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RESEARCHWORLD

Finding and keeping talent

Tomorrow's leaders



Top marketing trends
The buzzwords for 2008

Top



marketing trends for 2008

Here are the findings of a survey on marketing buzzwords for the coming year. By Tom H. C. Anderson

What's hot in the field of marketing? Results from the survey of Top Marketing Trends for 2008 yielded some expected and some unexpected findings. The study focused on members of the Marketing Executives Networking Group, a 1,700 member organisation of leading marketers in the US who are at a VP-level or above in their organisations. 84% of these marketers have Fortune 500 experience and 70% have earned graduate degrees, the majority of which are from top-20 Business Schools. The survey, conducted by Anderson Analytics, focused on top marketing concepts, buzzwords, global areas of opportunity, targeted customer demographics, and the books that marketers look to for inspiration and growth.

Inspiration

Executive-level marketers read avidly to stay abreast of information and gain insights for their business. The

most popular books are not necessarily the most recently published given that *Good to Great*, *The World is Flat*, and *Blink* were the top three most recently read books. In terms of all-time favourite business books, three in five executives were eager to make a recommendation to their fellow marketers. Topping the list were: *Good to Great*, *Positioning*, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, *Competitive Strategy* and *The World is Flat*.

Not surprisingly, some marketing executives named a professional guru who influenced their perspective. Of the gurus named, the top five were Seth Godin, Steve Jobs, Peter Drucker, Warren Buffet and David Aaker. The fact that fewer than half of respondents named gurus possibly speaks to the idea that many of the executives polled are themselves marketing strategy trendsetters.

What's hot & what's not

While the marketers weighed in on many marketing concepts, a few key areas emerged. Marketing basics, which include specific concepts such as customer satisfaction, customer retention, and segmentation, were of greatest interest. Approximately 60% of respondents rated these traditional concepts as 'very important', demonstrating that customers (and knowing everything about them) still dominate the minds of marketing executives. Interestingly, perhaps as many of the executives are CMOs or owners of their own firms. 'Search Engine Optimisation' (42%) had relatively wide appeal and cut across marketers in all fields.

'Green Marketing' (32%) emerged as an increasingly important concept. Specifically, marketing executives identified Green Marketing as one of the trendiest marketing buzzwords today. While green has long been important in many parts of Europe, in no small part due to the work of recent Nobel Prize winner Al Gore, marketers are recognising this as a topic of growing importance among US consumers as well.

Latest Book Read

Popularity Rank	Title	Avg. Book Rating
1.	Good to Great	4.3
2.	The World is Flat	4.1
3.	Blink	3.4
4.	Blue Ocean Strategy	3.9
5.	The Long Tail	3.6
6.	Made to Stick	4.3
6.	Freakonomics	4.3
8.	Execution	3.8
9.	The 4-Hour Work Week	4.4
9.	The Age of Turbulence	4.0
9.	Who Moved My Cheese?	3.2
12.	Wikinomics	4.5
12.	Word of Mouth Marketing	3.8
14.	The Goal	4.7
14.	The New Leader's 100-Day Action Plan	4.0

Major Trend Summary

Theme	Importance (% of Top-Box)
Marketing basics	60
Search engine optimisation	42
Personalisation	36
Green marketing	32
Multicultural/Ethnic issues	32
Breakdown of old media	29
Innovative branding	28
Viral/WOM	27
New media	26
Time starvation	17
Macro economics	16
Tech strategy	15
Outsourcing	13
Social issues	10
Other	8

Important targets

Marketing executives widely agreed that Baby Boomers are presently the single most important demographic group (81% 'Very Important'). Women (64%) are the next most important group. In the US market, Hispanic/Latinos (59%) are viewed as the third most important demographic due to their increasing size and prosperity. Generation X and Generation Y tie for fourth place (46% and 47%, respectively). Wise marketers understand that these two younger groups cannot be ignored as they not only have a sizeable impact today via their own purchasing power and influence over their parents but also represent the future.

The executives were also asked to pick which single geographic region, other than the US, represents the greatest current

opportunity. China was selected as the best market by over half of executives. India was a distant second (20%), followed by Eastern Europe (10%). Surprisingly few selected Western Europe (6%). Latin America (5%), Brazil (3%), Mexico (2%) and Russia (2%) complete the picture.

Market researchers

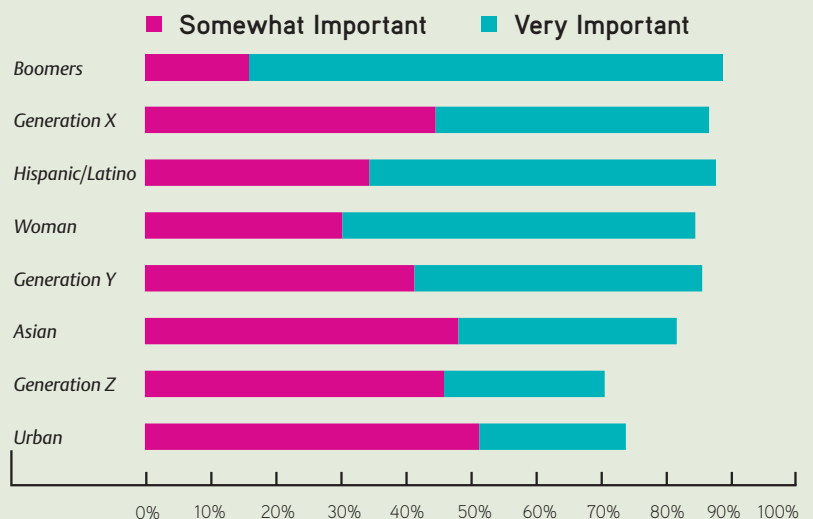
There were few differences between marketing research executives and marketing executives overall (i.e. marketers working predominantly in advertising, brand management, sales, or strategic planning). As might be expected, market research executives were significantly more likely to view analytics-related concepts such as Data Mining, Leading through Analytics, and Text Analytics as much more important than their peers in other marketing functions.

Market researchers were also more likely to view Health Awareness as an important trend compared to marketers overall. Perhaps this is indicative of a new consumer-driven trend?

Conversely, market researchers were less likely to find some of the more traditional marketing concepts such as Customer Satisfaction, Customer Retention and Quality as important. Long Tail was another concept that was rated as important by significantly fewer market research executives. This may be because traditional market research techniques are not well suited to target and measure this group, though data mining and text analytics may be more helpful in this regard.

In terms of offshoring, while the majority of marketers (77%) reported that their companies do not offshore any part of the marketing function, and half of senior marketers are not in favour of offshoring any part of the marketing function, market research executives were somewhat less apprehensive about offshoring than the others (only 9% vs. 17% of market researchers strongly oppose the idea). This may be due to the fact that many market research suppliers

Importance of Demographic



have embraced outsourcing, specifically KPO or Knowledge Process OffShoring, believing it to be 'necessary and a good way for companies to stay competitive'. Time will tell whether market researchers are wiser or more foolish in this regard (though their relatively low importance ratings on Customer Satisfaction/Retention and Quality may be revealing).

There were few other significant differences between market researchers and other marketing executives. Overall, market researchers tend to read the same books and follow the same thought leaders as their peers in other areas of marketing. Hopefully, as the importance of analytics continues to increase and more books (such as *Competing on Analytics*) are published on the topic, CMOs will continue to encourage advances in the field and someday we market researchers may well have our own, widely followed, gurus and authors to look up to.

About the survey

The Marketing Trends Survey was fielded by Anderson Analytics among current MENG members between 19 October and 20 November 2007. Though a majority of members are US-based, many have worked for organisations overseas. Membership to MENG is by invitation only and requires a minimum base salary (excluding bonuses, options,

Significant Top-Box Differences		
Issue more important to MR	Market research %	Total %
Data mining	58	36
Leading through analytics	50	25
Health awareness	48	33
Text analytics	26	8
Issue less important to MR		
Customer satisfaction	48	77
Customer retention	52	68
Quality	41	58
Long tail	3	14
<i>Market researchers vs all marketers</i>		

etc.) of US \$160,000. Natural Language Processing software was used to code open-ended/free-form text answers to questions in order to truly understand which issues were top-of-mind among the executives. The 607 responses yield overall statistics with a confidence interval of +/-3.98% at the 95% confidence level. ■

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