

How brands and their CMOs can market in the metaverse

Metaverse is still in its infancy of its first real time consumer engagement. However, there is much to learn from the early fore runner trying this new frontier. Metaverse marketing, as it currently stands, is not far from creating a compelling and irresistible brand experiences in the physical space. However, how these marketing elements are utilized in the metaverse is different. From time immemorial, creating values is the hallmark of marketing but how it is done keeps evolving from time to platform and generations.

The metaverse marketing strategies

Because Coca-Cola and Nike are successful in their metaverse quest does not guarantee you success. Like web2 platforms and social media that different brands utilize better than others, brands are fitted for metaverse more than others. Hence, the list will guide you the requirement to join the metaverse and how to market successfully.

Define your metaverse marketing goals

To American is football and to European is soccer. Before jumping into the metaverse, ask yourself the reason your brand should be in the metaverse and the goal of joining – increase awareness, brand positioning, or increase loyalty and engagement? Driving sales might be your ultimate goal but should not be the main reason of joining metaverse yet because virtual item sales volume cannot be compared to the physical sales.

Select a platform that resonates with your goals and fit your brand

The current popular metaverse platforms are Decentraland, Roblox, Minecraft, Fortnite and Horizon worlds. All differs in many ways, providing opportunities to try them and selecting the best for your business. For example, Gucci conducted numerous brand activation to identify the best way to connect with Gen Z. This activation allowed the luxury brand to draw almost 20 million users in two weeks when it launched the Gucci Garden on Roblox – a metaverse twin of its real world. The brand also partnered Zepeto to launch a virtual world on Sandbox, a blockchain-based metaverse to create games.

Create experiences to meet your audience yearning

Most metaverse platforms users are kids and young adults with high taste for quality and innovative experiences, as such requires brands to be more creative. Therefore, brands joining the metaverse should strike a balance between advertising, creating immersive experiences, and real world activations on their metaverse quest. For example, Vans, a skateboarding retailer launched Vans World on Roblox to appeal to the brand's audience. The experience allows the visitors skate with friends virtually and earn points from games. These points are collected to spend on apparel items, custom skateboards, and virtual sneakers. Creating experiences that address the yearnings of Vans audience made them engage both new and existing fans, generating 48 million visitors.

Test some income-generating strategies

Direct to avatar sales of virtual item stand at \$54 million with Gucci selling a digital twin of its Dionysus bag for \$4115, more than the price of the physical, while Forever 21 is selling a beanie on Roblox for a dollar. Nike, as well, is selling unique NFTs of its Dunk sneakers. All these pointed to the sales metaverse can generate. Therefore, as much as we said brands metaverse quest should focus beyond money, they should plan ahead to capture all the potentials of the metaverse. That is, as selling physical goods online has become a norm today, metaverse to offline sale will revolutionize the future. For instance, Chipotle claimed to be the first brand that enable Roblox players to exchange virtual currency for real time incentives when it gave burritos vouchers to the first 30,000 visitors of its metaverse restaurant. Therefore, brands should think beyond engagement, loyalty, and awareness to succeed in the metaverse.

Leverage, consult, and partner for new opportunities

Metaverse is new and doing things alone may not work. Therefore, brands should access their skills to recognize the gaps yet to be filled, and consult third parties like Play2learn.com. Learning from others is paramount, including web3 brands, creator communities, and developers for smooth execution. For instance, Roblox has thousands of experience developers creating and innovating with new games and new ideas to make money. Consulting these developers could shorten the learning curve of brands in the metaverse. For instance, NASCAR partnered the Jailbreak developer, Badimo, to create branded vehicles to the game for a ten day event. This resulted to a 30% increase in Jailbreak visitor to reach 24 million during the period. Therefore, partnership on metaverse can create awareness, increase loyalty, and boost revenues.

Create metaverse ROI metrics

Unlike the web2 platforms where ROI are measured by the number of likes and shares and cost per click, these are not applicable to metaverse. Engagement, number of sales, dwell time, number of visitors, among others are metrics brands can check. However, before focusing on metrics, brands should understand their goals and target market and define their outcome against their goals to see if their metaverse campaign is successful. For instance, Deliveroo utilized virtual drivers to make virtual deliveries in the Animal Crossing game, which include promo codes to activate in real life. This action resulted into three million in-game player interaction within the first few hours.

Conclusion

Metaverse will evolve and the innovation and adoption rate will increase, which will come with myriads of ways to use, engage, and monetize. Therefore, CMOs and brands should brace up and secure the know-how needed to understand this new frontier, including the technology, customer journey analytics, and social commerce.

Here are some ways marketers can work in the metaverse to reach their audience:

- **Make collectibles available.** People enjoy collecting items, and there is a new opportunity to create another collection in the metaverse. Digital collectibles can also be traded with other users. Nike, for example, is creating NFTs for digital products, which are unique and secured with blockchain technology to prove ownership.
- **Engage with existing communities.** Businesses shouldn't show up to an existing community and push marketing on its members. Instead, consider the style of the current platform. Interact with current members to create user-generated content -- such as videos, text, images and audio -- and they can help execute a business's campaign naturally.
- **Use native advertising.** As people explore the metaverse, there will be opportunities for native advertising such as billboards on a virtual street or product placement. There are also sponsorship opportunities for events within the metaverse. Coca-Cola and Samsung have

virtual billboards in video games such as Football Manager. Moreover, rapper and recording artist Nas hyped his new album through in-game audio ads during racing games and Fortnite.

- **Create a specific metaverse platform.** This is the most expensive and biggest way to invest in the metaverse. Businesses can create a game or a world specific to a company's product or service; however, this full experience may take time and research and a significant investment to find the best fit with the target audience. For example, Shopify launched its new AR/3D shopping experience for businesses to create virtual versions of their products, and is also working on its own NFT marketplace.
- **Allow customers to try products.** Using virtual and augmented reality, companies can see a 3D version product before buying it. Car companies, such as Porsche and Hyundai, have created virtual viewing rooms and events to get a virtual tour of the car. Companies can do the same with a variety of items, so customers do not have to leave their homes to try a new product, such as using augmented reality to see furniture in their home or trying on clothing.
- **Design interactive live events.** Many events went virtual when the pandemic hit, but the metaverse can take them to a new level. These kinds of events are interactive with 3D options. Remote employees will also be physically present in the metaverse with others to feel less alienated. The metaverse can be more cost effective and flexible, enabling collaboration and interaction with one another. This is done by visualizing and solving problems in 3D instead of facing 2D limitations of virtual meetings today.