

How can data improve customer experience through digital initiatives?

According to [the IDC, we will generate 40 zettabytes \(ZB\), or 40 trillion GB by 2020](#). With huge amounts of data being created on a daily basis, are marketers really making the best use of what they have? What can they do to transform the way they interact with their customers? How can digital techniques help to improve customer experience? In this month's Ask the Experts article [Simon Bowker, Area Director, Pacific, South Asia and Korea, Marketing Applications](#) answers these questions and outlines what brands can and should be doing with this wealth of data insight to transform their digital offering, and how doing so can dramatically improve the level of experience they provide to their customers.

Some brands are leading the way when it comes to creating digital products that make use of their data to deliver the best experiences for their customers, and ensure they are speaking to them in the most efficient way possible. Others still have a long way to go. Technological developments have made it far easier to cultivate these deeper relationships than ever before, so there is really no reason not to use the tools and expertise now available to improve their interactions with customers. Consumers want their expectations to be met and retailers want to guide them through the purchase journey – and making use of the available data is the only way to achieve this and lay the foundations for relationship moving forwards.

With that in mind, what do brands need to do to ensure they have the right digital initiatives in place so they aren't left behind?

Find ways to link on and offline

Following the success of Apple's innovative in-store payment methods, more and more retailers are choosing to issue their customers with a digital receipt instead of a paper one. In doing so, retailers are able to link what their in store customers are doing, with their actions online. By bridging the ever present gap between on and offline, retailers can now identify a customer's online and in store behaviour, therefore allowing them to seamlessly track the entire shopper journey, a most importantly, look for ways to make it even better.

Transform data usage to encourage re-engaging

Targeting consumers online with a product relating to one they have recently purchased in store shows the customer that their needs are understood and they are more likely to consider making the next purchase. The benefits to the consumer are clear, no more clutter, and receipts for big ticket products filed neatly away in their inbox. It makes the overall customer experience, as they switch between channels, seamless and helps create positivity around the brands. For businesses however, the benefits of bridging the gap between on and offline are far greater.

Brands, both here and in the US, have been investing in products that span this virtual data gap to enhance their customers' experiences. Investing in knowing your customer on and offline helps obtain instantaneous customer feedback, enhance the online buying journey and the path to repeat purchase,



increases the number of customer touch points and provides greater insight into customer buying behaviour. Knowing all of this about customers will help brands to build their business around what the customer truly wants, therefore engendering longer term loyalty and the financial returns that come with this.

Make interactions timely, relevant and personalised

Data enables businesses to nurture their customers with highly personalised, useful content, which in turn helps convert prospects to customers and turn customers into advocates through marketing automation. This is another huge benefit of being able to link your offline customer behaviour with online.

Good automated customer interaction, giving customers the information they want, when they want it, is dependent upon the brand's ability to store and manipulate relevant data about their customers' behaviour. This is key to enabling them to send highly personalised and automatic messages. Targeted communications generally result in significant new revenue, and provide an excellent ROI.

When it comes to transactional emails such as receipts, order confirmations, notifications of shipping and password enquiries, sent soon after the customer's interaction with a brand, the content must be targeted and personalised. If based on accurate customer data collected both on and offline, the email is far more likely to be opened and succeed in engaging the customer in valuable conversations, than those that do not fall into this criteria.

Invest in the channel strategy

A customer-initiated interaction is seven to ten times more likely to result in a sale than a company-initiated interaction or communication. Every opportunity must be analysed to understand the reason behind the interaction between customer and brand. A comprehensive channel strategy allows you to consider how you should manage a customer interaction when a customer engages with you.

Solutions should be aligned to your current business requirements, but also flexible enough to change in real-time, in alignment with your marketing efforts. Your solution should address the needs of real-time marketing so you can quickly analyse message data, integrate customer sessions and 'Big Data' insight. This will allow you to decide on the best offer or message to deliver to your customers.

Plan ahead to avoid losing opportunities

Creating digital products that bring your data from the offline and online worlds will undoubtedly bring you more data. Before embarking on this you should ensure you are able to manage the potential influx it will bring.

Ensuring you have the right data management system in place to manage and extract the value of data will allow you to continue the valuable conversations with your customers. There's no benefit to investing in one half of your data strategy, if you're going to ignore the second, more valuable half. The data will be worthless, without a program in place to extract the insights. Having visibility of all potential interactions



and understanding where they fit in the customer journey is also crucial if the data insights are going to deliver maximum value for the business.

Of equal importance is the ability to adapt and react to incoming data instantly, which will allow you to maintain a competitive edge and is vital to success. The data is there for the taking; through mining the information correctly, and making most of opportunities on and offline, brands will be able to use data-driven insights that enhance the experience for the customer, and ultimately generate a positive ROI.

This article is a summary of **Teradata's newsletter "Inside Digital Marketing"**. If this article was forwarded to you as a recommendation and you wish to receive further news from the email marketing sector yourself you can [subscribe here](#).