



Featured interview

Fernando Jiménez, Head of Marketing and Brands Iberia at Electrolux and Associate Professor at Esden Business School Business School, Madrid.

Fernando Jiménez, who currently leads the Spanish and Portuguese marketing divisions at global electronic products manufacturer Electrolux, caught up with Nigel Wright to talk about his views on the current trends impacting FMCG marketing in Europe.

From a professional marketing perspective, what aspects of marketing interest you most today and why?

I'm interested in different approaches to marketing and one of the subjects that I'm currently focusing on in my professional practice is the 'three hundred and sixty degree' approach to marketing. This approach is specifically about identifying and then combining all of the on and offline customer 'pre-purchase', 'while they purchase' and 'post purchase' 'touch points' of a brand. It's presented as a cycle, hence the name three hundred and sixty degree. I have three key ideas about how the three hundred and sixty degree approach can be challenged and developed.

Could you outline what those three ideas are?

Firstly, the customer or 'end-user' is already naturally inclined to the three hundred and sixty degree approach but many marketers still tend to isolate and then target customers based on a perceived channel preference – be it TV, online etc. This is still too much of a traditional approach. I would say that marketers who work like this treat customers as three hundred and sixty 'maybes' when in fact they need to accept that customers today are predominantly 'omni-channel' users. They are jumping from TV to iPad to other screens to advertising billboards to stores and so on. So, to develop some but not all of these channels is a key mistake marketers are making today. If we accept that customers naturally adopt an omni-channel approach, then it is vitally important for brands/marketers to also create an omni-channel 'experience' for consumers.

Secondly, it is also wrong, in my opinion, to adapt creative campaigns to different channels. This is also an approach which is common today but also firmly rooted in the past. It typically occurs because advertisers have always had to adapt campaigns to fit in with the requirements of the different mediums (TV, Press, etc). Today, the roles should be reversed, whereby the advertisers are driving the process and those managing the channels are adapting their requirements to fit in with the needs of the advertisers.

Finally, it is unnecessary to actually 'pay' for all of the channels within a three hundred and sixty degree context. It is, however, very challenging from a marketing perspective to approach a media buying agency, for example, and request a three hundred and sixty degree plan that only outlines the costs for certain touch points. The reality is, though, that TV advertising, for example, will likely generate a lot of viral and user generated content online and therefore you don't need to 'pay' to generate that content/advertising yourself. The SoLoMo (social, local, mobile) concept is important in this regard. SoLoMo marketing relies heavily on user generated 'free' content which is supported by a selection of 'paid for' advertising touch points.

Are you able to give some examples of how you have utilised the three hundred and sixty degree approach to marketing?

I have a really good branded content example. As head of marketing for Electrolux Group in Spain, I managed our sponsorship deal with the TV talent show 'Top Chef.' We utilised a three hundred and sixty degree strategy which included traditional promotional techniques such as TV advertising and product placement, alongside modern approaches like creating a smartphone app that enabled viewers to download recipes as they watched the show. These three approaches collectively generated a lot of online conversation which we were able to convert into footfall by hosting in-store promotions where customers could try and buy the Electrolux products that contestants had been using. Deals included providing customers with vouchers or free accessories if they purchased one of our 'Top Chef' ovens.

Which other companies have demonstrated expertise in this approach?

Pepsi-Co does this very well. Examples include when it sponsors the Super Bowl, as well as when it launches a new flavour of Doritos crisps. Lego is another global company with a great track record of successful three hundred and sixty degree marketing campaigns. These are focused around the Lego films which are available to watch and download for free via YouTube. These have had a positive impact on product sales in-store. In terms of a Spanish example, Campofrio is excellent at capitalising on SoLoMo marketing to leverage its TV advertising.



How do Spanish consumers react to three hundred and sixty degree marketing campaigns compared to consumers elsewhere in Europe?

I think Spanish consumers are perhaps lagging behind those in other European markets. They are definitely active online and research products and engage with brands in the same way as their European peers. However, they still predominantly favour making transactions in the traditional way, in-store. There's basically still a lack of trust in buying via e-commerce channels. We actually see this lack of trust in other industries too, like banking. Things are gradually changing though and I would certainly say the most successful retailers today in Spain are the ones that are utilising the three hundred and sixty degree on and offline approach to customer engagement. Those with no physical presence however are still immature in their development.

What other marketing trends do you anticipate will grow over the next few years?

Over the next two years I anticipate the concept of 'fun' and creating 'fun experiences' to become more prominent in consumer marketing. This is something which is already growing in popularity in the USA. For example, doctors are being encouraged to make visits more fun for children, and teachers are also now expected to create 'fun' experiences for students. This is gradually extending to products and services marketing whereby marketers are trying to turn typically stressful or difficult experiences into fun ones; examples include renting a car or dealing with a faulty or broken product. A more imminent trend is virtual reality marketing. This is being driven by products such as Google Glass and smartphone apps that allow marketers to give in-store virtual reality demonstrations of their products. This development has essentially signalled the end of QR codes, as brands seek to engage with consumers through perhaps more intimate methods such as 3D videos.

As well as having a successful career in FMCG, you've also worked in marketing education during the last ten years. What sort of skills and qualities are marketers developing within business schools to enable them to succeed today?

Students are especially interested in anything to do with digital and online marketing as well as brand positioning online. So, particular skills that are in-demand would include search engine marketing, organic marketing, affiliate marketing, keyword marketing – everything associated with positioning brands and engaging with consumers online. A lot of this is combined in the SoLoMo concept. Around 70% of people in Spain currently use smartphones. In the under twenty five age group, it's ninety eight percent. SoLoMo, therefore, is something students are encouraged to become very familiar with. Another key aspect of marketing training today is metrics. Twenty years ago, marketing was predominantly focused on increasing brand awareness and building reputation, but it was an intangible benefit, as few people were actually interested in measuring its effectiveness. Now, marketing is increasingly linked to P&L and developing the skills needed to properly track marketing performance, especially in the digital age, is considered vitally important.

Do you think it's important for Spanish marketers to gain international experience and understanding of international markets today?

Absolutely; Spain is still emerging from its worst financial crisis in almost seventy years which has seen the Spanish economy decline for seven consecutive years, leading to one of the worst unemployment

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rates in Europe, at 24%. Coinciding with this has been a mass exodus from Spain. The Spanish population has declined by about one million people during the last two years because both migrants as well as native people have looked abroad for work. Internal consumption has generally been very poor and companies have also had to look to overseas markets to stimulate growth. Spain is lucky though, as our language is also the main language spoken in Latin America, and Latin American countries represent a big opportunity for Spanish businesses seeking to expand overseas. So, experience and knowledge of Latin America, as well as Asia, which is attractive to all growing European businesses, is certainly beneficial.

How do you see your own career evolving over the next few years?

I've always been part of what I call the 'commercial triangle' – marketing, sales and products – and I have a strong background in all three of those areas. I've also mainly worked in B2C retail facing roles and I'm keen to stay within those arenas moving forward. Ideally, I would like to move into another Sales and Marketing Director position, or even step up into a Country Manager role, for a multinational business. Managing people is very important to me. At Electrolux, I have teams across three different sites – Lisbon, Barcelona and Madrid – so I am already used to the complexity of multi-country management; especially as Spain and Portugal each have different and distinctive languages and cultures. In terms of sector, I'd like to move away from consumer electronics and explore other consumer markets such as food and beverages or pharmaceuticals which are areas I'm particularly interested and passionate about. The pharmaceuticals industry is attractive because it's rapidly moving away from using marketing techniques that are very traditional and regulated, and adopting new approaches that are more in line with the broader FMCG sector.

Outside of work, what keeps you busy?

I'm a busy father; I have three children and most of my spare time is spent taking care of my family. Whenever I get the chance, however, I enjoy scuba diving. I'm qualified as a certified PADI advanced diver and have dived all over the world. Some of my favourite diving destinations include Cozumel, an island in the Caribbean Sea off the eastern coast of Mexico, Mauritius in the Indian Ocean, as well as superb 'local' spots like Lanzarote and the other Canary Islands.