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Google's 'user-centric' brand mission

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NEW YORK: Google, the technology giant, has retained its “user-centric” brand focus in engaging consumers, while also adapting its marketing strategy to reflect new digital realities.

Bethany Poole, Global Head of Marketing for Google Learn and its Director/Ads Marketing, discussed this subject at an event held by Kantar Millward Brown in New York to unveil the BrandZ Top 100 Most Valuable US Brands 2018.

“Our mission statement hasn’t changed: ‘Make the world’s information accessible and useful to everyone,” she said. (For more, read WARC’s in-depth report: [How new marketing realities are reshaping Google](#)

(https://www.warc.com/content/article/event-reports/how_new_marketing_realities_are_reshaping_google/118271).

But, she added, in her more than a decade working for the Mountain View, California-based digital behemoth, “how this [mission] manifests itself has changed a great deal”.

One of its recent initiatives is “Grow with Google”, offering free digital tools, training and events for small businesses, teachers and students. Similarly, its “Teachable Machine” program aims to help people understand machine learning.

And highlighting the work of Google Brain, a team working on deep-learning artificial intelligence, shows how Google has expanded well beyond the strategy that informed the company’s earliest days as a marketer.

“When we started, we were all about putting our product managers up and having them explain the products,” explained Poole, who has worked at the firm since 2006.

“But if you look at what we’re talking about from Google Brain, that team [of researchers], we’ve got a wide variety of research scientists, product managers, talking about the ‘why’: The why they are excited about machine learning, and what they think they’ll be able to solve in terms of big problems with it.”

Elaborating on this theme, she suggested that Google’s earliest ads were creatively engaging, although they still essentially represented “product demos” for its search engine and advertising services.

And there was a good reason for that: “A lot of our initial users were early adopters. They were tech people who were just like our founders. And so our brand efforts, and everything that we did, was very much a product demo,” Poole said.

While the company has kept its user-centric ethos, “Grow with Google” and its other recent initiatives demonstrate its broader focus. “Now, we say ‘user-first’, but build for everyone, and really lean in to that ‘access’ piece,” said Poole.

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This article explores Google and Facebook's digital duopoly, as the two largest players in the digital advertising market are growing faster than any other competitors.

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The event report looks at how Google is responding to what it sees as the major challenges facing the internet in 2017.

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