



**ENHANCING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE WITH
INTEGRATED DIGITAL TECHNIQUES**

Let's peer into the digital cosmos and ask ourselves that ever-looming question of why? Why "digital"? What can digital do for my business that other means cannot? Since business owners and managers have the most to risk and gain in digital implementations, let's gaze through their telescope and consider some of the reasons they are augmenting customer experience management with various digital signage technologies.

Until Amazon Prime figures out how to same-day deliver packaged goods with a nationwide fleet of drones, brick and mortar locations have at least one huge advantage over click and ship—location with inventory. Of course, physical stores have many more advantages than that, but most are not capitalizing on customer experience to an extent that could drive brand loyalty for today's digitally empowered consumer.



According to Adam Richardson, author of *Innovation X: Why a Company's Toughest Problems Are Its Greatest Advantage*, customer experience is far from dead. As a matter of fact, it needs an on-going transformation to meet the needs of empowered consumers in today's disruptive culture. Richardson argues that as companies all rise to a certain level of innovative competence, product differentiation is impossible to maintain and becomes marginalized, and that's when buyers begin to judge the entire ownership experience more harshly with increased expectations throughout the life of the product or service. Whatever the journey is for each client, it is ultimately connected through a series of customer touch points that define buyers' attitudes toward brands.



Certainly, who hasn't experienced the endless aisles of the big box store, which rarely offers much more than that—a box. Finding and getting assistance can be a time-consuming struggle at best or impossibility at worst depending on the day and time. This sort of in-store customer service vacancy can leave consumers wondering why they didn't just shop online. Today, considering

most big box stores have a significant overlap of goods, a better shopping experience is considered a competitive advantage.

Regardless if your business is retail, entertainment or some form of hospitality, customer experience differentiation can do more for long-term brand equity than product differentiation—assuming you already have a great product or service—and is more sustainable.

This is a key reason managers are implementing digital communication technology like never before.

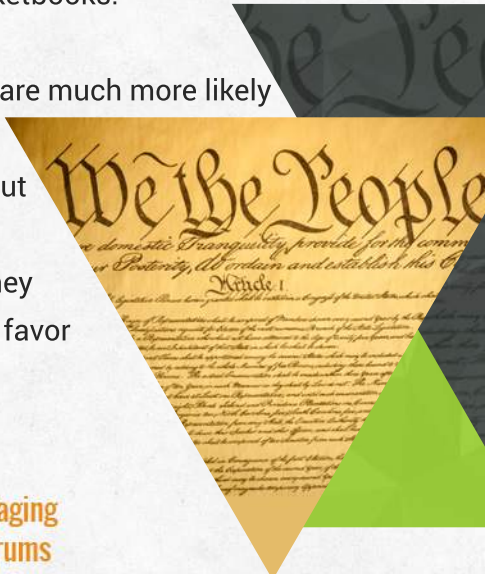


Unwrapping Customer Motivation

Digital communication enables customer engagement and makes it easier to *know and adapt* to your clients' needs. And the better you know your customers, the more likely you will understand what *motivates* them to buy from you.

50 years of social science research have shown that wielding a *big stick* (i.e., unfriendly customer policies) motivates people inconsistently. It most often breeds buyer's remorse, which can eventually cause resentment and lead to rebellion. When oligopolies apply the big stick through corporate policies, consumers are motivated to rebel in all sorts of creative ways. It's clear that most small to medium size businesses cannot afford this kind of buyer disdain, and must be much more in tune with patrons to win over their minds, hearts, and pocketbooks.

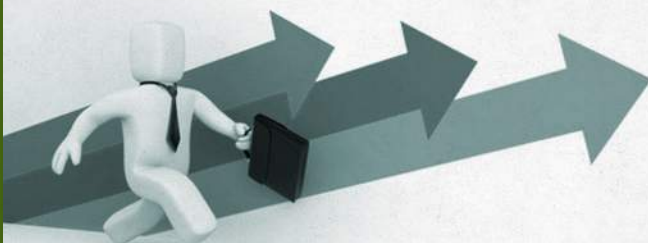
Social science has also learned through observation that humans are much more likely motivated with a *big carrot*, e.g., grand prizes, tax incentives, discounts, loyalty programs, and free this and that, right? How about something that would last a lifetime, like a lifetime warranty? These kinds of incentives do motivate people *some of the time*. They can help shorten the buying cycle by producing buying habits that favor certain types of products and services.



“ Nearly the entire buying population—not just Millennials—are engaging and sharing in the “world of mouth” using countless apps, forums and portals where nearly every product and service has recommendations based on personal opinions. ”

But forward-thinking business owners and managers may want to know what motivates humans *nearly all of the time*, that is if they want to get a leg up on the competition. If this is you, then read on to learn how your business can more effectively engage customers by better understanding human motivation, and finally, we'll begin to get some deeper insight into why business leaders are applying digital communications in increasing numbers.

It is recorded in the annals of American history that the founding architects and pioneers sought freedom from oppressors and shared a sense of destiny. As we will learn, this innate need still manifests in the population at large and provides a key to unlocking brand desirability for today's business owner.



Marketing research suggests that people tend to perform better and obtain desirable outcomes when motivated by a sense of autonomy and purpose. Fortunately, decades of research can be boiled down to a few fundamental principles as it pertains to digital communications and your business.

For example, some visionaries, like Steve Jobs and Bill Gates thought the PC and then the Internet would change everything. Well, it did—almost. It changed everything but human nature. One of the single biggest factors Internet users love is autonomy. People universally love autonomy. It’s part of human nature.



Old-style marketing ran counter to human nature in some ways. It was mostly a one-way conversation. Brands essentially told buyers what to think and how to feel about their company and products, which were learned primarily through advertisements that were broadcasted and printed at large. Although this style is still in use today, it is no longer the only way people form opinions about brands, products or services, which brings us to the Internet and the world of social media.

By using the Internet, info and entertainment seekers for the first time could determine where, when, what, and how information was obtained. Thus today, nearly the entire buying population—not just Millennials—are engaging and sharing in the “world of mouth” using countless apps, forums and portals where nearly every product and service has recommendations based on personal opinions. This is what forms a significant share of brand equity today, not only big brands but your brand, too.

What can we learn about the application of marketing know-how as it relates to building a better customer experience through meaningful touch points for your business today? Simply this: Digital communications that are interactive in some way offer consumers desirable autonomy that has a huge advantage over passive, non-engaging content.

Now it's time to apply these marketing fundamentals to a real-world application, where all the pieces come together, and customer experience return-on-objectives was a consideration from the beginning.



Let's meet Brent Sullivan, Food Strategist for Jose Pepper's, who manages key food and marketing decisions for the Kansas City-based Tex-Mex restaurant chain. Sullivan's expertise in restaurant marketing provides many useful insights into the ways digital applications offer communication paths to both customers and employees.

Like many marketers, Sullivan employs multiple channels to reach his smart-phone wielding patrons. Rather than seeing digital as a great divide, he and his executive team have embraced digital to build community. He champions the use of multiple digital channels, including the extensive use of social media, a loyalty program, a smartphone app, digital signage, and of course, a well-branded and user-friendly website. The combination of which has provided for impressive growth, not only of key performance indicators, but actual return on business objectives—which in marketing terms—are the desired results of the investment.

Sullivan says, "If you cannot measure it you cannot manage it. Producing even a 3% sales lift of promoted items during its prime season not only makes the business more money but also provides diners the freshest choices."

When it comes to return-on-objectives, Sullivan provided the following key points of improvement that his digital strategy provides the restaurants day in and day out:

- ✓ Improved point-of-sale communication to customers
- ✓ Improved back-of-house communications
- ✓ Increased staff adherence to instructions with visual reminders
- ✓ Labor savings from reduced meeting times
- ✓ Promotional cost savings
- ✓ Reduced wait-time anxieties for customers
- ✓ Sales lift of promoted items.



That's a nice start for any marketing initiative, but the Jose Pepper's loyalty program was the holy grail of Sullivan's digital aspirations. However, it had a huge problem: loyal customers were not loyal to the loyalty program.

// The Jose Pepper's loyalty program was the holy grail of Sullivan's digital aspirations. However, it had a huge problem: loyal customers were not loyal to the loyalty program. **//**

At first, Jose Pepper's promoted the loyalty program via social media, on table signs, at public events, and through an awareness campaign performed by table servers. All of these efforts didn't get the avalanche of signups or usage anticipated.

Fortunately for Sullivan, here's where the combination of digital signage, social engagement, and interactive came together with autonomy, purpose and convenience to form a winning proposition that eventually won the loyalty of patrons.

Tapping into the need for both convenience and the desire for autonomy, Sullivan decided to apply digital techniques to a new system that personalized the loyalty program and gave customers a sense of control. To make the program more attractive to tech-savvy patrons, an approachable tablet-based kiosk was installed in the waiting area that encouraged patrons to sign up and use the program. He also launched a smartphone app that customers can use to collect and manage reward points and personalize to their preference.

Sullivan then set his sights on promoting the loyalty program with digital signage firepower. After Jose Pepper's marketing team had approved the promotions that included community trivia and the specials of the day, the campaign was distributed to strategically positioned digital signs located in each restaurant's (14 in all) waiting areas. To say the least, if the digital signage campaign for the rewards program were fuel, then the daily promotions on the digital sign at the point-of-wait was the needed launch pad for program acceptance that took off like a rocket.

According to Sullivan, the results were "very successful." From March 2013 through August of 2014, the cross-promotion campaign produced almost 17,500 new users, and with the daily reminders promoted at the point-of-wait, loyalty users grew to an average of over 100,000 check-ins monthly.



Customer Experience Differentiation

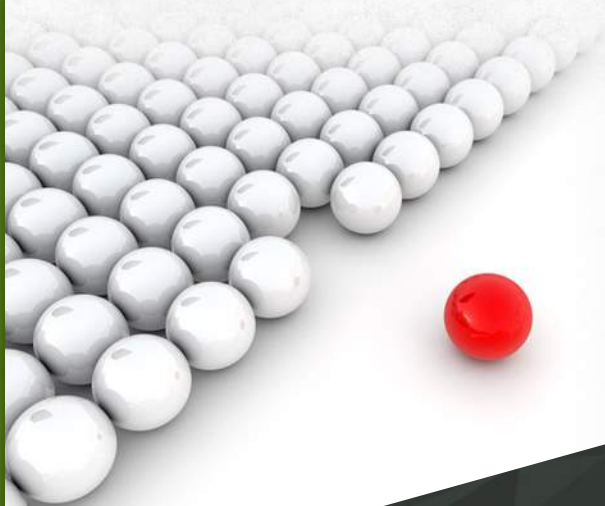
The primary benefit of digital from the consumer's point of view is the delivery of a high degree of control over their experience, which mimics in favorable ways their experience on the Web and with other on-demand technologies. Rather than passively viewing content, a simple touch or their mere presence can put consumers in control.

From a marketer's point of view, digital communications provide a means by which customers can buy into the experience of communications. Rather than attempting to attract and win customers with a shotgun approach using intrusive messaging, marketers can present consumers with content they choose, which better match their individual tastes and desires.

Equally important to business owners and managers is the feedback loop that engagement builds with customers. Based on statistics from customers' digital "fingerprints," managers can make tactical tweaks to their consumer messaging or adjust the overall strategy behind their communications effort. The statistics can also offer qualitative guidance on how interactive navigation and information is delivered to the consumer in the future.

Additional benefits of location-based digital techniques include:

- ✓ Multiplying sales resources in the form of a digital sales assistant
- ✓ Improving workflow efficiency of sales staff
- ✓ Offering a customizable customer experience
- ✓ Assisting in inventory control
- ✓ Tracking the popularity of specific types of merchandise
- ✓ Offering key information making up-sells easier
- ✓ Promoting complementary merchandise
- ✓ Building consumer databases to be used for subsequent marketing campaigns
- ✓ Developing a higher degree of customer satisfaction.



The reach of digital engagement applications extends far beyond the retail sector, however. From retail venues to corporate, healthcare and hospitality sectors, digital engagement can elevate the level of communications a business or institution has with its customers, improve workforce utilization and tie users—to the degree allowed—into enterprise servers with pertinent information to satisfy their inquiries in real-time.

The Future of Customer Experience

As business owners, managers and marketers re-evaluate traditional media choices and begin to look for ways to capitalize on changing consumer behaviors from passive media to dynamic alternatives, the relevancy of having a website and then extending its interactive media to digital signs, tablets, and smartphones will increasingly come into focus.

Brick-and-mortar retailers, looking to offer customers a brand experience consistent with those fostered and developed on the Internet, are likely to consider apps as a natural extension of the online experience. Similarly, those outside the commercial realm, like museums, education, and corporate centers, can tap into the same desire on the part of public to interact with their media devices for fun and learning.



The possibilities for interactive systems in this age of digital expectations are only as limited as the imagination of the creative teams implementing the technology. To be sure, implementing the latest interactive media via HTML5 and other web technologies requires technical and creative skills to integrate it successfully. However, with the increasing availability of hardware and software necessary to interconnect the worlds of the Internet, websites, tablets, smartphones and digital signage, some combination of interactive media will certainly play an important role in the future for the majority of businesses who want to be relevant in the 21st century.

A skillful combination of applied digital technologies provides patrons, consumers, customers, and stakeholders useful information that is personalized, autonomous and purposeful to the task at hand. And the better you know your customer, the more likely you will understand what motivates them to buy from you instead of a competitor.

About Fox Web Creations

Fox Web Creations specializes in creating exceptional customer and employee experiences. Established in Kansas City for over ten years, Fox brings stimulating creative and technical know-how to responsive website development, e-commerce design, mobile apps, digital signage, video walls, and copywriting services. Our team of professionals is passionate about helping your business shine, blossom and grow. To help you get started, we offer 30 minutes of no-obligation consulting on any marketing project to evaluate if we're a good fit for your creative needs. View our portfolio at www.FoxWebCreations.com, or call 816-479-5904 for an appointment today.



Jose Pepper's Case
Study Source: [Keywest Technology](#)



Fox Web Creations
4345 State Line RD
Kansas City, MO 64111
Phone: (816) 479-5904

