

# Great B2B campaigns need deep insight

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**G**reat campaigns are driven by insight: brands and agencies understanding the perceptions of potential customers and how to change them to help the client achieve their business goals. There has never been a better opportunity to gain this insight: before the advent of digital PR, data was a scarce resource, which meant that for many brands there was little difference between insight and inspired educated guesses. Today, however, brands and agencies have more opportunity to understand their customers and evaluate campaigns than ever before. The big question is whether brands translate this data into useful insight.

The importance and impact of digital, coupled with the emergence of a plethora of tools that generate data, means marketing tactics that were hard to measure only a few years ago are now brutally transparent. Digital campaigns can generate vast amounts of data. But it requires highly skilled people to take this data and transform it to information and then insight. There's a real danger of the industry allowing this opportunity to slip away. Setting naïve targets based on simple metrics such as likes or page views provides no insight, and frequently results in money being wasted on ill-conceived, ineffective campaigns.

At Napier we recognised that some marketers don't have the skills to interpret the data and create insight: some creative people simply choose to avoid the maths required. So we invested in a skilled team with the right analytical skills to analyse and understand the torrent of data, turning it into deep insight.

Data is abundant, but insight is incredibly valuable. Despite this, a surprising number of large brands have fallen victim to the 'reduce the metrics to one number and make that as big as possible' approach. Unfortunately these brands are usually the ones asking 'now what?', when they realise their large number of Twitter followers are from click farms in low-wage economies, and are going to do nothing to help the organisation achieve its objectives.

Insight means delving deeper to find meaning in the message. Insight is all about understanding cause and effect: how and why a campaign impacts the organisation's objectives. It's also about understanding what the target audience really cares about. In the technology sector in particular it's too easy to focus on the 'speeds and feeds' when almost every product is good enough, making other criteria far more important in the buying decision.

B2B companies are recognising the need to change. It's not unusual for us to review campaigns with clients that mash up data about website traffic, leads and other behaviour to produce insight and understanding about the needs of customers and the impact of PR and marketing tactics. Yet a willingness to define and commit to meaningful metrics or to expose great creative campaign concepts to impartial analysis of whether or not they were effective, seems to be conspicuously absent in many parts of the PR industry.

Perhaps the biggest challenge is overcoming the focus on specific tools as solutions. Many B2B companies are using marketing automation tools, yet with many companies making use of only a tiny fraction of what is possible, many users are disappointed with the results. It's not the tool, but how you use it that generates the return. We've made a conscious decision to focus on the skills required to extract maximum benefit from these tools, rather than to advocate a particular vendor as the panacea for all marketing ills.

With no hint of a slowdown in the data generated by today's campaigns, the ability to analyse and manipulate data to build insight will continue to grow in importance. Although it may not quite be true that 'the geeks will inherit the earth', it's pretty clear that brands, agencies and individuals must embrace data analysis if they are to produce the insights that ensure their campaigns are effective in helping an organisation achieve its goals.

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