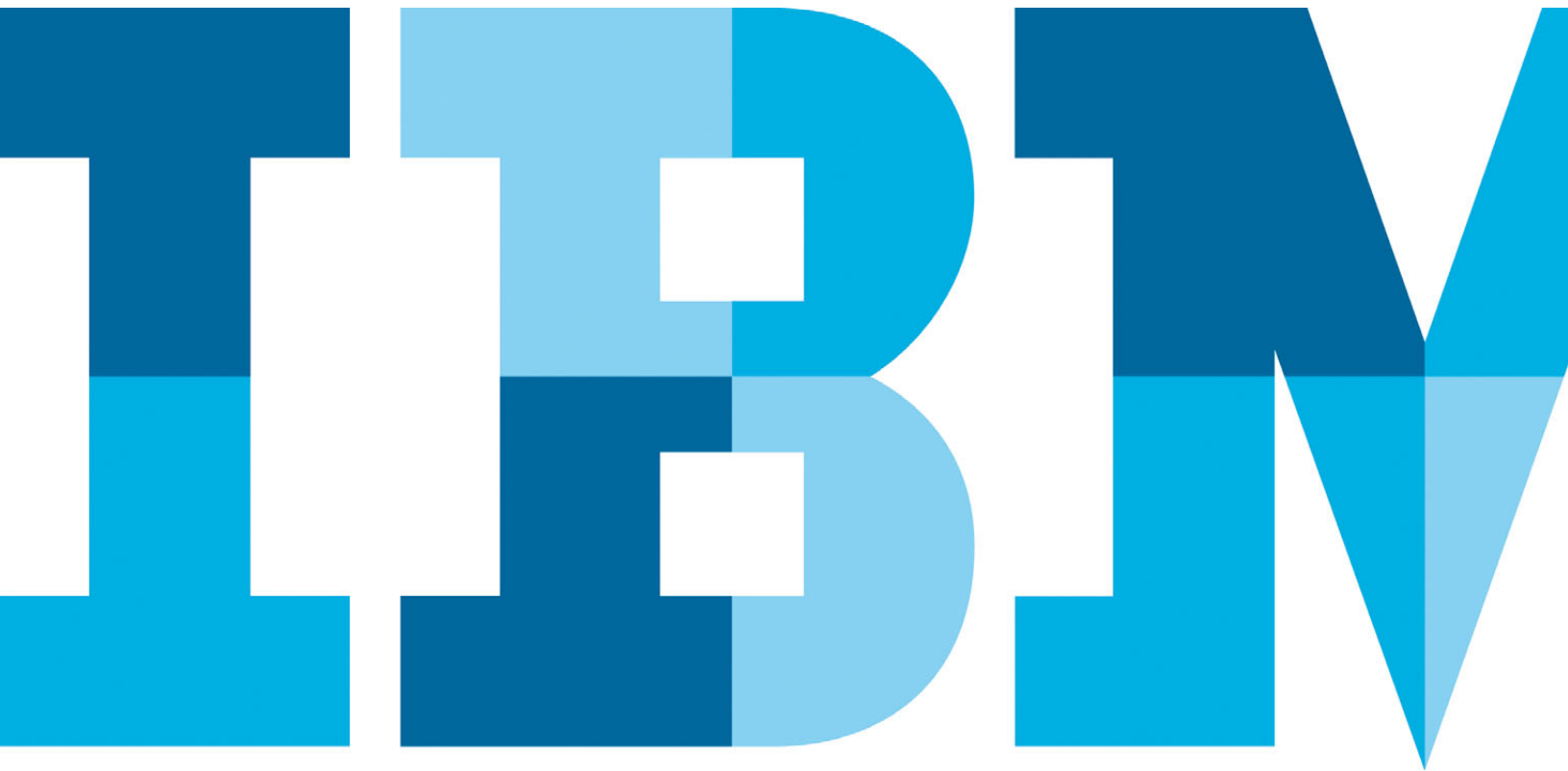


Tying it all together: Retaining and winning new customers in a connected world



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Part 1. Sending email is only the beginning

What's wrong with assuming that your email program qualifies you as a marketer? *Nothing. Everything.* Rather than think of your email channel as marketing, instead, consider your customers and how you can best serve their needs. Today's marketing mantra is "*marketing so good it feels like service.*"

The historical strength of email holds that marketers can measure its ROI, successes, failures and adjust the program based on a wealth of data. Email metrics are not isolated facts floating in cyberspace—they are patterns of human behavior.

Once you begin to see the immense volume of data available as behavioral patterns, then you can begin to define your 'customer,' not through general demographic criteria but by the customer's specific needs. When you can envision specific customer needs, you can begin to transform your marketing into a customer-centric service.

Defining the email project as work

On a recent trip to a retail store, a clerk approached me when I started taking clothes off the rack to try on. The clerk offered assistance, which I declined, as I wandered the store. Our paths crossed again, with my arms now covered with deeply discounted duds. The store clerk led me to the dressing room, provided his name and left me to try on my picks. Every few minutes the clerk passively returned to see how I was doing, swap garment sizes—all without being pushy, rude, or blatantly up selling. I was impressed with the clerk's matter-of-fact approach—it was honest, transparent and dare I say, human?! As I was standing at the register, the clerk walked over to me placed his hand out to shake my hand and said "Good working with you, Len." I think I was in shock as it took me a moment to respond with a firm shake. "Yes," I said, "you too, Rob."

Marketers who frequently shop higher-end clothing stores are shrugging your shoulders about now, but what I'd like to point out is the utter simplicity and ease of the service the store clerk provided thanks to good communication. Although Rob's task is to assist customers, the way that Rob performed the task transformed the function from a sales task to providing a service. The clerk serviced my need to acquire goods from the store so that the salesmanship didn't feel like pushy marketing. Instead, Rob's effort felt like good, clean service, marketed well. That level of service was what I needed as a consumer to make my selection and subsequent purchase.

Marketers can use email to perform similar work and ultimately create a service experience for their customers. Despite the wealth of email metrics at a marketer's disposal, most marketing email remains unopened in inboxes and is no more than a static, flat and easily ignored billboard. With the proper amalgamation of creativity and data-driven marketing, email can become a service that turns the marketer-customer relationship into a working partnership.

From the flat file to the three dimensional construct

To transform email into a truly customer-centric service, marketers must stop looking at customers as an email with a conversion and response history. To succeed, you need a significant amount of data, some of which you have, some of which you must find. Tools such as IBM® Unica® Email Optimization are designed to help you track and refine your messages...and the payoff can validate your efforts by helping you acquire demographic data including age, gender, location, birthday, income, hobbies, interests, receiving preferences, contact preferences, phone number, and social preferences.

What can you do with a wealth of information about your customers? You can have a conversation with them; you can custom tailor micro campaigns to unique populations because you know them or will soon enough. Allow your customers to define themselves by filling your data warehouse with as much information about who they are, and how they want you to market to them. In turn, you can then more effectively service them.

- *Engagement Data: Purchase history, opens and clicks*

This data set is well known to most marketers; however, very few marketers are using this data set to determine more meaningful ways of servicing customers. Try combining these metrics with offline data to help identify a set of customers who do business on their terms. Track customers that take coupon or email offers and redeem them in-store. Consider campaigns that encourage customers to do business or take advantage of offers across channels because you've identified them as passive online but active offline.



- *Structural Data: Bounces, complaints, spam trap bits*

Scrutinize your structural data and find better windows to deliver email. Use what you know from other channels and campaigns to help you tighten your message frequency. Don't be afraid to experiment with different delivery days, windows and hours. Remember, most marketers believe that the best days of the week to send email are Tuesdays and Thursdays; this situation creates a fight for customer attention at the level of the inbox. The mailing day is front-loaded with 40 percent of marketers choosing to send emails before 8 a.m. EST. However, deliverability is highest between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. EST, but less than 10 percent of all campaigns are sent during this time. There are patterns in your SMTP data that can help you discover how, when, where and how often your customers want to hear from you. These patterns include behavioral data such as email clients, preview pane versus message view, platform usage and social penetration.

Email is no longer tied to a specific device or platform. You can read your Twitter stream in a web email client or through Facebook, receive emails on your iPhone from Gmail, Yahoo! and Hotmail and then again read the same emails using your Notes or Outlook desktop email clients. It is essential to understand customer behavior through the view of the technology customers use to read your content and how they choose to respond, share, forward, endorse, and even complain about it. By understanding customer media consumption preferences, you can deliver more effective content to capture their attention.

At this time, having only a customer email address is worthless; if you have an email address without a name how can you personalize a message to make the recipient feel like you know them? Does the salutation say "Dear Customer?" Service means personalization; personalization requires data. Customers are increasingly in charge of their marketing experience and have more ways than ever to engage with our brands, or conversely, to disengage with our brands. To keep brands vital and viable in the digital marketplace, marketers need to leverage the total digital footprint left behind by their customers. This data enables marketers to transform their marketing from a billboard into a service.

Part 2. Effectively using landing pages

In Part 1, I spoke of what can be called the essence of every marketer's digital strategy: Email. Now start thinking about what happens after you deliver a compelling email that matches your customer's needs. However first, a history lesson. Ten to twelve years ago, landing pages were static with one market-leading browser and a standard 1024×768-screen size; you saw the same thing on your monitor that your neighbors saw on their monitors. Personalization was not a possibility as all marketers struggled to remain relevant in a vacuum of behavioral data.

Now marketers re-tool marketing programs into a service experience for customers. A well-crafted, well-targeted, well-timed email that renders beautifully across email clients is likely to fail if the landing page that loads is not optimized or personalized. Landing pages have the same risks as email and other digital channels—becoming a static billboard if the customer is not at the heart of the data and content that is driving the experience behind the landing page. Landing pages represent the click after the click and must be as personal as the channel that brought the customer to the page in the first place.

Defining the landing page project as the welcome mat of your virtual store

One Sunday afternoon my family and I visited the mall. My nephews ran to the storefront window of a new game and toy store for children that was still under construction. A forward thinking marketer included a QR label in the storefront that I scanned with my phone. The phone app instantly redirected me to a keenly designed landing page for interested parties. The experience was like stepping onto a welcome mat with my name on it at the front door of the store.

Because this children's store knew my city, they offered me a coupon for their grand opening, asked me to join their mailing list and included a quick survey with questions about my nephews' interests and ages. The moral of the story is that customers are special, they are unique, and customers have become accustomed to feeling special. Marketers must create a digital welcome mat to create a meaningful customer experience with each interaction.

From the flat file to the three dimensional construct

Extend the use of personalized landing pages across traffic sources. Any traffic driven to your website presents an opportunity to personalize that experience. In the example where the marketer used a scannable QR code, the marketer combined a preference center with a landing page delivering information and collecting it at the same time. You can personalize landing pages a number of ways including:

- *Customizing personalized landing pages to match the viewing device*

Today's landing pages are viewed and visited by mobile users, notebooks, tablets, desktops and even television sets. Each of these devices is likely to render a landing page differently because they all use different rendering engines and have different resolutions. Learn the landing page preferences of your customers and track the devices reading your pages. Narrow your offers and use intelligent single column designs that are most likely to render similarly across devices and deliver a clear call to action.

- *Creating relevance through time sensitive personalization*

Assume that a customer reads the same email twice. These days, it is common to see people reading email on a smart phone in the morning and then returning to re-read the same email on a laptop or desktop email client in the evening. By providing customers unique landing pages based on the time of day they visit, mornings on a mobile device or evenings on a desktop, you're advertising your knowledge of their browsing habits and creating a relevant, personalized customer experience at every visit. In the process, you gain a better sense of when to launch campaigns based on the browsing and landing page viewing habits and patterns of your customers.

- *Personalizing landing pages based on the source of traffic*

Someone who reaches your site with a QR code is definitely worth knowing because it takes extra time and effort for the visitor to scan the code and wait for the page to download. Additionally, you can safely assume that this person uses a smart phone (The fact that they used a smart phone is additional data for your customer profile), and might be a good candidate for an extra reward considering their level of engagement. The same landing page viewed by a mobile audience might receive high conversions with a social group. However, the same page might receive lower conversions than expected if sent using direct mail or if displayed on a billboard. Refine your landing pages to be relevant to the audience.

- *Using shared links to bring your customers to your landing pages*

Even customers who are “click-happy,” or who view information quickly, can become engaged with a compelling landing page and share the page. That’s exactly what consumers are doing. When customers share link-based offers, they become ambassadors for your brand. You want to work with your biggest fans and make your landing pages easy to share. Offer link sharing and track the sites that engage with your brand socially and promote your links to those sites. In addition, ensure that your landing pages do not require a cookie on the customer’s device in order to see the landing page, otherwise you risk losing a new fan,

- *Offer incentives to your customers and ask questions*

Offering a deeper discount or other incentive for more information about your customer has become standard. If you’re planning to solicit customer feedback, then offer your customers something in return. A conversation is bidirectional. If your customers are going to spend their valuable time working to enhance your understanding of them, reward them for their time.

- *Personalize for the lowest common denominator*

Thanks to geolocation, marketers have good information about global traffic by origin to site. Origin to site is probably the lowest common denominator and offers marketers the ability to make the content on their sites relative to the physical source from where the customer originates. Do the research necessary to know your customers and where they are from; make the pages locally engaging.

Your landing pages are destinations, small atolls in the digital ocean that rise and fall beneath the waves. Unica Email Optimization is designed to help you navigate to better landing pages. Then, if you design and optimize landing pages across devices and create compelling content for unique segments, you’re certain to reap the rewards of viral sharing.

Part 3. The power of social media

I admire Bill Moyers who I believe speaks truth about power. In a National Public Radio program interview, Bill Moyers uttered something incredibly relevant to our topic: “when you look at an audience of consumers you want to sell them something; when you see an audience of citizens you want to share something.”

The social network is a virtual country independent of borders and flags, where marketers and consumers are equals. Yes, equals. Both marketers and consumers are all citizens in the virtual country known as the Land of Social Networking. Marketers with multimillion-dollar budgets have the same influence as an individual auto-mechanic from a local city.

You learned how landing pages and email work in a customer-centric view. Now, pause and consider how to structure an approach to social media that maintains a customer-centric strategy. Social media presents marketers with more opportunities to embark on cross-channel campaigns than any other individual channel because of the interconnections growing in the applications and platforms. This age is an age of messaging convergence where information freely flows from one channel and application into another. This free-flow might seem chaotic, but it's full of opportunities, and, more importantly, replete with metrics and data about how our customers are engaging with our messages across networks and channels.



Defining the social media project as content

At a friend's insistence, over a few weeks time I watched all four seasons of a popular science fiction television show. I was so immersed and impressed with the series that I began to search the web for more content. I followed the show's leads on Twitter, hunted down the show's page on Facebook and declared my admiration by clicking the Facebook "like" button. Then I noticed something: The advertisements on my Facebook page. My screen now displayed an advertisement for the massive multiplayer online game based on this science fiction series.

Intrigued, I clicked and saw a beautifully designed landing page urging me to play for free. In addition to the game advertisements, I saw advertisements for shirts with slogans from the show. I shared these advertisements with friends who watched the show. This action increased the frequency of relevant advertisements. As the lines blurred among social media components, I wondered how brands can leverage the layers of social media to compliment and create a more potent total customer-centric digital strategy.

One of the geniuses of Facebook is to allow users to import feeds and updates to their wall from other sites. This ability creates stackable networks and provides users with less reason to leave the Facebook site. Your customers are doing much of the work for you by integrating channels, such as Twitter and Flickr feeds into Facebook. A single well-crafted tweet can be instantly seen on websites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and even in web-mail clients when picked up by a user who has stacked their networks. Much of the heavy lifting of sharing advertising is now taken care of through technological integration. Your job is to create content worth sharing.

From the flat tirade to the three dimensional conversation

Social media requires the marketer's active participation. You can't have a one-way conversation where it appears that you scream loudly at your customers. Your customers, fans and followers find it easy to click the links or buttons necessary to never hear from you again.

To succeed, marketers must leverage what they know about their customers from the email channel, their landing pages and other lines of communication to build out dynamic conversations that

travel up and down the social stack. Your emails are content, albeit good or bad content, that is seen across multiple social networks. Your job is to create engaging content that customers are compelled to share across channels. To participate with your customers effectively, you need to know:

- *The value of paid impressions versus earned impressions*

When a marketer spends money on keywords for search engine optimization (SEO), the marketer pays for the impression when someone clicks that link. If your customer retweets your message, or shares a link about you on Facebook, that's an earned impression. An earned impression is absolute marketing gold while the paid impression is a staple with fixed returns. Earned media impressions are far more valuable because they are accompanied by a large amount of trust. For each earned impression, you have the chance to earn more impressions from a captive audience. Social media networks of friends usually trust one another more than they trust the emails you sent. The continuing use of the spam button by consumers for emails proves that theory. You can earn impressions in many creative ways.

One example is the "*Burger Sacrifice*" campaign created by Burger King. To participate in this campaign, you received a coupon for a discount if you de-friended 10 friends from Facebook. The campaign had no rule about adding the friends back into your social network. The launch of this campaign raised brand awareness, generated traffic to restaurants to redeem coupons and garnered new fans. Social media encourages experimentation; and, at times social media rewards marketing bravery.

- *How to determine the most valuable marketing message in the world*

The most valuable marketing message in the world is the one you don't send. That's correct; social media marketing is a *less is more* paradigm. Basic marketing teaches the concept of message fatigue: How many emails can a marketer send before the customer complains or unsubscribes? The danger of over-messaging in social media isn't the loss of one customer. The danger is the exponential loss of the customer's friends, and their friends' friends, and so on. Each of your customers is the center of their own social network universe. You must trust your customers to do the work for you. Before trust comes empowerment. Before customers can help you, you must provide and empower your customers with compelling content. However, first you must understand what motivates your customer by building a robust multidimensional customer profile. Remember that an email address with no information identifying the customer behind the email has relative low worth. The same relative low worth is true for a Twitter handle if you're not measuring the user's sentiment about your brand. The same value measurement applies to a corresponding name that has liked your Facebook page. Your job is to track the content the customer liked and shared. This information is used to create the multidimensional customer profile that defines the specific characteristics and habits of that customer. These efforts correlate the channels and establish a viable cadence with the customer that doesn't exhaust a customer's attention span. Without this cadence, you cannot engage with a customer socially. The message becomes a one-way conversation and lacks the urgency to find its way through levels of the social stack.

Social media is not an isolated channel with different rules and metrics that is detached from the rest of your marketing efforts; however, marketers often treat social media as a separate entity. With some ingenuity, cleverness and IBM Unica Social Email Analytics you can bring your experience with email to the brave new social world. You can apply all of your customer metrics and social media channel metrics to your other digital channels to create a truly human and social view of your customers.



Part 4. Tying it all together

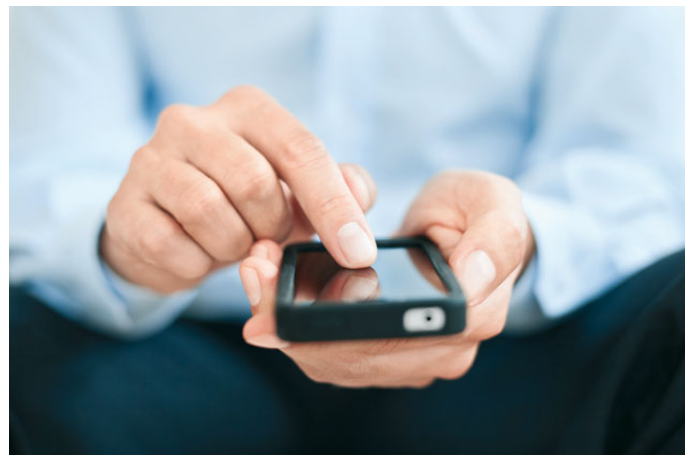
Email, landing pages and social media are all components in an end-to-end digital marketing strategy. An effective end-to-end digital marketing strategy considers platforms such as mobile, subsidiary channels such as mobile apps, call centers, direct mail, point-of-sale (POS), and any other marketing data sources that can empower marketers to better serve customers. Through technological advances such as Unica Email Optimization, you can expand your digital footprint and improve the potency of your digital marketing. Next, read how a marketer with a winning total digital strategy would approach marketing in the twenty-first century.

From dawn till dusk in the digital marketing trench

Jim's alarm on his mobile phone goes off at 6 a.m. Jim, like 67 percent of US adults, uses his mobile phone as an alarm clock. Jim knows that he has a mobile audience. Three months before today, Jim created an email campaign that is sent at 4 a.m. to a segment of his customers who responded to a questionnaire with a discount about their mobile browsing habits. He knows that right about now a dedicated set of customers is reading the emails. Even if these customers take no action, they saw a simple message with a single call to action that they may select to read later that day. Jim feels the sun through his blinds and knows that today is going to be a great day. Jim is an optimist!

Jim works for a major department store. This work enables Jim to be creative across products and channels. While waiting in line for coffee, Jim watches people quickly read email on their mobile phones and text their friends and colleagues. The day is Monday and Jim starts the week for the rest of his mobile users by sending their mobile devices a coupon for coffee that is delivered between 7:30 a.m. and 9 a.m. The online coupon is a cross-promotion with an in-store brand. The brand staff encourages people to subscribe or like their Facebook page. The brand

feeds these leads to Jim through SMS messaging. Those customers who click the link are directed to a custom landing page that urges them to like Jim's company's Facebook page. Jim then tags these customers as Facebook users and stores them with an SMS and mobile flag.



When Jim arrives at the office, Jim is feeling confident knowing that he already generated sales for a partner and increased his mobile and social segment. Jim's first job for the day is to evaluate what happened on Twitter overnight and over the weekend. Jim tracks sentiment across his brand, but Jim understands that the company brand uses many channels. Jim's next task is to research the content he published in his newsletters to determine what content appeared over the weekend on Twitter. Jim quickly realizes that a small campaign with a discount on women's accessories endorsed by a popular singer sent to a regional population of women in their early twenties found its way onto Twitter.

Jim sees tweets and retweets of the offer and begins to track the originating internet addresses using his web analytics system. The offer Jim created went viral and spread beyond his original target audience. Jim notes of the top five states from which customers visited his website and adjusts his future campaign to incorporate these states for a similar campaign featuring a rising music star. However, Jim is not finished. Jim creates a Facebook advertisement that builds on the viral video. Jim launches the Facebook advertisement, which directs traffic back to his company's site for a time-sensitive, one-day-only special. Jim sets a reminder to check the advertising activity in four hours. If this advertisement is successful, Jim can reuse the segment with another one-day offer the next day. Then, Jim will pause the advertising to avoid sending out too many messages to these customers.

Next, Jim meets with the marketing team to tackle the next significant campaign. Memorial Day is 10 days away and the team is planning three special drops before the shopping frenzy on the Monday that is Memorial Day. Although people travel on that day, Jim believes that his customers will stop into stores located at major travel destinations. Jim designed his first subject line to indicate a travel special and to say that his company is virtually everywhere the customer is, even online. The target audience is everyone, but Jim understands that the company has a large social audience. Sending the social audience both an email and posting the offer to a Facebook page may be too much messaging as there is also a Twitter campaign in the works. Thus, Jim excludes 50 percent of the social channel customers from the email campaign as a control group and decides to let Twitter and Facebook do the work. Jim sends the other 50 percent email and wonders if those customers will unsubscribe from offers given the number of messages they will see and receive as he plans on posting five times to the company's Facebook wall.

The first email drop has regional segmentation based on shopping preferences and ages. The company has many deeply discounted products to promote. Jim has been tracking buying habits across channels and is certain that customers from one demographic with Facebook, Twitter and email addresses will be more amicable to deeper discounts on electronics. In addition, Jim created a dynamic registration process that asks unique questions based on gender and age so he can filter out the customers from specific demographics who might not qualify for discounts.

Jim feels good about his day, the time is almost 2 p.m. and Jim checks on his Facebook advertisement. The advertisement generated sales. However, Jim sees a few posts on his wall and in Twitter lamenting the fact that he didn't provide a mechanism for customers to receive the same discounts through an in-store purchase. Jim considers this feedback and decides to include that option when updating the campaign next week. In addition, on the landing page Jim plans to include a social sign-up for a special QR code in his next email campaign so customers can scan the code in the store for an additional discount in the situation where the customer cannot or prefers not to purchase online. At the same time, Jim considers what other information he can require at the time of registration for Facebook users seeking QR codes in email to make in-store purchases. Jim sets a meeting with his database team to discuss new tables, the new pieces of information and how the marketing team can access the new customer data. Jim believes that now he can identify smaller and more unique segments of customers with the newly found correlations between purchasing behavior and messaging channel preference and delivery. In summary, today was a good day for Jim.

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Len applies a critical eye to his work that has been tempered through a post baccalaureate degree in creative writing. He describes himself as a process focused individual with a knack for thinking outside the box and making sense out of chaos.



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