



Brand and Marketing Trends for 2019

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With the New Year nearly upon us, marketers are preparing for 2019 fiscal brand planning. It helps to have an advance look at trends that will be make-or-break decisions – both for brands *and* for consumers.

Happily, predictive loyalty and emotional engagement metrics allow marketers to decode consumers' emotions and expectations and, ultimately, their behavior in the marketplace.

Brand Keys (www.brandkeys.com) has been decoding consumer behavior and emotional engagement since 1985. These 2019 insights are based on 120,000+ consumer psychological assessments that measure the direction and velocity of consumer / category values and identify future trends with proven accuracy. Here's an overview of trends that will help marketers stay ahead of the curve.

1) Real People, Real Profits:

Celebrities are so 2015. Reality stars are not any better. Brands will benefit most from leveraging real customers and authentic voices in the marketplace.

2) Augmented Reality Will Become Real:

Marketers will use the interactive experience of the real-world environment, enhanced by multiple sensory modalities, including visual, auditory, and olfactory.

3) Don't Disregard Generation Z:

Born hot-wired to technology, Gen Z will make up 30% of the U.S. population, a larger cohort than the Baby Boomers or Millennials, and Augmented Reality will appeal!

4) A More Customer-Centric Mindset Required: How consumers define "value" will become more complex. Only the consumer can tell you why they buy the way they do. Ubiquity will spell trouble for brands.

5) Live Video Is Not An Oxymoron:

Live streaming will take video to a new level in a more emotional and intimate way for interviews, personalized outreach, and higher conversion rates.

6) Brand Surrogacy Is Basic: Brands will continue to be surrogates for "value." Brands will have to work harder to avoid reliance on price-points.

7) Personalization Augments Customization:

The availability of enhanced Big Data analyses will make personalized content and outreach more engaging. Think of it as real-time outreach based on real consumer behavior multiplied by how customers really see themselves.

8) Consumers Want More:

Consumer expectations have increased by 28% year over year. Brands kept up by just 7%, which leaves a huge gap between what's *desired* and what's *delivered*. And, expectations will continue to increase.

9) Search Becomes More Visual:

Today's (and tomorrow's) consumers are more visually literate than ever, and visual search will enhance the user experience and better meet consumer's ever-expanding expectations.

10) Don't Snub Voice Search:

More than half of all searches will be via smarter, learning-capable AI voice assistants like Siri, Alexa, and Google.

11) Engagement and Entertainment Are Different:

Entertainment provides amusement. It gets attention, but it *doesn't* guarantee sales. Real engagement affects the emotional consumer-to-brand bond *and* the bottom line.

12) Everything Will Get More Emotional:

Successful brands need to first identify what emotional values exist in their category, and then worry about the entertainment factor. Differentiation has become more dependent on what a brand can offer emotionally.

A new year provides brand marketers a chance for new resolutions and new beginnings. But if you want to do something new, you have to stop doing something old. These trends provide brands the opportunity to break habits, embrace new methods of engagement, introduce new models, new technologies, and new – and profitable – opportunities into their brand planning.

One final trend: the best way brands can manage change will be through validated and predictive loyalty and emotional engagement metrics.

As always, we welcome the opportunity to share insights with colleagues, so feel free to reach out with questions. In the meantime we wish you all an accurate, engaging, and profitable 2019.

About Brand Keys:

Brand Keys is a world leader in brand equity, loyalty and emotional engagement metrics.

Brand Keys offers independently validated consumer-centric solutions ranging from behavioral-based assessments to brand evaluation, architecture, tracking, media optimization, and strategic communications research. It has been successfully used in B2B and B2C categories in 35 countries.

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