Leveraging Data and Machine Learning to Drive Brand Performance

There is no question that 2020 has been a year like none other, especially for those in the healthcare industry. For brand managers, that meant sales teams were grounded; budgets got frozen, or even cut in many cases; healthcare practitioners moved their offices virtual; and telehealth services jumped light-years ahead in terms of usage and capabilities.

Brand managers have had to reimagine all of their marketing strategies, no matter the type of campaign or who they are trying to reach. Going forward will require a focus on data, conversion strategy, and measurable performance.

Michelle Petroff, Head of Fingerpaint's Conshohocken, Pa., office, interviews Nick Bartolomeo and Bryan O'Malley, who co-lead Fingerpaint's SHIFT Performance Center of Excellence — a team of more than 50 people dedicated to data-driven, performance marketing. They share their insights on how they are providing solutions to some of the challenges faced by brand teams as the healthcare industry reevaluates how it reaches its customers.

Petroff: What's keeping healthcare marketers up at night?

Bartolomeo: It might be easier to answer what's not keeping them up at night. Brand managers always have a lot of responsibility resting on their shoulders. But their biggest investment has essentially been sidelined due to the pandemic, which has completely disrupted it. The traditional ways of pharma marketing and that responsibility have gotten increasingly larger. For example, brand managers are being asked to launch new products without ever being in the same physical location as the person they are trying to reach. They are being asked to do a lot more with less and to develop new solutions to challenges no one has ever faced before.

And these are just a few of the challenges they face.

O'Malley: There isn't a "How to Market During a Pandemic" playbook that spells it all out, but there are proven strategies marketers can rely on to maximize their opportunities. Delivering personalized brand experiences is more crucial than ever. This is where investments in audience profiles, marketing automation, and predictive analytics really start to pay off.

Bartolomeo: And, that starts with data.

Petroff: So, it's all about the data? How is data going to solve marketing problems?

Bartolomeo: It is not all about the data, but it definitely starts with data. We want to develop a complete 360-degree profile of every customer to gain insights on their understanding of a condition or a brand. That's made possible by the data we compile from their demographics and real-world interactions.

O'Malley: Exactly. Analyzing those key touchpoints gives us insight into their mindset, and it lets us start delivering relevant content to help move them along the adoption funnel. Then when we add in machine learning and suddenly we can take that analysis to a whole other level.

Petroff: Machine learning seems to be the latest buzzword...

Bartolomeo: Yes, machine learning is definitely having its moment in the spotlight. But, we have been leveraging its capabilities for the past couple of years. Embedding it into our brand strategies and using it helps us develop brand-altering campaigns.

O'Malley: We work in a very buzzword-heavy industry, so we have to move past the jargon a bit and really dig in to what problems that technology is actually solving. Machine learning is a powerful tool, but we also need the right methodology and data modeling to actually make it effective. For example, we're using our Actionable Intelligence Engine to predict HCP prescription behavior, and we're seeing a 91% model accuracy rate. That's huge!

Petroff: So, are the machines taking over? Have we reached the science-fiction world where people are replaced by automation?

O'Malley: Not at all. We need a synergistic mix of human expertise and predictive machine intelligence to get the optimal results. They complement and amplify each other.

Bartolomeo: Leveraging this mixture of advanced technologies and actionable data requires a multidisciplinary team of in-

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dustry experts. A blend of strategy, media, creative, and data science working seamlessly to identify, attract, and effectively communicate to customers efficiently.

Petroff: **Nick, you just mentioned creative experts tapping into the data. How does that relationship work? They seem like two very different disciplines.**

Bartolomeo: They are, but they work hand-in-hand. One of the key aspects of this process is learning from what has been done in the past to make smarter decisions in the future. So we analyze each channel, each tactic, even each creative execution and message to see what drives engagement. That insight helps our creative teams refine campaign assets to better res-

onate with the audience. It also helps our performance team adjust the strategy to deliver optimized and personalized brand experiences for each person.

Petroff: **How do you prove it works?**

O'Malley: It's measurable. We can literally analyze the conversation data and see it working. We develop measurable goals with our clients and track the pacing on a monthly basis, and not just base metrics, but actual indicators of performance like script lift and ROI. We're able to demonstrate — again and again, across different indications and different audiences — that our approach works.

Bartolomeo: Here's a real-world exam-

ple: Tell me if this sounds familiar. The brand had a small salesforce and tight budgets and they were looking for a way to broaden their reach and increase sales. With this exact approach we're discussing — a mix of actionable data, a methodical process, super-smart people, and machine intelligence — we were able to boost their script volume by 67% and convert one in five physicians from white space into trialists.

That's driving performance!

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Fingerpaint *is a full-service health and wellness marketing agency with five offices across the country and nearly $80 million in revenue. Built on a foundation of empathy, Fingerpaint is at its core committed to creating and executing meaningful brand experiences that are never paint by number for healthcare providers, care partners, and patients.*
For more information, visit fingerpaint.com.