Establishing True Relationship with Your Customers: Moving preference collection beyond the preference center

by Eric V. Holtzclaw

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Consumers' expectations have changed. They want control over their communication with companies and they expect personalized, relevant messages. Marketing departments, customer support organizations and sales teams are forced to constantly adapt to a shifting environment of technologies and modes for reaching their customers.

While reaching consumers is continuously impacted by new technologies and communication channels, the reasons a customer chooses a brand, participates in an experience or reacts to a marketing message doesn't change.[1] If companies take the time to understand what's truly important to their customers, the choice of technology platform, communication method and message is easily determined and much more successful.

While companies are struggling to set up Facebook pages or determine their social media engagement strategy, it may be very likely their consumers have long moved on to something new. Without a deeper knowledge of their customers and what really drives their decisions, companies are always a step behind.

One successful way to listen to your customer is to collect preferences. This data provides a unique opportunity to hear directly from your customer. The method and mode by which preference collection can and should happen changes as quickly as the technologies available, the methods for communication and the type of messages being sent.

Some companies have recognized the importance of a seamless customer experience across all communication channels and have opted to create the preferences center as a centralized location for preference collection.

This whitepaper explores how collecting customer's preferences provides companies with deeper insight into what's important to their customers and allows their company to adapt more flexibly to a changing technological environment. The goal is to share strategies and tools that result in higher customer engagement with brands.

This whitepaper is part of a research series that PossibleNOW is conducting t**o further the knowledge around customer engagement and to assist companies in creating strategies that are successful at creating and maintaining relationships with their customers.**

Moving preference collection beyond the preference center

INTRODUCTION

The introduction and adoption of new disruptive technologies in the past years has changed the rules of customer engagement. Consumers research, purchase and communicate at multiple points in the buyer's journey by whatever means is most suitable and convenient for them.

While the consumer has dramatically changed, companies, especially marketers, continue to focus on two parts of the equation that are no longer important:

Because of the advances in technology, marketers are distracted by technology and seek to solve what appears to be a technology problem with a technology solution.

1. The Technology

Ubiquitous Internet access provides consumers with instant access and endless opportunities to find information, to compare products and to find the best price. Social media allows the consumer to learn about experiences that others have had. In other words, technology and social media have made the consumer smart and informed. Times are over when marketers and advertisers could tell the consumer what to buy or to do. In fact, companies have little influence on what information consumers find and what is said about their products. The same holds true for how customers seek support. New technologies have put consumers in charge of the conversation.

2. Numbers

Marketers are driven by numbers and seek to have a large enough audience in order to justify their marketing spend. This is a legacy approach leftover from the days of mass production and mass media where delivering individualized messages was expensive and practically impossible. To get any type of uplift from their marketing efforts, marketers had to spread their message far and wide in hopes of collecting enough prospects in their net to move the needle.

A focus on numbers or size impacts the marketer's ability to focus and results in generic or inappropriate messages sent to large groups of customers.

The combination of a focus on technology and numbers makes the marketer view the problem of engaging with their customers as one where they should send as many people the same message as possible across all technology platforms.

Instead, marketers should focus on creating niche messaging. In order to do this successfully they need to include the customer in the conversation and focus on engagement strategies that capitalize on the consumer's core drivers.

True Relationship Building

Equipped with tools that put unlimited choices at their fingertips, consumers are not only looking for the best deal anymore – they can find that easily. The differentiating factor today is the relationship the customer has with a brand. Consumers treat brands like friends and associate personalities and characteristics to those they allow into their everyday lives. Consumers look for brands that are *"like them."* Because of this view, consumers expect companies to acknowledge and understand them.

"After I purchased some books for my teenage kids at Amazon.com, all my recommendations were teenage novels."

Today's sophisticated customers have high expectations when communicating with companies. They want relevant information, at the right time, at the right channel. The answers to what information is relevant, what is the right time and the right channel differ from customer to customer. Companies struggle to to match their customer's expectations for two simple reasons:

They do not have enough primary knowledge about their customer's habits and expectations.

They simply don't ask their customers what they want or expect.

Added complexity results in the fact that communication channels change and data from channels is often being captured and stored in silos that is not shared across the enterprise. Historically companies have focused on platforms, rather than functions to solve the problem of engaging their customers. Retailers started out with a brick and mortar store added a call center, an in-store POS system, then a web site and then a mobile app, all with separate hierarchies and overall goals.

Technology has enabled companies to collect huge amounts of data about their customers on each of these channels but rarely across channels. The data often reveals only the answer to *"what"* consumers do and want and rarely the reason *"why."* Assumptions that companies make based on these data, are often inaccurate and it is rare for consumers to be provided with the option to correct them.

Companies have placed high hopes on technologies that allow the analysis of huge amounts of data, Big Data[2]. A broad based study of 179 companies carried out by researchers at MIT and the University of Pennsylvania in 2011 found that data driven firms performed 5%-6% better[3]. McKinsey estimated that retailers using big data to the full could increase its operating margin by more than 60 percent.[4]

But, as Gartner's 2013 Big Data study shows, companies struggle to utilize Big Data effectively.

Recent developments around uncontrolled collection and distribution of personal data by companies worry some consumers. It can be expected that new regulation will emerge that further restricts company's collection and use of data in the future.

Preference centers are an initial attempt to fill the gap between big data collection and fulfilling the customers' expectations. They are an effective tool that allows companies to ask consumers to provide certain information voluntarily. It further allows the consumer to correct the conversation and assumptions that companies have made about them. If implemented correctly, a preference center can be the tool that brings the information from all communications channels together in one place and allows to inform all business units simultaneously – solving one of the major challenges companies face today.

But preference centers are just a start. Are there some unexplored capabilities that companies could deploy to better engage with their customers? What are creative ways to use preference collection beyond preference centers? What incents consumers to provide their information and how much are they willing to share? How can preference data fill the information gap and provide a lens into "Big Data?"

[2] http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/business_technology/big_data_whats_your_plan

[3] Strength in Numbers: How Does Data-Driven Decisionmaking Affect Firm Performance?, Erik Brynjolfsson, Lorin M. Hitt, Heekyung Hellen Kim, April 22, 2011

[4] http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/business_technology/big_data_the_next_frontier_for_innovation

Preference Centers Today

Preference centers are relatively new phenomena. The idea of a preference center is founded in customers' desire to have more control over the communication they receive from companies.

Introduced in the 1990s, the Do-Not-Call list gave consumers for the first time the ability to opt out of marketer's solicitation calls. After email became the main communication channel, consumer's wanted — and governments granted with CAN-SPAM – more control and an explicit and easy to use unsubscribe mechanism in every email. Now, as mobile platforms with far more messaging and localizing capabilities are gaining popularity as a new way to reach customers, consumer's demanded - and the government imposed - the upcoming "wireless consent" rules in October 2013.

> By following the path of "siloed legacy systems," preference centers can be more restricting than enabling, if they are only related to specific silos.

Companies want to or are forced to comply with customer expectations and legal requirements. Many companies have implemented preference centers in recent years in order to give customers greater control over their communication. Many of these preference centers are provided by 3rd parties, like email service providers (ESPs) and allow customers to opt in or to opt out of the email communication with the company.

Do you want to receive email communication from us?

☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

In fact, most preference centers today are focused on a single channel, single campaign and single frequency following the path of siloed legacy systems to which they are most closely aligned. Very few preference centers go beyond email communication and offer multi-channel communication options. Even fewer allow frequency control or support granular or customized communication campaigns.

They are not built on a platform that creates a unified picture of the customer across the enterprise and they provide little to no compliance risk mitigation. As a result, many companies implement very restrictive contact policies.

247 billion emails are sent every day.
Up to 80% of that is spam.

Most preference collection is simply the ability to allow consumers to opt out of the conversation with a company. Given this current, rather restrictive perception of preference collection, it seems understandable that they receive little attention. Typically preference collection and centers (like many websites, mobile sites) offer the exact same user experience to every customer and ask the exact same questions. So it seems, when it comes to preference centers, all customers are treated the same.

Knowing that this is not true and, with some ideas how preference collection should move beyond the preference center and could be enabling rather than restricting, we started our current research project to understand consumers' perceptions and expectations.

Questions that we sought to answer in this research included:

- How do consumers feel about companies collecting their information?
- When is it acceptable and when do consumers find it "creepy?"
- Is there a difference between being asked and the perception that companies are "spying" on consumers?
- How much information are consumers willing to provide?
- What do consumers expect in exchange for their information?
- What impacts do content, design, and layout make?
- Do consumers want to provide preference throughout the experience or through a centralized collection point?
- How do consumers cluster as it relates to preference collection and use?

In short:

What is the preference collection/center of tomorrow?

and

Does "one size" preference collection/center "fit all?"

In addition, we also wanted to know

- Is a preference center only appropriate for the collection of profile information and preference?
- Or, are there other functions a preference center can support?

Starting Hypotheses:

Are you in charge? Your inbox will tell us.

In our previous research projects we focused on verifying basic information around preference centers including whether "preference center" is the correct name, what colors or elements customers prefer and understand, and where they typically look to find specific elements on preference center.

Most respondents were not immediately familiar with the idea of a "preference center."

Conversations usually centered quickly on email preferences as email was the most commonly used communication channel. For many respondents the only experience with a preference center or preference collection was to unsubscribe from an email campaign.

Through a number of qualitative interviews we discovered an interesting pattern around how people treat their email inbox. There was a dividing line between respondents that had total control over emails they received and a group of respondents that had either no control or just don't seem to care.

Some respondents had no or very view emails in their inbox. They usually went through their emails every day and either deleted what was not of interest, or filed them in folders in order to use them later. Only a few actually went through the unsubscribe process consistently, usually via the unsubscribe button at the bottom of the email.

We called this group people with 'control over their inbox.'

> ***"I use email to connect. I read all email at the end of the day and keep my inbox very clean."***
>
> ***"I delete spam and trash regularly and have a few folders to organize emails."***
>
> ***"I like my inbox empty and have 60 personal folders."***
>
> ***"I clean out my inbox every time I sit down at my computer."***

Other respondents did not know how many emails they had in their Inbox. Some just let emails come in and delete them every once in a while or did not worry about it at all. They usually would not consider going through the process of unsubscribing.

We called this group people with 'no control over their inbox.'

> ***"More often than not I just let emails come and then delete. I don't usually unsubscribe because I may get an idea."***
>
> ***"My inbox has over 1000 emails dating back to 2002."***
>
> ***"I look at the subject line to decide if I want to open an email. I'll flag emails rather than create a folder and currently have more than 1000 in my inbox."***

As we moved into this round of research, we were curious how e-mail inbox control impacted consumer's likelihood to use a preference center or participate in preference collection. We also wanted to know if mailbox control translated to a willingness to share information.

Topics Covered

Based on the results of previous research and other consumer studies, we wanted to test the hypothesis that "not all 'preference collection' (for consumers) is the same." We also wanted to know what drives consumers in the context of providing preference information.

We started by learning about the respondent's awareness of companies collecting information on them. We asked about their behavior on Facebook, Twitter and other social media and looked at their confidence in shopping or banking either online or on their phones. We wanted to understand their feeling around online ads and messaging being customized based on their previous searches and viewing habits.

> "I prefer a customized relationship with brands I am loyal to because it makes sense to get the things I will use versus a bunch a junk."

Most respondents are aware of companies collecting information about them

We found that consumers have a general trust in technology. They research, shop on their laptops, computers and on smartphones based on what device is most convenient.

These respondents are aware that companies collect information about them and fully expect to hear from the companies they provide their information to or interact with. Many respondents felt the information being collected via online shopping and browsing behavior was actually helpful. One respondent commented that his "whole life was in Google's hands." Others felt that targeted/personal marketing was "cool."

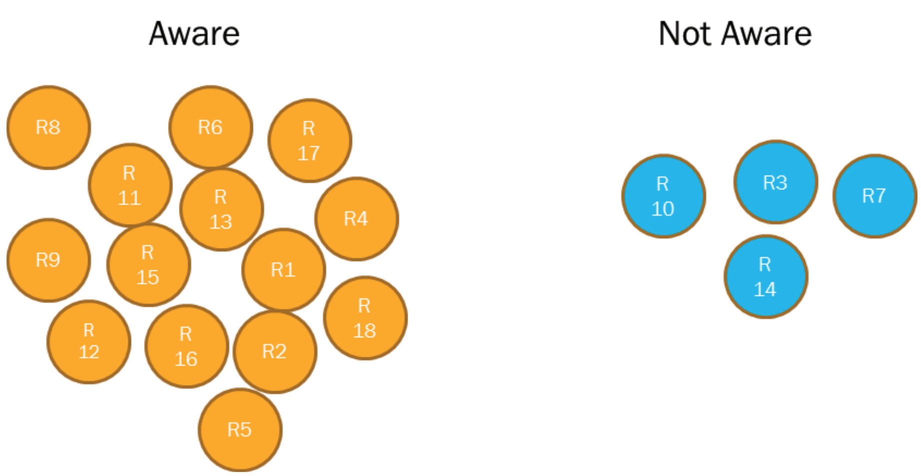
We also questioned respondents about their feelings around the recent NSA scandal.

> *What we found is that most respondents were aware of the NSA "scandal" but were not necessarily bothered by the government "snooping." Most felt they had nothing to hide and therefore were not particularly worried. They felt it was an invasion only when it involved private financial information.*

Surprisingly, some people are "not aware" that companys tracked information about them.

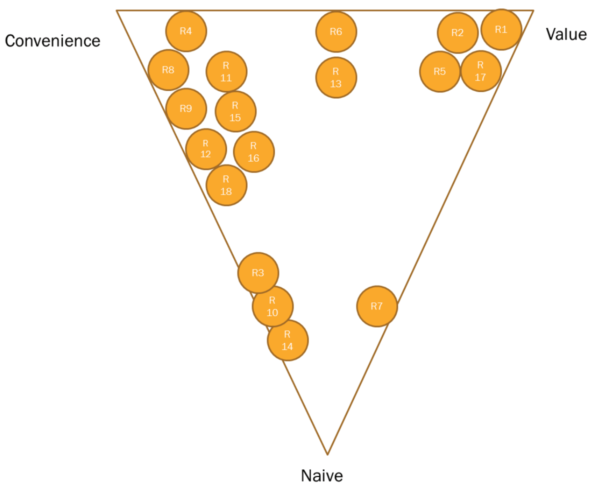
The first major differentiator is that people are either aware of companies collecting their information or they believe their internet behavior is automatically "private" unless they choose to share personal information with a specific merchant or social media site.

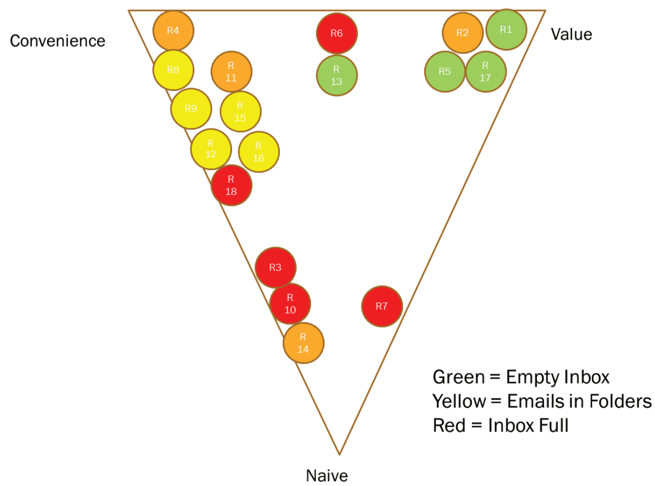
If a consumer is considered naïve, they typically do not understand the origin of many of the marketing communications they receive. Often they are unaware of how their social media behavior informs marketers or how their Google searches allow for more targeted advertising.



Over-Arching Findings

After further analysis, the **Aware Group** broke into two categories – one that is more concerned about convenience and another that cares more about value.



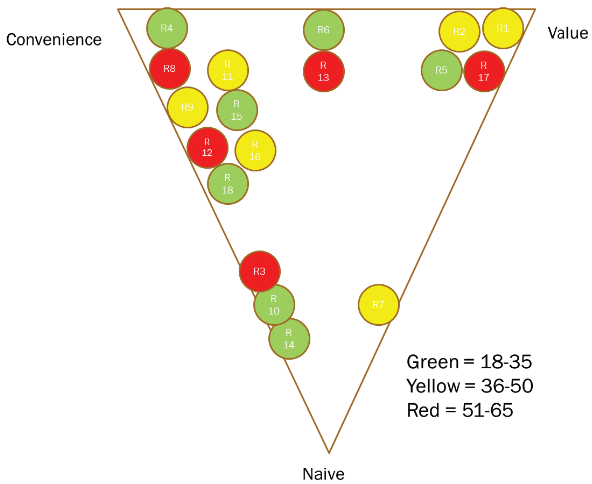


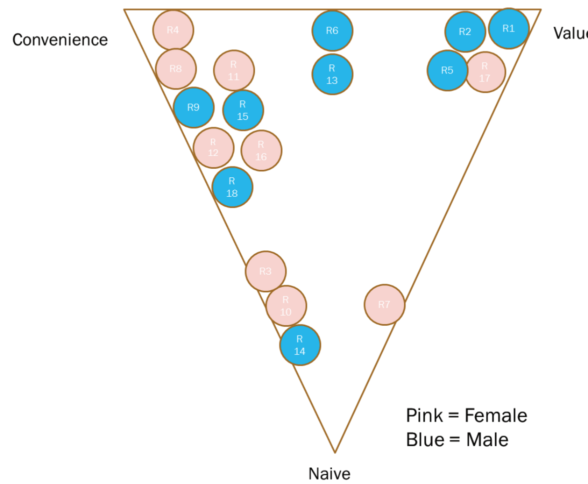
How respondents control their inbox can be a strong indication of where they fall on the continuum:

Most naïve consumers have little or no control over their inbox.

The more they control the flow of messages to their inbox, the more likely they are to be convenience-oriented. Typically, the consumers who manage their inbox are aware that the communication they receive is something they have signed up for. If their information has been shared and it results in unfamiliar correspondence, these consumers will decide whether to keep, unsubscribe, file or delete based on whether the information is relevant to them as an individual.

Age and gender made no impact on where people fell on the continuum of naïve, convenience or value.





Naive vs. Aware Explained

Naïve

We defined a respondent as Naïve if they were less aware of the tracking capabilities in sites like Facebook and Google searches. These consumers tend to post on social media sites more often than consumers we labeled as being Aware. Although these consumers were aware of the ads showing up in their Facebook feed for instance, they were unaware the ads were directed at them as a result of their online behavior.

Naïve Nancy

My husband and I are still living in this apartment because we haven't had the opportunity to look for something bigger. When we do move, I want something traditional. We still use our personal computer most of the time – it's just easier. I admit that I find myself looking information up on my smartphone more and more since getting it, but I haven't made a complete move away from the bigger screen and full keyboard. I was thrilled when I found my smartphone at such a good deal. I have always wanted one but just recently took the plunge. Of course, it's not the most recent version, but I don't need the latest and greatest.

When it comes to social media, I mostly post to Facebook. I really like to use it to see what other people are doing and keep up with them. I don't really "get" Twitter or Pinterest, but am open to learning how to use them.

We pay most of our bills online and I have used my new phone to deposit checks, but I still like the face to face interaction I get when I go to the bank. And I prefer to shop for big items at the store and in-person. I need to touch and feel the product before I buy it.

I really don't know how much information companies are tracking about me - I am really not that interesting and my husband doesn't use the computer enough for them to know anything about him. I avoid things like "signing in" with Facebook, mainly because I don't know what that does. I just don't think they have enough information to make a difference and I am not sure why they would really care.

Aware

Aware respondents were those consumers who are more discreet with their online and social media behavior. They are selective in what they post behavior as well as who is allowed to view what they have posted. They consider themselves "browsers" more than "posters," because they know they are leaving behind a digital footprint and have very little control on their own (or the barriers to control are very high) to what sites are tracking about them and their behavior.

Aware consumers break into two larger categories and appear to gravitate toward one group most of the time. They may move back and forth based on context (product being purchased or feelings toward a brand or product category.)

The major categories with the "aware" customers are:

Value conscious consumers sign up with merchants/shop online because they want to receive discounts, coupons, offers of free shipping, etc.

Convenience conscious consumers are driven by the ability to utilize technology to make life easier.

A further explanation of these two groups:

Value Consumers vs. Convenience Consumers

For the value driven consumer, their relationship with a company, merchant or brand is limited to only getting the best deal. In fact, that's the number one driver that will motivate them to make a purchase or continue to receive a communication. They are more likely to continue to receive communications even after they feel like the communications have become less relevant in the off chance that they might get a deal in the future. They keep and organize the communications they receive so they can look through them at the point they want to buy a product or go do an activity.

These consumers are not brand-oriented. They are looking for the best deal.

This category is particularly important for brands that are considered "impulse." Price and placement are often the drivers that move a consumer to make a purchase of an impulse product.

Value Valerie

I like to get a deal. In fact, that's my primary driver in life. It's not that I don't have the money to buy things, I just like to know that I got the best price for what I am purchasing and I don't like to waste money. I have sites I visit on a daily basis and I sign-up for e-mails from brands, companies and others to let me know where the best place are to get what I want. I organize the e-mails I get into folders so I can find a deal when I decide I want to do something or when it's time to buy someone a gift.

I love Groupon and Living Social and I have downloaded the apps to my phone. These applications let me keep up with things we can do around town and by saving money we can do more things as a family. I also use Foursquare to get a deal when I check into a place if I see a sign at the merchant. I would never share that I checked in somewhere with my social media network, people know too much about me already.

I will collect points so that we can do the things we want to do. We have used our credit card reward points several times to pay for hotels or airfare. I really prefer programs that collect the points for me, like Kroger Fuel Card, but I will go to the extra effort to enter a code or sign-up for a promotion. In fact, that's why I have "liked" most of the brands I have on Facebook.

If I find a coupon or offer for a product, that's what I am buying - I mean, they are all the same, right? I think it's silly to be tied to just brand or type. It's all about the best price and keeping as much money in my pocket as I can. I am willing to share information with companies to get a deal, but there is definitely a limit. If one company won't give me a deal, someone else will, or I will just wait.

The other category of consumer type is oriented toward convenience and status. They are willing to spend more and provide more information about themselves to companies and brands that provide them with exceptional service or make a statement about who they are. These consumers will share more with a company or brand that makes their life easier than they will with their "friends" on social media. They will compromise spending in other categories in order to support their relationship with specific brands.

Convenient Carl

I love to use technology to make my life more convenient and I am willing to share information with a brand or company if it means my life happens more "automatically." I love my smartphone and download new applications often to try them out, but if they don't meet my needs, it doesn't take much time for me to stop using them. I am going to pick a technology or communication method that works best for me. I have no real allegiance to one way to do things – just whatever is easiest.

That is not as true of my favorite brands or companies – I feel like I have established a relationship with them and that loyalty runs very deep. I have high expectations of these companies and brands to understand and take care of me. It takes a lot for a company to prove itself to me, but once established, it will take a lot to screw it up. I am more likely to complain and I expect to receive some type of relief or feedback – it's usually just a temporary misstep.

Now that I think about it, I will share almost anything with a company to makes my life easier, but I am more selective about the people that I let into my digital circle. I know that others pay attention to what I post on social media and it might impact their view of me - it might even impact my future career opportunities. A friend of mine used Facebook to sign-in to buy underwear and it showed up on my friend's timeline. That is not something I want to share with the world.

I use my phone to shop. I like to look at reviews and want to make sure I am getting something that fits my lifestyle and expectations. It's when I am searching for something new that I usually hear about new applications or services, or from my favorite websites and the news.

I really appreciate and expect a brand or company getting to know me. But once they do, I want them to send me selected messages that fit my lifestyle. I like to control my e-mail inbox and I try to keeps it "empty" by sorting correspondence into folders. If a company is missing the mark on it's messages to me, I want to easily correct what I am receiving or I will just unsubscribe.

Recommendations

In order to establish true relationship with customers, your company needs to understand what drives your customers more deeply. Implementing a preference management solution with a preference center and de-centralized preference collection is a powerful step toward this goal. In this process, you must consider the way to collect preferences based on these core drivers and the ramifications of providing your consumers with a voice.

Speak to your target group

Are you a value brand or a convenience brand?

At the very least, preference collection should consider that there are different types of consumers who interact with your brand for different reasons. Understanding if your brand or company is preferred by value conscious users is important to your preference collection strategy and your marketing campaigns.

On the reverse side, if your customers primarily choose your brand or company for convenience, they will provide more information to you. Once collected, there is a high expectation of how you use that information to better service these customers. And because this group is convenience driven, the collection of additional data needs to be easy. Implementing preference collection within the rest of the experience is a successful route to follow.

Understand preference collection is more than a preference center

Providing a preference center that allows consumers to make changes to all of the communication channels and subscriptions is very useful and desirable for some of your customers, but there are other customers who will prefer to make changes to their channels or subscriptions in bite-sized chunks.

The use of an "opt-down" page is a starting point to service these customers, but thought should be put into opting customers in to campaigns and channels as they experience and interact with your company or brand. This consideration should be made across all channels – online, mobile, in-store and support.

The use of a "survey" is a model familiar to consumers – collecting the survey data to better service your customer at a later date will both please them and incent them to provide information to you more readily.

Use preferences to put a lens on your Big Data

Companies struggle with effectively using Big Data information that is generated by many marketing systems they use to reach their customers. By combining Big Data with "Small Data", e.g. data obtained through preference collection, you can identify your most valuable customers and cater directly to their personal expectations.

Say you have two customers, both male, age 24, living in Boston and both have purchased unicycles from the same website. So far, they seem very similar and receive the same lead score. However, when you add other behavior and preference data, you find that they are very different at their core. One of the unicyclers loves to go places and impress friends with photos from around the world. He spends most of his money on travel. His unicycle does not need to be the latest, but it should be sturdy and something with character. His core driver is "value".

The other one unicycler loves to ride every day after work with his cycling group. Everything is about performance, so his unicycle must have the latest technology. He likes to be seen in the city with the coolest model. He is much more receptive to premium brands and the latest technology. His core driver is "convenience".

Preference collection is a powerful tool to capture their core drivers. By asking customers throughout the website about their preferences for certain products, deals or by including carefully crafted fields within registration, companies can gather additional information about their customers.

This information, combined with web tracking, purchase history and other tools, can connect each customer's web behavior to their personal preferences and contact information and, over time, fill in the unknown aspects of their personal profile.

In Closing

Using leading scoring in conjunction with preference collection takes the power of this feature to a higher level. You might use self-reported data to begin segmenting readers or targeting emails, but adding in behavior can reveal important distinctions among customers.

Say you have two customers, both age 24, living in Denver and both have purchased mountain-bikes. So far, they have the same score based on self-reported data, but when you layer behavior and preference data on top, you find one has joined your in-store loyalty program, regularly visits your website and posts pictures of himself riding his bike all over the world.

This customer should receive a different contact score and receive a different stream of email messages from the other biker, who is identical from a demographic and interest perspective.

A simple example: A prospect browses your website and shows clear interest in one product category over another. Perhaps you don't explicitly ask for this preference during registration, or you make it an optional field.

Using web tracking, you can connect this new subscriber's pre-registration web behavior to her email address and, in essence, fill in some form fields for her based on behavior.

The next time you and your team get together to discuss making changes to your preference center, consider rethinking the entire concept rather than just making a few tweaks.

Supplemental Material

About Laddering

Laddering was originally introduced in 1988 by Thomas J. Reynolds[5]. The approach proved that product attributes lead to consequences that generate personal meaning (values) for users. From this starting point Reynolds was able to determine which functional and emotional benefits resonate with the consumer.

For this research we use a refined approach of the Laddering technique that allows us to improve its accuracy, clustering, actionability and quantification.

The Phases of Laddering:

Laddering - Uncovering Relationships, Values and Decision-Making Processes

Companies cannot force their goods on an end consumer; rather, consumers carefully choose what they want to include in their lives, similar to the way they choose their friends.

This first phase is designed to discover these relationships in a series of contextual in-home interviews with respondents. These interviews are broad in nature and focus on discovering the personal environment, personal brand relationships and decision-making processes and meanings (values).

Confirming and Fine-tuning the Laddering

The second phase is designed to verify the clusters and hypotheses identified in the first phase. Based on the previous results, a set of assumptions are made about the type of stimulus to which each of the identified groups will react. This stimulus can come from a wide range of sources. These interviews are narrower in nature and focus on testing stimulus messages with respondents screened based on cluster findings from 1st round. The goal is to fine-tune the clusters, identify influencers or transitional clusters, and determine which stimulus resonates best with each cluster.

Latticing – Using Consumer DNA to Find the Overlap in Ladders

The first two phases of Laddering understand what drives each individual cluster. The next phase of Latticing identifies overlapping areas between the different clusters. The purpose is to discover the how the consumer groups relate to and influence each other. In this phase messages and areas that have the greatest impact on consumers will be defined. The results provide companies direction on where to focus.

[5] Thomas J. Reynolds, Jonathan Gutman, Laddering Theory, Method, Analysis, and Interpretation, Journal of Advertising Research , 1988

Quant verification

Goal of the quantification is to apply the knowledge on a large consumer group and test the results of the first phases. This step provides valuable direction on how to evaluate existing big data and helps understand the distribution of customer clusters within a company's existing customer base.

Lensing – Seeing your brand from the consumer's perspective

Today's consumers seek brands, products, and experiences that already feel like them. With the deep knowledge gained in the previous phases, we are now able to describe a company's brand with words and phrases that consumers would use and that they will recognize and identify with. We will focus on the perceived brand and product attributes for each cluster as these are far more important in the decision making process than the actual attributes, features and functions.

About PossibleNOW

PossibleNOW, headquartered near Atlanta, Georgia, is the trusted source for consumer preference management and compliance solutions. PossibleNOW leverages its expertise in information technology, database management, and consumer privacy and regulatory compliance to provide cloud-based applications and solutions. PossibleNOW's MyPreferences® is an enterprise preference management solution that effectively collects and manages the contact preferences of customers and prospects including servicing, privacy, marketing (opt-in and opt-out) across all marketing channels and makes the preference data actionable. The DNCSolution® suite of cloud-based services provides comprehensive tools that help direct marketers comply with federal and state Do Not Contact legislation (Do Not Call, Do Not Fax, Do Not E-mail, Do Not Mail). For more information, call (800) 585-4888 or (770) 255-1020, e-mail info(at)possiblenow(dot)com or visit http://www.possiblenow.com.

About Laddering Works

The overall objective is to move beyond merely understanding WHAT consumers have done to a deep and applicable knowledge of the consumer that understands WHY.

By understanding why, informed predictions can be made about how consumers prefer to be communicated with (offer), in what manner (mode), what they will do (technology) and be open to in the future (opportunity).

To achieve this objective, Laddering Works partners with a client company to apply laddering techniques that build on what is currently known about their consumers and then develop a deep and applicable understanding of the consumers' perceptions, expectations, influences and motivations.

After identifying the key patterns, a lattice of consumer clusters is created that informs a move-forward plan to capitalize on short term opportunities and identify long-term growth strategies. The plan includes optimal ways to reach the consumer, potential partnerships, data collection and analysis.

Laddering Works provides techniques (lensing) and a system (Prism) that supports the client in continually viewing new product, services or marketing strategies from their consumers' unique perspective.