

# DATA- DRIVEN COMMUNICATION

Banks have an amazing amount of information about their customers, but many are missing the opportunity to maximise the data to enhance their communication. **Pat McGrew** of Eastman Kodak explains to *Future Banking* how transpromo can improve customer relationships.

- The first step to maximising transpromo is to collate marketing communication to understand how the customer receives your marketing messages.

In the past five years there has been an increasing focus on transpromo; the leveraging of customer data to create targeted and relevant offers that are directed to the consumer via their bills or statements. It has gathered momentum because it allows software and hardware vendors to pick up on debates started before 2000 on how customer relationship management could lead to customer retention and higher revenues.

Unfortunately, many organisations found that their data warehouses were in poor shape and the use of customer data to target and personalise everything from direct mail to on-statement marketing offers was put on hold as database

remediation efforts came to the fore. Many organisations have been through this type of project more than once in the last few years, making a 360-degree view of their customer difficult, if not impossible, to build from the data available. Thought leaders in the banking and financial services space are taking advantage of these remediation programmes to ensure that they are able to create smarter integrated marketing initiatives alongside more mundane communication as they move forward.

Transpromo became significant when it became clear that the bill or statement was a wasted opportunity in most organisations. While credit card providers have been adding messages to their customer communications for some time, many financial services organisations looked at bills and statements as a necessary annoyance. As the issue turned up in the trade press and presentations at user-group meetings and conferences, the opportunity to take a look at transpromo techniques to increase customer mindshare has emerged.

In its basic form, transpromo is a set of tools and techniques that use customer data to create more compelling communications. It may involve putting targeted marketing messages on a bill or statement, or adding an overleaf with marketing messages.

If your organisation is not comfortable with adding marketing or promotional messages to customer-facing essential mail, there are alternatives that use the same infrastructure but bypass marketing. We call these TransInfo – using what you know about your customer to add relevant informational messaging, and TransEd – using what you know about your customer to add relevant and timely educational content about their relationship with you.

These tools and techniques can be applied to solicitation and promotional direct mail, because the more personalised customer-facing communication is, the more effective it will be. Regardless of which tools and techniques you use, the goal is the same. The goal is to bring the information you have about your customers and your current marketing presence together.

### Evaluating and assessing

You may be thinking that you already use data to communicate to your customers.

For instance, a statement or bill carries transaction data. But that is not really using the information. Transpromo, TransEd and TransInfo digs into that data to determine if you have the best relationship you can have with that customer, not just using customer-facing communication as a call for action or a demand for payment, but using it to build a two-way dialogue.

In many organisations the promotional messaging and responsibility for the image of the brand are owned by the marketing teams, while the billing organisation owns the essential mail. Often the bill and statement formatting is handled by the billing group since they know the capabilities of the print and web delivery mechanisms, print finishing requirements and mailing requirements.

The result is that essential mail documents have tended to diverge from customer care mailings in format, use of brand colours and logos, and in the tone of voice.

The first step in considering a more active approach to using essential bills and statements is to build a normalised approach for the organisation to all customer communication, including the essential transaction mail, promotional mail, web and mass media presence. This can be a challenge. There are many constituents and

the customer. Alternatively, you may learn that your organisation does not have a comprehensive view, and this is the time to start building one.

Once you know what the customer sees, it is time to realise that you are among many brands that market to your customer.

Knowing this, it is time to add value to all of your communication or risk losing your customers to the competition. Diving into promotional content on these essential documents is usually difficult, but there is always an opportunity to add informational content. The analogous function in direct mail is to add information based on customer-data focused information that is relevant enough that the customer spends more time with the offer.

Information may be static content that provides market data, information about other types of accounts or services, or even general financial education. The goal is to design the communication to take advantage of the best practices in design. It doesn't have to be personalised or targeted, just informational.

It may take time to get this technique standardised across the organisation. Perhaps you start with pre-printed forms replacement and move to blank paper, full

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many challenges in determining ownership of the message to customers.

The best starting point is a meeting between the marketing teams and the billing owners to look at everything a customer sees in print, in the mass media and on the web. This first step can help solidify the view of the brand, because customers see the mismatches in messaging and branding. This is where you learn about where data lives in the organisation, who has tools to mine it and who has access to it from outside of the customer data base. You may learn that the marketing team knows much more about customers than the billing organisation because they have acquired complementary data to build a comprehensive view of

colour printing as part of your new design, but the goal is always to produce an easy-to-read, easy-to-navigate document that does not make doing business with you any harder than necessary. The next step may be to use what you know about your relationship with your customer to educate them on how to be a more informed consumer.

TransEd comes into its own in the essential mail space, as it involves adding bar charts, graphs and other visual content that informs the customer about the status of their business relationship along with text-based educational content. The important part is that the personalisation of the content is relevant and timely for the recipient. Every



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modern document composition environment and most billing and statement software environments have the ability to create personalised charts and graphs.

For example, on a bank statement showing that adding just 1% more to a monthly savings plan produces a higher rate of return might be a valuable message. Showing how two different types of accounts perform with the same

If the offers are well-targeted, you may be talking about creating three, six or ten marketing message variations each month.

#### **Crawl, walk, run**

For any large project there is a progression that rolls out as a crawl, walk, run proposition. Adopting these techniques requires involving all of the people working in the communication cycle,

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investment is another option. If you take the time to provide education, consumers make better decisions and that drives retention and loyalty.

For your organisation you may determine that true marketing on essential mail is inappropriate. This is why it is important to understand that using customer data to create smarter conversations does not require marketing.

If you want to move forward it is important to create smarter customer communication with integration across all touch points. It means using what you know about the customer to create targeted, relevant marketing messages. This may sound like one-to-one marketing, and in some implementations it may be reduced to that level. In most cases, customers fall into a handful of well-defined categories.

from the owner of each type of service or account to the people who create the communication pieces. It also includes the marketing department and all of their support structure, which may include brand agencies, marketing agencies, direct mail agencies and a variety of advisors and consultants. Do not forget the web people and their supporting

infrastructure, the search marketing team and the email marketers. It should stretch to the MDs for marketing ICT and operations, and anyone who has a stake in making an integrated approach to the customer succeed.

However, many companies locate these people in different physical locations and rarely encourage them to get together, but to be successful, this must happen. It is necessary to ensure that the look and voice of all of the customer-facing transaction and marketing documents share common elements and promote the brand in a common manner.

As before, start by gathering copies of everything a customer sees in print, on the web and in the media. Remember, you do not have to get it all from internal sources. Go online and search on your company to see what comes up. Check newspapers, billboards and your own letter box. Are the logos correct? Are the type faces the same? Is the colour scheme the same? Are the messages on the current mail document the same as those in the current advertising and marketing?

Discover how well you know your customer. There is customer data that is used to generate the essential mail documents; is it mined and used to create better customer communication? Is that reflected in the direct mail, their visits to the web, or other customer communication? Remember that everything you do to keep your customer longer is reflected on the bottom line.

Your goal should be to inform the customer, provide a call to action and to make it easy for them to heed that call. Along the way you should be capturing data points and learning to use them to create the best experience for the customer. It is a never ending circle that needs to be repeated and assessed on a regular basis. FBA



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