The Future of One to One Marketing

Introduction

How context aware content, personalization and conversation create the opportunity for “web engagement” and is the future of personalized marketing. We've come a long way since 1993 when Don Peppers and Martha Rogers Ph.D. introduced marketing people to the concept of one-to-one marketing. Their book The One to One Future started a revolution in businesses all across the world. It’s since been published in more than 13 languages and has more than half a million copies in print. It's also generated hundreds of books about marketing engagement, customer service, personalization and other topics that the “one-to-one” concepts inspired.
And, maybe not surprisingly, most of those concepts that seemed overwhelmingly challenging in the mid 90’s are truly achievable today. For example, concepts like identifying the top percentage of customers and/or prospects that are the most loyal and who offer the biggest opportunities – would look very familiar as “lead nurturing” to us today. And, talking with customers one-on-one in order to collaborate with them about products and services, feels like a comfortable best practice for today’s social web engagement.

But it’s easy to forget that in those days – Peppers and Rogers were talking about using FAX machines, and voice mail and – yes – the very beginning of the Web 1.0 to try and generate that one-to-one future. How could they have even realized the developments that would take place over the next twenty years – giving us social, multi-channel, multi-lingual and contextually aware content delivery.

Today, listening to customers and their needs – and delivering content against those needs become an extraordinarily important best practice for organizations. But in many cases – there is a disconnection between what insight aggregated Web analytics tells, and what the customer experience actually consists of. In 2009, Gartner published their paper “The Top 10 Ways to Make A Website Customer-Centric” and said: “most business leaders think their websites work better than they do. Too often, the evidence they’re given from department managers about the effectiveness of their websites fails to match the customer experience.” One of the main reasons for that is certainly just the pure volume of content being presented to today’s audiences.

Even Best Practices Become Everybody’s Practices

A recent statistic published in the March 2012 issue of Time Magazine said that every day the average person spends about “12 hours consuming information – taking in more than 100,000 words that total 34 gigabytes of data.” That’s every day. The competition for consumer attention has never been so high. It’s now simply not enough to “be found” through a Google Search. Today’s audiences demand engagement at every single transaction that they have with a business. And, with the explosive growth of different channels of content access – from mobile smart-phones, social media and even ‘online’ devices like your car, refrigerator or even literally your window – today’s business must deliver contextually relevant and personalized content to their audiences.

As Brian Solis, a principal at The Altimeter Group said in a recent blog post:

A key objective for senior executives over the next several years is to use disruptive technology to get closer to customers to improve relationships, and enhance experiences. It is a considerable move and the result will usher in a new era of adaptive and empathetic business models. However, this is a move that is easier said than done, especially when vision and execution are two sides of different coins. This is a critical path where businesses must not only commit to new technology and goals, but also invest in the methodologies, systems, processes, and people to bring about change from within before it can effectively engage outside.

Note that Solis mentions “disruptive technology” as a way to improve those customer relationships and enhance the experiences. This is a key point. As the noise of content and the ability for consumers to filter it becomes more pronounced – so must marketers look to disruptive technology in order to enable a more relevant conversation with customers. In this way, companies like Hippo – and our passionate focus on context aware content management is disrupting the idea of what it means to deliver dynamic, “personalized” content.

Web Engagement Management Is a Process

Many WCMS vendors are professing to solve the “web engagement” challenge – by adding the ability to publish “personalized” content. But the future of the 1 to 1 Marketing Future isn’t just in delivering “personalized” content. Rather, the future is also about delivering content that is channel aware – and that helps the business become more relevant to more people over time. It’s a future that allows businesses to manage their content as a platform service – independent of the display mechanism – because there will just be too many to design for. It’s smart content that pours into any device, any time, and with as much relevance as the customer gives us permission to deliver.
This paper is an introduction to frame the conversation about the “new” personalization – and how delivering content as a contextualized, and personalized platform is really a disruptive technology that is already helping organizations to deliver on the future of what Don Peppers and Martha Rogers developed 20 years ago.

The Future today

As Web Content Management has moved from being IT driven to marketing driven – “content marketing” and the idea that businesses should become publishers to engage and attract buyers, as well as to serve and engage customers started to fundamentally transform the marketing department. In fact, according to the Content Marketing Institute and a 2011 study they conducted in conjunction with MarketingProfs 9 out of 10 organizations are now using content marketing channels to engage their customers more deeply. And, of the 90% that are using Content Marketing, these marketers are employing more than eight different content marketing channels (like mobile, social and blogging) to achieve their goals.

When you combine these things together – we see a very distinct trend. The explosive growth of content consumption from mobile and social interfaces, the pending expansion of the “internet of things” and consumer expectation of content availability is driving businesses to care much more deeply about engagement across channels - and WCMS providers to shift their value proposition to deliver against that requirement.

WCM software solutions are increasingly differentiating themselves on a scale of how well their solution can help a customer DELIVER a personalized “web experience” to the client’s consumers through multiple channels such as web, mobile and social. But the idea of WEM (or CXM) itself is a process – not a product. It is defined as a method to create more relevant experiences for consumers using a combination of process and tools.

In a white paper produced by The Gilbane Group – author Mary La Plante defined this well when she said: “Only when experience is deliberately managed does it become repeatable, predictable, measurable, and capable of being improved and optimized. That deliberate management is the essence of the practice of WEM. As a business practice, WEM is enabled by a range of technologies, including web content management, personalization, dynamic content delivery, analytics and optimization, and emerging tools for social computing. As such, WEM calls for integrated business, marketing and IT processes.”

So – what is the key foundation to building that process into a business. How does a business change its Web site strategy – into a dynamic content platform that is equipped to engage its users more deeply.

There are three basic concepts from which a business can start:

1. Focus On The Persona

– And Not The Product Delivering content that engages is about delivering a relevant experience for what the USER wants at that particular time – and across that particular channel. For example, Hippo has the Dutch Police as a client – and they deliver different content through their mobile channel than they do their main Web site. They understand that when people are accessing the site from a mobile device – mostlikely, they aren’t looking for “news” or other “informational” type content from the Police. Rather, they are usually looking for a location of the nearest police station and using the GPRS of the mobile device to show the nearest police station & their phonenumber. Therefore, delivering the most relevant content – independent of whether or not it is serving a specific “marketing” goal is most important.

2. Focus On Using Channels To Deepen Engagement rather than Driving Simply

More Clicks A personalized and contextual delivery of content means that the organization is focused on delivering the BEST experience at the right time and through the right channel. This means that the goal of each channel, while it may support the overall “traffic” goal – is to engage that user for that particular purpose. Don’t just repurpose content and publish it across multiple channels to deliver more “eyeballs”. That’s not a personalized, or contextualized strategy.
3. Usage Defines The Affinity Group – Not the Other Way

Around Many organizations start out by assuming they are already reaching the personas they want to serve – and that they know what their personas want out of each channel. Marketers will do better by watching the natural patterns that start to develop as you roll out different web content platforms – and then use that insight to develop different content strategies. For example, with more than a dozen different ministries and offices within those ministries, The Dutch Government understands that there are many many different reasons that citizens will come to their Website. Instead of forcing users into an assumed hierarchy of content – they use faceted navigation to have their content dynamically assume a hierarchy as the content is consumed. In this way – each user determines their own journey – and there are innumerable ways that they can provide a customized journey to an “end point”

Ultimately with these as fundamental starting points for a process – the components of a web engagement process will consist of the following functionality:

A Personalization Component

This is a critical piece to delivering a dynamic experience at the user-level. A good system will allow you to “listen” and profile users as they click through the site. These clicks, pageviews and other interactions can be built up over time in order to provide insight into how the content is being consumed – and how it might optimally be presented.

But the key is that the personalization of the content happens in real-time as the user interacts with it. Whether it’s at the “persona” level - or at the “individual” level - the business needs a dynamic content delivery system that enables the business to set rules to how content can be delivered in acontextual way.

Content As Conversation Component

The web is much more social now – and so having the ability for your system to accept and utilize (for personalization or otherwise) user generated content is a critical component.

This goes well beyond simple blog comments – but also into user-ratings, likes, dislikes, and of course related content coming from other networks. The system should be able to ingest all this content – and use it as one additional attribute to deliver a contextualized experience. For example, any good WEM system should be able to utilize content ratings as a way to prioritize display across multiple channels. So, if one piece of content is more important on the Web site – it should appear as features – vs. the content that is more popular on the mobile site and is correctly displayed there.

Flexible Publishing Component

Beyond displaying content, of course a critical component is in being able to manage content effectively for that display. Today’s WCM system all have varying degrees of capability to manage content across devices, and with ease and scalability.

But for a WEM approach – every publishing system should have some key attributes including:

- Complete separation of concerns between content storage and content display. It should be a fundamental piece of the architecture
- The ability for end-users to manage different channels – including the design and website layout of those channels
- Simple, yet robust workflow for creating an optimal content management process
- The ability to support dynamic delivery and – most especially – scalability across delivering to those channels
A Context Aware Component

Becoming “context aware” is the next stage of delivering a truly relevant, personalized approach. This is both channel awareness, as well as location, time, behavioral and other personalization based on real-time analysis of the consumer of the content. The content (where applicable) can be dynamically changed to be optimal for the channel it’s being displayed within (e.g. automatically sensing the TYPE of mobile device).

It’s based on two different types of attributes:

1. Explicit Attributes

Pieces of data that the visitor has explicitly provided and that the system can use to make the content more relevant in real-time. This may be a name, or a title, or the answer to a poll question.

2. Implicit Attributes

Pieces of data that the system can automatically derive from the visitor and use to create a more contextual experience. This might be time of day, or behavior on the site (if they choose “recipes” and “cookware” products for example we might deliver related content to cooking”). Or, it can even be simple attributes such as what device they are using, or a geo-located lookup for language presentation.

The key is that the system assimilates all of this data and both reports on it – providing insight into what “patterns” are being generates – as well as delivering more relevant, personalized content based upon it.

Conclusion

We’ve come a long way since 1993 – but it really feels like the drive for a new “future” of engaging consumers is upon us. Disruptive technologies like Hippo CMS will be a critical part of the marketer’s toolkit.

Any business that is providing an experience for its customers – has the opportunity to drive deeper engagement with that audience. A good set of tools and processes won’t help drive deeper engagement with content quality. Nothing but excellent writing, and creative thinking will solve that. However, a good WEM system – that drives a contextual experience for users will not only deliver better experiences no matter how good or bad the quality is – it will foster insight to help the business get better at quality and deepening those relationships.

If you’re starting to take a serious look at how you can develop more engaging content channels, we invite you to engage with Hippo. We can take you through examples of how our Open Source and Open Standards approach have helped real clients begin to use disruptive technology to deepen their customer relationships.

They’ve discovered ways to rise above the noise – and create the future of 1 to 1 marketing. It’s all in delivering a contextualized content experience. And, that’s what is driving the future of engagement.

Resources

Time Magazine
March 2012 - Your Head Is In The Cloud

Gartner
The Top 10 Ways to Make a Website Customer Centric
http://www.gartner.com/id=1221939

BrianSolis.com
A Critical Path For Customer Relevance
http://www.briansolis.com/2012/02/a-critical-path-for-customer-relevance-part-1/

2012 Marketing Profs Content Marketing Institute
Content Marketing Benchmarks Study

Gilbane Paper
Engage Me
About Hippo

At Hippo, we believe, digital is here to make our lives a little bit better. Hippo sets the standard for how organizations can bring real-time relevance to their audience and is the foundation for personalized communication across all channels: mobile, social and web. Our purpose is to facilitate innovation so our customers can create digital miracles. We serve our customers, by creating a platform that is fun to use, easy to implement and open for innovation.

Hippo CMS is a powerful, enterprise-class foundation to deliver outstanding Customer Experiences based on Enterprise Agility and Innovation Power.

Hippo CMS is open source, 100% JAVA and convinces with its lean product architecture that is built for uptime, security and performance.

Our dedicated, Certified Partner Network delivers Hippo Awesomeness around the globe to our valued customers. Hippo is proud to serve organizations such as Disney, Fidelity, Dolce & Gabbana, the Dutch Police, Thomson / Reuters and University of New York.

Hippo is headquartered in Amsterdam, The Netherlands and Boston, USA.