

Editorial: *Telling the Truth about the Difference Made by Data and Analytics, Bridging the Gap between the Marketing and Technology, and Improving Data-Driven Results*

“Always tell the truth - to your clients about their problems and what is necessary to solve them, to yourself about the quality of your work and your personal goals and to consumers”, (Conick, 2017) recommended Andrew Keller (while speaking with the Miami Ad School), global creative director of Facebook’s in-house agency Creative Shop, who will be a keynote speaker at the AMA’s 2017 Annual Conference in Las Vegas, September 9-11. On the other hand, Simon J. Bell, a professor of Marketing in the Faculty of Business & Economics at the University of Melbourne (interviewed by Cynthia Nalevanko, Editor, SAGE Publishing, the world’s leading independent academic and professional publisher), argued that in this “Google age”... *“firms should be proactive in educating customers and pay particular attention to educating them about how their firm operates.”* (Nalevanko, 2017)

Nine years ago, Professor James G. Looby (Chair Computing and Information Sciences Hudson Valley Community College, Troy, Rensselaer County, New York, USA) expressed the well-documented opinion (Looby, 2008) that *holistic marketing management* (management being responsible for shaping an organization’s values, culture and direction, and *holistic marketing*’s primary tenet being the understanding that every component of an organization and every actor in the value chain must embrace the holistic marketing orientation as a component of his job description and necessarily integrating all facets of business from a market-oriented perspective) is *“a converged approach consistent with the widespread convergence we are witnessing throughout the technologies and across many disciplines...”* and predicted that *“we will see increased convergence between marketing and other disciplines most notably, Information Technology (IT) and Organizational Behavior (OB)...”*. And citing Kotler & Keller (2007) who underlined that: *relationship marketing* achieves its goal (to develop and sustain mutually satisfying relationships throughout the supply and value chain that will subsequently optimize the customer’s perceived value and the organization’s customer lifetime value) by focusing on continuing two-way communications through *customer relationship management* (CRM) and *partner relationship management* (PRM); successful relationship management will also depend on the communication and IT competencies of the workforce further emphasizing relationship management’s integration with the human resources hiring (he even suggested that internal marketing must begin with HR process), training and retention process. He also highlighted that *the foundation of holistic marketing is an effective communication* (the relationship between social responsibility marketing and internal, integrated and relationship marketing being therefore obvious and additionally consistent with OB best practices (citing: Jaworski & Kohli, 1993, and Robbins & Judge, 2007). Looby concluded (by agreeing with Kotler and Keller) that *“holistic marketing and a comprehensive integrated approach is necessary to optimize performance and manage the increasing complexity of today’s Internet driven global market place”,* and suggested *“the emergence of the Internet while increasing the*

complexity of marketing will also yield new opportunities and its accessible digital basis will provide managers with better research and analytics”.

“Technologies for the Internet of things as well as advertising continue to advance at a rapid rate”, argued recently *Becky Wu, Ph.D., Sr. Executive Vice President Luth Research* (which is well-known for its Luth Research’s ZQ Intelligence, a pioneer and leading technology for passively monitoring consumer behaviors across computers, smartphones and tablets). There is a real challenge today for marketers to better understand and decipher the data points when using the Internet across the devices, by learning to work with various types of digital metrics such of those reflected in the figure below:

Type	Foundational Metrics	Inferential Metrics	Latent Metrics
Metric Examples	Visit	Duration	On-site activities
	Visit timestamps	Data volume	In-app activities
	Pageview & pageview URL		Advertising exposure
	Search terms		Click
			Purchase
Observability	Directly observable by device users	Often require inferences based on data patterns and parallel processes	Data corresponding to the user behavior is largely invisible from device users
Availability in Digital Insight Products & Services on the Market	Common	Common (but accuracy varies)	Limited to Non-existent

Figure 1: Various types of digital metrics

Source: Wu, B., Unlock your imagination for digital data, Luth Research Whitepaper, p. 4

A study conducted by *Forrester Consulting* - “A Custom Technology Adoption Profile” (surveying 108 US B2C director+ marketing/advertising decision makers at companies that own their CRM/customer data) - and commissioned by LiveIntent, recently (2017) evaluated the state of advertising technology (adtech) and marketing technology (martech) convergence (which is a popular topic among marketers, vendors, and investors), and in order to be made a real needed progress (the majority of firms being at an earlier ramp up stage) it was suggested that marketers should start by focusing on mastering one particular customer identifier as email addresses (as a first step toward the necessary data consolidation which must drive effective technology convergence). The study concluded that the B2C marketers’ need to deploy customer experiences that drive growth for their companies is reflected by this convergence, these marketers’ current analysis, orchestration, and execution capabilities being also pushed to their limits by the pressure of connecting and delivering customer interactions across touchpoints and devices.

There is no doubt about the real challenge today of effectively bridging the gap between the marketing and technology. As *Stephen H. Yu* (a world-class database marketer and Associate Principal, Analytics & Insights Practice Lead for eClerx) recently stated, for example, “Stop

blaming marketing problems on software”. (Yu, 2017) He attracted the attention on the imperative of fixing the data first when facing with a large amount of unrefined, data refinement work including: data hygiene and edit, data categorization and tagging, data consolidation, and data summarization and variable creation. It is not by chance that at the beginning of this year *Victoria Godfrey* (the CMO of Avention) highlighted that data-driven marketing will continue to be at the forefront of marketers’ strategies (B2B and B2C marketers uniting over analytical strategies; CMO and CIO working together) by focusing on maximizing data to provide insights that ultimately lead to increased customer conversion and retention.

Theodor Valentin Purcărea

Editor-in-Chief

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