



POINT OF VIEW

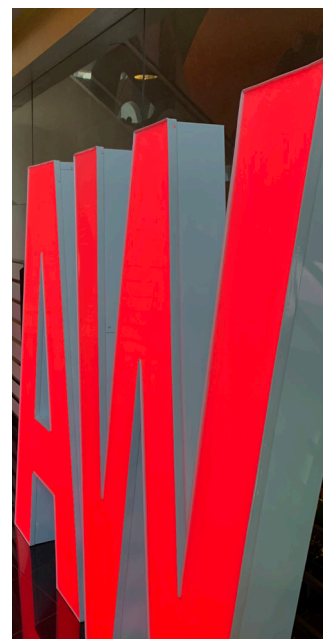
96 Hours at Advertising Week Four Key Takeaways



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Last week in New York City, thousands of advertising professionals descended upon Lincoln Center to attend Advertising Week—the premier industry conference of the year. Advertising Week (AW) brings together marketing, advertising, brand, and technology experts to share reflections and predictions about the industry. It's hard not to get swept up in the excitement of AW; brands present their best case studies, companies showcase their best technologies, and celebrities headline panels. However, in the midst of the buzzwords and flashy tech, there were consistent themes discussed throughout the four days—some ideas we've heard before but are increasing in importance; some are new but worth noting.

Rather than focus on the most obvious buzzword topics for these four key takeaways (Mobile first! Artificial intelligence!), I am highlighting the broader ideas that will continue to shape and shift the advertising industry and more importantly, the consumer experience, over the next year. Although AW isn't purely healthcare focused, my takeaways can be applied to any industry vertical and perhaps are most important for healthcare brands, who face a more significant challenge in building authentic relationships with consumers.



1

Move Over Millennials, Generation Z is Coming. If Millennials were the opening act, Generation Z is the main event. Born between 1995 and 2002, the oldest Generation Z'er is 23, entering the workforce, and upending the consumer marketplace with their spending power. Generation Z goes head-to-head with Millennials and Baby Boomers in size as one of the largest generational cohorts, and they are the most connected—they've never known a life without digital, mobile, or social media. And what Millennials got wrong, Gen Z is on track to get right. Generation Z was raised during the Great Recession, and as a result, their eyes are wide open. They are socially conscious, connected to their communities, and care about world affairs. And they expect the same from their brands. As you've likely heard, they spend their money on experiences, not products. They are demanding more from brand relationships than any generation before. Even if your audience target doesn't include a younger cohort, they can't be ignored. Why? As these connected generations grow in influence, they will dictate new standards for marketers. **If your brand does target younger generations, it's more important than ever to evaluate your mobile ecosystem, digital video strategy, and social media presence—as this is where the battle for Gen Z will ultimately be won.**

2

You've Gotta Have Heart. We are living in the age of “the conscious consumer.” The proliferation of digital and social media has resulted in a transparent world—brands and consumers now have direct relationships, and they coexist in the same, culturally charged universe. Consumers want brands that understand and participate in the world around them. It's no longer enough for brands to market their product, consumers expect brands to stand for something larger. Often this call to arms is confused with politicizing a brand. Having a POV on culture



is not the same as participating in hot-button debates and issues. Through the use of social listening, brands can discover the things that are authentic to their target audience and use the brand to tap into that story. Like Nick Drake, Executive Vice President for T-Mobile shared, “The cultural experience will happen with or without you, so you might as well be part of it.” Don’t know where to begin with tapping into your brand’s cultural opportunity? **At Evoke, we recommend identifying a “Brand Ideal” positioning for your brand—leveraging social listening and sentiment analysis we can help identify the culturally relevant, authentic opportunities to position your brand and engage with your audience. Additionally, regular social listening, a best practice for most brands, can reveal moments of opportunity for brand amplification.**

“The cultural experience will happen with or without you, so you might as well be part of it.”

— Nick Drake, EVP, T-Mobile

3

The Speed of Consumer. For years marketers have been talking about the changing consumer journey—it is now less linear, with more touchpoints, and more outside influence. However, what we don’t often discuss is the speed of consumer decision-making. We still assume that consumers spend hours, days, or weeks contemplating a purchase or decision. The reality is, technology has accelerated the consumer experience. It’s now possible to learn about a product in a video, order it from the same unit, and have it delivered to the doorstep the same day. Even the most critical purchases like car buying have accelerated to a fraction of the time it used to take. So, what does this mean for brands? In most cases, brands need to explore opportunities for total transformation within their customer journeys. It’s no longer enough to optimize paid advertising. With the saturation of tech solutions we have a chance to identify unique, end-to-end solutions that truly transform the customer experience. As Bob Greenberg of R/GA said, “There is no longer a ‘set it and forget it’ marketing solution.” We must always be thinking of new and different approaches that result in seamless solutions for customers. **Where should a brand begin? Innovation can sound scary, but it doesn’t have to be. We recommend starting by identifying a single issue that plagues your current customer experience, and the Evoke Business Transformation Team can help you determine a transformative solution to overcome the challenge and increase your conversion potential.**

4

Keep the Enemy Closer. No industry has been spared from the recent introduction of direct-to-consumer challenger brands. These digitally native disruptors typically offer niche products and streamlined customer experiences that attract young or novice consumers. Disruptor brands launch quickly (see above), iterate their brand experience over time leveraging performance data, offer highly personalized experiences, and abide by a single cardinal rule: consumer-centric marketing. A majority of disruptor brands’ traffic is sourced from search and content marketing vs. mass awareness and they rely on end-to-end control of their supply chain to establish an advantage over their legacy competition. One of the hottest debates in marketing these days is the question, “Who ultimately wins? Legacy or disruptor brands?” In theory, legacy brands have the market volume, customer trust, and infrastructure to scale. However, disruptor brands have the flexibility, courage, and let’s face it, chutzpah that isn’t often found in most legacy marketing plans. One thing is for sure, these challenger brands are forcing marketers to rethink how they engage their consumer. **While it may not be possible to mimic disruptor brands, it is possible to learn from them. Start by analyzing the disruptor brands in your category (healthcare has dozens!) and how their offerings and approach provide a market advantage compared to the category norms.**