

3 Tips to boost your data-driven marketing efforts

The mix of the right data, the right technologies and technical skills give marketers the opportunity to create more integrated and targeted campaigns. But this is something that few are getting right.



Image supplied. Micha Suarez De Koning, CTIO at Sprout Performance Partners, gives three tips to boost your data-driven marketing efforts

While data-driven marketing leverages information to predict customer behaviours, preferences and needs, and these insights empower marketers to deliver a truly personalised approach, with the hope being to convert customer data into sales, for data to deliver value and guide broader business strategies, it needs to be the right data and you need to be able to figure out how to leverage all of this information across your marketing channels to make smarter business decisions.

The gap is widening

New research from Boston Consulting Group (BCG) for Google on digital maturity shows that less than 10% of businesses are using insights and technology to create useful, relevant experiences at multiple moments along the customer journey. These brands consistently outperform their less data-driven and tech-savvy peers, the same research shows.

And this gap is only widening.

According to Micha Suarez De Koning, CTIO at specialist agency Sprout Performance Partners, the businesses that are being left behind have traditionally structured marketing teams and are hamstrung by data silos, with individual marketing

managers, separate budgets and different KPIs.

“The result of this is poorly executed plans and disjointed messaging that confuses consumers and fails to deliver any tangible ROI.”

A convergence between technology and marketing

Data-driven marketing demands a convergence between your technology efforts and our marketing efforts. Brands that battle to use technology to their advantage have typically deployed different platforms that don't speak to each other and that don't integrate successfully.

“So, when the time comes to activate anything, it is a massive struggle and demands that you build custom solutions to bring everything together,” Suarez De Koning explains, noting that this is both costly and time-consuming.

All businesses are trying to isolate an audience that is most likely to purchase but when you can't establish cross-channel views of your customers and connect front-end actions with back-end customer data, you can't align essential data points.

This makes it impossible to build models to get the right messaging, to the right person at the right time and at the right place unless you have the right technologies and the necessary skills to use these technologies effectively.



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Technology not a silver bullet

“The technology exists but most people don't know how to use it,” Suarez De Koning says. “These technologies enable marketers to link different channels together so that you can see how customers actually behave and get an idea of their propensity to complete a purchase. “If you connect everything properly, then you can spend your media rands in a way that eliminates waste because it is far more efficient.

However he is quick to point out that technology is not a silver bullet for the industry. If brands have the right tools in place but they don't know how to use them to execute their marketing efforts, they're just wasting their time.

For Suarez De Koning, only when data streams are successfully automated, when audiences are understood and when brands are using the right tech to adjust their messaging to speak to specific groups of customers, can they move away from a nascent, ‘spray and pray’ approach.

“In doing so, these brands will empower themselves to adopt a technology-first approach and deliver more memorable and impactful multi-moment marketing campaigns.”

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Suarez De Koning outlines a few tips to boost your data-driven marketing efforts.

1. Prioritise discovery

“When we onboarded one of the oldest banks in SA, we started out by getting all of the necessary stakeholders into the same room and asking them a bunch of questions,” he says.

The aim of this discovery session is to get a sense of what data they have and how they are currently using it. “If your customer service team has an incredible amount of post-sales data and your marketing teams have loads of user engagement data and your development teams have heaps of app data but you fail to bring all of these stakeholders together to understand the customer better, you’re only seeing part of the picture.

“This is why discovery is so important,” he explains.

2. Get buy-in from the top

Often siloes across executive functions prevent different departments from aligning to achieve common goals. But when business leaders work against each other, they won’t find success.

“If brands want to make the most of their marketing data, they need to abandon their egos and be willing to ‘give up’ a bit of their control so that you can bring people with different skills together to achieve the best results,” says Suarez De Koning.

3. Start now

Today, everyone is talking about privacy. As legislation like GDPR and PoPIA intensifies and brings data privacy into sharp focus, user data has become like gold. In a potentially cookie-less future, Suarez De Koning says that digital marketers will have to rely less on third-party data.

“This means that they must make the most of zero-party data, first-party data, and second-party data. if they want to provide more personalised, relevant and effective experiences.”

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