

At The Crossroads Of Nature and Nurture, You'll Find The Thriving Online Marketer

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I am sure that you have been a party to animated debates about Nature vs. Nurture in the context of psychology. But, have you ever considered this phenomenon when it comes to customer behavior and marketing? Nature, as I understand it, is the behavior that occurs without coaching. Nurture equates to behaviors that are learned. As marketers, our work lies in the balance between these two — understanding natural shifts in consumer behavior and shaping behaviors to achieve our end goal: engaging consumers and selling to them.

In today's ever-changing marketplace, marketers are forced to make note of the evolutions that are happening. For example, customers are shopping on

their mobile devices, they are asking one another for product recommendations before buying, and they are looking for deals online in ways that were previously unheard of. The changes we see are the results of consumers adapting to the new tools and online environments available to them. According to a 2011 report from ITU World Telecommunication, 2.3 billion out of approximately 7 billion people on the planet have access to the Internet — what an evolution!

This natural progression can't be stopped and long gone are the days of one or two channel commerce. However, we are not at the mercy of nature alone. Instead, marketers and online retailers have the ability to employ tactics that balance out the natural evolution with nurture. Let me explain: we can observe the shifts happening and provide fresh solutions to the evolving consumer, through creative solutions and ease of use, to facilitate the behavior we're ultimately looking for: conversion. As a commerce platform provider, we see our clients employing these nurturing tactics, allowing the customer to do what comes naturally: multi-channel shopping. Our clients' nurturing activities ensure that the end result, purchase, is achieved in this chaotic, evolving commerce environment.

We can point to three big adaptations that customers have made with advancements in technology, and what marketers should do about them:

Customers Shop On The Go And With One Click

According to research published by eMarketer on January 25, 2012, 23% of customers prefer shopping via their mobile device or tablet. Mobile technology is on the rise and customers are naturally adapting and taking advantage of the opportunity to gain information and shop while on the go. One of our clients, Case-Mate, saw this evolution in action in the form of a spike in mobile traffic to their site, upwards of 20%. As soon as they noticed this, Case-Mate made moves with our ShopVisible team to ensure that the experience via mobile was optimized in order to nurture this new shopping behavior and increase conversion rates. Since the launch of their new mobile site, they have seen upwards of 10% of their orders come from mobile. The Case-Mate team also noticed that their shoppers were naturally drawn to one-click shopping through PayPal and Amazon Checkout. Once these items were implemented, they only had a 25% cart abandonment rate, compared to the industry average of 60+%. *Make sure to accommodate your shoppers and make it "one click" to purchase.*

Customers Want To Know What Others Think

In 2010, Nielsen reported that 40% of online shoppers indicate that they would not buy any

electronic item without consulting online reviews first. Today, it is shoppers' natural predilection to read customer reviews online before purchasing products. Knowing that this the natural behavior, our client, Tempur-Pedic, made sure to include many customer reviews for all of their mattresses and sleep system products when implementing their commerce platform. Tempur-Pedic knows that customer reviews are so important that they have segmented out the ratings according to: overall, comfort, sleep quality, value and meets expectations. They have even provided customers with the opportunity to review using half stars, to achieve more precise feedback.

Why would an online retailer go to such lengths? Because they know that customers are going to review their products online, whether they like it or not and shoppers won't buy until they know what others think. Instead of fighting the change, Tepur-Pedic is proactively "nurturing" a natural consumer desire to have the opinions of like-minded shoppers in order to provide purchase with confidence. *Connectivity invites intersection so embrace the dialog with consumers.*

Customers Want Deals Online, And They Want Them Quick

While bargain hunting certainly is not a new behavior, online shoppers are taking it to the next level. According to a 2011 study conducted by Delloite, 63% of online holiday shoppers cited 'better prices' as their reason for shopping online versus in store. One savvy retail client, MovieMars, takes full advantage of this behavior and exemplify "nurturing" to produce a desired behavior. As a provider of discount movies, music and books, they are up against significant competition to gain the attention of their target audience. So harkening back to the premise of nature vs. nurture, MovieMars has created an environment where they leverage the innate desire of many consumers to find a deal with the learned behavior of applying promotional discounts. MovieMars proactively leverages promotional discounts to not only increase conversions to purchase but to move stale inventory as well. If they have an excess of inventory on a specific item, a targeted promotion can quickly accelerate purchases on that item. MovieMars' promotions are prominently featured within the main banner of their homepage so that shoppers can find the sales, select items and check out in a snap! *Harness customers' habits to achieve your business goals.*

Evolving Commerce

The only constant is change. Marketers and retailers may not necessarily be able to control the shifts but the savvy marketer can harness them to nurture a desired behavior. The businesses that win out will be staffed with people that understand the necessity of directing these evolved shoppers towards the end goal of conversion through new and innovative methods. So ask yourself, are you adapting to this new evolution?



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