ELEVATING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE THROUGH REAL TIME MARKETING ANALYTICS

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Abstract

    The journey that every brand undertakes as result of close interaction with customers helps in providing useful insight into such journey as planned by the organisation. In other words, it serves a the plan for product road maps and launching of any new or distinct service. The greatest advantage of marketing analytics is that it helps capture customer feedback from everywhere by identifying ways of engaging with each customer, what they are trying to accomplish and also highlight areas that act as a source of friction that needs to be focused on. Marketing analytics ensures that the type of journey that every brand undertakes as with customers is clearly understood and shared among the marketing professionals such that the desired changes can be made and ideas could be confidently implemented. The key objectives of this paper are to analyse the various benefits of marketing analytics, identify the real time business drivers of marketing analytics and understand the type of business value creation brought about by marketing analytics

Keywords: Marketing analytics, customer experience, elevation, value creation

INTRODUCTION

Companies have realized in today's dynamic business environment that marketing decisions cannot be taken in a vacuum without paying due consideration to their client, channel delivery and channel partners details. Channel partners help in providing the various touch points which help in connecting them with each other. Thus, it goes without saying that a company which strives to deliver as per their customers' wants should pay ample attention in have a thorough understanding about their customers at large.

The journey that every brand undertakes as result of close interaction with customers helps in providing useful insight into such journey as planned by the organisation. In other words, it serves as the plan for product road maps and launching of any new or distinct service. It should also be noted that such 'journey analytics calls for combining big data technology with advanced analytics by functional experts working together to develop an integrated and overall view of the end-to-end customer journey. It is this journey analytics which feeds the marketing professionals with all the required information.

The greatest advantage of marketing analytics is that it helps capture customer feedback from everywhere by identifying ways of engaging with each customer, what they are trying to accomplish and also highlight areas that act as a source of friction that needs to be focused on. Marketing analytics ensures that the type of journey that every brand undertakes as with customers is clearly understood and shared among the marketing professionals such that the desired changes can be made and ideas could be confidently implemented. However it should be noted that using marketing analytics to enhance customer experience is a complicated process

which involves first of all gathering data on the basis of clues that customers leave behind about their level of satisfaction with the product and the type of customer experience the and had while interacting with the brand.

Secondly, they should pay attention in reshaping the type of customer feedback to be obtained from customers. the data collected pertaining to customer interaction necessarily involves both quantitative and qualitative data.

Quantitative data which is in the structured form refers to data collected a like when the was the last purchase of a particular brand made by the customer, information about the demographics of customers like their age, domicile, products most frequently purchased etc.   on the other hand, qualitative feedback would mean collecting data which can be taken as the unstructured voice of the customers' needs.

By using sentiment analytics, a company will be able to conclude on what customers like or what they don't, and more importantly, the reasons for the same. By understanding the difference between quantitative data which informs the company for example the ratting that customers has given to the service they provide and the qualitative data which seeks to explains why, address specific issues with timely and accurate information obtained through customer feedback.

Thirdly companies should ensure that analysis of such data is done in the context of a high-level journey. The data should be placed logically in the various journey touchpoints. By ensuring a high-level journey, the marketers will be able to locate all data related to that area in one bucket to determine areas which need attention. This would help him identify the emotional high and low points with the help of customer sentiment as they move through the journey, by doing so the company would able to have a true representation and statically relevant information instead of just subjective information that really does not help in accurately depicting the existing situation.

On the basis of the above analysis, companies would be able to decide on the course of action to be taken.   by putting in place interactive dashboards on their websites, companies would be able to evaluate the real-time root cause for problems faced by customers. With this information, marketers can work with other departments to amicably settle such issues and thereby reduce the necessity for customers to call back into the contact centre.

Last but not the least, companies should focus attention on ensuring proper use of journey analytics by adopting any one of the following three ways as suggested by the research carried out by Forrester.   They should try to validate the assumptions instead of discovering them so that the data could be analysed in a silo, instead of throughout the enterprise and they should consider marketing analytics as one of the major projects instead of considering it to be a change management tool.

On account of adopting the above listed steps companies will be able to implement the right tools as a result of which the journey analytics would serve as the lens through which a marketer could critically view and evaluate views journey of the customer with the brand and know about the type of customer experience.   Thus, by mapping the customer statistical data

which deals with the demographic and behavioural aspects of the customer's voice, together with the feedback and friction points would help in improving those parts of the business which turn out to be most important for customers.

It is important to note that companies need to have complete data about customer experiences with respect to their products otherwise deficiencies in data collected with respect to customer experiences would not permit me to ensure superior customer experiences. This would help them in removing all the aspects which lead to inferior customer experiences thereby avoiding posting of negative reviews and feedbacks on the company website and other innumerable online sources accessible to them. Such negative feedback and reviews could badly damage the reputation of the company and would be a herculean task to set it right involving a lot of effort, time and money.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

In the present day when technology is driving the world in every sector, customer experience related data is viewed as the very fundamental input. However, with such unmanageable chunks of data floating all around on various online sources, it become almost impossible for companies to be able to differentiate between useful and useless data. Unless they are able to understand what type of information to use and what type of information to ignore they may not be able to use this type of data for working on various types of strategies which could help them reach the right customers at the right time.

Thus, it is important to appreciate the need for both data and analytics to work together, so that they could help in leveraging in creating a base on which companies could depend for building their competitive advantage so as to be able to provide an exceptional customer experience to their customers.

IMPORTANCE OF MARKETING ANALYTICS

Marketing analytics plays an important role with respect to customer experience. by having a thorough understanding of marketing analytics companies could position themselves in an advantageous position with respect to deploying of new technologies like artificial intelligence and chatbots which would help in creating a personalized experience for each and every customer.

Walmart having recognised the importance of marketing analytics has investing a huge amount of dollars in placing sensors in items it stocks in its stores, which will allow the company to know when a product runs out or expires and automatically send the customer more information. Being able to transform customer data and collect more data with sensors provides customers a more personalized experience.

With the advancement of technology companies are now able to gather new data through sensors and connected devices and thereby enjoy the ability to have a much better understanding of the customer needs and wants. A research carried out by McKinsey has shown that a majority of companies are not harnessing and reaping the benefits associated with marketing analytics.

Only a small fraction as of today, are able to reap the true benefits of the same irrespective of the sector to which they belong.   It is estimated that only about 10 to 30 percent of the potential value of such data analysis has so far been captured across most verticals including the public sector, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, etc.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

i. To analyse the various benefits of marketing analytics
ii. To identify the real time business drivers of marketing analytics
iii. To understand the type of business value creation brought about by marketing analytics

METHODOLGY

The research design for the study has been descriptive research. The respondents for this research were professionals working in the marketing department of various firms in Chennai. The sample size was limited to 75 respondents who were chosen on the basis of convenience sampling. The research tool was a questionnaire which contained questions in line with the objectives of the study and contained objective type of questions.

DATA ANALYSIS

Almost all agree today that real-time marketing analytics can help a company in enhancing customer experience across all touch points and devices.   It is viewed as a key driver in helping personalization of customer experiences with the brands.   Marketing analytics is viewed as a tool which can help companies fine tuning every aspect of the marketing mix to suit the requirements of each and every customer.   In line with this objective it is seen world over that companies have made investment in machine learning algorithms which provide learning of when and how to offer upsell and product recommendations, make adjustment in prices in response to demand and how to adopt competitive pricing strategies.

Table 1 : Extent of importance given to real-time marketing analytics

Level	Number of Respondents	Percent
Entry level	29	39%
Basic level	34	45%
Advanced Level	12	16%
Total	75	100%

It is obvious from the above that only 16% of the companies covered by the study have reached the advanced level with respect to consolidated a real-time dashboard of multiple sources of internal and external data, and are using the same to make adjustments or in making prompt responses to customer preferences as and when required. It can be further added that such companies are trying to use real-time marketing analytics which include both structured and unstructured data across most channels to have a positive influence on customer interactions.

It is heartening to note that another 45% have embarked on their journey of using basics relating to marketing analytics with respect to customer data.   They have started giving importance to customer interactions and are tracking transaction related data in order to have

firsthand information and be prepared with relevant inputs required for making their reports. The remaining 39% have just embarked on this long journey and are yet to reap the benefits of the same.

Table 2 : Ranking of benefits of marketing analytics

Benefits	Ranking of Benefits							Total	Weighted Average
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**		
Increases customer loyalty	3*7=21	5*6=30	34*5=170	10*4=40	11*3=33	10*2=20	2*1=2	316	4.2
Increase customer life time value	7*7=49	10*6=60	15*5=75	23*4=92	8*3=24	7*2=14	5*1=5	319	4.2
Increases customer retention rates	2*7=14	10*6=60	8*5=40	40*4=160	10*3=30	2*2=4	3*1=3	311	4.1
Helps identify customers likely to churn	2*7=14	8*6=48	9*5=40	31*4=124	5*3=15	10*2=20	10*1=10	261	3.4
Helps being customer centric and reactive	3*7=21	7*6=42	15*5=75	25*4=100	7*3=21	8*2=16	10*1=10	285	3.8

The above table shows that the biggest benefit of focusing on real-time marketing analytics are increase in customer loyalty and increase in customer's life time value. On account of the above the company would also be able to attract new customers and thus will be able to increase revenue as a result of adopting and integrating customer analytics into their operations.

This is in turn followed by increasing customer retention rates and ensures personalized customer interactions. By using IoT which is today seen as an important technology, companies can improve the improve customer experiences. Lowest ranked benefit includes being able identify those customers who are likely to churn out in the near future.

Table 3 : Real time business drivers of marketing analytics

Real Time Business Drivers	Frequency	Percent
Customer centric decisions and action across functions	52	69%
Strengthening contextual engagement across customer journey	46	61%
Accuracy in demand planning/product and service availability	41	55%
Address competitive and regulatory market pressures	26	35%
Better understanding of dynamics of supply chain	14	19%

With respect to real time business drivers of marketing analytics it can be seen the companies feel the most important driving factors as indicated by 69% is the need to ensure that customer centric decision is made and customer centric actions are taken across all the functions in the company. The next most important driver is seen to be the need to strengthen contextual engagement across customer journey by 61% of the companies. This in turn is followed by accuracy in demand planning and ensuring product or service availability by 55% of the companies. Another 35% feel the driving force to be the need to address competitive and regulatory market pressure. Last but not the least the driving force is considered to be need to have a better understanding of dynamics of supply chain by 19% of the companies covered by the study.

Table 4 : Opinion on business value of real time marketing analytics

Business value of marketing analytics	Frequency	Percent

Translation of data into actionable insights	60	80%
Accessibility of data at right time to right people	51	68%
Ability to predict, optimize and forecast using trusted algorithms	41	55%
Ability to deploy proven analytic models and test new ones	33	44%

Even though the value of using real-time marketing analytics has been proved it is seen that not many companies are have not yet started realizing the true business value of marketing analytics. As of today, there is a major gap between what real-time customer analytics business cases are showing as potential contributions versus what some companies are accomplishing.

Table 5 : Steps taken to implement data analytics

Steps taken	Frequency	Percent
Elimination of data siloes	56	75%
Leveraging of real-time data	42	56%
Translation of raw data into actionable insights	33	44%
Delivering consistent positive customer experience	24	32%

74% of the companies have been able to eliminate data siloes. By using various tools which help in the aggregation of customer related data from a multitude of sources the company is in a better position to identify the trends and patterns with respect to   customer   sentiment, customer pain points, and their needs at the various stages throughout the decision-making journey adopted by them.

62% of the companies are able to undertake leveraging of real-time data which provides useful and relevant insights thereby making it possible for the company to deliver highly targeted, personalized messaging which actually meet every customer's needs at the right time and at the right touchpoints throughout the customer's journey.

44% of the companies have been successful in translating their raw data obtained through marketing analytics into actionable insights. Such insights are sure to help companies to arrive at solutions which would help it to get leverage with its customers.

On the other hand, 32% of the companies have been able to ensure delivery of a consistent experience across channels with respect to customer experience. In the present competitive world consumers are constantly engaging themselves with brands across the innumerable channels and touchpoints available online. Thus, companies should focus attention on the creation of consistent positive customer experience across all channels such as email marketing, social media, video, and every touchpoint through which consumers interact with the various brands on offers made to them.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

i.   Only 16% of the companies have reached the advanced level with respect to consolidated a real-time dashboard of multiple sources of internal and external data, and are using the same to make adjustments or in making prompt responses to customer preferences as and when required. Another 45% have embarked on their journey of using basics relating to marketing analytics with respect to customer data and the remaining 39% have just embarked on this long journey and are yet to reap the benefits of the same.
ii. The biggest benefit of focusing on real-time marketing analytics are increase in customer loyalty and increase in customer's life time value which would help them to attract new customers and thus will be able to increase revenue as a result of adopting and integrating customer analytics into their operations.
iii. 69% of the companies feel that there is an urgent need to ensure that customer centric decision are made and customer centric actions are taken across all the functions in the company.

iv.   Even though the value of using real-time marketing analytics has been proved it is seen that not many companies are have not yet started realizing the true business value of marketing analytics.

v.   with respect to steps taken to implement marketing analytics it can be seen that 74% of the companies have been able to eliminate data siloes and 62% of the companies are able to undertake leveraging of real-time data which provides useful and relevant insights thereby making it possible for the company to deliver highly targeted, personalized messaging which actually meet every customer's needs at the right time and at the right touchpoints throughout the customer's journey.

Companies which are able to successfully prioritise their ability to translate marketing analytical data into actionable insights are able to deploy a strategy which will help them to face the challenges in the competitive marketing environment. on the other hand companies that are not able to prioritise their ability to translate marketing analytics date into actionable insights will not be able to make available the right data to the right people at the right time. n case companies fail to have integration of the data system which provides access and use of available data in a seamless fashion it would be placing the company in a disadvantageous position.

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