

# One... two... two-and-a-half...

## Simplifying marketing to combat today's 3-second attention spans

WITH SO MANY emails to read, links to click, tweets to re-tweet, we've come to live in a world of short attention spans. In fact, if you were an average consumer and not an interested marketer, we could probably get away with writing gibberish and just pointing you in the direction of the pretty pictures that sum this whole thing up.

As marketers, we need to understand how short these attention spans are—and how to combat them.

Office workers check their email an average of 30-40 times per hour, which puts us under a minute.<sup>1</sup>

However, BBC News says with web browsing culture taking over, our attention spans are more like 9 seconds—the same as a goldfish.<sup>2</sup>

That still may not be short enough. It takes an average of 2.7 seconds to read a tweet or a text<sup>3</sup>—meaning we can move from one topic to the next faster than you can count to three.

We like to blame the “kids” for this. They're the ones popularizing and proliferating the “Hey! Look! Something new!” culture that we as professionals—and as consumers—have to deal with, right?

Younger people are the ones who can deal with it, though. Not only have they grown up over-stimulated, recent studies say that the brains of young children have actually begun to adapt to a multi-channel world.<sup>4</sup> It's us grownups who need to figure out how to adjust.

And, so, to help our targets and ourselves, we must simplify—not just our messages, but our processes and channels for delivering those messages. After all, our target markets aren't the only ones whose time is budgeted by the second.

The way many businesses are structured today makes it imperative to simplify marketing. Trends that helped businesses grow in the past now need streamlining. Specifically, indirect channel marketing, accelerated globalization and advanced technology all make marketing more complex—it is now our job to simplify it again.

Indirect channel marketing

To effectively reach end users, more and more companies have turned

to resellers, creating indirect distribution channels. Even formerly staunch “direct only” businesses like Dell have succumbed to the trend.

Going from brand to reseller to buyer seems pretty simple. But once you think about training resellers on your brand, motivating them to sell it, and communicating consistent messages to targets, things start to get complex for all parties—especially end user segments that end up receiving muddled messages.

The key to keeping indirect sales channels simpler is managing the delicate “tension triangle,” a relationship of checks & balances that gives power to the central brand, the reseller and the end user.

Finding that balance requires devising a channel program that educates, enables and empowers—i.e. gives resellers tools they need to quickly and easily execute campaigns on the brand's behalf.

### Accelerated globalization

Globalization was never as easy as it is now. Tools like FaceTime, Skype and Google Chat make talking face-to-face with colleagues in other countries cost-effective and productive—meaning some companies end up with global distribution before they have time to establish proper processes.

Creating messages that will work in all global regions requires deep understanding of culture—but it also requires streamlined processes, and sometimes automation, for translation and localization.

### Advanced technology

Not only has technology led to our short attention spans in the first place, it has also made way for more complex products in the market—servers, storage, cloud computing.

With highly-technical products, product managers sometimes think that if the end user understands the technical complexities, they should be spoken to in a complex way. This isn't always so.

We had a client recently who was launching a service targeted at developers—and the way we talk to them

is more simple than how we talk to businesspeople because they have even less time for marketing fluff—they just need the point: “Can this do what I need it to do?”

The key in all cases is that the notion of three messages per piece is dying (yes, we're aware there are three points made in this piece). We only have time for one message: one through the channel, one to globalize, one to sell the complex.

So first it's a matter of finding the one clear simple message to rest on—and then you have to implement programs to help disseminate that message so everyone involved has the time—and attention span—to push it out. At Pepper, this is what we do. Because, to be honest, we don't have time for the fluff either. Oh, and in case you made it all the way to the end without looking at the pretty pictures—congratulations!

<sup>1</sup> Carr, Nicholas (June 2010). “The Web Shatters Focus, Rewires Brains.” *Wired Magazine*, 18.06.

<sup>2</sup> BBC News (23 October 2008). “Turning into virtual gold fish.” Retrieved from news.bbc.co.uk.

<sup>3</sup> Shankman, Peter. “Notes on Self Promotion.” SXSW Interactive. Austin, Texas. 17 March 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Lindstrom, Martin (18 May 2011). “The Cure for ADD-vertising.” *Fast Company*, 156.

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#### FOR INFORMATION

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# SIMPLIFYING MARKETING TO COMBAT THE 3-SECOND ATTENTION SPAN



## < 1 MINUTE

We check our email 30-40 times per hour, putting our attention spans under a minute.<sup>1</sup>



## 9 SECONDS

Web-browsing culture has given us the figurative attention span of a goldfish, nine seconds.<sup>2</sup>



## 2.7 SECONDS

The average time it takes to read a tweet; we can switch our attentions faster than 1, 2, 2.5...<sup>3</sup>

THE MORE MESSAGES THERE ARE, **THE LESS TIME WE HAVE TO LOOK AT THEM ALL...**

### KIDS CAN DEAL WITH IT

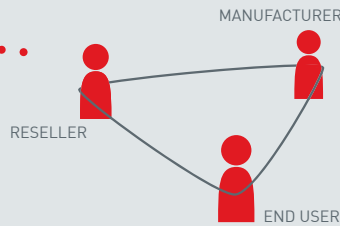
The brains of young children have begun to adapt to a multi-channel world.



### ADULTS? NOT SO MUCH

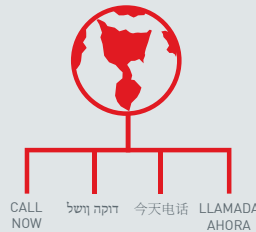
But adults have to fight with their biology to take in so much.

SO, TO GET THESE MESSAGES THROUGH, WE MUST SIMPLIFY, **USING OUR DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF**



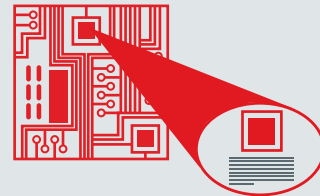
### DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL PROGRAMS

that balance the "tension triangle" to result in effective, efficient messages.



### GLOBAL MARKET SEGMENTS

to develop processes that streamline the globalization and localization of messages.



### PRODUCT BENEFITS

of even the most complex products so every target segment can see the point quickly.

PEPPER CAN DO ALL THREE FOR YOU. **AT ONCE.**

WE MAKE THE COMPLEX... SIMPLE.

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Creative thinking. Strategic results.

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