

Prioritising the personalised experience for success

Businesses that wish to stay ahead of the competition, and thrive in an ever-changing environment, have to prioritise relevant, personalised client experiences.



Source: © Denis Putilov [123rf](#) Today businesses have to prioritise relevant, personalised client experiences

Today's consumer is more concerned with value than with product, and other factors such as the environment and brand activism are equally important when making a purchasing decision.

Customers' expectations for digital experiences have skyrocketed. These experiences must not only be seamless, but they must also span the whole consumer journey. Be it online, on WhatsApp, or on a website, brands must meet the needs of their customers wherever they are.

Consumers are now the focus of all marketing strategies. So what must marketers consider if they are to succeed and stay ahead of the competition.

Journey orchestration to drive engagement

Orchestration involves arranging millions of data points to enable a specific, hyper-personalised experience.

From the moment a consumer engages with your business on any platform, the direction of each subsequent step (picture

a branching tree) is determined by a set of criteria that is unlikely to be identical for any two persons. The outcome is a personalised experience for each customer.

Brent Haumann, MD at Striata Africa, explains that the goal of journey orchestration is to provide the most relevant information, at the appropriate moment, wrapped in the right experience, all of which drives the desired outcome.

"In marketing and customer communication circles, you'll frequently hear about the significance of mapping the experience a customer has whenever they interact with a company," says Haumann.

"The difficulty is that the word journey implies a linear progression from A to B. The customer starts with an online application and continues based on the anticipated outcome. In reality, things are rarely so straightforward," he says.

Customers do not conform to journey orchestration; they go off on tangents, make errors during a process, abandon whatever they were attempting, and switch channels, all preventing them from completing a planned A or B journey.

While customer experience teams can set up specific journeys for their customers, doing so means losing out on customised journeys. Each individual interaction offers a multitude of possible directions, making the visualisation of an engagement process more of a spider's web of potential journeys.

"That's why the future of customer experience management is not based on mapping linear customer journeys, but rather the intelligent orchestration of customer engagements," Haumann explains

Conscientious data

"Data has the potential to help marketers make magic," says Shaune Jordaan, Hoorah CEO.

"But first it must be transparently and effectively collected, analysed and interpreted to produce the kind of results that are relevant to the brand's objectives and the customer needs."

Jordaan adds that the use of data for personalisation and targeting is well known, but beyond this brands also need to apply the information gleaned from data in a clever, creative and conscientious way.

"Simply, brands that benefit the most from data are the ones that consider how the application of data will benefit the customer," says Jordann.

This is where trust comes into play, and working with data and creativity to create a sacred trinity that underpins relevant and engaging campaigns.

At the most basic level this means that even if the data supports the conceptualisation of world-class creative, it will only be effective if the brand is regarded as a trustworthy one by the customer.

Hyper-connected flexible experiences

Almost every interaction a customer has with a business today involves some form of digital interaction. Never have there been more tools to provide clients with the greatest possible experiences.

However, a tool is only as effective as its user.

"Organisations today need to know that when it comes to digital experiences they should cater to hyper-connectivity and be as flexible as possible," emphasises Greg Gatherer, account manager at Liferay Africa.

"Your organisation needs to understand that people across all age groups and income brackets are online more than ever,

and adapt its approach to digital experiences accordingly," says Gatherer.

It also needs to heed the lesson of the past couple of years and realise that circumstances can change dramatically and rapidly.

"It's not enough for those experiences to simply remain the same regardless of the prevailing external circumstances. Instead, it should build in flexibility and help customers through those changes," Gatherer continues.

Be receptive to change

Lastly, and most significantly, businesses must be adaptable and open to change.

"We are constantly waking up to new algorithms, UI's and cookie preferences," explains Emma Cox, marketing manager at Irvine Partners,.

"The trick is to remain receptive to change, whilst letting the data drive decisions; all whilst continuing to have a dynamic approach to your marketing strategy," she says

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