Study points to CMO, marketer of the future, as customer experiences remain top priority

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IBM's new survey of marketing professionals finds that chief marketing officers (CMOs) are differentiating their brands by crunching big data in real-time and automating personalized marketing campaigns. The price tag for failing to meet the needs of today's so-called "omni-channel shoppers"—who frequent both online and in-store channels—is $83 billion in lost sales in the U.S. each year due to poor and inconsistent customer experiences.

Other top findings from the survey point to leading marketers taking greater responsibility over customer service interactions as they become the official brand stewards company-wide. At the same time, leading marketers are capitalizing on big data to better personalize their marketing communications. They are looking beyond segments and demographics to provide the right offers, services and information at exactly the right moment in the customer relationship. Further, marketers are looking to use location-based services to target more digitally-savvy, on-the-move customers and deliver seamless, intuitive customer interactions.

The survey, which identified leading marketers based on their level of adoption of cross-channel technologies and their ability to proactively influence the customer experience, found that 39 percent of leading marketers are adjusting real-time offers based on customer wants, needs and preferences. In comparison, only 15 percent of remaining marketers surveyed do so. Seventy-one percent of leading marketers are delivering personalized messages in real-time through social media channels,

including Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and review sites, while 62 percent of leading marketers are delivering those same personalized messages through the mobile channel.

While marketers are embracing these new channels, the study finds that cross-channel integration is still lacking. Only 35 percent of leading marketers currently integrate their campaigns across all channels, with eight percent indicating they are not currently integrated at all. In comparison, only 12 percent of remaining marketers surveyed currently integrate their campaigns across all channels, with 39 percent indicating they are not currently integrated at all.

This lack of integration directly affects the coordination of marketing campaigns and marketers' ability to deliver relevant, personalized messages. For instance, a telecommunications company wants to send their customer information about their mobile, satellite, and cable television services. However, the customer contacts the call center indicating they are not interested in learning more about the satellite or cable services, yet the company continues to send information on all three business units. This lack of integration between the customer service department and the marketing department not only frustrates the customer, but also wastes company resources and dollars.

Additional results from the survey include:

Leading marketers increase responsibility over customer service interactions:

As customer service seeks to keep the promises made by marketers, leading marketers are taking greater responsibility for customer interactions. The survey found 76 percent of top marketers contact their customers to gauge satisfaction, and 75 percent of those same marketers

monitor and track delivery commitments to ensure customers are receiving their orders accurately and on time. 71 percent of leading marketers are training sales and customer facing staff on product and service lines, to improve customer engagements and identify cross and up sell opportunities, leading to stronger consumer connections.

Leading marketers capitalize on big data:

Access to and adoption of an ever-expanding array of technology has given rise to the empowered customer, making flawless experiences a "must" for every brand, every time. As such, the survey found that leading marketers are harnessing big data to do just that. By leveraging individual behavior and context, marketers are delivering personalized messages in real time by channel. The highest percentage of leading marketers, 85 percent, are delivering these personalized messages through customer service and call centers, as well as through their respective websites. This strategy is also leading to automated decisioining processes, with 70 percent of leading marketers coordinating and automating the decisioning process through social media, while 63 percent do so through mobile apps.

Leading marketers become cross-company brand stewards:

Leading marketers continue to assume greater brand stewardship, taking responsibility for the customer experience enterprise wide, with 83 percent of leading marketers collaborating with the various business functions to ensure a consistent delivery of the brand message. Further, the survey found 82 percent of leading marketers are creating and delivering brand messages at every point of the customer interaction, resulting in a consistent and coordinated brand experience. Marketers are also measuring the impact of a consistent brand experience, with 84

percent of leading marketers systematically measuring brand awareness and reputation.

Leading marketers target customers where they are:

Nearly 66 percent of leading marketers are using location-based targeting to [market](#) to their customers, indicating a greater use of big data, analytics, and real-time marketing through mobile and social channels. 61 percent of leading marketers are using mobile messaging campaigns to deliver relevant offers to customers. For instance, retailers might remind customers of a sale or send customers a coupon as they walk past a specific store location. Marketers are also looking to user-generated content to market more efficiently, with 63 percent of leading marketers relying on [customer](#) input, reviews, blogs, and posts.

To view the complete survey results, please click [here](#).

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