



Digital Marketing is Sick. Who's Going to Take the Blame?

Posted by [Derek A. Lackey, Editor](#) / September 12, 2018

Digital marketing is sick. Very sick. Forrester's work from over 11-million brand interactions prove that engagement levels continue to plummet[i], P&G has cut back \$140-million in digital spending citing it as ineffective while simultaneously claiming no negative impact to brand performance citing quarterly earnings rose by 15%[ii]; Forbes cites that only 32% of brands believe they have an effective digital strategy[iii] and it all points to brand campaigns falling short.

Someone's going to take the blame and it might just be the agency. In his post Don't sell a product, sell a whole new way of thinking, Mark Boncheck, founder of Shift Thinking, points to the fact that agencies don't see the problems [or can't solve the problems] of today because they are operating with a different model of the current state.

Said simply, marketing's work is incongruent with today's digital landscape. Unpacking this model-paradigm incongruence, what's really being addressed is the required mindset for effective digital marketing.

To be strategically effective in today's digital world, a marketer must: focus on the customer experience and what the customer wants rather than prioritizing what your company wants to market[iv]

Albeit simple in statement, truly shifting a mindset and changing behaviour is a daunting task that according to Professor of Harvard Business School, Rosabeth Moss Kanter. When a situation changes (as digital has done to marketing), both leadership traits and competency skills are called into question.

These change problems are significant and unless we were aware of them, marketers won't know how to approach marketing properly and usher it in to the new era of digital.

There are 5 reasons from Kanter's work that will impede the new, truly customer-centric mindset of digital:

Contextually then, we have:

If you look at what brands are saying and what they actually want from their agency partners, the answer is daunting: Here's what today's brands are looking for[vii]:

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