How to use Customer-Level Data to Supercharge Customer Journeys

Drive customers down a path to brand loyalty
Introduction

Ever have an irrelevant ad follow you around the internet for a week? Try to buy something but checkout was too much of a pain? Click a link and not find the promised info? Customers today are used to brands disappointing them online. That’s why the vast majority of marketing emails are ignored, online carts are abandoned, and mobile apps are uninstalled within a week.

Too frequently, customer journeys don’t go anywhere, resulting only in disappointment for both customers and marketers. This report will help you better understand your customers so you can engage deeply throughout their journey.
You might think of journeys as never-ending engagement loops, with the lofty goal of creating a horde of die-hard advocates willing to camp out in a queue in front of your store for every product release. Or you may think of journeys as a replicable means to get customers from A to B, where A might be an email campaign and B might be an online purchase, for example.

But hopefully you have room for journeys to both long-term loyalty and short-term conversions, because you can’t have the former without the latter. And any type of customer journey has a starting point and a goal. A lifetime journey has many individual goals (conversions) within. Some of these individual goals are more significant, like purchases, and some are “soft” conversions (like content views) that lead to more significant goals. All of these goals should benefit your brand and the customer both - a win-win that reinforces your relationship with your customer at every conversion point.

So let’s focus on how we can use customer data to help customers reach our mutual goal (or conversion point) from a given starting point.
Know your customers to differentiate your journeys

Typical web analytics data focus on your digital properties (like unique clicks on an ad or bounce rate on a page). Data like these are table stakes for brands conducting e-commerce because they provide insight into what is happening in your digital universe.

Customer data, however, will tell you why your digital properties perform as they do, for better or worse. And when you know what and why, you are much more likely to know what to do to make your journeys perform better.

Sample journeys:

- Search ad click → Browser landing page → Social media scan → Form submit

- Campaign email click → Mobile web landing page → Browser product page → Cart purchase
Customer data focuses not on your digital properties directly but on the users interacting with them. And today, in the age of AI-powered marketing, how you use your customer data in your digital marketing will give you an edge over the competition.

How? By using your knowledge of the customer to create experiences along the journey that she will value, and will keep her progressing and bringing friends along with her. This is how we go from disappointing customers to making customers happy.

This is how we turn prospective customers into loyal advocates for our brand.
Types of customer data and how to use them

Let’s explore a few categories of customer data with the potential to positively impact your customer journeys in the near term.

**Mindset data**

What’s the difference between a customer who just heard of your brand and a hardcore devotee? Maybe a lot - but her mindset is one. Mindsets used in the context of digital marketing change as customers interact with your brand, become more engaged, and build a relationship.

Different industries can start determining customer mindset by following customer activity (typically via data capture solutions) and assigning a phase of their customer journey according to that activity. Let’s use retail as an example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illustrative customer action</th>
<th>Mindset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addressing a need by running searches or reading reviews</td>
<td>Discoverer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching product videos, downloading brochures</td>
<td>Comparer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making purchases</td>
<td>Acquirer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling customer service, posting to user forum</td>
<td>User</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posting reviews on brand site and/or social media</td>
<td>Advocate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once customer mindset is determined, marketers can create experiences along the customer journey that help progress each mindset segment to the next phase. For example, if your customer is currently a Comparer, make sure they have the information they need to assess your products in their consideration set. Maybe that means an outbound campaign, or maybe that means a tailored web experience bringing this information to the foreground.

New AI-enabled solutions can automate and scale your ability to segment your customer base by mindset and market to them accordingly. But for marketers still working manually, don’t assume the customer will find the right content at the right time. The customer ultimately decides the journey, your job is to help them get from A to B to C.

Sample mindset segmentation
Behavioral data

How do your customers act on your digital properties? This knowledge should drive the customer journeys you create. Surprisingly, though, many brands don’t know how customers actually interact with the digital world they’ve invested so much time, and energy in.

The simple use case for behavioral data is to make sure your customers are able to achieve their goals (like finding info or conducting a transaction) on your websites and apps. In the absence of behavioral data, analysts are forced to make inferences based on classic web analytics. For example, if customers are over-using your search function, your navigation may be lacking.

However, marketers can glean this info with more speed, accuracy, and dependability with behavioral analytics solutions that capture and display customer data like session replays, heatmaps, and form analytics. Such solutions actually show the customer experience from the customer’s perspective, whether in aggregate or individually.

Heatmaps for example tell you exactly what parts of the page customers focus on, scroll
to, click on, or even mouse over, providing a visually direct way of assessing how your site or app is used in aggregate.

To really get valuable insight from heatmaps, segment users to identify how different groups are interacting with the same content. You can determine things like what page layout works best and what campaign content on a page drives most traffic to conversion.

**Look over your customers’ virtual shoulders**

Traffic capture and replay functionality is included with leading behavioral analytics solutions. Some solutions capture all sessions while some only sample the data. What value can replays have for you? Let’s say a widget on your site is showing low engagement - watching a few replays of sessions filtered by that widget can show any issues affecting it that may be putting users off (like a slow load time or browser compatibility issue, for example).

Behavioral analytics solutions, like many digital marketing solutions, have seen exponential gains in value to marketers with AI. For

**Speed to enlightenment**

Using customer-level data to understand why certain user behavior occurs on your digital channels is important to any organization that conducts business online. But to make an impact today this insight needs to happen quickly. True user behavior enlightenment relies on the speed in which you can find the “why.” Every second searching for anomalies in digital channel costs something, be it money, time, headcount, or energy. More importantly, delayed time to action to optimize sites and apps creates opportunities for competitor to grab digital market share. So look for CX tools that can provide as close to instant insights as you can find.
example, marketers can get alerted proactively when certain areas of sites and apps demand immediate attention - like missed conversion opportunities or customer struggles. The end result here is the ability to identify and prioritize modifications with big impacts to performance.

In this case the AI makes it easier to identify anomalies within customer site-use data. User behavior such as repeating pages over and over again in a session, long page load times, and excessive user interactions on various pages (think button clicks), are issues across any site or app. When AI can identify these types of behaviors as they happen it can cut the time you’d need to take to even parse the session replays or usability analytics. This speed keeps marketers ahead of the curve, and the competition.

Engagement and value data

Entire digital forests have been razed to harvest enough PDF pages for all the papers on calculating customer value out there. So you can wade into the deep, confusing waters of customer value management, or you can:

- Leverage AI solutions that make these calculations for you, at speeds and accuracy levels a building full of data scientists couldn’t replicate alone.
- Create simpler, if less accurate and effective, models based on on-hand customer data around value, recency, latency, and frequency of purchases and general engagement. (You can even find free calculators out there with a quick search).
- Tell the Finance department to figure out (good luck with that).

We’re partial to the AI approach - better results faster, with less resources. And of course, we wouldn’t be putting you through the
trouble of making these assessments if they weren’t actionable in
driving marketing ROI.

Imagine your customers are represented on the
chart at left. It gives a pretty clear indication of
where to prioritize your marketing spend, doesn’t it? Top-right is a code red - they are worth a lot to
your business, and likely to churn. Let’s send them
an aggressive offer to get them back on the site.
Once they convert, let’s target them with another
offer to re-establish their buying cadence. Then
let’s invite them to a user community to get them
engaged. Essentially: let’s tailor a high-impact
customer journey to this segment based on what we know about
them.

But where do the resources for tailoring these journeys come from?
Out of your overflowing marketing budget? Just kidding. An analysis
like this will let you know which customers you can think about shifting
resources away from, like those on the bottom left, who are worth less
to your business.

Journey to a better digital world

Despite advances in customer data capture and prescriptive analytics,
customers often remain disappointed in brands’ multi-channel
experiences. This disappointment poses a great opportunity for
brands that do it right and create journeys that customers actually
value instead of avoid or just tolerate. Because we win in the
marketplace when our customers win by coming along with us.
About IBM Watson Marketing analytics and insights

**Watson Customer Experience Analytics**

Watson Customer Experience Analytics helps you make smarter, faster marketing decisions based on integrated insights into customers across touchpoints. With Watson, you’ll understand how customers interact with your brand on journeys across mobile, web, social, in-store and other channels - and which journeys drive the best business outcomes so you know where to invest.

**Watson Marketing Insights**

Watson Marketing Insights provides AI-powered recommendations designed to help marketers understand and anticipate customer behaviors. It recommends prioritized target audiences based on key predictors, or lets you explore your own, creating segments based on a rich profile of customer data compiled from multiple sources utilizing complex and robust queries.

To learn how Watson can help you supercharge journeys, visit: https://ibm.com/cxanalytics
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