

SHOPPER MEDIA GAINS MARKETERS ATTENTION

Alcohol brands have long been heavy users of main media advertising, but a recent study has shown that brand marketers should consider shopper marketing at multiple stages in the media strategy, writes Kirsty Dollisson, TORCHMEDIA'S general manager of marketing and commercial.

Shopper Marketing: *The Journey Begins*' by POPAI/ShopAbility is a ground-breaking study for the discipline of shopper marketing in Australia, giving us a snapshot of the industry for the first time. One of the important findings of the report is that three in five say the shopper – previously thought of as only existing in-store – can exist at home and in transit, while two in five say the shopper can also exist at work.

The report offered this definition of shopper marketing: “The application of shopper insights across the marketing mix, using multiple touchpoints along the path to purchase, to engage shoppers and increase sales”.

This shift in accepted thinking suggests that shopper marketing should not be thought of as simply the last stage of ‘the path to purchase’, but as a part of the above-the-line media continuum. The budgets for in-store media, a major shopper marketing activity, should come mostly from the brand marketer, and the creative lead should come from the brand campaign. In recent years, there has been a greater sophistication in shopper media executions in the grocery channel, driven by big global manufacturers such as Procter & Gamble, who now talk about the ‘last three feet’ on the path to purchase.

With 70 per cent of liquor purchase decisions made in the store, it is not surprising that this ‘shelf-back’ media planning endorsed by FMCG marketers is gaining traction in the liquor channel too. Shopper media has been shown to lead to greater sales uplift because you are considering what you want the shopper to do, rather than building a brand.

TV advertising has long been used by alcohol marketers to build brands – think VB’s ‘A hard earned thirst needs a big, cold beer...’, Carlton’s ‘Big Ad’ or Guinness’ ‘Good things come to those who wait’. Television commercials have been used to build brand personalities, and attach traits to a product that drinkers can identify with.

Rarely though do TV ads contain a call to action or specific information about variants. Often TV advertising will not even show shoppers what the product’s packaging looks like. On the other hand, the best in-store media executions clearly show the product, the packaging and the variant.



Successful in-store media campaigns show how a brand campaign can be pulled through into the store, to enhance the brand, trigger recall and introduce a powerful call to action. Any activity that is aimed at shoppers needs to enhance the shopper experience, not detract from it. For example, the messaging can suggest occasions for using your product, such as ‘this product is great for summer afternoons’ or ‘this product is ideal for dinner parties’.

In an ever-increasing competitive landscape at the shelf, liquor brands are faced with private label mimics and strong price competition. The only way to compete is to shout louder at the moment of truth. Off-locations, packaging and dominant point-of-sale messaging are imperative to stand out and reinforce all activity outside the store.

With increased acknowledgement by brand marketers of the need to integrate shopper marketing in their overall media and creative strategies, these new formats are sure to play a greater role in helping shoppers decide which bottles to take to the cash register. 