

Digital content is meaningless without unique experiences



By [Darren Johnston](#)

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In the effort to keep up with trends and consumption patterns of always-on consumers, brands and creatives are seemingly more focused on the next wave of digital innovation than on making emotional connections with consumers. Most especially during these trying times amidst the virus.



Image source: [123RF.com](#)

Blame it on our on-demand and automated world, but we're quick to forget that it is people who make buying decisions. As mind-blowing as digital innovations and 'game-changing' content may be, they are meaningless if they fail to make any real impact and drive consumers to act.

Instead of adding to the sea of clutter and increasing the 'scrollability' of users, perhaps it is worth stepping back and re-evaluating the effectiveness of brand communication in evoking consumers' emotions.

The importance of brand storytelling

Storytelling is a term that has been used and abused in marketing in recent times, but it remains a trump card for brands to differentiate themselves from competitors. Anyone with access to technology can offer a product or service that's on par with leaders in their fields and make in-roads in markets with aggressive digital strategies and substantial online ad spends.



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Telling a brand's story creates a consistent message that conveys authenticity, enables people to relate to it, and in doing so, enables a brand to stand out from the crowd. While virtual reality and gamification can galvanise online audiences with novelty and 'wow-factor', without a consistent brand narrative, these innovative techniques merely become gimmicks.

Creating unique experiences

Brands have become so obsessed about getting content in front of audiences on every media platform, that serving half-baked content with a hit-and-hope approach has become the new norm. It's what's driven consumers to ditch news feeds flooded with sponsored content (and for some, platforms altogether) and migrate to stories, private message groups, forums and following influencers.



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People connect with brands through unique experiences that are personalised, thoughtful and real. The brands that are getting it right, place the user at the centre of its world and collaborate with them on the platforms on which they live, as opposed to sending them one-way messages across multiple channels.

Talking the talk

Consumers expect brands to communicate with them like a human – they want to be engaged with on their terms and in the same manner in which they speak and behave. Slang, abbreviations, vernacular, and emojis have formed the basis of the digital dialect for a while now, and it's time brands and even the most hardened of copywriters embrace the lexicon if they want to be part of the conversation.



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As voice search and messaging capabilities between customers, chatbots and virtual influencers become prevalent, a consistent brand voice should permeate throughout conversational messaging across various platforms. Brands that attempt to win over potential customers by trying to talk the talk in a brand voice that is schizophrenic, could alienate their existing audience which could lead to a death spiral into the digital wilderness.

Embracing long-form video

Short-form video is the silver bullet of digital content – bite-sized snippets showcase products, reinforce brand messages, drive action and provide a solid ROI. But thanks to the onset of 5G, lower data costs and onboard Wi-Fi in public transport, people are watching longer videos for longer durations.

Average viewing times on YouTube are reaching the 30-minute mark and platforms like IGTV and Facebook Watch are gaining more traction. 'How to' videos, documentaries, interviews and behind-the-scenes footage are some of the rich, immersive video content that entertains, educates and inspires.



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There's no question that short-form video is here to stay, but long-form content could be the answer for brands looking to collaborate with loyal followers, instead of only punting their brand or pushing product.

In the face of constant algorithm changes, new digital media platforms and fluctuating social media trends, brands and creatives alike need to dig deeper to create unique brand experiences that evoke human emotions and drive results.

ABOUT DARREN JOHNSTON

Darren Johnston is a copywriter at Stratitude.

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