

The image features a central horizontal strip of light yellow paper with a torn, deckle edge, set against a solid purple background. The word "HILLO" is written across the center of the yellow strip in a white, stylized, outlined font. The letters are bold and slanted, with a double purple outline. The 'H' and 'L' are tall, while the 'I' and 'O' are shorter. The 'O' is a simple circle. The overall effect is that of a message or name appearing through a hole in a purple surface.

HILLO

"The best agencies aren't just executing campaigns; they are strategic partners, driving growth through insightful planning and empowered teams."

Dan Hills, 2025

20+ years in media & marketing

PhD researcher, Post-Digital Marketing Practices

Leadership philosophy
growth mindset | Collaboration | Data-Driven).

Framework for approaching client challenges:

My 4-step process:

Deep Dive & Diagnosis:

Collaborative Brainstorming:

Data-Driven Insights:

Actionable Roadmap & Measurement:

Supporting Case Study:

First 3 Months Approach:

Questions:

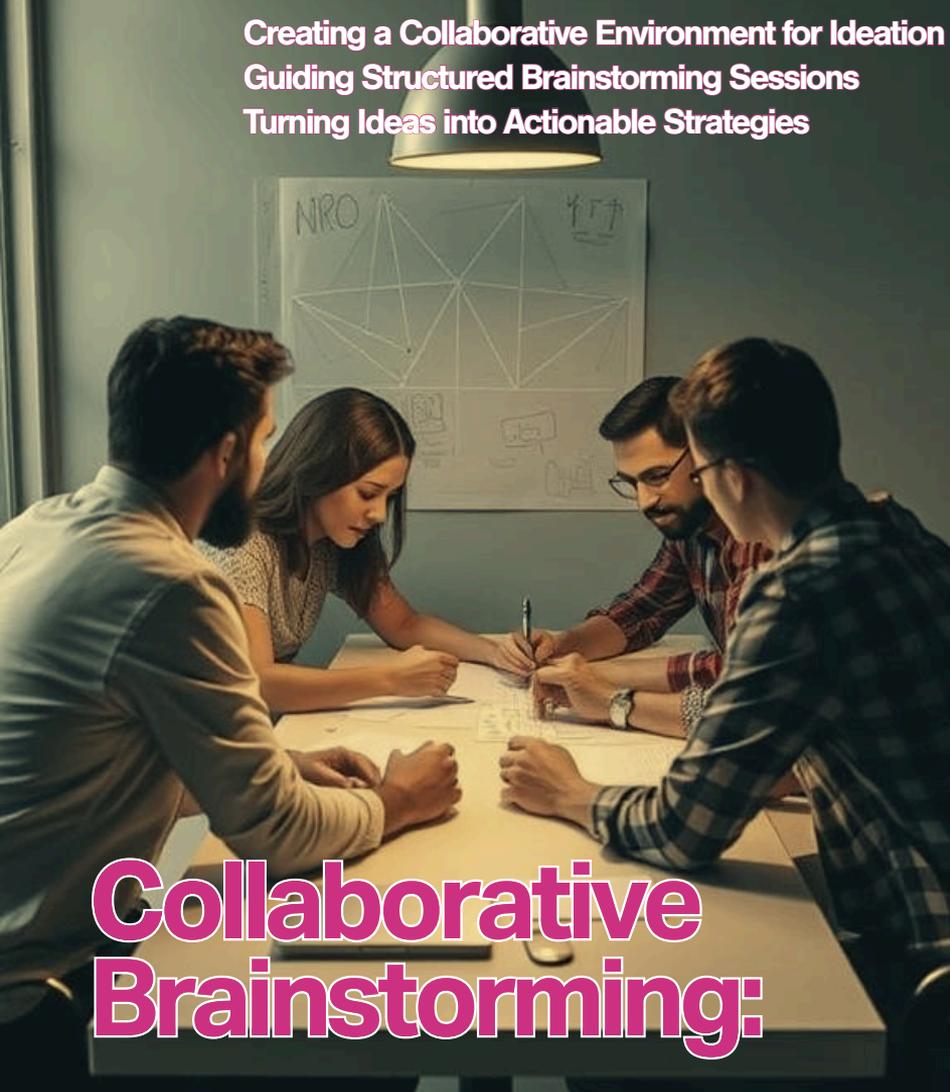
Deep Dive & Diagnosis:

Aligning with Business Objectives
Navigating Market Complexities
Identifying Root Causes of Underperformance

Leveraging Leading Indicators for Proactive Insights
Analyzing Lagging Indicators to Assess Performance
Integrating Data Analysis into Strategic Planning

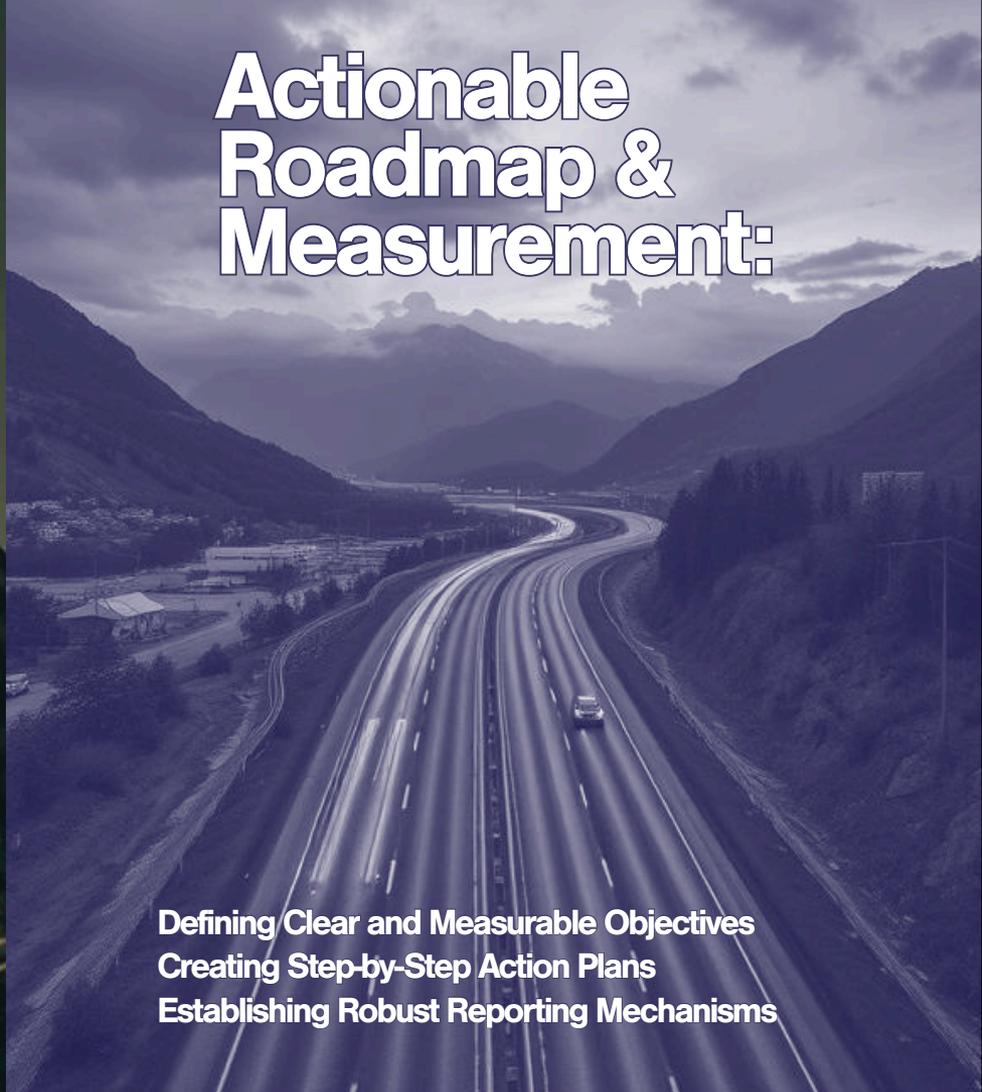
Data Driven Insights:

Creating a Collaborative Environment for Ideation
Guiding Structured Brainstorming Sessions
Turning Ideas into Actionable Strategies



Collaborative Brainstorming:

Actionable Roadmap & Measurement:



Defining Clear and Measurable Objectives
Creating Step-by-Step Action Plans
Establishing Robust Reporting Mechanisms

Case Studies

My vast experience spans numerous industries, channels, and disciplines, showcasing a remarkable depth of knowledge. Examples...



Regional Data Planning



Team Development and Leadership

OPSM LUXOTTICA



Rebuild and Establish Trust



New Business Launch



Retail App and Big Data



Data Planning



SITECORE



Brand + Growth Media

Part 2: Leadership Success Planning

First 3 Months Approach:

Immersion & Learning:

Building Relationships:

Assessment & Strategy:

Setting Expectations & Goals:



My plan for the first THREE Months

**Assessment
& Strategy:**

**Developing a
Strategic Roadmap
for Growth**

**Immersion &
Learning:**

**Immersing in
Smithfield's Culture and
Operations**

2

1

4

**Building
Relationships:**

**Fostering trust and
collaboration through
open communication**

**Setting
Expectations &
Goals:**

**setting measurable goals
+ clarity in team
expectations and
reporting protocols.**

3

Suggest /
Recommend

Ask /
Question

Listen /
Observe

1

2

3

Setting Up for Success in 2025



**Team
Empowerment:**



**Client
Alignment:**



**Culture of
Innovation:**

Thank You

DAN
HILLS



[LinkedIn](#)
[Blog](#)

Extended papers and books - [Luxury Marketing | B2B marketing Ideas for Marketeers | Media Top Trends for 2025](#)



Data-Driven Decision-Making:

Smithfield's focus on analytics and performance optimization matches my expertise in creating transparent, insight-led strategies. My ability to implement real-time dashboards and attribution models will enhance your offerings.



Expanding Client Portfolio:

Their consultative approach to understanding client sectors and competitors aligns with your experience in identifying growth opportunities and tailoring strategies for diverse industries.



Innovative Media Solutions:

Smithfield's emphasis on bespoke strategies and optimal targeting reflects my track record of using innovative tactics, such as guerrilla marketing and dynamic creative optimization.



Performance Marketing:

My focus on measurable ROI and efficient media planning complements your "Planning for Performance" mantra, ensuring campaigns deliver both immediate and long-term results.



Collaboration and Transparency:

My leadership and mentorship skills would strengthen your collaborative culture, fostering alignment across teams and enhancing client trust.

Revolutionizing Media and Subscription Strategy for Sony Entertainment Network

The Problem

As EMEA Digital Director for Sony Entertainment Network (SEN) and PlayStation Network, you were tasked with managing budget allocation and strategic planning across 15 diverse markets. While SEN's offerings extended beyond games to include movies, music, and box sets, competition from industry giants like iTunes, Google Play, and Netflix posed a significant challenge. To differentiate SEN's services and cut through the noise in a crowded market, you had to maximize marketing efficiency and engagement on a closely scrutinized budget.

The Solution

To address these challenges, you developed and implemented an innovative approach anchored by a proprietary tool you humorously named "Sony Alligator" (a typographical play on "Allocator"). This cutting-edge tool revolutionized the way budget planning and campaign strategies were executed:

Data-Driven Budget Allocation:

Comprehensive Analysis: Sony Alligator analyzed multiple data points from across the 15 markets, including:

PlayStation ownership metrics

Average basket values and subscription data

GDP per capita and personal entertainment usage

Brand awareness metrics and market potential

This robust analysis enabled precise, need-based allocation of marketing budgets, ensuring resources were directed to the markets with the highest potential for growth and ROI.

Centralized and Localized Collaboration:

Collaborated with local Sony teams in each of the 15 markets to gather localized data, providing critical insights into market-specific trends and audience behaviors.

Combined these insights with desk research from the centralized team to create a unified strategy that balanced global objectives with local nuances.

Integration with Sony's Ecosystem:

Embedded Alligator data into Sony's CRM, Data Management, and CMS systems to streamline operations and ensure cohesive execution across markets.

Leveraged this integrated approach to identify opportunities for cross-selling and upselling within the Sony Entertainment Network.

Campaign Implementation and Continuous Optimization:

Transformed data into action by creating highly targeted campaigns on Google, Meta (Facebook and Instagram), and Amazon platforms, ensuring messaging was relevant and impactful.

Continuously fed campaign performance data, such as brand awareness metrics, ad engagements, and e-commerce sales, back into Alligator to refine strategies and improve efficiency.

Retargeting and Loyalty Enhancement:

Utilized enhanced data planning to implement retargeting strategies, encouraging return purchases and increasing customer lifetime value.

Focused on delivering a richer experience for existing subscribers, bolstering retention rates and promoting loyalty.



Sony
Entertainment
Network



PlayStation®
Network

The Results

Your innovative and data-driven approach yielded remarkable results:

Subscription Growth: Achieved a 12% improvement in new subscription acquisitions across the 15 markets within a year.

Enhanced Retention: Boosted return purchases and customer loyalty through retargeting and personalized campaigns.

Operational Efficiency: Enabled a more efficient and dynamic allocation of marketing budgets, ensuring every euro spent contributed to measurable impact.

Award-Winning Campaigns: The innovative data planning campaigns garnered industry recognition, earning multiple awards for excellence in multi-market strategy and execution.

Higher Engagement: Delivered improved ad engagement rates and strengthened brand awareness metrics, further solidifying SEN's position in the market.

Key Learnings and Takeaways

This case study underscores the transformative power of combining innovative tools, centralized data planning, and localized insights to compete effectively in a crowded market. By creating Sony Alligator and embedding it within the broader organizational ecosystem, you established a data-driven approach that delivered sustainable growth and measurable results. Your ability to adapt global strategies to regional markets while maintaining efficiency is a blueprint for success in multinational marketing operations.

Mentoring a Junior Team Member at Shell International



The Problem

The Shell International account was a highly complex operation, with numerous moving parts requiring meticulous coordination. It was being managed by a young and enthusiastic account manager (AM), eager to excel but lacking the experience to delegate effectively. Her desire to be involved in every meeting and oversee all activities, though well-intentioned, led to inefficiencies and mounting stress, both for her and the team. This approach risked creating bottlenecks and fragmented team efforts.

The Solution

To address these challenges, a strategic mentorship approach was adopted:

- Establishing a Framework:** Instead of focusing on micromanagement, a clear strategic and operational framework was created for the team. This structure provided clarity on roles, responsibilities, and project goals.
- Empowering the Team:** The account manager was encouraged to take a step back, allowing team members to independently manage their projects and programs with light-touch oversight. This delegation fostered trust and accountability within the team.
- Reinventing Meetings:** Regular meetings were restructured as alignment sessions rather than prescriptive or detailed implementation reviews. This shifted the focus to collaboration and support, ensuring the account manager maintained an overview without being overwhelmed.

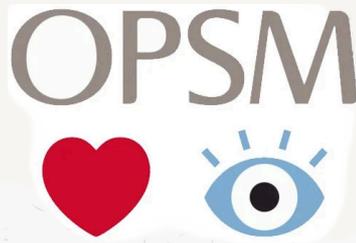
The Results

This mentorship approach delivered noticeable improvements across several dimensions:

- **Reduced Stress:** The account manager became noticeably less stressed and was able to focus on her passion for strategy development, enabling her to contribute at a higher level.
- **Empowered Team:** Team members thrived under their new responsibilities, relishing the opportunity to manage client-facing projects and showcase their capabilities.
- **Enhanced Collaboration:** The new meeting format fostered alignment and unity among the team, reducing tensions and internal politics.
- **Client Satisfaction:** The Global Marketing Director observed a significant improvement in the team's unified output, recognizing the positive impact of this collaborative and empowering approach.

This case demonstrates the importance of thoughtful mentorship, structured delegation, and fostering a culture of empowerment. By guiding the account manager to lead more strategically, the entire team, as well as the client, benefitted from improved performance and outcomes.

Rebuilding Trust with OPSM Luxottica



The Problem

When working with OPSM, a subsidiary of Luxottica, the account was suffering from a lack of perceived strategic direction. The client expressed concerns over the absence of a clear plan and felt underserved by a junior team that struggled to meet their expectations. This dynamic risked undermining the client's confidence and commitment to the partnership.

The Solution

To address this challenge, proactive and direct action was taken to rebuild trust and establish a strong foundation for collaboration:

- 1. Engagement Across Levels:** Invested significant time engaging with clients at all levels, from junior team members to senior stakeholders, to build rapport and understand their needs comprehensively.
- 2. Taking Ownership:** Assumed a leadership role, overseeing the account's strategic direction and client communication. This included leading regular strategic and operational meetings to ensure alignment and accountability.
- 3. Guiding the Team:** Provided clear guidance and mentorship to the junior team, elevating their capabilities and ensuring they could deliver the high standard of work expected by the client.



The Results

The newly implemented performance media strategy not only reestablished the client's confidence but also propelled their success within the OPSM organization. The initiative achieved remarkable recognition:

- Transformed the client into a "superstar" within OPSM.
- Garnered multiple global and Asia-Pacific awards for excellence in media and marketing.
- Secured a prestigious Cannes Lion award, a testament to the groundbreaking and strategic approach.

This case exemplifies the power of strategic leadership, client-centric collaboration, and innovation in media performance. It highlights the importance of not just delivering results but also nurturing trust and ensuring all stakeholders feel supported and empowered. Let me know if you'd like to refine or expand this further!

Launching Audible by Amazon in Australia and New Zealand

The Problem Audible, Amazon's global audiobook platform, is a market leader in providing access to audiobooks, podcasts, and spoken word entertainment. However, despite its international success and footprint, Audible faced a significant challenge in entering the Australian and New Zealand markets. The task was twofold: first, to adapt the global media strategy to local tastes, and second, to establish Audible as a recognizable and relatable brand in a highly active outdoor-oriented market with distinct cultural preferences. Adding to the complexity was a heavily scrutinized budget, necessitating a high degree of efficiency and strategic precision.

The Solution As the Head of Digital Media at Hearts & Science ANZ, I spearheaded the successful media and marketing launch of Audible in the region. The campaign was built on a combination of innovation, transparency, and a data-driven localized approach:

Winning the Pitch with Transparency and Data:

Presented an unbiased, data-led planning approach that demonstrated how each media dollar would be optimized for maximum impact. Highlighted the importance of transparent media trading to ensure client trust and accountability.

Localizing the Global Strategy:

Redirected the global strategy to cater to Australia and New Zealand's unique media landscape, focusing heavily on outdoor advertising to reach audiences in active, outdoor settings. Integrated the use of local celebrities, voice actors, and Australian and APAC book titles to establish authenticity and relatability.

Maximizing Limited Budgets:

Developed simplistic yet effective attribution techniques to track media planning and campaign performance. Delivered insights that went beyond raw numbers to offer meaningful, actionable recommendations for optimizing campaign effectiveness.

Multi-Channel Approach:

Orchestrated a cohesive single point of truth across various media channels, including outdoor, digital, social, and audio platforms, ensuring consistent messaging and efficient targeting. Employed dynamic creative optimization to tailor content for specific audience segments, increasing resonance and effectiveness.

Collaborative Team Execution:

Marshalled cross-functional teams to align on strategic goals, ensuring insights were shared collaboratively and execution was seamless.



The Results The campaign delivered outstanding results, exceeding client expectations on multiple fronts:

- **Increased Awareness and Engagement:** Audible's prompted brand recall improved by 40%, while unprompted brand awareness rose by 30% within the first six months.
- **Subscription Growth:** Audible achieved a 55% growth in new subscriptions in its first 12 months in the region, far surpassing initial forecasts.
- **Client Satisfaction:** Amazon's Audible team expressed high satisfaction, praising the precision of media planning and the effectiveness of localized creative execution.
- **Award Recognition:** The campaign was recognized for its innovative media planning and data-led approach, earning awards including:
 - Best Use of Data in Media (Australian Media Awards 2020)
 - Excellence in Marketing Effectiveness (APAC Marketing Awards 2020)

Key Learnings and Takeaways This case study demonstrates how a global brand like Audible can achieve localized success through a combination of data-driven planning, cultural adaptation, and collaborative execution. By focusing on delivering insights rather than just numbers, and by employing transparent and accountable processes, Audible's entry into Australia and New Zealand became a benchmark for strategic and effective market launches.

Transforming Retail Media with the MyMacca's App



The Problem

McDonald's Australia sought to leverage its MyMacca's app as a powerful retail media tool to drive customer engagement, predict consumer behavior, and promote tailored product offerings. Despite its potential, the app faced challenges in optimizing its vast data resources to deliver personalized experiences and targeted campaigns. With over 5 million downloads, the app had a significant user base, but McDonald's needed a more sophisticated approach to harness its data and maximize its impact. The goal was to establish the app as the market leader in retail media while setting the foundation for rolling out similar methodologies across other Omnicom Media Group Australia partners, including Target Group and 7-Eleven.

The Solution

As a client consultant working with Annalect and OMD Australia, I played a pivotal role in bridging the gap between data scientists and brand teams to deliver a transformative strategy for the MyMacca's app. The solution involved several key components:

Data-Driven Personalization:

- Utilized advanced statistical measurement methodologies to analyze individual consumption habits, peer group behaviors, and broader demographic trends.
- Integrated geographical data to tailor day-part targeted offerings based on the location of individual stores across Australia.
- Behavioral Insights and Predictive Analytics:
- Developed predictive models to anticipate customer preferences and promote specific product combinations, enhancing the relevance of app-based promotions.
- Leveraged first-party data to create hyper-targeted campaigns, ensuring maximum engagement and conversion rates.

Collaborative Execution:

- Worked closely with McDonald's brand teams and OMD Australia to align campaign strategies with business objectives.
- Acted as a liaison between data scientists and marketing teams, ensuring insights were actionable and aligned with creative messaging.

Scalable Methodology:

- Designed a framework for rolling out the app's data-driven approach to other Omnicom Media Group Australia partners, including Target Group and 7-Eleven.
- Focused on creating a replicable model that could be adapted to different retail environments and customer bases.

A graphic with the words 'CASE STUDY' in a bold, yellow, distressed font, enclosed in a hand-drawn yellow border. The background of the graphic is a blurred image of a smartphone displaying the McDonald's app interface.

CASE STUDY

The Results

The implementation of this strategy delivered exceptional results:

- Market Leadership:** The MyMacca's app solidified its position as the market leader in retail media within Australia, with engagement rates surpassing industry benchmarks.
- Enhanced Customer Engagement:** Personalized promotions and targeted offerings led to a significant increase in app usage and customer satisfaction.
- Revenue Growth:** The app drove a measurable uplift in sales, particularly during targeted day-parts, by promoting relevant product combinations.
- Award Recognition:** The campaign was recognized for its innovative use of data and retail media, earning accolades in Australian and APAC marketing awards.
- Scalable Success:** The methodology was successfully adapted for other Omnicom Media Group Australia partners, demonstrating its versatility and effectiveness.

Key Learnings and Takeaways

This case study highlights the transformative potential of combining data science with strategic marketing to create a powerful retail media tool. By leveraging the MyMacca's app's extensive data resources, McDonald's Australia was able to deliver personalized experiences, drive customer engagement, and achieve measurable business outcomes. The success of this initiative underscores the importance of collaboration, innovation, and a data-driven approach in today's competitive retail landscape.

Transforming Ras Al Khaimah into a Premier Tourism Destination



The Problem

When taking over the Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority account from one of the major global holding companies, it became clear that an abundance of valuable data was being severely underutilized. The previous agency had failed to analyze and leverage key insights from the wealth of data they were sitting on—data that could have driven innovative, strategic decisions to elevate the emirate's standing in a competitive tourism market. This oversight left the marketing efforts lacking precision and the agility to unlock Ras Al Khaimah's full potential as a unique destination.

The Solution

To address the missed opportunities, a bold, data-led, and innovation-driven approach was adopted:

- 1. Data Discovery and Analysis:**
 - Conducted a deep dive into all existing data streams, including audience behavior analytics, past campaign performance, and market trend data.
 - Identified untapped opportunities, such as targeting adventure-seekers and eco-tourists who were increasingly looking for off-the-beaten-path travel experiences.
- 2. Innovative Data Centralization:**
 - Developed an integrated data visualization platform to consolidate and analyze insights from disparate sources, enabling actionable intelligence.
 - Leveraged predictive analytics to identify emerging travel patterns and high-potential international markets.
- 3. Creative and Strategic Application of Insights:**
 - Developed a unique campaign concept that highlighted Ras Al Khaimah's distinct identity as *"The UAE's Hidden Gem"*, focusing on immersive experiences, eco-tourism, and adventure activities like hiking Jebel Jais or exploring the Al Wadi Desert.
 - Personalized marketing strategies to resonate with key audience segments, including millennials, families, and adventure enthusiasts.
 - Combined storytelling with data-backed creative decisions, such as prioritizing platforms popular among target demographics (e.g., Instagram and YouTube).
- 4. Innovative Partnerships and Campaign Activations:**
 - Collaborated with travel influencers and adventure-focused creators to generate authentic content, amplifying reach and engagement organically.
 - Employed real-time performance monitoring tools to fine-tune campaigns and maximize ROI dynamically.

The Results

This innovation-first strategy yielded exceptional results, firmly establishing Ras Al Khaimah as a prominent tourism destination:

- **23% Increase in Arrivals:** Within six months, international tourist arrivals rose significantly, outpacing initial campaign projections.
- **Digital Campaign Excellence:** Paid media campaigns achieved a 40% increase in click-through rates (CTR), with higher engagement metrics attributed to precisely targeted, data-driven content.
- **Global Recognition:** Ras Al Khaimah gained accolades for its innovative approach, being featured in global "Top Travel Destinations" lists and shortlisted for prominent tourism marketing awards.
- **Unified Brand Identity:** The creative use of insights redefined RAK as a must-visit destination, resonating deeply with audiences and differentiating it from regional competitors.

Key Learnings and Takeaways This case study highlights the transformative power of blending innovative thinking with data-driven strategies. By uncovering and effectively utilizing underappreciated insights, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority not only revitalized its marketing strategy but also propelled its reputation as a unique and sought-after global destination. The strategic pivot showcased how innovation in data application, personalized targeting, and creative storytelling can deliver sustained, measurable success.

Elevating Sitecore's Brand Share During MOI Global Engagement

The Problem

Sitecore, a leading CMS provider, faced significant challenges in breaking out of the shadow of Adobe's dominant CMS product. Despite having robust capabilities and features, Sitecore struggled with brand awareness and was not considered top-of-mind by key decision-makers in the market. The lack of visibility and differentiation hindered its ability to attract new leads and convert market opportunities, leaving it underutilized in an increasingly competitive space.

The Solution

A transformative, data-driven, and globally cohesive process was developed and implemented to address these challenges. This innovative approach was designed to elevate Sitecore's brand presence, strategically target Adobe's market share, and generate high-quality marketing-qualified leads (MQLs) through optimized messaging and tactical execution.

Driving Brand Metrics:

- Focused on improving brand recall (prompted and non-prompted) and brand favorability by using consistent, compelling storytelling across all touchpoints.
- Implemented programmatic advertising campaigns targeting decision-makers within enterprise-level organizations, ensuring brand exposure to the most relevant audiences.
- Utilized social proof, such as customer testimonials and award recognitions, to further strengthen brand favorability.

Collaborative Sales Alignment:

- Fostered collaboration between marketing and sales teams to improve lead quality and ensure alignment of messaging across the buyer journey.
- Conducted training sessions for sales representatives to position Sitecore effectively against Adobe during client engagements.

Global Data Planning:

- Conducted a comprehensive competitor analysis, focusing on Adobe's strengths, weaknesses, messaging, and audience reach.
- Leveraged insights from market research to identify untapped opportunities and critical markets where Sitecore's offerings could stand out.
- Centralized campaign data from regional offices to align global efforts and improve analytics accuracy for measuring effectiveness.

Strategic Messaging to Build Brand Awareness:

- Refined Sitecore's core brand messaging to clearly communicate its differentiators, such as its adaptable architecture and user-first design.
- Launched content marketing campaigns highlighting customer success stories, product innovation, and a direct comparison to Adobe's CMS capabilities.

Funneling MQLs with Optimized Media and Creative:

- Designed and executed a robust lead-generation strategy, including gated content, webinars, and targeted email marketing campaigns to draw prospects into the funnel.
- Worked closely with sales teams to ensure quality control of MQLs by optimizing creative messaging and media sources.
- Regularly analyzed lead conversion rates, adjusting campaigns dynamically to maximize ROI and nurture high-potential leads.

Innovative and Guerrilla Marketing Tactics:

- Created disruptive guerrilla marketing campaigns to generate buzz and capture the attention of key audiences. For example:
 - **Pop-Up Activations:** Engaged potential customers at high-profile industry events with live demonstrations of Sitecore's unique features.
 - **Creative Stunts:** Deployed attention-grabbing tactics, such as dramatic contrasts comparing Sitecore's agility to Adobe's complexity through on-site visuals and promotional giveaways.
- Designed viral digital campaigns, incorporating gamification elements to draw customers into Sitecore's ecosystem.

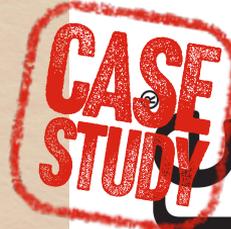
The Results

The implementation of this process resulted in a measurable and transformative impact on Sitecore's market position:

- **Improved Brand Awareness:** Prompted brand recall increased by 45%, while non-prompted recall rose by 30% within 12 months.
- **Enhanced Brand Favorability:** Positive perceptions of Sitecore among enterprise decision-makers improved significantly, with brand favorability levels growing by 50%.
- **MQL Growth:** The funnel saw a substantial increase in high-quality MQLs, with a 60% uptick in lead volumes and a 25% improvement in lead-to-opportunity conversion rates.
- **Competitive Market Share Gains:** The guerrilla marketing and targeted digital campaigns successfully drew attention away from Adobe, enabling Sitecore to capture new clients and increase its market share by 15% in key markets.
- **Streamlined Process:** The centralized, data-driven global approach created a consistent framework that could be replicated across campaigns, reducing inefficiencies and ensuring continued growth.

Key Learnings and Takeaways

This case study highlights the transformative power of combining data-driven planning with innovative and bold marketing tactics to challenge market leaders like Adobe. By clearly defining its unique selling proposition, engaging target audiences through differentiated campaigns, and aligning marketing with sales for quality control, Sitecore was able to elevate its brand visibility, favorability, and lead generation to drive sustained growth.



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