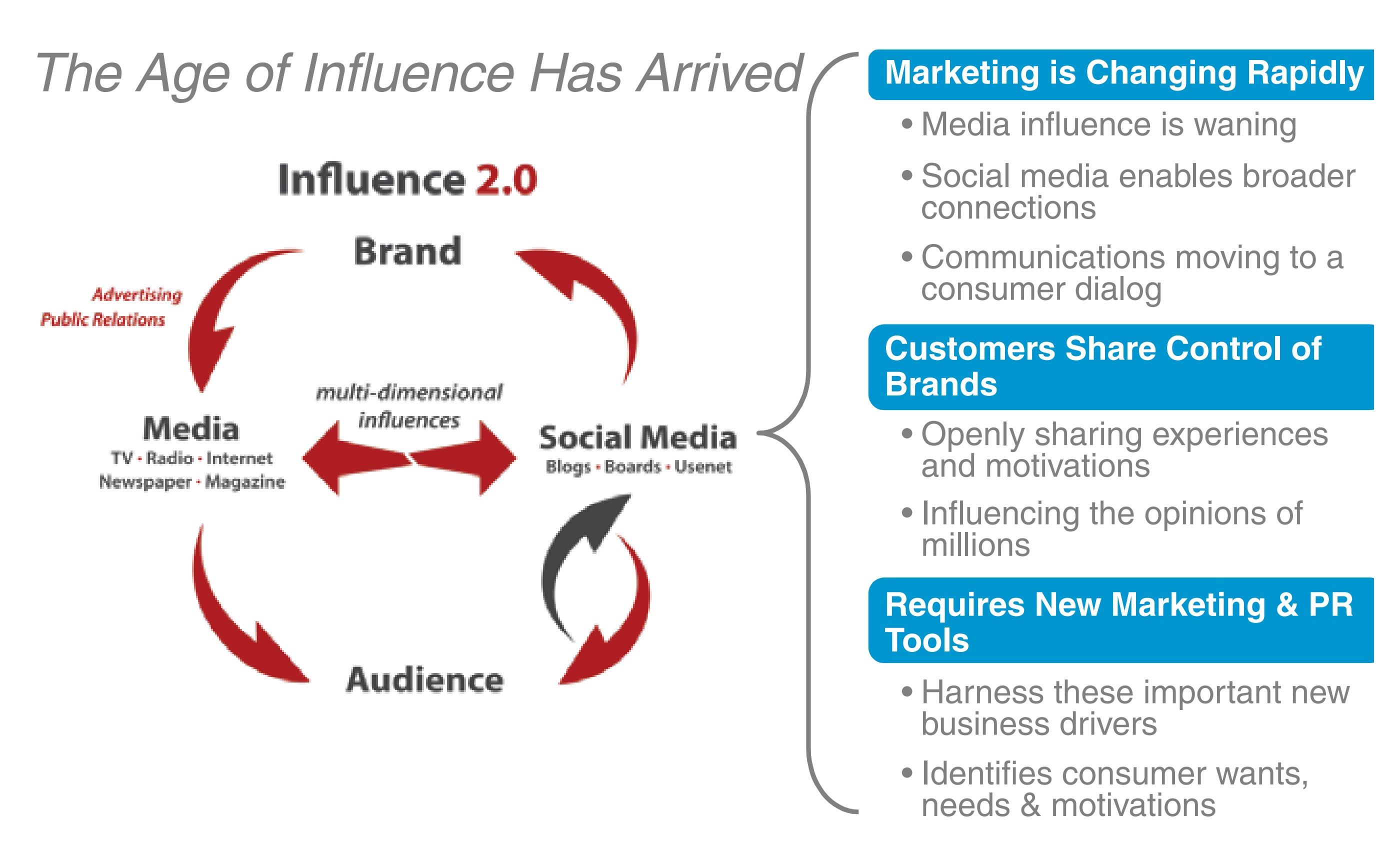

Measuring and Maximizing All Your Consumer Touch Points

With media choices for consumers continuing to grow, how can marketers and planners begin to measure all the possible contact points – and compare their effectiveness – to make the best selections?

By David Kweskin

We all like riddles. Here's one particularly relevant to those involved in DTC marketing:

What does today's media buyer/planner have in common with a store shopper soon after the fall of communism? They're both overwhelmed by all of their new choices.

In the past, there was a standard set of media options that people knew well and were comfortable combining into a promotional mix. But those days are gone. Now, new media choices are sprouting like spring weeds. To add to the confusion, the phenomenon of social networks – such as online, FaceBook and text messaging – have raised the power of the "community voice" to unprecedented heights. Increasingly, people turn to social sources for their health information more than traditional vehicles.

Do consumers have faith in word-of-mouth? A Jupiter research study reveals that about 80 percent of those who use the Internet to "connect to others" trust at least "to some degree" peer-created health information.

Spurred on by consumers' interest in seeking health information on the Internet, Web sites devoted to healthcare issues are now ubiquitous. A recent Harris Interactive study shows that 5 out of 10 U.S. adults have gone online in the last month for health information. Perhaps even more importantly, online users are not just looking for information to educate themselves. They are putting what they learn into action, using their newfound knowledge to assist them in physician conversations. What's being said on the Web is impacting what's being

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discussed in the physician's office – the point at which prescribing decisions are made.

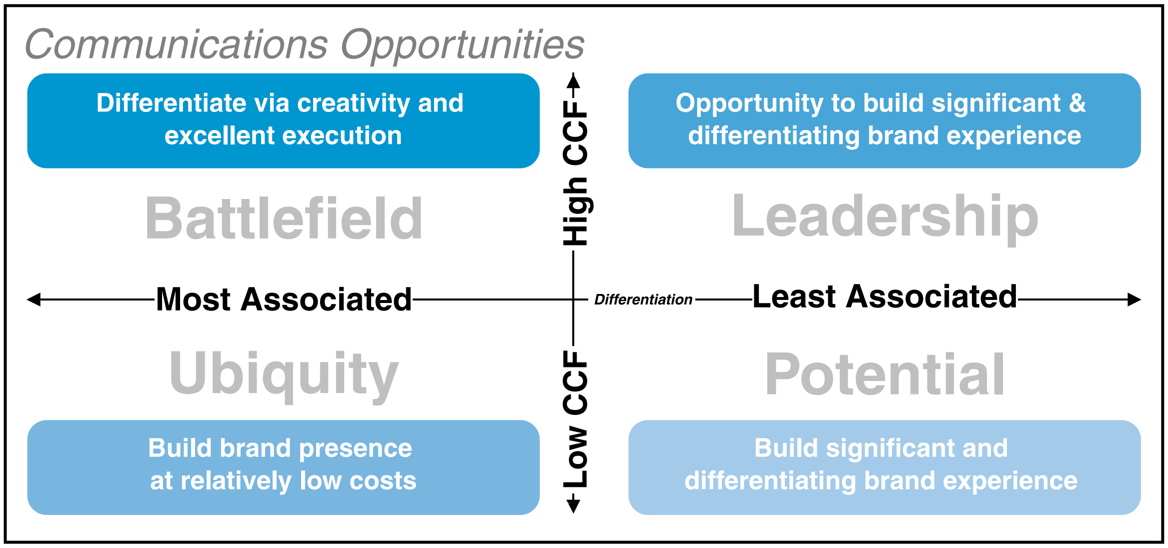
This fact is reinforced by TNS's own research on Web effectiveness, showing that Web site visits are strongly correlated with both new and total prescriptions. In fact, our studies indicate that a Web site visit can increase intent to contact a doctor by as much as 50 percent.

Choosing effective contact points

As powerful as it is, the Web is not the only influential new medium. The palette of possibilities marketers can choose from is huge – including everything from in-office collateral (such as a Zetia-sponsored DVD explaining cholesterol that plays in the waiting room) to more subtle brand reminders (such as the doctor's pocket protector, bearing the Lipitor name). Today's choices are virtually unlimited. So how does one even begin to measure all the possible contact points – and compare their effectiveness to make the best selections?

To assess such an eclectic range of alternatives, it is important to find a common way to compare their effectiveness. TNS's MarketContact Audit (MCA) provides s system for evaluating all of today's contact points on a common measurement platform, so it's possible to determine their relative effectiveness in supporting a brand.

The first step, of course, is identifying the set of contact points that need to be evaluated. This can best be done through qualitative research, such as client focus groups, as well as internal brainstorming.



Once the list of contact points is created, the process moves into a quantitative phase that examines each contact for that category across three dimensions – rational, looking at the perceived accuracy of information delivered through that contact point; emotional, uncovering which contact points consumers find appealing; and importance/power, revealing which contact points people consider most important. These three dimensions are then combined into a Contact Clout Factor (CCF).

Next, each contact point is weighted, considering how strongly people associate it with a particular brand. Of course, each brand has a unique association level with each contact point. For example, Fosamax may be most highly associated with a well known spokesperson, while Actonel may be closely identified with in-office materials.

By combining our CCF and association information, we are able to create Brand Experience Points (BEPs) for each brand. (For purchased media, think of BEPs as reach/frequency combined with memorability/impact.) It's a simple process that just involves multiplying our CCF and association findings. For example, if brand A has a word-of-mouth association of 40 percent and a Contact Clout Factor of "70," its BEP score would be 2,800 (70 x 40). The exciting part is that the BEPs give us a common measure—one language we can use to compare across all brands and all contact points, both new and traditional, both purchased and unpurchased.

Translating it into dollars and cents

With BEP insights, users can not only assess brand share by contact point, they also can build complete contact profiles for each brand. Consider this example: While Brand A has 2,800 BEPs for its word of mouth contacts, Brand B has just 2,100. If we broaden our view, however, and aggregate across all contacts, we find that Brand B has a far higher level of BEPs overall. Therefore, it is, in fact, in a much stronger position overall.

Validation work conducted by Advertising Research Foundation's Research Review, February 2007, showed that the brand Experience Score (BES) correlates well with market share per an extensive validation analysis relating the BES to the Market Share from over 500 MCA studies spanning 64 product categories and 37 countries. The average correlation was .85, in other words the BES predicts, on average, 72 percent of the variability in brand share.

Taking it to the next level, BEPs also are valuable for guiding media purchase decisions, letting users quantify the relative cost of winning each Brand Experience Point. Figure 1 provides a live example. In this case, TV costs $8,930 for each BEP. In contrast, magazines cost $3,000 per BEP and banner ads just $1,875 per BEP. (Of course, this information isn't applicable for unpurchased media, such as WOM.) Connecting BEPs to dollars and cents, marketers can clearly see where they are getting the most for their money.

Key Indicators

Contacts	BEPs/ Brand A	Costs U.S. $M	Costs U.S. $ per BEP
TV Ad	2,800	25,000	$8,930
W.O.M.	1,800		
Magazine Ad	1,000	3,000	$3,000
Banner Ad	800	1,500	$1,875
Total BEPs	**6,400**	**29,500**	**$4,610**

Figure 1

Putting it into an action plan

To provide marketers with a concrete tool for turning MCA into an actionable plan, we create a four-quadrant diagram, based on both level of clout and level of brand association. Clear actions are associated with each quadrant:

In the Battlefield quadrant, contact points have high clout. The competitive field is crowded, however, so brands need superior creative to stand out from the pack. In addition, marketers should look for cost efficiency.

In the Leadership quadrant, contact points have high clout, and there are few others in the space. This quadrant represents the ideal situation. The challenge is to optimize reach.

In the 'Battlefield' quadrant, contact points have high clout. The competitive field is crowded, however, so brands need superior creative to stand out from the pack. In addition, marketers should look for cost efficiency.

In the Ubiquity quadrant, contact points have low clout. Brands are commonly found in this area. The goal for those in the Ubiquity space is to create more differentiation, and build their brand presence.

In the Potential quadrant, there is both low clout and low association for most brands. This quadrant offers marketers the opportunity to find some hidden gems they can grow into more powerful contacts.

Conclusions

The world of media choices has become increasingly fractured and confusing. The proliferation of new options is a tremendous challenge – but also a tremendous opportunity for savvy marketers who can integrate traditional and new alternatives into a successful promotional mix. Old tools, such as reach and frequency, are no longer enough to create an effective plan.

In addition, with so much new, even the smartest planner can no longer count on gut instinct. The key is to turn to new approaches that use customer input to determine contact value – and provide a common measure for assessing the relative impact of each media option. Understanding the brand experience each contact delivers – and how that experience contributes to performance – will ensure that DTC budgets are allocated to deliver the highest return. ■

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