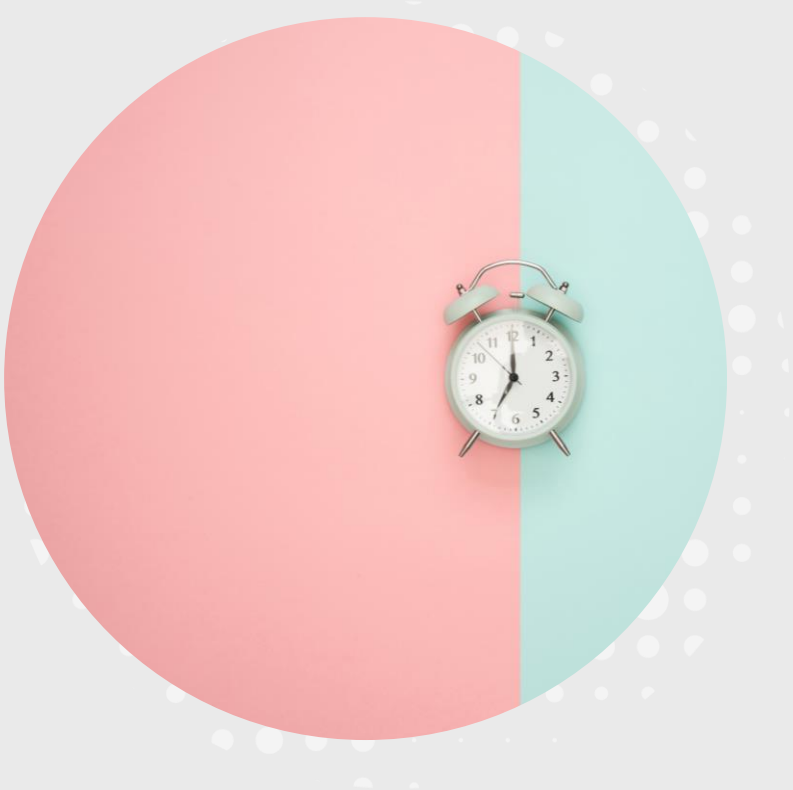

Dialog Insight

Real-Time Marketing: is it really important?

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Setting the context

Introduction

Brands have long sought to provide an authentic customer experience when customers call, open emails or visit a store. Indeed, it is through a seamless customer experience that companies compete for attention, sales, and most importantly, loyalty. Yet, for many customers, this consistent experience does not meet their expectations. **In fact, 86% of shoppers will pay more for a better and more memorable customer experience, but only 1% of companies are considered by their customers to offer such an experience.**

Part of the solution lies in the interactions made with each individual, and the value we bring to them. Real-Time Marketing (RTM) makes this possible. In other words, through daily interactions in real time. The goal is to provide the best experience by building on the customer's past behaviors, to go further with the customer.

Let's look at the concepts behind RTM, some thoughts on how to implement it in your organization, and how Dialog Insight meets some of the requirements of RTM.

> **Andre Davis**
>
> **« Content builds relationships. Relationships are built on trust. Trust builds revenue. »**

Why it’s important

Real-time marketing could be the solution to one of today's biggest problems: *how do companies reach and engage the always-connected consumer?* Marketers must not only reduce noise, but also communicate with the right person at the right time, in the right place and with the right message. An overused phrase, but how true!

- Econsultancy found that 84% of companies considered a better customer experience to be one of the main benefits of real-time marketing.
- A better customer experience in turn leads to increased sales (a key benefit of RTM for 72% of companies) and increased loyalty (a key benefit of RTM for 47% of companies).

Real-time marketing also offers a broader opportunity to rethink customer interactions, get closer to your audience, and engage customers with highly targeted, relevant, and timely conversion messages.

> Real-time marketing allows marketers to tailor their messages to a specific context. The benefits go far beyond simply improving brand perception. In fact, there are very real, measurable and positive impacts on revenues and other key indicators.

The benefits

Why is Real-Time Marketing still a hot topic?

Because it's striking

Because RTM allows marketers to tailor their messages to a specific context, it leaves a much sharper imprint in people's heads. In addition, by analyzing customer behavior, companies are in a better position to interact with their contacts throughout their journey and ensure that they present the most relevant offers.

Because it increases engagement

With RTM, companies can reach people interested in their products or services anywhere, anytime, when it matters.

Because the customer is at the center of actions

Through analytics platforms and other customer knowledge tools, organizations have access to real-time information on every known and unknown contact in their database. This data allows the creation of personalized campaigns. Personalization is not to be taken lightly, since it is the second thing after price that can influence contact behavior.

Conceptual basis

History

In its early days, RTM involved the creation of a marketing strategy focused on the most recent social, cultural, economic and political events. With this in mind, marketers used current trends to get closer to their consumers, creating buzz, but also for their products and services.

Subsequently, RTM gained popularity with the rise of social media. Social media offered companies front-line, real-time access to information about their target audiences. In this way, marketers could produce content that was much more likely to grab the attention of customers, but also of people who did not know their brand. We can say that RTM's effectiveness (at least initially!) is due to the fact that people want to be part of, or know about, current trends all the time. For example, marketers have taken full advantage of the Pokémon Go craze, the Super Bowl breaks (Oreo and the 2013 blackout someone?), and other historic moments since the 2010s.

RTM today

However, like any marketing trend, RTM has evolved significantly. While it still incorporates the concept of what is current, it does so in a much more customer-centric way. Real-time marketing now uses all kinds of customer data to help companies understand exactly how consumers behave. LeadSift points out that "the definition of real-time marketing has changed over the years as brands experiment with new methods to reach their target audience. Some marketers see RTM as a way to capitalize on current and emerging events and trends. Others see it as dynamic and personalized content across all channels touching the customer's journey - in real time!

With this in mind, RTM can touch :

- Visits to a website;
- A direct in-store shopping experience;
- The intervention, over the telephone, of a support agent;
- Mobile notification.

It should also be noted that this much more advanced approach to RTM supports a more complex technological environment than the simple use of social media.

The definition that we retain is …

Based on this, we use Forrester's definition of Real Time Interaction Management (RTIM) such as a brand's ability to deliver "contextually relevant experiences, value and utility at the appropriate point in the customer lifecycle via their preferred touch points".

The version of RTM that will be dealt with in this white paper thus moves away from that of social media, and relates more so to the one that refers to:

- The context, which must be considered to modulate the given experience;
- The client himself. This links directly to a greater use of the data that is cumulated;
- All the decisions that need to be made in order to modulate the experience.

This means that RTM is …

- Instant

According to a survey report by Econsultancy, there is a narrow window to capitalize on real-time behavior. 80% of companies believe that RTM must intervene with the customer in less than two minutes.

- (Mainly) automated

In many cases, humans are simply too slow to react so quickly, and on a large scale. Marketers must therefore use marketing tools that help them react in the shortest possible time.

- Targetted

It is no longer enough to treat your customers as a homogeneous mass with the same interests or motivations. Real-time marketing - in fact, your marketing in general - must be relevant and timely for each customer.

- Especially personalized!

Beyond targeting, RTM must be entirely based on an individual's data, and target 1-to-1 marketing, so marketers must deploy work methods that enable effective data management, deep customer knowledge, extended system connections, and more.

Actually …

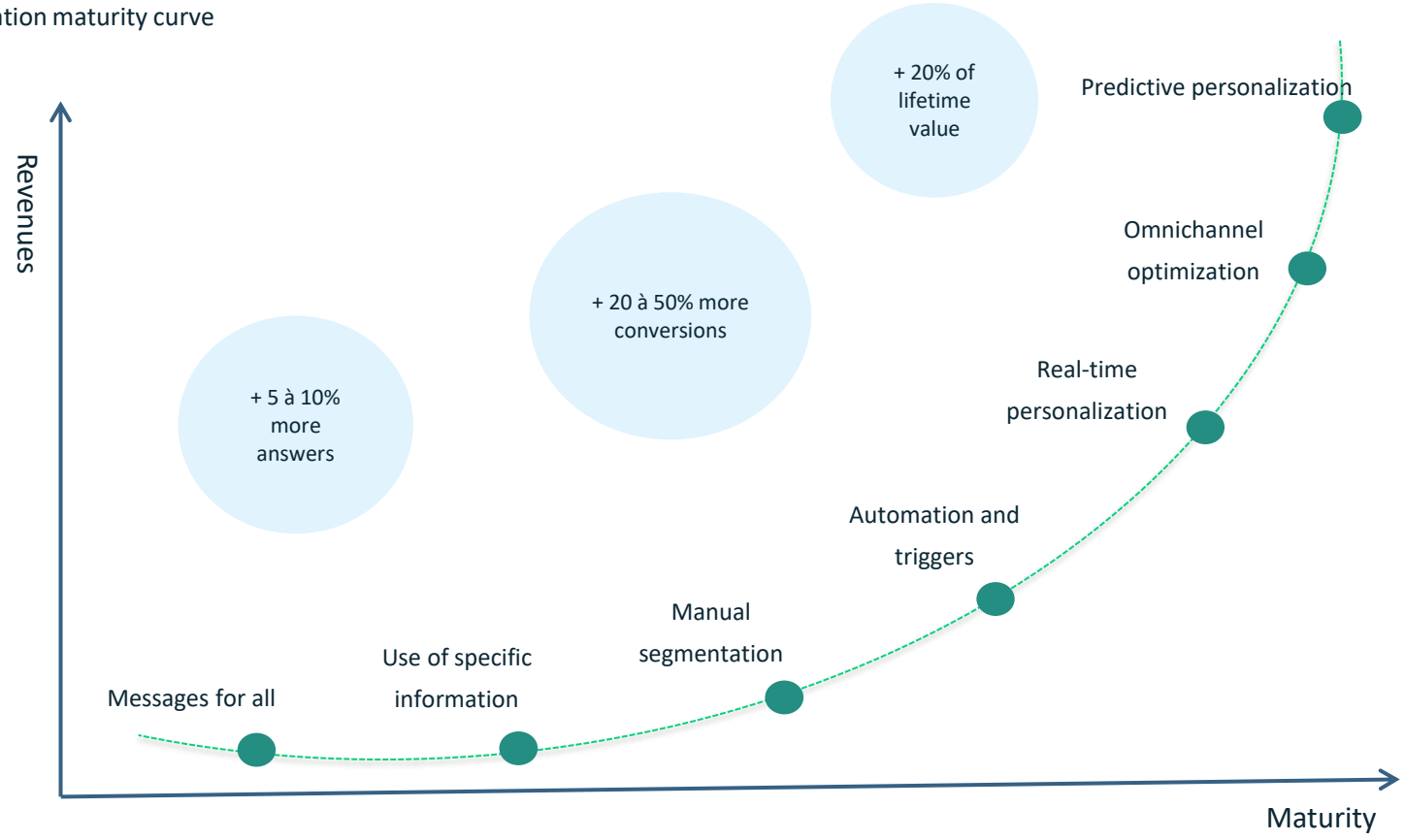
All of these concepts are so interrelated that they can be placed directly into a diagram to demonstrate that segmentation, automation and RTM are key and essential elements for personalizing.

This schematic is called the *Personalization Maturity Curve*, which is located on the next page.

In fact, the further a company advances in the development of its personalization strategies, the more synergy there will be between all these elements.

Therefore, real-time marketing is an integral part of personalization marketing, not another strategy that needs to be added because it's popular.

Personalization maturity curve



RTM and automation

Marketing automation is actually the use of a software to automate different marketing processes. Marketing departments use this type of software to more efficiently manage tasks that are repetitive in nature. This includes sending emails, SMS messages, social media, online advertisements, etc.

Marketing automation solutions are widespread in today's MarTech landscape. RTM, combined with automation, can change many aspects of campaigns in real time. Among the most obvious, there are:

- All communications (how to trigger a sending)
- Consumer profile (enriching your customer profiles)
- Testing and optimization (experiments that lead to decisions)
- Online Shopping Experience (product suggestions to abandoned shopping cart)
- Cross and upsell sales (suggestion of offers)
- The display (what appears before the eyes of the contact)

RTM and targetting

Everything about targeting and segmentation is still part of the most important pillar of personalization - data. Real-time data refers to **anything that creates useful information that marketing teams can immediately process and deploy, based on the collected data as it appears in the real world.**

We can't talk about it enough: to date, the biggest challenge with data is its centralization. Centralized data is easier to use, it gives the complete profile of the consumer and not just a few pieces of information related to a specific context. More and more tools are emerging to help this centralization, to better activate it, especially in real-time.

It is with this combined data, from multiple sources that collect customer information, that instant decisions must be made. People can then be better segmented and targeted based on their overall behaviors and cross-referenced to provide enriched experiences. To learn more about this, we invite you to read our Customer Data Platform white paper.

RTM and personalization

Real-time personalization is one of RTM's most lucrative benefits. According to LeadSift, 60% of marketers report difficulty personalizing content in real time, but 77% recognize how essential personalization is in today's marketing landscape.

Distinct benefits are associated with personalized content, including increased conversions, reduced number of emails to prospects, more customers, better contact management, more effective sales calls, a fresh corporate website, and more.

This attention to customers makes them feel valued ... and valued consumers are much more likely to develop loyalty to your brand than those who feel like a fish in a pond.

The benefits of real-time personalization are obvious:

- **It generates a 16% increase in customer's trust;**
- **A 14% purchase intention increase;**
- **18% increase in interest;**
- **And that "22% of individuals are more likely to consider a brand as a result of exposure to RTM". (LeadSift)**

Key elements to its implementation

Methods to consider

In 2018, 71% of companies were using a real-time marketing element in their digital and social marketing, while 29% of marketers had not yet studied how this could benefit them (Econsultancy).

The challenge is probably not in deciding to do RTM, since implementing, as mentioned, automated marketing can lead you to that. The challenge is rather how to get there when it matters to the customer, in a systematic way. While there is no clear recipe for running RTM, we know that you need to look at at least 2 things:

1. Organizational and marketing strategy

2. Technologies to support deployment

The next pages focus on the first point,

to give you food for thought for its implementation.

Organizational and marketing strategy

Before you even deploy anything, you need to do some planning of your current marketing processes. In the items to look at in order to start orchestrating RTM, we identify four, which are presented in the blue box.

Methods – Which channel should send an RTM message?

Examples: social media, email, SMS, Web, PPC, etc.

Triggers - What data, information or events present opportunities for real-time action?

Examples: social media trends; weather forecasts; product inventory updates; word searches; page views, etc.

Audiences - Which customer groups, contacts or segments can be involved in the real-time action?

Examples: customers waiting for a product to be restocked; customers in specific locations or regions; customers looking for a specific keyword.

Results and KPI - What do you want the message to do, and what KPI will allow you to measure this result?

Examples: develop brand awareness (referral), generate revenue (monthly increase), generate commitment (download), etc.

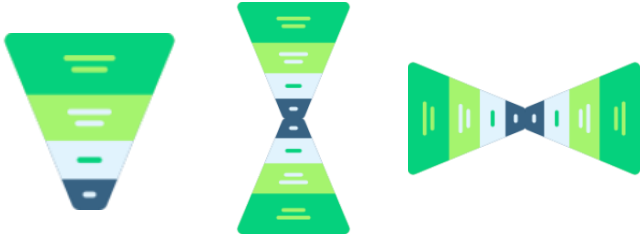
Step 1 - Methods

The starting point is not magic: start by understanding where your contacts are, in order to enrich the experience in the right place. The best way to expose these places is by mapping your customer journey.

These maps are a compact visualization of the customer experience from one end to the other, and can take many forms (computer graphics, illustrations, diagrams, etc.). They illustrate all the locations and points of contact of customers who encounter your brand, whether they are online or offline. They help you look at your brand, products and processes through the customer's eyes, so you can visualize their journey through the funnel.

In fact, let's talk about that funnel. In the late 90s and early 2000s, understanding the consumer buying process was largely based on the traditional, linear customer funnel, which is now obsolete. Today, the purchasing process is not as linear as the funnel model would lead us to believe.

We recommend this blog article on the types of funnels on the market ... Incredibly, there are even more!



There is no official template that you should use to create them... simply because no two customer paths are the same! This means that you have a lot of freedom to explore and be creative in their design. At the very least, here are 6 actions to start with, which you can enrich over time and according to your needs.

1. **Develop your personas:** an essential process that will serve you well beyond your RTM.
2. **Map the points of contact:** integrate online and offline points of contact along their routes.
3. **Find the objectives for each of these points:** go beyond the obvious or to get informed. What does he feel, what does he want deeply?
4. **Identify the pain points:** for your personas and at each step of the journey. Strategyzer: Value proposition Canvas can help you.
5. **Prioritize the moments of the journey:** according to what will have the greatest impact for the customer, order the RTM campaigns to be implemented.
6. **Continue to add new campaigns and improve existing ones.**

Step 2 – Triggers

What "customer decisions" need to be considered in order to provide a real-time experience?

Having an idea of customer paths should make it easier to start choosing where you would like to have a faster impact on your customers' actions.

What is called a trigger can be many things, but it will often be an event (an action taken by the customer) or a data (information that comes out within the moment).

But to act on these triggers, you need to be able to track them.

Step 2 – Triggers

This is where the challenge of data centralization takes on its full meaning, since information that is not accessible, or that is not accessible at the right time, is a lost opportunity to continue the relationship with the customer.

As an example, we know that the best engagement campaigns on abandoned shopping carts are done within 12 hours after a customer has not completed their transaction. If it takes you 24 hours to get the information about the products in question, to do the recall in your email tool, for example, you have lost a great sales opportunity.

This is just one example among many, but one that articulates RTM's challenge in the face of triggers, so that you can act on the data when it counts. The above example involves an RTM action that follows a particular customer interaction, but it is also possible to modulate an experience as it happens. Again, imagine how quickly information must be accessible to do this!

So, there are different levels of RTM, from the simplest to the most complex. No need to think big right from the start, but don't hesitate to find a method to filter out the essential actions to switch to RTM mode. Then move on to more complex projects when those first ones are completed. The MoSCoW Matrix could be useful at this stage!

Prioritize with MoSCoW

Must have	Should have
What are the essential sequences to put in place to put you on the same level as the best practices in your industry?	What sequences should you absolutely put in place to improve the performance of your campaigns that you are not doing?
Could have	**Nice to have**
What are the sequences that you could set up, but which are not critical for your marketing actions? (but would distinguish you)	What are the sequences that you could set up, but which would be a bonus for you, and not necessary for the success of your campaigns?

The MoSCoW method is a prioritization technique used in management, business analysis, project management and software development. It seeks to provide a common understanding with stakeholders of the importance they place on meeting each requirement of a project.

However, it is a technique that can be transposed to several fields, including marketing. It can be useful to you in order to classify the most essential projects to those that are more far-fetched.

Step 3 - Audience

Once you know the actions to modify, based on your customer journey, and the triggers that will activate your actions in RTM, you need to make sure you do it for the right audience. Not all contacts at the same entry point have the same characteristics, expectations and status. So, it doesn't make sense to provide the same RTM experience to all contacts.

Using data as a strategic foundation

In order to effectively manage real-time interactions, you will need historical customer data. These vital data points include information about previous purchases or returns, store and website visits, and even interactions with the brand through social channels.

The challenge?

Marketers are currently swimming in this type of data, analysis and reporting. Unfortunately, much of this data is specific to a single channel, so it is compartmentalized and reports only a small portion of the customer experience. Yet the ability to leverage product preferences, purchase frequencies, preferred channel or shopping location (and much more!) differentiates agile marketers from their traditional counterparts who are more focused on campaign production. Let's say that those who push their thinking towards data are those who open new avenues for contextual, multi-channel customer engagement.

Track client data

In this context, marketing will continue to evolve in a perspective that is even more technical. In the wake of the upheavals brought about by online platforms, the next wave of change will focus on a more data-driven marketing function. The challenges that will come out of this will be on several levels:

- Centralization of customer data in a single database
- The recognition of a contact, regardless of the channel it is on (the so-called Single Customer View)
- Continuous enrichment of customer profiles (historical and updated data)
- The use of a tool to facilitate the actions made from the data (thus from your marketing database)
- Advanced and continuous segmentation
- Testing, measurement and analysis tools to improve

Once these elements are in place, it will be much easier to target contacts, since the information used will be up to date and able to differentiate between contacts.

Sherlock Holmes

« It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. »

Step 4 – Results and KPI

The ultimate goal must be to monitor and analyze what customers are doing in real time, to provide contextual experiences that are tailored to each journey. As such, companies need to consider the benefits this will bring to customers, based on what the contact is looking for at the time of interaction. To do this, your actions in RTM must meet one or more objectives, whether it benefits the customer or your company.

When creating your RTM scenarios, don't forget to look at :

1. What the contact is trying to accomplish at time X (this may influence the RTM action at the present time, or the one following the customer interaction)
2. The decision he or she might make at the time of the interaction

These elements will greatly influence the content, the container and the timing of the RTM action. Finally, this last step also seeks to provide KPIs to see if your actions really meet customer needs, and what you can continuously improve.

Needs

- For each step of the customer journey, what needs must be met?

Decisions

- What decisions could the contact make (positive or negative) in order to anticipate all eventualities?

Metrics

- How will you measure whether your RTM really meets the needs of your customers?

Putting it into practice

Now let's move on to the implementation. What can you do to facilitate the implementation of a first RTM project, and how to visualize the "scalability" of these projects in the medium term. Here are a few thoughts.

#1: Organize a cross-functional data management team (starting to stretch)

Obtaining data from all possible sources is the first major challenge you will need to address. Data governance and continuous data improvement are critical to the long-term breadth and success of RTM (and marketing). The accuracy and robustness of the data will define the limits of what you can do in terms of real-time customer engagement.

#2: Start with a series of small pilot projects for real-time engagement that are more focused and less risky (learn how to walk).

The goal is to test in order to learn and get fast payouts. Then use the available data - social networks, click streams, navigation, POS, loyalty, CRM, etc. - to start experimenting with personalized campaigns. Consider incorporating tactics that overlay both implicit and explicit customer engagement data.

Putting it into practice

#3: Extend tactics that are done on one channel to multiple channels, using optimization techniques (start jogging).

Test inbound offers, regardless of the channel the person is on, by cross-referencing the behaviors of all contact sources. For example, activate customers online, in call centers, or in-store, based on engagement histories. Perform remarketing beyond advertisements, but also with email, SMS or notifications on your mobile applications.

#4: Extend real-time engagement strategies to begin shaping the ideal multi-channel customer journey. (Run the race)

Use machine learning for recommendations, with propensity scores or customer score card. Move towards a real data science for your marketing actions. Apply machine learning to optimize the best offer, the best channel, and consistent messaging across all channels.

RTM and Dialog Insight

Our Philosophy

We've spent the last 29 pages telling you about RTM, and we may be about to shock you a little. In our opinion, not every campaign needs to be in real time mode. At the very beginning, we mentioned that an action of this kind must be done in less than two minutes, which is a very short time frame.

If you go back to your drawing board, we are convinced that very few of your actions are launched in this time frame, and that is normal. It's even very correct, and you don't have to change everything to meet it. It's more a matter of looking at the actions that need to be done within those parameters. On our side, we judge that some campaigns will benefit from it, such as:

- Web personalization (suggesting related products on a product page on your site, for example)
- Specific offers according to the customer/visitor/contact data
- Targeted advertising that can be modulated or even retargeted.
- Follow-ups, for an event or a purchasing process for example

Our Philosophy

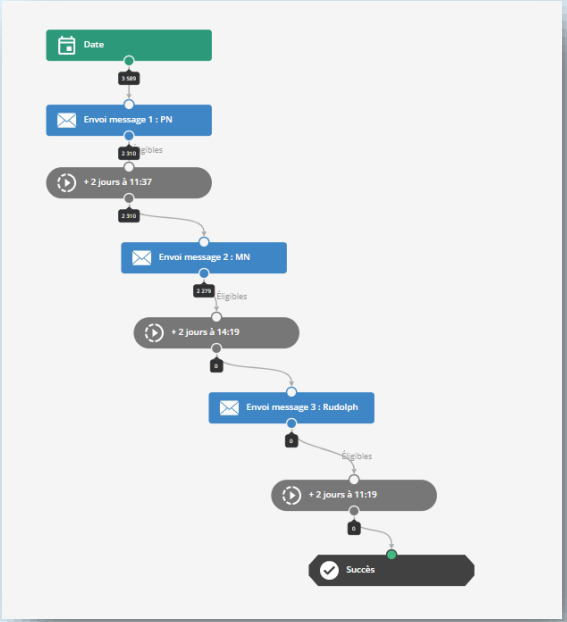
On the other hand, where we are convinced that processing times **must** be short is in the centralization of the data, and even in the processing of it. Whether it's data on your customers, products, inventory, outside temperature, snow level, calendar, purchases ... if a data must have an impact on one of your campaigns, it is essential that you have quick access to it.

With the Dialog Insight platform, the centralization of information is possible thanks to a few tools, such as:

- The Single Customer View, to get your customers' 360-degree path;
- Connection via API, web services, Webhook and automated import/export data;
- The management of customer information by relational table, to accumulate the history of their actions;
- Several data capture tools, for consents, interests, and by form;
- A tool to follow the web path and track the behavior of your customers.

For your campaigns

You'll also find different ways to react in RTM, including a **brand-new automated marketing tool** that manages multiple entry points and multichannel mailings.



Personalization tools for your sending of messages, such as:

- Dynamic content
- Display conditions
- Dynamic segmentation of your database
- Scoring by indicators and personas
- Geotargeting
- Content hub for dynamic display
- Marketing Asset Management
- Model for sending

In a nutshell! An array of tools to help you work quickly and simply when it comes to targeting individuals in a personalized way.

Conclusion

To conclude

According to McKinsey, a recommendation with a relevant message is up to 50 times more likely to trigger a purchase than a low-impact recommendation. What makes a recommendation high-impact? Understanding the intent, context and value in the moment... in a consistent way. Research shows that **contextually relevant messages result in conversion rates 6 to 7 times higher than generic messages. However, 70% of consumers have a negative opinion of messages in omnichannel mode. And, according to Acxiom, 74% of brands cannot recognize customers in real time.**

Let's also say that no amount of real-time campaigns will guide a customer to make a decision about their next purchase every time. When an individual is looking for something, they are not looking for marketing messages. They are looking for information, direction and someone they can trust. Thus, brands that guide their real-time approach to support the decision-making process will not only increase conversions, but also sow seeds to enrich customer recognition and loyalty. So now we hope you will give more consideration to real-time opportunities, especially when it comes to data!

> **Unknown**
>
> The world is now awash in data and we can see consumers in a lot clearer ways.

About Dialog Insight

One of the most effective ways to achieve your growth objectives is to take control of your customer data to maximize your marketing actions.

At Dialog Insight, we believe that each of our clients is unique and that their needs are specific. That's why we have developed global solutions in personalized marketing to adapt to constantly evolving contexts. On the one hand, we provide a platform that centralizes your customer database, orchestrates multi-channel campaigns and allows detailed analyses of the performance of your actions. On the other hand, we offer strategic and operational support services aligned with your needs.

Whether you are aiming to increase sales or stimulate customer engagement, leverage the customer knowledge you've gathered over time. You will then communicate in a more relevant, consistent and personalized way than ever before. Make every point of contact an opportunity to provide your customers with a brand experience beyond their expectations.

With Dialog Insight at your side, you are more than ever the master of your success.