

Andy Latimer:

Coming up on Bluewater Talks, we're discussing how to generate demand in the digital age and the importance of selling on Amazon. Today, I'll be joined by Vera Shafiq, Bluewater's director of digital. And Mike Marte, director of marketing. So we're in a shifting sands of the digital consumer engagement. A lot has changed since COVID-19. We all know that. Americans, and really people all across the world, they're working from home now far more than ever before. And they're buying from home far more than ever before. If you're ready for an open conversation about the state of digital marketing in this new normal, then stay tuned, watch with us. We're going to have a nice conversation, and an honest conversation about what is really going on in the consumer marketplace. This is Bluewater Talks.

Andy Latimer:

So, consumer behaviors have drastically shifted in 2020, and really as a necessity, right? The world changed. People are simply buying and engaging differently. We're marketing to them differently. They are far more engaged online across all demographics. This is a major shift in consumer behavior. I think some of the stats that came out that I recently was reading, there's 44% increase in spending in retail e-commerce year over year, a 44% jump. That's a major jump when you start to think about it, right? And department stores are reporting a 75... Let me get that to you correctly. 75% decrease in Q2. Now that consumers have made this shift where they're buying online and they're comfortable buying online, will they ever go back to buying the old way again? Or is this a permanent shift in consumer behavior?

Vera Shafiq:

Yeah, Andy, I would say the retail apocalypse is here. And this is something that we're seeing across the board. People are spending more time at home. People are online a lot more. Facebook is the number one channel for getting the news. People are reading about COVID, about politics. So they're on Facebook, YouTube, TV. Digital is now becoming a very important channel for selling product. And the same goes for Amazon. People are leaning towards Amazon even more because it's a convenience factor right?

Andy Latimer:

Yeah. I mean, I think we already knew that from the Amazon side of it, I think 60% of consumer purchases, or consumer investigations on products, start on Amazon. So there was already this path there for validation and the shopping experience. It had a boost. I mean, even more so, the trust in getting the delivery, right?

Mike Marte:

Oh, totally. You're seeing 20% of consumers are ordering groceries online now. And these people that weren't necessarily doing things online are having to shift to learn how buy online. So you have more people to address.

Andy Latimer:

I think that's the huge point, Mike. I think the broadening demographics that we are facing, and I think you're seeing that in the digital platform. They're not really early adopters in the shopping experience because Amazon's been around for a long time, and internet clearly has been here for a while, and consumers have already been engaging. But I think what happened was, if you will, sometimes I refer to it as that last mile, that last mile of conversion into buying online. How much has that really happened since COVID started?

Vera Shafiq:

I mean, it's been huge. The number one thing is the demographics of people that are shopping online has changed and shifted. We're not just seeing millennials doing it now. It's baby boomers, gen-Xers. They're all on there because they've been forced to do that, they've had no choice, and now they're actually enjoying the experience. So it's becoming just a de facto way of doing business, and we're seeing it. We're seeing with our online websites' activities increasing, people are on Facebook. Our advertising is just being... It's just a way more effective channel now, especially on social media. We're seeing it big time.

Andy Latimer:

I mean, it really is. It may be the great shift in dynamic, right? I mean, I think we've seen it in the past in certain campaigns, and in certain programs in our own experience, right? Because we saw it over the years at Bluewater, that transition going on, which is why we became a converged agency to start with. It's why we started to bring it all together to where we're doing television advertising, we were doing the digital advertising, and paid, and then we were doing content. And I think now we're in this platform in this space where you have to look around and say, well, what is really going on now? And what is really happening in the marketplace? Now you have to be everywhere, and you have to be prepared to see them across the board, right?

Vera Shafiq:

Yeah. You got to meet the customer where they want to shop. You got to be truly an omni-channel strategy in order to meet these customers wherever they feel that they want to purchase products, whether that be online, retail, watching TV and then pulling out their cell phones. On screen activity has changed dramatically during the COVID-19 period.

Mike Marte:

We're seeing that the consumers are... They need to understand the data a little bit more. Understanding what's happening on each channel is really going to help you to spend efficiently and forecast properly. You need to make sure that you're bringing in the proper inventory based on the media spend across all channels and the return that you're receiving.

Andy Latimer:

Well, I think it's definitely a big factor because now... You used to be like, well, we'll bring in 20% more for online sales, and we'll sit that in the warehouse because we know what the retail is going to be. Or, we'll put an X percentage. Now, no, that's shifted. You have to consider that the consumer is now buying more and more and more online. I think it's even the experience when you go into retail now and you'll find shelves empty. You'll find that they're not shipping the product into retail because they're holding it back to deliver it direct to consumer. That is a huge shift in what's happening in the world. The on demand delivery of an item was go to the store and buy it. That's not the case anymore, is it?

Mike Marte:

Yeah. We're seeing the infrastructure change tremendously, having that rock solid fulfillment set up so that... Retailers are trying to mitigate their risk by having that new brands that come on have to prove themselves. You're not just sending in a big old bulk shipment, you're having to test and do drop shipping initially. And given the current circumstances with courier shipping, taking longer times to ship, COVID effecting staggered shifts at fulfillment centers, you have to make sure that you're understanding

every piece of it so that you're proving yourself to retailers and still being able to expand under their online platforms.

Andy Latimer:

Yeah. And I think there's another point that you hit on before, Vera, that the consumer has changed where we're finding them a little bit. And it's a different consumer in those spaces. I mean, Facebook, it's an older skewing demographic, at least for social media side of it. But that is now become so effective because you're now finding that consumer that was going to the store and traditionally would not buy online, they're now buying online and that's where you're talking to them, isn't it?

Vera Shafiq:

Yeah, absolutely. A great example of that would be an outdoor griddle brand that we work with. They used to do a lot of TV advertising. Retail was super important to them, still is, but since COVID 19 this has shifted and digital has actually become their biggest channel for online advertising. They're on Facebook, display advertising. We're seeing huge, huge returns on ad spend on these channels, just because people are now no longer wanting to go to Walmart or Lowe's and purchase a griddle, they're ready to buy online. So yeah, definitely.

Andy Latimer:

Well, I think the home delivery side of it. It's interesting because a lot of our customers on one side of it, a lot of our clients have seen this incredible shift that's what's been going on. And not just like, it's interesting that you see it on a griddle product that they're wanting that delivered to the home now, but also I think that we're seeing it on HSN and QVC and in food delivery services, that more and more consumers are buying food online, which is wild. Now, Instacart and delivering direct to your door has become a regular service and a regular expectation.

Andy Latimer:

It harkens back to the old days of the milkman dropping the milk off at the door, right? It's this re-shift back to more home living. I think that's what's happening in this shift to consumer behavior is not just going to change the way we buy things, but it's going to change the way we live. I mean, how do you see that impact affecting how you market and how you drive products to those new consumers that just they're a little bit more comfortable at home?

Mike Marte:

Well, I mean, we're definitely seeing that. One of our kitchen wear brands, we had to pivot tremendously because we're realizing that more people that wouldn't necessarily be cooking at home are now cooking and they don't really know what they're doing. So you have to shift and you have to make sure that you're showing recipes, you're doing demonstrations that would help that consumer along the way. We're also seeing that, especially on Amazon, initially it was about 40% of people were mobile shoppers. That's actually increased to about 65%. So while we're pivoting with the way that we're showing it to consumers, we also have to change to make sure that we're answering those questions to those shoppers as quickly as possible.

Andy Latimer:

Yeah. It's now, isn't it? I mean, the response to it is now, and I think that's what's so cool. Because we've been in the direct to consumer business for a long time, and a lot of brands are now sitting here going,

"Wait. Hold on a minute. Those guys in this D2C space have been ahead of this model for so long that now the consumer has fully come to it." How has that changed the way you operate on a regular basis, Vera? I mean, what's it meant for you from a marketing standpoint?

Vera Shafiq:

From a marketing standpoint, since COVID came about, we found that our messaging has had to change dramatically. So yeah, okay, D2C, we've always been in that business, but we can't use the hard sell messaging anymore, especially when people are sitting at home. They're worried, they're anxious, they're not receptive to that kind of messaging anymore. So we got to change and pivot. Messaging now has to be more reassuring, more understanding. Yes, we know what you're going through. You're at home, you're stuck at home, and here's how our product can help you. And here's what we're doing to make your life better. So yeah, that's been a major focus of our marketing.

Andy Latimer:

Yeah. I think you just hit it head on, from a standpoint of now the consumer is sitting there and they're like, "I don't know how to operate in this world anymore, either." So from a standpoint of reaching out to them in the places that they now are and giving them a comfort level to say, "You can have the things that you need and we can get them to you with ease. And you don't have to put yourself in situations that you don't feel comfortable with."

Andy Latimer:

But once they adopt that methodology, are they ever going back to the store? I mean, really think about this. Are they ever really going back to the store? I don't think they are. I know my household alone, we used to lots of boxes at the door, but now there's tons of boxes every day. It's everything comes to the house. Why go shopping anymore when we can live a better life and let it come to the door?

Andy Latimer:

So knowing that so many consumers are struggling with finances, and brands are shifting their marketing budgets to other departments, how can a digital strategy combat these shifts that are going on? And how can we combat these challenges that are ahead? Because we saw it in '07, '08 when suddenly marketing budgets went from 10, 20, \$30 million to a million bucks. And advertising and the executives on that side of it, the marketing directors, were like, "What do I do?" How do you make that shift now with the assumption that there's going to be a shift again from the way we market to consumers now? I just read the other day that Proctor and Gamble, not going to the upfronts on TV again. That is a major shift in the way that marketers and advertisers are thinking it. How do we address that for our clients, and how do we address it for marketers, to be able to still reach their consumer in a way, even with shifting budgets, smaller budgets, and a more direct communication with the client?

Mike Marte:

I think the name of the game is changing to agility, right? So making sure that, rather than a set it and forget it method for your Q3 strategy, you have to be looking at it on a weekly basis, understanding what's changing, how is the consumer behavior changing, and what do I need to do to meet that demand at where it stands? Checking in weekly, making those changes, and then going back and understanding the data behind those changes.

Andy Latimer:

Yeah. We often refer to it in the past as you're pulling different levers. You've got a lever, sometimes you throttle forward on your TV advertising, sometimes you throttle back on your digital advertising. And it's finding that shift and that optimization in the shift, right? What have we seen from a change standpoint since COVID in that shift, and where has the optimization found itself? What have you seen so far?

Vera Shafiq:

Yeah, we've seen definitely a shift towards digital. And what we've been able to do is, in several instances with several of our clients that we work with, being able to shift budget from TV media to digital media at a moment's notice, because we've seen that digital is providing or giving us a much better return on investment. We have been able to do that, and it's proved to be very successful. Likewise, within the digital ecosystem itself, if we see a specific channel is working much better for us at the time, whether that be Facebook, whether that be YouTube, or whether that be connected TV, we're able to shift budget from one to the other very quickly. As Mike mentioned, agility's super important, especially with the changing times.

Andy Latimer:

I think they really work hand in hand still, right? I mean, we've seen it in the past where they play together. I think the ecosystem of your marketing is still out there the same. Yes, we're seeing a huge impact in digital. And I think the direct response nature, and the direct engagement nature of digital, is giving us much faster response. I think holistically, we typically in the past have still seen TV drive that overarching piece. So they still got to live in the ecosystem. You just have to make sure you're getting them to the conversion point, right?

Vera Shafiq:

Sure. Yeah. No, there's a fine balance between the two. It's super important, as I mentioned, the word omni-channel. You got to be everywhere that the customer is, and that includes TV. It's really a matter of balancing it to where you are driving demand to where it is. Right?

Andy Latimer:

Yeah. You got to be where the consumer is.

Vera Shafiq:

Be where the consumer is.

Andy Latimer:

I think from that standpoint, for each client or for each brand or each product, it's a little different. But are you seeing all demographics now across the digital platforms, and are able to reach them all more effectively than before COVID because of the engagement that's now happening?

Vera Shafiq:

Yeah. Depending on the product, obviously we're going to use a different channel depending on the demographic that lives there. Some demographics lend themselves to TV advertising, and still always will, so TV drives that upper funnel activity for us in many cases. But where digital comes in there is

capturing the lower funnel demand, retargeting, getting people in after they're already become brand aware, have already interacted with the brand.

Andy Latimer:

It really shifts because what you're now doing is we're looking at that top funnel as TV and the top funnel on a lot of your social platforms and a lot. But as that moves down, it's the communications, what we often refer to as the progression of the sale, where you're starting to move through the process of the engagement with that customer, and then engagement with that consumer, right? Then it gets to the conversion points, right, Mike? Which is Amazon so important.

Andy Latimer:

But what other points outside of... I mean, Amazon definitely, but what other places are now consumers buying? Again, I think I said it earlier, it's 273% increase in same day fulfillment for Target. Other places that were getting conversions, talk to me a little bit about that. Are they coming to individual marketer's websites? Or is it really still a huge chunk on Amazon and then everywhere else is small?

Mike Marte:

In terms of e-commerce sales, we're seeing that Walmart is growing. The percentage of ownership of those sales was about 3%. It's grown to 6% now, because of, like you said earlier, they've started to engage shipping food to consumers, but then also offering that infrastructure to ship very quickly. Target, Best Buy, they're all shifting to that quicker fulfillment. So we're seeing that, while they're not getting as many sales as Amazon, they're growing in their own right. Amazon put forth, I think, they hired 100,000 people to boost their infrastructure to support this. They invested \$350 million in employee raises across their fulfillment centers. So every single person got a \$2 raise because they knew that they were going to have so many people being in the fulfillment centers having to meet this demand.

Andy Latimer:

Yeah. I think you hit on a big point, because I think what's coming up on us is there's an estimate that 60% of consumers plan to shop less at retail stores and more online during the upcoming holiday season. I mean, wow. Are we ready? We just went through summer. You know what I mean? We went through not the highest buying season for online sales. As some people were saying, "Hey, it's Prime Day every day." What does this mean when we hit now the traditional shopping season and the traditional buying season of Q4? One, how do we continue to market? And then two, what's the challenges that marketers face, and the product owners face and brands face, in getting their product to the consumer? And can they actually handle the distribution increase?

Mike Marte:

You have to have a team of people dedicated to it, especially from an Amazon standpoint. I mean, Prime Day in October, that's crazy. No one knows how to plan for that. That gives you no time to plan then for Cyber Week. You have to make sure that you're understanding exactly how much product to bring in and what your media drivers are. Amazon is limiting the amount of inventory that you can send in, your receiving times are going from three weeks to sometimes eight weeks. So understanding exactly what you have and how you're driving it is going to be super key.

Andy Latimer:

Well, and I think another key point there is, think about this, this may be the greatest capture moment of consumers in the history of our life, when you start to look at it. What's about to happen... How important it is to get that consumer and manage your customer relationship with your customer as a brand. Because in Amazon, you're limited with the communication. In the situation where if they buy it on Amazon, you can only have certain levels of communication through the Amazon purchasing team. How important, Vera and Mike, is it for us to step back and say, how do I engage that customer beyond the purchase point to have them for a lifetime? Because this is a lifetime acquisition of customers, isn't it?

Vera Shafiq:

It is. And it's super important to remember that it's not just about the sale, but we also need to, as a brand, continue to put marketing dollars into our business so that we can reassure people that we are a brand. Even though we were going through a recession, we're going through tough times, we're still a brand that's going to be here for you. We're still going to be here at the other end. Once we come out at the end of the tunnel, we want to stay top of mind with our customers with that kind of messaging. So it's not just about the direct response. There is also a very strong branding play that's necessary,

Andy Latimer:

Well, I think it's huge. I mean, if you think about it, a lot of the brand relationship the consumer had was, to your point earlier, going to the retail outlet and going to the store and walking through and touching it. And more the brand was the retailer in many instances. Now, I think a lot of brands, and we've been blessed to see them over the over years ramping up to these that have been able to work with a lot of companies in the past, like the Soda Streams of the world, like the Blackstone's of the world, like Phillips and others that were engaging with their customers in a real way, and making a lasting relationship with that consumer.

Andy Latimer:

I think we're in the same place. Again, we're marketers and product owners and brands, now need more than ever to get sticky. They got to get inside of it. I think some brands that we see that are doing a lot of digital content are really doing a good job of holding that consumer engagement over a long time and creating brand advocates and creating brand fans of the brand to continue to go forward. What do you do now and how important is that now, even more so than... Is it more important now than it ever was? Because it seems to me that the relationships are transitioning from the retailer... And if the brand isn't managing their own relationship now with that customer, oh boy, I mean, they're at as much risk as the retailer was, right?

Mike Marte:

Yeah. You have to make sure that you're backing your brand with organic, making sure, like you said, you have that advocate group, making sure that you're supporting your brand with your website, and making sure the messaging that you're using is synced across all platforms. You're utilizing your website, all your ads. The Amazon storefront is giving the same message, because as you start to see these new consumers that haven't purchased online before, you have to build trust with them. So if you're not providing that same message across all platforms, you could potentially lose that consumer.

Andy Latimer:

Yeah. And I think engaging with the consumer across all the platforms is huge. Is there a point when it's too much? I mean, we've shifted to this relationship with the customer now, and we're hitting them on all fronts, and we're talking to them on Facebook, and we're tracking them and remarketing, we're giving them our message all the time. Is there a point where we've gone too far and we've given too many messages, or is it stay relevant all the time?

Vera Shafiq:

I think if you do it the right way, it's not too much. Your marketing has to be a story rather than blasting messages out continuously. You have to almost sequence your messaging to where now you've already said one message to a consumer. The next message that you present to them is going to be the next step in the story. So it's all about storytelling.

Andy Latimer:

Yeah. It's the progression of the experience, right? And again, progression of the sale or progression of engagement. We often refer to it as that path of what's the next message that makes sense?

Vera Shafiq:

Exactly.

Andy Latimer:

I think you see that in the digital content that's out there now. You're seeing longer format digital contents coming out, you're seeing shorter format pieces, you're seeing layers and layers upon layers of getting that consumer down the path to where they understand your product and brand and believe in your product and brand. And that can be from a consumer product side of it. It can be from an IP side of it. It can be across the board.

Andy Latimer:

It's a big shift though, right? I mean, what an incredible shift in what's just happened because the... And I don't think everybody gets it yet. I don't think everybody really understands what just happened in the last several months, that it's never going to be the same. I mean, think about this. You have more buyers online and more buyers engaging online than ever before. Retailers are dropping left and right, going out of business. Now, I believe we've just entered the ultimate age of direct to consumer, and the next 10 years, 15 years is going to be absolutely land grab material. The giants are there, yes. You've got Amazons out there, you got the Walmart's out there, but now any brand, any brand, can get to that consumer. Is that fair to say?

Vera Shafiq:

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, people are shopping online constantly. So not only on Amazon, but people are shopping on Google, right? They're shopping for products on Google. Google recently introduced free shopping services, free shopping ads for businesses because they know that they have to compete with Amazon. And they know that if they don't do something quickly they're going to lose a lot of search volume and a lot of user behavior. So, yeah, absolutely. I mean, it's never been as crazy as it were with people shopping online and searching for products and searching for deals and offers.



Andy Latimer:

It's almost an escape from the doom and gloom of... You turn on the TV and you watch the news and there's a mess. You're either hearing about COVID or you're hearing about protests in the streets. You're hearing about the election. You're being inundated on TV with campaign messages from... I mean, really, it almost makes buying online... You're not able to go out and do the things you used to do, so it almost becomes your escape, doesn't it?

Mike Marte:

I think so. With your messaging, like you said, there's so many different things that's going on. You need to really understand what your consumers want to hear, because you have to pivot that message. Sometimes it could be too much doom and gloom, or they actually want it because they want to feel more safe. So understanding what you need to say to them to convert that sale is going to be very, very important.

Vera Shafiq:

And people are using social media as an escape. They're on Instagram because they want to discover new things. And at the same time they're discovering new brands. So social media has become a direct response shopping experience, just like every other. Especially things like Instagram, Pinterest. Pinterest now has a shop button and has made it very easy for people to actually discover and buy product on that platform. The fact that we have access to consumer data on such a huge scale. Amazon has all of the purchase behavior. Google has all the search behavior. Facebook has all the affinity and interest behavior. So with all of that data, we're able to target our customers with pinpoint precision and serve them personalized messages that really mean something to them.

Andy Latimer:

That actually leads to better conversions, doesn't it?

Vera Shafiq:

It sure does. Yeah. Conversion rates are much higher when you're using personalized messaging rather than just blasting people with generic messaging.

Andy Latimer:

I think there's a point where... Yeah, I can get on and I can place a Facebook ad. And I think a lot of people go on and say, "Yeah, I can do that." It's a little more complicated. I think the challenge of it for most people is: Yes, you can go on and you can place a Facebook ad. And yes, you can find success. But what can you do with the knowledge of the data? And how does the data lead you down the path to the right decisions? I think this is true for social and it's true for marketplace, right? When you start to look at both, the understanding the data and responding to it is huge. Are there particular things you look for, trends that you look forward, that say, I'm going to change my marketing, I'm going to change or shift it because of this? Are there key indicators out there that you find that you're like, got to do something about this one, or I got to change my marketing because of it?

Vera Shafiq:

Well, our strategy is typically a full funnel strategy, meaning that we want to make sure that we're hitting people at the moment that they're receptive to the message. So of course, you have cold traffic,

you have prospecting audiences that really are not aware of the brand. You're going to show them a very different message than you are with someone who you know has already visited your website. Who's already potentially abandoned cart, that's an even lower funnel activity. These are the things that we look for in the data. The Pixel is everything to us. If we don't Pixel a website, we don't really know what behavior that particular consumer has gone through. It's all about the user journey, the customer journey, and again, personalizing the message to where that person is in their life or in their particular journey.

Andy Latimer:

Yeah. Are there top data points that you use post purchase? I mean, once the consumers made a purchase, are there data points that you're looking at? What should be reviewed on a regular basis to look at that post purchase behavior, and that post purchase engagement?

Vera Shafiq:

Yeah. We look at, obviously, time since last purchase. We look at the data as to what did they purchase, what upsells we have available to hit them with in terms of, okay, you the griddle, what about the accessories that go with it? And then that's where email marketing comes into play as well. So that's just another digital channel that we haven't mentioned already, but is huge.

Andy Latimer:

One of our clients that's a direct to consumer underwear company that was made very famous by Howard Stern over the years, what I was most impressed with them... We did a series of commercials and engagements, content for both television and online for them. I got a little company called Tommy John. Tommy John, what most impresses me is their ability to stay engaged with me as a consumer because I'm in their consumer funnel so I get marketed by them all the time. And then in seeing how that extrapolates across and understanding and watching some of the behaviors that they're engaging, not just from a lifestyle standpoint side of it, but offering new products and continuing to develop the consumer relationship.

Andy Latimer:

Also, I think one of the big factors that I think most marketers miss is the timing. The timing of when to talk to your customer. We know from years of Amazon data, we know exactly when people buy. We know the spikes, we know the times of year, we know everywhere that the consumer looking for a particular product is going to see a spike. I think a lot of marketers either only focus on the spikes and don't focus on keeping a high level of base going, or the opposite, they have no focus on when the consumer's really buying. How important is it to look at the timing of your buying and timing of your marketing against what the data points tell you for when consumers are actually purchasing? Has that changed for today post COVID?

Mike Marte:

In terms of the Amazon piece, like you said, just utilizing that data to make all of your decisions within the marketplace is going to be tremendously important. I mean, we have 15 years of data understanding different categories and when to push different messaging. And we also are continuously changing our advertising strategies, so creating new campaigns on a daily basis and understanding how is that consumer shopping and what are they searching in order to really convert that sale on Amazon.

Andy Latimer:

And is there a shift from a standpoint on the rest of digital marketing platform, from the data driven standpoint of finding those spikes and how do you maximize the spikes? It could be seasonality, it could be holiday driven, it could be just what products sell at certain times of the year, right? How does that better help you improve or help you guide your clients or marketers and brand owners in the right way?

Vera Shafiq:

It's truly important to look at the data, look at the historical data, and as you mentioned, seasonality events. During back to school season we see, not spikes, but actually declines in sales. And these are things that we want to be aware of and cognizant of that we know happen every year, right? It may have been a little bit different this year because of COVID-19 and schools not being the way that they usually are, but we still did see a bit of a decline in sales around the time when people are preoccupied with their kids. That's just an example. Okay, my kids are going back to school so I'm not really thinking about buying at this time. The data's very important.

Vera Shafiq:

As you mentioned, holiday periods, Cyber Week, we definitely see spikes there, so we have to prepare for that. We do that by making sure that we have good offers in place and that our marketing messaging is hitting people where they expect to be hit, because people hold off on purchasing right before Cyber Week. This time of year we're in end of September, coming into October, people are actually holding back because they know that the deals are coming in November, right? So we've got to be cognizant of that as well.

Andy Latimer:

And we talked a lot about demand online and conversion, touching on the idea that you need to be telling a story, to walk the consumer through their journey. But let's talk a little bit about remarketing and lead nurturing, and the significance of that in the digital funnel. Because the top level piece is one part, but where you're really getting the meat, and where you're able to hold a consumer longer, is getting the remarketing efforts, the repurchase, and that nurturing and the relationship. How huge is that from a marketing standpoint, specifically for consumer product brands? And then secondly, for intellectual property brands?

Vera Shafiq:

It's really important. That's why our focus is full funnel, digital marketing. We wouldn't do it any other way. It makes sense to fill the funnel with prospecting, but then as you nurture those audiences, as you said, messaging changes. You got to realize that the conversions are happening in the lower funnel. You've spent the money to bring those people into the funnel. At this point, if you lose them, you're losing out. So you got to make sure that you keep them in the funnel and convert them at the right time at the right place. So, yeah, hugely important.

Andy Latimer:

So listen, guys, if you want to watch, listen or join, engage with us on any of the current trends and what's happening in direct to consumer and brand marketing, you can follow us and check us out at Bluewater.TV. You can follow us on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Vimeo, and yes, even YouTube. And check us out right there and see what's going on in the latest trends. We can plan to continue to have Bluewater Talks, and continue to have engagements like this that are about diving

deeper and helping to have an open conversation about what to do now, now that the world has changed, and now that direct to consumer marketing is, without a doubt, the most important marketing you can do. If you're not talking directly to your customer, if you're not talking directly to your client, you're missing out on what's really going on right now.

Andy Latimer:

And I know, it's hard. We're all out there. We're looking at situation and we're going, what do we do next? I know a lot of companies are asking that. I know a lot of brands are asking that. I know a lot of product owners, both small businesses all the way to big corporations, are sitting there saying, "How do I talk to my customer today? And how do I continue to find my customer in a world that my traditional means of delivery and distribution are drifting away and collapsing?" I promise you this, the direct to consumer engagement that's going on right now, and understanding across platform, and understanding a converged model that can look at your business and say, "How are we marketing across all platforms," and pull those levers and optimize. I promise you, if you take a look and you get inside of that front process, you will understand that you can still reach your consumer, quite frankly, in a more effective way. And you can have an incredibly profitable business, even in this changing circumstances.

Andy Latimer:

This has been Bluewater Talks. Vera, Mike, so glad you guys were able to hang out with me and chat. Look forward to further ones in the future and different topics coming up. If you want to find us and follow us, you can check us out at [bluewater.tv](http://bluewater.tv), or you can follow us on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and yes, Vimeo and YouTube. Other platforms to come. Maybe we'll get ourselves on Twitch a little bit because I know a lot of you guys are twitchy. So we'll see you next time. This has been Bluewater Talks. I'm Andy and we'll see you around.