

COLUMNS

Pinpointing your target audience with hyper-relevance

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By AN AMERICAN MARKETER COLUMNIST

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Marketers are inundated with stats about the growth of smartphone use.

I cannot resist mentioning a couple. Consumers look at their phones about 150 times per day, according to comScore's 2012 Q3 State of the Mobile Market Report. And since that is the case, it should not surprise anyone that 78 percent of us use phones in retail stores, per the xAd and Telemetrics Retail Report Q2 2013.

Mobile marketing is critical and retail marketers need to take much better advantage of this incredible opportunity. In our work, we have explored the connection between mobile and retail in depth. Here are some new ways to pinpoint your target audience for better insights and results.

Not all location data are equal

First, they are mobile devices, so one powerful data point about your target is where they are. It is also critical to know where they have been. However, be aware that not all location data are equally accurate.

For example, satellite/GPS data is terrific, but it requires people to opt in. Wi-Fi data can add another layer of detail, but only if it is enabled on the individual's phone.

Cell tower triangulation only provides a broad idea about where the person is. Least accurate is when users report their location for example, filling in a ZIP code in a store locator app.

Hyperlocal is the goal

We now have access to technologies from ad networks and data partners that combine all these data points with device-level targeting to match up anonymous household information with location. This is a brilliant advance.

Imagine being able to follow a device's user throughout a day or a week. You would have a time stamp of when she left the house in the morning, the location of the gym she uses, her favorite coffee place, detail about where she works, the grocery store she prefers. The level of detail can seem a little spooky.

Because of privacy issues, it is critical that the data be anonymous.

With this location-level detail, ad networks can build out profiles and personas to predict behavior and activities. It tells marketers where our target is and because the data is time stamped, when the target will be where they are going next.

This knowledge is pure gold. Within a matter of milliseconds, a retailer can deliver a message to the target based on her profile just as she is planning to walk into a competitor's nearby store. That is relevant.

Add new dimension to customer relationship

Just as your significant other knows you love them when you remember important details, your customers appreciate this, too.

Capturing household data can help retailers fill in the gaps, providing the critical details needed for pinpoint marketing. And if the device's Wi-Fi is turned on and connected to the home network, all the other devices related to that person or family become discoverable.

For example, using this "device share graph," if I search wedding planning on my phone, when I turn on my home laptop, I am served content related to wedding dresses. That is cool.

But after I look at fly fishing gear on the iPad, I may get an ad on my laptop showing a woman fly fishing. By knowing my profile, the network predicts I am a girl because of previous searches, and serves an appropriate, hyper-relevant ad.

These insights enable marketers to add a new dimension of relevancy to the customer relationship.

Retail ROI is end game

Mobile marketers can use all this data in endlessly creative ways to delight their customers.

What delights retail marketers is the ability to track results in much more detailed and sophisticated ways. This lets you prove real ROI and determine sales attribution more accurately.

With new hyperlocal tracking capabilities, marketers can know by device exactly who viewed their mobile ad and whether that user subsequently walked into the store.

Marketers already know that click-through rates can be helpful, but this kind of analysis is hyper-relevant to all mobile marketers.

With mobile, we have an incredible opportunity to reach our target audience on the go.

Now, thanks to hyperlocal, we are able to create the added value of contextual relevancy to the customer when it comes to ad placement.

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