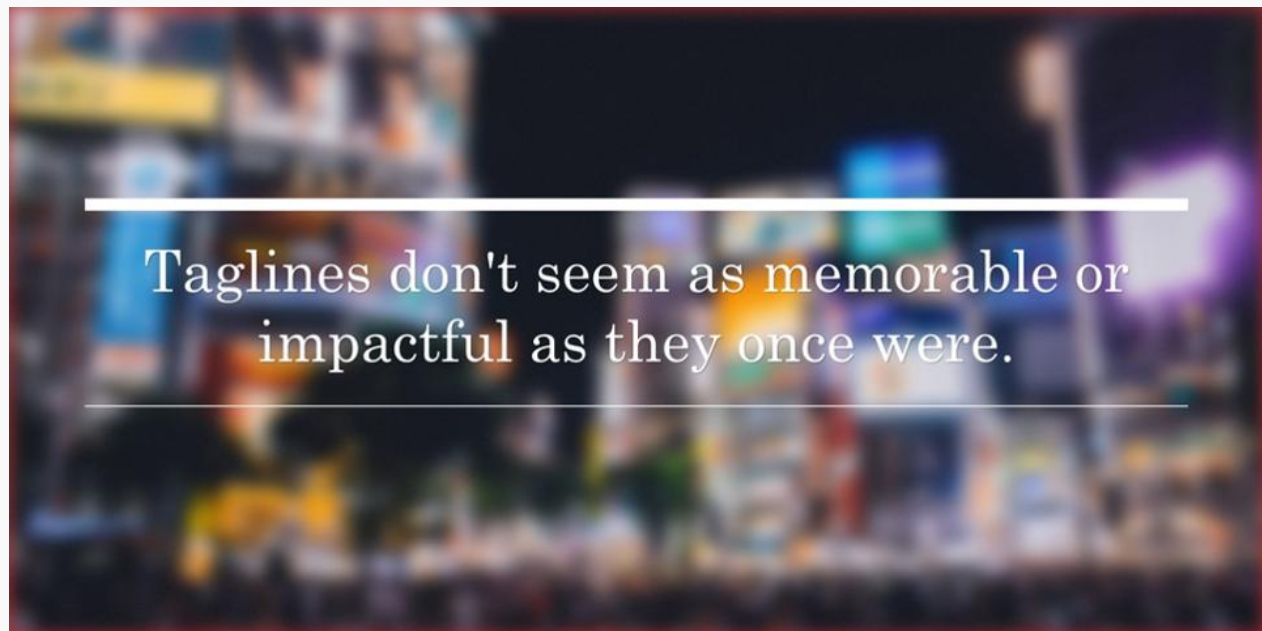


Does Your Brand Need A Tagline?

F forbes.com/sites/deniselyohn/2017/07/12/does-your-brand-need-a-tagline/

7/11/2017

If you're wondering whether or not you need a tagline, you're not alone. Many advertisers are questioning the value of taglines these days.



Source: Denise Lee Yohn, Inc.

Many advertisers are questioning the value of taglines these days.

Now that more ads being viewed on the smaller screens of mobile devices and more ads are being delivered through search results and text messages, advertisers must maximize the impact of each pixel and character in their ads and a tagline can take up valuable ad real estate that might be better used for a call to action. Plus some of the most popular brands today — Apple, Facebook, Starbucks — don't regularly use taglines, so they seem somewhat unnecessary.

Taglines also don't seem as memorable or impactful as they once were. A recent [post](#) published on a website specializing in content about personal finances listed "The 100 Best Advertising Taglines Ever." Only 6 of the 100 taglines were created after 2000 (Verizon's "Can You Hear Me Now?" and "Impossible Is Nothing" by Adidas were among those.) The list was based on an unscientific poll of "many colleagues, professionals, and consumers" with no stated criteria for how "best" was judged, but it nonetheless seems pretty accurate. Can you name a widely-known or memorable tagline from the last few years?

A combination of shorter attention spans and the proliferation of communication has produced a new marketing communications environment. It's much harder today than in years past for a brand to introduce a phrase that enters the popular lexicon and gets repeated consistently over time. Plus with politicians, athletes, and other celebrities creating their own messaging, there's more competition when creating a meme than ever before.

The tagline seems to have been replaced by the hashtag, which can be much more useful in today's social media-dominated marketing world. By adding a trending hashtag (e.g., [#starwars40th](#)) or a descriptive hashtag (e.g.,

#makeup), advertisers can increase the likelihood of being found by customers interested in a common topic. Other advertisers use branded hashtags to encourage participation in promotions or engagement campaigns, like Coke did with #MakeItHappy, which tied together social posts promoting happiness and positivity. Some brands use hashtags as if they were taglines, such as #DriveProgress which Audi used in its 2017 Super Bowl ad or Kit Kat's #haveabreak. While these "hashtaglines" seem more like traditional branding, they can sometimes turn into popular social media memes and powerful brand assets like Always created with #LikeAGirl.

Headlines also seem to have over taken taglines. In content marketing, the headline is often the only piece of communications that's read. Copyblogger [reports](#) that 8 out of 10 people will read the headline of a piece of copy, but only 2 out of 10 will read the rest of it. And [according](#) to Native Advertising, 1 in 5 Millennials say that they only read the headlines when browsing social or content feeds. So brands increasingly rely on the first words of a communication piece to create an impression, instead of the last ones which have traditionally comprised the tagline.

And communication is becoming more visual than verbal. Pictures, videos, infographics, and GIFs have replaced words in terms of breakthrough power, memorability, likeability, and sharing. Eye-tracking [studies](#) by the Nielsen Norman Group show that when images are relevant, internet readers spend more time looking at the images than they do reading text on the page. And, Axonn Research [found](#) 7 in 10 people view brands in a more positive light after watching interesting video content from them.

So all of this adds up to a general decrease in the importance of taglines in brand communication. That's not to say that you don't need a tagline. Taglines remain a powerful way to communicate a pithy brand message. [But they are only one of the many tools in an advertiser's toolbox today.](#)

Denise Lee Yohn is a brand-building expert, speaker, and author of [What Great Brands Do](#) and [Extraordinary Experiences](#). [Contact](#), [follow](#), [friend](#), or [link in](#) with her.