ORACLE
MARKETING
CLOUD

Engagement

... for always on, multichannel marketing

A How-To Guide for creating integrated, meaningful interactions with prospects and customers across all digital channels.



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PART 1: Introduction

What is Engagement?

Meaningful marketing is centered on the customer. No longer can marketers or sales reps relegate communications to company centric conversations. To engage with prospects and customers in a meaningful way, you must develop tactics to address and align messaging across all digital channels. To do this effectively, you must have a content marketing strategy in place to provide educational engagements.

As we think about the future, building a customer-obsessed culture comes down to overcoming three key challenges: Truly Knowing the Customer; Multichannel, Always-On Marketing; and Data Driven Accountability. Here are some examples of how engagement has evolved, and how marketing needs to adapt:

"A man without a smiling face must not open a shop."
—Chinese Proverb, circa 400 BC

Customer obsession. Even way back in the Zhou Dynasty, marketers knew they needed to focus on building one-to-one relationships. The challenge over time has been scale. What worked for a simple shopkeeper in rural China—a welcoming environment, friendly interaction, simple respect, a smile—now must be multiplied and applied to possibly millions of eyes and ears across hundreds of digital and analog channels at any moment.

"Every great business is built on friendship."
—J.C. Penney, circa 1902

To manage multichannel relationships, it's imperative to understand your customers, and what they are passionate about. Be like a close friend. Marketing technology has advanced to allow demand generation and marketing operations to deliver on the promise of customer experience. But it's not just about launching campaigns.

"Do what you do so well that they will want to see it again and bring their friends."
—Walt Disney, circa 1940

Listen to one of the world's greatest showmen. To be truly obsessed with customer experience is to commit to honoring your audience's needs and preferences. To create a true end-to-end process for enabling amazing marketing, we need accountability—not just with numbers, and data from analytics, but also with planning.

Can Engagement Be Mastered?

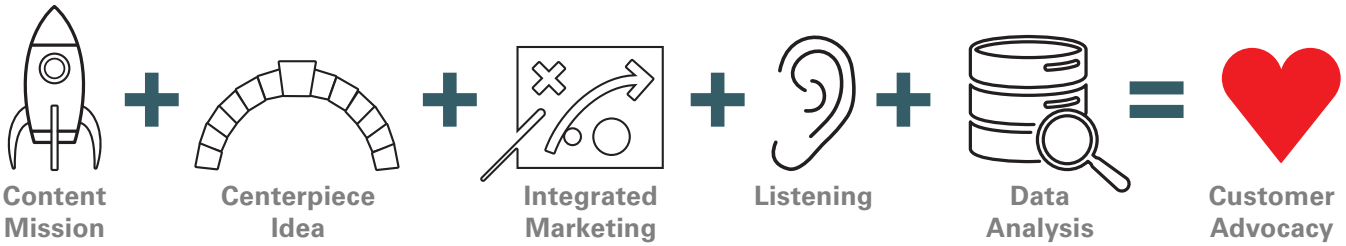
Introducing the Customer Success Equation

How do you measure the performance of your marketing? Do the strategy and metrics go far enough?

Most do a pretty solid job understanding what messages and delivery channels work to trigger initial interest. But that is only the "door opener" of the engagement spectrum.

We also need to think about the evolution from initial interest…to customer…to genuine advocacy. Understanding the unique points of engagement and the role of each on the path to that advocacy status can only help marketers establish and maintain logical checks and balances for effort.

While these touch points differ across verticals and company sizes, the way you measure the success of your engagement can and should be somewhat systematic. Check out this **Customer Success Equation:**



Let's break it down:

1. **Content Mission**—First establish your parameters for engagement. Why are you engaging with a particular audience and how does it benefit your company's bottom line?
2. **Centerpiece Idea**—Develop positioning that serves as a springboard to your content marketing and social media.
3. **Integrated Marketing**—Literally approach the audience from all sides. Present a united front across all points of engagement and give your content consumers a "right to choose" with multiple forms of gated and ungated information.
4. **Listening**—We should talk a little less, and listen more. To keep your finger on the pulse of what's working, you need your ear to the ground! We pay close attention to our customer feedback through traditional channels, such as social media and our blog forum, but we also field ideas in our Topliners community before we pull the trigger and launch generally. Your current customer base is perhaps the most important audience to refine your marketing.

CONTENT MISSION

"This statement should include 3 things: your core audience for your content, what will be delivered, and the outcome for the audience. This mission statement allows you to set realistic goals to not only help keep you on track, but it's a good way for readers to get a clear understanding of what they will get out of reading your content."

—Joe Pulizzi, Author, "Epic Content Marketing"

Marketing organizations need the ability to provide valuable interactions with your prospects no matter what means of information gathering, overt or peripheral, they prefer. To make marketing effective, we have to build relationships that are centered on the customer's needs and objectives.

Note: 'Effective' is the key word—not product info or sales collateral—and is what moves buyers from the top of funnel. But you also need to provide valuable engagement mid-funnel and post sale. Once you've garnered an opt-in, it's critical to treat it with respect as you engage prospects as well as creates advocates from customers. It creates an emotional connection between your customers and your brand. It makes your customers more knowledgeable and positions your brand as a market thought leader.

Talk to people where they talk. Educate where they learn. Entertain where they play. The channels you use to engage should be an extension of "word of mouth."

THE END GOAL: BECOME A TRUSTED ADVISOR

This term is thrown about in more marketing and sales meetings than MQL and SLA. Sadly, it is usually only the top sales folks who can actually claim to be this grand title to their customers.

Fortunately, marketing has more tactics and technology than ever before to influence audience perception of who's a "trusted adviser."

1. **It starts with offering content that has value.** Content marketing has evolved in recent years from an innovative editorial approach to a must-have mindset in the Modern Marketing toolkit. With a data-driven approach to content marketing, you can support KPIs.

   Align relevant content with customer data and profiles so you have a "plan of engagement" to help your company cultivate a role in the research and discovery process. Content is the core means of communication. It helps you across every phase and stage:

   - Interesting, easy to access, and snackable content helps attract prospects while they're searching for key terms and topics.
   - Entertaining, readily available, and targeted content helps engage buyers to create interest in your brand (thus your products and services).
   - Focused, persona-based content enables you to ramp up your individual rapport to accelerate conversion of prospects to opportunities.
   - Customer-centric, culture-driven content supports your brand's passion, commitment to success and innovation to increase adoption, as well as advocacy.

   Establish relationships. Support their education and help them save the day. Drive growth. Create ideal customers. And repeat. :-)

2 Next, choose carefully how you deliver that content.

YOUR WEBSITE (HUB)

The center of gravity for content marketing is the brand website. Your website has to create deeper engagement, inform at higher level, and provide quality content that doesn't mention the product. Your company becomes a true media publisher. Proper site-based content marketing develops a relationship with the prospect and nurtures them toward a lead conversion and makes advocates out of your customers. Other marketing channels, such as direct, PR, events, etc. utilize output for content marketing, but don't underestimate the power of the brand site. It's the home base for a storytelling strategy. Good storytelling creates more informed, engaged, and loyal customers.

Focus on creating an end user experience that is meaningful and most importantly, honors the content consumer's right to choose. Present information and content in multiple formats that cater to different preferences. Keep in mind Amazon.com's wildly successful "You Might Also Like..." approach in every web interaction. This spawned an expectation across all points of engagement: people want to feel as if their needs are anticipated. Your website is prime real estate to continue the discussion in ways that are meaningful to your audience.

EXTENDING ENGAGEMENT VIA EMAIL (SPOKES)

While many marketing communication channels have emerged along with the evolution of automation tools, email is still perhaps the most critical point of engagement that supports marketing communication. Marketers are equipped with an arsenal of prospect information, garnered through web forms, third-party lists, social media, conference registrations, and a variety of other channels. Email helps support overall multi-touch communications strategies, enabling marketers to deliver these targeted messages based on customer preference across different points in the buyer's purchase process.

Email provides a platform for right time, relevant communication when used with behavioral triggers. It also provides the opportunity to serve up relevant content at the time when a buyer is engaged and likely to respond.

The standard opens and clicks are one way to measure the impact of email marketing effectiveness, but marketing automation provides visual click through reporting so you can see which links within an email get the best response. This helps optimize the overall effectiveness of email communications. By knowing which email messages and offers are the most engaging, you can fine tune your trigger-based marketing campaigns and serve the right message.

SOCIAL MEDIA (MORE SPOKES)

Social is the marketing practice de jour. *Youtility* author Jay Baer said it best in citing: "Social media is the gasoline that fuels content." While the two vehicles (content and social) are interdependent, the focus is on the social environments and content is created that is in context of each specific social environment (each social outlet has its unique purpose to play). Content marketing strategy must come before your social media strategy.

AN INFLUENCING CASE STUDY: THE CONTENT MARKETING INSTITUTE

"When we started, we didn't have the audience to get our content distributed to the right people. So we developed what we call an "influencer hit list" and promoted relevant content from these influencers to the audience we had. Over time, these influencers started to notice, and we formed relationships with dozens of them. Then they started to share our content. Now, we have over 60,000 subscribers and see over 100,000 unique visitors a month engage in our content. It all started by giving first. Most brands want to promote their own content. If you want social to work for you, about 60% of your posts should be about other people's content (OPC)."

—Joe Pulizzi, CEO, *Content Marketing Institute*

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (SRM)

There's no question that social has grown in relevance for most businesses in the past few years. And there's good reason for this. According to a recent Mashable article with data from GfK, on average, Americans spent 37 minutes per day in 2012 with services like Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn. Social consumed most of their online time when compared with other online channels.

Social media and networking is now a driving communication force where buyers, sellers, and influencers are connecting to exchange ideas, experiences, opinions, and information. The influx of content and self-service now available across these online channels has tasked businesses with a variety of new roles and requirements to respond to opportunities and risks.

With a better understand social behaviors on networks like Twitter and Facebook, you can gain a more complete picture of their target audience's **Digital Body Language** and trusted relationships. This helps you provide more engaging content at the right time, to optimize social media marketing initiatives.

Matrix (Old School vs New School)

The Engagement Believability Continuum

Check these scenarios out: A street vender selling questionable designer purses in midtown Manhattan. A commercial recommending a new blood pressure medicine. Your significant other telling you to buy a shirt because you look good in it.

We all inherently have an internal barometer telling us what advice or offer to doubt, be curious about, or trust immediately. Hopefully, it's what protects us in our day-to-day lives. For centuries, advertisers have adopted their message and the delivery media to mirror how we interact.

The ad agencies of the 1960s were limited to print, outdoor, and broadcast—all intrusive channels, immediately triggering a level of skepticism in the audience. Engaging and entertaining, yes. Trusted? Not so much.

The Modern Marketer has a much richer (and overwhelming) choice of channels. Now messaging can appear wherever a target is wandering, searching, learning, or being entertained.

This chart is a quick reference for what types of engagement align across the spectrum of real life to old school advertising to the new world of always on, always available messaging.

WORD OF MOUTH

Old School	New School
Tier 1 — Personal	
Family and Friends, Over the Fence conversations	Facebook Friends & Family, "Share With a Friend" options
Tier 2 — Trusted Advisors	
Doctor, CPA, other Face-to-Face Experts	Facebook Fan, Twitter Followers, Media Show Fan, Bookmarked Personal Website, LinkedIn associate/coworker
Tier 3 — Communities	
Church/Congregation, Clubs, Professional Affiliations, Activity Group, Sport/Fans or Teams, Entertainment Fellows (Disney World visitors, movie audience, etc.)	LinkedIn Group, Facebook Group, Web Community, Opt-In Info Source

WORDS OF WISDOM

Old School	New School
Tier 1 — Hands-On Consideration	
In-store Exploration, Test Drives, Taste-tests, Information Telephone Numbers	Online / In Person, 30-day Trials, Organic Search, Brand Website
Tier 2 — Expert Reviews	
Analysts, Reviewers, Journalists, Segment Print Pubs, Government	Professional Analysts, Web-based News Sources, Online Reviewers, Topic-Focused Bloggers, Online Ratings, Professional Association Ratings, Community Ratings/Reviews, Opt-In eBulletins, Opt-In Emails, Opt-In Tweets/Posts/Notifications, Opt-In Newsletters, Professional Publications, Content Syndication
Tier 3 — Standard Push/Pull Media	
Interruptive, Multimedia advertising	Emails, Banners/Display, Radio TV, Print, Telemarketing, Unsolicited Posts/Notifications/etc., Paid Search Results

PART 2: Engagement Strategies

Listen and Learn Via LinkedIn

LinkedIn is in all senses of the phrase *"Where it's at!"* as a vast majority **(76%) of execs say they actively use the business social network to share content,** according to Demand Gen Report's B2B Buyer Behavior Survey. The webinar also highlighted real use case data that validates the impact that social selling techniques have on the bottom line.

InContact, a provider of workforce optimization and cloud contact center solutions, has seen astounding results by leveraging social media within demand gen and pipeline growth, including:

- 122% increase in revenue for sales reps using LinkedIn.
- 157% increase in revenue for those sales reps using LinkedIn and Eloqua marketing automation combined.

Build Believability Via Editorial Forums

Believe it or not, **Xerox** doesn't have any issue driving brand advocacy for copiers. They did, however, need to focus on creating believable perceptions about other parts of the business. With the primary goals of providing knowledge, expertise, and trust to build belief and value—not sell—the Xerox marketing team make a commitment to produce trusted and relevant editorial content. Healthbiz Decoded is an owned microsite focused on the business of healthcare—an editorial site that, in Ericson's words, is intentionally far from the sun (of sales, that is). The website hosts editorial content designed to make sense of the changes in healthcare brought on by technology and regulation.

HERE'S THE CYCLE OF WHY IT WORKS:

1. **It's an information concierge.** The website's mission is to educate and provide valuable information about topics relevant to the healthcare industry. But it's not a sales circus, by any means, because only about 30% of the stories that run on the site have a connection to or mention Xerox.

2. **A manager with the appropriate skill set is overseeing the initiative.** A former broadcast journalist and most recently assistant managing editor of the Broadcast group of The Associated Press, Ericson noted, "We didn't make a commitment to marketing or to tell people how awesome we are. We made a commitment to editorial."

3. **It's a social and earned media goldmine.** @XeroxHealthcare and the hashtag #SimpleHealth has earned the brand significant social media impressions. New followers, new tweets, and impressions, are enabling Xerox to join the conversations relevant to their audience.

Guide Your Buyer's Thinking

We think of sound data and information sources as the foundation to your Modern Marketing house. Without it, your efforts will crumble because they're not relevant and focused. Buyer personas are important because they support your organization's development of the fundamental understanding about your target audiences. Your personas should state: ***who*** **buyers are,** ***what*** **they are trying to accomplish,** ***what*** **goals drive their behavior,** ***how*** **they think,** ***how*** **they buy,** ***where*** **they buy,** ***when*** **buyers decide to buy, and** ***why*** **they make buying decisions.**

Marketing technology helps us interact even more intelligently. Buyer persona expert, Tony Zambito, offers up these tips on how to let your personas drive even smarter marketing:

- **Align with buying:** Turn your interaction from a cold encounter to a warm encounter by relating to the buying dynamics of your buyers and customers. Buying dynamics, in essence, relate to understanding how buying takes place. What are their buying cycles and what is their critical buying path-to-purchase? If you are out of synch here, your interactions will be too.

- **Digital behavior:** Marketing automation helps us to capture interaction. Buyer personas help us to be smarter at interpreting the digital behavior of our buyers and customers. When researching buyer personas, one element we look for is digital behavior and body language. We can gain clues on the what, how, and when of digital behavior and interaction.

- **Language and terminology:** When buyers and customers interact, they want to know if you relate. As you know, it is hard to relate to someone if you do not know or speak his or her language. This is a place where buyer personas can be extremely helpful. They help us to speak to buyers and customers in their language.

- **Topics:** When it comes to content development, randomness can be a real downside. Are you forcing buyers to sort through random topics to find something relevant to them? Are you trying to be all things to all people? Gaining insight through the research and creation of buyer personas makes you smarter about topic themes and topic generation. So, when buyers interact with you, it is about what they care about.
- **Campaign:** Campaign creation can go from hit or miss to a purposeful effort. Providing the right content, to the right buyer, and at the right time. Campaign smarts avoids wasted effort and wasted dollars.

By analyzing and understanding prospect online behavior—email responses, web page views, social engagement, and other core attributes—marketers have a wealth of insights to personally guide prospects through the buying process into becoming ideal customers.

The notion of understanding buyers is no longer based on information that the sales team types into a sales force automation (SFA) system. It's now based on information that's gathered from all buyer interactions. As we learn more about buyers across all touch points such as events, webinars, social, and video, we gain a deeper understanding of their Digital Body Language, and have many more predictive insights than from their SFA record. If you understand these attributes and assign values to each of your target segments, you're ready to roll with relevant, information-based engagement.

This has become the best way to understand the customers we are targeting, and we use this understanding to personalize messages, define segments, and identify leads for sales. But as it has become more valuable it has also become broader and every interaction we have with a customer, from videos to social interactions and ad clicks to webinar views. This gives us insight into buyers we could only have dreamed about just a few short years ago.

So now we need to broaden our understanding of Digital Body Language to the new digital customer, but still use it to guide how we target and interact with them.

Now that you know how to aim...trigger your responses and fire when ready!

The key to executing trigger-based marketing is timing and relevance. By aligning the content and timing of email messages with behavior, marketers can optimize their points of engagement and encourage feedback via calls to action. Trigger-based email programs enable marketers to transform existing customer data into measurable rules that help execute on business objectives.

Marketing technology supports content delivery based on interest, inquiry, and engagement. By providing tailored information specific to prospect or customer actions, you can more definitively provide value to assist and empower potential buyers. This dramatically helps reduce cycle times.

For instance, when an email recipient clicks on a link or call to action to learn more, predefined rules can be set to ensure that this particular prospect, who expressed topical interest, should receive a specific asset or information based on their behavior.

Insightful Inbound Marketing

There's a lot to think about to support your brand getting found. We know that content marketing is a supremely effective method to reaching people by establishing a rapport for being a trusted advisor. We are now firmly in the era of content marketing: Most organizations have acknowledged that each different customer persona needs different content at each stage of the decision-making process, what we call content in context. But we now need to manage this complexity.

Consider these stages to support more insightful inbound efforts:

- **Notice:** AKA the first impression stage, this is when a "digital passerby" (or your audience) is consuming your advertising, such as digital banners, sponsored industry thought leadership, paid search, some forms of content syndication, etc. People notice and may interact on a very high-level, but you don't "know" them within your database. This is the first impression or "shaking hands" phase of your engagement relationship. The end experience is critical and you want to provide content so compelling that, as *Content Rules* author Ann Handley puts it, "People have to thank you for it." This keeps them coming back to your brand for more, if done well.

- **Remind:** Stay in touch and top of mind—that's the name of the game. Remind your audience why you matter to their success by establishing strong conviction and value in your core messaging and communication. This can be achieved with re-targeting, which allows you to bring an unknown contact (you know they have interacted with your content or site, but you don't know them yet) and make them known to your campaign. Retargeting helps you refine your one-to-one engagements in a meaningful way, but do so in an automated fashion. The key to building relationships with technology is to let it work for you in ways that make you look smarter (but don't require you to work harder!).

- **Entice:** Taking your engagement up a notch, this is the phase in which you know your prospects better because you've spent time gleaning information about them and establishing connections. As a result, you can better tailor your messaging to—still high-level, but more high-touch—specific problems you can solve through product information, demos, and videos that continue that conversation and increase engagement. At this phase your demand generation and content marketing teams must be aligned. This is the sweet spot of demand generation and where demand generation through great content and outbound marketing really comes in.

PART 3: Integrate It All!

An integrated marketing strategy hinges on content process and execution. Your teams have to tell the same story. "The role of the marketer is all about finding the highest relevance possible in relation to the target audience," says Ardath Albee, CEO of Marketing Interactions and author of *eMarketing Strategies For the Complex Sale*. "Storytelling pretty much forces this shift in mindset. You cannot tell a story if you can't relate to your audience. They must be the heroes of the story marketers choose to tell."

ARDATH'S SHORT LIST OF 5 PRIMARY FACTORS FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF B2B CONTENT MARKETING:

- **Personas as tools, not checklist items:** Mandatory first step if marketers are to achieve true relevance and prospect engagement.
- **Content strategy:** Not a list of topics for content, but a real plan about how the content developed will tell a story that orchestrates progression for the persona it's created to serve—across channels.
- **Account-based marketing:** The prospect universe most likely to purchase from a B2B company has limitations. It's time we addressed them and really focused on winning, rather than selling to anyone breathing with a checkbook. Because B2B buying is a group activity, ABM just makes sense. And it will scale.
- **Sales enablement:** Marketers must focus on the entire customer lifecycle, not just lead generation to qualified leads. If marketers stop telling the story that engaged prospects when sales gets involved, pipeline momentum will stall. The key to shortening sales cycles is to have a strategy in place for how the entire cycle works together. After all, prospects don't care if they're talking to marketing or to sales—as long as the value of the interaction is apparent.
- **Technology proficiency:** To accomplish marketing in real time across multiple channels in an interactive and progressive manner, marketers need to master the technology that's supporting their efforts. This means using functions such as lead scoring and triggered offers and the ability to analyze data to gain actionable insights. We've got to get beyond the basics to make all of the above work.

PART 4: Bonus Asset

Interactive Content Grid

"The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well that the product or service fits him or her and sells itself."
—Peter Drucker

Check yourself, before you wreck yourself.
Engagement is about content. How does your content marketing strategy stack up? Tell us what you do and we can tell you about your marketing style with your very own Interactive Content Grid. Are you an accelerator master of the funnel? A cultivator who understands that the art of the up-sell begins after purchase? Maybe you're a rainmaker who has what it takes to make it rain tweets, likes, and pins wherever your brand content shows up, or an elite master of social media and demand gen marketing? You might just be a closer who passes on spamming the web with ineffective content to focus on sealing the deal!

About Oracle Marketing Cloud

Modern Marketers choose Oracle Marketing Cloud to build customer obsessed cultures, create and manage ideal customers, and power revenue performance. They use award-winning technology and expertise to transform marketing by truly knowing the customer, engaging with cross-channel marketing, and achieving data driven accountability. Integrated information from cross-channel, content, and social marketing with data management and dozens of AppCloud apps enables these businesses to target, engage, convert, analyze, and use marketing technology to deliver personalized customer experiences.

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