

How to Use Your Customer Data for Impactful Inbound Marketing



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In the past, a customer may have interacted with their service provider at the local branch or office of their business. Customer service was done in-person, and each visit allotted a good amount of face-time with the customer to provide positive experiences. The downfall was that these visits happened infrequently. With the advent of advanced functionalities becoming available around digital and mobile, customer exchanges have changed drastically – intermittent visits have been replaced with more frequent interactions happening via the service provider’s website and, more so, through mobile applications. Because of this, the window of time to delight your customers has grown smaller, but you now have many more opportunities to do so.

Marketers have new and growing opportunities to connect and convert customers. Many customers are now taking the initiative and proactively connecting to companies via their inbound channels. These “always on” inbound channels allow for more opportunities to interact with customers. Now, more than ever, when a customer takes the time to interact with your company, they want to know that their needs are being heard and addressed. Because of this, you must be at the ready to impress your customers at every inbound opportunity, or else risk losing them and the valuable business they bring your company. Whether they land on your website, dial into your call center, or interact via email or social media, you need to make sure that every inbound interaction with your customers is relevant so that each experience is maximized.



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It's time to use each inbound opportunity to make your brand, company and employees stars in your customers' eyes. And, most importantly, as you deliver better experiences, your brand equity will grow, loyalty will be paid off and your business will become more profitable.

But, with all that in mind, how can you ensure that you are ready with consistent and updated interactions that will wow your customers at every inbound opportunity?

It requires having always up-to-date, omni-channel, individual customer profiles combined with inbound customer interaction insights, and the availability of inbound messages and offers that can be personalized in real-time. In this ebook, we'll explore how you can make the most of your inbound marketing programs by using your customer data to truly understand their wants and needs, and to interact with them with the most impact.



“With outbound marketing you are always the footnote. You are forced to stick out or not be seen at all. It makes your relationship with your customer based on attention grabbing rather than value. With inbound marketing, you are the story. You are the keynote speaker. Inbound marketing is all about creating great content to share with your audience. It's about telling stories and speaking to your audience where they want to be spoken to, how they want to be spoken to. It's about delighting them, educating them and engaging them in an open and transparent way.”

— Zac Gregg, Vital

BREAKING TRADITION

Not long ago, if a person wanted to detach as a customer of a service provider, it was usually due to the price of products and services. Today, customers change providers when they are not happy with the customer service.

Also, new, innovative technology companies are coming into play attracting customers because they're offering more relevant products and services, along with a seamless customer experience. Service is important in shaping the customer experience, and it's often overlooked from a marketing perspective. Customers don't want to be blasted with campaign-based messages to buy products and services that aren't relevant to them. They aren't waiting for you to come up with the campaign, offer or rebate – they want to be the center of the conversation now.

Inbound marketing offers great opportunities to deliver more relevant customer interactions. But, without the proper customer experience management solution in place, you'll be unable to make an impact with your inbound interactions – you won't know enough about these targets to provide a relevant and timely customer experience. When you don't understand your customers, you won't be able to have impactful inbound programs. You'll be:

- **Unable to serve messages that have any relevancy** to the visitor at the other end, leaving the customer with a disappointing experience
- **Losing valuable cross-sell/upsell and churn prevention opportunities** by not taking advantage of each inbound interaction
- Wasting time and money. Marketing has come a long way—**why use old tactics that don't have any relation to delivering better customer experiences?**



“A CUSTOMER IS FOUR TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BUY FROM A COMPETITOR IF THE PROBLEM IS SERVICE RELATED VS. PRICE OR PRODUCT RELATED.”

— BAIN CONSULTING

Relevancy is key to transitioning to smarter marketing. However, you might not truly understand your customers enough to shift effectively. And, without knowing your customers, it's going to be difficult to properly target them with the right messages and offers, at the right time, to drive greater responses, revenues and expand vital relationships.

It's time to move towards more personalized interactions that take your customers' recent and historical needs, wants and problems into consideration. Relevant inbound interaction requires continuously updated customer profiles that take into account the inbound interaction insights as the interaction takes place.



82% OF PEOPLE HAVE STOPPED DOING BUSINESS WITH A COMPANY DUE TO BAD CUSTOMER SERVICE.

— Zendesk



BECOMING INBOUND

Inbound visitors consist of both your customer base and anonymous users, and an impactful inbound strategy should have you thinking about both of these types of targets. You want to be able to gain and operationalize your data so that you can create a relevant experience no matter who comes in, including anonymous users.

Service organizations spend a lot of money attracting the right people to come through all their communication channels, but they have a limited understanding of who these people are. All visitors should be captured in their own customer profiles so you can start to predict their preferences and turn them into customers. You also want to be able to build customer profiles for known customers, including both anonymous interactions and interactions where the customer is logged in. By comparing current customer data to online traffic information that you are already collecting, you can turn anonymous website visitors into valuable customers. Behavioral information can help you focus your marketing efforts and more accurately evaluate their preferences so that you can easily turn them into long-term customers.



PROPERLY EXECUTED
INBOUND MARKETING
TACTICS ARE
**10 TIMES MORE
EFFECTIVE FOR
LEAD CONVERSION**
COMPARED TO
OUTBOUND METHODS.

— Gartner

Inbound marketing is permission-based marketing. You interact with your customers through the channels they want to interact with you. It's not about bombarding your messages on your customers. It's about making it easier for them to get what they need from you, and that all comes down to relevancy. In order to be relevant, you need to know your customers – not only where they click during a session, but also their habits, behaviors and needs. Knowing your customers down to the individual-level can help you predict what they're looking for so you can give them the best possible customer experiences.

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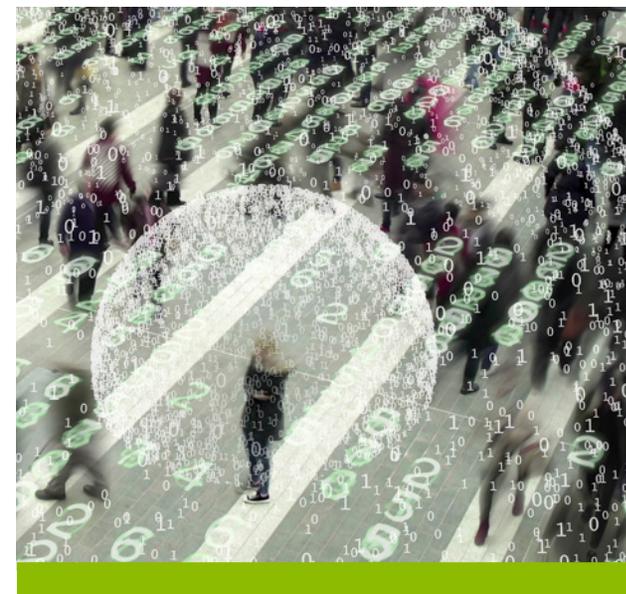
Here are three ways to ensure impactful, customer-centric inbound marketing:

1 | It Begins and Ends with Your Real-Time, Omni-Channel Customer Profiles

It's no secret that running your business with a customer-centric mentality creates powerful opportunities by enriching the customer experience. It's important to ensure that all of your departments are aligned around customer centricity. You want to make sure that you're working with your data to create individual customer profiles that are available to all operations of the company, in real-time. Being able to access all of your data in real-time is key to having the most robust, rich and dynamic customer profiles.

Customers expect personalized experiences for inbound interactions, so it's not sufficient to rely on segment-based profiles and segment-based marketing.

Negative experiences with inbound marketing comes down to a lack of data availability and not having the ability to operationalize the insights gleaned. For instance, when you can't identify and address your customer as an individual, you won't know the most recent issue he might be calling in about. You need to know the behaviors that identify the people who are likely to call customer support with a particular problem, and then preempt those calls with relevant, personalized messages about how to solve the potential issue – before it becomes a problem. If you can do that, everybody wins. The customer appreciates the proactive service, your company fields fewer phone calls, your customer service reps aren't dealing with as many disgruntled customers, your customers are pleased you're finally using their information to serve them properly, your customers tell others about their positive experiences enabling referrals, your customers buy more from you...and your business thrives.



You should be able to capture every interaction you have with a customer in real-time. Make every specific interaction count. Your customer may not just be looking at the homepage – she could be looking into specific pages of the site, ultimately expressing product interest. If a customer is running a simulation of a car loan three times a day for a week, surely this is someone you'd want to interact with by offering a loan deal that she can't pass up - based on your knowledge that she is a loyal customer with an excellent credit rating. You want to interact with her when she is most likely to interact with you, with the most relevant offers.

If you're able to create strong customer profiles with your data, you can maximize each customer's interaction when they want to engage with you. When you truly know and understand your customers, you come across as a smart and engaged service provider that offers an exceptional customer experience.

Put Your Insights to Action:



Let's say a customer comes to her bank's website to check her balance. Then she does a car loan simulation on another page within the bank's site. She may also make a payment on her credit card balance during the session. The site will usually serve banners ads based on more static data like her age and gender. The bank, however, should actually be able to serve more pertinent ads based on her individual experience- on specific and detailed background information, as well as her current online interactions. The bank can take into consideration her spending habits, her affinities and preferences, and even if she is a credit risk. Knowing these details gives the bank the ability to serve the most relevant offers with precise details related to each visitor.

2 | It's All About the Individual

Traditional marketing endeavors involve segmentation - you create marketing programs by segmenting customers collectively, mainly through static information, such as age range, zip code, etc. But, do all the people in the same age range and zip code have the same wants and needs? Do they have the same income, product affinities and communication preferences? Do they all want to interact with you about the same topic, at the same time and through the same channel? Definitely not. For true customer centricity, you need to know everything you can about your customers to really put them front and center.

Your most impactful inbound marketing programs will happen when you see your customers as individuals and not as segments. It's not enough to think that if you know a couple of customers from a socio-demographic perspective, that they will be templates for others. We are all individuals, and we all interact individually with our service providers.

To understand which offers are relevant and will appeal to each customer, and how and when those offers should be made, you need ongoing access to customer data and automated processes to address each customer at the individual-level. The more you can understand the customer as an individual, the greater your ability will be to support relevancy — knowing which messages and offers to deliver at the appropriate time and place to be the most meaningful to that individual customer.



With the right customer experience management solution in place, you can compile dynamic customer profiles based off of metric similarities – beginning with socio-demo information, but more importantly, adding on powerful contextual and behavioral data – to ensure the most precise targeting. Focusing on the individual consumer, rather than mass marketing, will allow you to concentrate on their singular needs; you'll be able to preemptively address their issues any time they want to interact with you. Having rich, continuously available customer profiles will allow you to know how best to connect with your customers – on their terms, on their preferred channel, with the incentive best suited to their individual needs.

Put Your Insights to Action:



Centralizing the customer insights allows all departments to work from the same insights for consistency of customer interactions. This streamlines the processes for you so that you no longer need to dive into a variety of databases and do ad hoc data plunging, mashing databases together causing untimely and less precise insights. If you are able to share customer insights with multiple customer-centric departments and programs, you will save time, increase consistency and accuracy of customer relationship efforts, and be empowered to support finer, more granular customer understanding. You will now be able to see individual loyalty scores, churn propensities, digital and interactive activities, product and subscription purchases, and any other data point you would need to properly target relevant interactions down to the individual-level. All of this information will be at your fingertips, and the days of needing to do technical database queries and customized reporting will be no more.

3 | Get Relevant (and Contextual) in Your Content, Channels and Timing

The real value your company can give customers is addressing their needs, and bonus points are added when their needs are addressed before they may anticipate them. Not only do you need to be relevant in your messaging, you need to be on-point with the channels by which you interact with your customers. Be ready when an inbound interaction happens so you're not predicting and optimizing an inbound action that still needs to take place in the future. If you can predict the timing and nature of inbound interactions, the inbound channels can be optimized.

Being contextually relevant with your customers ensures that how you communicate is just as important as what you communicate. For example, when a customer seems disgruntled via inbound calls and then goes to the site, you'd want to address their issue or drive them to something that would solve their problem quickly and easily. Or, if they came to a branch or local office, they should be treated in a way that would solve their issue, and also impress them while at it.



“AT A TIME WHEN CONSUMER ATTENTION IS SCARCE, RESPECTING THEIR TIME AND DELIVERING SIGNIFICANT VALUE WITH MESSAGES BASED ON THEIR CURRENT STATE OR SITUATION IS IMPERATIVE.”

— Jason Klein, ClickZ

Delivering relevant, appropriate content to customers is critical, but you won't see any fruits of those efforts if this content isn't delivered in a timely manner. Wouldn't you want to know if a customer is in close proximity to their favorite store so you can offer a coupon there when they use one of your transactional products or services? Or, how about knowing a customer's preference on the kind of content they like to consume and when they are consuming it? You can then provide a timely, relevant advertisement when you know they'll see it.

Wow your customers not only from a service perspective, but from a consistency perspective. Give them the same experience regardless of the channel they are using.

Inbound marketing is all about your customers. When you know your customers better, you will have the ability to make each opportunity to interact that much more effective, impressive and impactful. You will know, with great confidence, who to up- or cross-sell to, who already has certain products and services, who is about to churn, who has become inactive, or who is really a happy, satisfied customer. Your inbound communications will be relevant, timely and provide real success to your organization.

Put Your Insights to Action:



If a customer files a complaint via the website, then calls in later, the call center needs to be aware of this ahead of time so they are ready to react. You want to be able to solve their issue then and there.

You become more productive and make it a more pleasant experience overall for your customers.

NGDATA's Lily Enterprise is the customer experience management solution that sits in the middle of your data-generated insights and your business-oriented customer interaction programs. It connects your data with your marketing so you can enable the most relevant, contextually-ware customer experiences. Contact NGDATA for more information.

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