



SNAPCHAT'S SUPERPOWER



The key to success isn't technology - it's personalisation. Augmented reality can turn fun filters into ways for creators to monetise content, while still letting audiences express their "real" selves





DAN HEFFERNAN
Global Agency Lead, APAC, Snap


Alma mater?  

 Bournemouth University

Breakthrough moment?  

Working for Yahoo! in Sydney 2012-2014, selling the full suite of products to media agencies. I built and sustained a broad spectrum of contacts, learnt tons about delivering communications and ad campaigns to clients, and got voted Yahoo! Sales Rookie of the Year

Specialism?  

 Digital knowledge across the entire marketing mix



The internet's present incarnation was founded on personalisation. Social platforms have built empires by leveraging user data, in exchange for an online space users can call their own and a network where they can connect to their friends and family instantly and constantly. These platforms have succeeded by turning these networks into purchasing engines, fuelling the rise of social commerce by which products and services are marketed and sold directly to users, and through which creators can make a good living.

In this game, personalisation and authenticity remain the best tactics. Snap's visual messaging app enhances relationships with friends, family and the world by offering a different POV. "It's the human interaction that differentiates social commerce from all other forms of commerce, and makes it more interesting, lively and trustworthy," explains Dan Heffernan, Snap's Global Agency Lead across its Asia-Pacific markets. "In Snapchat's environment, it makes it more fun, as well," he adds.

These are the make-or-break qualities that turn creators into credible endorsers, whom users can empathise with and feel comfortable making payments to.

Influencers and augmented reality

Snapchat can leverage two important qualities to encourage sales through its platform. The first is found on every major social network: influencers, as well as friends and family. "Human beings are essentially social creatures, and I trust my friends a lot more

than I trust an ad on television," Heffernan says. "What we observe on Snapchat is the consumer's capacity to purchase and participate rapidly."

Through people taking part in these hypersocial moments,

content creators on the platform can capitalise on a quick turnaround - the speed of a viral meme energising a customer's transition from participation to purchase. The second quality is a technological one: augmented reality. While influencers used to try the product themselves - as an effective stand-in for the customer - now users can now "try on" various items directly in a matter of seconds through a digital overlay in Snap's camera mode.

Snapchat's history as regards disappearing

"It's the human interaction that differentiates social commerce from all other forms of commerce, and makes it more interesting, lively and trustworthy"

messages also benefits this relationship, because users do not feel as though all their data is being retained and micromanaged, and therefore believe they can act authentically.

"The most important aspect is the fact that customers feel safe in this environment with their friends," Heffernan says. "They feel comfortable showing their face in the camera, and they see themselves - their real self, not the fake self."

The new "personal computer"

This relationship is one that has developed significantly in emerging markets such as China, India, and other Pacific countries where the "personal computer" was not the PC but the smartphone. While Europe and the US made the transition to eCommerce and the internet through the desktop, these countries are mobile-first economies where smartphone penetration rates are set to tip 95 percent within 20 years. Moreover, a significant chunk of them have already used augmented reality in a social setting.

"Snap has been investing in camera technology for a long period of time, and when your eCommerce catalogue is available via the AR experience, a lot of our users are able to consume that seamlessly because, years ago, they played with doggie ears or the crying lens filters," Heffernan says. "Consumers have grown up with the

"Other phenomena, such as buy-now-pay-later, will be a massive contributing factor to social commerce on the platform. It's going to be one of the fastest growing channels for commerce across the world"

platform. The challenge is not so much in teaching our consumers to participate in social commerce layered with augmented reality, it's more the evolution of the overall ecosystem, like payments."

Integrations with Shopify, eBay or local marketeers who can bring SMEs directly into the

app, as well as other phenomena such as buy-now-pay-later, will be a massive contributing factor to social commerce on the platform. "It's going to be one of the fastest growing channels for commerce across the world," Heffernan predicts. All of that will build on what Heffernan calls a "reality check" for consumers. "Reality is amazing," he says. "The fact that I'm now able to augment reality using the Snap camera to identify dog breeds or experience the history of a particular place has been a moment of discovery for me.



It respects privacy, and can foster a positive real-self environment. I think that is something you will see happening more and more."

