How Definition 6 Uses Data to Drive Beyond the Personal

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In preparing for the future of entertainment marketing, understanding the difference between personalized experiences and individualized experiences is more paramount than ever. Individualization comes down to more than addressing the consumer-it's about demonstrating that you understand them on a more granular level. Data and informed creative are our greatest assets when you need to individualize the customer experience.

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What Individualization Means for the Future of OTT

When I stream Netflix, for instance, I am getting recommendations based on algorithms that analyze what I've watched. But what about shows I started to watch yet opted out of? Deep data analysis-asking why I opted out-is a perfect example of what a smart individualization strategy looks like. If you know why the consumer took action, then you'll better understand what content to serve up next. At its core, this is the difference between personalization and individualization.

What Streamers Can Learn from the Retail Script

Online retailers are more advanced at individualization than other verticals. If I abandon a shopping cart on Amazon, for instance, they are savvy at re-marketing the products I was looking at, as well as introducing alternative products. That's the advantage of ecommerce compared to an abandoned shopping cart in a physical store where zero clues are left behind.

Considering the amount of time people spend on streaming platforms versus linear broadcast, my opinion is that streaming companies and their marketing and content creation partners need to think about the relationship between platform and viewer in a more intimate manner than they are today, and that relationship needs to be more symbiotic. We know these platforms are already providing value to the customer, but the next challenge is: how can they obtain more behavioral information and leverage it in a way that makes the most of their relationship with viewers?

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Rally Behind Your Data Like an Academic

Once you've got the foundational elements of data-mining in place, building out a comprehensive testing program will help you individualize the customer experience. Succeeding in this phase ultimately comes down to staffing and organizing analytics teams that take an academic-like approach to analyzing data and market segmentation with a future-forward perspective. By this, I mean it's not always about what your analytics team is hyper-focused on right now. Think ahead to secondary and tertiary data explorations and how they fit into the big picture of all your findings.

That's ultimately what we do at Definition 6. We strategically assemble teams to build out the best possible business case for our clients. The deep analytics work we do informs our strategy, how to best to execute it, and lastly, how we measure and optimize it. It's a dynamic, experimental process. The ones who do it best are always learning and augmenting by constantly asking what works best and what isn't working.

Technology and data continue to empower us to not only understand and engage with consumers in powerful ways, but also to make their experience with brands more seamless. Consider how technology has evolved customer service. While ecommerce platforms like Amazon made shopping easy, 10 years ago there were still some growing pains shepherding consumers from calling for help versus how it's handled now via chat. Nowadays, that process is tremendously personalized and has matured into unprecedented business practices when you consider Amazon's "don't send it back" policy. Essentially, Amazon saw the big picture with this policy from the viewpoint of both their bottomline and customer retention-the cost of returning a product versus the convenience of letting the customer keep the product in error and sending a new one.

Humanize Your Data with Creatively Driven Calls-to-Action

Of course, you have to be cross-functional with data and technology. Meaning that having a creative team that can build on it with a human touch through elements of design, storytelling and experiences. This is why quality content is such a huge driver in the equation. Whether you're in streaming, broadcasting, or trying to fill seats at the movie theater, you can't simply rely on having the next great show. You have to communicate the value and give viewers a reason to watch. You have to make your call-to-action not only exciting, but also intuitive to the individual.

Customer Retention is the End-Game

I believe that brands are just tapping into the potential of what data can do in achieving this-whether it's building out more robust data-driven systems for developing interfaces and creating user profiles, or making them more entertaining through elements of education, gamification, and loyalty programs with incentives. Ultimately, subscriptions will plateau and the game will be customer retention and win-backs. So let's put on our data hats and get creating.

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