

Slow Marketing: Strategies for Meaningful Customer Engagement

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ARTICLE DETAILS

Article History

Published Online: 02 April 2018

Keywords

Slow Marketing, customer, Moment Marketing, Conscious Marketing

ABSTRACT

In a time when the companies are in a race-race to be the first ones to deliver to the customers and the focus is on 'quick', being 'slow' and 'mindful' can be an experience for the customer. Slow does not mean slow in delivery of the service but creating a meaningful, conscious connect with the customer through marketing. The concept emerges from the slow movement. Slow marketing helps the companies to establish a lasting, meaningful relationship with the customer. This paper examines the characteristics and components of slow marketing. The paper also gives an outline of various strategies companies can use for slow marketing and the future prospects of slow marketing are discussed.

1. Introduction

The objective of companies is on numbers. More sales, more customers, more followers and 'Fast'. Companies look for instant gratification by focusing on satisfying the needs now. It is actually a rat-race between companies to pitch the prospect as early as possible. In this myopia, what suffers is focusing on building relationship with the customers, winning his trust first and giving him right consultation.

Slow Marketing is all about shifting focus from hard selling to letting the customer come to his or her own conclusions. While most of the companies nowadays try to shout louder than their competitors, focusing on bombarding the customer with flashing and fast advertisements, a slow marketer will focus on respecting the customer privacy by allowing them to choose the product of their choice. One major pitfall of remarketing is that customer feels that his privacy is compromised as he is tracked down on all the social media channels by behavioural targeting. A slow marketer will give the customer freedom and space so he does not feel he's been stalked online. The focus is on pull marketing wherein the product does all the talking.

This paper examines the characteristics and components of slow marketing. The paper also lays down reasons companies should slow down, strategies for doing that and the future prospects of slow marketing.

2. Characteristics of slow marketing

Ritzer (1993) explained the concept of 'fast' as a quest for rationality, efficiency, control and predictability which is not necessarily beneficial for society (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). Frykman (2000) described "fast society" as the indicator of a wider process-a reaction in which time and space is compressed in the fast society.

The major part of slowing down is connecting with people, place and purpose. The movement all over the world has slowed down to the speed of human. It's about right timing, and right place.

Characteristics of the slow mindful marketing are that it is propounded and its momentum is maintained by the individuals who involve the expanding global community of Slowing down.

In it's campaigns, especially on television, the brand must go in for undramatic narrative. The duration timing here is longer. Also, there is focus on the visual content that is, there is stillness of composition. This allows experiencing the space and leaves and lasting impact.

1) A tendency toward *realist* or hyperrealist representation,

The field of cinema that shares common traits, aesthetics and emphasis on the passage of time in the shot. It is an undramatic narrative or non-narrative mode, and a rigorous compositional form that is designed for the purpose of contemplative spectatorial practice (Flanagan's, 2012). These characteristics are helpful in studying the characteristics of slowness.

It poses the big question that how stylistic and formal aspects of films or marketing campaigns like stillness as well as viewing attitudes of the audience can correlate to the experiential effect of heightened awareness. This has been dubbed as *slowness*. This is understood as a viewing mode that is to be differentiated from boredom (Flanagan's, 2012).

Stillness denotes here as a heterogeneous set of formal features of the campaign that all stress temporality. In short, the stillness of the campaign that slow cinema replaces sensory-motor reaction with the generation of affect; through the employment of stylistic and formal stillness, the campaign open up the possibility of a pensive or contemplative mode of viewing in which the viewer identifies with the campaign's body instead (Boer, 2017).

A key property that binds the field of cinema together along with the subversion or dissolution of the narrative structure (already common in art and experimental film), is what has identified as "the hyperbolic application of the long take (Çağlayan, 2014).

3. Components of slow marketing

The idea of slowness has been unfolded by many writers, advocates and scholars during the past two decades. The literature has summarized the following values present in being slow (Dickson & Lumsdon, 2010).

1. Slow equates to quality time
2. It is about physically slowing down to enjoy what is on offer

3. A quality experience
4. A meaning and engagement
5. In tune with ecology and diversity.

Besides external marketing, the concept of slow is also a useful marketing tool. The movement is guided and supported by an integrated set of meaningful thoughts that require the involvement of the local community, which further involves changes in lifestyle, values and attitude (Alfonso, 2012).

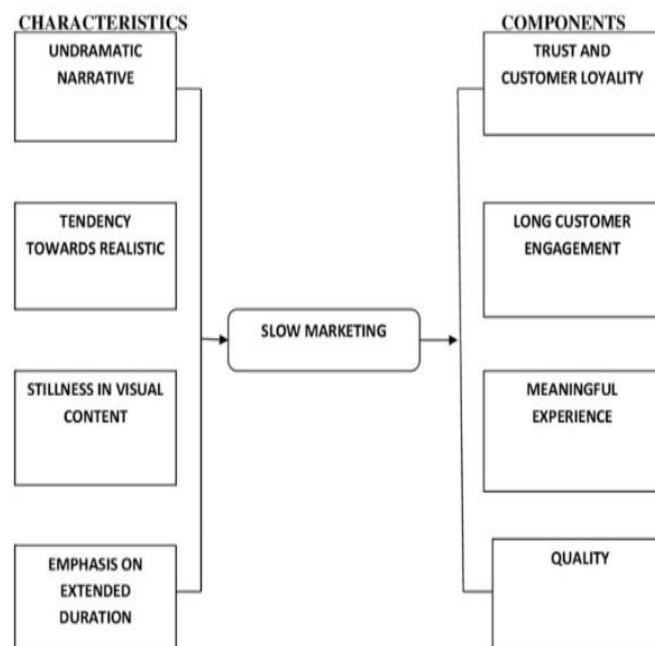
1. **Meaningful Experience:** A brand that is seen authentic by the customer, gradually earns his trust. They earn loyalty by creating *meaningful customer experiences* across all contacts (Beverland&Farrelly, 2009) Marketers are in danger of draining the customer experience and losing the customer which is the vital element by focusing on the disposable (Kemp N, 2015).
2. **Long Term Customer Engagement:** In order to have long term engagement with customer, slowing down the marketing campaigns is necessary. Fast paced profits and short-term thinking is the reason why business and capitalism has failed humanity and the planet. A Slow School was also started to help people make more mindful, sustainable choices that would benefit everyone. Prosperity is a much more important measure of success than profits. We connect more deeply with ourselves, and the communities, when we all slow down. That's where real change happens (Tate, 2001).
3. **Quality:** Marketers prefers real time marketing because they want data analytics to be faster. People

are increasing the production with automation, robot writers and designers. The brand following 'slow' can bring a quality and reputation with it. (Nilsson et al. 2007). The market is segmented based on consumer profiles such as quality products and services aimed at the (environmentally or culturally) conscious consumers. (Nilsson et al., 2007)

Moment marketing does little to develop a brand or give consumers permission to interact with them. Brands must have the purpose by producing goods and services that improve the lives of consumers and enhance *quality* of life. With today's savvy consumer, it is imperative that brands focus on how to better interact with them, how to build stronger relationships, and how to ensure that those relationships generate trust and meaningful engagement over time (Llopis, 2014).

Globalization has led to a need to see immediate and faster results. The slow movement questions the sense of "hurry" caused by the era of globalization, filled with the desire to have more quantity other than quality. If the marketer wants to deliver quality to the customer instead of quantity in order to gain long-term profits, the Slow Movement is essential. It places a new value on the benefit of taking more time to achieve goals or outcomes and meet our needs. These days customers are looking for *sustainability, ethics, quality and relationship building*. It is required to have a customer centric outlook. Customers want to get relaxed from the hundreds of ad messages popping in their mobiles each day.

"Slow" does not mean doing anything at a snail's pace instead doing everything at the right speed. That implies quality over quantity and building real human connections.



4. Reasons companies should slow down

- Slowing down gives a company more time to reflect and act.
- This contemplation and planned right moves will also help reduce stress and workload.

- The company will start acknowledging quality over quantity.
- Moving consciously helps a company to increase in environmental sustainability.
- Also, consciously practice of being patient and present that will improve human relations and wellbeing.

- It would also lead to better efficiency and growth
- Overall, slowing down helps in making long term profits and growth.

5. Strategies For Slow Marketing

If a firm slows down and focuses on its sales activities, it can well concentrate on the long-run viability of the customer. Some strategies that can be followed by the companies are as follows:

5.1 Understand consumer characteristics:

A smart company will always put to use refined marketing strategy for targeting the right customers. For this the companies must first identify potential slow customer segments. Understanding their characteristics should follow this. Profiling of the customers can be done based on their consumption patterns, their value systems and quality. (Jung & Jin, 2016)

5.2 Look for the qualified leads:

The lead should spend its time *learning* the prospects of the customer's needs, usage and budgets. The salesman should never be fast talkative person. The *time and effort* put into research will help increase the volume of qualified leads, and while helping you identify top prospects.

5.3 Shape the relationship:

Most of the companies' salespersons are under the pressure of sales quotas to push their product in the market. This leads to hard selling tactics, which implies only short-term gains for the company. On the contrary, an attempt should be made to ease out that pressure and develop a long-term relationship with the customer that helps earn their trust and loyalty. Following a *measured and a patient approach* can do this.

5.4 Customer should not be disturbed

One common problem most customers face these days is being spammed with unwanted content. They are bombarded with constant advertising. This may act as an irritant for the customer and may in turn put him off. Therefore, it is best if the companies make use of the pull strategies.

5.5 Retargeting & Reexposure

According to recent consumer surveys, digital advertising doesn't exactly have the best rep. Pop-ups interrupt the browsing experience at every turn. Remarketing can offend customers and he may feel stalked (Frankle, 2011). Readers are constantly bombarded with online advertisements asking

for enrolment for subscription. Luckily, the option of blocking out annoying ads is there with the customers.

In a Here's a simple trick you can use. Would you do it in person?

Let's say a customer is browsing in your store and you see her pick up a pair of sunglasses, try them on, check the price tag, and set them back down. You might walk over to tell her that they're on sale, or that you have another color in the back, or to share a cool story about the brand – each of those interactions add something for her, and she might even welcome them. But if you follow her around the store going, "Did you forget those sunglasses? Are you sure you don't want those sunglasses? What about now?" you're going to lose a customer. There is a need to slow down and follow slow marketing by making the marketing simple.

6. Future Prospects

What started off as slow movement has now encompassed diverse areas ranging from slow city (Cittaslow), slow fashion- sustainable fashion focusing on minimalism and reusing (Fletcher, 2007), slow cinema- which focuses on long, in-existent takes; slow food- shunning off fast food culture and embracing traditional cooking. The movement is now shaping up as slow marketing. Since all companies are into a rush to reach out to the customer, the first ones to slow down will have the market differentiation advantage. Slow marketing overcomes all the shortcomings of fast marketing. The shift of marketers from digitalization to slowness will make the customers feel more involved. Limited research has been done in this area and still very new, underexplored.

7. Conclusion

While a majority of companies focus on being 'fast' and 'quick', a company concentrating on slowing down and focusing on mindful marketing will be easily able to differentiate itself from others. Undramatic narrative, tendency towards realistic in companies advertisements can help it company market to the customer in such a way that leads to long-term customer engagement, winning trust and customer loyalty and meaningful experience with the company. At the same time, it gives the company time to reflect and act, taking conscious, right decisions. Following a measured and patient approach by easing out the pressure of sales and focusing on the pull strategies can help companies market itself mindfully. Profiling of the customer by taking their characteristics into consideration is also very important here.

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