
Client relationships should be more engaging. Here's why.

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Ricoh Europe, London, 25 November 2022 — Customers don't see channels; they see brands instead. It's why brands should seek to build long term, worthwhile, customer relationships through meaningful engagement. That is one of the key insights shared in the fifth book in Ricoh's Guides to Modern Marketing series.

In a world of highly targeted, personalised marketing communication, sustained customer relationships are created across multiple communication platforms. Customer engagement marketing (CEM) is vital. CEM happens when brands use personalised communication to guide their audience through a planned customer journey. From lead to sale - it's all about a welcoming and nurturing a relationship.

Customer engagement can take a number of different forms including:

Creating Impactful Content

Content provides the substance to your communication, gives it purpose and ultimately delivers the tactics to meet the strategy. Brands use great content for acquisition and retention. To achieve that, identify who you want to be your company's spokesperson and develop interesting content that resonates. Your content should address your audience directly and respond to their wants and needs. Creating and publishing appropriate content means that you'll need to fully understand the customer lifecycle states, which range from prospect to new customer to loyal brand fan, and their pain points. Offering solutions will be valuable. Examples include 5 Top Tips, 4 How Tos, or 3 Did You Knows.

Being Creative

You don't have to be a creative genius to produce great marketing creative. But you do need to know what's relevant to your clients to build a foundation for compelling creativity that engages, inspires, and sells. Start with a creative audit that evaluates every aspect of your business then look at ways to stand out and establish common ground with your audience.

Colour your creativity to influence people's moods, productivity, and behaviour. Research from the CCI Colour Institute and the University of Winnipeg indicates that between 60-90% of our judgements on brands, products and our clothing are based on colour. Cool colours, like blue and green recede from the eye and are used to calm our reactions. Warm colours, such as red and orange, advance so they increase our heart rate and energy. Paying attention to graphics, fonts and words can also influence tone of voice and grab attention.

Ensuring Relevance

Consider how relevant you are to your clients' wants and needs. Brands tend to be one of the following:

- Customer focused with a customer obsession mindset. They find out who their customers really are, not just what they buy, and meet core wants and needs.
- Pragmatic - they take bold steps, make smart business bets, and often move on from failure and experiments quickly. They have their products available when the customer needs them and can deliver consistent customer experiences.
- Innovative and obsessed with what competitors are doing and what customers are yearning for. They know that without constant innovation, they won't still be around tomorrow. They create emotional customer connections and earn long term trust.
- Inspiring industry leaders that push the status quo and engage with their customers in new and creative ways. They also find new opportunities to meet their customers' wants and needs.

Achieving relevance is not just about what you say - it's where and when you say it. Communication must be meaningful, of the right length and in the right place.

Using Digital Marketing

Explore social platforms and the different communication opportunities they offer, use digital search advertising, and consider digital display advertising. Also transform your website into a dynamic marketing hub and consider how your website can help continue conversations.

Choosing Print

People react to print because it's tactile. It's a different way to consume communications and therefore works on our subconscious brain in subtle, effective ways. Direct mail is as

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responsive today as it's always been and still outperforms Social Media. A multi-part DM piece demands to be explored in its many component parts. Print has many benefits, for example brand recall for print ads is higher than for digital display, and printed information requires less effort to process by our overloaded brains.

Wow them with Digital Print Enhancement

Build closer relationships with your clients by demonstrating that you are a partner rather than a supplier. One who is proactive and full of ideas that can support their business. The extraordinary effects and impact that can be conjured up by Digital Print Enhancement make it the kind of suggestion that can earn their trust and loyalty. Consider taking advantage of a Ricoh EDGE (business development consultancy service) workshop on how to exploit this opportunity, where margins are high but so will client satisfaction be too.

Letting your clients have their say

Customer Generated Marketing (CGM) is changing the way companies seek out, convert, and retain customers in the digitally driven world. It's a world where people place higher value on the opinions of strangers than they do on established brands. It's a world where no-one is afraid to voice an opinion, or idea, so print companies simply have to listen. It's also an effective way for you to get great ideas. It works best with loyal fans where client idea generation can be encouraged with incentivisation.

These are just some of the many impactful ways customer engagement can be developed. By exploring some, or all, of these Print Service Providers can start new conversations with their clients and strengthen existing relationships.

Engage is one of five other books in the series that also includes Audience, Modern Marketing, Brand, Vision, and Optimise. They have been developed to provide a practical, easy and enjoyable way to shape business growth and profitability.

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With cultivated knowledge and organizational capabilities nurtured over its 85-year history, Ricoh is a leading provider of digital services, information management, and print and imaging solutions designed to support digital transformation and optimize business performance.

Headquartered in Tokyo, Ricoh Group has major operations throughout the world and its products and services now reach customers in approximately 200 countries and regions. In the financial year ended March 2022, Ricoh Group had worldwide sales of 1,758 billion yen (approx. 14.5 billion USD).

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