

COLUMNS

Delivering on the promise of personalization

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By **Matt Ramerman**

There is little argument in marketing circles that personalization is a potential game-changer. One-to-one outreach, rather than one-to-many, has benefits that even those on the receiving end see.

In fact, 75 percent of consumers like it when brands personalize offers and messages, according to the Aberdeen Group.

So what has been holding things back? While brands and agencies work hard to identify narrow audiences, the limiting factor is the efficiency of producing numerous versions of ads and other information to address differences within narrow audience segments.

But technology, experience, and some smarts have changed that for some.

Churn of events

A good example is one of the major phone carriers that has decreased churn and increased satisfaction by personalizing its communications with customers.

The effort by the company actually begins on day one of a new relationship with a consumer.

Working with a personalization firm, the mobile delivers a welcome video that is the very first point of communication with a new customer. This personalized welcome video acknowledges and thanks the subscriber for his or her business and summarizes the details of the account and what to expect when the first bill arrives.

As a result, the company has seen:

Significant reduction in churn (customers leaving in the first 30 days)

A decrease in calls to customer support

The highest recall of any other company touch with the customer (more than 50 percent measured at 90 days post-video delivery)

Significant increase in revenue (ARPU, or average revenue per user and lifetime value)

And the one-to-one marketing continues through the life of the carrier-customer relationship.

An example is the communication of service enhancements.

As individual neighborhoods receive network upgrades, the company pushes personalized video to all affected subscribers, alerting them to those enhancements.

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As a result, the operator has seen a significant increase in Net Promoter Score, a key tool to measure loyalty.

Sub text

Mobile messaging with video is the most powerful direct marketing tool available to marketers today.

Mobile campaigns that use messaging are the most inclusive reaching smartphones and simpler feature phones and often the most successful.

Why? It is imperative to keep all mobile programs simple and ubiquitous.

In other words, marketers should execute programs that do not exclude any customer.

The MMS (multimedia messaging service) channel picks up where SMS (text messaging) leaves off. It is highly scalable and can include a long text message (greater than 160 characters), images, audio files and video.

This powerful utility allows for managing numerous scenarios in support of the call to-action: Text and links can be dynamically inserted including click-to-call, click-to-view the closest location, click-to-download application, click-to-open native application and, perhaps most important, click-to-buy.

PERSONALIZATION HAS big implications with the potential to increase traffic, conversions and average order value, according to Forrester Research.

The key to selling is relevancy.

Relevancy is the perfect alignment between "who" sees your ad or other communications and "what" it says. That does not come easy.

Savvy marketers are identifying platforms that synthesize first and third-party data, building custom target audiences and leveraging unique attribution.

The result is exceptional ad performance and increased brand perceptions.

In this mobile era, context plus relevancy drives engagement that leads to higher conversions and to happier and longer-lasting customers.

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