

# New marketing metrics are needed for the age of the customer

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The way that most **brands** measure their investment returns from **marketing** and **advertising** is still largely based on traditional media thinking, and it is falling out of step with the demands of a new era of **digital** media and empowered customers.

Tried and tested measures of sales conversions and **brand** awareness are not always aligned with the new needs of a world where consumers are informed, tech-savvy, and have high expectations for personalised engagement from **brands**.

Through their use of **social** media and their interactions with **digital** giants such as **Amazon** and **Uber**, South African consumers have learnt that they have a voice and that they are entitled to more personalised **brand** experiences. Old measures of **marketing** success such as frequency, reach, and **brand** awareness don't tell us enough about how well we're doing in building customer relationships.

## Driven by emotions

Diamond says that today's consumer cares as much about the customer experience as he or she cares about **brand**, price, and quality. Customer experience encompasses not only the value and worth of the product or service, but also how the consumer feels overall about his or her interactions with the **brand**.

We're looking at something quite subjective here — how we appeal to the consumers' emotions. The question for every marketer today is how do we address the consumer's needs, wants, and feelings so that we can drive profitable engagement with the **brand**.

When looking at **advertising**, marketers today have the benefit of a wealth of demographic and behavioural data from **digital** channels to help them create emotionally engaging experiences, she adds. The data can tell marketers who consumers are, what they're doing, and what they are looking for.

## The role of creativity

It is then up to the creative team to use this data to create messages and campaigns that will resonate with consumers. Armed with the right information, marketers now also have the ability to engage with customers with refined and more personalised messaging across targeted channels, says Diamond.

Data from **digital** channels such as **social** media, mobile and display are especially powerful when it is combined with the reach of conventional mass media. Many people still have a close relationship with regional radio, for example, and it remains a deeply engaging channel.

By supporting radio with **digital** channels, **brands** can extend the consumer experience, build further engagement and get more insight into the success of their customer engagement strategies, says Diamond. Real-world activations are another way to build engagement.

### Measuring engagement

Engagement is hard to measure, says Diamond, but some ways that companies could benchmark it, include the following:

- Use of market research tools such as Net Promoter Scores (NPS)
- Tracking the frequency and session length of consumers' interactions with the **brand** using its apps and website
- Sentiment, activity and advocacy on **social** media
- Customer churn and retention
- Trends in the customer's use of the company's products and services

As marketers, we need to think about customers rather than channels as we build our campaigns. The question isn't how just to get the best reach and frequency, but how to use a combination of channels to engage with consumers effectively and creating memorable experiences. This is where marketers will find their returns.

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