



Trends | Digital & Tech

Marketers should be on the front lines embedding sales material and messaging as their company rolls them out.

Humanised chatbots

Chatbots are popping up everywhere, both in Facebook and other live chat solutions. They are more sophisticated than ever, using colloquial semantics in place of robotic language. As chat-based AI takes off, expect to see more chatbots being utilized in everything – answering FAQs, placing orders and getting in touch with customer service. Marketers should be on the front lines embedding sales material and messaging as their company rolls them out to ensure they drive real value.



The shift to a **truly digital** mindset is slow but sure.



We are on a steady journey to understanding what 'going digital' really means. For a traditionally brick-and-mortar company, going digital is often misunderstood as having a presence online. This might have been sufficient 10 years ago, but the potential and the demand for smartly designed customer experience cannot be ignored.



We've been seeing brands step up, proactively seeking to understand how they can create an entire digital experience for their customers, anticipate behaviour, and design journeys that produce better results. They are learning that it's no longer the brand that determines the marketing strategy but the consumers who are in the driver's seat.

Thanks to constant immersion in the online environment, digital-born businesses especially e-commerce are faster at picking this up, although efforts are still concentrated mostly on top-of-funnel customer acquisition.

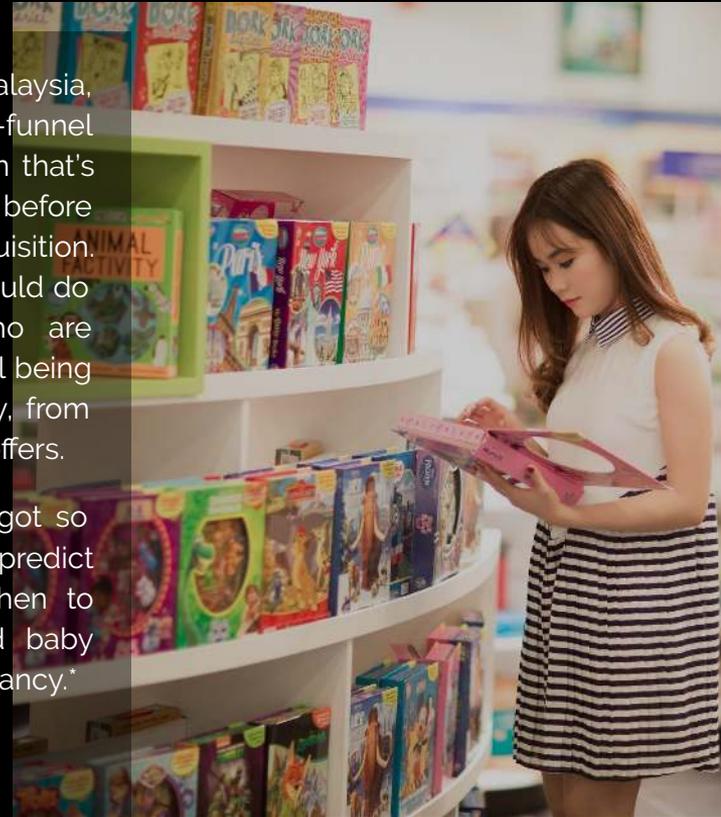
Despite all the talk about Big Data, brands are cautious. There is a common mistrust of social media data and, consequently, inaction. People are used to hard sales numbers; soft numbers like social interactions are tough to credit. The credibility of social media analytics is further undermined by a misleading cover of 'fun', that social engagement is cheap and does not necessarily translate into a sale.

**Be in control of
the entire
customer journey,
from purchase
and search history
to targeted offers...**
**Anticipate
demand even
before it happens.**

The case of PetPet

For the number two diaper brand in Malaysia, PetPet is still focused on top-of-funnel marketing. In a population of 31.6 million that's still growing, this might make sense before finally hitting the ceiling on customer acquisition. To ensure sustained revenues, PetPet would do well to retain existing customers who are expecting *another* child. This would entail being in control of the entire customer journey, from purchase and search history to targeted offers.

U.S. retailer Target's predictive analysis got so good at reading the data that they can predict which customers are pregnant and when to send offers on certain pregnancy and baby products at different stages of their pregnancy.*



*NY Times

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Opportunity

Brands need to think like a digital-only business. The single most important question is, *if digital was all you had, how would you maximise its impact on your business?*

Here's an example of making digital really work for you. Instead of spending 10 months on ads to start seeing significant conversion, shorten the time to purchase by targeting personalised ads and thereafter engaging in ways to increase customer lifetime value. To make success sustainable, the process is continually optimised with A/B tests.

The key ingredient is enabling technologies. Martech is a means of reaching an end, not the end goal itself. Digital has always been driven by a strong creative focus. Marketing technology gives data to generate insights that direct the creative approach. On the business side, martech helps to lower cost-per-lead and increase efficiency.

Take AirAsia. The airline uses technology to enable self-service and automate FAQs, thereby filtering thousands of similar requests and manual processes and almost completely removing the need for human touchpoints in the pre-departure experience.

In 2019 and beyond, budgets will move to cover more phases of the funnel, with greater appreciation for the importance of automation that nurtures prospects into loyal customers. There's some way to go, but we're getting there.



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