

Micro-moments, context and connectivity

 By [Craig Johnston](#)

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One of the breakthrough technologies of the fourth industrial revolution is machine learning which has in a fairly short time achieved some remarkable feats; from voice recognition to medical diagnosis and even the ability to recognise faces.



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Pretty amazing, but what machine learning still struggles with is context. Anything that does not have a very defined protocol and historical framework seems to be really hard for machines to interpret and represent accurately.

A great example are photographs. If you or I see an image that is upside down, we'll immediately notice it and correct it. Computers, however, are none-the-wiser. Then, even if a machine could learn, through trial-and-error, when a photograph is the right way up and when it is not... how about a curve-ball, like when a photo is supposed to be upside-down? So, context is important.

The defining characteristic of IoT is its ability to create context, since when an object is connected to the internet it immediately is plugged into an activity stream. Now the object becomes a platform with a context, in multiple dimensions, as part of its own ecosystem. It is the managing of this connectivity between (seemingly unconnectable) components or domains that will deliver the intelligence enabled by IoT.

The importance of staying connected

Context, as applied to devices, is different from the context required by humans and especially when applied to customer service. The thing they have in common though is their starting point. Being connected. Just as an object or device is imbued with greater potential when it is connected to another device, so customers also present more (potential) opportunities for interaction with your business when they are connected.

This applies in two ways.

One is being generally connected to the internet through the use of a device like a mobile phone and the other is being directly connected to your business through experience, your website, app or any other native web interface. Google's now-famous studies about customer journeys and how these have evolved in a multi-device and mobile connected world revealed quite compellingly that there is no such thing as a linear customer journey anymore and that, rather, businesses need to capitalise on the micro-moment interactions they have with customers.

Understanding micro-moments

Basically, Google revealed that there are four micro-moments that must be understood: you must **have presence**, if your site is not mobile-friendly you will lose the opportunity; secondly you also need to **provide relevant value**; thirdly your **site needs to be fast**, if it does not respond quickly you will lose potential customers who will opt out if they have to wait too long and, lastly you need to be able to **track a potential customer's journey** across devices and platforms.

Delivering real value to customers

By following such a context-driven approach you will be able to gain valuable customer insights, revealing what they need and want at each point in their buying journey.

In addition, this will allow you to deliver targeted, consistent and relevant content, within context, and products that directly drive purchases. At its core, this approach lets you continually learn from the customer's journey and in response deliver differentiations through context-driven services based on customer behaviour, affinities and intent from sources such as click-streams, device-related data and geographic data.

Having the systems in place and the data flowing in is one thing, but good service also requires four primary skills:

1. Listen to what your customers are saying and doing
2. Understand their intentions by processing the information
3. Decide on the best course of action
4. Respond quickly

The ability to achieve this level of insight and depth of customer understanding and service is only possible if your business is running a fully-optimised enterprise resource planning system that is integrated with a context-driven services application.

The integration of these systems makes it simple to drive purchases through the delivery of targeted, consistent and relevant content and products. By understanding your customers' specific context and then providing unique tailored commerce experiences to them you will not only drive conversion but also win their loyalty.

ABOUT CRAIG JOHNSTON

Craig Johnston is the marketing manager at Seidor Bluekey and has been in the marketing industry for almost a decade. With vast experience in marketing strategy and campaign execution, he has developed a solid foundation in both traditional and digital marketing.

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