How automated communications can enhance customer engagement and brand loyalty

By Karyn Strybos , issued by Everlytic

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Technology can drive dynamic content campaigns, at scale, while marketers embrace a more strategic role. Marketers have long since identified the importance of strategic and highly personalised content – delivered at the right time – to create and nurture lasting customer relationships. Yet many marketing teams find themselves juggling day-to-day administrative tasks with the deadline-driven requirements of strategic communications campaigns. In many instances, over-burdened marketers simply cannot send out the targeted, timely and personalised content at the scale that is required to drive customer engagement more effectively than their competitors. Technology and, more specifically, marketing automation are now rapidly changing this equation.

Put simply, marketing automation enables teams to send highly strategic messaging that immediately engages customers, at scale. This virtual, automated and sophisticated communications function gives your marketing team the critical time and space to focus on what they're good at: creating high-quality, strategic content.

Giving marketing the strategic (post-lockdown) edge

Indeed, automated communications illustrate just how technology and marketing can combine and enhance existing campaigns: It does the repetitive legwork for teams, giving them a scale and reach that was previously unthinkable; while simultaneously providing marketing minds with the freedom to find the creative and strategic angles that will differentiate their campaigns from their overworked competitors.

Arguably, the combination of creative flair and automated communications will become even more critical to success as brands and businesses enter a dramatically altered, post-lockdown economy. Margins are tighter, teams are often working remotely and consumers are on the hunt for value. Never before has strategic, personalised and scalable marketing been this integral to long-term business success.

Personalised journeys

With so much 'noise' and digital content competing for buyers' (limited) attention, marketing automation is designed to adapt and customise the communication journey for different audiences, based on specific behavioural cues. And while personalisation within marketing is nothing new, what is certainly new is the ability to create automated customer journeys that prompt impactful messages to go out at specific times, with strategic delays. This messaging, of course, is data-driven and strategic: based on conditions such as contact behaviour, location and/or personal data.

While marketing teams can then be freed to focus on strategy and innovation, marketing automation will be simultaneously, and efficiently, converting leads into buyers.

Dynamic, timely content

Imagine this: Some contacts (who have already signed up for updates and content) are on the fence about buying your product and all they need is a timely nudge to move to the other side. Automated marketing would be programmed to identify the need for this nudge – and would be prompted to send content that translates potential customers into converted customers. All this would happen with little to no direct effort at all from the marketing team, once the content has been created for each stage of the prospective customer's journey.

In the travel industry, for example, customers can be given timely nudges when researching and planning for trips.

Prior to the formidable challenges presented by Covid-19 and restrictions on air travel, Flight Centre harnessed cues such as the departure point (where users are travelling from) and buyer persona (culture, adventure, family, luxury, relaxed or generic) to create dynamic and targeted content that personalised each customer journey on the site.

The result? On the emails that sent dynamic content based only on the users' location and departure point, the results included a phenomenal 106.45% increase in email user enquiries on the Flight Centre website. Even more impressively, the emails that sent dynamic content based on the subscribers' buyer personas resulted in a 388.72% increase in website traffic from the emails (and a 153.75% increase in email user enquiry submissions on the website) – outcomes that are transformational for them.

Cutting out the inefficiencies

Moving to the finance industry, automation has almost unlimited applications. Old Mutual, for example, leveraged automated communications when launching its 'Plan your Dreams' app - whereby users could submit details around their specific financial dreams and long-term goals. Using this data, the app would share the key information (via an API) that automatically triggered an email communication - which contained dynamic content and messaging that was highly relevant and targeted to users' personal, financial goals. The financial services provider thus harnessed automation to avoid the need to build seven different emails, and instead relied on dynamic content sections to drive engagement, with great outcomes.

Looking more broadly, across sectors, automated communications can be used to drive engagement and identify possible weak links in existing relationships. For example, technology can automatically re-engage inactive customers or subscribers after a set time with special offers or discounts (or perhaps customer reviews and success stories). Within event registrations, automation can target invitees who have not opened their email invitation with an automated SMS to alert them to the invitation in their inbox. In the same sense, you could automatically send those who did RSVP on an automated journey to share additional information and remind them of the event before it happens.

As businesses move into a difficult and highly competitive post-lockdown environment, these types of automated communications can be the one game-changer that achieves the all-important brand loyalty.

More than ever before, customers are looking for value that speaks to their own personal journey – and marketers have to equip themselves to provide this value, consistently and efficiently.
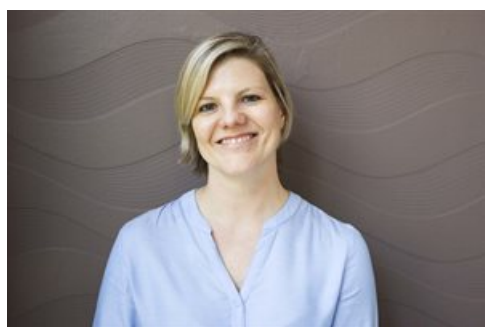
About Karyn Strybos

Karyn is the marketing manager of Everlytic, a SaaS marketing automation platform. With over 14 years' experience in the digital marketing industry, she brings knowledge from both agencies and corporations alike. Her strong project and brand management skills have enabled her to improve brand awareness and deliver effective and timeous campaigns that drive true business results. She has worked on various brands within the B2B and B2C space, some of which include DStv, Accenture, HP, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, First Car Rental and Adcock Ingram.

About Everlytic

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