Making the leap from automatic….to intelligent marketing automation

Marketing automation has become the lynchpin of successful marketing campaign management, yet many brands struggle to fully maximize their marketing automation ROI. We settle for automating manual tasks – like lead management, email campaign development and landing page creation –because we’re too busy to learn what marketing automation can really do for campaign effectiveness.

The time has come to move from simply running campaigns automatically to running them intelligently. For more about marketing stacks, watch the on-demand webinar MarTech Madness: How to evaluate your marketing stack.

Thanks to artificial intelligence (AI), a new breed of marketing automation solutions can “mimic” human intelligence and recommend marketing actions. The AI-fueled outcomes include predictive lead scoring and product recommendations, account-based marketing (ABM) and social media campaign integration for B2B brands, as well as highly personalized B2C website experiences that analyze content consumption trends, on-site behavior and CRM data.

If you’re not using “smart” marketing automation tools, your brand will be left behind. More than half of executives surveyed by MemSQL said that machine learning and AI are their companies’ most significant data initiative for 2019. More marketers are recognizing that customers control the buying journey, a trend that has accelerated with the proliferation and increased sophistication of mobile devices. Customers decide where to research, how to buy, when to purchase and where to buy. And, their expectations for the brand experience is higher than ever before.

In light of these changing dynamics, it’s up to us as marketers to transform how campaigns connect with customers and prospects. Forward-looking brands are already discovering how to use AI to develop longer, deeper customer experiences that strengthen relationships and increase lifetime value. Let’s look at how they are doing it.

Delivering 1:1 experiences

ZoomerMedia Ltd. is Canada’s largest diversified media company developing content, services and experiences for the country’s nearly 16 million residents aged 45-plus. The company also operates CARP, Canada’s leading non-partisan, non-profit, advocacy organization for older Canadians. Despite being Canada’s largest age group – with the spending power to match – the 45-plus population was neglected when it came to digital media. ZoomerMedia sought to change that by adding digital to its arsenal of media platforms.

The company’s goal was to deliver richer, more personalized

campaigns to every 45-plus Canadian by analyzing online reading habits, browsing habits and more. ZoomerMedia adopted an analytics-driven marketing methodology to serve the most engaging content to the right people at the right time. The company teamed with Watson Marketing to build a new marketing platform that was fully integrated with a single, centralized source of customer data from the company's CRM. As a result, ZoomerMedia has been able to create a more accurate view of customer preferences and reach out with tailored messages automatically. For example, when marketers see a number of print subscribers reading articles about healthy living on the CARP website, they can build campaigns that direct them to similar articles on the Zoomer magazine website.

Intelligent automation has also allowed ZoomerMedia to complete essential tasks such as segmentation, list building and analytics in a fraction of the time that it took previously. Marketers have more time to dig into customer data to uncover new ways to delight audiences. Today, the company has more than 750,000 customers on its email list, and drives more than 50 million digital interactions per year. ZoomerMedia has successfully increased its marketing touches by 20 percent while ensuring that every message is relevant, compelling and personalized.

As the traditional media company transforms to a new media company, marketers plan to integrate machine-learning capabilities to open the door to more personalized customer services. By combining sentiment analysis with data on a customer's past interactions with the company, agents will offer products and services that will be relevant to the customer in that moment.

Smarter means scalable

Speaking directly to individual customers and taking them on personalized journeys with your brand is key to successful marketing. The challenge for enterprise marketers is how to target thousands or even millions of individuals with the right message in the right channel at the right time. How do you track and honor unique customer preferences? And, how do you quickly and cost effectively design, execute and measure customer-driven campaigns across all channels?

That was the challenge facing the British Columbia Automobile Association (BCAA), which serves one in three British

Columbian households with industry-leading products, including home, auto and travel insurance, roadside assistance and full auto services. BCAA captures a huge amount of customer data and wanted to make the most of it when it came to marketing outreach. The problem was that BCAA's existing campaign management platform wasn't equipped to deliver tailored, multichannel marketing communications at the speed and scale needed. It took so long to develop and implement a campaign that the organization was only able to send out campaigns in weekly or monthly batches. The goal was to use customer data to shape tailored campaigns, then deliver them at the right time and on the right channel.

BCAA invested in an upgrade of its data and analytics capabilities, digging deep into both operational and customer information to strengthen strategic decision-making and customer service. BCAA worked with IBM® Lab Services to introduce a new, analytics-driven digital marketing platform. Data was centralized from many source systems into a central data repository, creating a single view of customers across all business lines and channels. The new approach enabled BCAA to segment its customer base according to customers' purchase histories, preferences and previous interactions with each business line.

With a better understanding of individual customer behaviors, BCAA marketing teams now craft more tailored messages and deliver them on the optimal channel – helping campaigns resonate more effectively with target audiences. Most importantly, with highly automated campaign design and delivery tools, BCAA is building and launching campaigns faster than ever. Marketing teams can re-use components such as audiences, segments, offers and treatments to design new outbound marketing campaigns quickly and easily. The result has been a 50 percent increase in the number of campaigns run annually. To facilitate these levels of success when implementing a martech transformation, here's a useful

checklist to make sure all resources and stakeholders are aligned.

Multichannel marketing that removes conversion obstacles

Research shows that more than half of consumers start their buyer’s journey online, but use a variety of online and offline channels throughout the buying process. But most marketing organizations are unable to interact with customers consistently across multiple channels and have difficulty guiding them smoothly through a multichannel buying cycle. The biggest obstacle? Siloed customer data that blocks effective targeting and personalization, and ultimately hurts customer engagement and conversion.

About The Author

IBM Watson Marketing is a leader in AI-powered digital marketing platforms. Our open, integrated tools help marketers understand and personalize the customer experience. From real-time analytics and insights to omnichannel marketing automation, Watson Marketing dives deep into consumer behavior, enhances workflows and drives conversions. With Watson Marketing, marketers can harness the power of data to build lasting engagement across the entire buyer journey.
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