



How personalisation achieves greater results and ROI

There was a time when just adding a name or applying other demographic data to a piece of print was considered cutting-edge.

The marketing formula was basic, “data + content = personalisation”, and may then have been enough to make the recipient sit-up and take notice.

But today’s automation and digital communications make such obvious references look clumsy and outdated. While they may customise a piece, they add little to its relevance or impact and it’s a long way from the individualisation that consumers have come to expect, even demand.

Because for today’s savvy customers time is precious and their concentration spans are short. They want brands and advertisers to get to the point, and they don’t expect to have to wade through content and information that does not resonate with them.

Where digital leads

Email broadcasting applications are ubiquitous and blasting hundreds of thousands of wholly unique messages to a subscribed dataset can be achieved in mere minutes. Online businesses are using log-ins, tracking and analytics to optimise web pages and offer up promotions to target their customers with pin-point accuracy. In fact, as long ago as 2015, UK retailer Shop Direct boasted of its ability to serve 1.2 million versions of its homepage to its customers, with a vision to rapidly increase that to 3.5 million.

Capture of data across channels means we know more than ever about the customer.



Such targeting goes way beyond demographic information. It considers:

- **buying behaviours** – when does the customer shop, and how? Online, in store, or a combination of these?
- **purchase history** – what has he/she bought before? Think Amazon’s “bought together” suggestions.
- **preferences** – product types, sizing and fit, payment methods.
- **financial** – order values, credit limit, etc.

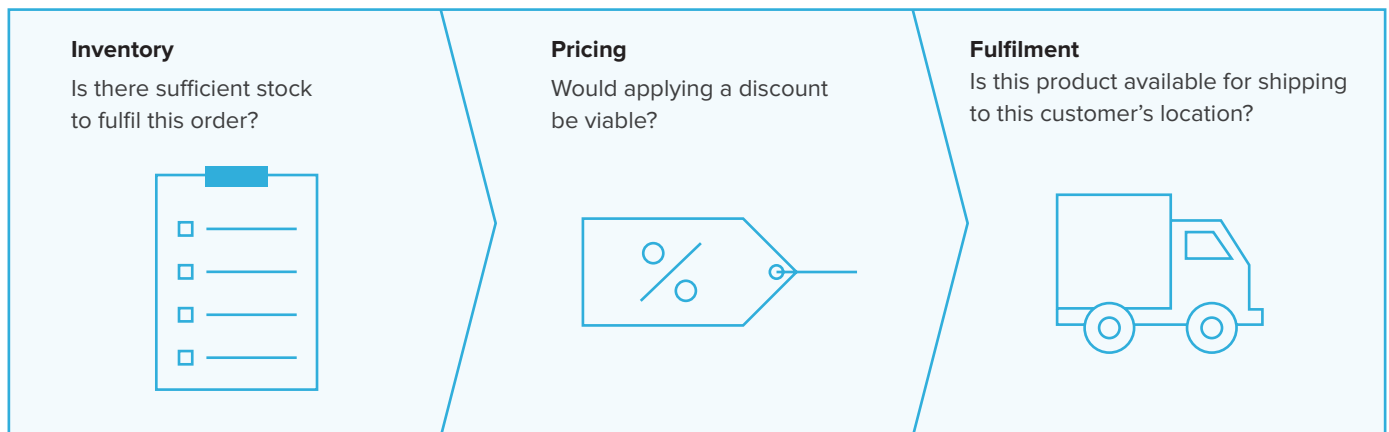
It is personalisation which, while detailed, is subtle and may even go unremarked. And that can be important in an era where consumers increasingly mistrust brands and fear data misuse. Its effects however are powerful.

Benefits of Personalisation

1. Targets a specific audience(s)
2. Creates more relevant content, offers and materials
3. Matches supply with demand
4. Builds deeper, more intimate, relationships with customers
5. Makes better recommendations and offers
6. Reduces production, fulfilment and mailing costs

Personalisation is a 2-way street

Data-driven personalisation is most effective when overlaid with the supplier's own data. For example:



Materials and promotional messages are not only relevant, timely and contextual to the recipient, but they benefit the supplier by matching what he wants to sell with what his customer may want to buy. They help build a longer-term relationship with a consumer, influence their behaviour and, in doing so, promote loyalty and goodwill. In short, personalisation cuts through the noise.

Digital meets print

Programmatic Advertising (PA) is online advertising triggered by a user's search for, or browsing of, a product/service, but where the journey to purchase has not been completed. It is usually apparent to the user because advertisements (and, where permissions allow, emails) for these continue to "follow" them on subsequent websites with the aim of nudging them to complete the transaction.

Programmatic print can work in much the same way. Relatively new, it is made possible by the use of digital print in conjunction with the latest software applications. It mimics PA, as it is also based on real-time digital intent, and takes the online data harvested and merges it instead to printed promotions or direct mail.

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The advantage is, that while the online and email interactions are momentary, printed versions are enduring, tactile and as with all printed materials, considered more trustworthy. Plus non-effective materials are reduced/eliminated and so production, fulfilment and delivery costs are cut and ROI increased.

Personalisation and the PSP?

If you are serious about helping your customers with personalisation, ask yourself these questions;

- Are your customers aware that print is well-placed to be personalised?
- And, if they are, do they know you have the technology to help them achieve this?
- Would they realise the ease and speed with which this can be done?
- Do you personalise your own materials and, in doing so, reinforce this capability?
- Is your sales team actively promoting such an offering, and could they talk knowledgeably and in the marketer's language?
- Do you, or could you, have the skills to manage and manipulate their precious data?
- Would they trust you to handle it in a compliant and effective manner?
- Have you explained to your customers that personalisation of their materials can reduce their print volumes, cost of production/fulfilment and so improve campaign performance and ROI?

And, if the answer to any of these questions is "no", **act now to seize the opportunities that personalisation can deliver.**



SUGGESTED READING:

Permission Marketing: Turning Strangers into Friends and Friends into Customers
by Seth Godin



This article is one of a series supporting the **Canon Ascent Programme**, a business development initiative for Canon Professional Print customers. If you'd like to know more please contact your Canon Account Manager or search "Canon Ascent Programme".