

Virgin consumers: It's their first time - why not make it special

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4 Feb 2013

The staggering pace of consumer-facing innovation means that everyone is now at times, if not constantly, a virgin consumer: one who is unfamiliar with many of the products, services and experiences they experience. However, far from being coy, virgin consumers will try out, experiment with and lust after these new brands, products, services and experiences more than ever before: as long as they are effortlessly simple, intuitive, and, of course, enjoyable.



Evidence abounds of the [NEWISM](#)-fuelled hyper-innovation that is the fundamental force driving the creation of virgin consumers. With 19,000 apps added to the Apple app store every month and over 18,000 Kickstarter projects successfully funded in 2012, there's certainly no shortage of new products and services. Thanks to connectivity, globalisation, and the demolition of barriers to entry, the pace and volume of consumer-facing innovation has never been higher.

So how do you, as a marketer, product developer or entrepreneur target your new product or service to this virgin consumer? Here are three ideas to help you to cultivate a virgin mindset:

#1 Keep it simple:

Cast off industry convention and (if you're an established brand) previous product iterations, and **re-imagine your product from the ground up**. Make your product **intuitive to use right out of the box**, even if you're a big brand. For Microsoft, ripping up two decades of user experience and pivoting to a touch-led tile interface in Windows 8, meant creating an interface that caters to virgin consumers.

#2 Explain your brand:

When coming up with campaign ideas for your product or service, think of those that **answer foundational questions**: who are you? What makes you different? What does your brand say about those consumers who choose it? When Peugeot promoted its 208 model to young South Africans last September, they created a crowd-sourced campaign where comedian Lucky Du Plessis embarked on a live-streamed journey determined by members of the public via Twitter.

#3 Don't ask for commitment:

Indulge the joy VIRGINS take in playing the field and exploring by 'streaming' or renting them products instead of selling. Think in terms of how to **give virgins access to your product, rather than just selling it to them**.

So, whether you're a start-up or a heritage brand, remember: as NEWISM pushes consumerism to light speed, you simply *have* to start mirroring the VIRGIN mindset in your own thinking if you want to stand a chance with many consumers.

But however you cater to virgin consumers, remember: make it special. It's their first time ;-)

For more on virgin consumers, check out this month's Trend Briefing on www.trendwatching.com

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