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What does Gen Z consider to be innovative marketing?

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Flash

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About the Author



Dylan Huey is a successful content creator, musician, entrepreneur, host, speaker, innovator, and leader in the entertainment, social media, and technology industries. As a creator, he has garnered over two million cumulative followers on social media under his moniker and stage name, Rodin' Flash.

In addition, he has previously managed other creators with followings over 100M. Dylan has been a featured creator on TedX, Consumer Electronic Show, Comic Con, and VidCon. Currently, he runs the first and only collegiate influencer organization, REACH, which was started at USC and now expanded to 75+ other

universities, including UCLA, Penn State, and Duke.

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Source: Ground Photo on Shutterstock

Dylan, explain the mission of REACH, and why you were compelled to establish the organization.

REACH was conceived out of a clear void in the academic and professional ecosystem for collegiate individuals deeply passionate about the evolving creator economy. This wasn't just an observation; it was a call to action. Recognizing the potential of social media as a powerful tool for personal and professional growth, REACH was established to serve as a pioneering platform. It offers a unique blend of community, education, and professional development for college-aged creators. Our aim was to democratize access to knowledge and opportunities in the social media realm, ensuring that anyone, regardless of their follower count or university, had the chance to learn, grow, and succeed in this dynamic field. The rapid expansion of REACH to over 75 universities is a testament to the universal appeal and necessity of such a community. It highlights the burgeoning interest among today's youth to harness social media not just for socializing, but as a potent tool for change, career development, and creative expression.

What does marketing mean to you as an individual soon out in the working world?

To me, marketing represents the heartbeat of any successful modern business strategy. It's no longer confined to the realms of traditional advertising but has morphed into a complex, multifaceted discipline that demands a digital-first approach. The digital revolution has transformed the landscape, making it imperative for brands to not only exist online but to thrive there. This involves a strategic blend of content creation, social media savvy, data analytics, and an authentic brand voice. Digital marketing opens a dialogue with consumers, inviting them to engage, interact, and co-create with brands. This dynamic interaction is what sets modern marketing apart, offering an immediacy and personalization that traditional mediums could never achieve. As someone about to step into the professional world, I see marketing as an exciting challenge. It's about finding innovative ways to tell a brand's story, making meaningful connections with consumers across the globe, and navigating the ever-changing digital landscape with agility and insight.

Where do you get your trusted information? Can you share an example?

In today's digital age, the abundance of information sources presents both an opportunity and a challenge. It's vital to sift through the noise to find trustworthy, reliable news. My approach involves a combination of curated news platforms such as LinkedIn and YouTube, which offer a broad spectrum of perspectives, and subscription services such as Apple News, which aggregates content from leading global news providers. This hybrid approach allows me to stay informed on industry trends, global events, and niche interests with information that is both timely and credible. The rise of social media as a primary news source reflects a broader shift in consumption habits, particularly among younger generations. Platforms like TikTok and Instagram have democratized news distribution, making it more accessible but also raising questions about accuracy and bias. Navigating this landscape requires a critical eye and a commitment to cross-referencing information, ensuring that one's understanding of the world is both broad and well-informed.

Can you share a brief case study of how you've used influencer marketing in some way to help a product or service distinguish itself from competitors?

Our collaboration with Hulu for the "Self-Reliance" movie premiere exemplifies the transformative power of influencer marketing. By carefully selecting influencers across various niches, we were able to craft a campaign that resonated across diverse audiences, generating excitement and engagement that traditional advertising mediums

could scarcely match. This strategic approach underscored the importance of authenticity and alignment between brand values and influencer personas, ensuring that each post, story, and interaction felt genuine to the audience. Similarly, our work with Appily's scholarship discovery platform highlights the efficacy of leveraging influencer content to engage with a specific demographic. Through creative, relatable content, we were able to significantly amplify Appily's reach and engagement, underscoring the value of influencers in translating brand messages into meaningful narratives that resonate with their followers. These case studies demonstrate not just the effectiveness of influencer marketing in standing out in a crowded marketplace but also its potential to create deep, lasting connections with consumers.

What would you consider “an innovation” in marketing for a product or service today? What stands out to you as a digital-savvy Gen Z individual?

Innovation in marketing, especially from a Gen Z perspective, is synonymous with authenticity, creativity, and integration. The evolving dynamic, where influencers are not just endorsers but integral parts of brand teams, represents a significant shift. This closer relationship ensures that content is not only more authentic but also deeply aligned with the brand's identity and values. Moreover, the trend of offering equity to influencers is a groundbreaking approach, transforming them from external partners to invested stakeholders. This not only incentivizes long-term collaboration but also aligns the influencers' success with that of the brand, fostering a deeper commitment to shared goals. Liquid Death's marketing strategy is a prime example of this innovative approach. By combining a unique brand identity with strategic influencer partnerships, they've managed to carve out a distinct place in the market, demonstrating that creativity and strategic thinking can turn even the simplest product into a cultural phenomenon.

Is there anything you'd like to recommend or suggest for hotels or restaurants to ensure that innovative marketing reaches targeted audiences?

Innovative marketing for hotels and restaurants transcends traditional advertising, requiring a deep understanding of the target audience and a commitment to engaging them in meaningful, authentic ways. Key to this approach is leveraging local influencers and content creators who can share genuine experiences, turning one-time visits into ongoing relationships, and transforming guests into brand ambassadors. Incorporating immersive experiences, such as exclusive events or behind-the-scenes tours, alongside user-generated content (UGC), allows establishments to create a buzz and build trust through real-life testimonials. Additionally, embracing technology through virtual tours,

augmented reality menus, or personalized apps can significantly enhance the customer experience, setting your brand apart in a competitive landscape.

Furthermore, aligning marketing efforts with consumer values, particularly around sustainability and social responsibility, can deepen connections with younger generations who prioritize these issues. Showcasing eco-friendly practices and community involvement through storytelling on digital platforms not only highlights a brand's commitment to these values but also resonates with a demographic looking for more than just a service—they're seeking an experience that aligns with their worldview. By adopting a multifaceted marketing strategy that combines authenticity, technology, and value alignment, hotels and restaurants can not only reach but profoundly engage their target audiences, ensuring long-term success and relevance in today's dynamic market.

How about this year's Super Bowl ads!

This Super Bowl season, we witnessed a continued shift in advertising that goes beyond traditional norms, blending the magnetic appeal of celebrities with the authentic, relatable touch of influencers. My favorite Super Bowl ads this year? [BMW Group](#), Mountain Dew, [Squarespace](#), [E*TRADE from Morgan Stanley](#), and [BetMGM](#)! This year's ads leveraged influencers to captivate and engage, transforming the ad landscape:

🌟 **Strategic Synergy: Celebrity Meets Creator Economy** – The integration of digital creators like Addison Rae with traditional celebrities in Super Bowl ads (shoutout to Cardi B) is both innovative and strategic. By tapping into Addison's Gen Z stronghold for Nerds, brands showcased the power of authenticity, bridging the gap between product and consumer in a way that feels both personal and genuine.

📺 **Viral Creativity: Crafting Shareable Moments** – [Zach King](#)'s collaboration with [PepsiCo](#) exemplifies the viral potential of influencer partnerships. His magical, creative spin ensured the ad lived on through shares and likes, extending its lifespan far beyond a 30-second slot.

🎯 **Targeted Impact: Engaging Niche Audiences** – Sean Evans' unique appeal added a layer of targeted engagement to [YouTube](#)'s campaign, demonstrating how influencers can draw in niche markets with precision, turning viewers into engaged community members.

🏈 **Community First: Building Deeper Connections** – The NFL's collaboration with

creators like Jimmy Donaldson transcended traditional advertising, embedding the brand within communities, and fostering a sense of belonging and loyalty that goes beyond the game.

The strategic use of influencers in Super Bowl ads underscores a pivotal shift towards more nuanced, engagement-driven advertising. With #socialmedia, ads are both experienced and shared, creating a ripple effect that extends a brand's reach and impact.

It's not just about who's in the ad but how the ad resonates and mobilizes the audience, turning passive viewers into active participants and advocates.