

# The only constant is change - and the customer

By [Desiree Gullan](#)

27 Jul 2017

Just when you've mastered the interminable functionality of your new smartphone or taught mom how to upload holiday snaps to the latest photo-sharing platform, the virtual rug is ripped out from under you and once-cool new tech is given the switcheroo for something way cooler and newer.



Desiree Gullan

As digital marketers grappling to get ROI on the fleeting digital environment, my recommendation is to identify and leverage the constant at the core of our changing digital world: the customer. The customer will never disappear. How customers get what they want, or how we show them what they want will be new and dynamic – but what they want is relatively consistent.

As much as digital feels like the removal of the human element, if anything it allows us to draw closer, understand deeper and target sharper. These digital trends suggest that as much as we become digital and adopt increasingly automated marketing techniques, customers remain at the centre of our universe.

## Programmatic buying

At its core is the customer experience. With insights into movement, behaviour, affinities and profanities, programmatic media buying gives us the ability to more accurately pin-point and target potential customers. It may be rooted in algorithms and rely on big data, but that's purely auxiliary – there's nothing anonymous or robotic about it: it's deeply human.

It's estimated that by 2018, programmatic buying will have grown from 28% to 80% of marketing spend (State of Digital, 2017). The efficiency of programmatic buying gives more bang for an ever-shrinking buck, and marketers should give it consideration to aggressively grow market share.

## Rich and rewarding experiences

The explosion of digital video reflects the importance of the human experience within the digital experience. Facebook's 360° and live videos are perfect examples of getting close to the experience of another. Users love video because it's a more human representation of reality than something static.

The rising consumption of video content reflects a move back to an immersive and human experience – either intimate storytelling or even a point-of-view understanding. Digital video consumption increased by 53% in 2016, with digital video on mobile seeing staggering growth of 145% (IAB).

Hyper-personalised social media platforms that give real-time updates of user's experience as they happen – then self-destruct – are nothing if not a more life-like imitation of the real thing. Moments pass in real life, just like they do on SnapChat.

## **Service on demand**

Chat-bots and always-on digital support for customers are indicative of the human need for attention. We all want to be noticed, wanted and served (whether we'll admit or not). If you can offer value-added services and support that require minimum work for the customer and maximum reward, you're speaking to that human need that's endlessly self-serving.

This also means your clients are likely going to be offering enhanced services to customers who previously didn't have access. The bottom end of the pyramid, for example, who might be given service and support via mobile access. So ensure you have the technology and marketing tools in place to support the shift.

How to remain relevant in a digital world that seeks to exclude the out-of-touch as quickly as it innovates? Remember your customer and you'll stay abreast of the tech. For now, that means the three big movers – programmatic buying, rich and rewarding experiences and enhanced services. All of which reaffirm what you should already know: the customer is key.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Desiree Gullan is Gullan & Gullan (G&G) digital executive creative director.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>