

21st Century Economies
DIVERSITY

PRINCIPLES of Multicultural “Digital” Communication

by Clayton Banks
President, EmberMedia Corp.

The Diversity Economy is defined as a Diverse Workforce using an inclusive approach in business to produce economic benefit.

Digital Media has ushered in new avenues of interaction and our multicultural society is driving a new “diversity economy”. According to Multichannel News, Asian Americans are leading the charge in digital media adoption with 57% having broadband access. A comScore survey reported that Hispanic Internet usage now outpaces television with 56% reporting to spend at least one hour per day online vs. 50% that reported spending one hour per day watching television. The percentage of African-Americans who use the Internet increased to 64% as of December 2008, up from 56% in December 2007, according to the Pew Internet & American Life Project.

Are companies considering the subtleties for a multicultural audience to accommodate for the opportunity that exist with the increased penetration of broadband users? Specifically, how is the information getting shared online being transformed into knowledge that leads to company growth? How do you measure your success in the diversity economy?

Getting users and building usage leads to making money. ROI in the diversity economy is the same as measuring any digital media initiative (page views, time on site, clicks, referrals, etc.) with 1 exception; it is imperative to share your diversity with your users and reflect the people you serve. Without that diversity, the relationship with the user is fragile.

Digital media solidifies the fact that growth within the Diversity Economy has never been more important and more accessible.



Ember Media Corporation
224 W. 35th Street, Suite 1001
New York, NY 10001 USA
T: 212. 695. 1919 F: 212. 695. 6190
www.embermedia.com

The Seven Principles

Respect is a unifying force that flows through all humanity but it is especially pertinent to multicultural communication. As such, the 7 principles are based on

RESPECT.

REMEMBER, REACH, REALITY

RThe first principal is to cement your relationship by demonstrating that the user is valued. An ability to remember details about your users, including their digital habits, will drive usage. Easy to remember Domain naming, other related content site referrals and targeted invites are another great way to begin a relationship and extend your reach, your customers are your most important referral resource. Asking your users to invite friends is important to the growth of your online property. Finally keeping it real with your loyal users is imperative to their longevity and investment in your product and services. Multicultural consumers rely heavily on their personal network to verify the legitimacy of a product or service and are tolerant of online advertising as long as it is relevant. In Tapscott's book "Grown Up Digital" it points to a whole generation that is amazingly adept at detecting, filtering, skipping and blocking ad messages all together.



Mesh.com, a service that will allow users to sync all their devices, access and share information wherever and whenever.



Dwellicious.com is a good example of how important it is to have a grassroots approach to getting users.

EASY, EPISODIC, EXCEPTIONAL

EBroadband is allowing for sophisticated applications to be accessed online on demand. The success of an online property for a large audience is ease of use. Content rich sites benefit from simple presentation of the content that keeps the user interested. Another component to connecting to your users is keeping your information concise and fresh like a new episode of a good show. Showing date and time of a posting is recommended for your users. Leading networks use webisodes to keep fans interested off-season. Your users will want to feel from time to time that they are an exception to the rule, and uniquely important to you as a business. Personalizing their experience with your content will increase their loyalty to your brand.



YouTube, a site where users are 1 click away from getting engaged.



Honda uses Webisodes on their site to keep their audience engaged.



Gmail is a good example of how utility software gives everyone his or her own space.

SHARE, SOCIAL, SPECIAL

SSocial Networks have evolved in recent years from being a place where researchers could share information and collaborate to a commercial online destination where people of all backgrounds can connect with other people based on shared values. This has created a culture of sharing, and the more you share the more you are respected in cyberspace. Your user base wants to interact with your product, but also want to interact with others that are interested in your product. Creating safe social based extensions to your brand will empower your users. Sponsored co-branded pages power these online destinations. And again, your multicultural users want to feel special when interacting with your brand. These references often lead to new opportunities.



Twitter is an online tool that shows how sharing can create followers at no cost.



MTV is successful at linking all of their shows to online destinations that empowers a community.



LinkedIn provides a recommendations section on individual profiles that serves as a reference for the user.

PROFILE, PERFORMANCE, PRIORITY

An online personality has a life of its own and the foundation starts with a profile. Traditional business cards have meant so much to your multicultural users, online profiles are just as serious. Creating methods for profile optimization can connect you with your users that is mutually beneficial. Online dating sites were the pioneers in evolving profiles, but now internet properties can benefit by supporting users within their own personal information hub. Keeping tabs on how your online properties are performing in the eyes of the user is important to gaining their loyalty. Fast page load times, multimedia playback and browser compatibility are all key in keeping users on your web property. Wikipedia's growth has been driven by exemplary search engine optimization and site maintenance. Finally, it is important to prioritize your information for these users. Clicking around should only occur after the user knows what is most important on the site. Busy people do not want to figure out how to do business with you.



Profile optimization is key to lavalife and their multimedia approach to dating.



Blogs like The Huffington Post show how the most important information is very evident from the opening of the site.

ENGAGE, EMPOWER, ENLIST

Users are attracted to online properties by several tactics. The most important of which is word of mouth via online blogs, chats, email and sharing on Social Networks. Once the user discovers the destination, the interactive experience is essential to converting the viewer into a prospect or customer. The multicultural user wants to be empowered when interacting with your goods and services online. Being able to rate, comment, and generate content within your domain is a way to empower users that creates a bond. And finally, it is important to enlist your users as advocates for your online properties. Creating easy to plug-in applications, widgets, and RSS feeds is critical to generating the buzz needed about your product or service, through your user controlled syndication channels.



Apple creates a buzz around their goods and services and has worked hard to make the online user experience engaging leading to a successful long lasting relationship.



How-to video sites such as eHow provides excellent content and allows the user to get involved as much or as little as desired.



Flickr is a leading online photo-sharing property that enlist members to attract other users to their network.

CHANGE, CREATIVE, CURRENT

Change is the new status quo. Digital Media allows for fast and frequent information that users can build on. Evolving your online offering to keep pace with technology trends is important in maintaining your market position. Change is hard but change is now expected. The world is a colorful place and your creative should reflect that, and use it as a source of inspiration. It is important that your multicultural users have an emotional connection to your creative. And finally, it is important to be current with the information and new features that surround your product or service. Users want to engage with your information in a three dimensional way. Providing information that is indirectly tied to your product gives it more credibility.



Shopping sites like shoeline are adding video to the site and seeing increased online sales over 40%.



Hulu is an online video portal that uses current quality content to gain a loyal viewership..



Yelp serves as a city guide that taps into the community's voice and reveals honest and current insights on local businesses and services

TRUST, TOOLS, TEST

Technology is given a lot of room for bugs, but trust is not something your multicultural users will tolerate being violated. Your ability to effectively deliver on this is vital to maintaining the connection to the user. Downloading applications, software, and plug-ins in the past was not a trusted exercise and it has taken a while to grow from that phase, but trust is the key. Tools to enable your user base are essential in having a long-term customer life cycle. News feeds, email alerts, viral video, widgets, gadgets, applications, and open source code can only help build your online property bigger and stronger. The development community is building applications that users adopt as utility everyday for these properties. Finally, your multicultural users want to get involved in beta testing your products. Make sure you have an inclusive approach to testing new digital ideas.



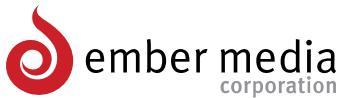
Rhapsody worked hard to communicate its safe and secure music download features.



Twirl uses public beta testing to build users and confidence in their product

Conclusion

Ubiquitous Broadband brings endless possibilities and our multicultural society offers the best opportunity for growth. In 2009 the U.S. government realized that an optimized Broadband Infrastructure provides the foundation on which future generations will prosper. The USA has an opportunity to lead the world by understanding how its multicultural citizenship translates into a 21st Century sustainable economy. Companies that understand how to navigate in a diverse, multicultural society will be the most successful. Failure to understand how our society has evolved and how the role of new media and technology has formed a new value system will certainly compromise business achievement. Technology is a key to effective multicultural communication and companies that understand how to apply applications, content, and utility will shape a new diverse economy. Common interest will trump traditional demographic targeting, dialog between members supercedes company sponsored testimonials, sharing will overpower segregation, and RESPECT is the common denominator that is essential to expanding opportunity and success.



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