

WARC

Press Release

For immediate release

WARC launches Toolkit 2018

Five key marketing trends for the coming year: CX, data, digital transparency, redefining purpose, voice

Global, 5 December 2017 – WARC, the global marketing intelligence service, has today released Toolkit 2018, an annual guide to key challenges that marketers around the world will be faced with in the coming year.

“We’ve conducted a survey with more than 600 marketing and advertising professionals around the world to get their opinions on the year ahead as well as assessing the best ideas, latest research and most effective case studies from WARC’s content over the past year.

“The result is a comprehensive global report in which we identify five major marketing trends that will impact marketers and the industry as a whole in 2018,” comments David Tiltman, Head of Content, WARC.

The five key marketing trends identified are:

1. CX is now a key battleground

Customer experience (CX) is a ‘digital transformation’ priority for 2018, meaning a growing focus on customer journey mapping, and rising investment in experience optimisation technology. It also means that advertising agencies will see an ever-growing challenge from management consultancies promoting CX as the future of brand-building.

WARC key data: 53% of brands prioritise CX within their digital transformation strategy.

2. Marketers are looking for greater control over customer data

Data – and, in particular, data management – will be a major brand concern in the year ahead. This is partly a reflection of new regulations coming into force. These dovetail with a broader push by brands to take control of their many data sources. Data will be key to delivering the “mass one-to-one marketing” which will fuel the next wave of digital growth, according to Procter & Gamble’s Chief Brand Officer Marc Pritchard.

WARC key data: Only 22% of brands and 18% of agencies believe they are prepared for General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

78% of respondents to MediaSense's 'Media 2020' survey said that data analytics and insight is the "critical" media capability in need of development.

3. AI is moving mainstream, with voice emerging as a key interface

As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes the most important emerging tech in 2018, voice is now emerging as an important new interface between consumers and their devices, and the combination of voice and AI is opening up a new frontier for brand-building. From audio branding to voice-activated purchases, this could have big implications for marketers.

WARC key data: 17% of brands have audio guidelines, versus 86% who have visual ones

4. Redefining Purpose

Purpose is one of marketing's great ongoing debates: how necessary and valuable is it for a brand to centre its activity on a single, consistent 'purpose'? In 2018, the challenge will be recognising when (and how) purpose can drive sales as well as social good.

WARC key data: 300% increase in purpose-driven ads among the top 100 global brands over the past five years.

5. Brands will pressure suppliers for digital transparency

2018 will be pivotal to the development of digital, as the current drive for transparency continues. Viewability and digital measurement is the number one issue faced by brands; more than 30% of marketers surveyed by WARC expect digital spend to be cut if these issues are not resolved.

WARC key data: 51% of brands believe there is a crisis of trust between brands and agencies.

In an exclusive interview with WARC, Marc Pritchard, Chief Brand Officer for Procter & Gamble, sums up his main priorities for 2018: "Right now I want to get the media transparency that we need and we're still very dedicated to raising the bar on creativity. Looking ahead, this new transition to one-to-one marketing is going to be a big shift. It will move into data management, and we need to think through data standards and the ways we operate."

WARC's Toolkit 2018 Executive Summary is now available on warc.com. Further in-depth analysis and discussions on each of the five trends will be serialised on a weekly basis from 14 December via studies and video interviews. A round-up discussion on Toolkit 2018 will take place via a WARC event and webinar early next year.

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proven approaches to maximise advertising effectiveness. WARC's clients include the world's largest advertising and media agencies, research companies, universities and advertisers.

WARC hosts four global and two regional case study competitions: WARC Awards, WARC Innovation Awards, WARC Media Awards, The Admap Prize, WARC Prize for Asian Strategy and WARC Prize for MENA Strategy.

Founded in 1985, WARC is privately owned and has offices in the UK, US and Singapore.