The key to creating consistent **brand experiences** across platforms

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I looked through my Flight's Window to the melee below, restless as I had nothing better to do before I landed in Mumbai and resumed my life that I am accustomed to. The sky was clear from the top and I could see a panorama which is not visible from the Mumbai skyline due to the ever clinging smog. I was flying down from Bangalore after a vague prospective client meeting earlier in the day. The brief was still ringing in my head and my mood was not of jubilation but one of despair. I had taken the early morning "Red Eye" flight to be briefed that the company had some extra marketing dollar left and we were to do "Something in Social Media and digital front." Most of us are like that gentleman for whom marketing and creation of brand experience is more of an afterthought than a strategy.

The 80s and 90s were the decades when my generation was growing up attuned to song requests made on AIR by people from a nondescript town called "Jhumri Tilaya" and Lalitaji's pearls of wisdom on which washing powder made our clothes look whiter or how a particular Scooter brand was creating stronger images of stronger India as it was hard to miss on Sunday morning television along with "Ramayana" and "Mahabharata". We kept trying to save a particular character's

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girlfriend in the name of Video games. Digital camera was still a distant dream to the ubiquitous Camera Rolls, X-Boxes and PlayStation were unheard of and life was about scarcity and limited choices.

But two decades later Internet, Smart devices and Technology have created a world in which are generation and ones that followed saw a whole new world where globalization and technology advancement shaped the way we perceived and saw things like never before. This gave rise to a whole new breed of consumers.

Consumption was no longer about available choices but getting what you wanted on your terms.

Brands have started looking for a more robust marketing mix, one which will interact with consumers in unbelievable ways at various touch points and across various media 24X7, allowing brands to come alive for the TG by creating connections between brand and consumer, in their personal world. These connections should be formed by experiences that are personally unique but relevant to the consumer, it should be memorable for them, it should be interactive, and it should invoke emotion and lead to recall in a non-intrusive way.

New technologies have radically changed how the brand engages with consumers via multiple touch points such as websites, mobile apps, ads, social networks and various services. While this has created multiple channels for brands what we overlook sometimes is that customers hold companies to high expectations to deliver experiences that are consistent on all platforms, and to complicate it further customers are more demanding than ever and expect to be able to choose freely when and how we interact with products and services.

The rise of the Omni-channel consumer who looks for information across different sources simultaneously, whether it's a mobile app or a website. It is critical that each part of the brand ecosystem should speak a similar language, delivering a consistent brand experience on a 24/7 basis across many touch points. Living the brand promise consistently, every day, across multiple markets and product lines is another challenge.

Adding more touch points to make the experience unique poses a great challenge because you need to integrate those points into the total experience and this poses a great challenge: Every time you add a touch point you raise expectations

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and increase areas where you may potentially fail to deliver. Sometimes it's better to be selective about the medium you chose. The brand needs to ask who am I talking to?, what "language" do they speak?, what platforms do they prefer?, what motivates them? And what am I going to say?

As companies and organizations design for the larger user experience, it's important to consider consistency across all channels. Consistent experiences help users build trust with the organization. Each interaction is part of the overall user experience with a company. If the user experience isn't consistent across channels, users will question the organization's credibility.

Remember that brand creation happens over time not overnight ......On that note happy landing. ■