Addressability and the Rise of the Platform Marketer

Translating the Jargon Into Plain English

By: Craig Dempster | March 11, 2014

“Could someone translate this jargon and buzzword laden article into simple and direct English?”

The comment from “Old Ad Guy,” in response to a recent piece I wrote, made me think about the alphabet soup that is today’s marketing landscape. As I read through some of the recent thought leadership about addressability at scale -- and the disruption it causes in our marketing status quo -- I realize that I do often get caught up in my enthusiasm. I’m excited about what’s possible today in customer-relationship marketing that wasn’t possible even one short year ago. And while the notion of addressability goes back to the days of Benjamin Franklin, the platforms on which it is executed have made more strides in the last two years than in the previous 200. It’s that revolution that is causing today’s marketers to clamber for the path to competitive advantage.

Despite the fast-talking, slang-ridden, acronym-loaded lingo of the digitally native, the opportunity of addressability at scale is not that difficult to understand. It’s the execution that gets so complicated. But with the proper framework and blueprint, the implementation of a customer-focused business strategy is possible. To take advantage of this new opportunity, it will be necessary for brands to integrate their own first-party data and analytics across the customer lifecycle, and use it to create consistent consumer experiences across digital audience platforms, such as Google, Facebook, and Twitter, and also across devices, such as PC, tablet and mobile.

This opportunity gives rise to a new breed of marketer who is able to master addressability at scale. This marketer has a deep understanding of customer relationship marketing principles along with the knowledge and vision to thrive in the world of digital audience platforms. We call this new persona “The Platform Marketer,” and success hinges on seven essential competencies:

Identity management

Identity management begins with creating a unique consumer identity map for each customer or prospect, across media and channels. Customer identifiers, whether known or anonymous, are used for analysis and targeting. A single persistent “key,” or identity, is created when these descriptors are linked and merged together. In turn, all anonymous digital and known interactions are aggregated at the individual level into a singular “event stream” for targeting, personalization, measurement, and insights.

Audience management

Audience management is the creation and use of segments (i.e., the “audiences”) that are based upon consumer data aggregated from multiple sources. The segments are used in targeting and personalization across digital channels and media.

Consumer privacy and compliance

With increasing attention being paid to the collection and use of consumer data, today’s marketers must continue to be vigilant and responsible stewards of that information. Scrutiny from legislative and regulatory entities as well as privacy advocates, requires marketers to constantly monitor and participate in the shaping of consumer privacy regulations and industry requirements. These efforts are critical to the proactive development of enterprise-level consumer data protection standards.
Media and channel optimization

While identity and audience management create data and insight “fuel,” the engine that drives addressability at scale is the combination of competencies and assets that provide a consolidated view of the online consumer. It is housed in an integrated media platform that manages a complex web of programmatic media buying and optimization tactics. Similarly, within the world of the digital channel, new competencies have arisen to take advantage of the increasing addressability of the first-party audience platform. These include real-time personalization as well as experience planning and execution.

Measurement and attribution

For the Platform Marketer, effective measurement and attribution involve the development and ongoing management of key performance indicators (KPIs) and underlying methodologies that measure marketing effectiveness. They provide insights for agile ongoing execution and enable attribution across a variety of media, channels, and device types, rather than the inaccurate “last-touch” attribution. It also includes tools for visualization and communication of results and insights.

Experience creation and design

The Platform Marketer has mastered the intersection of creative with data and analytics in the evolving digital platforms, at their websites and indeed across the whole customer experience. There are three core creative requirements and they all require a change in traditional approach of the creative team. They must be:

- well-versed in new media platforms, including Google, Twitter and Facebook.
- purpose-built for 1:1 personalized experiences across all device types.
- focused on the development and execution of truly data-driven customer journeys across platforms.

Technology Stack

The engine that drives this effort is an integrated marketing technology stack that facilitates easy integration and access to valuable data from numerous, disparate online and offline data sources into a consolidated consumer view that is managed and activated through the marketing database, identity management, analytics, data management platforms, decision management, and media- and channel-specific execution platforms. The open and flexible design and implementation of the stack allows for adaptation to the rapidly changing digital audience platform marketplace.

In the simplest terms I can muster, the brands that leverage these Platform Marketer competencies, using a proven execution framework and roadmap to achieve addressability at scale, have a great opportunity for sustainable competitive advantage.

About the Sponsor

Craig Dempster is Executive Vice President, CMO and Customer Experience Group Leader at Merkle. In this role, Craig is charged with developing the enterprise marketing strategy in addition to managing the customer experience group, a business unit comprised of digital media capabilities including social, search, display, email and mobile, as well as creative and communication services.

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