

The Right Time for Real-time Marketing:

Deliver more relevant offers, increase response rates, and create happier, more profitable customers



A leading global hotelier is using real-time marketing to enhance loyalty and increase the amount of money spent during each hotel visit. A major financial institution is using event-triggered transactional and real-time communications to increase product penetration and turn customer behaviors into profitable product investments. These are just two real-world examples of the impact of real-time marketing.

Selecting the right offer for each customer is a complex challenge. Customers have taken control of the dialogue and relationship with your brand as they interact with traditional, digital and emerging social and mobile channels. Keeping your customers engaged requires investing in customer-centric, interactive marketing. A cross-channel, real-time marketing strategy that leverages customer-initiated interactions in inbound channels (call center, website, kiosk, point-of-sale, or ATM) enables you to market more effectively.

Applying real-time marketing practices even further, adding the ability to integrate customer behavioral data from all channels (outbound, social, mobile, etc.) delivers even greater marketing precision and improves customer engagement for the long term. Customers who engage with your brand on their own terms, and share their needs and wants are much more receptive to marketing offers. Moreover, real-time decisioning takes into consideration the context of the customer's current interaction to identify, prioritize, and deliver the most appropriate message in any channel.

It's the right time for real-time marketing

In a climate of rising customer expectations, now is the right time to refine your use of inbound channels – it's the time to go real time. Whether you are serving pre-defined static offers, no offers, or siloed offers, marketers who continue the status quo are missing a huge opportunity. Even some of the forward-thinking marketers who adopted inbound marketing in its early days (i.e. the first Internet bubble) may have disparate systems in place that silo inbound and outbound marketing. These early systems have been left largely untouched, and while they are delivering some value, they are stagnant; new channels exist that are not served. Integration between inbound and outbound data, or an upgrade initiative may be on the "to do" list, but global economic challenges forced many businesses to back burner this effort. Although the global economic picture is slow to improve, online marketing is maturing, and interactive marketing solutions are advancing, so the time is right to capitalize on this vast opportunity.

Best-practice marketers are deploying real-time marketing strategies to generate offers that are based on deep customer profiles, transaction histories, and other rich, real-time context about the current interaction. The right offer for the right customer, delivered at the right time, is marketing that is so relevant it feels like a service. High relevance and the appeal of personalized customer care help ensure optimal marketing results and lifetime customer value.

Here are four proven best practices in real-time inbound marketing that can produce bottom-line results:

1 Make it personal

Despite your best intentions, you can no longer expect results from generic marketing messages where every customer receives the same communication or batch push offers based on historical data. Your customers expect you to know them, to take into consideration the context of their current interaction, and to deliver personal, relevant messages. One of the Netherlands' leading financial institutions uses real-time marketing to deliver personal offers to customers whose savings accounts are underutilized. As a result, they have increased savings revenue by 5 percent.

2 Balance business objectives with customer needs

You can achieve business goals while delivering real-time marketing. It's possible to steer customers to options in products and services that meet their needs and your business objectives. For example, a leading global loyalty program service provider shows loyalty program members that by purchasing "this" versus "that" (when "that" is a product with a higher profit margin) they can earn more points and bigger rewards faster.

3 Use real-time decisioning

Traditional marketing relied on historical interactions; today customer actions in inbound channels can disrupt your best laid plans. Real-time decisioning lets you adjust to customer-initiated interactions in the here and now. As interactions become more digital, marketers have more data that drives the need for sophisticated real-time decisioning technology. These self-learning systems use complex, automated algorithms to figure out which offer each customer is most likely to respond to, based on their customer profile and their current behavior.

4 Enable collaboration

One of the most common obstacles to achieving real-time marketing is the typical marketing organization's siloed organizational structure. Channel silos create barriers to effective centralized decisioning, and hinder agile, real-time marketing, so organizational buy-in, coordinated marketing campaigns, and clear commitment are essential to success.

Real-time marketing in action

Today, leading marketers are using real-time marketing with great success. From retail to financial services companies, real-time marketing is an investment made to convert fleeting opportunities into profitable customer interactions that increase bottom-line revenue and build strong customer relationships. Here are two examples of winning real-time marketing strategies.

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- A worldwide hospitality organization is using real-time execution as an important component of its overall marketing strategy to build customer dialogues, enhance loyalty and, ultimately, increase the amount of money spent during each hotel visit. Upon making a reservation, a guest receives a confirmation email delivered in a matter of minutes summarizing his reservation with a tailored up-sell offer. Forty-eight hours prior to the visit, he receives another email listing the activities available at the hotel during his stay, as well as a promotion to encourage participation. The promotion is based on historical customer data, preferences, and predictive analysis. When the guest checks in, he receives a tailored letter summarizing the daily activities and, again, coupons to participate.

Lastly, after check-out, the individual is contacted through their preferred channel to gather information pertaining to the visit as well as to encourage future visits. This timely, relevant and optimized dialogue communication strategy has increased customer loyalty while increasing the average revenue generated per visit. The investment in a flexible and scalable real-time solution that integrates with a marketing technology platform that handles not only real-time activities but also periodic and transactional activities has resulted in significant ROI and impressive bottom-line results.

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- A major financial institution is using a combination of event-triggered transactional and real-time communications to increase product penetration and proactively turn customer behaviors into profitable product investments. A series of event-triggered transactional marketing campaign strategies have been designed to detect significant customer deposits and withdrawals. Once an event is identified, a campaign leverages lifetime value, response, and cross-sell models to determine the most effective offer, if any, for the individual. If an offer is recommended, the customer is contacted within 24 hours by a Relationship Manager. Real-time campaigns are also being executed via the web, ATMs, and call centers, based on specific customer requests. These event-triggered marketing campaigns have delivered an increase in response rate from 20 percent to 30 percent as well as significant incremental revenue. More importantly, the real-time marketing activities are integrated into an overall marketing and branding strategy, focused on helping the bank's customers to become "financially better off," which is leading to increased customer loyalty and profitability.
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Real opportunity to improve marketing results

Real-time marketing is a golden opportunity to engage customers in meaningful dialogue. Inbound interactions represent a time when your company has your customer's undivided attention. You are more likely to receive permission to cross-sell or deliver a marketing message during inbound interactions. This is your chance to address your customer on a personal basis, to present relevant messages and offers that reflect their most up-to-date needs, preferences, and priorities, particularly as the line between inbound and outbound marketing begins to blur. Customers are adept at moving across multiple channels – for example, researching purchases online but picking up in store.

IBM Enterprise Marketing Management (EMM) provides an end-to-end interactive marketing platform that includes everything you need to be as agile as your customers – to operate seamlessly across all channels, inbound and outbound, mobile and social, in a complete range of media.

About IBM Enterprise Marketing Management

The IBM Enterprise Marketing Management (EMM) Suite is an end-to-end, integrated set of capabilities designed exclusively for the needs of marketing organizations. Integrating and streamlining all aspects of online and offline marketing, IBM's EMM Suite empowers organizations and individuals to turn their passion for marketing into valuable customer relationships and more profitable, timely, and measurable business outcomes.

The IBM EMM Suite helps marketers to understand customer wants and needs and leverage that understanding to engage buyers in highly relevant, interactive dialogs across digital, social, and traditional marketing channels. IBM EMM provides robust web and customer analytics, event detection, campaign management, real-time interaction management and recommendations, lead management, digital marketing optimization, email marketing, targeted advertising, search engine marketing, and marketing resource management capabilities. Over 2,500 organizations around the world use IBM EMM solutions to help manage the pressures of increasing marketing complexity while delivering improved revenue and measurable results.

IBM's time-tested and comprehensive offerings are giving companies such as E*TRADE, ING, InterContinental Hotels Group, Orvis, PETCO, United Airlines, Vivo and wehkamp. nl the power and flexibility required to provide their customers and prospects with what they expect today--a more consistent and relevant brand experience across all channels.



For more information

To learn more about IBM Enterprise Marketing Management, please contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website: ibm.com/software/marketing-solutions

Smarter Commerce: An integrated approach

IBM Enterprise Marketing Management solutions are part of the IBM Smarter Commerce initiative. Smarter Commerce is a unique approach that increases the value companies generate for their customers, partners, and shareholders in a rapidly changing digital world. To learn more about Smarter Commerce, visit:

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