



Lisa Bacus

EVP of National Marketing, Cigna

CMO AWARD FOR CONTENT MARKETING

Q+A on Content, Campaigns and CX with Cigna's Lisa Bacus

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Given that Lisa Bacus, EVP of National Marketing at Cigna is a recent winner of The CMO Award for Content Marketing, one might assume that our conversation would stop there especially given my somewhat obsessive interest in the topic. But fortunately for you, that is not the case as Lisa also provided insights into Cigna's recent agency change, global campaign launch and the importance of addressing the entire customer experience (CX). In fact, my favorite quote in this interview is "I believe that CX is everyone's responsibility," as she describes CIGNA's approach to dealing with this thorny challenge--one that is all too often left off a CMO's responsibility list. But enough of the preamble, here's Lisa.

Drew: Can you describe your primary content marketing initiatives this year and how they benefited your company?

Lisa: Most of our content marketing has been through web/social/mobile platforms, and through co-branded partnerships. We are also fortunate to have authored several white papers on emerging trends, that we have turned into helpful content -- videos, on-site advising, infographics, live chats -- plus a host of personalized content delivered through our customer web portal.

Drew: Do you think you are doing a better job than your competition with content? If so, how so and what does take to get to this level?

Lisa: I can only speak for Cigna, and while I don't believe anyone has mastered content marketing in our industry, we are very happy with the level of customer and consumer engagement we have had to date.

Drew: A lot of companies are just getting started with content programs. What advice would you give them overall?

Lisa: I'd start by looking within. There are probably a lot of great things that the organization is currently doing -- you just need to harness it, synthesize it, and create it in a way that is compelling and consumers can easily digest it. And with good analytics/insight, you can deliver it in a way they want to receive it.

Drew: How are you as CMO staying on top of all the new digital marketing techniques and opportunities?

Lisa: There is a lot to stay on top of! Personally, I do a lot of reading to understand emerging trends and technologies in order to identify those that may be able to deliver on the things we are exploring. We test a lot of new ideas and new technologies. Some that are working well, and others, though they didn't meet our needs, we provided good learning.

Drew: The trade press reported that CIGNA went through an agency review earlier this year--how did that process work for you and what lessons would you give to other marketers who are considering changing agencies?

Lisa: In an industry that has been going through quite a bit disruption, we had the opportunity to strengthen our branding efforts and really leverage our global brand. Until recently, our branding was managed locally, through multiple agencies operating independently. By uniting our marketing efforts across markets and across the globe, and with the support of a global agency, we were able to gain scale, consistency and greater effectiveness in our branding efforts. We were fortunate in that we had great business partners to work with, and had a strong roster of global agencies. We started the process with the end in mind, and defined the process upfront, which served us well. Also, in the second round, we presented a challenge to the finalists, to see not only the strength of their capabilities, but how they interacted with the team in the process. It was a collaborative effort all the way around and we are very happy with the results.

Drew: Your new campaign tagline “Together, all the way,” seems to represent a major shift from CIGNA’s previous “GoYou” campaign. Can you talk a little about the thinking behind the new campaign and how you rolled it out?

Lisa: The spirit of GoYou lives on, as we believe in inspiring and championing the individual. At the same time, our research told us that we needed to tell more of our story. Those who were familiar with the brand were 19 times more likely to choose us. Among our most passionate advocates, were those who talked about Cigna helping them either get well or stay well. They talked about partnership over the long haul and Cigna having their back. We knew we had an opportunity to demonstrate to others, through many proof points, how we do this, and convey that we know how hard it is to stay well on your own. This is why we’re in it with them -- together all the way.

Drew: Was there an internal component?

Lisa: Absolutely. What makes this easy is that our 35,000+ colleagues live the brand every day. In fact, we feature our own employees in our ads, talking about how they have our customers’ backs. Additionally, from a series of brand rallies, to personal commitments to the brand promise from every employee scrolling on our intranet, to a crowd-sourced contest where employees could share how they partner with charities in their community to win micro-grants for the charities -- the level of engagement has been terrific.

Drew: Customer experience (CX) does not always come under the control of the CMO yet can have a dramatic impact on the brand and ultimately the believability of your marketing initiatives. How have you been able to impact the customer experience in your current role?

Lisa: I believe that CX is everyone’s responsibility, though it is in my accountabilities. We have a team that is dedicated to CX to ensure that we understand what the most critical levers are that we can pull to have the greatest impact on the customer experience. We measure NPS across all of our businesses and all of our markets, and it makes the short list of most critical KPIs at the enterprise level. By identifying the top 3 parts of the

customer journey that are creating the least amount of joy for our customers, we can be focused, and somewhat surgical, in our approach to improve key processes and customer impacts. The other interesting thing we do is match these up again our employee engagement survey results, to see where we have common areas of opportunity and can reshape key processes that directly impact customer and employee satisfaction.

Drew: What were a few of the major lessons you learned related to launching new campaigns that you might share with fellow marketers?

Lisa: The basics -- know thy brand, know thy customer, know thy market. If you do the work to understand the current state, and what your current/prospective customers need, you can build upon your assets to ensure the brand is relevant and desirable, to drive greater consideration.

Drew: In your experience, how do you know when it’s time to make changes to an organization or department?

Lisa: When a team is no longer delivering optimal value for the customer or the company, it’s time to take a look at what you are doing and how you are doing it. I believe that most people come to work wanting to be great, so when the marketplace changes, or the business needs change, they are often quick to know it’s time to take action and change/improve the current approach.

About the author

Drew Neisser is the CEO and founder of Renegade, the NYC-based social media and marketing agency that helps inspired CMOs cut through. He is the champion of Marketing as Service, a philosophy he espouses in his writings on FastCompany.com, PSFK, TheDrewBlog and The Cut, a much-appreciated monthly newsletter. If you have a CMO success story to tell, let Drew know at dneisser@renegade.com.

