



STOP THE CONDESCENDING SECOND GUESSING. TRUST THAT CUSTOMERS KNOW WHAT THEY WANT

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According to the IBM *2017 Customer Experience Index (CEI) Study*, “Only 19% of brands offer more than a basic level of personalization of the online experience.” This doesn’t come close to meeting consumers’ demands for more *personalized and human needs-based communications and experiences*.

So how do marketers step up and deliver? For 2018 they *need to trust that customers know what they want. Marketers must end the condescending view that customers don’t know what they want or don’t tell the truth.*

In our ERDM *VoC research*, consumers told us time and time again that marketers still don’t get it! They still aren’t providing personalization that is meaningful or relevant:

- “What we receive is *not smart personalization.*”
- “They aren’t personalizing the things that *matter to me!*”
- “What they consider personalization is *so old-fashioned.*”
- “I want more than just simplistic buying history-based emails.”

To provide “smart” personalization, marketers must engage customers to learn how *they define their individual, personal, human needs*. Then, meaningful communications and interactions must be created, which *are not generic, inferential or transaction-based and are more helpful and tailored to self-profiled preferences.*

So, **Step 1** in re-creating your marketing plan is to **go beyond simplistic** algorithms and buying histories and understand how, why and how often your customers want to be communicated with. This necessitates that you engage, ask, *LISTEN, provide the ability to set preferences, and then respect these preference requests once submitted.*

Step 2 is to **end generic “spray and pray” marketing blasts** and develop true, human-based omnichannel personalization driven by consumer preferences. *This means trusting that customers know what they want.*

Additionally, key consumer journey life stage points need to be identified, and corresponding engagement actions put in place.

Engagement strategies that offer help, advice and value-added dialog are required at these key *lifecycle points*:

- Acquisition
- Onboarding
- Anticipatory responses to decreasing engagement (visits, responses, purchases)
- Immediate resolution of negative experiences
- Surprise and delight and thank you marketing
- Value added cross-selling and upselling
- Repeat sales and renewals.

**Takeaways:**

- Engage customers by providing easy avenues of communication at all touch points. Whether it's an online preference center or opportunity for contact updates during checkout, chat or phone conversations, give consumers the power to drive their relationship with your company.
- Create the means to fully understand the intricacies of an individualized shopping journey. Engage shoppers to customize their experience — based on a compelling value proposition.
- Identify key consumer life stages and put in place specific actions to acknowledge or respond to situations in a seamless manner, which demonstrates a desire to earn long-term loyalty rather than to expect it.

And, trust that customers know what they want. End the condescending view that customers don't know what they want or don't tell the truth.

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