

How ideas will spread in 2016

By [Walter Pike](#)

1 Feb 2016

The advertising and marketing problem is one of spreading ideas. We are all in the idea-spreading business, Ideas to vote for this candidate or another, to buy this product or another or adopt a cause. The fundamental nature of idea spreading changes in the social era because the structure of media changes and changes the methods that we set out to spread those ideas.

The disruption in the idea spreading business is profound and is changing rapidly as the tools change. We should consider these trends in the year ahead.



Redefining the big idea into a brand narrative

In many ways we are still stuck with communicating the big idea, the compelling unique selling proposition around which communications strategies are built. In the broadcast era the way you communicated was to carefully craft the idea into a single message and share that with everyone.

In the social era we interact with our brands and the idea over multiple touchpoints and in real time. The big idea must and will morph into an overall real time brand narrative.

Revolving around mobile

In countries with a reasonably high smartphone penetration - South Africa does have one of those and the rest of the continent is on its way - the mobile phone and wearable devices are becoming the interaction point between the brand or the idea and the individual. The Google algorithm which emphasises mobile will force the way to mobile first.

Mobile first means instant and real time

Social media becomes more and more 'in the moment'. Users of Periscope, the live streaming video tool recently acquired by Twitter, already watch 40 years of live video daily. This, combined with tools such as Instagram and Snapchat, means that the brand interaction with the customer needs to constantly adapt as things change. The days of content plans deep into the future are gone - real time participation is what counts now.

Integration

I've been doing a pile of seminars on marketing and digital over the last year. The outstanding feature of the participants in those seminars is that they operate in silos. Silos of different thinking

Not only is above the line (ATL) thinking different to digital but even within digital there is a lack of understanding between its different branches.

Communications strategy will more and more need to be built around an integrated multi-channel strategy driven by the complexity of the modern customer journey and how ideas and information are distributed - both the paths of distribution - as well as the access points. Be they television, print or mobile or any number of different points, such as beacons that integrate the customer into the retail environment in a way that never was possible before.

Digital as a term is starting to become redundant as it perpetuates the idea that digital is a separate channel and a separate

strategy. It may shift to being the core of the relationship with wearable and handheld devices integrating the consumer with the world, but the development of a digital strategy outside as a separate strategy executed by the digital team, is fast becoming a thing of the past.

Now with lines radiating out from the mobile device, it's crucial that idea spreading strategy is built as an integrated unit that interacts with the brand narrative in real time.

ABOUT WALTER PIKE

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