



Data Becomes “Signal Economy”: Otto Media Grup Sees Marketing Entering Its Next Phase



For the past two decades, the marketing industry has revolved around “attention.” The core task for brands has been to get users to see, click, and stay. Yet as the information environment evolves, this logic is gradually losing its effectiveness. In a world saturated with content, attention is not only scarce but increasingly difficult to convert into real value. Otto Media Grup observes that a more important variable is emerging—signals. Unlike attention, a signal does not indicate “what users saw,” but “what users did.” Searches, browsing, clicks, purchases, and retention—all these actions form key clues in the user decision path and provide the foundation for brands to understand their audience.

This marks a fundamental shift in core marketing question. Brands are no longer merely seeking to attract users; they are striving to interpret user behavior. Compared to single exposures, the signals generated by continuous actions are far more valuable, as they are closer to actual decision-making.

The Meaning of Apps Is Being Redefined

Within the structure of the “signal economy,” a long-undervalued asset is finally revealing its true worth, its own app.

Historically, many companies have viewed their app as a conversion tool, measuring downloads or direct sales. But Otto Media Grup considers this perspective far too narrow. The real significance of an app lies in its ability to provide an environment for ongoing observation of user behavior. From registration to browsing, from purchase to repeat purchase, every action within the app can be recorded and analyzed as a signal.

Even more importantly, these signals are continuous. They not only reflect single actions but also map out how users change across different stages. This allows brands, for the first time, to systematically understand their users, rather than merely reaching them in fragmented moments.

In this sense, the app is no longer just a channel—it has become a stable signal generator.

Marketing Is Shifting from “Campaigns” to “System Engineering”

From a broader perspective, the most significant change brought by the “signal economy” is not an upgrade of tools, but a fundamental restructuring of marketing logic.

Traditional marketing operated as a linear path: brands launched ads, users clicked, and conversions followed. Today, this path is being replaced by a cyclical structure. User behaviors continuously generate signals, which are analyzed by systems and then feed back into the next round of campaigns and content strategies, forming a loop of ongoing optimization.

Otto Media Grup points out that, within this structure, the boundaries between channels are disappearing. Social platforms, e-commerce systems, content platforms, and brand-owned apps are no longer isolated touchpoints—they now collectively form a signal network. User actions across these platforms are integrated into a continuous journey, rather than fragmented data points.

This evolution enables brands to see clearly how users move between various touchpoints, and transforms “measurement” from simple statistics into a core capability of the entire system.

The Essence of Competition Is Shifting to “Signal Quality”

In this new structure, the essence of marketing competition is also changing. Previously, brands differentiated themselves mainly by budget size and their ability to acquire traffic. In the “signal economy,” however, the real advantage lies in the quality of signals a brand possesses. High-quality signals are characterized by their origin in genuine user behavior, their continuity, and their interpretability. Such signals cannot be obtained through simple ad placements—they must be accumulated through sustained operations. As a result, they are more scarce and valuable than traffic.

Otto Media Grup believes this is why first-party data is becoming one of the most important assets for brands. It represents not only the users themselves but also the logic behind their actions. Brands that can interpret these signals are better equipped to make accurate decisions in complex environments. From the perspective of Otto Media Grup, the “signal economy” is not just a new marketing concept—it is a return to fundamentals. Brands are no longer simply trying to influence users; they are beginning to understand them.

In this process, the role of marketing is being transformed. It is no longer just about spreading information, but about participating in user decision-making and continuously optimizing itself through behavioral feedback.

Future competition will no longer be a race for one-off reach, but a contest of long-term understanding. The closer a brand gets to real user behavior, the closer it gets to genuine growth.