

# Blend & Stretch



TOUCHPOINTS

INTEGRATED MARKETING

CONNECT

## Key Take-out's:

- Consumers are constantly using touchpoints in new and different ways
- However, it is important for marketers to understand what brand and business goals they are serving today
- They must also understand touchpoint synergies, consistency and creative integration

Touchpoints — any interaction point between a brand and consumers— are perpetually proliferating and many brands struggle to keep up. According to [TNS's Asia Pacific Marketing Monitor 2016](#) study some businesses experiment with every new platform, while others take a more conservative approach. Navigating the changing touchpoint landscape is particularly challenging for brands that lack a holistic understanding of which touchpoints are most effective in their category and for their specific brand. Nevertheless, smart brands work constantly to discover new, more effective ways to communicate and engage with consumers.

## Blend- touchpoints are increasingly fluid

How consumers use touchpoints is consistently evolving. For example, recent research conducted by TNS in Asia showed an unexpected result — online haircare\* consumers were twice as likely to browse other products than offline customers were. More confounding was the fact that most said that they did not intend to buy the product they were

browsing. We realised online shoppers may actually be more interested in browsing for additional, new products than offline shoppers — an unanticipated finding. Consumers are interacting with touchpoints in new ways. Today, online and offline touchpoints are becoming progressively more blended, especially as brands realise that consumers want to interact this way, and online touchpoints, like websites, become better designed to encourage ongoing brand interactions.



## Touchpoints need to balance short & long-term goals

Complicating matters, touchpoints do not necessarily work the way we think they do. It is hard for brands to know not only how consumers use touchpoints, but also what brand and business goals those touchpoints are then serving. For example, we helped a German department store realise that its store's sales staff actually serve more to build the brand in consumers' minds, than to promote sales. Over the past 2 years, we have seen brands begin to build a better understanding of how touchpoints can be used in counterintuitive ways. Back in 2014, we saw ever-savvy Coca-Cola's use its packaging for

\* Category changed to protect client anonymity.

brand engagement in its #colouryoursummer campaign. And we've encountered brands, like Lowe's, the home improvement retailer in the US, use a typical sales channel — its storefront windows — for brand building, when it transformed its online video vines into 'old-skool', animatronic versions in its display windows. Talk about blending between offline and online touchpoints! As touchpoints evolve and become increasingly fluid, it is all the more important that brands understand how touchpoints are delivering value.

Finally, it is important to know whether or not touchpoints are actually working towards generating positive brand equity. This is not always the case; touchpoints can do disservice to a brand. A recent touchpoint study of the Korean beer category revealed that the in-store entry displays of Korean beer brand, Cass, were actually generating negative brand equity. Brands must conduct the due diligence of understanding specifically how their touchpoints are performing and to what ends.

### Stretch- consumers do not 'use as directed'

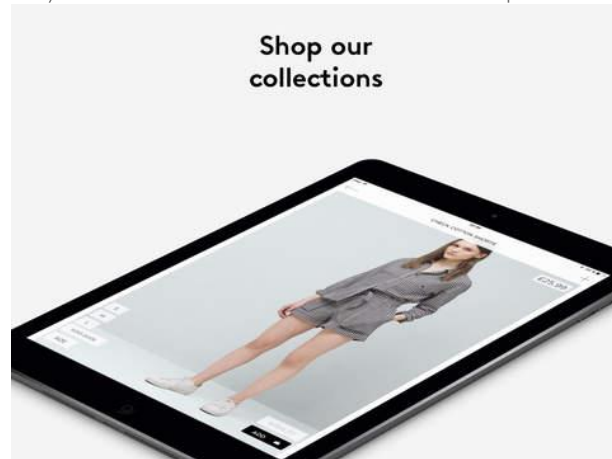
In the past, marketers often devised brand strategies with touchpoints performing specific, isolated functions. This was, in part, the result of legacy, siloed organisational structures, where departmental goals and KPI's were isolated. In these circumstances, touchpoints often were not leveraged to serve integrated marketing purposes. Since then, marketers have learned through experience that consumers do not experience touchpoints as discrete units, and that they often do not necessarily 'use'

touchpoints as originally intended by business. This is why we have seen some social media migrate from a manicured brand-building channel, to a busy platform for customer service, to a seamless sales environment. However, this is not to say that touchpoints cannot be used strategically to target specific audiences — they can. A recent TNS category study for a multinational food manufacturer\* showed how the client's touchpoints were influencing specific audiences and segments compared to the competition. Results revealed that brand switchers were more impacted by digital and POS touchpoints. We provided specific information on how to improve those touchpoints.

### Touchpoints work synergistically

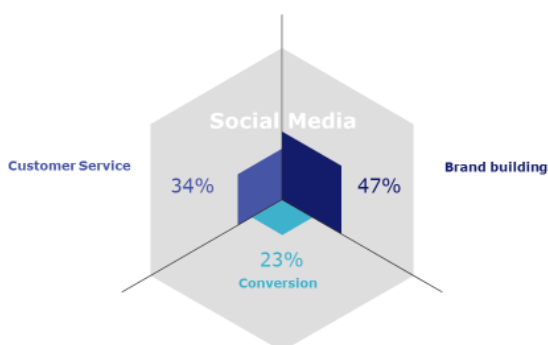
It is also important to note that touchpoints do not naturally operate in isolation. Because consumers do not make clear distinctions between touchpoints, touchpoints often work together synergistically.

Mango, the women's fashion retailer, understood this when they incorporated iPads into their brick-and-mortar retail store environment. Rather than only seeing online as a lesser substitute when consumers are not able to shop a physical store, they realised that online and offline touchpoints can



be complimentary. Allowing sales associates to help shoppers place online orders for items or sizes that have sold out in store or which, due to inventory limitations, are unavailable in-store, is a touchpoint 'win' for retailer and consumer, alike. Such integration not only serves to increase immediate sales, by introducing or reminding shoppers of the eCommerce site. It also builds future online sales.

Touchpoints serve multiple purposes



SOURCE: ConnectedLife 2014



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7

## Touchpoints and business goals

Online retailer, Refinery29, recognised early on the value of building brand equity and engagement initially to drive later sales. Having nurturing a curated online environment since 2005, Refinery29 co-founder Philippe von Borries said of the brand, "We had enough credibility in the marketplace after 3-4 years of building the brand that it was like dropping a match in a barrel of fuel." A modern business with a diversified strategy, Refinery 29 is both a media platform, earning revenue through advertising sales and an eCommerce platform earning 20-30% of percent of every sale.



However, unlike other websites with standalone ecommerce sections, Refinery29's strategy is fully integrated right down to the site interface where readers have the ability to purchase an item directly from links embedded in content. Because consumers do not perceive and use touchpoints in isolation and because they work synergistically, it is all the more important that brands understand how and when touchpoints are contributing to larger business goals.



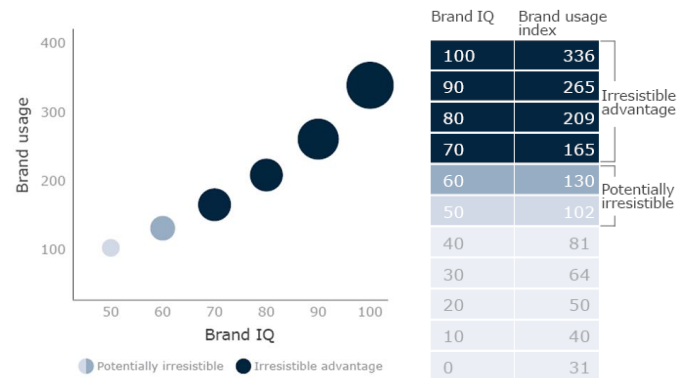
PHOTOGRAPHED BY VIKAS VASUDEV.

[Pero dress](#); [Rashmi Varma sari dress](#); [Eina Ahluvalia True Colours Earrings, \\$189, available at Eina Ahluvalia](#); [Tribe by Anrapali belt](#).

## The next hurdle: touchpoint consistency & integration

Touchpoint consistency and integration will be the next challenge for brands. As touchpoints continue to evolve and operate on a two-way, interactive street with consumers, brands will need to focus on the consistency of the message they are sending. As we know from Needscope, the more strongly and distinctively a brand occupies an emotive territory

### Higher Brand IQ correlates with higher usage



(Brand IQ) the greater its usage. And since the totality of touchpoints are what constitute a brand, we can only infer that high consistency between touchpoints means greater market share.

### Needscope & Connect: touchpoint fit with brand positioning

Target	Fit Index				
	TV advertising	Billboard	Facebook	Print	Shelf
	88	75	62	48	6

Fluid touchpoint integration will mean looking at the landscape holistically and understanding how to optimise impact with consumers. This will not just be about budget efficiency, but also a well-thought out creative deployment that binds together seemingly disparate touchpoints into a symbiotic brand narrative that captivates consumers.

For more information on touchpoint management check out [TNS Connect](#).