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Report

18/09/2023

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## Insights from MEMEX Berlin 2023 on Gaining Meaningful Attention

Published on September 18, 2023

The MEMEX Berlin 2023 conference, hosted by the Berlin-based market research institute eye square, revolved around the theme of "Meaningful Attention," reflecting the institute's expertise in eye tracking and its focus on user perception in the context of branding and advertising.

One noteworthy aspect of this year's MEMEX conference was the presence of attendees beyond eye square's client base. Moshe Satanovsky, Head of Business Development at GEO-IT in Stuttgart, was among them, expressing interest in exploring potential collaborations with eye square, particularly in the realm of voice recording and speech recognition solutions.

Katharina Müller, Lead Communications at eye square, emphasized the conference's focus on technology and the art of capturing user attention. The event, which marked the second MEMEX of the year following the New York edition, delved into the science and techniques behind achieving meaningful user engagement.

The conference began with a unique twist as CFO Friedrich Jacobi, using an avatar generated with ChatGPT, welcomed the attendees and fielded questions from the audience. The use of avatars for interaction showcased the blend of technology and engagement strategies discussed throughout the conference.

One of the highlights was Olaf Schlesiger's presentation, Associate Director Research at Seven.One Entertainment Group, discussing the impact of context and creativity on advertising effectiveness. He classified viewers' television-watching habits into four time zones, each requiring tailored advertising approaches:

1. Busy Day (2 PM - 6 PM): Viewers are distracted and not fully focused.
2. Work Is Done (6 PM - 8 PM): Viewers engage in relaxed content, such as The Simpsons.
3. Quality Time (Prime Time): Viewers gather for blockbuster shows.
4. Dreaming Away (approaching midnight): The TV day winds down.



Schlesiger's team tested 64 ads in these scenarios, monitoring participants using head, eye, and emotion tracking, resulting in 8,304 ad interactions. The key takeaway was the need to consider user mindset when selecting ads for these scenarios. Clear and concise ads with expert endorsements worked best during Busy Day, while humor and positivity were favored during Work Is Done.

Quality Time demanded storytelling, allowing longer ad content that aligned with the ongoing show. In the Dreaming Away scenario, subtle and feel-good content was preferred, with loud, aggressive ads being less effective.

Dr. Cristina de Balanzo, Board Director at Walnut Unlimited, emphasized the importance of brands reevaluating their ad content. She showcased how established brands were shifting their focus to spotlight minorities in society, such as LGBTQ+ individuals, wheelchair users, or people with Down syndrome. The goal was to embrace authenticity and humanity in advertising.

She pointed to a Colgate ad featuring a person with Down syndrome playing the drums and a gay couple during a move. Although initially met with resistance within Colgate's ranks, adjustments were made, and the ad was well-received. This shift, de Balanzo explained, initially triggered negative reactions in viewers but eventually led to positive associations with the brand.

Nuria Sichalla, Senior Research Consultant at eye square, delved into the role of social media in advertising, focusing on TikTok and Instagram. Her study revealed that despite shorter user engagement on TikTok, ad recognition rates were higher compared to Instagram. TikTok's visual richness offered more brand placement opportunities beyond creative content, enhancing overall ad memorability.

Lisa Wiese, Director Human Experience at eye square, examined how digital technologies, particularly social media, have become integral to daily life, influencing user behavior more than traditional media like cinema, books, or radio. She noted that smartphones and social media now serve as constant companions, with digital platforms posing a greater temptation than drinking, smoking, or shopping addictions.

Wiese also addressed the negative consequences of digital technology, highlighting behaviors like "phubbing" (ignoring someone in favor of the smartphone) and "ghosting" (sudden online communication cutoff during dating). She emphasized the need for platforms to help users transition from "Meaningless Attention" to "Time Well Spent" by implementing features like content reminders and prompts to reconsider sending messages.





Philipp von Hilgers, VP Enterprise Sales at DoubleVerify, drew attention to the carbon footprint of the digital ecosystem, revealing that it contributes 4% of global CO2 emissions, surpassing the 2% from air travel. This eye-opening statistic underscored the environmental impact of the digital realm, highlighting the need for greater awareness and sustainability measures.

In conclusion, MEMEX Berlin 2023 shed light on the intricate art and science of capturing "Meaningful Attention" in today's tech-driven world. It emphasized the importance of tailoring advertising strategies to user contexts, embracing authenticity in content, and considering the environmental implications of digital technology. The conference's insights offer valuable guidance for businesses seeking to make a lasting impact in the ever-evolving landscape of marketing and user engagement.

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