

SEPTEMBER 2021

## THE NEW WAY FORWARD: EMPATHY IN MARKETING

The events of the last year reshaped virtually everything about the way we do business, including how we market goods and services. New research suggests that businesses willing to be nimble, innovative and humanize the consumer experience are the ones rising to the top in today's unprecedented socio-economic climate.<sup>1</sup> Prioritizing the customer and leading with kindness just might be the key to helping your business thrive.

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### TESTIMONIALS

"I find myself really looking forward to receiving your magazine each month in my mailbox because it is well designed, graphically appealing and always highlights interesting people and their personal stories who are actually "my neighbors". Thank you for delivering great content, great stories and promoting area businesses that we can support!"

– Karl S.

### Customer Experience Matters

Research conducted by Salesforce found that 84% of customers said the consumer experience is just as important as the product itself.<sup>1</sup> Each interaction your business has with a customer contributes to their overall feeling and emotional response. All the more reason to abandon the old marketing playbook such as overused buzzwords, generic templates and one-size-fits-all approaches in favor of personalizing what you're already doing. Consumers are savvier than they've ever been and are spending their money at businesses they trust and feel understood by. Refocusing marketing efforts on the customer in a meaningful, personalized way could be the key to building stronger customer relationships.

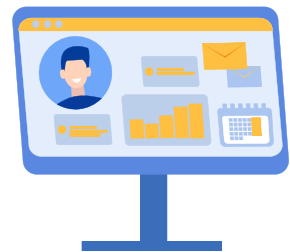


### Embrace Innovation

As you identify new ways to add value, let your customer's experience drive innovation. It seems like all we've been doing recently is changing, but the more a willingness to pivot is embedded in your business's culture, the more effectively you'll be able to communicate to your customers through marketing. No one is quite sure how best to navigate this new normal, which means now might be the time to try new things and get creative!

### The New Way Forward

It may seem incongruous, but many businesses are turning to data to help guide them toward more customer-centric marketing plans. For your business, this could be as sophisticated as transaction data and AI or as simple as learning your customers' interests and preferences and using that knowledge to inform your empathetic marketing strategy. However, not everything can be captured in a number and analytics isn't everyone's cup of tea. Don't be afraid to start small with a couple of key metrics and new ideas, but remember to stick to the core of your marketing plan and trust your gut. As business owners in the local community, you know the importance of consistency in marketing, name/brand recognition and local recognition and word of mouth.



When in doubt, put the customer at the center of every marketing decision you make. The ripple effect it has on the rest of your business just might surprise you.

<sup>1</sup> Solis, Brian. "In An Era Of COVID-19 Disruption, Brands Must Rethink Marketing As Empathetic Customer Experiences." *Forbes*. 9 Jul 2020.