

Growth of real meaning, real-time value

 By [Mike Abel](#)

13 Jan 2011

My crystal ball is currently in for a service so I've had to rely on tea leaves. Rooibos this year, vs Aussie Ceylon. At a top level, my prediction is the ongoing growth of that which has real meaning. Not just a historic perspective on "meaning" but now including real-time value.



In this busy world, *convenience beats traditional loyalty*. Consumers have finally entered both a creative and emancipated age. The web as we know it today has given them an accepted voice via social networks and the like. Give feedback to the world instantly from your couch versus the hushed historic void of the "complaints department".

This will force brands, much like "trip advisor" does, to ensure that they are reported upon favourably. Therefore they need to behave and *deliver* favourably.

Consumers want technology, previously a cold word, to start delivering a greater experience to them and one just need play with an iPad, the latest iPhone or BlackBerry to see where technology, ergonomics and experience can intersect.

So thinking about some of these influencers, what will this look start to look like:

1. The web is no longer free:

Kindle, iTunes and killer apps are training people to start *paying for the content* they want vs that which is freely available. This is good and right.

It will also make the current paper-based migration of newspapers and magazines that much easier for the media owners that have been grappling with the post-1995 abyss of their advertising and subscriptions revenue models.

2. Ebooks, emags and everything in-between:

Related to the previous point, the Kindle and iPad have taken *paper-based communication one step closer to extension amongst the higher LSMs* - and given the rain-forests a fighting chance.

3. Economies of ethos:

Brands increasingly must stand for something beyond just rational items. Brands can't, however, just "stand for" the cause du jour. Doing what others do, just because they're doing it, won't work very long or very effectively.

Corporate social responsibility efforts will need to be believable, sustained, and engaging. Some of the strongest will come from those brands that connect the public and the personal in today's financially-strained world.

4. Next door smarts:

Influence by "friends" will also increase. If consumers trust the community, they will extend trust to the brand.

Not just word-of-mouth, but the right word-of-mouth is what matters. Look for more websites using Facebook Connect to share information with the friends from those sites while trying not to annoy anyone.

5. Prolifetition:

Look for increased competition - and not just from traditional brands. *The Internet changed the game from consumers feeling they had to know a brand to even consider it.*

Ubiquitous awareness is replaced by strong word of mouth and positive viral sharing. Knowing what drives a category, what consumers really expect, and what creates loyalty, can give you a meaningful advantage when entering new and uncharted categories populated by strangers to your brand.

6. "Social CRM":

It's already happening, with some big brands playing in this space, but in 2011 it will find momentum.

More and more, marketers will realise that the customer service model has changed for good. Call centres will need to be re-tooled as "social centres", equipped and ready to deal with customers via the new channels in which they play... Facebook, Twitter etc.

7. 3D advertising:

We've seen the impact and appeal of 3D movies in cinemas, and in some cases, we've seen some 3D advertising in cinemas. But 3D advertising will start taking shape and form beyond the cinema. Affordable 3D TVs will be the order of the day shortly.

Ad campaigns will be made specifically made for 3D, eg Courvoisier cognac, secured its position at the forefront of a 3D revolution as the first brand to create a specific 3D advertisement on UK terrestrial TV. The ad, 'Cognac With Another Dimension', shows cognac in a balloon glass exploding and then spinning into a vortex that forms a cocktail. The ads naturally make the consumers feel more involved.

8. Storytime: turning products into icons

More and more, consumers want to understand the 'story' behind a product. This gives it value beyond the functional use and surrounds it with history, heritage and, often most importantly, a 'real' reason to charge a premium for it.

Knowing the history of the Nike Air Max and the reason why it's billed as the 'world's best running shoe' has allowed it to become an iconic sneaker and, as a result, sell well into the millions.

The product 'story' now gives retailers an angle, a reason to engage with a consumer. It empowers them. Customers feel a sense of satisfaction, knowing that the product they are buying comes from a lineage or has a real reason to exist.

9. Shop in-store; buy on-line:

Etailing is going to continue to grow in leaps and bounds. Consumers will use shops more as an experience and opportunity to engage with the tactile product, and then they'll buy it online from an etailer which doesn't have the expensive rent or staff overhead and can therefore offer the item at a reduced price.

In conclusion, brands will need to be more consistent in their communication, more single-minded in their messaging and the offers will need a clear and real focus on benefits. This does not mean compromising on creativity or charm.

In fact, quite the converse.

For more:



- Biz Trends 2011: [Marketing & Media South Africa](#)
- Biz Trends 2011: [Marketing & Media Africa](#)
- Biz Trends 2011: [Retail](#)
- Twitter Search: [#biztrends2011](#)

ABOUT MIKE ABEL

Mike Abel is chief executive partner of M&C Saatchi Abel, which he launched in South Africa in February 2010. He is the former COO of Ogilvy South Africa and CEO of M&C Saatchi Australia. Contact Mike on tel +27 (0)21 421 1024 (Cape Town) or +27 (0)11 263 3900 (Johannesburg), email mike.abel@mcsaatchiabel.co.za, follow him on Twitter at [@abelmike](#) and read his blog at mikeabel.wordpress.com

- EXCLUSIVE: Building hope in society - the rallying call for brands and their agencies - 27 Aug 2020
- Business can transform SA and thrive - 29 Jul 2019
- Creative work can change the world - 30 May 2017
- From start-up to 'Agency of the Year' in five years - 8 Dec 2015
- Brave is the new safe - 4 May 2012

[View my profile and articles...](#)

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