Conversational Marketing and Retail go hand-in-hand

An introduction to Conversational Marketing

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Contents

Hello,

Conversational Marketing is the act of a consumer and a brand/business having a two-way conversation remotely, using a chat messaging service in real time. Examples would be WhatsApp, Chat Bots, two-way SMS or Human Chat via website popup. This booklet was created to give a little introduction and some assistance for any brand wanting to learn more. We hope it provides inspiration and education on how Conversational Marketing can aid digitalising tasks traditionally performed in person or (IRL).

Conversational Marketing in a nutshell

Conversational Marketing is straightforward; a personal conversation, used as a marketing tool. These chats take place online or via mobile phone. Social Media made 'Brand' and 'Consumer' relationships official, Conversational Marketing takes the relationships to going steady.

Modelled on human behaviour, these 'chats' are designed to feel familiar and comfortable to consumers. We use short, casual and sociable messages to answer questions, make suggestions and receive feedback. While the channel began well before COVID-19, it's certainly exploded since 2020 due to the ability to assist organisations in building and sustaining lockdown proof relationships.

Relationships in action

XYandZ Skincare

To put Conversational Marketing into context, we've created a fictional Australian skincare brand named 'XYandZ'. They found that they've needed to invest in a new customer marketing strategy to combat lost revenue. Pre-pandemic they relied heavily on instore sales at their CBD locations; in addition to stands in large department stores. Fortunately, they have a system that rewards staff who collect the mobile numbers, emails and marketing permissions from customers and interested testers. Our consumer in our XYandZ scenarios is named Emily.

▶ Scenario one

XYandZ sends a two-way-SMS to their VIP customers ahead of Black Friday. The SMS offers exclusive access to their online pre-sales event. A link is included with a PDF brochure including details about several items included in the VIP sale. The SMS invites the VIP to reply with any questions about the products; Emily enquires about the suitability of two products in particular, wondering if they would be appropriate for her dry skin and olive complexion. The XYandZ representative is quick to respond with relevant and insightful information. Emily feels listened to and develops a stronger loyalty towards the merchant while purchasing two products.

▶ Scenario two

It's Black Friday; everyone is frantic. Emily has been viewing two types of cleansers on the e-commerce store via her smart phone: Jasmine Princess and FRESH. A trigger is activated as she has been on a browser window for the pre-defined time of 90 seconds. 'Ping'. Emily is altered to a WhatsApp Chat pop-up. Emily scans through the pre-defined WhatsApp topics for conversation (FAQ), and she receives a message asking if she needs any extra help (from a real human rather than a bot). Emily declines the human assistance as she can see her questions listed. She learns that FRESH is fragrance-free and would better match her skin type. The XYandZ bot also alerts Emily to an additional FRESH range item that would fulfill Emily's needs, a fragrance free toner. Emily purchases the two items and chats to her friend about the positive online shopping experience.

▶ Scenario three

Two days pass, Emily receives her 'click-and-collect' instructions via SMS. Once she retrieves her package a trigger is activated, which automatically sends an SMS. 'Hi Emily, how do you like your recent purchase?' Emily responds; one of her purchases is incorrect and she'd like to return it. The XYandZ representative is quick to respond, and requests a few essential details. As Emily isn't home, she decides to respond later.

Two weeks later Emily spots a marketing email from XYandZ, she remembers that she hadn't sent the details. As Emily's phone service isn't wonderful, she responds via WhatsApp and includes a unrelated note regarding the promotion discussed in the email. XYandZ is able to ensure all communication channels populate Emily's CRM profile. The appropriate team member is alerted and able to reply to her without requesting the same information again. The potential sale isn't missed as the WhatsApp, Email and SMS information are all captured. The process is seamless for all parties involved. XYandZ have a happy consumer despite the hurdles and mix of communication channels.
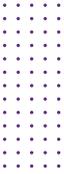
The future is here

Historically many conversations that resulted in an up-sell or extra purchase were triggered by fantastic in-person customer service. Conversational Marketing empowers merchants to continue to build the mutual trust relationships with consumers and reap the rewards. Lockdowns have shifted habits, with more people shopping from home the right communication tools can replicate the great service in-store attendants provide. With the added bonus of managers being able to record, analyse and improve attendants communication skills; by downloading the transcripts or viewing the chat live. While many of these consumers could have found their answers by a good Google search, many consumers don't have the time. Conversational Marketing brings product conversations into an online (or remote) marketplace. Without this additional assistance, potential consumers may turn to the easiest purchase, a competitor or no purchase at all.

9 million Australian households (82% of all AU households) purchased online in 2020. 1.3 million hadn't purchased anything online in 2019. With online purchases in August of 2021 being 21% higher than August of 2020, it's fair to assume that online shopping popularity will continue to grow in Australia. A solid path forward is investing in a strong e-commerce customer experience to complement bricks and mortar stores.

*Australia Post 2021

How you can get started

☐ Collect mobile numbers and email addresses from prospective and current customers. Ensure you gain opt in (permission to market).

☐ Review the Australian Anti Spam Act (or equivalent in your country) and ensure you have all the correct permissions.

☐ Register for a Business WhatsApp account with Esendex.

☐ Add SMS and WhatsApp as a Contact Us option on your website contact forms, newsletter signups and CTAs.

☐ Start engaging your current customers about their preferred communication channel.

☐ Start (or continue) populating your POS or CRM system (or however client and sales information system).

☐ Collect new contact details by promoting an offer in exchange for contact permission (EG. Sign up and get 10% off your first order).

☐ Review instore campaigns that have worked for you in the past, think about how they could be taken to the next level by operating an online replication assisted by Conversational Marketing.

☐ Document common client questions, upsells and queries. Add the relevant information to your FAQ topics on WhatsApp and other channel.

☐ Clean your contact data and keep cleaning. Your marketing is only as good as the contact data you've collected.

Come and Say Hello

Want to learn how to start implementing Conversational Marketing? Got some questions about SMS in general? Want to share your favourite emoji with us (Ours is 😎)? We'd love to chat.

On the flip side, if you're ready to take us for a spin - you can signup for a free trial and shoot off some SMS today!

Ready to chat?
SMS 0419 862 939 To get the ball rolling.

WhatsApp us by clicking here.
Or to open via your phone - scan our QR code.

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