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## **Why did it go wrong? When brands use influencers for social impact and don't gauge the target audience first**

By Jim Joseph, CEO, U.S. and Global Chief Marketing and Integration Officer, Ketchum

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# About the Author



Marketing is a spectator sport and Jim Joseph is one of the industry's most engaging, enthralling, and entertaining commentators and drivers. In his primary role as CEO, U.S. at Ketchum, Jim constantly puts his decades-long integrated marketing experience to the test.

Jim's list of brand experience spans virtually every industry and is a who's who list of the most impressive brands on the planet including Johnson & Johnson, Procter & Gamble, Walmart, Intel, Oracle, American

Express, Novartis, Microsoft, Hyatt, Ford, and McDonald's.

Jim is also the award-winning author of *The Experience Effect* series and an adjunct instructor at New York University where he teaches a graduate class in integrated marketing. His newest book, *The Conscious Marketer*, explores the need for brands to be aware of socio-political, public health, and cultural issues in their marketing. He has also written a book about his journey as a father in *Out & About Dad*.

Entrepreneur of the Year, Agency of the Year, Consumer Launch Campaign of the Year, Most Creative Agency, Best Place to Work, Social Media Icon, Hall of Fame – these are the accolades that Jim has amassed throughout his career. But none are more important than the daily badge he wears with the most pride: dad.

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### Have you seen examples of “innovative” attempts at marketing that have gone awry?

A classic example lately is the [Bud Light influencer campaign](#) for Pride Month last year. It was innovative to feature an influencer on the actual packaging, which could have been quite engaging. But I’m not sure the brand understood its audience enough to know if they would embrace that particular influencer the way the brand would have wanted them to. Or their audience is engaged in Pride activities. It’s a great lesson learned that no matter how innovative the idea, the brand needs to make sure it meshes with the target audience. If not, pass.

**Do you have any advice for hospitality brands that advertise through mass media, like the larger chain hotels, about what they can do to “cut through the clutter” and prove “innovative?”**

The best advice always is to have an understanding of the target audience, beyond the demographics. Mass media can often be broad sweeping, reaching a very broad demographic. It's important to understand the psychographics of the target audience, especially in hospitality which is such an emotional path to purchase and experience. It's important to understand the wants, needs, desires, emotions, and pressures of the target audience so that you can tailor the messaging (whether macro or micro) to those issues. Then you will get engagement.

**Do you have any insight for aspiring marketers of consumer or lifestyle brands to use new tools or take risks in some way to be considered “innovative?”**

I would encourage everyone to embrace new technologies and give them a try. You don't have to be the first but be a fast follower. Experiment. Beta-test. Go for a test drive. It'll spark your imagination and creativity, and who knows where that will lead you! As I said earlier, experience with AI for example. Go onto some sites and play with the technology. See how it can enhance your research, your writing or creativity. Don't run away from it because you think it'll replace your skills. It will enhance them!