



# Three Critical Components of Intelligent Marketing: Right Buyer, Right Timing and Right Message

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## Biography

Nick Mitchell is the Managing Director, EMEA, at intuitive customer experience company [24]7. Nick has a background of delivering IT supported, business transformation programs, along with providing differentiated customer service solutions. With [24]7 he works with some of Europe's most prominent brands to deliver a more intuitive and omnichannel customer experience.

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## Abstract

*Customer Engagement is all about encouraging your customers to interact and share in the experiences that you create for them as a business and a brand. The more you know about who they are, what they do and what they care about, the more you can personalize your marketing and deliver the right message to the right buyer at the right time. More than anything, this will turn them into loyal, satisfied customers who come back time and time again. This article looks at how Customer Engagement Management (CEM) can benefit both businesses and customers and gives five top tips on how to set up your own CEM strategy.*

## Introduction

Winning customers is a competitive business and all too often marketers miss critical pieces of business intelligence that could mean the difference between winning a new customer, or losing an existing one. As we all know, the best customer is a past customer – research has shown that 20% of customers drive 80% of retailers' revenue. In fact, according to the White House Office of Consumer Affairs, it is six to seven times more expensive to acquire a new customer than it is to keep a current one.

End-to-end customer engagement is becoming a business imperative and, more specifically, Customer Engagement Marketing (CEM) which is designed to foster brand growth and loyalty by influencing and guiding the customer (or prospective customer) at every stage of the customer journey. What that means in practice is data-driven personalized, tailored communications that give the right message to the right person at the right time.



### **A perfect target**

It may seem strange that we still receive marketing emails and targeted ads that are completely irrelevant to our lives or our interests. The technologies and applications we use track enormous amounts of data about our activities, connections, and preferences, but marketers still struggle to connect the dots between messages, products, and customers. (Satirical magazine *Private Eye*'s 'malgorithms' column, which is devoted to examples of unsuitable ads placed next to news stories, is a good example of when things go wrong because the software hasn't understood the context.) Getting one of the three components wrong – the message, the person or the timing – is easily done when there are gaps in the communication chain, and this is where a holistic customer engagement strategy is essential.

### **Mind the gap**

In many companies, the marketing function is best placed to orchestrate customer engagement for the entire organization, but to do so, it must be able to influence touch points everywhere, even those that it doesn't directly control. For example, customers are exposed to social media and the results of web searches before they even begin to focus their attention on you, the brand. Many prospective customers rely heavily on 'word of mouth' recommendations from their network of contacts, and are completely impervious to more traditional marketing.

This is where advertising and marketing are becoming firmly embedded in the customer engagement process. Wherever the customer is, or has been, so should marketing and advertising be to inform, educate and guide the selection process.

### **All the world's a stage**

Every customer or potential customer is at a different stage of their customer journey, and all of them possess vastly different intents. They could be a first time buyer, a repeat buyer, a well-informed or uninformed customer, male or female, higher or lower income, someone who uses the Internet a lot or not at all, someone with positive or negative previous experiences; they may have vastly different criteria for making a purchasing decision – criteria such as the cost, the range of functionality available, durability, delivery options, post-sales service and so on. Customer attitudes and emotions towards the vendor throughout their customer journey could fluctuate wildly from excited and empowered to anxious, angry and frustrated. The key is to understand each possible journey variation, and deliver a personalized, contextual experience.

### **Where does it hurt?**

It is annoying for customers to have to make several phone calls and each time have to go through their details over again, then to be passed from pillar to post and finally told they have to ring another number – maybe the one they rang in the first place.

A review of customer engagement touchpoints may reveal a set of touch points that should be coordinated, but which instead are managed independently within functional silos dotted around the organization.



## Personalization

Personalized and contextual interactions are the key to satisfying customers' requirements and with the right kind of technology, marketers can deliver the right message to the right person at the right time.

Some may have advanced to target marketing selected prospects based on very broad parameters – for example, marketing different messages to male or female prospects - but such a strategy, while preferable to simple mass marketing, still misses the mark.

Research from Gleanster Research<sup>1</sup> has shown that segmentation, content personalization, recommendations, and the inclusion of custom database fields in emails drive 360% higher conversion rates than a generic email message with a simple personalized salutation.

### Top Tips

So what do marketers need to do to move from mass marketing to customer engagement marketing (CEM)? These are my top five tips.

1. **Personalization:** Create messages that buy into customer or prospective customer 'personas' in order to create an emotional response that drives them into taking action.
2. **Know what your buyers want:** To understand what your buyers want, first look at how they interact with your brand. What are they interested in and what are their habits?
3. **Omnichannel:** Operate an integrated, multichannel and holistic customer service strategy. The market today is looking for customer engagement marketing – an integrated process that combines the traditional elements with data analytics to deliver relevant, personalized and timely customer interactions across all channels.
4. **Advance personalization using Big Data:** Buyer 'personas' have endless variations. You're not just married with children. You're married with children of a particular age, work in a particular industry and have certain buying habits.
5. **Create loyal customers with one-to-one conversations:** Turn a stranger into a long-time, loyal customer by demonstrating that you know how they feel and what they care about.

## Conclusion

Every touch point, from advertising campaigns to post-purchase support can affect a customer's perception and loyalty. To influence those interactions, organizations often need to go through a significant transformation of their own, adapting their



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systems, processes and infrastructure to put the customer at the centre. The effort is worth the investment. Positive customer experience can build its own momentum, creating an 'ecosystem of goodwill' that costs relatively little to maintain, but can deliver a loyal fan base that generates tangible bottom-line returns.

**Reference**

- <sup>1</sup> <http://www.gleanster.com/report/5-key-milestones-for-the-first-30-days-with-marketing-automation>