

Keeping youth interested in advertising key to industry success

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Leading a school where we pride ourselves on preparing students for the rapidly changing world of marketing and advertising, we always try to keep a finger on the global pulse.



Of course, our ambitious young students have their own vision for the industry they have chosen to enter - and their own ideas about how it needs to transform. Bearing tomorrow's creatives in mind, we have identified four trends that excite us about the marketing and advertising industry right now, and where it seems to be headed.

Rethinking what attracts young talent

According to data shared by LinkedIn CEO Ryan Roslansky at the Cannes Lions this year, the advertising industry lost 5.5% more talent than it gained over the last five years. This eye-opening statistic is even more sobering when compared with the tech industry, which gained 23% more talent than it lost over the same period. What this tells us is that a rethink is necessary. More than simply finding new ways to attract and retain creative talent, the fundamental value of creativity itself needs to be prioritised, including fair and competitive pay from day one.

The fact that this notion entered the discourse at Cannes is heartening. It suggests that creative industry players at global level are open to having the conversation. It's no longer enough to simply "be" a large agency promising the opportunity to work on famous brands with big budgets, to make young talent come running. A TBWA Worldwide study found that a more diverse working culture, making employees' wellbeing a priority and respecting their personal time, and creating clear operational structures and career paths are the key priorities for potential young hires.

No avoiding the tech

We are faced with a new world that has forced creatives to adopt a different mindset and meet physical and virtual consumers where they are. Brands entering virtual spaces should be joining the conversation and adding value to it, or building a world where a new community can grow.

But simply disrupting in the virtual world is not going to win you any fans. Think about how you can use new mediums to drive engagement and advocacy.

“ The industry needs to rethink what will attract young talent to pursue opportunities ”

The second most decorated piece of winning work this year at Cannes was 'Backup Ukraine'. Ukrainian people were given a tool on their mobile phones to scan important monuments and cultural treasures in case they got destroyed, so they can be rebuilt in the metaverse.

Yet using technology in a clever way isn't worth much if there are still people who can't access it. So while we should all be investing in technology-driven work, more thought needs to be given to the roll-out.

Better business

Businesses today face some of their toughest challenges ever. New technology combined with cultural, political, and pandemic-related shifts have upended established ways of working. We are seeing more brands with an appetite for risk, unconventional thinking and creative problem-solving, reinventing the way they do business to drive transformative change.

Major brands and agencies this year have shown us that a sustainable business transformation needs to be more than just a 'good' idea. It needs to have a strong social impact to deliver profitable growth and permanent change. It needs to be more than a one-brief campaign. It needs to start a movement.

Recent research by IBM has shown that three out of five global consumers say that socially responsible products make up at least 50% of their recent purchases. So there's no denying that the time is now.

Ethical and inclusive marketing

While it might seem the world has come a long way when it comes to inclusivity and representation, we definitely still have a long way to go.

According to the Geena Davis Institute of Gender in Media, the body of international creative work surveyed has almost reached gender parity. The prevalence of visually prominent people of colour has also, according to the Institute, improved within the last five years. However, representation of people with a disability sits at 2.2% of all visually prominent characters (bearing in mind that 15% of the world's population has a disability).

And, in a context where we continue to battle against long-entrenched sexual politics, we salute the work of organisations like Consent Labs. Their Classify Consent campaign aims to draw awareness to lack of consent by including warnings similar to those that alert viewers to violence, nudity and strong language. Their aim is not to censor content, but to highlight the extent to which lack of consent is accepted and normalised.

With sustainability finally becoming a serious priority and not just a buzzword, being better in terms of ethics and inclusivity is crucial to the survival of every advertising and marketing business.

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