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## How Dannon Cultured Multichannel Marketing

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Once an organization is fully set up to accommodate multichannel marketing, the real work will begin. Determining which mix of channels is appropriate for a particular marketing campaign means knowing how your customers like to be contacted, what they have bought in the past, and other preferences.

"Succeeding in multichannel marketing means rethinking how you view the customer. That requires their preferences so you can shift from blasting one-size-fits-all messages to a customer preference-driven relationship where you give them what they want, the way they want it, regardless of whether it's offline or online," Roman says.

That's the tack Cindy Marshall, Performance Bicycle's chief marketing officer, has taken. Marshall has spent the past seven months working with the CEO to further define the company's brand to target three broad-reaching customer segments—the affluent family, the future family (single, no kids), and the mature independent. Building on that segmentation, the group then researched its customer base and found that recreational riders tend to buy at stores, while avid riders tend to buy online. They also found that the vast majority of customers were men. Based on that information, the group spent time improving its Web experience, reimagining its catalog, refining the retail experience, and enhancing its loyalty PR and multimedia efforts.

Next up is introducing an Oracle-based marketing database, which will house all customer information and order transactions. This tool, which will go live in April, will allow the company to analyze customer patterns based on how they like to buy, what they buy, and how they like to be contacted. Eventually, it will give them enough information to change their marketing messages to be more relevant to each segment and, eventually, to each customer.

"Our goal is to change our marketing communication to be relevant to each individual group by personalizing and customizing our messaging," Marshall says. "With the data now available, we'll be able to examine our customers' buying behaviors and how they prefer to interact with us."

Knowing what you want, and getting the customer data to prove it, is critical, but it must be followed by rigorous and diligent testing.

"We're not going to move from the single to multichannel world overnight, but we can begin that process if we take initiatives and processes that used to be single channel and begin testing more integrated alternatives," Margulies says. "It's about matching customers with the channels they are likely to respond to."

Performance Bicycle takes testing seriously. It is currently working through a multipronged process that involves testing all types of media for various types of campaigns. That includes testing digital display ads to drive both online and retail traffic, testing Facebook ads and expanded Facebook promotions to drive retail traffic, and expanding the use of social and viral marketing around each store.

"We're testing variable triggers online to understand what triggers we need to drive response," Marshall says. "We're also testing offline so we can better segment our fliers by putting different images on them depending on what your profile is."

### The Pain Of Change

The last piece of the puzzle is changing the corporate culture to fully accept multichannel approaches. At Dannon, Arosio has introduced the concept of integrated communication planning, where all members of the marketing team, as well as the connection team and other internal stakeholders, meet to align the functions behind objectives. This step is critical, he says, not only to make sure everyone is on the same page, but to move forward with a campaign that is coordinated with the organization's goals as well as the marketing department's goals.

But even if you do everything right, organizational and cultural biases toward specific channels can cause problems.

"Don't jump to the next new thing just because it's new, even though there may be a lot of excitement around it. Make sure it makes sense," Arosio says. "Make a fair, long-term assessment of its value, and don't jump into it. You can already do an excellent job with your existing tools while you work and test and try to get right how you will incorporate the new platform."

Channel conflict and turf wars also can cause problems. If a customer sees a posting on Facebook about a sale at a favorite store, then goes to the Web site to find what she wants, confirms her choice by reading a catalog, and finally makes the purchase in a retail store, which

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channel gets credit for the sale?

"Each channel contributed to making the sale, so it doesn't matter who gets the credit," Roman says. "It's about providing more choices and generating a greater number of total sales than before. All of the media has to work together to surround the consumer with an integrated message. That's the beauty of true media integration."

And, as always, remember to put the customer first.

"The customer is in control, and everything needs to be around what the customer thinks, not what the company thinks is best," Marshall says. "If you keep that in mind, you'll succeed."

« first < previous 1 2

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