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A MONTH IN MEDIA

SEPTEMBER 2017

VIEW FROM THE TOP

PETS: STARTER CHILDREN OR BRAND OPPORTUNITIES?

Millennial consumers are marrying and having children later in life than their older counterparts. However, one thing they are not holding off on is becoming pet owners. Millennials are owning more pets and treating them like more than just companions — they're viewed as starter children. Research from business solutions agency Gale found that 44% of Millennials see their pets as “practice” for the real deal, which means they treat them comparable. With the importance of pets increasing for Millennials, brands have more opportunities to engage with this mystifying generation. For example, BarkBox delivers a monthly subscription of pet goods, providing constant connection, while Vet On Demand taps into the fact that pets are often treated better than how owners treat themselves. **Brands must strive to make a difference in the pet owner vertical by keeping up with digital and consumer trends. By offering simple, utility-driven services and products that help put what they love first, brands can succeed and gain Millennial loyalty.** ►



INNOVATION OF THE MONTH

WARBY PARKER CREATES BUZZ SURROUNDING THE SOLAR ECLIPSE

Eyewear brand Warby Parker took advantage of the buzz around the recent solar eclipse and its natural connection to their product vertical (eyewear). Warby Parker engaged in the conversation; the brand provided consumers with entertainment while educating them about both the brand and solar eclipse safety. Before the big event, Warby Parker distributed custom-made cardboard cutout eclipse viewers for friends and family of the brand. Additionally, as an initiative extension, they provided a digital version on their website, so that anyone interested in solar eclipse viewing could join in. Warby Parker also created a dedicated landing page on its own site, ‘The Great American Solar Eclipse’, alongside activity on social platforms and in its physical stores. **Aligning marketing initiatives with real-life events can often feel forced and unnatural, which can be a consumer turnoff. However, Warby Parker smartly aligned its product and brand with an event that makes sense (and even requires eyewear) and they clearly planned well in advance, evident by its strong digital rollout and seamless product distribution. Strategic, timely activations like this are the future of marketing; smart brands can engage with relevant moments to create a 360-degree connection with consumers.** ►



TOP HEADLINES & WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

INSTAGRAM EXPANDS AD OFFERINGS WITHIN STORIES

To leverage the Instagram Stories product, Facebook has recently added features that create more flexibility in how they create and buy ads within Stories. There are three primary features: an expansion of canvas ads into the platform; the ability for advertisers to repurpose organic content to run the content as an ad; and placement optimization that enables brands to seamlessly run campaigns across Facebook, Instagram and the Audience Network. **These additions improve Instagram's ad capabilities as Facebook continues to provide a strong alternative, and arguably a better platform, to Snapchat. Now brands have the flexibility to use the platform in any way to support marketing goals whether it is to drive deeper engagement through canvas or to expand reach outside of the platform through Audience Network. It will be interesting to see whether these continuous updates drive more brands to favor Instagram over Snapchat.** ▶

HULU'S LIVE TV MAKE BIG MOVES FOR OTT

Hulu has secured agreements with five of the major U.S. TV broadcaster networks (NBC, FOX, ABC, and CBS and The CW) for its new Live TV service. The service which is still in beta offers Hulu subscribers the ability to watch live TV and record programs to a "cloud DVR." Live TV users can also watch Hulu's library of on-demand content and Hulu's Originals. The streaming service is also bringing its Live TV service to the Roku platform, including Roku streaming players, Roku Streaming Stick and all Roku TV models, in addition to being available on Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV devices, Xbox One and Xbox 360, iOS and Android mobile devices, and Chromecast. **Hulu's strategic moves in the OTT space illustrate their motive to become one of the top platforms for content. By providing live TV to cord-cutters, Hulu is becoming a one-stop shop. Brands can learn from Hulu's tactics by enacting similar practices that appeal to cord-cutters.** ▶

VENMO: FROM DIGITAL TO PHYSICAL PAYMENTS

Venmo is currently testing a beta release of a physical debit card that allows users of its payments app to make physical purchases in-store and online. The Venmo card works just like any debit card, except that purchases will use funds from members' Venmo balance. A Venmo card launch would be the latest move by a digital-first company to wedge themselves deeper into the financial lives of consumers, as last month Square started marketing a new physical debit card of its own. **For brands, it is not always about bringing digital opportunities to their consumers, but rather bringing useful solutions that consumers find practical and enable them to have more physical touchpoints with the brand.** ▶

FACEBOOK ENTERS THE MOVIE TICKET BUSINESS

Facebook has included a 'Movies' section in partnership with Fandango and Atom Tickets to provide users a way to see movie information and showtimes for nearby theaters as well as the providing users with the ability to buy tickets directly from Facebook itself. This is not the first time Facebook has provided ticket sales on their platform, as last year Facebook introduced a way for users to take various actions (i.e. getting quotes, buying concert and movie tickets, etc.) via Facebook pages. The interface from Facebook Pages looks very similar to the Facebook apps 'Movies' section and expands Facebook's existing relationship with Fandango and a better user journey. **Even though this is still a test, it proves that Facebook is quickly expanding to be a portal for everything a user may need online. Marketers should investigate ways to partner with Facebook in an effort to integrate their brand's offerings into their apps main navigation (i.e. purchasing products, ordering food, etc. directly from the Facebook app).** ▶

WHATSAPP ENTERS CUSTOMER SERVICE SPACE

Facebook-owned messaging app, WhatsApp, is launching a new app that lets businesses chat with customers. Businesses can now be given a “verified profile,” so customers know that they are contacting the right shop or service. It will also give businesses an easier way to manage the flood of messages; banks and airlines and other companies will be given the tools to manage conversations with customers and do things like share flight times, delivery notifications and other updates. **For WhatsApp, a platform that simplified communication globally, having the ability to streamline consumer to business communication is a huge opportunity. As one-to-one communication continues to evolve, finding ways for brands to connect and engage at a personal level with their consumers is key to creating valuable experiences.** ▶

TARGET ADDS PINTEREST VISUAL SEARCH TO APP & WEBSITE

Target and Pinterest announced a partnership that will integrate Pinterest’s visual search technology, known as the Lens, into Target’s apps and its desktop website. The deal, which represents the first time the company has integrated Lens into a retailer’s app, will allow Target shoppers to snap a photo of any product, and then find similar items available for sale at Target. As a result of this deal, Target is also increasing their ad buy significantly with Pinterest, in a related effort to drive more consumers’ shopping online to Target’s site. **The partnership between Target and Pinterest illustrates the changing ways in which consumers search and shop. Understanding new shopping behaviors and creating strategic partnerships can enable brands to deliver the products that consumers search for and make a direct purchase.** ▶

SNAPCHAT BRINGS BITMOJI TO THE REAL WORLD WITH WORLD LENSES

Snapchat’s World Lens feature applies filters intelligently to the world around you using augmented reality and your smartphone’s camera, however, Snapchat recently added support for Bitmoji so that it can be used in AR. This means you can take the animated avatars of yourself and drop them into your surroundings. The 3D Bitmoji are created based on the Bitmoji you’ve already made using the app and your linked Snapchat account, and they’ll appear as a new option in the rear camera Lens options within Snapchat in both iOS and Android automatically. **What does this mean for brands? Firstly, it shows that Snapchat is bringing AR to the masses via their app and enabling their platform to be more than just a social photo sharing platform. Additionally, it shows that consumers enjoy creating personalized content. Brands can leverage this feature by creating more AR options on Snapchat.** ▶

MORE INDUSTRY BUZZ

AMAZON ADDED ALEXA VOICE CONTROL TO THE AMAZON MUSIC APP ▶

INSTAGRAM NOW HAS 800 MILLION MONTHLY AND 500 MILLION DAILY ACTIVE USERS ▶

SNAPCHAT ADDED 14 NEW PARTNERS FOR GAMES, DATA CAPTURE, INTERACTIVITY & MORE ▶

GOOGLE AND HTC SIGNED DEAL TO BOOST GOOGLE’S HARDWARE CAPABILITIES ▶

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