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State of Marketing: Turkey



What is the key to creating effective marketing communications in Turkey?

Let me start by a few key words regarding Turkish people;

- Friendly, collective, excited and emotional...
- Attached to families, communities and roots...
- Spontaneous, communicative, smart/inventive, proud...
- Social environment carries high importance, third person opinion matters.

In a country where human relations do really matter, key to everything is understanding the 'consumer'. They are exposed to incredible media clutter and thus getting more indifferent to generic messages each day. Only a few brands have the mind-set and opportunity of setting the game in real terms.

- **Generation of a 'high value idea'.** Core insight generation that leads to a 'high value idea' to be creatively fertile across disciplines & time.
- **Engagement & interaction.** One-way communication is history now. The challenge here is carrying a single-minded high value idea right to the heart of everyday life and engaging the consumers. Using interaction in communication is a relatively new level in our lives... It works! We like being involved.
- **Creative media usage.** Message bombardment leads Turkish advertisers to more creative usage of existing media, especially 3D and interactive outdoor executions, and even creating new media.

Other than these universal rules, Turkey is unique in terms of local values. Speaking especially of global brands, those who respect and take into account local values are more likely to become one of us. Ramadan is a good example of when consumption of certain goods reach a peak and everyone is fighting to win the best of this period. However, it is such a fragile zone that you must avoid abusing/exploiting values and being perceived as irritating or insincere.

What strategies are working? Which are failing ?

Telling the working ones by default brings together the failing ones.

- **Localization...** Be careful about the tango between global and local. Avoiding local values will eventually result in failure whereas exploiting may alienate the brand.
- **Creating a platform for engagement is the winner card.** The age of interaction, brings some kind of a “fusion” into the lives of consumers and success is inevitable.
- **Transparency and sincerity.** ‘Big idea’ which in our terminology is ‘high value idea’ should come from the genes of the brand and due to consumer’s expectation of trust increasing over time, there has been a transition from passive consumers to reactive consumers. Internet age brought about a whole transparent period where brands can no longer give overpromising messages. On the contrary, brand should bring out their potential to become a ‘lovemark’ and communicate their messages in ‘sincerity’.
- **An age of “media neutral ideas” to live through activation, digital, DM, CSR, PR and etc.** TV is indispensable for almost every single Turkish individual, as source of info/news, entertainment, passing time etc. Turkish people watch TV average 3 hours daily, so reach is high and the cost per thousand is low, thus it is a popular medium. However, this brings an incredible clutter where it becomes harder to differentiate. “Media oriented idea generation” is getting hand-in-hand with “idea oriented media generation”, answering the question “where do I implement the high value idea best”. Turkey is at the early stages of this but brands who adapt to this mind shift will generate aspiration for other brands and the market will become more fierce in the near future.
- **Digital arena...** We have a long way to go in digital, but Turkey has huge potential.
 - o Turkey is one of the highest penetration countries with 37% (Europe 59%) and increasing with a high pace.
 - o Turkish internet population is young. 77% of users (~ 21 mio) are of ages 16-34.
 - o Even in low SES groups internet usage is considerable. (AB 36 %, C1 32 %, C2 25 %)

Those who use digital effectively and creatively do benefit to a great extent especially to interact with their consumers, but those who’re there just for the sake of using digital media do waste their budgets.

What trends do you see? What do you feel will be next year’s trends?

Speaking of the Macro Trends, 3 trends are affecting Turkey; “In search for the better”, “In search for more” and “Searching for beyond the limits”.

- Following new trends with respect to your own style; being modern and traditional at the same time, not being part of a pattern but taking the part you like from everything and creating your own style is a rising trend in terms of dining-wining, home decoration, hobbies and daily life...
- Especially youngsters’ are going through a fusion of the Ottoman past & Turkishness, applying these cultural values to daily modern life.
- Together with the economic environment, spending time at home together with friends become a rising value. (boardgames–scrabble, pictionary and shared homemade dishes)
- Benefiting from the little comforts and luxury of the daily life to “pamper” yourself, not pushing back anything in life and enjoying every little moment of a day is also an increasing attitude towards life.
- Brands offering “happiness” to consumers is definitely a rising trend in such economical conditions where the whole population seeks ways to “happiness”. Either the brand can be one such as chocolate, or the tone of voice may be delivering this feeling (Coke - open a cap to happiness).
- Turkey is quite far from passing to the well-being phase but interest and consciousness about good and natural nutrition has increased.
- 3D first entered cinema and now slowly into our homes with next generation 3D TVs.
- Internet technology brings increase and variety in internet communication.

- i-phone as a gadget of entertainment is used by around 3 million people in Turkey but it is to become desired and owned by an increasing number of people, which will bring an increase in brands producing more i-phone applications to reach a certain target audience.
- However, mobile marketing doesn't work in Turkey because brands have abused it with their discount text messages and people have come to hate being exposed to any kind of message without their interest. Same goes for spam e-mails as well. Consumer's attitude here is like "I will interact with you when I desire to do so".

What technology has impacted the way brands in Turkey effectively engage with their targets?

Internet and social networking.

Turkish people, especially youngsters, have easily adapted to social media and have actually become part of it (70 % of young internet users declare they use social media).

Time spent home increased and the most economic entertainment gadget is the internet.

In a partially closed society, internet gives people the freedom to conceal their identity and socialize at the same time. Turkish people are #4 on active Facebook usage, and Turkey ranks #3 in MSN!

Internet is one of the most affordable media in terms of reach to a receptive audience.

It is not the technology itself but how to use it right that is what matters at this point. It is not important for a brand to have a page on Facebook or an account on Twitter but rather what it offers there. One example would be a local airline brand announcing flight promotions designed especially for Twitter and an incredible number of followers waiting for the opportunities the brand offers. The most important challenge is to manage social networking well, with relevance to the medium and the target audience, because just being present there will not help at all but look just dull.



Nesteren Davutoğlu

- Nesteren Davutoğlu graduated from T.E.D. Ankara College and from the A.I.T.I.A University/Journalism and Public Relations, department respectively.
- She started her career at TRT (Turkish Radio and Television).
- She worked as a producer between the years 1974 and 1982 at TRT Ankara/İstanbul Studios.
- She moved from broadcasting to advertising and started working at Ada Agency in 1982.
- She was promoted to be the Head of the Account Department in 1986.
- Between 1990 - 1992 she worked as an Assistant General Manager responsible for Total Quality and Advertising, at BankEkspres and FinansBank.
- Nesteren Davutoğlu is the Chairman of Lowe Advertising, one of the leading corporations of the Advertising sector, as of 1995.
- She has conducted numerous communication campaigns for many brands, to meet their target audiences for 27 years.
- Nesteren Davutoğlu was the Vice President and President of the Advertising Agencies Association between 2000 and 2003, respectively.
- Besides her book Ada'da Zaman (Times at Ada), which has been accepted as a source book by the ad industry, she also has written a book called Görmedikleriniz (What You Haven't Seen) about the behind the scenes of the film Gönderilmemiş Mektuplar (Letters Unsented), which she was the producer of. Her travel journals Norveç Defteri (Norwegian Diaries), Afrika Defteri (African Diaries) and Balkanlar Defteri (Balkan Diaries) have also been published.
- Her new film, Yüreğine Sor (Ask Your Heart), which Nesteren Davutoğlu, the CEO of Lowe Advertising Agency is the producer of, will meet with its audience in 2010.