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Xerox CMO at DMA 2011: Marketing must be relevant, personalized

Juan Martinez | *Direct Marketing News (dmnews.com)*

Brands must offer engaging, personalized and relevant marketing experiences to compete in today's marketplace, said Christa Carone, CMO of Xerox Corp.

During her keynote address at the Direct Marketing Association's 2011 Conference & Exhibition on Oct. 2, Carone admitted that even her own company's marketing efforts sometimes miss the mark. "We're not perfect," she said. "We produce a lot of marketing. Some of it is engaging. Some not so much."

Carone said the future of marketing will be about brands forging shared beliefs with consumers to turn them into buyers and brand advocates. She said direct marketing can become engagements that make brands an influential part of the buying and referring cycle.

"You can allow consumers to become a fan on Facebook, follow you on Twitter and add you to their RSS [feed]," she said. "But what's more important, the technology or the experience of shopping at the store? Is it about the technology or the service, products and greeting? That's an easy answer."

Irrelevance, Carone, said, is the ultimate "dissatisfier."

She praised technology company Zadspace for enabling brands to place promotional material on the front of packages as opposed to simply using traditional inserts. "The promotionals are solo, centered and with the address label," she said. "The promos catch you at the point of interest."

Zadspace ads are removable, relevant, real-time, personalized, trackable and targeted, she said.

Carone also urged the attendees to develop a "brand personality," which she said "makes it so much more interesting for the listener. When you meet someone, you try to be interesting, you try to act interested and you have a particular tone of voice. Think about that in the context of a brand."



Groupon, she said, created a brand personality that is so important to the fabric of the company that it influences its hiring decisions. The company has "a great hotbed of writers with a twisted sense of humor," she said. "Sometimes they're controversial but they're memorable and get your attention."

Carone also urged the marketers in attendance at the DMA show to implement customer reviews platforms for products. She said Xerox's customer reviews platform offers "a tremendous amount of engagement" and enables the office supplies company to know "the people who have personal connections to our printers and other devices."

Xerox can leverage consumer feedback to develop targeted and relevant promotions, she said.

"If we receive 15 ratings and reviews from realtors who say our product is an efficient way to print new listings, very quickly we can create a customized offer using language from the reviews, speaking in realtor jargon and within hours start to kick out a relevant real-time marketing effort [to similar prospects]."