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# Tech Can Wait: Hearts And Minds Still Matter In Brand Communications



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Technology is increasingly shaping the way people do business with the purpose of making things simpler for the end user. Thanks to “startup” and “tech culture” dominating the headlines, nearly every industry is now navigating this pervasive “adapt or die” mentality.

But the way I see it, all this hype is fearmongering to some extent; tech is only part of a much larger consumer experience. In fact, [a recent study](#) found that 55% of customers “prefer speaking with human customer service agents.”

Despite the feeling that human interaction is vital to successful customer relationships, many industries have been disrupted by technology. Think of travel websites like Orbitz, Expedia and Priceline -- they changed the way people booked airline tickets and hotels, created access to thousands of flights and rooms with a click of a button and essentially diminished the need for travel agents. The financial sector has been infiltrated by online platforms like E-Trade, which make it possible for people to buy and sell stocks from the comfort of their own homes and chiseled away at business for day traders. The real estate industry is saturated with online platforms promising one-stop shopping for homes, mortgages, appraisals and buyer leads, all while trying to cut out the real estate broker.

So, how can businesses survive when the cornerstones of their industries are constantly being threatened by shiny new tech?

### **The Dial ‘0’ Effect**

How many times have you called a company and, when presented with robotic, numeric options, you immediately press “0” to speak with a representative? You’re not alone. In the same study, 73% of shoppers prefer to skip the maze and press “0.” The top reason (selected by 43% of these shoppers) was to “connect with a real human who can understand my problem.” This superseded other factors such as efficiency and data security.

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While tech may save time, the bottom line is people still want to feel like they are being heard -- keep this in mind before you put all your eggs in one chatbot.

### **Combine Heart And Wallet**

Technology cannot reproduce human emotion or empathy, and this is where a good marketing campaign can really come in handy. While other brands are busy touting what technology they have and how fast they can scale, brands that want to attract and retain their customer base can do so with a smart emotional appeal.

In my opinion, some of the greatest ad campaigns center around tugging at the heartstrings. They focus not only on the product but the emotional impact that product has on the world around us. Even tech-forward companies are using this tactic -- just think about [recent iPhone commercials](#). While they do focus on the sleek design and seamless interactions, Apple also focuses on the connections to other people made possible through these phones.

Your brand is likely to be remembered more if it is relatable on a human level, and that can translate into return on investment that can't be bought.

### **Word Of Mouth Is Still Powerful, Even Online**

Across the internet and, more specifically, on social media, word-of-mouth marketing is still extremely powerful for brands. Consumers like sites like Yelp and Airbnb at least in part because the reviews by fellow consumers are posted openly online, offering more transparency.

Companies that incorporate these reviews and testimonials in their marketing strategies allow their end consumer to connect and relate to them. Furthermore,

highlighting these connections can be an extremely powerful way to get core brand messaging to a broader audience.

When it comes to business, nobody wants to feel like they are just another data point. Don't fight how tech is changing the industry; instead, figure out how it will enhance your irreplaceable human skills. Skip the robo-number maze and skip straight to "0."

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