



# Build Your Engagement Engine: Part 3

WRITTEN BY  
*David Mogensen*

PUBLISHED  
*December 2013*

---

## THE RUNDOWN

At a time when marketers feel their job has changed more in two years than in the last 50 years, planning can be daunting. The way forward is to combine what's worked in the past with the new—anchor your brand in customers' lives, and then experiment. David Mogensen, Head of Brand Engagement for YouTube and a former marketer for a global Fortune 500 company, concludes this three-part series by looking at how digital and traditional media work harder together, identifying opportunities by using consumers' lives as a lens, and exploring how Madison Avenue could benefit from a little Silicon Valley spirit.

---

Marketing has changed more in the last two years than the past fifty, 76% of marketers surveyed said in a recent Adobe study. The survey captures the high levels of anxiety and excitement within our industry. As John Gerzema wrote

earlier in the Engagement Project, the fact that it is such a tumultuous time makes it such an energizing time to be a marketer.

If you consider the media platforms that have launched in the last 15 years, nearly all offer marketers valuable feedback and signals, giving us a deeper understanding of who our customers are, when they want to hear from us, and what they're passionate about. This opens up opportunities to experiment across the ever-changing landscape in ways that we could only have dreamt of just a few years ago.

In this, the final installment of the Engagement Engine series on the ways we see engagement-based planning changing our industry, we'll explore how constantly-connected consumers are prompting savvy marketers to rethink the order in which they plan and buy, how they launch and flight campaigns, and how they test and iterate.

## **1. DIGITAL + TRADITIONAL WORK HARDER TOGETHER**

Once upon a time, video equaled television. Music was radio. Books were print. Today all lines are blurred. All these types of content are increasingly experienced in digital form or with a digital component, helping people fit more into their busy lives. By embracing this combination of traditional and digital, marketers suddenly have a much bigger toolbox.

*“Are your media plans built around product milestones like a launch, a new feature, a line extension? Or are they based on people milestones such as a new job, a recent move, the birth of a child?”*

Integrating traditional and digital once meant simply adding a website URL, or a “follow us” call to action at the end of an ad. We now know the interplay between online and offline can be so much richer — adding real value for the viewer. Take Crate and Barrel, who have taken the traditional catalogue and elevated it by including not just product shots, but playlists, invitations, recipes and apps designed to enhance the experience of their products. In doing so, they create engaging content and deepen the role they play in people's lives.

Beyond adding value for the customer, combining traditional and digital can also be a powerful way to see what works and generate insights that you can scale up. At YouTube, for example, we see lots of brands using the platform to determine which videos drive the deepest engagement, and then using those insights to make their entire campaign more effective. Audi and Doritos, for example, were among those that used YouTube last year to let fans choose which ad they ran during the Super Bowl.

In fact, distinguishing between digital and traditional in marketing already sounds dated. As P&G CMO Mark Pritchard told a marketing conference in September, “The era of digital marketing is over. It’s almost dead. It’s now just brand building. It’s what we do.”

### **Things to consider:**

- Do you use online data to inform your offline marketing decisions?
- How do you enhance your traditional marketing by pairing it with digital?

## **2. CUSTOMER IN, NOT PRODUCT OUT**

We all like to think the consumer is at the center of our brands. And, in many ways, that’s probably true. After all, we’ve all studied our model customer and we use that profile to guide marketing and product strategies. But are your media plans built around product milestones like a launch, a new feature, a line extension? Or are they based on people milestones such as a new job, a recent move, the birth of a child?

Take refrigerator manufacturers for instance. The traditional approach might be to step up their media efforts when they launch a new state-of-the-art model. This makes sense — they’ve invested in R&D, tooling, and so on. They need to build demand. So they run heavy media for a month or two and see a spike in sales. It worked!

But, what would happen if they used the same investment and anchored it to people’s lives? As a consumer, when do you think about buying a new refrigerator? For most of us, it’s when the old one breaks or when we remodel our kitchens. At all other times, chances are we are much less attentive to refrigerator ads.

At Google, we talk about winning the moments that matter. Do a search for “broken refrigerator” or “kitchen remodeling.” Depending on where you are, who you are, and your search history, likely very few ad results for refrigerators come up. Those are moments that matter, but the leading brands aren’t there.

Regardless of whether it's refrigerators, or refinancing, or reconditioned pianos, once you identify the people who are most likely to be interested in your product, digital tools allow you to tell a deeper story.

When Garnier wanted to show women in France how easy it was to color their hair at home, they decided to tell a story in a way that would resonate. They created a teaser video on YouTube and only those who watched the entire video could see the next full episode and so on. The campaign generated more than 1.2 million views and led to a record number of Google searches for the products in the video. "The public doesn't necessarily want to see a 20 second ad with a pack shot at the end," says Stephane Levy, who led the creative from Garnier's agency. "They want to create a dialogue and engage with the brand and that's what makes this work exciting."

With a customer-centric approach, you may spend the same on marketing. But by focusing on people and when they are most receptive, your efforts are likely to mean more and be more effective.

**Things to consider:**

- Do you plan around products or people?
- At which moments does your product matter? Are you there?

**3. THINK LIKE AN ENTREPRENEUR**

In this series, I've tried to keep all the trends and recommendations specific and actionable, but I thought I'd end on a more philosophical note.

Vinod Khosla, entrepreneur, founder of Sun Microsystems and a major investor in companies like Square and AppNexus recommends all of the companies he invests in take 25% of each series of funding they get and spend it on experiments that have a "10x upside and a 1x downside" — that is, projects that could provide returns that are 10 times what they cost to test, but will have moderate impact on finances or strategy if they're not successful.

Larry Page has a similar idea for pushing Google employees to believe in their ability to do the impossible. He thinks it now takes about five years for a big new idea to look obvious. He urges teams to start development when an idea seems completely crazy. If you don't start then, you'll never be able to catch up by the time it seems obvious.

Now, the world of marketing is different than the world of tech. The idea of failing regularly isn't something most of us can afford. So, we take 10% of our budget to experiment and the other 90% looks similar to last year's plan. The question is: Is 10% enough to keep pace with a marketing world that's changed more in the last two years than the last 50?

---



**David Mogensen**

*Head of Brand Engagement for YouTube*

---