

B2B Big Data

Making the flood of marketing information coming into your organization useful and actionable

Your organization may have lots of data—but do you *really* have big data?

“Most people think they’re [using big data] but they’re not,” says Erik Matlick, CEO, Madison Logic. “Right now, big companies have all set up the infrastructure, so they have the capability to organize and warehouse data. So they have a solution but that’s just the plumbing—the majority don’t really have big data yet.”

Matlick estimates that there are maybe 10 marketers in the B2B world that can afford to run a big data program by themselves in house. “They’ll have data scientists on staff, but for 99% of companies that’s too expensive.”

“We see marketers who have large supplies of data but it isn’t really helping them,” says Jeff Adeo, senior vice president, B2B List Services Group, Infogroup Targeting Solutions. “Data is becoming more of a commodity than it was in the past—focusing on what you really need seems to be the problem.”

“People have to look at the actual results and see

what they are getting a lift from,” Adeo says. “You need to make data actionable to get over the hurdle.”

Perhaps, says Anders Ekman, president of Data-Mentors, marketers should focus on right data, rather than big data. “The thing that we’re exploring in big data and B2B is data acquisition and sourcing to create a competitive advantage.”

The concept of data as a service (DaaS) is beginning to grow, he notes. “The number of unique data sources out there are larger than any client organization can wrangle, and you need to have a good knowledge of how they need to work. If you couple these businesses that are creating data and are imaginative against your client problem, you really have something special. It tends to be more real time, and more uniquely sourced.”

A strategy is important, of course. You don’t just want to create another business silo, Ekman notes. You need to link everything together.

“Often, what we find is marketers going ‘oh, let’s just get all the data that we can,’” he says. “You need



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DATA 101

FOUR QUICK TIPS TO REMEMBER

Make sure you have a plan. “What data are you trying to capture, and what is it going to do for you?” asks Jeff Adeo, senior vice president, B2B List Services Group, Infogroup Targeting Solutions. “Make sure you’re getting the right data elements in place so your plan comes to fruition.”

Keep your data clean. B2B data changes at roughly three to five percent on a monthly basis, says Adeo. “Poor data hygiene can cause a heck of a lot of problems and have a tremendous negative impact on your operation.”

Know the numbers. Make sure you have the metrics and the right platform in place to be able to know whether whatever you’re doing is working. “Look at your attribution and know where to focus your energy going forward. Track and know what is working.” Some companies are using multiple lead scoring mechanisms to keep track of their success, and that can lead to confusion, notes Erik Matlick, CEO of Madison Logic. “This will end as companies realize they want all their data in one place.”

Consider the type of data you’re using. The trend at many companies is to consider demographic or firmographic elements, says Matlick. But intent data can be a better predictor of behavior. Direct marketers are typically among those naturally making the step to layer behavioral data on to their campaigns for better targeting. “The print guys get it,” he said.—BNV

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advocates of having a data strategy in place and understanding what really matters in your business.”

Using intelligence from big data to link marketing and sales can be a giant frustration in B2B, Ekman notes. “The ability to source that one person who can give off purchase signals, and getting that contact to the dealer network, that’s cool.”

THE PIPES ARE OPEN

“Data tends to be unstructured,” says Jeff Winsper, president, Black Inc. “With the pipes opening up, it gets challenging for marketers to take unstructured data and convert it into something meaningful. That tends to be the last frontier.”

“When there are sensors and chips in everything from athletic gear to airplanes and any number of applications, that’s throwing off huge amounts of data, and now you can start to understand behav-

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ior versus intent,” says Winsper.

Big data can be used for display advertising, lead scoring and choosing content. But ultimately, it’s true purpose is to inform salespeople and determine where they are in the sales channel, Matlick notes. Data management platforms can help marketers determine an actionable data set that will assist in creating lead analytics that can be plugged into a data warehouse or CRM solutions. “You can look at the data and build models around it to help inform your marketing automation platform.”

One problem for marketers is that ad agencies are disincentivized to use granular data, says Matlick. It’s better for a marketer to do micro campaigns on multiple topics to smaller segments. But, because granular media buys are more difficult to navigate, agencies would rather make bug plays to try and reach a decision maker.

INTO THE DARK SIDE

A missed opportunity within many organizations is “dark data,” information being collected by organizations but not being put to use, says Winsper. “Because it isn’t part of the most recent interaction or transaction-based data, it isn’t adding its value to the current needs.”

He adds, “There’s enough information for people to choke on, but not enough for bite-sized insight. We’re not taking advantage of data capture—we need to do a better job of collecting information.”



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You Will Survive

4 ideas for staying ahead in a data driven world

Hey CMO! You're under qualified! Get a math degree. Don't hear that very often, do you? With technology and data transforming the marketing field at lightning speed, there is a need for a smarter, better-rounded, business-minded CMO.

During the era of the Don Draper-esque marketer, you could make it as a CMO as long as you had a great idea. Sometimes it didn't even need to be great, and sometimes all you needed was one good idea.

The Don Drapers of the marketing world weren't troubled with data analysis and they certainly were not bogged down with spreadsheets. Nope. In those days, it was all about coming up with the one idea that made your stone-faced client crack a smile. It was about that witty jingle that lingered in the minds of the customer (remember Bumble Bee Tuna, Wrigley's Doublemint Gum or Oscar Mayer?); or that one line that gets embedded in popular culture (Got Milk? Where's the Beef? Just Do It!).



Back then, linking marketing efforts to financial results and top-line revenue only clouded the mind and made for a heavy hangover.

Those were the days of creativity, not accountability. And for good reason. How did you know how many people really tuned in to the "Jack Benny Show" where your ad was being shown? How many people really read your billboard as they drove by?

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CREATING A DATA CENTRIC VIEW OF CUSTOMERS

Having a customer centric view is great. But the real challenge for both B2B and B2C marketers, according to Amit Phansalkar, chief data officer at MassMutual, is creating a data centric view.

"What do you think about when planning data strategy?" said Phansalkar, who spoke at the recent Future M event sponsored by MITV in Boston. "It changes from vertical to vertical, and brand to brand. Consumers are taking more control over the content they like to see, and [data can help you] understand consumer intent."

"[Knowing] the intent of the customer can get you close to providing an experience that is as personalized as possible," said David Drollette, senior director, analytics at Wayfair.

It's imperative, of course, to be as careful as possible with the data your customers provide.

"We can't run the risk of alienating our customers. We have some customers who love to give out their data, because they love to see what we give back. And then some never give out their data," said Drollette. "The big concern are the ones in the middle who are agnostic—until you do something that offends them. We need to be able to tailor an experience for people that is fantastic just before the point of creepy."

Companies need to think about data as an asset, rather than just a tool to help create better business processes, said Phansalkar.

But you can't analyze data you don't have, noted Drollette. "Get the data first, and then you can deal with the heavier infrastructure questions."

However, many brands often have more data than they realize. For example, said Benjamin Spiegel, senior partner, managing director of strategy, Group M, ratings and reviews count.

"It's already in the CRM or CMS system, and you just need someone with a data focused mind in your organization who can look at it and see what it can tell you about your customers," he said. —BNV

DON'T FORGET SMALL DATA

With all the focus on big data, are some marketers missing out on the small data opportunities? Absolutely.

"There's so much data being spawned today, much of it from digital channels, and it doesn't really add up to more than the next digital marketing campaign," says Anders Ekman, president of Data-Mentors. "That data is useful, but clients are missing opportunities to talk to people who are in the market for what they are selling now. There's a lack of knowledge of what is possible and a lack of imagination to apply the technologies that are out there."

"As opposed to blasting out the next banner ad campaign, wouldn't it be more efficient if you delivered a targeted message to someone who has shown they might be a good target for a certain offer?" he continues.

Marketers need to take advantage of the moment, agreed Jeff Winsper, president of Black Ink. For example, say a customer service rep is interacting with a customer in real time, entering information into their account. "You can see whether someone is likely to renew or not, and see cross-sell and up-sell opportunities—if someone is doing the analysis. But often people don't look at that data."

The big challenge, Ekman says, is that often most marketers are still just reaching out to the masses on some level. "You're not marketing to that one person who will make a difference to your business. But big data is now enabling small data—over the next three to six years, you'll see traditional marketing get displaced by targeted [initiatives]."

Rob Schmults, vice president of ecommerce for Talbots, noted at the recent Future M conference in Boston that before joining the retailer he was with a data analytics firm. B2B marketers could take a page from the retail book when it comes to leveraging small data.

"There's so much pressure to leap to the future that many overlook the interim steps that are easy to get to and would deliver a lot of value," Schmults said. "Targeting by recently viewed—that's a simple form of personalization. And geotargeting is one data point you can look at to think about what would be relevant to some people. Maybe send a message to folks within 10 miles of a store. It isn't taking 110 data points and looking for patterns. It's taking one data point and applying it. It's a spectrum." —BNV

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Back then you had no clue. You trusted your gut and you hoped for the best.

But, thanks to the Internet age, we can say goodbye to the days of whisky lunches and gut decisions, and welcome a new era of big data and financial impacts. With the dawning of digital marketing and the creation of marketing automation tools, we're getting access to more and more data.

"These days, you need a lot of analytics to understand that data you're collecting," says Mayram Banikarim, CMO at Gannet Corp Inc., the publisher of USA Today. "Understanding the analytics and how your customers are behaving is core to today's marketing."

This data holds a wealth of information that allows us to actually get feedback from our marketing efforts, and improve our marketing campaigns with remarkable precision.

Oh, but here is the rub...

We CMOs were never taught how to do the data analysis. We took marketing and psychology classes in business school, while hiding from the finance classes. The most we took was a statistics class, but that's because we were required to.

Welcome to the new age of the CMO. And to survive (let alone remain relevant) in this new era of marketing you need an analytics skill set. Without it, you don't stand a chance.

Today, some of the world's leading CMOs come from a background of mathematics, accounting or computer science. In this age, an analytical perspective can do wonders.

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4 WAYS TO GET ANALYTICAL:

Take an online class. For instance, my Alma Mater, Wharton University, offers free online classes across a variety of business disciplines. Professor Peter Fader, one of the leading marketing minds of this generation, offers an online marketing analytics course. Take a look at the local university and see if there are courses being offered in this manner.

Get an MBA. If you don't already have your MBA, this might be a good time to get one. A lot of universities have an executive MBA program if you are

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too busy — it may take longer but it is well worth it. Earning a post-graduate degree offers the opportunity to really round out not just your marketing knowledge but your overall business knowledge. So, to really get more bang for your buck, why not

Back in the day, advertisers were never quite sure how many folks actually saw the ads they bought during "The Jack Benny Show." Today, everything is measurable.



take on a concentration in finance if you're already a marketing expert, or take electives that address your weak spots?

Get someone to teach you. If you work for a successful company, chances are it has a finance, IT or an engineering department with plenty of people who get the numbers. My advice to you: befriend them. Take them to lunch. Buy them a drink. Find a way to get them to teach you a thing or two about their side of the business. In most cases, they usually are more than happy to do so, because, in the end, it helps them as well.

Hire someone. Yes, I said it. And now it's out there in the marketing universe and there's no taking it back. I know it seems like the lazy man's way to solve this problem, but sometimes it really is the most effective. The first thing I try to do in a new job is hire a financial analyst — an analytical person whose job it is to find the answers I need. So, when I ask for the ROI on a marketing event, that person just simply tells me.

"I'm not analytics expert so I rely on my analytics team," says Matyam. "There is no way you can be an expert on everything, so you have to not be afraid and know how to ask question."

Whether or not you learn it yourself or go the lazy man's route, there is hope for you yet.

"Underlying principle of marketing is the same. The better you understand your consumer, the better you can serve them," reminds Maryam.

But one thing is for certain: ignoring the data is like taking a long walk off a short pier. Not recommended. **!** —David T. Scott, author, "The New Rules Of Lead Generation"
