

COLUMNS

Using app data to improve the customer experience

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It is becoming more important to personalize the digital delivery of our communications and content in an environment where we speak to audiences digitally more often than in person.

When I say speak, I am talking about all the electronic interfaces you offer such as email, Web site, ecommerce site, text messages and push messages not just your application. The delivery of information and communication should be timely, relevant and contextual in the digital world to effectively engage with and retain customers.

Believe it or not, United States consumers now own more connected devices than there are people in the country and spend more time interacting with those devices than any other medium combined.

In just a few years, consumers have quickly evolved to expect personalized communications delivered exactly when and where it matters most to them. Some call this phenomenon "mobile moments."

4 key data sets

The digital marketers that I talk to tell me that there are significant challenges to keeping up with today's rapidly changing audience expectations and demands.

One of the primary challenges is the ability to capture, harness and instantly take action on their data to engage and retain customers, and improve the overall customer experience.

Successful digital direct marketing programs leverage four key data sets to deliver the kind of personalized communications experiences that engage and retain customers:

Demographic

Behavioral

Location

Transaction

Demographic data

It is vital to know your customers. What are their names? Where do they live, work and play?

Digital interfaces such as mobile apps present an unparalleled opportunity to capture baseline user data, including

the user's name, email or mobile number.

In addition, opt-in rates for mobile apps to receive email, text and push communications can reach 30 percent to 80 percent, depending on user affinity and interest.

Social media sources are also helpful in building individual customer profiles. You can easily leverage email addresses to match publicly available social media accounts, and then further populate your database with information such as name, occupation, profile description and followers.

Finally, third-party data sources some dating from the direct mail era can also provide additional consumer demographic and lifestyle propensities.

Behavioral data

Tracking individual behavior can provide powerful insights and generate actionable data. Digital interfaces generate a wealth of data metrics such as page views, clicks, scans, redemptions, opens and closes.

Location data

Apps now have the ability to link a user's location to data metrics. Tagging latitude and longitude coordinates will identify their location at any given time. You can even measure time spent at a given location.

More precise location data can also be collected with the use of beacons, which is an increasingly popular choice among retailers. Some retailers even track user presence at competitive locations.

Transaction data

Transaction data are very powerful and predictive. The challenge is, how do you put it to use from a marketing perspective?

Integrations are often the long pole in the tent, preventing marketers from accessing real-time data. Successful programs typically extract the data in real time, or at a frequency high enough to complement their marketing data stream.

Personalize communications to customers

To truly engage and retain your customers, you must combine these data sources into an easy-to-use segmentation and marketing automation tool, which is really the key to a successful, data-driven personalization program.

You may be wondering, will consumers actually share their personal data with you? Absolutely, according to some surprising results we found this year in our study with mCordis, "Consumer Attitudes to Privacy, Permission and Personalization."

In fact, when we looked at the mobile usage habits of 1,050 users of all ages, we found that consumers are more than willing to share their personal data if they feel they are getting something worthwhile in return royalty rewards, discounts or coupons and if they trust the content provider.

THE BOTTOM LINE is this: The more personalized your communications with the audience, the better it via email, text, Web site, ecommerce and apps. And the best way to personalize messages for your audience experience is by leveraging demographic, behavioral, location and transaction data. As quickly as possible, because if you do not, your competitors will.

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