

Igniting the Digital Gunpowderâ€¦

Posted by [Derek A. Lackey, Editor](#) / December 17, 2016

Have you ever looked back over a campaign, admitting the results weren't as expected? Followed closely by the imminent conversation with the client around the pending question: why?

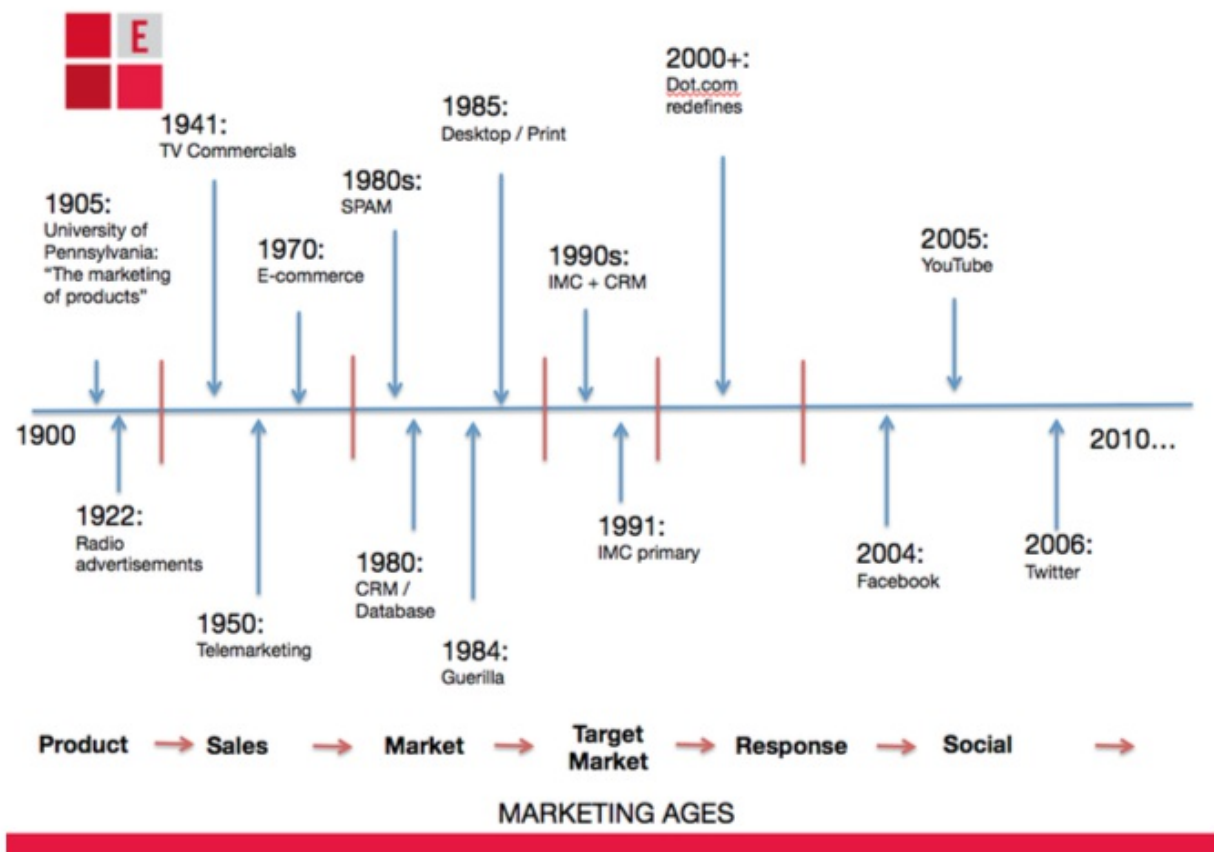
We chew on data, we interrogate timing issues, we critique creative or perhaps copy or budget spend but no matter how it's sliced, the outcomes tilt unfavourably against the efforts of our craft.

The core truth is: most digital campaigns render marginal results not because of timing, creative, copy or even budget. Campaigns fail because we enter the battlefield of digital in the wrong way.

Let's take a closer look at the source of the problem:

Since the early 1900s when marketing began to take shape within academic fields, it was seen as a discipline of telling a story to an audience with a desired outcome (buy something, promotional offer, trade in, etc.). This approach developed by E. Jerome McCarthy, is commonly referenced as the 4Ps (Product. Price. Promotion. Place). It took hold and became the fundamental thrust of marketing for the next century.

Granted, the media has changed greatly seeing radio, TV, telemarketing, direct mail, e-mail campaigns and even .coms and social media all hold places of prominence on the marketer's podium but again, marketers still relied on the 4 P approach: Tactics aside, marketers have gone through a series of very distinct ages: Product. Sales. Market. Target Market. Response. Social. All of which again caused us to modify overarching strategic approaches of how we would tell our stories but those stories still were delivered within the framework of a 4 P philosophy (see following chart)



So now with digital at the forefront, marketers do what marketers have always done the problem: we pour enormous energy into learning the media itself and then, deploy traditional campaigns through it, again:

Tell a story via the available media (fill in your own 4 Ps)
 Expect changed behavior from target audience

Marketers continue to use dated strategies and tactics in a totally new environment. Its like the classic metaphor: are they bringing knives to gun fights?

Consider for a moment pre-gunpowder warfare: Two sides, horses, archers, foot soldiers all lined up and when the battle started, theyd advance and crash into each other. Then gunpowder entered the scene. We then witnessed how military generals had to go through a learning curve.

At first, even with new weapons at their disposal, namely guns and canons, the two sides would still line up and act as if they were still using bows and arrows. They would advance towards each other unleashing the new weapons but, in the same old fashion way. Thats what they knew worked, from years of experience and battles.

War doesnt happen like that anymore.

War strategies have changed because the WAY wars are fought changed. The WAY wars are fought changed because gunpowder changed the game.

As gunpowder changed the way we go to war, digital has changed the way we go to market

Its tough to shift over 100 years of practice but lets face it: its a new world and marketers need to help clients learn the new WAY of dialogue-based, brand engagement.

In Blazon's recently published course on [Mastering Digital Strategy](#), we spend over an hour unpacking how Digital has radically changed how marketing is done. To summarize, digital is NOT about enabling past brand actions in a different media. Digital is a two-way dialogue between a brand and its customers whereby marketers are responsible for ushering in a new model to brand behaviour.

Marketing In The Dialogue Age

Yes, gone are the ages of Product, Sales, Market and so on; todays age is the Dialogue Age the age of instant, two-way communication and it demands a new WAY: new strategies, methods and tactics.

Has the end objective changed? Absolutely not. Marketers are still charged to achieve changed behaviour of a consumer towards a brand. Has the WAY in which we realize this changed? Absolutely.

OLD WAY: Focusing on how to sell (4P focus)

NEW WAY: Focusing on how to inform (dialogue age engagement focus).

To start, you must focus on developing client brands into trusted authorities, and through digital media, understand how consumers engage with, speak to and yes, expect to be listened to by brands. (if you want more on this, see our digital profiling, content and analytics programs)

Have a hard look at your digital strategy: if its filled with quivers of 4P arrows and not the dialogue ammunition of today, dont be surprised if the battle turns ugly and of course, you have to answer the question: why? I have actually had clients tell me Google does not work for our industry. It never occurred to them that they may have brought a knife to a gunfight. That maybe, just maybe they do not know how to deal with a customer who talks back - in real time.

Looking to improve your strategic power in digital? Enrol today in the [Mastering Digital Strategy certification program](#).