ENGAGEMENT IS THE CURRENCY OF MARKETING

For years marketers believed they were in control of the buyer's journey, trying to orchestrate nurture nirvana with choreographed email sequences. As marketers have adapted to the buyer-driven journey, they have also realized that personalizing based off of behavior would result in improved results. However, most marketers have struggled to have the appropriate mechanisms in place to listen to and act on this data. The pandemic has increased the number of digital signals in place and reliance on digital marketing tactics as well.

Engagement is more important than ever. Third-party intent data isn't delivering on its promise, as teams become desensitized to too many signals or intent being flagged too late, and we're staring down a cookie-less future, as browsers move away from their collection. Marketers have to prioritize the creation and action against first-party data, in order to remain relevant and outpace competitors. And, first party data that is actionable and rich with insights is created through engagement.

OUTCOMES OF THIS PLAY

Better First-party Data

Traditional first-party data would include form fills, but augmenting this type of information with behavior signals, like time on event or questions asked, will provide deeper insight.

Engagement-aligned Programs

Moving from a focus on the delivery mechanism or tactic for marketing will allow marketers to think about the type of engagement they are trying to create instead. By focusing on this, programs will include a diverse mix of tactics.

Personalization Promise

Many personalization programs have failed because tactics are personalized off of poor quality data. By improving data quality, personalized tactics will be more relevant.

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PROCESS

1. Understand Engagement Data

The first step is to understand what engagement data is. There are three core data categories we capture in marketing:

- **Activity Metrics.** These are counts of actions taken and include metrics like number of emails sent, number of programs run, eBooks written.

- **Impact Metrics.** These are results of the actions taken and include metrics like length of attendance, engagement score, survey responses and content downloads.

- **Business Metrics.** These demonstrate the business impact of a series of activities and include metrics like pipeline generated, new opportunities and account impact.

Not all metrics and data are created equal, but all of these data categories play an important role in how you measure the effectiveness of your marketing.

For the purposes of engagement, Impact metrics are prioritized. Aside from the count of the actions itself, it is these behavior signals that show us how audiences engaged with the marketing tactics.

2. Set up Sensors

With an understanding of the different types of data categories, it is important to translate this into how to have the appropriate sensors set up to capture the signals. To do this, you must separate out the tactic or delivery mechanism being used and think about what engagement techniques will be used during the experience.

For example, if a landing page is being created, an engagement technique could be to deploy a chatbot to help guide the prospect to share information or recommend additional content. In a webinar, engagement techniques could include Q&A with the presenter or polling.

Plotting out the engagement techniques that will be used is most critical in this step. Additionally, it is important to keep in mind that audience engagement techniques will vary by the persona being marketed to. For example, how you would engage a C-suite executive in marketing would be different than a software developer. Leveraging persona research can help to inform these decisions.

3. Listen for Signals

With sensors deployed and tuned to looking at impact data categories, marketers must now tune to what they are gathering. If we consider BANT as a guiding principle here (budget, authority, need, timing), need ends up being one of the best things to listen for.

For example, polling questions used in a webinar can be used to understand where a company falls in its maturity level of deploying new tactics. The information here can also be used to decipher which of your products would be appropriate for a potential buyer — information that is critical for marketing to this person again or for sales to follow up on.

Additionally, timing can be uncovered with questions related to how the topic is prioritised for annual planning.

4. Act on Engagement Data

The best way to act on engagement data is to act on it in the moment. Consider how to personalize CTAs in experiences based on behavior during an event. In a webinar, a presenter can verbally present next best actions for audience members based on polling responses or direct them to the appropriate content included in the experience.

With sales, sharing this information with them immediately is critical. But more important is having playbooks prepared for them to be able to act on this data. For example, simply sharing with a sales team member that one of their prospects asked a question might not lead to action from the sales team member. Instead, be more prescriptive — based on the question that this person asked, it is recommended that content related to this topic be shared.

DATA

Inputs	Outputs
• Registration	• Engagement data
• Attendance	• Buying signals data
• Length of attendance	
• Engagement score	
• Polling responses	
• Survey responses	
• Content downloads	

NEXT STEPS

Engagement is the currency of marketing.

It is up to you to understand how to earn and spend this currency, as well as make smart investment decisions. Risky moves can lead to eroded trust and a lack of funds.

Marketers must also share engagement with sales and make sure that they are informed about how to act on the data. Sales must treat the result with the same level of respect and empathy as marketing.

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