

Up close and personal: Why personalisation is the new holy grail of marketing

 By Jason Liebenberg

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The long and short of personalisation is that every piece of creative should be data-led. It's an approach that is simpler than it sounds, but ultimately more effective than conceptualising something based on what we think we know and what we *think* people want. But thanks to the proliferation of data, there's no need to guess because the information is available. It simply needs to be collected and interpreted.



Image source: Gallo/Getty Images.

When data first became a thing, the receiver's name in the email was the extent of it (and pretty impressive at that). But as both the technology and the consumer become more sophisticated so too does the need for marketing communication that not only calls you by name, but also speaks to your individual needs, preferences and, if the marketer is really savvy, your whims.

Taking personalisation to new heights

Data takes the guesswork out of marketing and advertising and helps us instead to create campaigns that speak to an understanding of who the customer is, where they are, and what their needs and preferences are. When creativity is able to engage customers in an authentic and relevant way, the potential return on investment for the brand is also far higher, which means less (easy to ignore) marketing "fluff" clogging up the consumer's inbox.



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And thanks to data we are able to take personalisation to engaging new heights. When a hyper-personalised campaign is strategically conceptualised and thoughtfully executed, the results are significant, as we saw with a campaign we created for Audi.

By utilising the data Audi made available about their customers we were able to mine that information to create a personalised video to remind them when their vehicle warranty was due for renewal or extension. The video addressed the vehicle owner by name, referenced their specific Audi model, the date or kilometre reading at which the warranty would expire, as well as the dealership at which the vehicle was purchased.



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This data was the crux of the message and allowed us to create a personalised video for the individual, that addressed his or her specific vehicle concern. The data was the foundation around which the creative was developed.

What this did for Audi was to up the perception of value around its brand and service. Across the board, we're finding that hyper-personalisation has a higher perceived value, which sees higher levels of engagement and a "how did they do that?" reaction that, in turn, encourages action.

Data can help us make magic

It's useful to briefly consider the psychological effect of personalisation. Our names are among the first words we learn as children and is, as Dale Carnegie, celebrated self-improvement specialist, famously said,

“ A person's name is to him or her the sweetest and most important sound in any language. ”

When we see a piece of communication with our name, and that demonstrates an understanding of our needs and wants, we tend to feel "wow, this was created for me" and immediately our inclination for interacting with the brand increases.



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Data has the potential to help us make magic. But first, the data needs to be transparently and effectively collected, analysed and interpreted in a way that is relevant to the objectives of the brand and the needs of the customer.

Another example to illustrate what personalisation can do it to imagine what it can do for a toy shop. Quality data would offer information of the shopper's monthly spend and the sorts of things they are buying in terms of the child's age and gender.

This dataset could help to automatically render a video of all the products that meet a given criteria. The data effectively helps the marketer to speak to their clients about the things they have proved to have an interest in, and in a price bracket

that they are comfortable with.



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Personalisation lends the creativity to curiosity and intrigue, a gold standard for any marketing message. But for personalisation to be effective, and this is where many brands are still lagging behind, the data needs to be relevant and organised in a sensible way. It needs to be specific, it needs to be useful and it needs to be protected.

ABOUT JASON LIEBENBERG

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