10 Key Marketing Trends for 2016

and Ideas for Delivering Exceptional Customer Experiences

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In the aftermath of a brilliant performance, athletes often say they were "in the zone." In this state of advanced flow, achieving superhuman feats seems relatively easy. Complex tasks somehow appear simple, as the athlete feels as if he or she is in full control, calm and laser-focused on the task at hand.

You don't have to be LeBron James, Cristiano Ronaldo or Serena Williams to know that shopping isn't as thrilling as sinking a winning three-pointer, scoring a last-second goal or bashing a perfect serve. Still, when today's buyers are researching a purchase decision or otherwise interacting with a business, they want the process to feel seamless and streamlined. Even among all of modern life's distractions, they want the experience to be focused and efficient. They want the right offer, insightful piece of content or helpful reminder to fall into place at just the right time. Yep, they want to be "in the zone."

Unfortunately, buyers rarely find themselves in the shopping zone. Instead, they are forced to navigate a disjointed, impersonal experience that frequently fails to resonate. Only 22 percent of consumers say the average retailer understands them, and just 21 percent say the marketing messages they receive from average companies are "usually relevant."[1]

Most marketers understand this must change, with 88 percent agreeing that their organization's growth ultimately depends on personalization and better customer knowledge. The challenge is that only 37 percent

feel they have the tools they need to provide exceptional customer service and experiences.[1]

So, what can marketers do in 2016 to shift to an approach that nurtures contacts through the buying process and inspires loyalty among existing customers? C-suite executives think four technologies will be particularly important for marketing success in the near term: cloud computing and services, mobile solutions, the Internet of Things and cognitive computing.[2]

You'll find all four of these areas covered in this white paper, plus many more ideas, strategies and tactics offered up from our in-house marketing experts, partners and clients. The biggest theme running through these key marketing trends for 2016 is gaining a deeper understanding of buyers and delivering the types of outstanding cross-channel experiences customers and prospects crave. Let's take a look at 10 key trends that will shape digital marketing in 2016.

Stephen Monaco @StephenMonaco · 5m

The #digital #marketing trend of 2016 will be using #cognitive #martech to proactively #personalize #customer journeys @Silverpop #cx
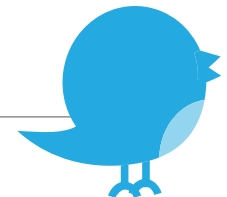
Trend #1: Cognitive technologies change the way businesses engage with customers.

**Deepak Advani,
General Manager,
IBM Commerce**
@deepakadvani

Here's an interesting statistic — 80 percent of data today is unstructured and largely invisible to computers. What does that mean for marketers and their brands? At a time when turning data into insight has never been more important, brands are only benefitting from 20 percent of what's out there.

As we begin looking to 2016, it's clear that marketers need to embrace new approaches that allow them to access ALL the data customers are creating each day, to understand and learn from it and in the end use it to drive loyalty and build advocacy. With access to an endless universe of information and possibilities, leaders can now understand what individuals want (sometimes even before they know it), deliver the right experience at just the right time and do this billions of times per day.

But how do you create these brand champions who are truly passionate about what you have to offer? Delivering the best product is one factor, as is selling it at the best price, but that's only part of the recipe for success.

To win in 2016, brands must embrace cognitive commerce capabilities as well as new strategies and tactics that allow them to see patterns and make unlikely connections — connections beyond human imagination — and create serendipitous moments for customers. These are those times where out of nowhere, the perfect deal, a helpful piece of content or a timely reminder is presented at exactly the right moment for the customer.

Here's an example of how we can make better recommendations based on personality, needs, values and emotions. Imagine that you're traveling for business. Your airline misplaces your luggage and you're stuck in a foreign city with no business clothes to wear to your meeting, which is only two hours away. So you post a message on your social profile asking your network for

recommendations on where to purchase a suit. Meanwhile, a cognitive agent sees your plea for help and jumps into action. It automatically empathizes with you, sends an amenity package to you (free of charge!) and offers recommendations on where to go shopping for a specific outfit based on your personality traits, as well as needs and values.

This is the power of cognitive commerce. It can fuel a company's transition from delivering customer service to servicing its customers. It recognizes emotions — the new brand value that must be earned through trust over time.

In 2016 and beyond, cognitive technologies will increasingly help companies understand customers and prospects on completely new levels by learning about their behaviors, personalities and emotions, pinpointing what tone will resonate best in brand messages, and optimizing offers and content for each customer journey based on the progressive discovery of intent. Through this deep level of understanding, marketers can then design and engineer perfect moments that not only establish deeper levels of customer engagement but make this engagement so memorable that it spawns a new level of intimacy with each person.
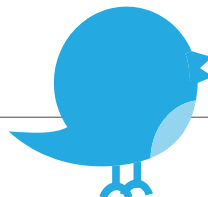
With cognitive computing, consumers and business buyers will receive experiences on levels they never have before while businesses build a base of loyal customers who are powerful brand advocates.

Whereoware @whereoware · 3m
@Silverpop! Becoming customer obsessed - using data to give customers a better, seamless brand experience.

12:37 PM - 4 Nov 2015 · Details

Trend #2: Delivering a connected customer experience becomes increasingly critical for companies.

**Maria Winans,
CMO, IBM Commerce
and Social**

@MariaWinans

People's feelings, preferences and attitudes can change with the click of a mouse or a tick of the clock. With cognitive technology it's possible to create unbreakable bonds with customers, understanding them in the moment and responding immediately with relevant, personal engagement by:

- Understanding what individuals really want, maybe even before they know it
- Identifying the perfect moment
- Layering in nuances of tone, sentiment, emotional state, environmental conditions and personal relationships for deeper human engagement
- Bringing more certainty to the business by extracting real-time information to enhance forecasting and decision-making across the value chain, all enabled by cognitive processes and systems
- Being able to act on all of these capabilities simultaneously and in real time

With 81 percent of marketers saying they contextually understand their customers, and only 38 percent of customers agreeing with that statement,[1] a big challenge facing marketers in 2016 is making sense of and visualizing the collected customer data from multiple customer engagement applications and then delivering a connected, meaningful customer experience.

As customer expectations have increased so has the complexity of the business environment — more channels, more devices, more solutions and more data. In some companies, marketers work within more than 30 different systems. For businesses to react to customers in the moment, it's critical to have the ability to easily connect data stored in those solutions — and across all channels — for a single, complete view of customer data. For instance, you might take what a customer is doing in Facebook and act on that data in another application, such as a paid advertising channel.

The requirement to deliver a connected customer experience is calling on leaders and practitioners to increase their mastery in 2016, blending art and science to expand the boundaries of what is possible. Cognitive capabilities uncover new insights, reveal patterns and make unlikely connections beyond human perception.

Access to an endless universe of information unlocks equally endless possibilities. That's the power available to help leaders humanize transactions with a smile and a handshake, online or in-store, and engineer "moments of serendipity" for customers — those "you read my mind" moments that create unbreakable bonds and brand advocacy.

Phylicia Teymer @PhyliciaTeymer · 2m

More "buy now" integrations, brand ads made BY customers, increased personalization @Silverpop #NewWaytoEngage #smm
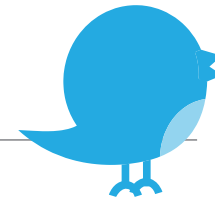
Trend #3: Retargeting reaches unprecedented levels of cross-channel sophistication.

**Dave Faupel,
VP of Marketing
Communications,
Silverpop, an IBM
Company**
@davezamazing

It's a familiar experience for anyone who has ever shopped online: You view a product, exit the website, and then notice display ads for that product following you around the Internet. For marketers, these retargeting efforts are a no-brainer, driving revenue even if they only resonate with a small percentage of contacts. For many customers, though, the experience can range from invasive to annoying.

While traditional retargeting ads are often relevant, they become less effective the more times a person sees them. This is due to what psychologists call inattentional blindness — the failure to notice an object that's in plain sight when focusing on something else. What if you could help shift this paradigm by delivering ads that understood a contact beyond the product he or she just viewed, took into account everything you knew about that person, and changed based on built-in rule sets?

Well, the good news is that tools are emerging that enable marketers to retarget and nurture contacts in a more sophisticated fashion across more channels. In 2016 and beyond, savvy

marketers will no longer be limited to their emails and website when it comes to behavior-driven retargeting. Moving forward, you'll be able to use display and social advertising, as well as your mobile app, to extend your nurture efforts to show contacts contextually relevant content that helps move them forward in their customer journey.

For example, let's say you're a sports equipment retailer and someone browses hockey sticks on your website and then leaves without making a purchase. In the old display advertising model, this individual would see ads for the same hockey stick (or category of sticks) when they visited other sites, without any contextual understanding of who that person was.

In the new display ad paradigm, the contact is served ads based on where he or she is in the customer journey, such as:

- **New contact who hasn't bought yet:** Ad for downloading "Guide to Buying the Right Hockey Stick for You" PDF

- **New customer who recently made a purchase:** Ad for watching "Tips for Caring for Your Hockey Gear" video

- **Long-time customer with multiple purchases:** Ad for clicking to "Join Our Loyalty Program and Get Exclusive Content and Offers"

To better position your company to take advantage of these retargeting opportunities, make it a goal for the year ahead to revisit your lifecycle campaigns (nurture programs, welcome campaigns, etc.) to see how you might supplement these email campaigns with display ads – as well as social ads and rich in-app push notifications — triggered by behavior-specific rule sets.

For marketers, these new retargeting options present exciting opportunities for 2016 and beyond. Customers will have a better experience because they're receiving helpful content rather than just nonstop offers to buy something, and you should see higher conversions and better use of your spend because you're getting more personalized in your retargeting.

View the video

**Adding Context
and Value to
Your Retargeting Efforts**

Trend #4: Social media and automation will combine in new ways to improve the customer journey.

Amber Armstrong, Program Director, Commerce and Social Amplification, IBM
@ambarmstrong

Customers will remain in control of their purchase journeys in 2016, and social media will continue to be intertwined in these customers' personal and professional lives. The way marketers interact with contacts on social will need to evolve, though, to deliver the types of engaging experiences today's social users want.

To better meet customers' needs, marketers will need to incorporate more sophisticated tools into their overall social media efforts, creating more personalized experiences for each individual, on a mass scale. Here are some areas of social that leading marketers will want to pay close attention to in 2016:

Social Media Advertising

Social media ads provide one of the best opportunities to personalize customer engagement. The big networks, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram, offer a variety of advertising options. Effectively using these channels provides an additional touch point for both prospective and current customers to engage with your company.

Advancements in digital marketing technology continue to break down the silos between marketing channels, and social media is no exception. Marketers can increasingly incorporate data collected from other channels into their social marketing efforts. For example, if a prospective customer explores your website and visits the demo form or a product page, but doesn't complete the action, a pixel on the page allows you to retarget that individual in a tweet or Facebook post with helpful content related to exactly where that person is in the buyer journey.

Alternately, for customers who have been loyal to your brand over time, you can offer special deals and promotions as a "thank you." For example, a sporting goods retailer could deliver a targeted tweet or Facebook ad to a repeat customer who is due for a new pair of running shoes. Integrating paid social campaigns with your digital marketing platform allows the two systems to pass information back and forth, giving customers those personalized interactions they crave, while simultaneously increasing engagement, loyalty and marketing ROI.

Organic Social Media

The advancements in paid social media do not bring an end to organic social efforts, however. In 2016, leading companies will double down on creating branded social channels that serve as an online home — an inviting place for customers and prospects to learn more about your brand and what you offer.

Your social "home" should have interesting books on the coffee table (enticing content or offers), a host that's always ready to make the guest feel comfortable (active moderators and page managers) and — in the best situations — other guests that make the home even more valuable (an engaged community of fans).

Brands that succeed in 2016 will not only provide relevant, worthwhile content on social media, but also engage with their followers in a personal way. Through both organic and paid efforts, marketers will share valuable, personalized information at exactly the right moment.
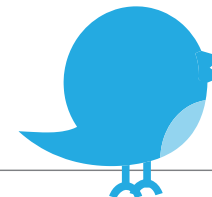
Meaghan MunozDickson @MadebyMeaghan · 1m

The digital marketing trend of 2016 will be buyable pin campaigns!
@socialmedia2day @Pinterest @Silverpop

Trend #5: Video moves to center stage in the marketing mix.

**Loren McDonald,
VP of Industry Relations,
Silverpop, an IBM Company**
@LorenMcDonald

Marketers have understood for a while that video has tons of potential to engage customers, but technical limitations and unfamiliarity with the medium have limited how effectively most companies have integrated it into their overall strategy. That's about to change. Video will assume greater prominence for marketers in 2016 thanks to several factors:

1) Internet speed/mobile data plans: Faster broadband, widespread free Wi-Fi and cheaper data plans make watching videos less challenging, whether in or out of home, on TVs, desktops, laptops, tablets and smartphones.

2) Social/mobile viewing sites: Consumption of social and mobile video has exploded over the last couple of years:

- YouTube viewing hours are up 60 percent over 2014[3]
- Facebook video grew 94 percent from 2013 to 2014, with 50 percent of U.S. Facebook users watching at least one video a day[4]
- Mobile accounts for more than half of all YouTube video views, while mobile viewer hours have increased 100 percent since 2014[3]

3) Simpler video production: The popularity of amateur videos featuring everything from piano-playing cats to GoPro daredevils indicates that consumers will accept videos that focus more on content than slick production values. Also, mobile technology has evolved to the point that smartphones can capture video that approximates or matches video-camera quality.

For marketers, these factors present a golden opportunity to use video to add value to the customer experience. And the potential is there to not only build engagement but also to drive revenue: Consumers who watch videos while shopping online are 1.9 times more likely to buy than non-viewers.[5]

Integrating video into your customer journey communications strategy across channels can cut costs, increase customer satisfaction and move prospects closer to purchasing. Here are three strategic questions to ask in 2016 to help take your video marketing efforts up a notch:

1) What purpose will video serve? Your videos don't live in a vacuum, so think about ways you might use video in your marketing — bringing a blog post to life, explaining how to use a product or service, promoting an upcoming event and more.

2) How can video improve the customer journey? Examine your customers' journey and look for opportunities to leverage video content. At what points in the journey can video effectively create interest, solve buyer problems or drive brand preference and engagement?

3) How will we measure success? Depending on your goals, simply tracking YouTube video views may not tell you much. Consider other ways you might tie video to your broader objectives, such as measuring leads generated via video, reductions in calls to your call center, and increases in upgrades to your "enterprise" product.

Wide distribution, booming consumption and low entry barriers make video an ever-more-important marketing channel in 2016. If you're not taking steps to enhance your use of this medium, you could well be eclipsed by competitors who do.

View the video

**Tips for Moving
Video to the Next Level
in Your Marketing**

Trend #6: Top companies bust the myth of the marketing suite.

**Jay Henderson,
Director of Strategy,
IBM**

@jay_henderson

Marketers are constantly on the lookout for exciting technologies and better ways to engage their customers. Buzzworthy new technology, such as Meerkat, emotional analytics or iBeacons, makes it easy to get excited – and a little overwhelmed — when creating your marketing strategy.

With platform vendors offering to solve all your marketing needs in one suite, it's tempting to be wooed by the myth of the marketing suite — the idea that one platform can be a one-stop shop for all your diverse digital marketing needs.

To best succeed in 2016, though, marketers must understand that flexibility is key and the ability to integrate with a variety of best-of-breed technologies can open up amazing new opportunities to innovate and engage. Moving forward, it's crucial that you plan for the simultaneous consolidation and fragmentation of the marketing technology landscape.

What does this mean? Now more than ever, large platform vendors are building suites that consolidate marketing technologies. These platforms seek to offer everything from email to analytics to customer data management in one hub with a single sign-on and user interface. These suites are absolutely critical for building a solid foundation for your marketing stack. However, if you want to craft memorable, differentiating customer experiences, you should think beyond the traditional marketing suite.

While large vendors are driving consolidation, small "martech" companies are entering the landscape faster than ever and offering fascinating new capabilities. With a focus on agile technology, these vendors specialize in everything from social sign-on to programmatic ad buying. It's simply impossible for large marketing suite vendors to offer all these new tools as part of their platform. And while I certainly don't suggest that marketers invest in all these technologies, it's important that their strategy provides the flexibility to work with some cool new technology companies.

In 2016, leading companies will take advantage of this flexibility between applications to:

- **Collaborate on designing customer journeys:** Work across organizational silos, break through channel silos and create journeys that will span the technologies that execute them. For example, a journey could include an email and a push message executed by the suite vendor, but a social engagement crafted by a stand-alone vendor.

- **Analyze journeys across channels:** Regardless of what technology executed the interaction, connect the dots from one touch point to another — for example, between email marketing and social campaigns.

- **Gain a contextual view of customers:** Access customer information across solutions so you can provide the right data in the right system to inform the next interaction.

In today's complex marketing technology landscape, it's crucial that companies construct a marketing stack that brings together both a strong foundation and unique niche vendors that will support their goals and strategy. Bottom line: In 2016, look for new ways to leverage your technology mix to give you greater agility to innovate and more strongly engage your customers.

Amy Tennison @AmyTennison · 45m
...personalized #mktg. People talk about it now but it will become more of a reality. @Silverpop #NewWayToEngage
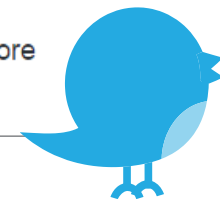
Trend #7: Leading marketers use predictive technology to further distance their companies from the pack.

Ellen Valentine, Strategic Marketing Evangelist, Silverpop, an IBM Company
@EllenValentine

Over the last few years, marketers have had to really step up their analytics game to not only improve their results but also facilitate higher revenue achievement. Some companies have done a good job of taking advantage of innovation, using new technology to drive competitive advantage.

In 2016, much of this innovation will come in the form of predictive technology, which leading marketers will harness to separate themselves from the pack by using it to spot trends, prevent bottlenecks, identify retention leaks and capitalize on opportunities before they occur — not after the fact.

Consider multichannel customer journeys, for example. They can involve smartphone apps, personalized emails, SMS text, mobile push notifications, sophisticated websites, webinars, events and more. Behavioral and other data is being created through every button click, download, page visit, video watched and shopping cart purchase — to name a few.

To manually analyze all this data in a timely manner is both time- and resource-intensive.

Given that every contact's path to purchase is unique and data-rich, how can marketers make sense of all this information?

Thankfully, new analytics technology is emerging that will enable companies of all sizes to collect pertinent data, use advanced statistical modeling to identify causal factors, and provide recommendations for proactively addressing a problem or seizing a revenue opportunity. You might, for example, tap the power of predictive marketing to:

- Determine the best channel or content with which to interact with someone
- Retain your most valuable customers by detecting gradual loss of engagement or sudden likelihood of churn — and the best response
- Determine the most effective offer based on other customers' responses that share the same characteristics

Here are three tactics to consider in 2016 to help prepare you to harness the power of predictive marketing:

1) Up your department skills. Statisticians and research analysts will no longer be the sole property of academic institutions and think tanks. Make head count plans for hires who can use new solutions to not only gain insight from what's happened in the past, but to also uncover issues before they become a problem or discover amazing opportunities to capture revenue and market share.

2) Employ the latest technology. Look to move beyond basic reporting and spreadsheets to make predictive capabilities a strategic weapon for your company. Allocate budget dollars to invest in new solutions that will give you the valuable insight you need to stay ahead of your competitors.

3) Institutionalize new analysis findings. The way many businesses assess their results, forecast future business, and determine marketing and sales success is deeply rooted in the corporate DNA. Now is the time to shake up those processes and introduce new analysis and predictive approaches so the executive team embraces these methods and accelerates smart decision-making.

View the video

Driving Marketing Innovation with Predictive Technology

Trend #8: Internet of Things appliances and sensors become a real factor in customer engagement and data collection.

Josh Rochlin, Global Business Leader, IBM Mobile Customer Engagement
@XtifyCEO

For most of the "smartphone age," digital marketers have enjoyed the relative luxury of thinking of customer engagement as binary: a relationship between marketers and their target consumers. The marketer had a message to deliver (offer, coupon, etc.), and the consumer had a device on which to receive it.

In the coming year we can expect to see this calculus undergo a significant transformation. As more "things" become connected, marketers will be challenged to act and react based on their customers' interactions with a growing variety of connected and addressable "things." Gartner predicts that by 2020 we'll have 26 billion smart and connected products in use.[6]

So what will this transformation mean for your business?

For starters, marketers will need to change the way they look at the customer journey. Whereas before you could engage your customers when they were "in store" or "on screen," you'll now be challenged to engage them with the right message at the right time as they interact with the newly hyper-connected Internet of Things.

Home

Let's start with the home. In addition to the playful part of the Internet of Things (connected refrigerators, washing machines and microwaves), we have begun to see a more serious penetration into the home by Google (with its Nest products), Amazon (with its Echo device) and Apple (with the Siri capabilities of its newest Apple TV). This means these brands may now have an unprecedented presence in your customers' homes.

Amazon's Echo device — while still in its infancy — is currently the most ambitious. Sure it can be voice-summoned to play Billy Joel, update the news and provide the weather. But more importantly for marketers, it's already collecting shopping lists ("we need more ketchup") and adding them to a mobile app . . . owned by Amazon. If you're a retailer or even a consumer goods manufacturer, what might this mean for your business? How do you prevent further disintermediation by Amazon, Apple or Google?

Business

Outside the home, the challenge of the Internet of Things is also a great opportunity. Ironically, perhaps, the Internet of Things is now diminishing the divide between "bricks" and "clicks." Marketers will be able to "tag" zones in their businesses much the way digital marketers have been tagging their websites and apps. In addition, retailers and other venue owners will be tracking "entry" and "dwell" events — similar to how digital marketers track website visits — and adjusting their marketing and product mix in real time to maximize efficiencies and customer experience.

Winning

The key to a successful Internet of Things strategy will require adopting a marketing orchestration platform from which you can consume and leverage the data from increasingly connected "things." With this new power, marketers in 2016 and beyond will be able to execute effective, contextually cognitive marketing campaigns that will serve to influence consumer intent at unprecedented levels.
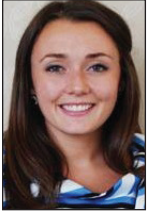
Vordik @vordik · Nov 5
Looking to future #digitalmarketing trends, we predict the Internet of Things will be the trend of 2016 @silverpop
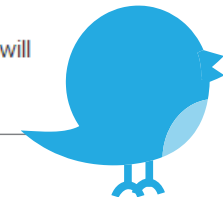
Trend #9: Loyalty programs expand across channels and touch points.

**Hannah Egan,
Product Strategy
Specialist, IBM Customer
Engagement Solutions**
@HannahB_Egan

In today's super-competitive, customer-centric landscape, quickly building loyalty and increasing brand advocacy is critical. True, loyalty programs aren't new to the marketing landscape, but in 2016 advanced capabilities around customer data management and unified customer identities are giving savvy marketers the ability to create loyalty programs that reach across channels and touch points to foster deeper levels of brand advocacy and play a more critical role in brand success.

In the past, loyalty programs were typically driven by purchases and limited by data silos. Today, marketers can pull in behaviors from across systems and devices to inform loyalty programs and create custom offers for consumers. From web to in-store, loyalty programs have expanded far beyond a simple card swipe at checkout. Smart brands are creating loyalty programs that are accessible across channels. Whether receiving bonus coupons via a mobile app or earning points for sharing a new purchase via Twitter, consumers are eager to participate in loyalty programs. But, in order to keep clients engaged, brands must construct programs that bring a consistent experience across channels.

The multichannel nature of loyalty marketing creates new opportunities for brands to personalize customer loyalty programs. Instead of sending all frequent flyers drink tokens, airlines could focus on using customer purchase data to personalize tokens based on past purchase behaviors. Similarly, not all customers value a loyalty program centered on discounts.

For example, some consumers might be less likely to come in store for 10 percent off women's outerwear and more motivated to venture in for an exclusive pre-season trunk show party. By crafting custom loyalty programs that break the status quo mold, brands can create loyal customers who will serve as brand advocates.

Finally, brands must remember that loyalty programs won't captivate your clients unless customers can use them and they add value. Companies that create an easy sign-up process, friendly user experience, and simple interface will maintain loyalty members.

Generally, customers surrender valuable personal data when they sign up for a loyalty program, so brands should offer value in return (special events, discounts, offers, etc.). That value-add can also come in the form of dynamic content that enables consumers to make the most of their loyalty points or offers. For example, when a member visits the brand's website they might see a dynamic content block with the latest tally of their points. Or, members who opt in for text messages might receive an SMS that alerts them when a special loyalty event is happening in their area. If a program is challenging to navigate or doesn't offer tangible value, customers will likely abandon your program for a better option.

Bottom line: In 2016, loyalty programs should be multichannel, personalized and user-friendly to capture the attention of your best customers and help you succeed in the competitive marketing world.

GIGYA
Gigya @Gigya · 1m
2016 = #Personalization. Leveraging 1st party data directly from consumers for memorable #CX & #DigitalMarketing
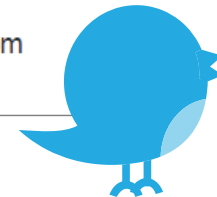
Trend #10: Look-alike modeling transforms the role of social in list growth.

**Dave Walters,
Strategic Marketing
Evangelist, Silverpop,
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@_DaveWalters

In today's world of accelerating expectations and continuing tight budgets, the smartest marketers are constantly in search of the new growth edge — that next tactic that will drive acquisition for the next four to six months before they have to reinvent the effort yet again.

During the coming 12 to 18 months, the most progressive marketers will begin to think about social channels — particularly Twitter and Facebook — as a primary acquisition source. And the good news is the stars (and business model pressures) are aligning to make social an epic channel for list growth.

Here's the deal: The biggest social sites have developed paid advertising products called look-alike models that might just be your new best friend. The easiest way to summarize these products is that they allow you to match the attributes of your best buyers to millions of potential buyers across the social sites. This enables you to deploy paid media dollars in a much smarter way — far beyond simple targeting metrics like lowest CPM bid or a single element like geography.

Let's use a specific industry and Facebook as an example. Say you run marketing for a newish children's clothing brand. On the competitive spectrum you're more like Daily Tea than Old Navy – that is to say you offer premium pricing for premium products that are likely to last long enough to be handed down to a sibling. Your business currently looks something like this:

- You sell primarily via ecommerce but are looking for additional scale and audience reach.

- You've likely tested the product in large-scale alternate distribution channels like the flash sale site Zulily so you know your value proposition is on-point.

- You have a clear set of repeat buyers and understand how your products are bought together.

- Your own ecommerce successes give you the key attributes of your customers like ZIP codes, purchase frequency and average order value, and you can make some basic assumptions on affinities.

This is the absolute perfect case for look-alike models. And by uploading all the data you have on your best segment of customers in a CSV file, you can power the search for similar buyers – and target both content and offers to an incredibly more focused audience. Imagine being able to directly reach mothers with more than one child, who match the geographic mix of your best customers, and who have interests that match newer mothers like parenting and online shopping.

In the race to increase relevance across all your marketing channels, social-powered look-alike models are an absolute win/win proposition for you the marketer — and social network users. You get direct access to more customers, and they get more offers and content directly related to their interests.

View the video

**Using Social
to Power List Growth:
Look-alike Models**

Bonus Trends: Partners

CMOs lead their organizations like CEOs.

**Kristine Steuart,
CEO and Co-Founder,
Allocadia**

The pressure on CMOs to prove the effectiveness of their marketing efforts has reached a tipping point. No longer is it enough to report on campaign metrics or even marketing-generated leads. Today, success is determined by pipeline: How much revenue is your marketing organization driving and how can you prove it?

To answer these questions, marketing leaders need to think and act like CEOs. In 2016, the marketing organization will be led like a business unit that is aligned with both corporate goals and revenue targets, and will be held accountable for its contribution to the bottom line.

This shift will be made possible by next-generation marketing platforms which integrate Marketing Performance Management (MPM) with customer engagement delivery. Sometimes referred to as "linking the back office to the front office," connecting the tools for building and delivering customer-facing activities to the marketing plan and the budgets funding them enables organizations to demonstrate ROI. As a result, absolute alignment between marketing initiatives and corporate goals (and between marketing and finance departments) becomes a reality.

Ownership of this mind-set will also change. In 2016, it's not only the CMO who will be held accountable for driving revenue, but every marketer. As MPM systems empower each member of the marketing organization to participate in planning, budgeting and measuring returns, the result is not only amplified collaboration but a heightened sensitivity to the impact of each strategic decision.

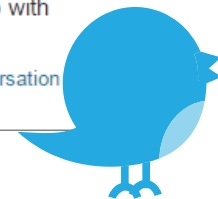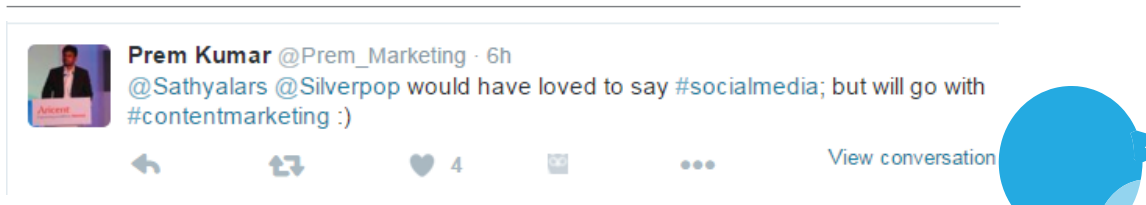## Social media will take over your office in 2016.

**Kevin Zellmer,
VP Corporate & Business
Development, Hootsuite**

For years now, the top minds of business and tech have been heralding the demise of email. Why does it persist? Because most efforts to improve office communication with more social software encounter adoption challenges. A time-saving tool that demands too much time from your team to learn is doomed to fail.

2016 promises to be the year the workplace social network finally solves this conundrum. With Facebook at Work, the social giant is leveraging its biggest strength to overcome the adoption hurdles that stifled previous attempts to make office communication more efficient. Because most of us already use Facebook, onboarding friction is virtually eliminated.

The toughest competitor for Facebook's workplace communication offering is likely to be Slack, a collaboration tool that owes its rapid growth in 2015 to the same kind of bottom-up adoption pattern. Both tools are becoming entrenched in office culture by being familiar, fast and sticky. Other software has offered similar feature sets, but 2016 is going to be the year social finally takes over office communication because adoption of tools like Slack and Facebook is being driven by users, not from the top down.

Prem Kumar @Prem_Marketing · 6h
@Sathyalars @Silverpop would have loved to say #socialmedia; but will go with #contentmarketing :)

4

View conversation

Retailers use predictive tools to take personalization to the next level.

**Andrew Pearson,
Vice President of
Marketing, Windsor Circle**

Consumers are becoming more and more tech-savvy and expect a certain level of personalization in their regular communications from retailers. Because of these higher standards, retailers are going to be challenged in 2016 to take personalization to the next level. Predictive marketing is going to be integral to success for retailers in 2016.

To achieve this end, retailers need to have access to actionable data in their email marketing platform. Once that has been accomplished, being able to use that data to create even more relevant and timely messages will be key to developing lasting relationships and retaining customers. Essentially, the goal of a retailer will be to show customers what they want before they know they want it.

Predictive campaigns can be as simple or in-depth as you see fit. From enabling browse abandonment and replenishment messages to beat Amazon at their own game, to incorporating dynamic product recommendations into regular email promotions, predictive marketing will be a major game changer for retailers in 2016.

Programmatic marketing moves from concept to reality.

**Joanna O'Connell,
CMO, MediaMath**

"Programmatic" has revolutionized digital media transactions, bringing automation to process, and more critically, data-driven decisioning. In 2016, "programmatic" is pushing beyond the historical boundaries of paid media into the realm of earned and owned experiences for two primary reasons:

1) A CMO-level imperative to contextualize the customer journey requires alignment between ad and marketing tech stacks. In fact, "89 percent of companies plan to compete primarily on the basis of customer experience in 2016," which requires uniting siloed marketing programs.

2) CMOs have greater accountability to the CFO and CTO as budgets increase and more dollars are allocated to technology. Thus, maximizing utility and scope of marketing technologies is essential.

Advertising and marketing technologies, typically found on opposite sides of the equation, are aligning. With this, "programmatic marketing" – marrying advertising and marketing technologies that seamlessly interact, inform and influence one another – is expanding.

In action: A retailer looking to increase click-through rates targets email openers with ad creative that echoes the subject line. A consumer's email experience automatically informs their advertising experience; they see the ad, purchase a sweater online, receive a confirmation email, and begin seeing ads promoting the sweater in other colors and a discount code.

In a converged scenario, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. 2016 will be the year that "programmatic marketing" initiatives move from water cooler conversations to reality.

nishant kalra @withnishant · Nov 6
@Silverpop cognitive customer journey predicting the path of purchase and delighting at every touch point
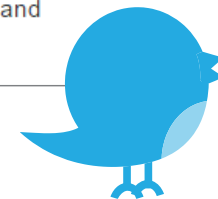
Bonus Trends: Customers

Customized digital ads make it easier to extend personalized journeys.

Nick Wyatt,
Marketing Automation
Manager, SUPPLY.com

2016 will see an explosion of marketers utilizing more relevant display advertising targeted at specific customer lists. Facebook calls it "Custom Audiences," Twitter calls it "Tailored Audiences" and Google AdWords calls it "Customer Match." Each of these gives you the ability to limit the exposure of your ads to only the people on your lists, even if they have don't have a cookie from your site.

This gives marketers the ability to bring the same levels of personalization and relevancy present in more sophisticated email marketing efforts to display advertising. In 2016, you'll see more marketing automation platforms start building out connectors to display advertising and social networks with this functionality.

These connectors will enable marketers to automatically add and remove people from these "custom audiences" based on where they are in the customer journey. This kind of technology will cut down tremendously on the human resources required to pull off these types of relevant campaigns. What used to take hours will now only take minutes to manage. The future of personalized, automated digital marketing has never looked brighter!

Responsive email frameworks evolve.

Michael Hobley,
Global Email Marketing
Lead, Intertek

The last several years have seen email marketers embrace the device-neutral email by building on any number of free responsive email templates. While the heavens may have rejoiced at having an enjoyable (or at least legible) mobile experience, the construction of a responsive email can still be a painful process. And any time there's a pain point, there's someone looking to make life easier.

2016 and 2017 will see the embracing of responsive email CSS frameworks, such as Zurb's Ink. Similar to Bootstrap and Foundation on the Web, a designer use these frameworks to quickly knock out a responsive layout that "just works" for all devices. Like a giant bandage, these frameworks not only allow for the quick creation of emails, but also open the door for a dedicated email WYSIWYG editor focused on email creation.

As we continue to see open rates climb on mobile devices, the need for device-neutral email designs will also increase. Certainly, relying on a canned email template will always be an option. That may work in some scenarios, but it may be worth the time and effort to become familiar with the available options and create that marketing masterpiece that ROI is made of.

Spredfast ✔
@Spredfast

⚙ Following

@Silverpop Hi! We look forward to seeing marketers personalizing the customer journey through integrated data insights. And...more cowbell.
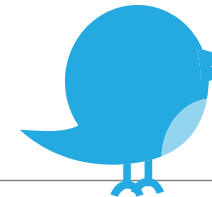
The email creation process becomes streamlined and more nimble.

Meagan Moughty, Digital Marketing and Automation Consultant

A key marketing trend in 2016 is going to be moving to a shorter "runway" for creating new emails. I hear a lot of digital marketers talking about the bottlenecks in the email creation process, whether it's design, copy, approvals or QA. Digital marketing should be nimble, though, especially if the company's voice and branding are well-developed.

If these elements aren't fully thought-out, start there. Not having these in place will hold the process up, because there are so many options to consider with each new email. If you're solid in these areas, make sure everyone agrees on the email's goal before you start developing. Also, if you don't currently wireframe the email first, try that to speed up the process or use an online whiteboard.

Email creatives need to be more "templatized" than ever due to the variety of screen sizes. Limiting your options can be helpful when you're looking for a faster turnaround. Your content might be awesome and highly targeted, but if you miss your window because the email took too long to develop, you lose.

As digital marketers we live and breathe the adage of "Right Person, Right Email, Right Time." To nail the last part in 2016, we need to identify and address any barriers in our creative development process.

Authenticity and relevance become more critical for engaging contacts.

Jason Andracki, Senior Assistant Director of Admissions, Allegheny College

Working in the enrollment sector in higher education, our audience is primarily high school students and their parents – a pretty skeptical group. A key part of our marketing and communication has to be authenticity, and that's true for marketers of all verticals. You can't be afraid to talk with your audience in your real voice.

For example, we use technology to reach our contacts on a wider scale, but the language we use to invite them to an open house must also reflect the warmth and humor they will experience walking around campus with one of our student tour guides.

Families know we're using the same type of tools as their favorite brands, so we need to connect with them as individuals rather than the old single stream of communication. If they've already sent in their application, we need to acknowledge them and provide them content that is relevant and engaging for where they are in their college search process.

Regardless of industry, 2016 will be a big year for finding new ways to incorporate more authentic, relevant content into your marketing efforts.
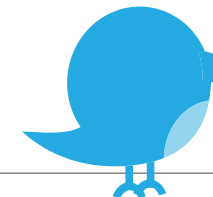
Exchange Solutions
@ExchangeSolns   ✿ Following

We predict we'll see more real-time 1:1 personalization of all aspects of the customer experience. Thanks for asking @Silverpop! #2016

3:33 PM - 4 Nov 2015

Conclusion

Recent technological innovations have given marketers many new tools to work with, but have also led to some challenges as businesses race to keep up with purchase habits and buyer needs. With customers generally plugged in 24 hours a day, 7 days a week across a variety of channels and devices, how can you create those perfect customer moments that make them feel like they're in that elusive zone?

Without a doubt, the pressure is on marketers in 2016 to get attuned to what customers need, how they want it and when they'd like it served up. Executives have noticed: Eighty-one percent of CxOs anticipate more digital interaction with customers by 2020, and 66 percent expect more focus on customers as individuals.[2]

To win in 2016, challenge yourself and your team to get more collaborative and innovative to create stronger omni-channel experiences for your customers and prospects. Evolve to gain more speed and agility. Take steps to access and harness real-time, cross-channel data. Pay closer attention to analytical, predictive and cognitive tools. And strive to deliver more personalized interactions throughout the buyer journey.

By paying attention to the trends outlined in this white paper, assessing how your organization can pivot to best succeed given these changes, and keeping a sharp focus on enhancing the buyer's journey, you'll be well-positioned to improve the customer experience, drive deeper loyalty and make a powerful impact on revenue growth. Are you ready to raise your game to ensure you're among the top performers in 2016?

Footnotes

1-IBM and Econsultancy, "The Consumer Conversation: the experience void between brands and their customers," 2015

2-IBM, "Redefining Boundaries: Insights from the Global C-suite Study," 2015

3-YouTube, "Statistics," 2015

4-Facebook, "What the Shift to Video Means for Creators," Jan. '15

5-Invodo, "Video Commerce Benchmarks Report: Q3 2014," 2014

6-Gartner, "Forecast: The Internet of Things, Worldwide, 2013," Dec. '13

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Reading Silverpop's "10 Key Marketing Trends for 2016 and Ideas for Delivering Exceptional Customer Experiences"

Silverpop, an IBM Company, is a cloud-based digital marketing provider that offers email marketing, lead-to-revenue management and mobile engagement solutions. Silverpop Engage — the foundation of the IBM Marketing Cloud — uses customer data and individual behaviors, collected from a variety of sources, to inform and drive personalized interactions in real time. IBM Marketing Cloud powers the delivery of exceptional experiences for customers across the buyer journey by leveraging key data, providing analytical insights and automating relevant cross-channel interactions.

As part of IBM Marketing Solutions, Silverpop helps make it easier to design meaningful customer experiences across applications, devices and time, accelerating today's results and tomorrow's ambitions. Silverpop is trusted by more than 5,000 brands around the globe. For more information, visit silverpop.com.