
Next Generation Contact Centres

Three major trends impacting online conversions in 2011/2012.

Broadcast and interactive video use; making way for the rise in mobile commerce; personalisation and the increasing influence of social networking sites.

Static websites that follow a 'one size fits all' model are not attuned to the sophisticated needs of today's digitally astute browsers. To truly maximise revenue potentials, companies must be prepared to invest in far more than a professional looking site and capitalise on the upcoming opportunities the online world presence.

There are three major trends to watch in e-business during 2011 and 2012: the use of broadcast and interactive video; the growing importance of mobility; and an increasing emphasis on creating a personalised customer/client experience – most notably through social media.

Mobile means business in 2011

Mobile is emerging as an important channel where prospects expect to be able to interact with your brand. Despite this, few company websites are optimised for mobile use, meaning customers are presented with a distorted and often irrelevant customer experience on the move.

With the launch of the first tablet in 2010 and the increasing popularity of smart phones, mobile access will be a 'must' moving forwards. And it's not simply about re-jigging a version of the website – consideration of new mobile distribution and communication channels, including branded apps, QR codes, mobile payments and, crucially, updated customer service features need to be brought into the mix to meet the needs of a digitally driven marketplace that could quite literally mean business anytime, anywhere and from any device.

Video as vehicle for conversion success

There is evidence to suggest that video use correlates with improved customer satisfaction, which in turn creates more loyal brand advocates and could ultimately increase sales.

Video has been frequently used in the consumer marketing space over the last few years, with many online retailers embedding product demonstrations and video reviews to showcase items and compensate for the touchy feely aspect of shopping in a bricks and mortar store.

Amazon has been a high profile pioneer of video, with circa. 224,000 clips currently incorporated in its site. Regular online shoppers (i.e. those purchasing goods at least once a month) cite video as an extremely or very important feature and this undeniable influence has led online businesses to explore new ways to influence purchasing decisions via this route.

In the US, for example, enabling video calls between customer service representatives and prospective buyers has been shown to significantly increase site conversions. Similarly, the ability to take control of a client's desktop to direct them to featured products; webcasts, corporate videos and other informative clips can be conducive for cross and up selling while the agent's got the customer's attention.

Mobile video is set to play an increasing role in the contact centre with over 2/3 of smartphone users and 86% of tablet users accessing video from their devices and the consumption of mobile is set to increase significantly.

By 2014 mobile internet use will take over desktop internet use

Getting personal

While mobile helps to extend reach and video offers exciting avenues for branding and sales efforts; arguably the biggest potential to promote purchase decisions lies in the ability to act on social media insights to deliver more personalised customer experiences.

Social networking activity can provide valuable information on a potential customer's beliefs and behaviours, as well as the opportunity to engage with them via influential online communities of interest - where consumers are forming many of their opinions, and choosing their shopping and service provider preferences.

Reflecting this trend, Hitwise Intelligence 2011, found that social networking and community forum sites ranked third as a traffic driver to online department stores.

Traffic from social network sites to the Retail 500 also increased 27% in December 2010 compared to December 2009.

Likewise, The TNS Digital Life Report 2010 points to the undeniable sway social media has on the world's online population. Researchers interviewed almost 50,000 consumers across 46 markets and found that people, on average, spend more time on social networking sites than on email – despite the former only becoming mainstream in many markets over the last few years.

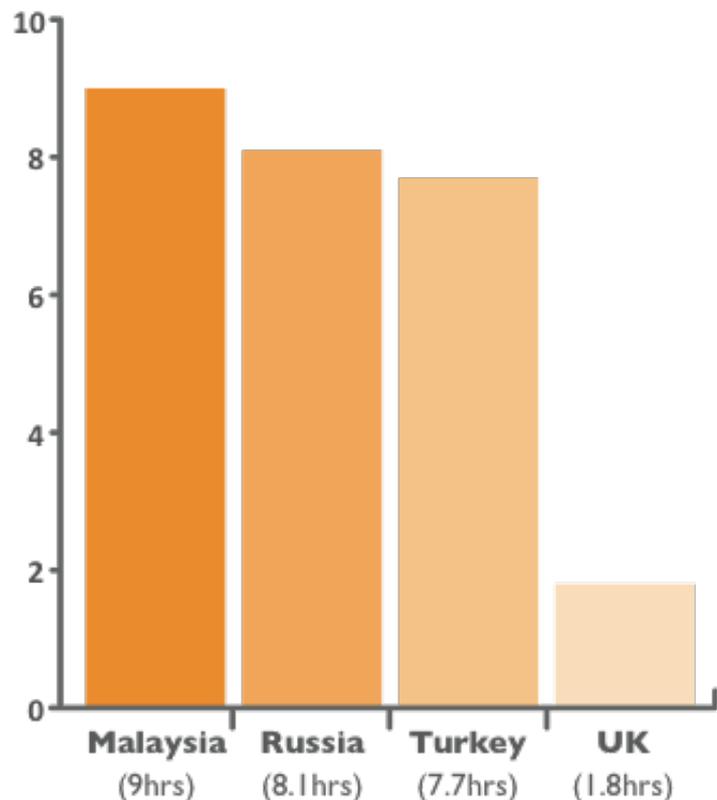
In rapid growth markets such as Latin America, the Middle East and China, the average time spent, per week, on social networking is 5.2 hours compared to only 4 hours on email. Online consumers in mature markets remain more reliant on email, spending 5.1 hours checking their inboxes compared to just 3.8 hours on social networking. The heaviest users of social networking are in Malaysia (9 hours per week); Russia (8.1 hours per week) and

Turkey (7.7 hours per week). The UK spends on average 1.8 hours online on social networking sites each week.]

What's more, approximately four out of 10 people are generating or reading brand related comments.

200M+ You Tube views occur every day on a mobile device

Global weekly social media use



Brand activities on social media: Talking i.e. writing positive or negative comments about brands (26%); Listening i.e. viewed user comments about brands (25%); Inactive i.e. does not read or write comments about brands (62%).

91% of mobile internet access is to socialize compared to 79% from desktops

Though under 20s were identified as being most likely to broadcast brand related posts, all age groups listen to adverse or positive comments - affecting customer perceptions - irrespective of their demographic profile.

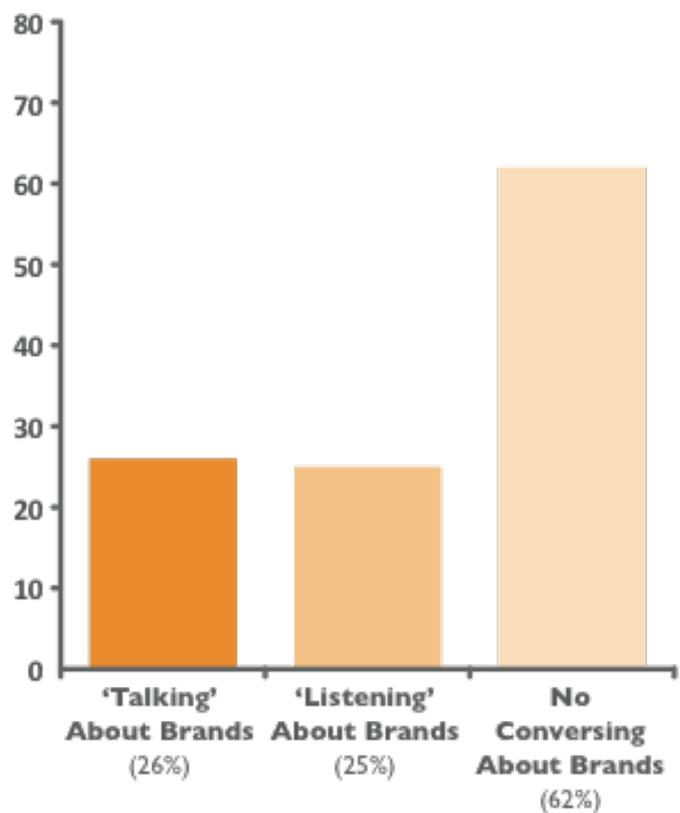
Not only should businesses be aware of social media buzz from a reputation management point of view, but also mindful of the customer service dimension.

Customer or client experiences at any brand touch point can influence their perceptions of the company and in turn the messages they take out to market.

What the age of social media allows is the ability to keep a closer eye on what's being said and the chance to instantly respond to criticism in an appropriate way, which - if done well - can reflect more favourably than a string of glowing reports and shows the business to be honest, human and interested in the end-user's experience (think Virgin).

Combine these social media interactions with web analytics and companies can intelligently deliver a highly personalised customer experience that can help create genuine differentiation in these cost-driven times.

Online brand related conversion



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