Digital Leadership Academy 2020: Key Take-Aways
What is Digital Leadership Academy?
Digital Leadership Academy

Where marketing executives define the trends and opportunities to improve digital health

Gartner's Digital Leadership Academy serves to inspire and educate senior-level decision makers on leading business trends and opportunities that impact their sector. Over 350 digital leaders from a variety of sectors attended the 2020 conference in London.

350+ attendees
12 sessions
one-to-one office hours with Gartner experts

Industry breakdown

Top 7 industries represented
- Beauty: 34%
- FMCG: 23%
- Fashion: 9%
- Watches & Jewelry: 9%
- Professional Services: 8%
- Activewear: 4%
- Pharma: 4%

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On the Digital Horizon

Discover the insights you missed
Building Consumer Experiences That Drive Revenue Growth

Marketers are in search of answers

Today’s consumer is more open to trying new products and services. As such, brands are under pressure from competitors that were insignificant five years ago and are also at risk of losing market share to disruptive brands. To drive revenue growth, marketers are focusing on customer engagement. However, developing an effective customer engagement strategy is complex. Gartner research shows it is time for a change in marketing’s approach to consumer experience.

The way forward: Customer agency

With more than 50% of consumers abandoning the purchase process due to difficulty choosing the right product, customer agency has been identified as the biggest opportunity for marketers to drive revenue. Customer agency is about changing the way customers think about themselves, rather than how they feel about your brand. In a world with too much information, empowering customers to feel more in control over their purchase decisions will ultimately drive growth.

Key take-aways:

- Efforts to increase ongoing interactions with customers have no discernible impact on purchase outcomes.
- Brands can boost customers’ feelings of agency through bounded exploration.
- Bounded exploration eases the customer’s navigation experience across the site, while keeping them on the path to purchase.

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Amazon Strategies to Grow Through Disruption

Amazon revenue growth has stalled

Amazon is the world’s most powerful advertising platform and an essential reference point for all retailers, regardless of whether or not they advertise on the platform. However, Amazon’s net sales have slowed over the past year, as has its quarterly net income. This is partly due to traditional retailers, such as Tesco, refusing to die and becoming more innovative to keep pace with Amazon.

Three areas of disruption to watch

This has led Amazon to shift its focus to profitability in 2020. The three areas that Amazon plans to disrupt to drive growth are: Amazon brands, advertising and fulfillment. This change of focus will present numerous threats, and opportunities, for all businesses. For example, we are already seeing competitors mirror their digital commerce platforms, and advertising levers, on Amazon.

Why Amazon Is Focusing on Profitability

Key take-aways:

- Amazon is launching exclusive brands in sectors where it does not currently have 50% or more of the market share.
- Amazon’s focus on advertising is shifting from products to services.
- Heavy investment means Amazon is less reliant on fulfillment partners. Brands must also revisit their delivery models to keep pace.
Crafting a Genius Content Strategy

Consumer behavior has evolved
With almost 80,000 Google searches per second, 15% of which having never been searched before, the need for brands to create rich, engaging content is greater than ever. Marketers are subsequently increasing spend on content creation, but nearly 3/4 of marketers evaluate their content marketing approach as only moderately successful at achieving their organization’s desired ROI.

Guidelines to building a genius content strategy
An effective content strategy can drive engagement across digital touchpoints and impact your business positively. Marketers need to build their content strategy around business goals to align objectives across teams and to create internal efficiencies. Marketers must create their content marketing strategy around three key pillars — creating content, maximizing its impact and measuring its performance.

Key take-aways:
- Be relevant to your consumers by monitoring their behaviors, needs and trends.
- Syndicate your assets where traffic is high, and link your content to commerce.
- Select relevant metrics to assess your content strategy performance, focusing on ROO.
Winning Gen Z on Digital Touchpoints

Generation Z is motivated by common values

With 73% of Gen Z buying goods or services online in 2018, they are redefining the rules for digital communication. Globally, Gen Z is connected by a unique set of values, including sustainability, equality and authenticity, and they are not receptive to marketers or brands who do not understand them. This differentiates them from millennials and the baby boomers before them.

Relevance is the new digital currency

Brands that are winning the battle to attract and engage the Gen Z audience ensure their marketing efforts speak to their values, on both a global and a local level. In Europe, Gen Z’s willingness to share personal data with companies presents an opportunity for brands, many of whom are already leveraging this data to provide customers with a customized site experience.

Key take-aways:

- Gen Z in Europe are more likely to share their personal data with companies than their U.S. counterparts.
- Environmentalism and sustainability impact Gen Z’s views on brands and, ultimately, their purchase decisions.
- Physical stores with digital integrations are favored by Gen Z.
Maximize Your Social Platforms & Influencer Strategies for 2020

Social platforms have evolved

With 97% of teens using social media daily in 2019, up from 55% of in 2007, it is no surprise that CMOs identify social marketing as a channel where they expect to significantly increase spend in 2020. This is partly driven by a 110% increase in traffic from social platforms to brand retail websites. The platforms themselves have evolved to embed commerce functionality. Social media is now a hypercompetitive space where advertising best practices collide with generationally varied consumer usage.

Brands are struggling to keep pace

Despite increased investment in social marketing, many brands struggle to drive both awareness and conversions. To boost awareness, brands must build content based on platform resonance, focus on authentic influencer campaigns and support these campaigns with spend. To drive conversions, brands must clearly define their call to actions, creating relevant regional-specific posts and plan frequent, short stories to facilitate conversations and engagement.

Key take-aways:

- Social platform developments will focus on relevancy and discoverability as Gen Z creates and shares more content.
- Western social platforms continue to follow Chinese counterparts in providing additional functionality for users.
- Leading brands experiment with incorporating new functionality to make campaigns interactive and shoppable.

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