

Mobile and tech - What should be on the marketer's radar



By Jonathan Hall

4 May 2015

Jonathan Hall, President Consulting: North America, at Added Value, highlights the latest in everything from artificial intelligence to wearables, from big data to storytelling, and what brand owners can learn from the worlds of mobile and tech.

1. Keyword: Innovation

The word, 'Innovation', was one of the most commonly used in the names of SXSW Interactive events this year. Hal Gregersen, co-author of the Innovator's DNA with Clayton Christensen and Jeff Dyer, spoke about their award-winning research and the [five skills they identified that distinguish innovative leaders from non-innovators](#). In another panel, Walter Isaacson, biographer of Steve Jobs among others, emphasised the "[group portrait of creativity](#)", as opposed to the loner(s) in the garage.



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2. Big data: not just for geeks

SXSW kicked off with a rock star panel facilitated by Ganesh Bell, Chief Digital Officer at GE, but the topic was raised in countless panels. And it's not just for data scientists: [Next Big Sound's algorithm](#) identifies breaking music artists; [Catapult's devices monitor](#) the health of athletes; and [Mark43](#) uses analytics to help make policing smarter. More than 70 sessions were dedicated to the Internet of Things. Read here about the [impact a hyper-connected world will have on consumer identity](#).

3. Wearables: Apple and more

Speaking of the Internet of Things, wearables are starting to come of age, with fashion and health the two sectors at the forefront. These days, cutting-edge fashion design is more about 3-D printed garments and smart textiles with performance, safety and quality of life in mind, like [this light-emitting jacket](#) or these [touch-sensitive undergarments](#). The health sector has long been a focus for Wearables, allowing us to improve performance and wellness (think FitBit, Fuelband, Shine, but particularly [Apple's newly-announced ResearchKit](#)). And of course, the debate raged around the Apple Watch.

4. Artificial Intelligence is mainstreaming

Once the preserve of science fiction, artificial intelligence is among us. And it's not only evidenced in products like DJI's consumer-friendly video drones or Anki's toy race cars, or SXSW's first three-day [Robot Petting Zoo](#). Martine Rothblatt, the highest-paid female CEO in the US, outlined her vision for a world where [humans and artificial intelligence exist in harmony](#). On the principle that neuroscience can be understood and digitised, she believes 'mindclones' will be real in her lifetime.

5. Storytelling goes experiential

As people develop T-shaped attention spans, [brands have to develop narratives](#) that are modular, without beginning or end, and open to be joined or left at any point. Sabrina Caluori from HBO talked about layering emotional, cross-channel experiences. Andrew Cochrane, Creative Lead at Mirada, Guillermo del Toro's independent studio, spoke about driving experiences across physical and digital, including virtual and augmented reality. And that includes re-inventing physical stores. Here are the key takeaways for retail marketers.

6. Every business is a tech business

One of the central business challenges/opportunities at SXSW was the bewildering acceleration of technological impact. Media business Thrillist sees the future of the industry as integrated media-commerce companies with technology as the facilitator; retail e-commerce start-ups Rent the Runway and Stitch Fix are steeped in [data science](#) and in healthcare, patients empowered by access to app-based data are challenging the diagnosis and distribution system. Spotify, however, bucked the trend launching its new brand identity to position itself as a music company, rather than a tech business.

7. On-demand ecosystems

Lyft and Uber made a big play at SXSW with their [ride-sharing services](#), reinforcing their role in the mushrooming sharing economy and on-demand ecosystems. But the opportunities for Lyft and Uber don't stop at the taxi industry; the newly launched [neighbour-to-neighbour shipping network, Roadie](#), demonstrates their potential to go up against UPS and Fedex; while they also share the goal of becoming a media platform for other brands. CEO of Lyft explains how he [plans to overtake Uber](#) in the ride-sharing race.

8. Female empowerment

The stand-out Neiman Marcus 'Make Some Noise' initiative - [celebrating bold women](#) who 'rock' in their respective fields - was launched last year and generated more than 80 million impressions. Since, Neiman has pivoted to drive the initiative across everything they do. In a panel of female CEOs led by Julie Bornstein, CMO of Sephora, the conversation ignited around the relative lack of VC support for female entrepreneurs.

ABOUT JONATHAN HALL

Jonathan joined Added Value UK in 2005 to work on global clients, before moving to head up Added Value France three years later. In 2011 he became Managing Director of Added Value Cheskin in San Francisco.

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