

DOC, WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR MY MARKETING HEADACHE? A Data prescription

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In this article you'll learn:

- Five reasons your data can help you identify the right marketing solutions.
- How data can help drive customer insight, engagement and ROI

Many marketers feel overwhelmed by the waves of marketing “solutions” that hit them every day: new digital advertising options, new mobile apps, every surefire lead-generation scheme in the book. That torrent is enough to give a person a monumental headache.

The best prescription for helping you blunt the pain and ensure that individual “solutions” don’t also trigger “sub-headaches,” is an organization’s own data.

To view data (a potentially potent headache-maker in its own right) as a prescription for marketing execs may be counter-intuitive, but data is a surefire prescription for driving customer insight, engagement, and return on investment (ROI).

Here are five reasons your company’s data can help you identify the right marketing solutions—and reach and engage your customers.

One Data removes guesswork

Because it’s concrete and measurable, data can relieve executives from being pushed around by the solution of the day. In fact, focusing data-collection efforts on the customer provides a foundation for all your other marketing decisions. Collect customer data from sources you’ve never tapped before (e.g., customer complaints, service calls, online comments or referrals, warranty data, enrollments, purchases, dealers, and retailers). Capture it all.

And don’t forget data in the public domain, including public registrations, licensures, or governmental regulatory requirements; such data can supplement and complement your own.

Look to your marketing agency for help. If it can’t deliver, find one that can help you build data-driven marketing.

Two Make the data talk to you

Unfortunately, data collection isn’t enough. Solid analytics will coax the usable information out of the raw data. Insight comes from analytics and analysis. Begin by segmenting your customers. Determine where they are in the customer lifecycle: from prospect to advocate, and various stages in between.

This step is critical to understanding which relevant messaging and which channels should be used to effectively reach each customer segment. Successful analytics comes from organizing data into a flexible, useful, and automated database. Doing so is easier than you'd think, because you can manipulate the data to gain insight into customer behaviors and characteristics—everything from demographics to value measurements and brand preferences.

Use a data-synthesis system (you can build or buy one) to unify and to bring structure, reliability, measurement, and predictability to your database. In short, so that you can make the data talk to you. A good system will help you mine nuggets of gold from the data and leave the tailings behind.

Ultimately, if a marketing leader takes ownership of that process, Marketing will have a database that is “marketing actionable,” a database built **by** Marketing **for** marketing.

Three

Now, use it.

Sometimes data gives marketers a clear message, but they ignore it in favor of going with a sexy solution that will look good to senior management. For example, one client spent \$10 million on a national television campaign, but when the campaign was all over and done he could not tell whether that significant portion of his campaign had anything to do with sales results.

Well, nothing looks better than validated ROI, and nothing produces ROI more reliably than a marketing campaign driven by solid customer data. Sound data is an absolutely golden tool in the long run, because it brings awesome focus to your interactions with customers.

Good data will guide you along the customer's path—from prospect to passionate advocate—and capture the monetary and brand value from each step. We've all seen the research. Maintaining a focus on the customer is the only true competitive advantage any business has, and data is the secret sauce for maintaining customer focus.

Four

Feed the python.

The beauty of a data-driven marketing culture is that your most recent marketing victory feeds the next one. That culture enables continual learning and fostering positive customer engagement.

The data you collect from each customer interaction reveals repeatable trends, making it feedstock for the next step in your data analytics. That will equip you to build upon a data hierarchy that reveals customers' preferred channels and messaging. You won't have to re-invent the wheel for each marketing campaign. Instead, you can keep building on a solid foundation because you've got data that answers the following questions:

- What are customers' preferred communications channels?
- How do customers want to be talked to?
- What do customers care about most in a transaction?
- What will prompt customers to become advocates for your product, service, or brand?
- What is the likely timing for another transaction by a customer?

Five

Measure and integrate channels.

A key reminder: during this process, resist becoming a slave to a particular channel. If you're like many companies and you're marketing via many channels, your data will help you integrate channels by focusing on the most effective and proven messaging, content, creative, channel combinations, and timing. Your channels can sing harmoniously as a chorus to the customer instead of sounding like a cacophonous collection of voices.

Just as important as learning which channels work best is learning which channels to eliminate altogether, a decision that can be justified via data.

The result is... you either save money by cutting your budget, or you can double-down on those channels that perform best.

Crazy as it sounds, data can be the prescription to cure your marketing headache by guiding your marketing to a state that is more measurable—more consistently delivering ROI and bringing you ever closer to your customers.

For more information on Customer Engagement programs visit [BI WORLDWIDE.COM](http://BIWORLDWIDE.COM) or email us at LATAM@BIWORLDWIDE.COM.

