



The key 2015 trends that marketers can act on right now

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Date: 21st October 2014

Like Christmas carols in July, the year's not even close to over and we're already eager to announce the latest and greatest digital trends that will change your life in the year ahead, says Lise Pinnell, head of strategy, AnalogFolk London.



Over the coming months, you'll be seeing many more of these lists packed to the brim with innovative ideas that – in most cases – have no practical application.

I know what you're thinking, who wouldn't want a drone that patrols the living room whilst doubling as a remote control for the air conditioning?

The truth is, as more brands capitalise on trends by integrating tech aimlessly into their products, only a select few offer truly functional enhancements to our lives.

With that in mind, here's our first stab at predicting the trends that will really shape 2015. (But don't blame us if they're debunked before the year has even begun.)

1. Unlocking the potential of wearable tech

So far, the wearable revolution is yet to make the impact expected. Collectively we whined and clamoured and pleaded for them, but when they entered the ring we weren't that interested.



With research from Endeavour Partners finding that over one third of users abandon their smart wearables within six months, there is clearly a gap between consumer expectations and the reality of the products.

The fight is not yet over, but it seems the wearable tech pushed into the mass market so far just hasn't been that useful.

But as Apple and Google (two super-heavyweights, if we're going to continue the boxing analogy) begin to align the technology with luxury fashion, this may be set to change.

In order to get the most out of these devices, whether building them from scratch or enhancing existing ones with software, brands must ensure they make something with lasting value rather than temporary novelty.

2. The age of accessible data

People have always been sceptical about handing over their data to brands. The thought process has been, "If I give them my information, am I willing to delete one extra email per day for the rest of my life?" But as long as the value exchange is enticing enough, consumers are more willing than ever to allow brands access to their data.

For instance, 36% of global consumers are willing to share their current location with retailers via GPS – almost double the number who were just one year ago. In return, marketers are moving beyond basic segmentation to offer truly personalised, valuable and permissioned experiences.

As this continues, our openness with personal data will grow throughout 2015, granting more opportunities for brands to engage with their customers.

3. Getting personal

Offering personal communications with customers used to involve the kind of workload that would make a mule balk.

But increasingly sophisticated algorithms and predictive models that are capable of analysing myriad data streams can now do the bulk of the heavy lifting. This gives brands the opportunity to tailor services and products to individual customers with more precision than ever before.

Imagine a bank that could seamlessly allocate money between your mortgage, loans and current account based on your previous behaviour, always making sure you got the best deal. Welcome to 2015. The revolution in banking, health, hospitality, and travel is about to begin.

4. Embracing future-facing business models

There was a time when brands could stoically tie themselves to a single proposition and drive brand value by romanticising that positioning.

But new brands and start-ups aren't following those rules. Services like Uber are uniting irreconcilable poles of value – in this case cheap, simple and convenient.



Over the next 12 months, consumers will learn that they no longer have to accept the same trade-offs that they used to. In response, brands must go beyond fine-tuning and embrace new business models that deliver unreasonable propositions, or face being de-positioned by agile brands and tech start-ups.

5. Instant gratification

There was a time when "next day delivery" meant paying through the roof for the outside chance of receiving your package within 48-hours (assuming you ordered before noon).

These days, "next day delivery" is not only reliable but often free. In fact, it's sometimes not fast enough. Amazon has patented "anticipatory shipping" – a system of delivering products to customers before they've even ordered them. As these kinds of services grow more ubiquitous, consumer expectations will rise with them.

Businesses must focus on streamlining internal structures in order to meet the demand for things right now.

6. From active to passive

The advent of smartphones put consumers firmly in control of their exposure to brands. No longer were they captive to the messages surrounding them, as they could pick their own way through the marketing minefield.

And while they won't be relinquishing that control any time soon, the manner in which they manage it is evolving. Recently, we've seen a shift from active engagement technology (such as the smartphone) to passive technology – that is, sensors.

Whether it's a watch that monitors your heartbeat or headphones that select music based on your mood, there's a new wave of technologies that'll kindly automate the activities we used to do ourselves (at least until we abandon them after six months).

So consumers are becoming better able to tailor their experiences without any active engagement. In 2015, brands will need to ask less of their customers, and offer more in return.

And the winner is...

The running theme throughout these trends is the heightened expectations of the modern consumer. Providing they actually materialise in 2015, the onus will be on brands to take these demands seriously and ensure their business is set up to deliver on them.

Those that can do this will benefit from superior brand awareness, improved conversion rates, better brand affinity and, ultimately, customer loyalty.

And make sure you stay tuned next week when we'll be predicting the 2018 *X Factor* winner.

Link: <http://www.marketingmagazine.co.uk/article/1317779/key-2015-trends-marketers-act-right>