

A portrait of Marie Gulin-Merle, the CMO of L'Oréal USA, with short grey hair, wearing a white collared shirt and a dark jacket, set against a solid orange background.

L'Oréal's Digital Transformation

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Consumer experiences on digital – and more specifically mobile – are becoming much more personalised and assistive. Marie Gulin-Merle, the CMO of L'Oréal USA, shares how her company is reinventing its marketing to keep up with these accelerating trends.

think with **Google**

There wasn't one single instance that made me realise we needed to rethink our customer experience if we wanted to remain relevant – it was more a series of discoveries.

It started with the recognition that digital, and especially mobile, has fundamentally changed the way people consume media, develop brand preferences and choose products. Being able to help a consumer as they test a hairstyle in front of the mirror anytime, anywhere in the world used to feel like an unattainable dream for beauty marketers. But thanks to mobile, it's now a reality.

Because of this, we recognised that digital couldn't continue being its own channel – it had to be a part of everything we do.

Pretty quickly, we realised we needed to digitally transform to truly reinvent the way we meet our consumers' needs in the moment.

Digital transformation tip no.1: Make it persona

Because of mobile, consumers now have a personal stylist, hairdresser and makeup artist right at their fingertips, 24/7. To make sure we are there and useful whenever our customers need us, we must offer more than just customised products. We need a personalised digital experience, too.

We launched Makeup Genius, a mobile app that allows consumers to virtually try on makeup. The app scans a customer's face, analyses more than 60 characteristics, then virtually displays how various products and shade mixes can be used to achieve different looks, in real time. Consumers can select a look they like and directly order the right products with just the press of a button. As the app tracks how the customer uses it and what they buy, it learns their preferences, makes inferences based on similar customers' choices, and tailors its responses.

The important takeaway is that we didn't build Makeup Genius to mirror our mobile commerce experience. This app is a unique asset

both as a branded channel for engaging with customers and as a “fire hose” of incoming information about how our customers engage. It allows us to understand the needs of our loyal users and tailor meaningful, assistive experiences for them. We now have more than 20 million customers that we can provide a customised experience for.

“This app allows us to understand the needs of our loyal users and tailor meaningful, assistive experiences for them.”

Digital transformation tip no.2: Harness the power of data

For most of our customers, the purchase journey starts online – so we have to pay attention to what they search for and watch. To launch our Maybelline Master Contour makeup line, we partnered with Google to learn about the specific contouring questions and concerns consumers had, so we could better identify, predict and meet their needs.

We segmented our audiences into three groups, and decided to focus on the “contour-me-quick” consumers. These are women who express a desire to acquire contouring skills, but think it’s too hard or time-consuming for them to learn. We made a series of quick how-to YouTube videos that demystified the art of contouring in three simple steps. The videos were personalised by intent and demographics, to ensure that we answered the primary question the shopper had, and gave them the best advice for their skin colour and type.

This data-driven approach resulted in more than 9 million views of our videos across this key customer segment. That’s more than 9 million times we were able to help consumers find the contouring tips they were looking for, and lower the barrier to purchase.

How To Contour In A New York
Minute | Maybelline New York



Digital transformation tip no.3: Reimagine storytelling

While we're able to reach consumers throughout the many moments in their day, competition for their attention is stiffer than ever. For consumers to engage with a story, its relevance must be proven quickly. So, we have to align our message, creative and media in a compelling way, and that means speeding up our storytelling.

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And sometimes it only takes a few seconds to deliver that key message. When we launched our Root Cover Up spray, we created a YouTube ad that demonstrated the core value and usefulness of the product within the first six seconds. Consumers who loved what they were seeing could then choose to watch the full video and learn more.

Cover Gray Roots in Easy Root
Cover Up | L'Oréal Paris



Digital Transformation Recap

Make it personal. The best and most memorable experiences are the ones that feel personal. Find ways to be relevant and assistive to individuals in their moments of need.

Harness the power of data. Your customers are leaving digital footprints every time they search or watch a video. These actions contain powerful insights, which can be used to predict customer needs and inform your marketing strategies.

Reimagine storytelling. Test new creative ways to tell stories to better engage mobile consumers.