

Communication refocuses on people-centricity

By  Karyn Strybos

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Companies have had to reinvent many of their traditional business processes to remain operational while ensuring the safety of their employees during the turbulent events of the past year. Throughout this, communicating with all stakeholders has become more important than ever. This will have a significant impact on the trends influencing these engagements in 2021 and beyond.



Karyn Strybos

Prioritising internal comms

Many CEOs have already used the Covid-19 pandemic as the opportune time to rethink the way they work and communicate. Internal communications, with its focus on engaging employees, sharing information, and creating a company culture, will require a fundamentally different viewpoint to be successful in the journey to come.

To this end, internal communication must remove as many barriers as possible for employees to access the content and systems they need to remain productive. Additionally, the organisation must be aware and understand how this radically different environment will impact on the mental health and wellness of employees. Having an internal communications strategy that reflects this will be a key trend in the new year.

Remember privacy

Furthermore, the implementation of the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) is around the corner. Companies only have a few months to get their systems ready to reflect an increased focus on data privacy and security.

More than that, it will also change how businesses can communicate with their customers. For instance, people must now opt-in for email and SMS messages, there must be a relevant privacy notice in place, and the unsubscribe process must be comprehensively audited. Non-compliance will carry significant financial fines and reputational damage if the company is found guilty. This means that any marketing campaign and piece of communication that gets disseminated must adhere to the regulatory framework.

Understanding customers better

Even before the lockdown, data science was a growing field. But as companies need to differentiate themselves better thanks to more challenging economic conditions, they will refocus their efforts to embrace predictive analytics and gain a better understanding of their customers.

The rise of clean data gathering tools that are supported by omnichannel platforms, decision-makers will understand even more from their data. Nothing is unimportant when it comes to customer data. Everything has the power to inform how goals for the business are created going forward.

Everything from transactional customer data to customer behaviour tracking can significantly influence how products are developed. However, it is in the personalisation of communications with customers where a lot of value can be added as people will feel the business has a better understanding of their requirements and who they are.

More than just retention

This understanding will be great to become more customer-centric. This is vital given how businesses cannot rely on customer acquisition alone but also still need to provide exceptional value for existing ones to mitigate against the risk of churn. Signing on new customers is a resource-intensive process. Invariably it takes some of the focus away from identifying opportunities for growth.

Using automated communications will allow the organisation to retain a customer and build a long-term relationship with them at a scale previously unimaginable. The customer needs to have a consistent feel of the organisation from when they are a prospect to a new customer and eventually to a loyal customer who has the potential to become a brand advocate.

This is where more meaningful customer experiences become key. Companies must capitalise on relevance and personalisation in this regard. But personalisation goes beyond marketing and into every way that customers interact with the business. For example, something as simple as asking a customer for their communication preferences can make a big difference. The business then knows how they want to be contacted and can avoid frustrating them by choosing a different method.

Ultimately, the new year will be about putting people first regardless if they are employees or customers. It is about gaining a better understanding of these stakeholders and using digital solutions to send timeous, relevant, and automated communications that speak to their needs.

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 corporates alike. Her strong project and brand management skills has 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.

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