

Data gives marketers insights to connect with customers

 By Paula Sartini

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The world changed more in 2020 than at any other time in history. Employees experienced the benefits of working remotely and are resisting the move back to the office. Consumers have exercised their ability to demand what they want. Companies now need to listen to what people want if they are to survive.



Paula Sartini, founder and CEO at BrandQuantum

Marketers find their voice

The Covid-19 pandemic brought accountability and measurability to business as many people were allowed to work remotely for the first time in their careers. This pushed analytics to the fore as people questioned the value of working from the office versus working remotely. However, this quest for value and measurement is not isolated to employees. Marketing departments are now also looking at analytics to understand the performance of their marketing campaigns and initiatives.

Historically marketing departments focused on implementing campaigns with limited insight into whether they worked or not. Now with the rise in technology adoption, marketers are turning to the data to determine what is working and can push back to the top-level to let them know, able to substantiate with real-time data and compare campaigns giving them a voice in the boardroom.

With customers exercising the right to choose, brands need to be purpose-led and cannot make promises they don't deliver on as people are increasingly aware of what they believe is and isn't fair.

The buffer removed

Before the pandemic, employees had to follow the right channels for communications and could not go directly to management for information. At the same time, companies had hierarchies in place whereby certain employees would handle customer queries or engage with customers directly.

With employees now working remotely, the communications channels have changed and there is no longer a buffer in place to withhold company information from employees. With fluid communications, internal and external communications have aligned to a consistent voice. This is also driving the authenticity of communications as companies can no longer filter and clean up information as they want to portray it, with customers looking for information to be made available immediately, there is no time to hamper with it but rather make it available to them as it is needed. In addition, measuring responses is now done within minutes, hours and days rather than within months.

Immediacy replaces perfect moments

Traditionally marketing departments spent months creating the perfect campaign. However, with communication channels changing so rapidly, marketers no longer have the luxury of time they once did. Today marketers need to run campaigns quickly, test the results and force correct as necessary.

This is a more strategic approach to campaigns as marketers can see what is working in real-time based on immediate customer responses and feedback. While this has several benefits in terms of the ability to measure the success of campaigns in real-time, it also adds additional pressure on teams to be ready and make adjustments as and when they are needed.

While technology makes it easy to measure the success of campaigns in real-time, it cannot replace the creative process or handle unpredictability which is where human ingenuity comes in.

Marketers to embrace technology and data

Traditionally marketers have shied away from technology, however, in an age where consumers are creating a sea of data, marketers need to sit up and pay attention. With an estimate of 2.4 billion emails being sent every second, consumers are spending more time online and marketers need to hone in on this and lean into the data to deliver what customers want.

This can only be achieved by using technology solutions such as AI and machine learning which improves marketers' ability to work better, fast and cheaper. For example, while many tasks within the marketing department remain repetitive, these can be outsourced to machines that would be able to do it quickly and efficiently.

This would free up marketers to use these data and analytics to understand customers' behaviour and gain insight into what they want. This can only be achieved by leveraging the information that is available to them and using this to develop campaigns. The data and quality of data are critical to meeting customers' needs and marketers will not be able to give customers what they want without the data.

However, while customer experience is increasingly important, how marketers gather and use the data comes under the spotlight as customers are looking for transparency and control. As such many marketers will need to go back to basics in terms of data collection and data analytics to get marketing right and prepare for 2022.

ABOUT PAULA SARTINI

With over 20 years' experience helping leading organisations overcome various business challenges, Paula understands the challenges that companies face in delivering a consistent brand experience and the impact this has on their bottom line. An analytical thinker that strives to solve business problems with innovative solutions, Paula believes that technology plays a major role in solving critical business and branding challenges. As such, she established BrandQuantum to help businesses overcome their branding challenges in the digital age.

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