

The stormy voyage of mobile engagement automation

By  Nick Orton

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The ship has sailed on silo-driven batch-and-blast email and vomit-and-hope SMS campaigns. Today's attention- and time-deprived consumer expects personalised communication built on seamless digital experiences that offer relevant, timely forms of value.



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Recent advances in integrated omnichannel orchestration, enterprise-class automation, and advanced behavioural analytics provide practical cloud-based building-blocks for South African businesses and brands to increase engagement across the customer lifecycle.



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But brands will have a tough time navigating the stormy waters of falling consumer confidence and low levels of economic growth unless they reach the promised land of integrated omnichannel marketing experiences delivered to their customers on highly personalised forms.

Today, brands can deploy a fleet of omnichannel experiences that combine to create compelling calls-to-action that drive sales, loyalty, and repeat purchases. Despite the use of modern marketing automation platforms linked to an omnichannel strategy emerging as the clearest way marketing departments can prove their value to the business, many marketers still find themselves all at sea.

A 2017 survey found that only 21% of marketers could measure their contribution to their organisations' revenue, perhaps partly because 80% of those surveyed admitted to using Excel as a tool for tracking their impact on the business.

The maiden voyage of HMS personalisation

[According to McKinsey](#), personalisation can reduce acquisition costs by as much as 50%, lift revenues by 5%-15%, and

increase the efficiency of marketing spend by 10%-30%. Marketing 'captains' wishing to embark on a voyage of personalisation should prioritise the capture and analysis of behavioural data, the foundation of personalised marketing communication.



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By grouping customers with a similar interest together marketers can start understanding the journey of their customers from consideration to acquisition to (ideally) repeat purchases. Behavioural data can stem from internal sources - such as website visits or in-store purchases - to external sources such as social media activity, geolocation, and more. These datasets inform how marketers should tailor the nature, timing and delivery of personalised touchpoints to individual customers.

Effective navigation of the complex sea of consumer expectations also requires respect for the two-way nature of modern marketing communications. Customers who invest time and energy into visible activities - such as posting on social media, browsing online, or purchasing in-store - should be treated with an appropriate marketing response, which ideally takes the form of a personalised value experience delivered via the right channel at the right time.

It's critical that they get it right: [according to IBM](#), nearly three-quarters of online consumers become frustrated with content or promotional offers that have little to no relevance to them.

On the shores of the promised land

How are brands faring on their journey to the promised land of personalised omnichannel communications? In [one global study](#), 60% of respondents highlighted their struggles with personalising content in real time, despite more than three-quarters saying real-time personalisation is crucial to their success. The reasons? Half noted that complexity of systems stunted their efforts, while access to real-time data was listed by 46% as the reason for not implementing dynamic personalised content across channels.

Marketing automation platforms that have an element of AI could greatly assist, for example by helping dynamic segment creation. With the lines between sales and marketing blurring further this year, the use of marketing automation tools that can self-optimize could prove the difference between success and failure in 2018.



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What's more, modern cloud-based marketing automation platforms can start leveraging predictive consumer engagement to discover invaluable insights into how and why consumers engage with certain marketing messages or channels and help prepare personalised communications built on these insights to drive engagement, sales, and loyalty.

It's a brave new world for marketers in 2018. Despite some stormy seas and occasional headwinds, the voyage toward truly integrated and personalised omnichannel marketing communications is well underway. Where are you on your journey?

ABOUT NICK ORTON

Nick Orton is CEO at Grapevine, which helps companies to be present with customers at the critical moments of their customer journeys. By combining omni-channel communications with marketing automation technology, Grapevine provides businesses and brands access to its cloud-based delivery platforms to help them interact at speed and scale. The company is powered by a team of mobile-first communications and marketing technology professionals. For more information, please visit www.grapevinegroup.co.za.

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