
Digital's one missing ingredient?

Posted by [Derek A. Lackey, Editor](#) / August 02, 2018

Once upon a time, a digital marketer sat down and planned a campaign. Put it all together, baked it for the right amount of time but to his chagrin, the results were poor and the digital cake fell flat.



Confused and embarrassed, the digital marketer went back and re-looked at the recipe card: What went wrong?

This marketer, being a good student of his craft, went back and started at the beginning.

What does my audience want more than anything else?

After spending time with his colleagues white-boarding and brain-storming, he turned to the University of Harvard's Grant and Glueck study where they've spent the past 75 years seeking the #1 secret to leading a fulfilling life. (after all, that's what people really want)

He stopped and thought. If marketing is to be customer first and, if Harvard has spent 75 years studying the #1 thing that makes people feel fulfilled, perhaps as a marketer I should dig this out and learn more.

As he began to read, his thoughts began to change about what people actually wanted (and the things on the white-board began to get crossed off). He also read a great article by Melanie Curtin about this exact topic and it reinforced that true fulfillment in life is: Not how much is in your 401(k). Not how many conferences you spoke at--or keynoted. Not how many blog posts you wrote or how many followers you had or how many tech companies you worked for or how much power you wielded there or how much you vested at each.

The #1 thing that leads to a fulfilling life is: Good relationships keep us happier and

healthier. Period.

And the biggest predictor of happiness and fulfillment overall in life is love. Now because he was still young, this marketer was confused. Love? How could love be brought into marketing? How could candlelight, romance, flowers, hand-written notes, walks on the beach help? Harvard said love but there is no way thought the young marketer that he could get that meaningfully into a brand campaign

But because this young marketer had a smart and wise boss, he was granted the time to think and so he did. And yet again, he did what smart marketers do, he kept asking questions

What exactly is this love Harvard's talking about?

He thought he knew but to his surprise, he found out that the world love has actually 4 completely different meanings:

TheresEroslove. This is the one that he thought about. Romance, sex, feelings, passion and so on. Although theres lots of this on TV, he knew enough to understand that this couldnt be what Harvards study was talking about.

TheresStorgelove. This is family and friendship love. Like how parents naturally feel about their kids. This was getting closer but probably wasnt quite right as Harvard was talking about a long and fulfilling life. Even if someone had kids, those kids will eventually grow up, move out and start their own life.

TheresPhileolove. This is brotherly love (as in Philadelphia: city of brotherly love). Its warm and tender, drives friendships, its committed and chosen. He felt he was getting really close now as he could begin to see this working in his customer-first digital campaigns.

And then, theresAgape. An unconditional love that directs specific actions towards the other person while expecting nothing in return. This isnt about emotion or feeling but its actually a verb. Lovea verb. A set of actions, a demonstration of things done all for the sake of the other person.

He again began to think:

If digital is all about forming relationships.

And, if Harvard has spent 75 years confirming that meaningful relationships are the #1 thing people have in a fulfilling life

And, if this kind of love (Agape) is the secret to having those real relationships.

And he had it

He went back to his digital recipe and asked: how as a brand are we fusing love into our campaigns? Actions for the sake of the consumer for their benefit and not ours.

This young marketer was faced with many obstacles. Many of his clients didnt feel comfortable with this: they were used to blasting promotions on Facebook and running banners ads filled with product features. Some of his colleagues didnt like it either. They were happy to ignore the statistics from Forrester, Accenture and Forbes all showing failing digital engagement scores. They were focused on selling the next digital tactic campaign featuring cute kittens feigning in hope that one day it might go viral.

But...

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