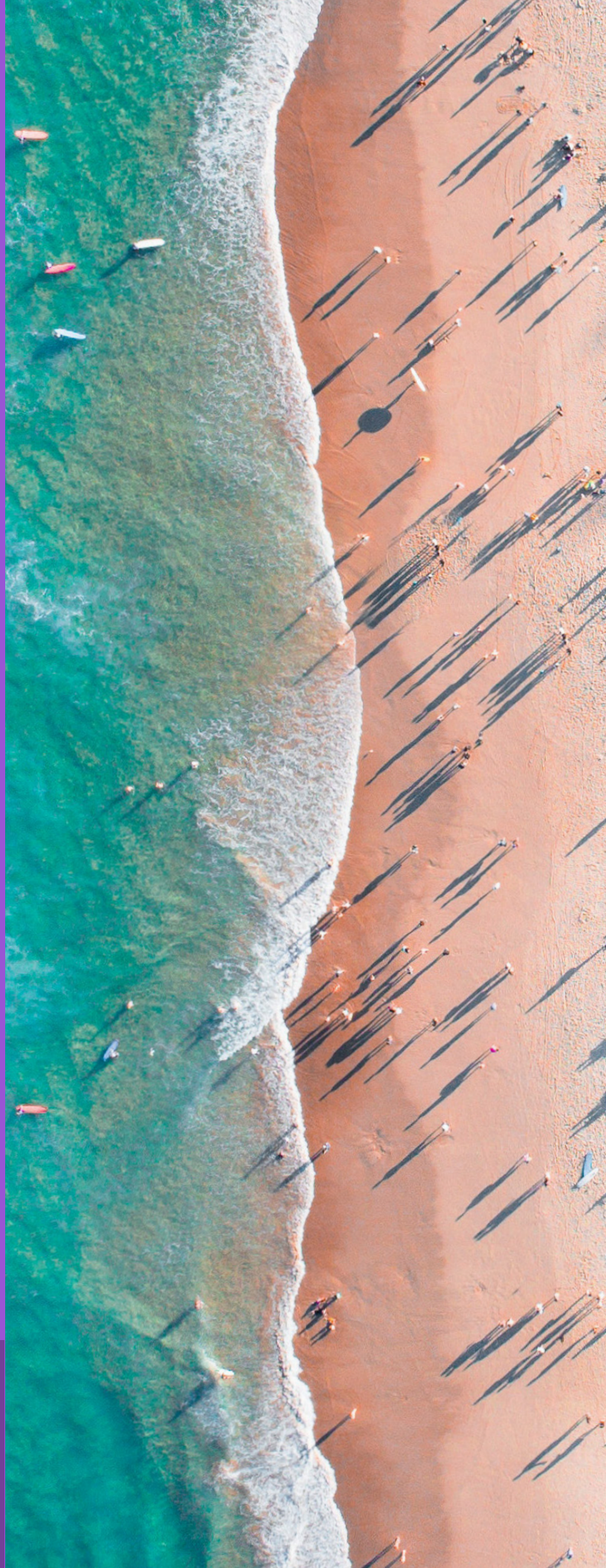


Watson Marketing

4 Best Practices for Personalized Digital Marketing:

Innovative Ways to Get Ahead



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Introduction



Is your marketing technology smart enough to handle your marketing ambitions? Many companies find themselves answering ‘no’ to this important question. Don’t let your company be one of them.

Instead, use AI-powered personalized marketing technology to create hyper-targeted campaigns at scale. With a personalized marketing campaign, you can easily make data-driven decisions to design a meaningful, impactful and relevant brand experience at any customer touchpoint.

In this exclusive eBook, industry experts Joel Comm, Martin Jones and Jason Falls share their perspectives on how to deepen customer relationships to maximize engagement and loyalty.

As a marketer, you will discover how AI-powered tools can help you deliver content that is tailored to your specific customers needs whenever they interact with your brand.

Practice 1:

Customer Loyalty Marketing is Now Engagement Marketing



Joel Comm

Create a deeper connection to your brand

The challenge in customer loyalty marketing is giving customers a sense of personalization — a feeling that they really matter to the company — without giving them the creepy sensation that company is watching their every move. That shift is starting to happen.

The practice of live video across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram has given social media platforms the ability to offer an exclusive experience: a recorded video can be seen on multiple sites; a live video is only ever broadcast on a single platform. It's given brands the chance to broadcast content that has an in-built urgency; there's only one chance to watch a video live. It's also given those brands a new opportunity to engage directly with customers not as a mass or even as data, but as individuals.

Facebook recommends that live video broadcasters greet new customers by their names as they start watching.

“Today’s loyalty marketing uses engagement and targeting to create real content that’s not just personalized but individualized.”

It's a strategy straight out of Walmart, the world's biggest retail chain, where store greeters welcome shoppers in person as they walk through the doors. Live video broadcasters can take questions in the comments

and they can answer them live on air to produce the same sense of audience closeness as a local call-in radio show. When they broadcast regularly and routinely, they can see the same people returning to broadcast after broadcast, and they can welcome them with content they love in the same way that a bar owner will line up a regular's favorite drink. The combination of personalization, interaction, engagement and urgency of live video creates viewing rates among loyal customers that are three times longer than recorded videos and generates ten times more comments.



Martin Jones

Traditional loyalty tools need to be reimagined

Let's be clear: promoting customer loyalty should always be a fundamental goal of your business. Consumers are increasingly focused on the customer experience, and on an experience that is consistent, simple and optimized with them in mind. Now, more than ever, customer loyalty should be viewed through the lens of the customer experience and brand engagement offered by your organization. As the Harvard Business Review notes in a recent article, the psychology of consumers is not based primarily in rational choice but rather in what they term "processing fluency." In plain English, the preference of customers is to choose the easiest option that works.

If Tide laundry detergent has made their clothes clean before, the customer is inclined to go back to Tide again and again and again. Of course, winning new customers still requires offering a good value proposition, but generating long-term loyalty is less about continuously appealing to their consideration, and more about making the choice familiar and easy.



In practical terms, what does this mean?

Customer loyalty has become the natural by-product of a customer experience that is focused on encouraging repeated brand engagement.

Businesses that take steps to simplify the path to purchase and focus on facilitating social conversations of friends and influencers are more likely to establish a relationship with customers that promotes loyalty than those that aim to influence the purchase decision through a generic loyalty program.

“Setting aside artificial loyalty programs and instead seeking to establish your customer’s sense of belonging within your brand is crucial for ensuring long-term success for your organization.”

For example, Amazon’s Dash Buttons, which allow customers to reorder commonly-used products with a single push of a button; in this way, utilizing the IoT to make purchasing convenient and frictionless has allowed Amazon to again increase customer loyalty.

See how AI can help you drive loyalty

[Learn more](#)

Practice 2: Transitioning from A/B Testing to Personalization



Martin Jones

Personalization starts with data

For more than a decade, A/B testing has provided marketers with an effective way of measuring performance and improving conversion rates. In A/B testing (also known as split or multivariate testing), visitors are shown two variants of a web page. The variant that shows the highest conversion rate wins -- it's as simple as that. The conversion rate may involve lead generation in the form of ad clicks, direct sales or motivating a customer to upgrade to a paid app or subscription. As long as the strategy persuades visitors to take some sort of action that can potentially convert them from non-paying users to paying customers, it's considered successful.

“The more you can find out about a customer, the more you can tailor and customize your marketing strategies to win that customer over.”

The word “personalization” implies a highly personal, one-on-one interaction with customers—a strategy that may sound challenging and even highly problematic to marketers. According to marketing specialists Nick Iyengar and Tim Ash, personalization doesn't mean that you have to create an overly-intrusive, uniquely-personalized experience for every single customer. Instead, it's a question of “high-value segmentation”— or segmenting your customers according to the data collected, and knowing how to use that data to optimize your conversion rates.



A customer relationship management (CRM) system can provide additional high-value segmentation marketing strategies by providing you with complete records of your previous interactions with clients and customers. By tracking customer communications, a CRM system can also give you the information you need to identify areas that are underperforming.

A CRM software system can give you the information you need to prioritize your marketing strategies so that you can target your higher-performance demographics more effectively.

“A customer relationship management (CRM) system can help you create high-value segmentation marketing strategies.”

According to Nick Iyengar, when it comes to optimizing your personalization strategies, it's important to have a clear strategy of what you want to accomplish. That's why personalization marketing, unlike A/B testing, can vary greatly according to the product or service you're providing.

Practice 3:

The Role of Customer Journey Mapping in Effective Campaigns



Jason Falls

Journey mapping that creates the right message

The more you know about what your customer is thinking and doing, plus when in their buying process they are thinking and doing it, the more relevant you can craft your messaging to them. More relevant and personalized messages equal a higher likelihood the audience will respond. Customer journey mapping can be broken down segments, like the retail experience or your website user experience to find break downs in moving the customer along the purchase funnel. **Broad perspective customer journey mapping helps you diagnose and plan more effective experiences and marketing campaigns.**

My team at the Conversation Research Institute (CRI) recently completed a case study on the topic. We mapped the customer journey in the senior living and care industry using social media conversations as our data set. We sat out to better understand social media touch points for those having to find care for their aging parents. This knowledge should give us:

- Better understanding of the journey moments our target audience turns to online resources for information and support
- What language and lexicon they use when discussing these moments
- The emotional vs. rational state of mind in these moments
- The websites, social networks and outlets they turn to as they continue on that journey



All of that information can help us build better targeting and messaging to deliver a more effective campaign, both in the digital space and in traditional channels. We indexed over 20,000 conversations over a 12-month period, weeded out only the relevant conversations from actual consumers indicating they were at some point along that customer journey, then mapped when they turn to online conversations to ask, learn, share and comment on the process. Let's look at that customer journey mapping project as an example to see how ensuing campaigns for a senior living brand can be made more effective.

Turn customer journey mapping into relevant messages

Our research showed five distinct customer journey touch points for senior care purchasers. We designated these five points as **Realization, Selection, Enrollment, Experience and Change**. In our example, senior care and senior living brand managers now look at the five stages and establish corresponding messaging for the touch point:

- Broad awareness campaigns may focus on the **Realization** phase asking audience members if they see the signs of aging or disease that might begin the thinking process for customers. Understanding the questions they ask or the emotions they're encountering gives advertising creative better ingredients to lead customers to their solution.
- For customers in the **Selection** phase, more specific needs are at the forefront of the conversation. Messaging can then focus on the type of facility, types of care offered, amenities and nuances that

aren't relevant in the earlier phase when the customer is dealing with the emotions rather than the logistics. Also, since this is an intense question and answer phase for customers, placing online media in specific online communities and forums hosting these more in-depth conversations is wise.

- The **Enrollment** phase moves the customer past the selection process but is still an opportunity communicate features and benefits of a facility, including service upgrades and add-on amenities.
- For customers in the **Experience** phase, there are two important campaign opportunities. First, mitigating or (as a competitor) capitalizing on those experiencing negative interactions with the chosen facility. And next, solidifying the family's confidence in the brand for the potential need in the next phase.
- The final phase – **Change** – is needed when the patient either improves or declines in physical or mental condition. The family may elect to move the patient to a facility they feel is better equipped to deal with their loved one's issues or keep them within the same facility or brand family. Messaging and targeting around change management could be helpful.

While each phase can likely be broken down further, these are the easily recognized phases of a person's buyer journey in the senior care/senior living category, based on when they turn to online conversations for information, support, and encouragement. All of these factors combine to deliver a more relevant set of messages and targeting opportunities to improve the chances your marketing communications persuades your audience to take whatever step you establish for them.

Explore how to create an effective customer journey

[Learn more](#)

Practice 4:

The Keys to Your Own Customer Journey Mapping



Jason Falls

How to use journey mapping effectively

Don't trust technology alone – While artificial intelligence and algorithms applied to social listening software certainly can narrow the pool of data you're working with, categorizing and coding topics to ensure real, relevant insights and proper identification of touch points must include some level of human analysis.

Keep an open mind – You'll likely start with your assumptions of what your customer journey looks like, but know that the data may reveal a touch point you didn't expect. We were not expecting as much conversation around the fifth (and somewhat critical) touch point in our senior care example – changing levels of care.

“Ask current customers to validate or invalidate the insights you discover.”

Validate with further research – Conversation research offers a more cost-effective method to discover insights to feed your customer journey map, but there is an audience that doesn't turn to online conversations to discuss or engage around your buying process, too. Ask current customers or develop short, specific surveys to validate (or invalidate) the insights you discover as a fail-safe.

Conclusion



Until now, marketers had only two choices: pick a personalized campaign, or a scalable one, but not both. Machine learning is changing that. With Watson, AI-powered brand storytelling can now sharply adapt to a consumer's preferences and behavior to deliver personalized stories at scale, helping your company engage with customers more efficiently than ever before. Don't get left behind the competition. Be sure that your marketing technology matches your marketing ambitions by using personalized marketing tools to help you reach your customers.

With Marketing Solutions from IBM Watson you now have the power to uncover new levels of actionable insights, deliver impactful and personalized experiences that customers want and value, and discover innovative ideas that provide a competitive edge.

Explore how personalized campaigns on Watson can deliver incredible results

[Learn more](#)

Biographies



Joel Comm is a New York Times best-selling author focused on marketing, social media, and online business. An internet pioneer, Comm has been making profitable websites, software, products, and training since 1995. With keen insight into marketing & delivering results, Joel is a marketing consultant for businesses of all sizes.



Martin Jones is the Sr. Social Media and Content Marketing Manager with the corporate Cox Communications marketing team where he leads the employee advocacy strategy for Cox Business. Today, over 1 million people engage with Cox Communications and Cox Business content across numerous social media and digital destinations. Jones has been named a Top 100 Social Media Influencers, Top 100 Marketing Influencers and Keynote Speakers, and Top 50 content Marketers.



Jason Falls is an innovator in conversation research, Falls leads the Conversation Research Institute, a think-tank and consultancy focused on mining online conversations for consumer insight and market research. An award-winning strategist and widely read industry pundit, Falls has been noted as a top influencer in the marketing space by Forbes, Entrepreneur, Advertising Age and others. He is the co-author of two books: No Bullshit Social Media: The All-Business, No-Hype Guide To Social Media Marketing (Que 2011); and The Rebel's Guide To Email Marketing (Que 2012).

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Somers, NY 10589

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