IPG MEDIA LAB

TARGETING TRIBES THROUGH TECH

JULY 2015

Tribes form strong connections

Tribes are exclusive groups of people who create identity bonds between one another over a shared interest, even if they don't know each other. They have a unique culture and strong identification.

"For millions of years, human beings have been part of one tribe or another. A group needs only two things to be a tribe: a shared interest and a way to communicate"- Seth Godin, Tribes: We Need You to Lead Us

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A relatable example of modern day tribes

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Why are they important?

Brands must begin to define and message to people based on their cultural attributes and psychographics in order to sincerely and successfully message to passionate tribes.

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Interactivity is a better predictor of brand love

Partner IPG agency Octagon conducted a Passion Shift Study in which they explored two distinct types of fans:

1) **The Avid Fan:** Self-proclaimed fans who tend to be more passive in their consumption habits.
2) **The Interactive Fan:** Those that express their passion and act on it by engaging with others and displaying their passion publicly across platforms.

   Interactivity is behavioral, making it easier for marketers to plan against, unlike avidity. Thus, the interactive fan is the target customer because they are a better predictor of brand love.

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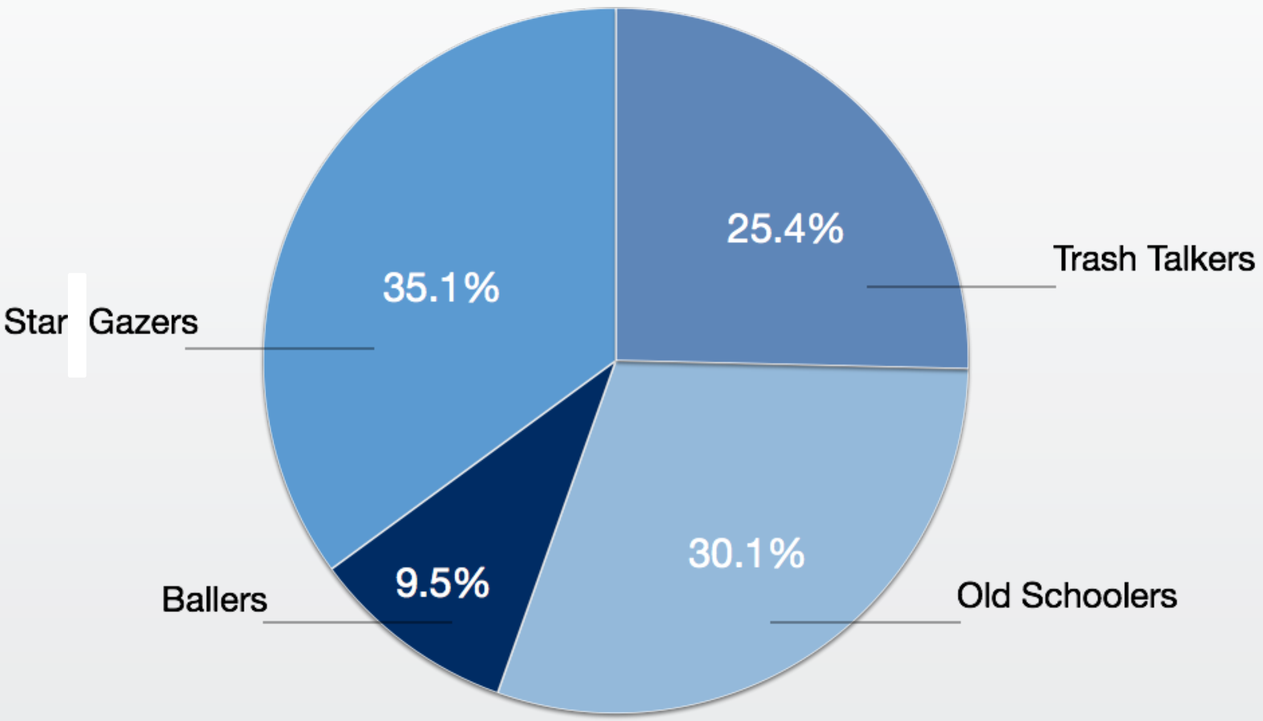
Why are fans, fans?

Fans can be fans for different reasons. For example, in Octagon's Passion Shift study, they discovered that there are four distinct groups of NBA lovers.

- Trash Talkers: Young and competitive, NBA is entertainment
- Old Schoolers: Most traditional fans; passion revolves around their historic bond to their team
- Ballers: Most passionate and active fans; they love to play and love to win
- Star Gazers: Driven by marquee players and match-ups; more family-focused



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It’s not just sports fans. It’s all types of fans.

Comic Con

Star Wars

Vid Con

Beyonce

Lululemon

Harley Davidson

New platforms and ad technology aid tribal communication

Conversations that were once limited to physical proximity have expanded to multiple platforms online. With the evolution from desktop to mobile, these conversations can take place almost anywhere. It’s important for brands to be there to feed fans what they crave, when and where they want it to have the most success in changing purchase behavior. New platforms that empower fans to connect along with advancements in ad technology also enable better tracking abilities.

“…it's difficult to try to build a following using social as a marketing tool versus using content to build your following through social. People want to talk about it, they will go on social media and talk about it.”- Lateef Sarnor, Kollide.tv

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The audience has an audience that propels tribal communication

Fans are creating original content online that fan communities actively acknowledge and respond to. In fact, millennials are spending 30% of their media time engaged with user-generated content. They also trust and remember UGC more than they do traditional media. Tribes and brands share UGC on social media platforms to build bonds. GoPro, for instance, has pioneered tribal communication online through its YouTube channel that empowers its activity-loving audience to become ambassadors, who create new content on the company's behalf. They've accumulated over 3 million subscribers as a result.

"In a networked environment, the audience has an audience. This change in architecture complicates the traditional understanding of how media is supposed to behave"- Kenyatta Cheese, Everybody at Once

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Traditional demographics have become output information

Due to these shared interests, people no longer need to be categorized and targeted based on traditional demographics but on interests and behavior. Our mobile devices are constantly consuming and producing streams of data that provide great insight into behavioral patterns. In fact, 43% of smartphone users check their mobile device more than 25x per day and a recent study shows that 25% of smartphone owners ages 18-44 say “they can’t recall the last time their smartphone wasn’t next to them”. As a result, traditional demographics have become the output information instead of input.

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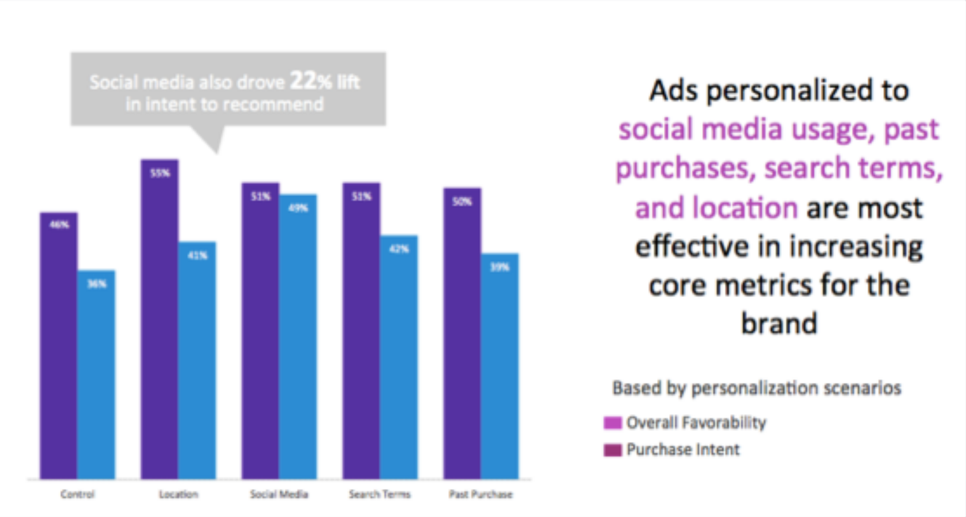
Native formats yield positive results from tribes online

To be effective in targeting tribes, ads need to appear in the right format. Native ads have shown positive impact because they message to people without making them feel interrupted. In fact, native ads registered 18% higher lift in purchase intent and 9% higher lift for brand affinity responses than banner ads.

The IPG Media Lab and Yahoo! developed a research study that runs parallel to this idea. We discovered that ads personalized to social media usage, past purchases, search terms, and location are most effective in increasing core metrics for the brand. Social media also drove 22% lift in intent to recommend.



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Behavioral data enhances the opportunity for programmatic advertising

Because tribes are constantly online and communicating 24/7, using programmatic buying tools allow the advertiser to accurately target during the most relevant times as these tribes move across the most relevant content. Additionally, using the insights drawn from behavioral data, these programmatic tools can help an advertiser conquer messaging to specific groups with minimal waste.

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How can brands get involved?

Advertisers have a unique opportunity to communicate with tribes through technology with the emergence of new ad technologies that enable better tracking. The overarching idea is to gain effectiveness by being as authentic and transparent as possible when targeting these tribes. Here's how brands can get involved:

- Find the best methods to target your audience
- Explore audience behavior online
- Identify and cooperate with tribal influencers
- Consider the strengths and weaknesses of social media platforms
- Stay relevant and connected

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Find the best methods to target your audience

Technology makes it possible to track and target people in ways that will yield the best results. Brands can also monitor their audience to understand what's important to them.
For example:

- **SambaTV** tracks real-time Smart TV viewership to retarget relevant messaging across mobile devices.

- **Instagram** has developed a new API that allows agencies to better target based on who the user follows and likes on Facebook.

"…for the first time marketers are able to reach consumers on a 1:1 basis based on their representative affinities in today's content landscape and a deterministic approach around what they've actually viewed, not on the likelihood that they watch a certain show because they "look like" that audience base and subsequently might have been exposed to an ad."- Samba TV

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Explore audience behavior online

Brands can understand online factors that drive buying habits through observing the interactive fan and tribal influencers. We mentioned that marketers need to go after these fans as they are both influential and the best predictors of brand love.

For example:

- **Social listening company, Qualia**, teamed up with a mouthwash brand who wanted to re-position itself as the solution to conquering awkward bad breath moments. They monitored top social platforms and identified leaders and trendsetters online, like coffee lovers, to understand and target the most qualified consumers.

“Digital touch points are multiplying at a rapid pace. Rather than monitoring one behavioral signal on one device and deeming the consumer “in market for a car” we monitor patterns of behaviors across devices and platforms (social, search, location and ecommerce) to fully understand the consumer’s values and needs.”- Qualia

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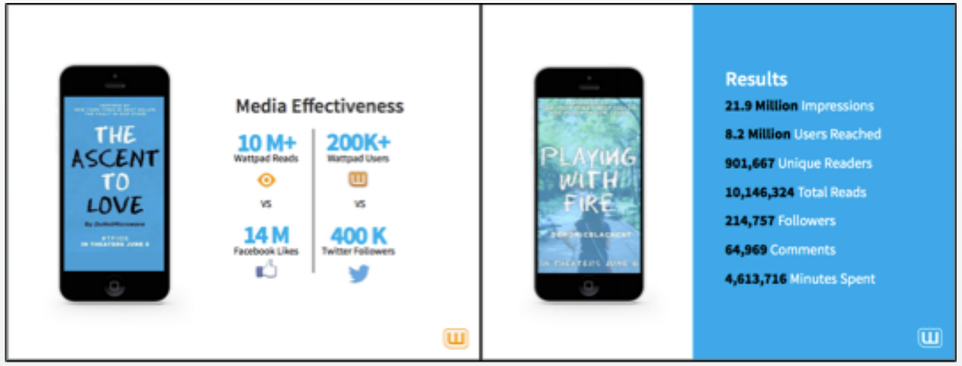
Identify and cooperate with tribal influencers

We touched on how the audience has an audience within fan communities. Brands need to leverage this organic relationship by identifying the tribal influencers to develop partnerships and boost brand equity on platforms that are popular to the tribe.

For example:

- **Writing community, Wattpad**, raised media awareness for The Fault in Your Stars through native content where prominent writers were asked to write stories about Extraordinary Love, a theme chosen by 20th Century Fox.
- **Taco Bell** teamed up with YouTube star and Taco Bell lover, Tyler Oakley, to promote their teen scholar contest “Graduate for Mas”



“Partnering with writers allow brands to leverage writer's huge followings and reader base to spread and endorse/ influence a brand’s message.
Brands are able to craft a highly entertaining, and persuasive narrative that emotionally connects that writer's readers to brands.”- Wattpad

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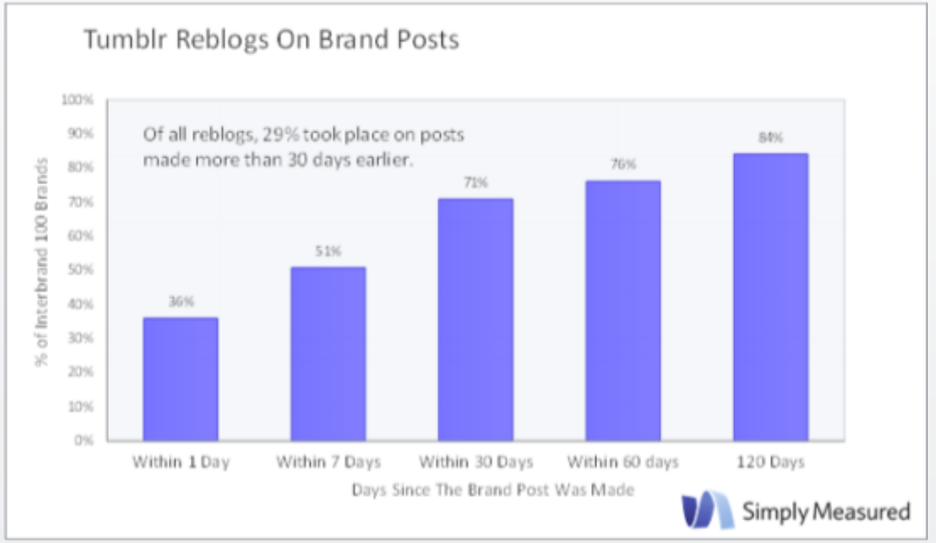
Consider the strengths and weaknesses of social media platforms

New ad technology allows us to quantify tribal behaviors, which allows for new methods to determine effectiveness. Measuring effectiveness is unique to the medium so, it's important to identify the appropriate engagement metrics specific to each case.

For example:

- Tumblr has a level of longevity that you simply don't find on other networks, enabling prolonged awareness and engagement. Out of all Tumblr reblogs, 29% were from posts that were at least 30 days old. Compared to Twitter, tweets more than a couple hours old are often lost in the social media ether. However, having a lot of Twitter followers gives you the power to drive instant awareness.



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Stay relevant and connected

Once a tribe is targeted, the brand must find ways to keep the attention of the audience. Find a way to be embedded in the tribe so that there is a mutual love and connection between your brand and the tribes' passions and beliefs.

For example:

- **GameStop** teamed up with Gimbal to maintain a connection with their consumers by installing beacon-equipped, interactive, hotspots around the store to encourage people to learn more about their products. The activation brought significant insights to surface like who requested more information about merchandise and how to expand upon their audience to create new revenue streams.

It's connections like these that solidify the bond between the brand and tribe.

"By removing the friction associated with a mobile user having to actively search out information and making it easier for customers to discover the places, deals, and value the business provides, brands can form lasting relationships with their customers that increase their interaction with the business, and ultimately their lifetime value."- Gimbal

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THANK YOU

We hope you've found this POV interesting and provocative. If you have questions or want to talk more about the future of media, please contact us:

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For more on the Passion Shift, please contact Simon Wardle at Octagon.