Call analytics platforms: What are they good for?

Marketers are using call analytics platforms to identify the rich data and consumer insights hidden in the growing volume of inbound calls. Call analytics platforms are one of the few martech systems that can track both online and offline leads. Call tracking – following a call from source (i.e., website, click-to-call search or display ad) to sales representative (i.e., based on geographic location or product line) – has been a core use case.

However, call analytics platforms now work for a number of marketing use cases, including the following:

- **Marketing attribution:** Call analytics provide flexible attribution across media channels, helping brands understand which digital media are driving phone calls. PPC marketers, in particular, have adopted call analytics to connect callers to specific campaigns and keywords, and track keywords to conversion events. The goal is to optimize bids for the keywords driving the most productive calls.
- **Personalization:** Call data can be combined with other martech system data to improve marketing personalization. Call analytics surface demographic data, product interest, buying stage and customer type. By pushing caller audiences into PPC, CRM or other marketing automation systems, marketers can optimize for the next right action.
- **Persona and lookalike audience building:** Call analytics platforms record and transcribe calls, then apply AI-based models to the results to determine the characteristics of the highest-performing callers or leads. Marketers can then build personas or lookalike audiences to use in campaign development and execution.

- **Retargeting:** Call recordings and transcriptions can also be used to retarget prospects based on the content – and insights derived – from their prior calls.
- **Sales enablement:** Call analytics platforms can score calls based on transcript analysis, to identify which callers merit callbacks, evaluate agent performance and learn which scripts or offers work best.

Many of these marketing applications are being fueled by vendor investments in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, which are driving greater speed and accuracy into caller insights. Call analytics technology is evolving from providing basic analytics to providing "conversational intelligence" based on highly sophisticated algorithms that can extract and predict caller intent, and measure caller tone, sentiment and emotion. The goal is to enable brand marketers to increase marketing effectiveness and sales conversions.

Marketing apps emerge for new technologies

New AI-driven technologies, including intelligent voice assistants, chatbots and messaging apps may also have a positive impact on the volume of mobile calls to businesses, although industry experts are still debating the marketing value of those calls. Nearly a quarter of U.S. adults (24%) own a smart speaker in 2020 – representing more than 60 million people, according to *The Smart Audio Report*, published by NPR and Edison Research. The report also found that the number of smart speakers in U.S. households surpassed 118 million in 2018.

And it appears those smart speakers and voice assistants are being used to connect with businesses, with many respondents saying they'd ordered food within the last week using their smart speaker (18%) or the voice assistant on their phone

(24%). Additionally, seeking information about local businesses is a regular activity, with 31% of people reporting using their smart speaker for the purpose in the last week and 38% of respondents using the assistant on their phone.

More about Call Analytics

Call data governance remains a priority

But even as brand marketers gain greater access and insight into individual consumer intent, call data privacy continues to be a priority, particularly for brands in the healthcare and financial services markets. Call analytics platform vendors must comply with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) and Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) regulations.

Many vendors automatically redact personally identifiable information (PII) and consumer financial information from call recordings and transcripts to comply with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI DSS), a set of security standards designed to ensure that companies that accept, process, store or transmit credit card information maintain a secure environment.

Several vendors use security measures such as data encryption and two-factor authentication. Others invest in third-party data security audits through organizations such as TrustArc (formerly TRUSTe), a technology compliance and security company.

The European Union’s (EU) General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) went into effect in May 2018 and impacts all U.S. marketers and data firms handling European data or serving

customers in the EU. In June 2018, California legislators passed the California Consumer Privacy Act of 2018, which grants consumers more control over the use of their personal information online. The law went into effect in January 2020, and defines personal information as anything that can be associated or linked with an individual or household.

These regulations are driving an expanded industry focus on data governance, with a view toward complying with new standards for the benefit of consumers, as well as marketers.

If these benefits sound like what you're looking for, check out our Martech Intelligence Report for in-depth info on the call analytics space and in-depth profiles of vendors.

About The Author

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