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Value of digital marketing revealed by pandemic



Asiafruit Congress spotlights the rise of digital marketing in Asia with two leading fruit brands, Zespri and Rokit Global

Promotions form the bedrock of which sales can boom or bust. In-store activations have long been the unbeatable form of marketing, but over the last decade – in which social media platforms have become ubiquitous – the use of digital has become increasingly important.

This theme was discussed in detail during the first day of Asiafruit Congress 2021. In the session titled 'Digital marketing with a difference', congress attendees heard from two leading fruit brands that have led the charge to digital platforms.

General manager of global marketing for Rokit Global, Julian Smith, said the Covid-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of having a digital presence, as he outlined the miniature apple company's approach to promotions.

"A big part of what we've done [in Asia] is to differentiate ourselves in the fresh

produce category by using social media platforms in a way that surprises people, and where it makes them sit up and take notice," began Smith.

"We had to ask, as an apple brand from New Zealand, how do we do that? It has been really exciting and fun to be a part of, and we've had some great results. We've over tripled our global social media following, our engagement scores are through the roof, and we're only just starting to get noticed as the small up and coming challenger brand that we are."

A key aspect of Rokit Global's digital marketing approach, Smith explained, was an omni-channel approach. This afforded the company the ability to trial and error across a number of platforms, and then to hone its focus where the results were apparent.

"We've used a performance-lead marketing approach to our digital

activation," said Smith. "I'm not sure how many players in our category approach it that way, but it's been something very new for Rokit and it allowed us to gain a lot of insight into what was and wasn't working.

For Zespri, the number one fresh produce brand in China and Taiwan, the move to digital was one the company's senior marketing director in Greater China, Ng KokHwee, said was vital.

"Our approach has been anchored in traditional channels such as wholesale and brick and mortar," KokHwee said of Zespri's marketing campaigns. "Digitalisation was a necessity in a post-covid world – this pandemic has accelerated e-commerce growth across all categories in mainland China, and digitalisation has presented a compelling opportunity in the fresh produce category.

"We identified two key areas we needed

to focus on in order to drive effectiveness and efficiency in our investment. The first was precision targeting to better reach our audience with a laser-like focus. The second is increasing conversion through content, focusing on strengthening the link from content to purchase.”

KokHwee believes the lines between online and offline are blurring in Asia, and that while Zespri has had a lot of success in the digital realm already, she admits they are constantly learning.

Speaking of learning on the go, one of the key takeaways highlighted by Rockit’s Smith was the need to localise content.

“We’ve had a team in China localising our content as much as possible,” noted Smith. “You’ve got to approach the campaign you’re producing with a local flavour, and make sure that your strategy is appropriate for your target consumers in the market.

“It’s all about test and learn. Sure, you can apply the principles you’ve

learned from other markets, but you must use them in a way that suits the market you’re in,” concluded Smith.

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