

COLUMNS

## Days of mass-marketing winding down

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"Selfie," "my favorites," "wish list," "recommended for you," "items you may like" all popular words and phrases defining the state of today's consumers, signaling to marketers that it is time to say goodbye to the days of mass-marketing and hello to one-on-one conversations.

We are now in the all-about-me era in which well-informed and proactive customers demand personalization from brands across all touch-points. In fact, this expectation for marketers will only increase as we head into 2015 with more tools at our disposal.

Recent studies have even revealed that 40 percent of consumers are more likely to buy from retailers who personalize according to their preferences.

Additionally, 59 percent of customers believe it is easier to find the items that they are looking for when brands personalize the experience and 39 percent tend to buy more if retailers offer recommendations based on their past purchases.

While consumers are demanding more control, marketers are using innovative strategies to collect customer data to deliver on a personalized brand experience.

The following highlights approaches that some marketers are using to gain customer insights to fuel this effort.

### **Social media**

As we all know, social media is the promised land of customer data.

Facebook, specifically, has the richest database and is a great place to gain valuable insights. The social platform allows you to leverage ads to find your customers and target audiences according to the parameters you set within your targeting selection for creating an ad.

With the information acquired from the ad placement, you can learn about your customers' interests and behavior, as well as harness these learnings to deliver personalized content to customers and target audiences via targeted ads.

This will then initiate a useful cycle of customer insights that will allow you to continue to optimize your content based on engagement from the ads.

The downside here is that you have to pay to play.

Segmentation data belongs to Facebook and incremental access to these segmented users is getting costlier over time.

## Online

Most brands track Web site user behavior to learn about their customers.

In addition to reviewing how users navigate between different pages of content, it is crucial to look at the various types of products that they clicked and saved to their shopping cart.

The Holy Grail of tracking customer behavior and retargeting is the online cookie.

The cookie and online retargeting tools allow brands to reserve personalized content across owned media channels and online media networks to get the products that they are most likely to purchase served across sites to target consumers.

## Mobile

Tracking customers via mobile to personalize is proving to be more challenging than social media and online.

With multiple experiences such as applications, browsers and messaging, the concept of using a cookie to gain insights for personalization breaks down over multiple platforms.

Incrementally, location-based technologies are also challenging how we think about sending content in real-time.

As a result, personalization on the mobile front is starting to rely on app integration and the mobile number to initiate a personalized mobile conversation.

Strategies include using mobile messaging to create one-to-one brand conversations that can be leveraged to harvest the mobile number, deploying personalized content across mobile touch-points as well as across platforms.

This strategy is highly personal and provides marketers with declared data from their customers, but also empowers marketers to own their data, rather than purchasing it from sources such as Facebook or other data providers.

THE BIG QUESTION that most brand marketers have today is how do we bring this all together?

There is no silver bullet here, but it all comes down to having integration between vendors and a powerful CRM so you can act on the insights you gain as a result of this data.

Real-time personalized communication is the future, and it will continue to be the expectation from customers.

The days of mass-marketing are really winding down due to cost and the ever-increasing number of messages we need to filter through on a daily basis.

We need to get smarter with our marketing and in today's market the customer expects a personal one-to-one conversation.

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