

HOW TO LEVERAGE THE POWER OF PERSONALIZATION TO SHOW YOUR AUDIENCE YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY REALLY NEED

THE POWER OF PERSONALIZATION

If done right, personalization is a powerful tool for marketers. But how do you avoid the “creep” factor and connect with your audience in a meaningful way? In this four-part special report, we’ll dive into the technology, tools and techniques you need to know to create B2C and B2B campaigns that show your customers that you see them, you get them and you can give them what they need.

Most companies hold some form of partial data about their customers, whether it’s a personal or professional email address, a phone number, a physical address or even a social handle. But quite often that data is siloed across departments. The demand generation team might hold an email address, the customer loyalty group might maintain a physical address and customer support might track a social handle from an online review.

While all these disparate pieces of data might live within a single organization, few companies have the technology or time to combine and assemble them into a single view of the customer. The number of touchpoints and level of complexity has also increased dramatically over the years as customers now communicate not only through different channels but through multiple devices as well.

Getting the 360-degree View

To transform partial identities into complete profiles, customer management platforms can help marketers create a 360-degree view of their customer. There are two phases to the process, enablement and enrichment.

Enablement is the first step in bringing all the data snippets together. It provides a consolidated view of who the customer is across all the company’s touchpoints. This identity resolution is “the connective tissue that helps companies stitch together multiple accounts for a single customer that they wouldn’t otherwise realize is one customer,” says Mark Canada, Director of Professional Services at FullContact.

Enrichment extends beyond the information maintained by the company to add mined social and outside data such as lifestyle and product interests, as well as psychographics. Enriched data might tie together a consolidated customer view with insights into the individual’s affinity for sports, travel or music, for example.

Knowing precisely who customers are can help inform an organization’s marketing strategies. Whether looking to increase

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sales to the highest-spending tier, to the low-lying fruit or to any other segment of their database, knowing how customers describe themselves or where they overindex in terms of interests can help develop a data-driven persona.

That information can then be used to develop a general strategy and messaging for that audience, including lookalike campaigns, which are often used for top-of-funnel lead generation. "If you know the unique social DNA of your best customers," notes Canada, "you can use that to find more customers who are similar."

Naturally, knowing the customer enables companies to deliver a more personalized experience. Imagine in a hospitality setting, you check into the same hotel chain you've used in the past. Only this time, thanks to personalized data, they know you are there for a major sporting event featuring your favorite team—so they have a team mug and cap waiting for you in your room. How would your attitude toward the hotel chain change?

Or, say someone posts a negative comment about your product on social media. With a full customer view that makes affinity information available across channels, a customer service rep can see both their online and transactional data and know that this is a high-value customer—and handle the complaint accordingly.

Even in a B2B context, knowing your customer can mean the difference between making or losing a sale. After all, you are looking

to develop a relationship with a human being, and the ability to relate to that person is better enabled by having a full picture of that person.

"Segmenting messaging and personalizing by job role in B2B is incredibly effective, if done well," says Bart Lorang, Co-Founder and CEO of FullContact. "Marketers should send different messaging to people in different parts of the buying process."

Using insights developed from the full customer view, companies can "creatively use that information to make sure they're dealing with customers the right way," says Canada.

In one example of creative thinking, a home furnishings company combined data-driven personas on top of behavioral data to look at their customers' professions and bios. It soon learned that many of its top customers described themselves as real estate agents or stagers. The company would never have been able to extract that information on its own from its primary loyalty card program. The corporate development team was then able to develop strategies around these roles to pull similar prospects into customer channels.

With a 360-degree customer view, another brand learned that its customers overindexed on travel and photography, even though it was not in either of those industries. As a result, it was able to subtly tailor its product images and messaging to incorporate travel and photography themes, thereby expanding its appeal.

POWERING UP FOR PERSONALIZATION

While the idea of developing a personalization system can seem overwhelming, it's really "a game of inches," says Rick Porter, Director of Solutions Architecture for FullContact. "It's not about any one vendor or technology," says Porter. "It's about building bit by bit and understanding which areas you can do yourself, and where you need to bring in partners."

Furthermore, the proliferation of martech tools and touchpoints has created a much more unwieldy view of the customer. With the increased fragmentation comes the need for identity resolution.

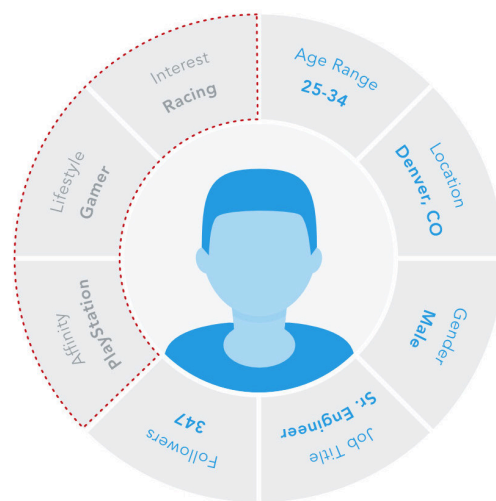
From a technology perspective, there are three steps for successful personalization:

1. **Gather the disparate data elements.** This includes all customer touchpoints from multiple channels and devices.
2. **Resolve the identity graph.** Compile a 360-degree view of the customer by consolidating data points for a single customer view and then enriching that information with social and other data.
3. **Leverage the personalized view.** Execute by implementing segmentation strategies, audience personas, data management platforms, clustering, cohorting, etc.

The third step is critical, notes Jon Tallman, Director of Solutions Architecture at FullContact. Businesses "must take action" he says, whether working with an outside vendor or in-house data managers, data scientists or data analysts.

"Everybody needs data science now, so if you don't have any, get it," adds Tallman. And if you do have in-house data scientists, he notes, "Listen to them more. They already know which technologies, solutions and tools they need to do the job."

The Value of Identity Resolution



89%

of brands cite challenges with personalization*

6X

increase in transactions when brands invest in personalization*

40%

increase in email click-through rate with personalization*

*Source: VentureBeat Research, 2015

Identity resolution is the connective tissue that helps companies stitch together multiple streams of data on a single customer that they might not otherwise realize is one account.

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And to handle journey mapping, lead scoring and creating different paths for customers based on responses, “businesses need to invest in a good marketing automation system,” says Scott Axcell, VP Marketing at FullContact. “The more time you spend creating those journeys, the more effective you’re going to be in reaching your customers.”

Using Data to Determine Media Channels

Of course, even with a full customer view, marketers must be in the right place at the right time to engage customers.

“If we know something about the interests or affinities of your customers, such as where they like to read offline,” says Porter, “we can target strategies to align the budget in the places where those people just naturally go.”

One cruise line, for example, advertised its vacations in all the typical travel magazines—along with all of its competitors. By reviewing affinity data and the high-end segments for this client, a strong link was found with *The Economist* and *The Wall Street Journal*, whose readers overindexed for travel. With that knowledge, the cruise line had the opportunity to revise its media mix and stand out from its competitors rather than blend in.

A full customer view also helped a publisher review the top five magazines in which it planned to place ads. Using affinity data that showed engagement patterns for publications—along with a behavioral segment view of where the high frequency, recency and high monetary value customers reside—the publisher found that only two of the five magazines overindexed as a good fit. The other three underindexed. However, FullContact was able to point out three different magazines that overindexed with its high-end customers. This provided the opportunity to consider testing the other magazines, with the potential for full replacement down the road.

Sometimes the 360-degree customer view is not consistent with what a company believes. In fact, a brand could be launching a new initiative aimed at an entirely wrong audience.

Such was the case with a watch brand that was sure fashionistas and hipsters were its target audience. Data, however, pointed to young mothers as its key market. In a social promotion featuring influencers with dedicated hashtags, the sales generated by a single mommy blogger surpassed that of all the hipster bloggers combined. The results supported the data and enabled the marketing team to revamp its strategies.

MARKETING HUMAN TO HUMAN

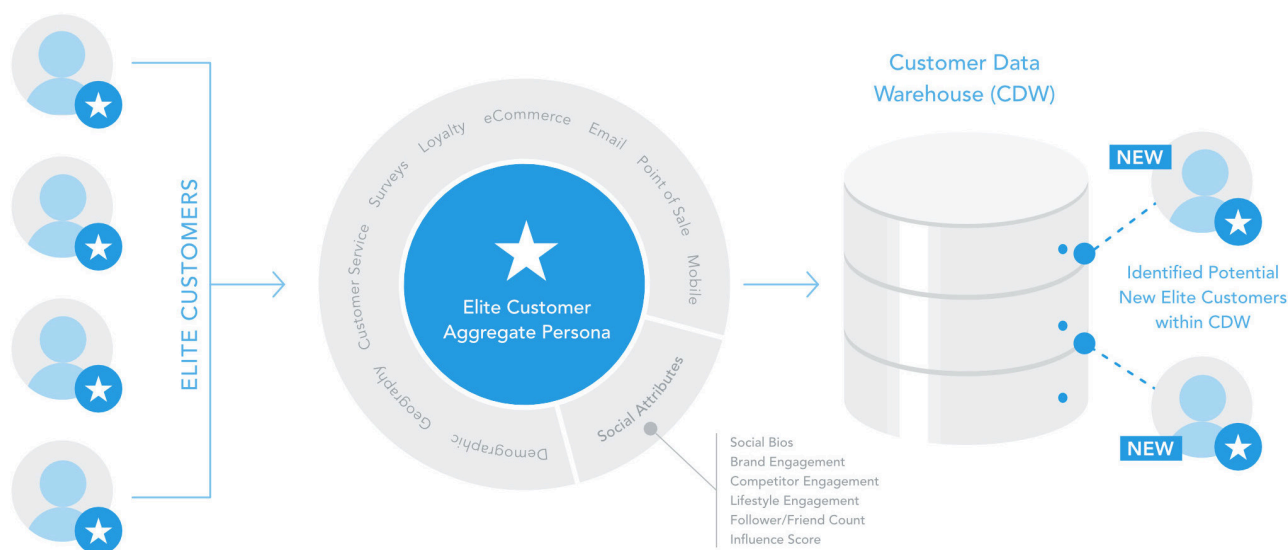
“Knowing your customers means knowing them as a human,” says Axcell. “When you know your customer as a person and know what their interests and affinities are, that data can be used to create better engagement.”

Furthermore, companies must authentically connect with people, notes Lorang. “To do that requires insights, empathy and intelligence—which are all fueled by data. You must demonstrate you actually care about people, about their organizations and about their goals.”

This human-to-human approach can be more challenging in a B2B environment, where companies traditionally lead their

communications by telling prospects about their product or service. B2C companies, on the other hand, are much more immersed in the psychology of how, when and why people buy. That means B2B brands have some catching up to do.

When dealing with customers on a human level, however, it’s important to keep in mind that “there is a thin line between context and creepy,” cautions Porter. While consumers know B2C marketers gather data about them, “they should use this knowledge in more subtle and thoughtful ways that makes them relevant rather than creepy.”



Data-driven personas of elite customers combined with behavioral data can help companies tailor messaging & develop strategies to engage prospects with similar profiles.

Building Affinities

When consumers develop an affinity for a brand, they expect the brand to consistently offer them the right information in the right channel at the right time. Otherwise it feels like the brand isn't reciprocating their loyalty.

With a 360-degree view of the customer, personal and professional data is layered together so marketers have a complete omnichannel view. "They can connect more consistently, more authentically and more effectively," says Axcell.

That, in turn, means the customer gets better content, better promotions, better customer service and an all-round better brand experience.

For example, a call center that was fielding complaints needed to make the phone calls more personal by interacting on a human level. Affinity data appended on the back end gave customer service reps information to help disarm disgruntled callers and form a human connection while they discuss the situation.

If a rep sees a caller is from New England, for instance, he or she might comment: "How about those Patriots this weekend?" Suddenly the person is engaged and feels like more than just a number to the company.

"When personalization is done properly," says Axcell, "customer loyalty grows, brand loyalty grows and ROI grows."

Making Marketing Investments

Results are only as good as your original data—which can be incomplete, outdated or inaccurate. Marketers should make sure they have high-quality, accurate and current data before they set out on any personalization efforts.

"You've got to have accurate information about people," explains Lorang. "If a prospect's name is misspelled, you'll likely never get a second chance."

Marketers should apply personalization from segments to one-to-one engagements, taking their knowledge of the customer and creating a spectacular customer experience, says Canada.

This dedication to understanding and truly valuing your customer drives stickiness and brand loyalty, and this in turn greatly increases your chances of creating brand advocates.

BEST PRACTICES FOR PERSONALIZATION

Conducting any transaction, such as making a buying decision, requires trust. That trust comes from empathy and understanding. That understanding comes from insights and intelligence. And those insights come from data.

Effective marketing "starts and ends with the human being behind the data," says Tallman. "We all have private and professional versions of ourselves, but we don't proactively differentiate." So what should personalized B2B outreach look like? Axcell says this is what he would expect to see from an effective program that drives top-of-funnel leads.

The business should know:

- Who the person is
- What position they hold
- What industry they are in
- What are the likely problems they are facing

Beyond those basics, B2B businesses should:

- Show they have researched something the person has written or commented on
- Tell the person about competitors and what they're doing better than his or her own company
- "Do something to grab the person's attention and cut through the clutter," advises Axcell. "Try zigging when everyone else is zagging."

"Personalization using insights is really about showing a customer that you understand them, which leads to trust, which leads to a transaction," says Lorang.

ABOUT

**CHIEF/
MARKETER**

Chief Marketer, an Access Intelligence brand, provides marketers and aspiring CMOs with content, ideas, recognition and events that help them make smarter decisions with their marketing budgets. It offers data-driven industry intelligence, actionable insights, inspiring case studies and the latest technology trends so marketers can improve their campaigns and increase ROI.

ABOUT



FullContact

FullContact is the world's open, cloud-based identity resolution and insights platform that enables people to fully identify, describe, and authentically connect with each other, human to human. Their patented identity graph provides a unified view of people across their personal and professional lives enabling deeper understanding and empathy in every interaction.