

Ag Marketing Trends

1 – Increased Customer Focus

Focusing on customers' needs and best interests will be of the utmost importance during 2022. As companies large and small continue to fall under the scrutiny of a consumer base that is growing increasingly distrustful of businesses and service providers, it is imperative to foster relationships built on trust and to conduct business in ways that demonstrate the goals of your organization rise above profits.

2 – Modernization

With the rapid expansion of digital capabilities and social platforms, today's audiences are more connected than ever before. While traditional media such as print and broadcast continue to be effective communication tools, they are not always the best option. Depending on the project, more modern channels may be better suited to accomplish specific marketing goals. Additionally, these modern options may also be more attractive from a cost-point perspective. Not only does a robust and active digital presence in the form of engaging social media or a well-designed, optimized website lend credibility, it also gives your audience greater access to interact with your company.

3 – Data-based Decision Making

Numbers don't lie – and the ability to capture and collect data is easier than ever thanks to new, user-friendly analytic tools that can be applied to almost every facet of business these days. Data can be a great way to measure, evaluate and help managers make informed business decisions. This is a secret livestock producers have known for years, using EPDs to help make stocking decisions for example. However, collecting data is no longer the difficult part. The key to using data successfully is understanding how to properly analyze it. As companies continue to develop an appreciation for the insight data can provide, more and more businesses will turn to consultants who can help interpret the data and advise in the decision-making process based on professional experience and expertise.

4 – Visual Branding

As the marketplace becomes more competitive and visually oriented, the importance of high-quality visual branding is growing too. Customers are steadily growing immune to advertisements while at the same time their attention spans continue to dwindle. This has forced advertisers and marketers to push the envelope of their creativity to attract and capture the increasingly limited attention of potential customers. No longer are sub-par logos, graphics and collateral materials acceptable.

A bad logo can actually do more damage to a company than no logo at all. Having a high-quality logo and collateral materials that boost brand recognition can tremendously help businesses cut through the noise and effectively reach their audience.

5 – Selective Audience Building

Much attention has been paid recently to how algorithms have impacted the way in which consumers behave and make purchasing decisions. In fact, research shows that customers are actually put off by the use of algorithms and targeted marketing. Now consumers are attempting to ‘out-smart’ the algorithms by consciously disengaging with brands. Whatever your opinions are, this issue has reinforced the all-important fundamental of marketing – which is to know your audience. If you are casting a wide net and reaping little reward with your marketing program, perhaps you should reevaluate who you’re speaking to, how you’re speaking to them, where you are speaking to them, and what you’re saying.

6 – Intentional Communication

Take a moment to review what marketing materials you’re currently circulating. Consider the message of each of those materials. Do they align? Are they cohesive? Are they helping advance your marketing goals? Does what you’re saying actually matter? If you do not have clearly defined marketing goals or are not communicating them effectively, then you’re wasting your time. Ineffective and unintentional communication causes your audience to stop listening and paying attention to you. When this happens, it is much more difficult to regain their attention.

7 – Multichannel Marketing

Marketing should not be confined to one channel of communication. Different audiences resonate with each medium, meaning you might be missing an opportunity to reach a potential customer by opting not to engage within a certain channel where your audience may be. Demographically, a target audience might be very similar. But personal preferences when it comes to media consumption within a demographic can still be very diverse. Do your research and find out where your audience consumes media. Consider how, when and why they consume it. Now, think creatively about how to repurpose the content you already have to effectively use it across all your marketing channels.

8 – Content Consistency

The content you produce is just as important to your brand as any other element of your business. Reliable, trustworthy and engaging content is critically important to staying top of mind with your customers. The goal in creating content is to create something that is either useful or entertaining – and not overly commercialized. Further, your content needs to be consistent, both in quality and in frequency. Don’t

publish too often and don't allow long intervals to pass without refreshing your content either. Determine a cadence that is manageable for you and commit to sticking with it. Social media manager roles are already a widely accepted necessity in the business world. If your business does not have a dedicated content manager or provider, perhaps it's time to get one.

9 – Thought Leadership

One of the most effective ways to stand out and strategically position your business is through thought leadership. Thought leadership, when done right, can establish you or your business as an authority on a certain topic or within a particular field. As respect and acknowledgement of your authority and reputation grows, your opinions can begin to influence your audience on a higher level than traditional marketing efforts can. Establishing yourself as a thought leader can be at times challenging, complex and resource intensive, but the dividends can be very rewarding. If this is new territory for you, find a knowledgeable consultant who can help you chart the most appropriate course.

10 – Strategic Partnerships

Growing your audience is one of the most challenging objectives an organization can face. In many cases, an organization can be doing everything right within its means and still see no return. That's where strategic partnerships come into play. More and more, businesses are recognizing the value in striking collaborative partnerships with organizations that share certain interests, to tap into each other's established communities and leverage their respective resources for mutual benefit. Practice caution when forming an alliance though. Protect your business by engaging with a third-party consult to help objectively identify organizations that would make appropriate prospects for a partnership, and allow your consultant to manage the relationship to ensure each party's obligations are upheld and that the best interests of your business are being preserved.