The Three Second Sale

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Traditionally, an advertising agency's role has been to create awareness of a brand, to increase purchase intent and to drive consumers to the store.

What happens once a consumer enters the store is still often neglected.

We often here about "the path to purchase", the process by which a consumer comes to a decision as to what brand, product or service to buy.Â
It describes the influencing factors such as advertising awareness and relevance, media placement, third party recommendations, experience, needs and desirability, adoption rates, family influence, personal fact finding and retail promotional advertising.

The perceived wisdom is that this path to purchase determines the ultimate sale.Â However, the path to purchase often assumes that all consumers enter a homogeneous store where all features mirror a brand's (and its competitors) sales and marketing plans. Â

It assumes a truly level playing field, where the best laid plan, supported by the highest media spend, delivering the highest unprompted consumer awareness, wins the game.Â It's a big assumption and a misguided one.

Consider what happens when all the predictive data points to consumers being aware of your product. Â

She is driven to a store as a result of all the media that has reached her.Â She believes in the brand promise, she's excited by the offer and she enters the store with every intention to purchase the brand but, the scan data consistently shows her buying another product? Â

Even more frustrating still is that all the post purchase research still points to her preferring your product over your competitor's.Â What happened in-store and at shelf to cause this major disparity?Â Welcome to the new role for marketing.

We know around 70% of purchase decisions are made at-shelf which often leaves marketers with anywhere between 3 and 6 seconds to convert a purchase.Â P&G refer to these pivotal seconds as "The First Moment of Truth" (FMOT) - the moment when a shopper picks up a brand from the shelf. Â

This is when making a purchase easy for a shopper is key.

In-store shopper marketing has long been considered a tactical issue or at the most, associated with basic POS toolkits that simply take a key visual from an ATL campaign, utilize it across multiple point of sale elements and erect as many as possible in-store. Â

This approach misses a key opportunity to connect with consumers because it fails to recognise that purchase is a process, with evolving shopper attitudes and behaviors.

Shopper marketing must first begin with understanding the different shopping modes, unearthing a deep insight into a shoppers behavior whilst they are in a shopping mode, then translating that insight into actionable marketing solutions that encourage them to make a purchase.Â With the right insights, the store has become one of the most effective media vehicles today.

Brands will need to embrace this new role for marketing in order to remain competitive. Â

For almost 100 years traditional advertising has been leading shoppers to the store, but missing the opportunity to turn those shoppers into buyers and those buyers into repeat buyers.

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