A roadmap for marketing personalisation success

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While the technology to unlock the real value of personalisation is readily available, it's important to start your personalisation journey with a clear roadmap for success.

While personalisation can deliver some really big wins for brands, when done badly – much like anything in life – your efforts won't bear much fruit. And they might even embarrass you a bit. The majority of the mistakes businesses make when it comes to personalisation are caused by a lack of up-to-date data, inaccurate customer details and incomplete buying behaviour and purchase history. Personalisation fails also happen when we make assumptions based on single interactions or when we inundate our customers with personalised messages.

All of these things come down to the same thing – the lack of a roadmap or strategy for personalisation success. If you're keen to deliver truly individualised consumer experiences, I think McKinsey's blueprint for personalisation at scale is a great place to start. According to management consulting firm, personalisation at scale is all about the 4Ds — data, decisions, design and distribution. Let's unpack this in more detail.

The devil's in the data

If your customer data is outdated, if the information is inaccurate or if it's sitting in siloes across the business, your personalisation efforts will fall flat. Similarly, if you don't have enough information about your customers, you won't be able to create truly personalised experiences. Here, the right customer data platform (CDP), which connects first-party data across various systems to create an addressable customer identity, can be a game changer.

A CDP is also an incredible asset as we move into a world defined by hyper-personalisation – which leverages advanced technologies and data analytics techniques to go beyond regular personalisation. Hyper-personalisation allows us to do even more with the data we already have. When using artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, brands can better anticipate a customer's needs and can easily re-adjust their understanding of a customer based on new interactions. In this way, marketing campaigns get smarter over time, which makes it possible to create experiences that are unique to a

specific individual.

Using information to make the right decisions

What one needs to remember is that any ideas we have about personalisation are just ideas until we test them. Once you've gathered insights about your customers, you then need to validate these insights and determine if the assumptions you have will deliver the results you're after.

If, for example, your email marketing strategy, which entails sending several emails every day, isn't performing as you'd hoped because your customers seem to be dismissing these messages, you might take the decision to reduce the volume of emails sent and consider your wording more carefully. Again, machine learning and AI models can optimise your decisioning and help you to identify patterns that you didn't previously see so that you can experiment with new ways of engaging with your target audience.

Designing an approach that speaks to your customers

While it is really important to start small, you also need to be strategic. Creating bespoke content campaigns can be effective, but when designing a personalisation strategy, scale is essential. If you run a nursery and you develop a campaign to upsell bird food to everyone who buys a bird feeder, this probably seems like a good idea. But, if you only sell one or two bird feeders every month, your efforts won't noticeably boost your business' bottom line.

So, when thinking about personalisation, try to find ways to repurpose content or to create modular content so that it can be reworked or tweaked slightly and then used elsewhere. This content has to be properly tagged and stored in a central repository so that it isn't difficult to find and so that users can mix and match different assets to determine what works best.

Getting the message out there

Modern customers have so many channels to choose from, which gives you more ways to connect with them but can also make choosing the right channel a little tricky. That being said, if you have the necessary foundations in place, you'll also have the data you need to discern what channels are the most relevant. The goal is to create a seamless and coordinated experience regardless of how or where customers interact with your brand.

Having the right tools is great — but you need to be considered when it comes to the best ways to use them. If a customer visits your website and browses through a few products but doesn't buy anything, you could try to entice them into a sale using push notifications or targeted social ads. It's all about using the right triggers, at the right time to guide customers along their journey.

Our goal is to help customers get their personalisation strategy right. To find out how we do this, connect with us, today. Click here to reach out.

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