

COLUMNS

## Marketers must track behavior down to the individual level

May 17, 2016



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By **Sunil Thomas**

The world of mobile marketing is rapidly changing and it is imperative that marketers understand these changes and how to adapt their strategies accordingly.

With the shift away from home computers and the rise of personal tablets and smartphones, the current connected experience is much more personalized and unique to each user.

So what does that mean for marketing? It means it is time to get personal.

Personally speaking

According to a new Forrester Research report, only 35 percent of marketers believe that they have best practices in place to guide the use of mobile technology.

So why are so many brands falling short when mobile engagement has proven to be way of the future?

The problem is that they are not tracking behavior down to the individual user, and without individualized data you cannot create truly personalized messaging.

Most data analysts and marketers gather large amounts of segmented data generated over long periods of time page views, sessions and transactions and use that insight to create better experiences in the future.

This is the old way of doing things, and while it is certainly a step in the right direction, it fails to consider individual user behavior.

Tracking behavior down to the individual and create comprehensive user profiles is essential for delivering personalized mobile messaging, whether that is via email, in-application messages or push notifications.

The digital marketing world has effectively shifted from a one-size-fits-all mentality to what is being referred to as mass personalization, which entails tailoring messaging based on one or two attributes, such as age or gender. This does not do enough to create a truly personalized experience, and consumers can see right through it.

To be successful, brands need to create and distribute messaging tailored to a single user based on that user's individual behavior and preferences.

Brands that do not personalize their messaging fail to connect with the millennial generation and are doomed to become spam or seen as spam.

Time and again

When it comes to personalization, timing is everything

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What brands need now is software that can track individual user behavior in real-time, so that they can create personalized experiences based on the data that software collects.

By thinking in terms of how the user engages with your mobile platform, you can tailor your message accordingly and provide accurate and timely notifications.

Real-time marketing automation influences consumers during the decision-making process, not after, which is what ultimately drives conversions.

That small window of personalized and timely influence is why more brands are offering discounts and promotions during the checkout process, and it is working.

Funnel vision

In general, a common struggle for gathering user data in real-time is the need to use funnels and cohorts that are tracked beforehand to immediately gather sample data.

These funnels separate users based on preset rules and can identify user behavior as it comes in.

There are tremendous benefits that can be seen from proactively setting up these tools and providing personalized marketing strategies.

For example, a recent VentureBeat study of 506 marketers found that between 70 percent and 94 percent have seen an increase in the effectiveness of various key metrics by employing personalization, depending on the specific metric.

Furthermore, several case studies highlight impressive effects of truly personalized messaging in essential areas such as bounce rates, add-to-cart rates, conversion rates, email revenue and average order value.

A few highlights include:

Microsoft dropped bounce rates by 35 percent and increased add-to-cart rate by 10 percent

O'Neill increased conversions by 46 percent with web personalization

Alex and Ani has seen a 73 percent lift in monthly email revenue

GameStop saw a 41 percent increase in average order value (AOV)

THE OLD WAYS of mass personalization spray and pray are fading away.

It is now critical for marketers to be both proactive in data collection and track mobile engagement down to the individual.

This not only grants a better understanding of user behavior, but also allows you to distribute the best possible message at the best possible moment for each unique user, which is what ultimately drives mobile conversions.

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