

Remembering the Basics In An Ever-Changing Marketing Environment

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In the ever-changing world of integrated marketing, new concepts, new media, and new strategies are constantly before us. The burgeoning opportunities are so exciting that it's easy to ignore the application of the basics that have guided us as marketers for many years.

But, to keep the basics in mind, you need to know what the basics are.

Planning – start at the beginning, not in the middle.

Over the years, I have spoken to many enthusiastic entrepreneurs who had invented a “widget,” manufactured 10,000 of them, and were now looking for ideas on how to market them. No research and no planning – and, usually, no buyers and no sales for the widgets. The moral of the story is, of course, to ensure that there is a robust market for your brainchild before you invest.

It is alarming how frequently the planning stage is overlooked. A historical major marketing failure was Coca Cola's introduction of a reformulated *New Coke* in April 1985. The original formula, re-introduced three months later as *Coca Cola Classic*, drove sales back up again. Was it really a flop or was it really a brilliant and daring plan? Without the global brand recognition and deep marketing pockets of Coca Cola, it is more prudent to have your well-thought-out plan securely in place before you embark on your marketing efforts.

Testing – test, don't assume.

The beauty of testing is the opportunity to *know*, rather than to *guess*.

I recently read an article on *Mobile Marketer* about the use of the images known as emojis, which have quickly gained ubiquity among millennial mobile users. It suggested that “To effectively use emojis, consider them one piece of a customer relationship management strategy. Implement them in a campaign that wants to drive an emotional impact, A/B test different variations, track the success of various alternatives, and iterate with each new campaign.”

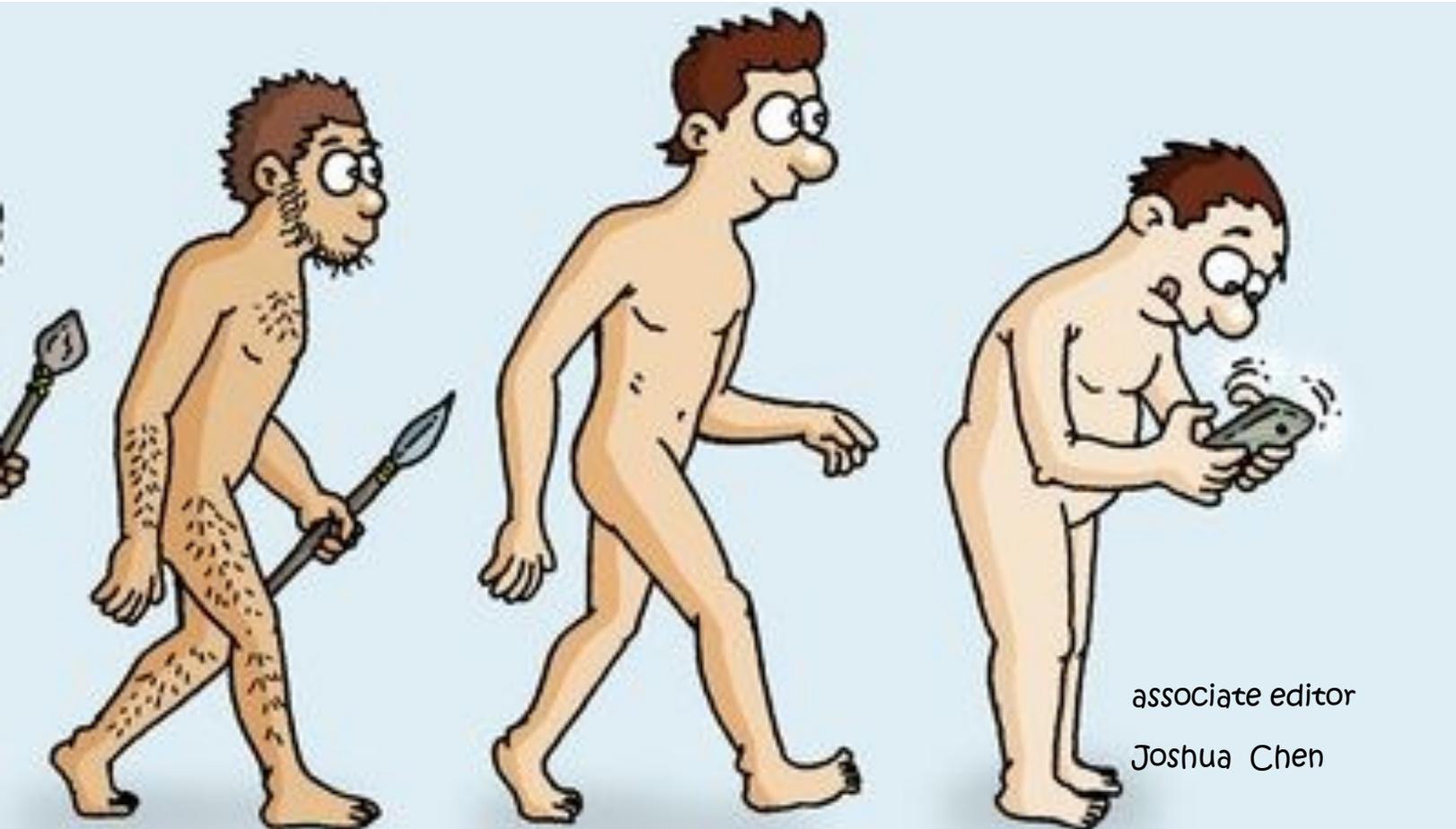
Did I read that correctly? A/B split variations of emojis in a mobile marketing campaign? Yes, here is a basic marketing rule being recommended in one of the most contemporary forms of communication. This experienced and thoughtful integrated marketing strategist has the ability to embrace new opportunities while using the basic strategies as a foundation for implementation.

There should rarely be a reason not to test, although many experienced direct marketers will offer some tried and true tenets.

Common sense – use it liberally.

We have so much information on our target audiences, as well as the capability to personalize and tailor our messages, that it can be very tempting to forget common sense and “spill our guts” with personalization. In direct marketing a basic tenet is “Don't Spill Your Guts On The Envelope,” or don't tell the whole story before you've enticed your prospect to open the envelope. Well, you don't want to spill your guts with the data you use either.

Let's say the prospects you are targeting are parents of young children and – through the data you are accessing – you know that Family A has three children under 12 in the household. The database also contains the gender and name of each of the children – plus the name of the school they attend.



Remember, these parents are not your customers. They have not willingly given you information about their family. So if you reveal the knowledge of this much information in a tailored message, do you think these parents are going to be overjoyed to hear from you? To them, your message could sound much more like stalking than selling.

A Summary of Timeless Marketing Rules.

One of my colleagues, Jay Weinberg, president of The Jay Group, posted an excellent rules reminder on Slide Share. He called it “Get Old Schooled: The Five Timeless Marketing Rules Startups Need to Know.”

His five timeless rules are:

40/40/20

Forty percent of the success of the campaign is due to the audience; 40 percent to the offer; 20 percent to the creative. So if you send the right offer to the right people, with decent creative, your chances of success are better than if you send superb creative to the wrong people with the wrong offer.

RFM

Recency, frequency, and monetary value are used to determine relative value of customers. How recently have they bought, how many times have they bought, and how much have they spent?

80/20

Then there’s the law of the vital few. Eighty percent of revenue/profit comes from 20 percent of customers; 80 percent of email opens come from 20 percent of audience, and so on.

AIDA

Attention, interest, desire, and action. Attract attention of the audience; engage their interest; convince them they want your product; make it easy to buy.

\$ Off > % Off

People don’t like to think. Dollars off beat percent off.