

COLUMNS

Do not get stuck in mobile limbo

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We have entered a new era of marketing one that I refer to as context marketing in which success is inextricably linked to effectively connecting with the mobile consumer.

Context marketing starts with a mindset shift that helps drive strategies to deliver exactly what customers need, right when they need it.

As more consumers come to expect the experiences delivered through context marketing, marketers who do not adopt it will fall behind, and those who do will be mobile leaders.

Traditionalists see mobile as a channel and focus on the device, whereas leaders understand that mobile is a consumer state of mind.

Leaders do not manage mobility projects. They build ongoing processes based on deep customer insights, smart data, context-driven content and constant optimization.

Here are some tips that can help you become a mobile leader.

Put customers at the heart of the strategy

Consumers are mobile in many senses. They use devices while they are on the go, and move from one channel to the next while interacting with your brand.

A typical consumer journey might include responding to an email offer, heading to the Web to look at brands, retailers and ecommerce sites, pulling up a review application via smartphone, or connecting with friends on Facebook to discuss a potential purchase or share feedback about a brand.

This behavior demonstrates that while marketing departments and platforms are often defined by silos, consumers are not, and they expect to be engaged seamlessly across every touch point.

Consumers also move at the speed of Internet, completing tasks in mere moments. Once their transaction is complete, retargeted ads and nurture cycles are a little late.

To get in the game, marketers need to connect with consumers in the midst of transactions wherever they are.

Clearly, everything hinges on the customer experience, and that is where planning should start.

It is vital to do the homework needed to understand the context of every interaction consumers have with your brand,

and to identify the experiences that customers want based on their history, location and current desires.

To do so, marketers must consider how all touch points link together, and then map customer journeys to identify dead ends and conversion paths.

Apply a smart approach to data

Mobile leaders understand that mobile is one channel among many. To address the entire experience, inclusive of the mobile device, marketers must ensure data, regardless of channel, aligns around the individual consumer in real-time and at scale.

Delivering experiences relevant to customers must be a holistic process, not a one-off project.

When mobile is a project rather than a process data, experiences and content and the teams responsible for them can become siloed, making it impossible to gain a single view of the customer and adding unnecessary cost and complexity.

Focusing on standalone mobile technology and content prevents marketers from interacting with customers in a consistent, engaging way.

Ideally, content should be created once and used everywhere, regardless of channel.

With the right technology platform, it is possible to reuse content in multiple channels. It is also possible to combine social listening with Web analytics and marketing automation to ensure that all delivered content is more relevant and contextual.

By integrating previously siloed data from different touch points, marketers can begin to get real-time customer insights that incorporate the diversity of channels, devices, and geographies involved.

These contextual insights should be combined with a brand's complete knowledge of its customer's past interactions and behavior.

When the knowledge from those interactions is aggregated and analyzed, brands can build complete pictures of individual customers.

Measure, learn and optimize

Mobile leaders will create and manage content in one place, allowing them to monitor all customer experiences in one place as well, streamlining measurement.

To ensure the single customer view required for accurate mobile measurement, marketers should integrate their mobile Web site and apps.

If an app does not recognize that a customer has used a site, marketers lose a lot of valuable, contextual insight.

It is also vital to combine mobile metrics with data on email opening, click-through rates, social interactions and commerce activity to truly understand the customer's current state.

ONCE BRANDS have the ability to analyze individual consumers' patterns, they will also have the tools required to continually optimize the customer's experience and turn insights into truly personalized interactions.

Mobile leaders put customers at the heart of their strategy, employ a smart approach to data and optimize interactions based on continual measurement.

By making the shift to a mobile leadership mindset and focusing on a holistic customer experience, marketers become mobile leaders and quickly outperform those who chose to cling to the past.

This is the second in a series of three articles on Context Marketing. The first article discussed the challenges related to mobile marketing and the pitfalls of approaching it without the right mindset, strategy and support in place.

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