

Do you personalise your marketing efforts?

 By Pasqua Heard

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Personalised marketing extends beyond friendly digital greetings, such as “Welcome back!” and “We missed you”. Zubair Noor, Takealot.com's head of digital marketing, recently shared a trove of helpful insights at a Meltwater Biz Breakfast to help businesses capture their customers' attention and make them feel more valued.



Zubair Noor

While tricky to get right, personalised marketing is essential if you want your business to stand out, because customers expect brands to empathise with their needs and address them accordingly. Your aim is to provide a “content-rich and and relevant experience”, both on your website and in-store. This is achieved by targeted and tailored messaging to the right people based on factors including their age, gender and interests.

Be specific about what the customer can expect from your site or store with relation to quality of customer service, delivery times, and the like.

Discussing the benefits, Noor says, “Marketing personalisation allows you to target users along each stage of the purchasing funnel or buying cycle and allows you to then guide those users along the funnel to your final end goal, whether it is a sale, conversion or signup...This helps you control when and

where the message is sent to the user. It allows you to breach the gap between yourself (the advertiser) and the customer by adding a personal touch to what normally would be an impersonal process.”

Customer research is key

Be prepared to set a budget for marketing personalisation, as this can be costly - especially when gaining customer insights. Conduct customer research through surveys, user behaviour and your sales team, then group your customers into segments based on their interests shown in how they navigate your website and which departments they view.

“This is one of the most important things with regard to personalised marketing,” says Noor, “If you don’t have reliable data to base your targeting and segmentation on, you’re just going to waste money and make incorrect decisions.”

Useful channels to reach your users

Noor explained the benefit of using a variety of channels to reach customers, dependent on one’s offering. He referred to the Forbes Insights and PwC Content Survey, [Leading with customer-focused content: driving growth through personalized experiences](#), to indicate the most effective channels to engage customers with personalised content.

He placed particular emphasis on paid media, saying, “From a digital perspective, paid media is one of the most powerful tools you can use for marketing personalisation, because Google and Facebook lock their customers into their ecosystems and, in that way, they can learn more about their customers and their interests.”

Noor also explained the benefits of using the following channels for your personalised marketing efforts:

Digital

Remarketing. This refers to the process when someone views a few products on your site, but then switches to another

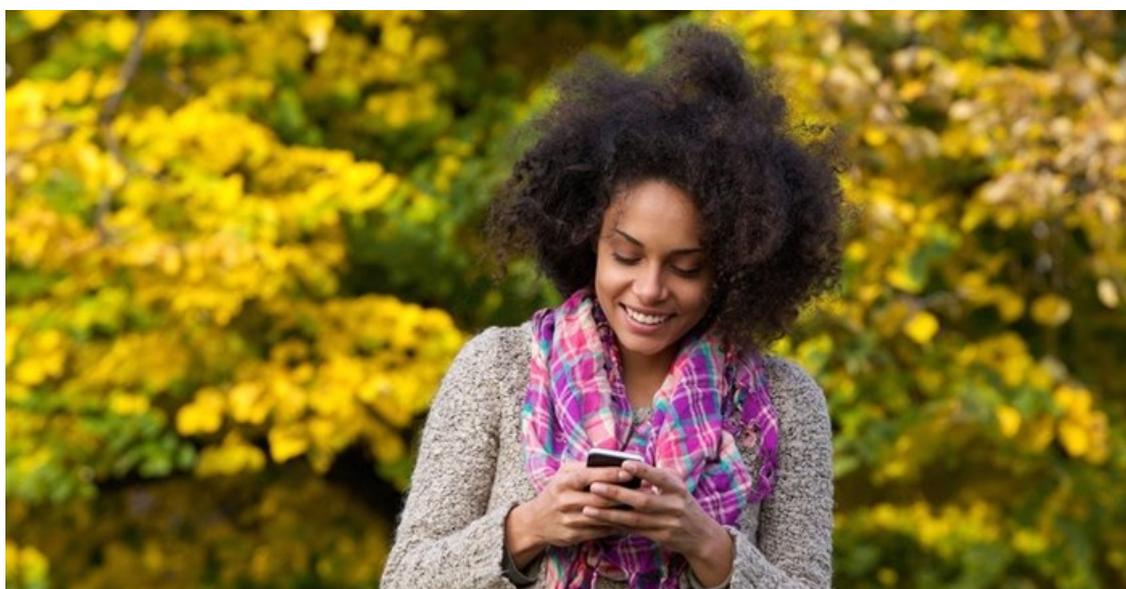
site where the products will reappear. Noor warns that remarketing needs to be relevant to the customer and cannot be too repetitive or persistent.

Signup email. “If you have your analytics tools integrated, you can assess customer information based on insights from their behaviour on your site, so you know what kind of products that customers buys and can cross-sell certain products in the same genre to that person through email. You can also email to thank someone after signing up. For example, “Hi, thanks for signing up. This is what you can expect of our service in future.”

Transaction email. Following up post purchase to thank the customer and let him/her know when the order will be delivered.

Abandoned cart. This refers to reminding someone when they have selected an item, but have not yet checked out. Noor explained that it can be a helpful moment to connect with the customer who may have forgotten about their items in the cart.

Organic search. This is based on how good your site appears to Google. You want your offering to rank as high up on the Google search as possible, so focus on search engine optimisation.



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Mobile

- **SMS.** focus on timing (stick to work hours) and content.
- **Push notifications.** These can be based on how people interact with your app and what they search for. Browser push notifications of certain products which might interest the user can also be effective forms of personalised marketing.

Noor highlighted the following as more difficult channels to achieve personalised marketing, yet effective if used correctly:

Radio and TV

You could target customers via certain channels/locations or at certain times of the day.

YouTube/Video

- You could target demographics and location.
- Optimise videos on YouTube as much as possible to appear as high up in the search as possible.

Print

While this is a difficult medium to use to target individuals en masse, Pick n Pay's targeting at the bottom of purchase receipts indicating how much their loyalty customers can spend on their next purchase is a clever way of personalised marketing via print.

Risks to personalised marketing

Here, Noor lists several factors to be aware of while attempting to personalise your marketing efforts:

- Scaling your efforts will be tough, as they're resource heavy from a content production point of view.
- It might be difficult to maintain consistency across touchpoints. The message shouldn't be the same on every channel, but should be consistent.
- Sometimes customers view personalised marketing as intrusive or too personal.
- You might be missing out on serendipitous moments to connect with your customers if you aren't gaining any new insights or changes to customer behaviour.
- Your efforts could become too predictable.

About Meltwater's Biz Breakfast

According to Meltwater's marketing manager, Wesley Mathew, Meltwater has been holding the Breakfasts since June of last year, both in Cape Town and Johannesburg (one per city, per month). The events were initially held in their office boardroom, but quickly escalated in size to a point where they were having to hire out larger venues (i.e. The Rockwell Hotel).

"The idea behind these breakfasts is to bring together communications and marketing professionals in order to network and learn. The sessions entail a complimentary (and scrumptious) breakfast, as well as an insightful 20-30 minute presentation from an industry thought leader.

"We send out invites to our database of marketing and communications professionals, but rarely need to promote the events further than that, as they tend to fill up rather quickly. Should people be interested in being added to our mailing list, they can email wesley.mathew@meltwater.com and I'll be happy to subscribe them."

Find out more about 2017's personalised marketing trends [here](#).

ABOUT PASQUA HEARD

Communications Associate, DGMT

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