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Building e-motional connections with customers

Jean-Luc Ambrosi | 01 December, 2015 08:49 | 0 Comments | Share this post |

The warm weather is upon us. It's a time of year often associated with the blossoming of love and relationships, which has me thinking about how marketing has leaped forward in its ability to build emotional connections with customers.

Mix the emotive value created via astute branding with the evolution of digital as a prime communication channel, then throw in data for customisation, and you have the perfect cocktail for a first date with consumers.

Beyond the ability to create strong brand value propositions, marketing today is foremost an exercise in building relationships and bonds between customers and brands. And if you are really good at it, you'll be able to inspire love for your brand.

A few years ago, I was trying to convey to my MD and head of sales that my job as a marketer was mostly about building relationships, not about colouring-in pages of collateral or wasting 50 per cent of our advertising dollars on short-term campaigns. It was a hard point to argue in an environment focused on building face-to-face relationships. But I was able to show that marketing communicated with nearly 100 per cent of our existing customers, at the critical stages of the prospect and customer lifecycle, reinforcing the relationship at every step, while other channels could only focus on a limited amount of contacts.

My statement was confronting because it raised the notion that marketing could influence every stage of the customer journey, and own or co-own that entire journey. This was in an environment that had traditionally viewed marketing as a support function.

As online becomes the prime interface for consumers to interact with brands, that relationship can now be fostered through multiple push and pull digital channels (Web, email, messaging, social, apps, mobile), as well as be fully customised by leveraging data insights. Messages and content can be targeted, offers tailored, the purchase experience enhanced, and follow up and re-activation activities automated.

Thanks to technological advancements, one-to-one marketing principles can also be fully applied and tested in real time. Modern digital and data management allows marketing to evolve from the traditional marketing mix (the so called 4 or 7Ps) to a new e-marketing mix. This expands across the entire customer lifecycle from building branding to acquisition, customer experience management, cross sell, up-sell and retention.

The result is marketing has evolved into a more strategic and measurable function in managing the customer relationship and buying cycle. Therefore, the real challenge for marketers today is to develop greater strategic capabilities to successfully manage this evolution.

It's a unique task. Marketers not only need to focus on strategic aspects of engagement, such as leveraging analytics, constructing customer lifecycle management strategies or managing behavioural change techniques, they must also retain the ability to drive emotional connections between their customers and their brands with creative and content.

Tags: [customer engagement](#), [marketing strategy](#)

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