

Get even more personal

We know how personalisation improves a campaign's results, but data-driven individualisation goes one step further, boosting customer experience and ROI

Marketers have understood for some time the role that personalisation plays in increasing ROI from direct communications. However, despite an increasing consumer demand for brands to understand us better, many marketers have failed to take personalisation to the next level and embrace the potential of what some are calling 'individualisation' - truly data-driven communications.

Personalisation allows marketers to tailor certain aspects of a communication to consumers. This may include name, address or detailing their interest in specific products or activities. Individualisation is an evolution of this approach. It allows communications to be created that are driven completely by the preferences of the consumer, through a combination of insight, modelling and data analysis. This allows the marketer to tailor every aspect of the content, from the product that is being offered, to the tone of voice and images that are used to fit in with a consumer's life stage, preferences or behaviour.

Stand and deliver

While marketers have long understood the need to communicate with customers in this way, the reality is that many companies have failed to truly deliver. The reason for this is that while many understand its power, few have invested budget or found the right marketing service provider to combine insight (through data analysis) with action (through enabling software and digital print or email technology).

The investment in data analysis is fundamental to succeeding in being able to communicate with consumers as individuals. Document composition products now enable marketers to make customer communications a more profitable process by ensuring that the content, irrespective of channel, is relevant.

While companies are still hesitating, it is important to realise that the internet has already altered consumer expectations. If they have log-in details to a site, they have to come to expect that the site will record information on them and their behaviour. Sites such as Amazon are a great example of how individualisation can have a big impact on the customer experience. It has long recommended products to customers which it thinks will be relevant to them, based on their previous purchases.

Over the past few years, there have been a number of surveys which have demonstrated that the organisations that get it right on the web by adopting this approach receive higher customer satisfaction and uplift in sales.



Individualisation clever use of data enables highly targeted campaigns

'Sites such as Amazon are a great example of how individualisation can have a big impact on the customer experience'

Nevertheless, this doesn't just have to be the domain of the internet. Because every company, regardless of the channels it uses to engage with its customers, must place data at the heart of the business. The intelligence gathered must be used to develop a customer's communication lifecycle, underpinning everything from delivery through to response handling. This can be applied from customised statements and bills to on-demand marketing collateral and self-service web applications through to individualised correspondence and proposals that have been produced interactively by customer-facing employees.

With today's increasingly demanding consumers, organisations realise that adopting new approaches to direct communications will deliver stronger brand equity, highly customer-focused communications, improved customer satisfaction and increased cross-selling opportunities. Therefore organisations that fail to understand the real power of personalisation do so at their peril.

Not only can it enhance the customer experience, it can reduce costs by streamlining the marketing function. Right time, place, channel and message continue to be essential, more so than ever in the current climate.

In My View



Jon Cano Lopez

Managing director,
Ai Data Intelligence,
a Communisis plc
company

Savvy marketers are implementing strategies that realise revenue from dormant customers while retaining loyalty from their most profitable existing ones. Knowing who you're talking to, what drives them to purchase and, more importantly, what would turn them off can be the difference between success and failure.

At Communisis we work with many of the UK's largest brands, which all have the same problem: they need effective direct communication with the consumer while increasing profitability.

Over the past 18 months, we have acquired Ai Data Intelligence and made significant investment in technology to allow composition of messages for simultaneous distribution online and offline. The result is that the direct comms process is more profitable by delivering the highest level

of customer profiling and a personalised message in the right format and via the right channel.

We passionately believe that the future of marketing lies in the integration of the communication lifecycle; from data and planning, right through to production, distribution and response handling.

Integrated customer communications delivered from a single platform provide you with a faster time to market, and better visibility of where costs and wastage can be lowered and processes streamlined.

'Talking to customers as individuals rather than the universal consumer will have an advantage'