



Driving customer engagement and re-engagement

Start and end with the user

Any good ecommerce site should always start and with the user, having a solid understanding of who your customers are and how they use the online channel to shop is one of the crucial first stages when developing an ecommerce proposition.

Whether this is your first venture into the world of ecommerce or you're an experienced multi-channel ecommerce retailer, there are always certain fundamentals that are universal for any online business. Key to any ecommerce strategy is a business's plan to help ensure that their ecommerce offering engages with their target markets. To succeed vendors need first to understand their markets, customers and how online differs from other selling environments. This article looks at specific ways vendors can effectively drive customer engagement and re-engagement through the use of targeted and personalised promotional communications.

Ecommerce solutions that empower vendors

In an increasingly competitive environment, online retailers need to be supported and empowered by their ecommerce platform, able to exploit every opportunity that they have to engage and re-engage customers. One of the most effective, proven drivers of engagement and re-engagement is the use of highly targeted and personalised promotions as part of a communications strategy.

In order to maximise the effectiveness of these promotions it is important to understand that different people respond to different types of promotions. Ensuring that the right promotion reaches the right customers at the right time, in the right way requires an ecommerce platform with sophisticated promotions engine.

Promotion types

- % off an order
- % off a product(s)
- £,\$ or euro off an order
- £,\$ or euro off a product(s)
- Fixed price product
- Free products
- Free shipping
- Get cheapest free
- Bundles (e.g. buy 2 get 1 free, 3 for £10)
- Coupons
- Buy X get Y free
- Free gift / samples

Example uses

- Buy 3 from these selected products and get 10% off
- Buy 1 get a free gift or free sample
- 5% off your order when you spend £50 or more
- £15 off E7247 Speaker
- 10% off E7247 Speaker
- Use coupon code DISC10 for 10% selected products
- Spend £50 and get 10% off, spend £100 and get 20% off
- Buy 1 get 1 free
- Free gift wrapping
- Buy a pair of E7247 speakers and get 10% off a pair of headphones
- Buy any 2 pairs of headphones and get the cheapest free
- Free shipping when you spend over £100

How and when to communicate promotions to customers

Companies can interact directly with customers through a number of different communication channels at different times, as part of a buying process. These instances are known as touchpoints, examples of the more traditional touchpoints include face-to-face (in-store), phone and mail. For ecommerce businesses it's important to understand the digital touchpoints and how these differ from the more traditional ones. A good exercise to undertake is to walk through typical user scenarios, this will help you to identify the potential digital touchpoints and consider how best to capitalise on them using promotions.

Transactional emails

The main digital touchpoints include transactional emails such as order acknowledgement, confirmation and shipping status. Transactional emails are some of the most commonly missed opportunities by retailers. While it is important not to lose sight of the primary purpose of these types of communication, there's no reason why you can't cross sell to the customer. It's also thought to be best practice customer service to offer assistance, answering questions regarding their orders, shipping and delivery etc.

Customer Services (live help)

Customer services are at the very forefront of the shopping experience and another key engagement influencing touchpoint. Customer services are the voice of your brand and provide a great opportunity to potentially upsell to the customer.

Newsletter opt in

When a customer makes the conscious decision to opt into hearing more about your products and services, they're clearly interested. Out of courtesy you should reply to signups with a welcoming email, to say thank you and possibly offer a promotional incentive that reinforces their decision to opt in and prompts further actions, this incentive could be a discount to use online.

Social media

Probably one of the most widely debated and controversial touchpoints is Social Media. Social sites like Facebook and Twitter can be used to help businesses interact with their customers and potential customers.

Send to a friend

Giving your customers the option to send to a friend gives you access to new and most importantly relevant customers to communicate with. By allowing shoppers to share your site, products and services with their friends engages them in the buying process and gives you valuable information that you can use to generate highly targeted and personalised communications.

Email literature

A good value adding touchpoint is to send through useful and relevant email literature to a customer following their purchase. This helps to avoid buyer's remorse and reinforce a positive purchase decision. Be sure to maximise the communication opportunity by giving them a reason to shop with you again for their next purchase with a discount or offer.

Mobile

Mobile in particular is of increasing importance in the ecommerce landscape and has developed into a credible sales channel of its own. Many of the early adopting multi-channel retailers such as House of Fraser, Tesco and John Lewis are now reporting healthy returns on their mobile commerce or m-commerce investment, setting the trend for more merchants to go mobile.

Conclusion

Whatever the touchpoint, it is important to remember that every interaction your business has with an existing or potential customer is an opportunity to market to them, increasing engagement and re-engagement. Retailers need to ensure that their ecommerce solution offers them the functionality and flexibility required to engage and re-engage with customers using promotional communications.

About Red

Red are a full service ecommerce solutions provider who deliver end to end ecommerce solutions for high growth online businesses using their tradeIT ecommerce platform. Red has worked with numerous leading online vendors including global brands and high street retailers to design, develop and deliver fully internationalised ecommerce solutions, proven to attract, engage and re-engage customers. Red are a highly experienced ecommerce partner who deliver proven, best in class ecommerce solutions with individual clients who turnover millions online using their tradeIT ecommerce platform.

James Candy, Business Development Director, Red Technology

Tel: +44 (0) 1865 880 800

Email: james.candy@redtechnology.com

Web: www.redtechnology.com