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Seven (Non-Cliché) Trends To Watch In 2020
Marketers Warned to Also Watch For Trend ‘Expiration Dates’

NEW YORK, NY October 28, 2019 – It’s that time of year. The releasing of the trends for the coming year. Sadly, the publication of trends for *next* year started six months ago. “So, there’s already a ton of pedestrian advice out there already past its use-by date,” noted Robert Passikoff, founder and president of Brand Keys, (www.brandkeys.com), the New York-based brand loyalty and engagement research consultancy that conducted the 34th annual trend analysis.

“What’s offered up early in the year can hardly be called ‘trends.’ In reality it’s opinion not prediction. And there’s a big difference. That kind of opinion has efficacy *only if* you didn’t pay attention to them when they showed up three or four years ago when they were values that were going to become trends,” said Passikoff. “Generally speaking what’s already out there are clichés, opinions that are already passé in a marketing and branding world that moves at the speed of the consumer. These adjustments have already made themselves felt in the marketplace. They aren’t new ‘trends,’ they’re the ‘new normal.’”

These include observations, opinions, and suggestions to marketers to focus on things like bots, reality (augmented and artificial), customization, personalization, storytelling, influence marketing, embracing IoT, voice search, voice assistants, video marketing, blockchain, big data, programmatic, and the selling of experiences anywhere and everywhere. “Been there, *should have* already done that,” noted Passikoff. “IoT has been around for 20 years.”

Brand Keys has been decoding consumer behavior and emotional engagement since 1985. The trends – real dynamics that will change the competitive landscape – are identified annually based on 120,000+ consumer psychological assessments for 1,000+ brands, trends that measure the true direction and velocity of consumer and category value shifts. “That enables us to predictively identify authentic and imminent trends with considerable accuracy,” noted Passikoff. “Our trend predictions have been independently validated to correlate with marketplace episodes and manifestations at the 0.80+ level.”

For 2020 Brand Keys identified seven trends marketers need to watch to remain up-to-the-minute, state-of-the-art, and ahead-of-the-curve:

1. The rise of alternative platforms

Core platforms for B2C like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, and platforms like LinkedIn for B2B, are not meeting consumer expectations. The addition of pay-to-play platforms means engagement will become more problematic. Alternative e-commerce and social platforms like TikTok allow brands to easily engage consumers who are planning to migrate from older platforms to those that better meet their expectations.

2. An increase in shoppable posts

With the continuing growth of social media and e-commerce, synergy between the two will be massive. Shoppable posts have been around less than a year, but the amalgamation will be the next big thing for social media. Using native integration will

make it easy to tag and shop products and will make driving consumers to product pages easier, more fluid, and instinctive.

3. An immense customer service shift to social media, commensurate with increased brands' social media channels

Significant increase and activity in brand social media accounts (Brand Keys: +25% YOY), combined with double-digit increases in expectations for better customer service (+34% YOY) and faster customer service (+51% YOY) will cause a shift from email, phone, and online chat to social media channels.

4. Where consumers want more

Consumer expectations have increased 28% year-over-year, but brands have only made a 6% gain on average. That's -3% YOY and leaves a huge gap between what consumers *desire* and what they believe a brand is *delivering*. Knowing the gap between the two can be a real opportunity for a brand – or for competitors.

5. Omni-Channel marketing

Multi-channel marketing is sooo 2017. Omni-channel's use of multi-platforms provides audiences the opportunity to fully experience – and engage with – a brand's strategy. Here's where marketers can capitalize on older opportunities like customization, personalization, storytelling, and AI, *if* one can do it seamlessly and strategically.

6. More accurate and predictive cross-media measures

Identifying precisely *where* and *how* brands can amplify engagement and loyalty along the path-to-purchase will become of paramount importance. Methodologies like [Brand Keys' Media GPS](#) that identify which loyalty drivers will be most influenced by one medium versus another, *and* the percentage contribution each media platform makes to generating awareness, enhancing recall, creating engagement, and driving sales, will become essential planning tools.

7. How differentiation can provide an emotional lift for brands

Differentiation continues to be critical to brand success and is the one trend that isn't going away anytime soon. Increasingly, differentiation will come from what the brand is able to offer consumers emotionally. This is one market tendency that *has* been around for a while and only becomes more critical every year, so it's important that marketers pay substantial attention.

"We at Brand Keys speak to, watch, and poll thousands of people annually. But we also try to remember that people are only consumers some of the time and, even then, they do not turn to anything resembling a rational buying equation. They remain people, with emotions and other concerns, who understand their brand choices have social, even spiritual and tribal, consequences," noted Passikoff. "Particularly these days. Consumers constantly re-examine deeply held notions that underlie brand loyalties and market behaviors, which is why six months in marketplace-time can be a decade in a brand's life."

"Examining people from both a rational *and* emotional perspective *always* leads to the nexus of opportunity and success. As always, we welcome that opportunity to share insights with our colleagues, and invite them to reach out with questions," said Passikoff.

In the meantime, Brand Keys wishes you all an accurate, engaging, predictive, and profitable 2020.

About Brand Keys:

Brand Keys (www.brandkeys) is a world leader in predictive brand equity, loyalty and emotional engagement metrics. Unlike economic use models, which rely on historical data and profitability conjecture, the Brand Keys' assessments and trends identification is 100% consumer-driven, measuring emotional *and* rational aspects of the consumer's decision process in B2B, B2C, and D2C categories.

Brand Keys offers independently-validated consumer-centric solutions ranging from predictive behavioral-based assessments to brand evaluation, architecture, tracking, media optimization, and strategic communications research. It has been successfully used in B2B, B2C, and D2C categories in 30 countries.

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