

Part 3: Crafting a first-party data strategy is more urgent than many think

By [Anse Leighton & Andrew Smit](#)

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Planning for a future in an age without third party cookies (as well as Apple's intense privacy-first changes) is not only causing some serious head scratching, but has placed a real urgency on marketing leaders to respond.



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If they hope to adapt to the new regime, they will need to design and implement first-party data strategies that both meet their need for information, as well as building and nurturing lasting relationships with their customers.

So what data do we have access to?

In the wake of Google's announcement that it would no longer be tracking or holding individual data, as well as Apple's announcement that iOS 14 users would have to opt in to sharing the data with every app they use, brands are now significantly more dependent on collecting first party data for their marketing purposes.

The question on everyone's lips, however, is how will we operate in a world that requires us to rely on first party data? And, do we even know where that data is?



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The onus is now firmly on brands to form a deep and individual relationship with their target audience. No longer can they rely on the big platforms to find their customers, they will have to work hard to find ways to entice them onto their own digital channels and, through these, harvest as many unique data points about that person as possible.

Quite simply, collecting data on people coming to your website in a transparent way and then organising and storing that data must be the number one priority for CMOs and Data leaders over the next 18 months.

And companies should not assume that this will be a quick and easy thing to do. We have seen that even some of the largest organisations have been pretty relaxed about how they manage their data. Going forward they will have to pay very close attention to how users interact with their content and how they collect and use the data those visitors have shared.

However, on the plus side, although very unsettled by the privacy changes and the continued uncertainty, we have seen very few local companies cutting back on budgets. Companies seem to remain committed to using digital channels as the best way to reach their customers and this bodes well for the industry in general, especially in a muted economy.

Working in a new privacy-first world order

Collection of data is just one element of operating in a world that wants to put privacy first. Brands will also need to decide what they do with the data that they have collected.



Anse Leighton, Lead Platform and Media Consultant at Incubeta

Running a data audit is the most sensible place to start. Figuring out just what data you have and where that data resides within an organisation is such an important first step. Once you have that figured out, you need to establish where that data plugs into your marketing stack and how you can best use it to reach your audiences. This also gives you an opportunity to fix any problems that are threatening your overall compliance which, with all the various data protection laws now in effect, should not be overlooked.

Working with your marketing partner to achieve this will significantly cut down on the scope of the job and ensure you have set the correct parameters for the exercise.



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Shifting from a product-centric approach to become audience-centric

Another part of the challenge will be to find new ways to entice users to part with their data. More than ever before users will need to feel comfortable sharing personal information and this means finding an equitable trade off. We see too many e-commerce sites demanding you part with a sea of data before you are even able to transact. While they may claim this helps them tailor their offering to you, many customers may not intend becoming frequent shoppers and this route puts them off from making the first transaction.

Of course loyalty and reward programmes are a good way of coaxing information out of your audience, but again, make sure that you are offering a meaningful exchange that will impact your customers. Small discounts are not appealing and in an age of increasing digital competition you must stand out if you hope to achieve your data objectives. You must build true personalised relationships with your customers and this means capturing their attention with meaningful tradeoffs.



Andrew Snit, Head of Data Solutions at Incubeta

Don't get complacent

Global industry bodies and many governments may be obsessively chasing privacy, but the fact remains that users are advertisers too. Individuals want to be able to reach other individuals to market their small businesses, their blogs, their gender reveal parties, their political views. And with this in mind, we can expect to see more changes as regulators, big tech companies and users continue to barter privacy for convenience. Marketing leaders should be prepared to remain

agile in their response and continue to lean on their marketing partners to help guide them through the shifting tides that lie ahead.

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