



What's the next big thing in marketing? What are the things every marketing professional worth his/her salt absolutely must know? We asked Chair of CEIBS' Marketing Department Professor Lydia Price what this year's trends will be. Here's what she and her colleagues expect in the months ahead.

5 Marketing Trends for 2016

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Given the ubiquity and convenience of mobile internet, Chinese buyers effortlessly blend 'online' and 'offline' shopping behaviour. Increasingly, smart marketing campaigns will integrate media and channels to provide a seamless and personalised consumer journey through search, consideration, purchase and post-purchase sharing. As an example, retailers will blend real-time data about a shopper's physical location and shopping history with knowledge of their own inventory and in-store merchandising to deliver a highly targeted shopping appeal. CEIBS alumni are already pushing to take the lead in offering these integrated data services.

Changes in the form and function of external marketing campaigns will drive changes in internal department staffing and work flows. Marketing departments will deepen their professional ranks and break down internal barriers that keep data and decisions in non-productive silos. As a result, marketing campaigns will become more strategic, while still retaining the push for short term sales results. We already see a growing emphasis on data-driven strategy in the projects submitted by sponsor firms for our MBA students to work on.

2



Research shows that Chinese companies do far less marketing research than multinationals. 2016 is going to be a difficult year as the overall economy slows. During this chilly Chinese winter when piercing winds may freeze entrepreneurs, it will take a certain degree of skill to see the hot opportunities that are just beneath the surface – to appreciate marketing research and transform the organisation through insights that come with truly understanding consumers.

Interest in eco-friendly products will continue to grow as the shopping power of Chinese millennials increases and the government puts more emphasis on environmental protection, as is widely predicted for the 13th Five Year Plan. Research shows that Chinese millennials – who have always lived in times of prosperity – will not compromise on fashion or quality, however, and will demand eco-friendly products that meet their rising lifestyle aspirations.

Whether going global or navigating China's increasingly complex domestic markets, Chinese firms will put more emphasis on growing brands. The smartest firms will resist temptations to cut brand investments during the economic downturn and will instead invest for a healthier future. Brand experiences (online and offline) will emerge as an increasingly important stepping stone to building and retaining brand loyalty.

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