

Five Ways to Improve Engagement Using Multichannel Marketing

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In this digital age, the need for integrated marketing is paramount. More than ever, consumers are interacting with brands across an array of channels, creating opportunities for those marketers who can engage appropriately at different stages of the customer journey.

In advance of Econsultancy's JUMP London event on 10 October, we've been looking at some of the best joined-up campaigns from retailers. Here, Econsultancy research analyst Amy Rodgers outlines five key points for marketers to keep in mind.

1) Join up offline and online stores

A trip to a bricks-and-mortar retail store is no longer a standalone consumer journey in an age where a customer can have almost unlimited access to the online world.

An offline purchase is often preceded by research which can include visits to a retailer's website, competitors' websites, price-comparison sites, and social media reviews. This research can continue via mobile directly up to the offline purchase.

Online research forms part of the consumer's 'path to purchase', and being aware of this journey is key to increasing sales. At a talk at Econsultancy's Future of Digital Marketing (FODM) event in June, House of Fraser E-commerce director, Andy Harding, gave a compelling presentation about the need for retailers to embrace multichannel.

He explained why his company had opened two 'concept' stores in Aberdeen and Liverpool where customers can browse products using tablets and interactive screens.

"Digitising the in-store experience is key", he said. "Multichannel customers are three to four times more valuable than single channel customers each year."

An increasing number of retailers are embracing 'reserve and collect' services, which take advantage of the online research customers are doing prior to an offline purchase. Argos attributed 39% of their sales to this service in their 2012 Annual Report.

Another retailer which has understood the importance of a joined-up experience is Marks & Spencer, who are bringing digital to the shop floor in their Cheshire Oaks store, with high definition TV screens to showcase products, staff equipped with iPads, virtual counters and lots of QR codes and free wi-fi.

2) Make use of increasing smartphone and tablet use

Let's start with the basics on this one. Your mobile website must be optimised. No ifs or buts – it has to be fully optimised, UX tested, and glitch-free – or your sales will take a hit.

In February this year, Dominos UK revealed that 13% of its digital sales come from a smartphone or tablet, and at Econsultancy's FODM event in June, addictive! founder Simon Andrews predicted that within the next eight years, nearly all consumer behaviour will be driven by mobile.

Mobile is crucial because it is linked to all other channels; consumers access retail websites, email, social media, and search engines via mobile devices, and as a result each and every channel needs optimising for viewing on a smartphone, and likewise on a tablet.

Check out the mobile campaign created by British Airways to promote its Executive Club mobile application.

3) Lead your TV audience online

Traditionally, watching TV has been a passive experience that involved limited choice. Consumers are now faced with a multitude of options and more avenues through which they can consume content than ever before.

With the penetration of mobile devices reaching an all-time high, consumers are increasingly using multiple devices which watching TV, and driving these consumers online using their devices is becoming a key focus for marketers.

An example of a brand extending the TV ad experience online was AXA's use of QR codes in its TV ads for their home insurance iPhone app.

4) Engage with fans via social media

Social media marketing has seen a huge boom over the last couple of years, and most marketers see this channel as a key way of engaging consumers, allowing conversations on a more personal level than previously possible. Although brands have historically been wary of investing in social due to its hard-to-measure return on investment, better processes and technology have made the channel easier to track and attribute value to.

Statistics from a Reevoo survey show that a massive 88% of consumers 'sometimes or always' consult a review when making a purchase, and 60% were more likely to purchase from a site that has customer reviews on.

Social media sites are an ideal medium for customers to review their experience with a retailer and their products, and encouraging this interaction and providing personalised responses will lead to further engagement.

For a great example of how social media can be used to support a global ad campaign, look at H&M's Superbowl ad campaign with David Beckham.

5) Personalise the customer experience using data

Personalisation, if done well, can huge increase customer engagement and, as mentioned, social media has facilitated an increasingly personalised customer journey in recent years. Extending this experience

to other channels relies on making sense and use of the wealth of data that is available to marketers on where their online customers have come from.

Although some think that personalising emails, for example, with a customer's name is responded to negatively, without doubt using data to target display and email ad campaigns can work really well.

The launch of Facebook Exchange will enable advertisers to use first and third party data to re-target site visitors when they are on Facebook.

Encouraging customers to log in to checkout pages enabling the collection of demographic data, or at the very least a name and email address, enables targeted purchase suggestions based on what the user has previously clicked on or bought, abandoned basket reminder emails, and emailed offer vouchers for example.

Data was used to effectively create a more targeted, personalised campaign in this Consumer Connect campaign example by Nectar, Sainsbury's and Yahoo.

Link:

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