant and coherent content should be built for all channels held.

Today's consumers no longer prefer uncomfortable advertising messages, therefore, a better strategy is that they should be allowed to come towards the brand, and not the other way round. What people want to know has become more important, not what the brand transmits. In this regard, content delivery contexts can be:

- *everyday moments* (routine events) - that can be felt and exploited, because consumers want to experience, so that some ordinary moments can be valued (eg. the removal of thick clothes when coming winter storage);

- *cultural moments* (exceptional circumstances) – they can be both planned and unplanned (eg. the topic of the refugee crisis).

However, the most important moment is the present, so after it passes, the relevance tends to zero and the message that no longer responds to the consumer's needs does not matter anymore.

3. New Consumer Approaches

There is no universal recipe for all consumers, so that a particular message is suitable only for a particular audience and it is used with a particular purpose. Along with the technological advance, from a consumer approach based on offline it has gone to an online one, and then to an omnichannel (multi-channel) one. Moreover, the offline and online media seem to have divided their roles already: while television is significantly more efficient in generating awareness and even familiarity with the brand, online space appears to be more efficient when it comes to "call to action" - i.e., the intent to purchase. The customer remains the same, but the media of interaction (offline-online) is different.

If we approach our country's case, Romania does not fundamentally differ from the global average on most issues about multiscreening, which means that it is already aligned with global trends dictated by technology. A study conducted by Millward Brown in 2015 in 37 countries show that people in Romania who have smartphones spend about half past six hours in front of one of the 4 screens - TV, laptop / PC, tablet or smartphone, of which, for one and a half hour, watching television overlaps with the use of the Internet on one of the other three screens.

The study also shows that a multiscreening consumer in Romania spends, on average, 127 minutes on the laptop / PC, 118 minutes on the smartphone, 100 minutes watching TV and 54 minutes using the internet tablet (Enescu, 2015).

Besides the clear trend towards mobility, we see another interesting trend - using overlapping screens. Both worldwide (35% of the time) and in Romania (30% of the time), we see that people tend to use multiple screens simultaneously, fact which considerably changes the level of attention given to various channels and to television, in particular.

In Romania, as in most countries in Central and Eastern Europe, we are witnesses to the predominant use of PCs / laptops for surfing the internet, while globally, smartphones prevail. Moreover, the Millward Brown study also shows that smartphones, compared to the other screens, are a more efficient environment for the ads which target differentiation.

The opportunity to be exposed to advertising on smartphone and PC extends throughout the day, since the morning - when we wake up and use our smartphones for information throughout the day - when browsing on the PC significantly increases without the decrease of the use of smartphones - until the evening when communication opportunities arise on multiple screens - TV, PC or smartphone.

Moreover, the mobile has changed the rules of the game, and marketers must change themselves too. Firstly, consumers are not mobile; they tend to become only mobile. And just as they wish, their expectations, behaviors and preferences are changing.

This small electronic device located on our side is transforming our lives, whether we notice this or not, it opens up new ways of doing and learning things, it helps us discover new ideas and new businesses, it helps us tackle the problems and it inspires our plans.

Top 10 Emerging Trends is an annual report that highlights key trends which influence the interaction between brands and consumers, and the opportunities brought by them in the communication process (www.forbes.ro, 2016). The report stresses that new technologies change the consume behavior, especially of the younger people, who are more avant-garde; it identifies possible new types of personalized interaction between the brand and its consumers, aiming to enrich the relationship between them; it confirms the

ideas which were previously affirmed in the paper, which are also relevant for our country. In short:

- *the video blast*: on-demand content, brand built-in content - many consumers have given up partially or definitively on television, online video will become its mainstream alternative;

- *brand storytelling*: technology changes the subject of the action, many consumers have become integrated characters and storytellers;

- *personalization in the social media* more than the friends' recommendations: more and more consumers will have control over what they recommend;

- *proximity marketing*: transmitters at every step because brands take by storm the cell phone in the hand of the consumer.

4. Micro moments marketing

Marketers get that mobile is important. But it's still largely an additive strategy that's part of an overall digital initiative. Mobile apps, responsive sites and mobile ads are all bringing brands to the smaller screen. But to mobile users, it's all about the lifestyle, not the device. They're learning how to get around existing customer journeys to find and get what they want. And now, the combination of smartphone and tablet traffic exceeds desktop for many brands. This has opened small windows of consumer engagement that Google calls micro-moments. These moments are driven by intent and happen when someone reaches for their smartphone to know, go, do and buy (Brian Solis, 2016a).

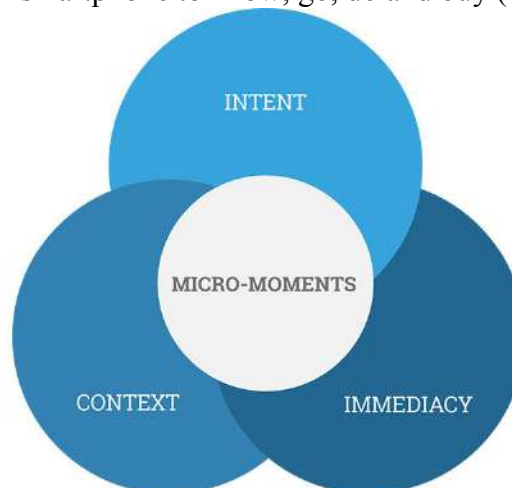


Figure 1. Micro-moments content

Basically, consumers live online, all the time. Whatever, whenever, these moments are changing the game for marketers. The expectations of connected consumers are through the roof. They want to take instant action and they want instant gratification based on personal agendas and goals. Their movements are comprised of mini-moments and their decisions at each is more unscripted and unpredictable than ever. In fact, Google found that consumers are often more loyal to their need in the moment than a particular brand or product. At the same time, they're attracted to those brands that best address their needs in-the-moment. Immediacy and relevance trump loyalty nowadays.

In short, micro-moments open windows of "in the moment" opportunities when someone searches for something top-of-mind using the closest device to them. It's what happens in these short bursts of actions that shape the impressions or next steps of the consumers.

Mobile search behavior is a good reflection of our growing reliance: in many countries, including the U.S., more searches take place on mobile devices than on

computers. Mobile is quickly becoming our go-to. When we want or need something, we tune in via convenient, self-initiated bursts of digital activity. Take the oft-quoted stat that we check our phones 150 times a day (Google Research, 2016).

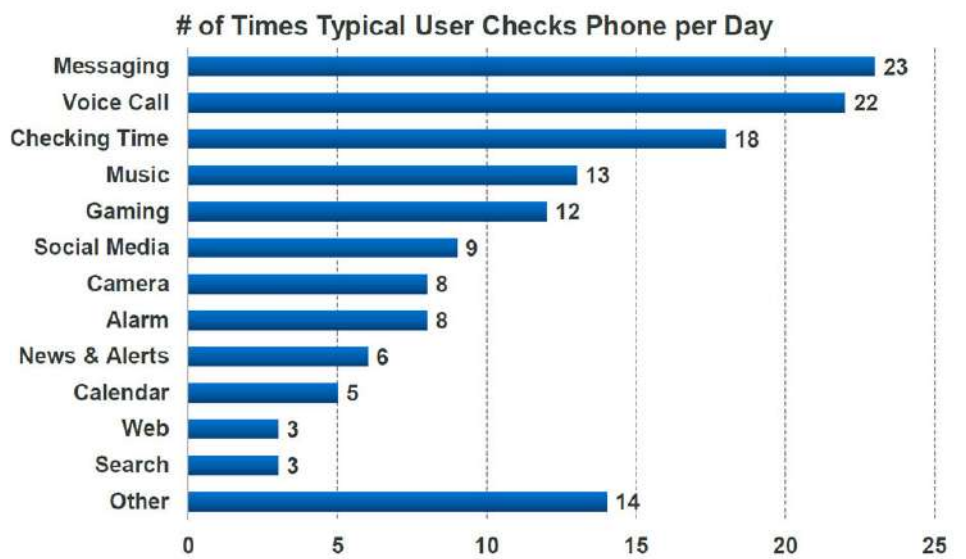


Figure 2. Daily phone checks reasons

Pair it with another that says we spend 177 minutes on our phones per day, you get a pretty fascinating reality: mobile sessions that average a mere 1 minute and 10 seconds long, dozens and dozens of times per day. It's like we're speed dating with our phones.

Behind these mobile bursts are countless interactions, like texting, updating data or installed programs, or posting a vacation photo. These types of moments are a common part of life, but they're not moments when we're necessarily looking to engage with brands. In other moments, we're very open to the influence of brands. These are the moments when we want help informing our choices or making decisions. For marketers, these moments are an open invitation to engage. And they're the moments when people have to be ready for.

They're the moments when we turn to a device - often a smartphone - to take action on whatever we need or want right now. These I-want-to-know, I-want-to-go, I-want-to-buy, and I-want-to-do moments are loaded with intent, context, and immediacy. 82% of smartphone users say they consult their phones on purchases they're about to make in a store; 91% of them turn to their phones for ideas in the middle of a task. These micro-moments are critical touch-points within today's consumer journey, and when added together, they ultimately determine how that journey ends.

When consumers reach for their devices to search in those moments, it's typically done on a smartphone, and navigated through swipes, zooms and clicks. Formats are inherently mobile, real-time and friendly. For the most part, users are not jumping to websites, they aren't looking to chat with salespeople or experts, and they definitely aren't willing to drop everything they're doing to visit a physical location or get in front of a PC.

That consumer journey looks a lot different than it did when a predecessor sat at his desk. And it's not just a story of more mobile usage. Since we can take action on any need or curiosity at any time, the consumer decision journey has been fractured into hundreds of tiny decision-making moments at every stage of the "funnel" - from inspiring vacation plans to buying a new blender or to learning how to install that new shelf.

Consumers are spending plenty of time on their phones, but these can be fleeting moments. Time spent on websites by mobile users fell by 18% per visit in 2015 in the

U.S., according to the Google report. Marketers can still take advantage of those precious moments if they know whom to target, when and with what information (Sarah Steimer, 2016).

An increase in mobile sessions and a decrease in time spent might lead to conclude that consumers aren't finding what they want on mobile. But actually, mobile conversion rates have shot up by 29% in the last year alone. It doesn't just rely on long sit-down sessions at the keyboards to make purchases anymore. People reach their devices and make informed decisions faster than ever before. And though mobile is driving this change, this phenomenon has implications far beyond mobile. It affects the entire consumer journey across screens, devices, and channels. In the retail stores today, foot traffic has declined, yet consumers are spending more when they do visit—because they've done their research and made decisions before ever walking in. A similar thing is happening when consumers visit websites using a desktop or laptop. They typically spend less time per visit but convert more often. In many ways, micro-moments have become the footsteps that lead people to the store or desktop site.

Here are three essential strategies that can help people to win micro-moments: Be There. They've got to anticipate the micro-moments for users, and then commit to being there to help when those moments occur. Be Useful. They've got to be relevant to consumers' needs in the moment and connect people to the answers they're looking for. Be Quick. They're called micro-moments for a reason. Mobile users want to know, go, and buy swiftly.

5. Conclusions

That brands that learn, adapt and practice will earn relevance and loyalty. All it takes is connecting, adding value to each micro-moment (Brian Solis, 2016b):

1. Identify key micro-moments and what happens in them: Why, where and how people search for information.
2. Understand their goals and aspirations for doing so.
3. Use search insights to identify new trends.
4. Surface the context of the search, the moment in which it takes place and the behaviors and expectations that define it.
5. Run an audit of the current media efforts. Are people present in the right places with the right information in the right context?
6. Learn how information is presented in each moment and understand which content formats would be ideal (and optimized) for easy discovery and consumption on the right device at the right time, every time.
7. Discover ways to meet or exceed consumer expectations through technology, content and engagement.
8. Orient a single view of the customer and all of the moments you need to guide their journey.
9. Empower teams to test using new approaches and methodologies.
10. Commit to being there in the moment -- comprehensively and consistently.

Winning micro-moments deliver a better experience for consumers and real business results for brands. Enterprising marketers who focus on micro-moments, human-centered behaviors and expectations and related tech, will naturally sustain a new level of meaningful consumer engagement.

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