

The background of the entire page is a vibrant orange. A large, black silhouette of a clock face is visible, with its hands and numbers. A man in a white long-sleeved shirt and dark trousers is shown from the side, reaching up with both hands to touch a large, black key that is positioned diagonally across the upper half of the image. To the right of the man, a large, green, hexagonal price tag with a black dollar sign (\$) is hanging from a thin white string. The overall composition suggests themes of reaching for goals, value, and marketing.

A NEW WAY TO BUILD YOUR BRAND
AND MAKE IT MORE RELEVANT

BY MICHAEL J. McDERMOTT

Get Real

About Real-Time Marketing

Real-time marketing (RTM) has made cameo appearances in futuristic movies like *Idiocracy* and *Minority Report*, often with alarming undertones. Now that the technology exists on a broad enough basis to actually implement it, RTM seems hardly so sinister. Done well, real-time marketing has the potential to increase positive perceptions of a brand and drive consumer engagement, but the “done well” part is absolutely critical.

“The key is for brands to be in the right moments with relevant marketing,” emphasizes Mike Proulx, executive vice president of digital and director of social media at Boston-based agency Hill Holliday. Otherwise, RTM risks becoming a cliché in the industry, “synonymous with invasive and innocuous pre-planned witticisms from brands in social media tied to marquee pop-culture happenings,” he warns.

The Real Deal

As is generally the case when a new trend or buzzword sweeps through the marketing world, real-time marketing is going through some growing pains as brand marketers struggle to answer questions as basic as what it is and is not and when it should and should not be used. Ground zero for this discussion is often Oreo’s killer tweet during Super Bowl XLVII’s infamous power outage: “Power out? No problem. You can still dunk in the dark.”

The line was retweeted more than 15,000 times, and while there’s no doubt that serendipity played more than a minor role in the brand’s RTM coup, a lot more went into it. Almost two years earlier, Mondelez International, Oreo’s parent company, made a massive, interdepartmental commitment to social media marketing in support of the brand’s 100th anniversary, amassing more than 35 million followers on Facebook and 250,000 on Twitter. When the lights went out, it had all the pieces in place — including marketing, legal, and agency teams — to jump on the opportunity.

One problem, argues Jeff Dachis, CEO of Austin, Texas-based social business software and consulting firm Dachis Group, is that since Oreo’s winning touchdown, too many brands have been trying to replicate that success with generally dismal results. They fail because simply inserting an ad into a broad cultural conversation and hoping it catches fire is not bona fide real-time marketing.

“Finding and joining the conversations that matter in real time is what’s really required,” he says. “The single biggest challenge is speeding up the metabolism of a marketing department to react to events in real time without compromising quality. Marketers need to learn how to rapidly create and distribute great marketing that does more than just shove their brand into an existing trendy conversation, and that’s really hard to do.”

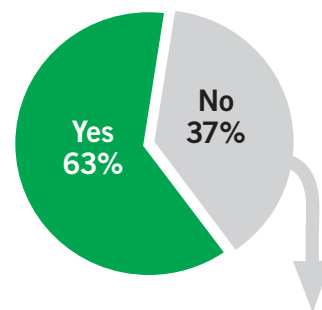
The ANA’s 2013 Real-Time Marketing Survey illustrates the extent to which marketers are still struggling to decide just what RTM is and does. Eight in 10 respondents agreed it involves real-time content marketing, 65 percent said it’s about aligning marketing with trending topics, 62 percent said it includes real-time ad-campaign rebalancing, and 54 percent believe social customer relationship management is an important element of RTM. Smaller numbers said the definition includes dynamic creative optimization (48 percent), real-time buying (42 percent), and strategic business decisions (40 percent).

Just under two-thirds of respondents are currently engaged in real-time marketing, but for more than half of those marketers, they’ve limited their RTM involvement to just informal feedback. The three biggest barriers to full adoption of RTM identified in the survey are staffing capabilities (67 percent), technological barriers, and internal approval processes (61 percent each). Among those who currently align marketing with trending topics, they have a range of opinions about what constitutes “real time,” with slightly more than half saying it’s within one to two hours and about a third saying within 24 hours. A small percentage pegged real time at one to four days.

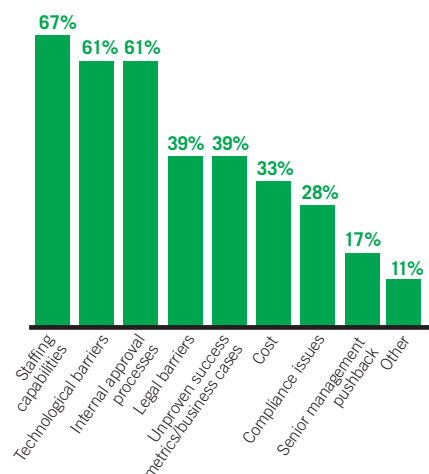
If a consensus is emerging about real-time marketing, it is that RTM cannot exist in a vacuum relative to a brand’s overall marketing strategy and that it needs broad internal support to maximize its potential. “Real-time marketing is a moderating variable, one that can intensify the effect of some other tools,” says Dawn Mueller, consulting marketing leader at Deloitte. While not a standalone tool in the b-to-b marketplace where the consultancy does business, RTM has an immediacy that can help make clients feel unique, and it may be a gateway for

AT A GLANCE

Is your company currently engaging in RTM?



What are the barriers to adoption of RTM strategies you have seen in your organization?



SOURCE: ANA 2013 REAL-TIME MARKETING SURVEY

expanding bilateral communication between marketers and their targets or customers. RTM is the latest step in the evolution of earlier marketing trends such as one-to-one marketing and mass customization, Mueller suggests.

Substance Over Sizzle

“From the top to the bottom of our organization, both from a Purina perspective and from a Nestlé perspective, the idea of real time and the importance of engaging with consumers in a real-time, value-added way has gone from the brand flash of the last year or two to an expectation,” says Michael Kotick, senior brand manager at

- RTM is the future.
- Marketers still struggle with defining RTM.
- Broad internal support is a must to maximize RTM's potential.
- To achieve success, maintain a constant state of readiness.
- Putting data at the center of RTM pays off.
- Engage in dialogue that is interesting, actionable, and adds value in the customer's eyes.
- If you make a mess, clean it up.

Nestlé Purina North America. "So, real time is definitely included in every campaign that we plan." RTM is still a tactic, just like digital and social are tactics, he adds. While this particular tactic affords the opportunity of being timely or relevant when it comes to experiences or cultural events, unless it is adding value or providing utility or service to Purina's customers, "then there's no substance, just flash. We apply that lens to every RTM opportunity," Kotick says.

For Union Bank, the strength of real-time marketing is the immediacy, with the insight it provides into a campaign's performance as it happens, says Juan Silvera, senior vice president of e-marketing at the San Francisco-based bank. "For example, if we launch a campaign that uses a landing page to capture digital traffic for a call to action, we can tell if it is working or not within hours. Real-time marketing has the potential to enhance the customer experience because it allows the marketer to make changes to the message on the fly in response to customers' preferences, as captured by their online behavior."

Union Bank's RTM strategy eschews the "tweet of the moment" mindset Dachis and Proulx disdain in favor of a results-oriented implementation in the broader marketing plan. The goal is to generate actionable information the bank can use across multiple channels, says Candice Marti, assistant vice president and marketing manager. The bank's integrated approach to marketing involves traditional marketing and social media for a multichannel effect that allows the brand to engage with its customers where

and how they prefer to be reached. "The team can take information gathered from social dialogue and incorporate it into traditional vehicles like TV, radio, and print," she says. "Metrics from real-time marketing enable marketers to adjust and optimize campaigns. Our real-time marketing teams leverage what they learn from their search and social channels for their other marketing efforts." For example, Union Bank uses customer feedback on Twitter and Facebook to gauge interest in topics like financial education, and those insights, coupled with other data points, help inform future marketing campaigns and content.

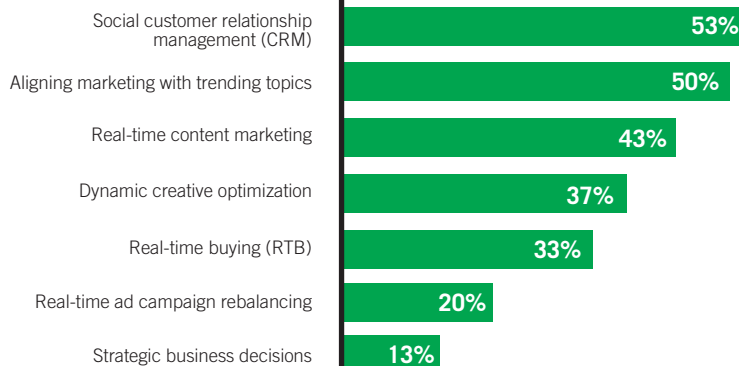
Brands should think about RTM as if their website were their best consultative salesperson, suggests Arthur Sweetser, chief marketing officer at Evergage, a Somerville, Mass.-based provider of web personalization and related marketing services. "How would you change or direct the site experience to better close the sale? Real people expect a real-time response," he says. "Consumers want information here and now, particularly if it's relevant to who they are and what they're doing. They're going to stop tolerating static experiences on the web."

Purina's emphasis on customer service and added value and Union Bank's on customers' communication preferences are typical approaches by brand marketers who are having the most success with RTM. Proulx recommends thinking of RTM as a "hierarchy of consumer needs" (à la Abraham Maslow's theory of human motivation) with the aim of satisfying the most basic consumer needs first. "When it comes

TYPE OF REAL-TIME MARKETING CURRENTLY USED

Base: Those who currently use real-time marketing (30)

Which of the following best describes the type(s) of real-time marketing in which your company currently engages?



SOURCE: ANA 2013 REAL-TIME MARKETING SURVEY

► CASE STUDY

DUNKIN' HARNESSSES RTM AND SPORTS PARTNERSHIP



There was excitement aplenty during *Monday Night Football's* 2013 season premiere broadcast on ESPN, especially during the first touchdown of the game. As the Philadelphia Eagles drove for the end zone, a controversial fumble recovery and 85-yard return for a touchdown by the Washington Redskins thrilled viewers. The excitement level was just as high among members of the news-room-style team of Dunkin' Donuts and Hill Holliday marketers, who instantly re-created the play in a Vine animation featuring Dunkin' Donuts products. It was the kickoff event for a real-time marketing campaign that would continue throughout the season.

THE CHALLENGE

With more than 11 million fans on Facebook and almost half a million Twitter followers, Dunkin' Donuts is a powerful force in social media. Eyeing the growing influence of real-time marketing, Dunkin' faced the challenge of using RTM to leverage its assets — including its strong social media presence and existing partnerships — to engage the brand's fans in a unique way.

THE SOLUTION

Each week during football season, Dunkin' and Hill Holliday's RTM team watches *Monday Night Football*, selects a play during halftime, and creates a six-second stop-motion-animation Vine on a 10-foot "Dunkin'-ized" set, with cups of Dunkin' Donuts beverages subbing for the players. The video was then tweeted out from @DunkinDonuts during the game's fourth quarter with a handy hashtag, #DunkinReplay. Another Vine animation ran as a five-second billboard ad during the ESPN *Monday Night Countdown* pregame show.

"We see real synergy in integrating new social media and traditional media," says John Costello, president of global marketing and innovation at Dunkin' Brands. "This is the third year Dunkin' Donuts has worked with ESPN's *Monday Night Countdown*. Each year, we look to make the program bigger and better, which led to the addition of the #DunkinReplay real-time Vine during each *Monday Night Football* game." Dunkin' views sports, especially football, as the most social genre of television, and it saw an opportune way to maximize this integration. "Having creative content on both Vine and Twitter with the #DunkinReplay allows Dunkin' Donuts to engage our fans in a timely, fun, and relevant way," he says.

The marketing team's goals for the #DunkinReplay ad were to engage the brand's fans in a fun and unique way, differentiate the Dunkin' brand, and take advantage of its partnership with *Monday Night Countdown*. It selected Vine for this campaign because of its real-time capabilities and integration with other social media channels, like Twitter. While social and digital media is exciting, Costello says, traditional media like TV, radio, and out-of-home advertising continue to work very well for Dunkin' Donuts, so the marketing team is constantly looking for synergy between the two sets.

"We are committed to exploring other ways to incorporate RTM in our overall marketing plan," Costello says. "In terms of RTM's role, we do see a strong integration into our advertising and marketing efforts. We also see a growing value in mobile, social, and digital, so instead of decreasing specific efforts to prioritize mobile or digital, we're simply growing it where it's the most strategic, and RTM seems to be a strategic fit for us."

— M.J.M.

to RTM, brands should start with customer service, addressing issues raised in social media in the most responsive, nimble, and human way possible," he suggests.

Fan engagement, campaigns, and media integration, in that order, are the next three levels in the RTM consumer hierarchy, and serendipity — that Oreo moment — is the last priority. "If a brand has established the infrastructure to fulfill the basic consumer needs of RTM, then when unplanned serendipitous moments arise in social media, that brand is equipped to seize and respond to them in what could be impactful ways," Proulx says. The payoff from RTM, well done, is consumer perception of the brand as one that "listens, is responsive, nimble, customer-centric, caring, innovative, and relevant. This is the kind of stuff that fuels loyalty, advocacy, and ultimately sales," Proulx says.

Embracing the Now with Vigilance

Mark Smith, president of Provenir, a provider of customer-listening software headquartered in Parsippany, N.J., endorses Proulx's emphasis on the importance of customer-centricity for successful RTM. Brands must recognize that RTM is not only about real-time ad buying and websites; it must cover all interactions between the brand and its customers, including mobile devices. "Think about someone talking with a customer service rep at a call center while also looking at the brand's website," he says. "The customer is using both channels in real time. The problem this creates for businesses is that they need to connect this experience, and the data behind it, in real time in order to correctly serve that customer."

Doing so, of course, can require a substantial commitment of resources, not just

for the customer-centric aspects of RTM but for the more "market-y" ones as well. "The holy grail of marketing would be to listen to what is happening in the world of your stakeholders, react to something in real time, and make your brand completely relevant to your target audience at that very moment," says Brandon Berger, worldwide chief digital officer at the New York City-based Ogilvy & Mather. The challenge is one of staffing and costs: Effective RTM requires a 24/7-style news desk that integrates an agency and client team together to collaborate quickly and efficiently, and that infrastructure has to be a commitment, not a one-time effort, he says. "Having the ability to constantly listen and then have a full team together to react to a data point, come up with an idea, approve the concept, and then produce an output is definitely a challenge," he admits.

Technology, staffing, and cost requirements are not the only challenges associated with RTM. One that keeps Victor Lee, vice president of digital marketing at game maker Hasbro, up at night is the danger of misinterpreting consumer sentiment. “Real-time marketing is reactionary,” he worries. “The traditional 10 versions of strategy, planning, and endless meetings with bad snacks is condensed to 10 minutes of gut, thoughtfulness, application, and instinctive planning. There is no formula, no test and learn. It’s just do or don’t do.”

Lee is also quick to acknowledge the importance of RTM and its potential value to brand marketers. “RTM is what’s happening now,” he says. “Brands must embrace the now and the instant but with a vigilant eye on truth, detail, and credibility.” At its best, RTM “shows honesty in a brand’s position, trust in a consumer’s opinion, and transparency in information,” Lee adds. “It also removes the corporate ‘safeguards’ that most marketers get bogged down in trying to defend, adhere to, or circumvent.”

Hasbro’s strategy to leverage “right now” moments is built on managing its digital channels like a 24-hour news organization, but Lee admits a template for a successful RTM effort does not exist. “If there were, I’d write a book and charge for my speeches,” he quips. The reality, he adds, is that marketers need to adopt a whiteboard mentality that’s “fluid, erasable, sometimes hectic but not without reason. And if it doesn’t work, erase it and try again.”

Done Well, Benefits Aplenty

As challenging as real-time marketing can be, the potential benefits it may deliver justify the effort and risk involved. Bob Dunfee, director of CRM solutions at Infor, a New York-based provider of business applications that unite social, mobile, analytics, and the cloud, says marketers who use real-time solutions to ensure all interaction channels are managed properly can truly “find the good, the bad, and the ugly about their products or brands,” and they are able to:

- Deliver the right message, offer, next best action, or other marketing communication across all channels.
- Provide channel consistency to ensure customer preferences and previous interactions are holistically managed.
- Improve customer satisfaction and Net Promoter scores. »



ON BRAND, IDEOLOGY, AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

By David Spievack

It is much remarked that social media is a disruptive force that has stripped companies of the power to dictate consumer perceptions of their brand through TV and other mass media. This process actually began at the onset of the information age. As consumers have gained increased access to information, brands have been held to greater accountability and scrutiny. Over a span of 20 years, brands as revered as Nike and Apple have been criticized for their labor practices overseas. Johnson & Johnson and BP have been compelled, for very different reasons, to address circumstances that led to human tragedy. Examples abound, but the essential fact is that the commoditization of goods and services combined with enhanced access to information have required companies to up their game and stand for something more meaningful in the lives of their consumers.

Social media technologies have accelerated the phenomenon. These technologies have enabled not only the exponential growth of information but also the ability of consumers to share it with lightning speed and breadth. Conversations about brands are happening all the time, overwhelming the ability of traditional mechanisms like mass advertising, crisis management, and corporate social responsibility to influence and control. The challenge for marketers is not to compete with these conversations but to shape them in ways that are brand positive. To do so, brands need to know what they stand for and associate that with the needs and aspirations of their customers. They need to be keen observers of culture and participate authentically in it. These are the central tasks of effective social marketing.

BRAND POSITIONING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Like religion and political ideology, building a brand is a conscious endeavor designed to influence diverse audiences to arrive at a consensus view. This view is what marketers typically refer to as the brand’s positioning. Corporate marketers are the primary voice in the conduct of this positioning effort, but with the advent of social media, they are increasingly reliant on the identification of ideological agents or influencers who possess authentic standing with target segments the brand may lack on its own. These segments have varied views, interests, and needs, and the role of the corporate marketer is to know how to mobilize influencers in ways that are in service to the brand without being about the brand. While the tools of social media are new (and powerful), the nature of the ideological enterprise is as familiar as Japan’s pre-World War II emperor system and America’s postwar consensus around containing communism. Building a brand in the age of social media is, fundamentally, an ideological enterprise. It is grounded in a core idea and implemented through the mobilization of influencers who reinforce the idea through a lens and language their audiences recognize on a deep, emotional level.

Achieving this recognition offers the promise of a new level of consumer loyalty that major brands have only yet imagined. It is often said that social media both reflects and accelerates the decline of trust in major institutions as consumers turn to their networks of friends and associates for advice and recommendations. This, of course, is true. However, brands that effectively tap into these networks and identify where brand purpose intersects with the aspirations of their target audiences will be brands that explode the paradigm of social media as threat. These brands will come to realize the redemptive possibilities that social conversations afford. Far from destroying institutional trust, social media presents the best opportunity for brands to restore their reputations and enhance their relevance in people’s lives.

David Spievack is vice president of research and analytical services at Visa.



► Q&A WITH EMARKETER'S DEBRA AHO WILLIAMSON

THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF RTM

Principal analyst for social media marketing and real-time marketing (RTM) at eMarketer, Debra Aho Williamson has written dozens of reports on the state of real-time marketing, revealing what this trend means for marketers' creative process, their social media strategy, television advertising, and more. Aho Williamson shares her thoughts on the nuts and bolts of RTM and how marketers can capitalize on real-time opportunities.

Q. What is the role of RTM in an overall marketing plan?

A. We define real-time marketing as "marketing at the intersection of mobile, social, location, and big data." It's more than an element in a marketing plan; rather, it is a philosophy that should pervade all aspects of a company's marketing, from advertising to promotions to customer relations. It is also something that is bigger than any one medium. Often, real-time marketing is considered a social media tactic or technique, but there are opportunities for real-time engagement practically everywhere, from digital to traditional media, from in-store to on the street.

Q. How can RTM be used most effectively?

A. Brands need to adopt a real-time mentality that pervades all of their marketing. New technologies make it easier to collect, analyze, and act on data. Businesses can run complex queries in minutes — or in some cases, milliseconds. Mobile devices are ubiquitous, making the goal of reaching consumers wherever they are an attainable reality. Social platforms encourage sharing in real time. Social media provides consumers an easy venue to share their thoughts, feelings, and actions as they move through their day. And the growing data trail of GPS-based location data, store purchase information, or simply the long trail of crumbs that Internet users leave as they visit websites all add up to an enormous amount of real-time data.

Q. What are some of the myths that need to be debunked about RTM?

A. Many marketers believe that by moving more quickly to take

advantage of opportunities, they might make a mistake or their agency will put out shoddy work. While it's true that some real-time marketing initiatives will fall flat — or worse, reflect poorly on the brand — it is shortsighted to assume that any attempt to move faster will result in poor creative.

Marketers also think that being prepared means they need to plan everything in advance. You're not doing real-time marketing if you are posting "Happy Monday!" on Facebook or if you are wishing your followers a "Happy Sandwich Day." Planned is canned; it doesn't come off as fresh. Prepared is having the people, assets, and technology ready in order to act quickly.

A third myth that marketers believe is that real-time marketing is simply a tweet and a catchy image. A timely status update or a tweet used to be considered real-time marketing but now are just part of the status quo of social media marketing. The addition of visual creative along with the tweet or status update takes real-time marketing a step further, but that too will become standard procedure as more brands embrace the activity. I don't know that it makes sense, long term, to have "war rooms" and "content studios" if all you're doing is coming up with tweets.

Q. What are the most important best practices related to RTM that marketers need to get their minds wrapped around?

A. Embrace — and expect — the unexpected. Plan to be opportunistic. And don't let fear of failure keep you from moving forward.

— M.J.M.

- Drive brand awareness and promote a positive brand image.
- Determine neutral or negative sentiments and prepare marketing campaigns to make them positive.

Real-time marketing is a relatively new development. Rob Carpenter, director of marketing at Evergage, traced the first appearance of the phrase on Google to 2005, but he credits the 2011 book *Real-Time Marketing & PR*, by David Meerman Scott, with providing the first thorough discussion of the concept as it exists today. Not surprisingly with a marketing concept so new, best practices are in a nascent stage and will likely continue to evolve, but some are already evident and show signs of staying power:

- **Conversations must make sense for the brand and its customers.** "Engage in dialogue that is actionable and interesting," Union

Bank's Marti says. "Planning is very important and often overlooked."

- **Maintain a constant state of readiness.** "This means having an A team whose members will be able to identify the trend or news, determine whether it's something the brand should participate in, come up with a creative response, develop the content, publish it in the right places, and in some cases promote it with tools like promoted tweets," says Jennifer Lashua, global social media manager at Intel. "We have each of these people and processes in place, and we can do this all in a matter of minutes."
- **Make sure it adds value from the customer perspective.** "We have to be listening all the time, not just when we want to," Kotick says. "That's become core to what we do at Nestlé and Purina. Adding value is a prerequisite to everything we do in marketing. RTM and other marketing tactics fall on deaf ears if that's not there."

- **Put data at the center of RTM.** "Moving quickly is one thing, but moving with purpose is another one entirely. Having the right data in hand allows us to do both," says Jordan Bitterman, chief strategy officer at Mindshare North America, a global media and marketing services company. "Moving in real time means surrounding both people and process with all the information to drive insights that, in turn, drive actions."
- **If you make a mess, clean it up.** "Nobody is perfect, so it's important to have a process in place for diffusing situations if problems or errors occur," Provenir's Smith says.
- **Find the "do not cross" line.** It's easy to fall into the trap of the "right now, before anyone else does it" mentality, Hasbro's Lee warns. "That's when it gets personal and poor decisions are made for the wrong reasons." ■