

How to Bring Emotional Engagement Into a Personalized Marketing Plan

DISCOVER THE FIVE WAYS TO CREATE AND FOSTER GENUINE, PERSONAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN YOUR COMPANY AND YOUR CONSUMERS.



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How consumers feel about your brand has far more impact than what they think about it. The vast majority of purchasing decisions—[95%, according to Harvard Business School professor Gerald Zaltman¹](#)—are made on the basis of emotions, not logic. That's why you need to build an emotional connection between your company and your consumers.



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Marketing teams that market to the masses without using targeted personalization lose out on such connections. Instead of putting relationships and customer experience first, they broadcast promotional marketing monologues, which over time is off-putting and teaches consumers that advertising can—and should—be ignored.

On the other hand, marketers who think of consumers as individuals employ strategies that build relationships. These brands are the ones that provide meaningful, authentic and overall better communications with consumers.

MAKE A REAL CONNECTION

When a brand truly connects with its consumers, people don't just buy their products or services; people have experiences that they identify with on a deep and emotional level. TOMS donates a pair of shoes or glasses for every pair purchased. Trader Joe's brings adventure to shopping for food. Given the chance to connect with brands in meaningful ways like these, consumers not only become repeat buyers, but they also advocate for—and even defend—them in personal conversations and on social media.

Authentically connecting with consumers on a personal level builds the trust that allows your consumers to believe in your brand. Creating real human moments with consumers nurtures lifelong brand advocates.

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MARRYING MARKETING AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

You're under pressure to make wise marketing investments, squeezing the most value out of every dollar in your budget and getting the best possible—and always improving—marketing ROI. At the same time, your competitors have just as much access to your consumers as you do and are constantly learning new ways to ease customer pain points while communicating with them on their ever-evolving preferred platforms.

In addition, consumers themselves are more informed than ever. By the time they make purchase decisions, they have already done their research: reading your reviews online, discussing the merits of your product or service with peers and engaging with your brand on social media.

While choices for marketing strategies and tactics abound, you're looking for a marriage of marketing and customer experience. Creating personalized moments and cultivating emotional connections is what will ultimately help you [build your loyal brand advocates](#).²

In today's highly personalized world, recognizing the individuality of each consumer using authenticity, transparency and truthfulness in the right way can be more successful than mass marketing. As Jay Baer, founder of Convince & Convert, reminds us, personalization really matters. Unless you approach your consumers from a relationship point of view, they'll [feel disengaged](#)³ before they've even interacted with your brand or your marketing.

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BUILDING BRIDGES TO YOUR CONSUMERS

The goal for most brands is to get new consumers to try their products and services while also retaining a loyal consumer base that buys with them over and over again.

But it's difficult to build new consumer trials and customer loyalty through a digital ad campaign, a paid search strategy or even an email blast. Consumers are bombarded with advertising messages. [Red Crow Marketing's research](#)⁴ found that consumers see up to 10,000 advertising messages every day, while marketing strategist Mehmood Hanif estimates that an internet user sees 11,250 ads per month. It's no wonder that consumers simply tune them out.

So what *does* reach consumers? Think about companies like USAA and Patagonia; their customers don't just buy their products or services—they believe in them. Buying a product or service and believing in the brand are two totally different things, and only one leads to a lifetime of repeat purchasing.

These companies have realized that the only true way to build new customer relationships and to improve customer loyalty and retention is by authentically connecting with their consumers in personal ways that are relevant to them, and then following up that engagement with a great product and customer experience. To genuinely connect with consumers, it's critical to focus on the relationship.

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5 WAYS TO NURTURE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH CONSUMERS

Reaching out directly and individually to consumers is the most effective way to nurture a personal connection. A [personalized greeting card](#)⁵ gives you a meaningful, high-touch way to engage consumers that gets opened, read, understood and acted upon.

Here are five ways to nurture your company's personal connections with your consumers and how [Hallmark Business Connections](#)⁶ can help:

1 Connect with the right words

To connect with your customers, you need to speak to them with words that resonate emotionally. If all you do is sell, your attempts to create a relationship will seem forced and artificial. Hallmark Business Connections has a team of writers and editorial experts who specialize in crafting words that connect with people.

2 Take advantage of trends and research

Starting a relationship with your consumers requires communicating with them in ways they understand. Using the biggest trends in culture, color, subject matter and editorial does just that, creating a more meaningful impact. Our team gathers insights into these trends to ensure your message resonates with your consumers in a way that advertising messaging cannot.

3 Create “surprise and delight” moments

Receiving an unexpected Hallmark card in the mail surprises and delights people, which is the first step in enhancing the way consumers feel about a company. Even better, sending a card to your consumers also motivates them. Hallmark cards are opened, read, engaged with and acted upon differently from other forms of mail. Since [98% of people](#)⁷ check their mail every day, you have frequent opportunities to provide the personalized experience that makes [80% of consumers](#)⁸ more likely to interact with your brand.

4 Turn your special offer into a gift

Sending a special offer in a typical advertising mail format usually means it will get tossed in the trash the moment your recipient sees it. But when your special offer comes in a Hallmark greeting card, it is seen as a gift rather than a piece of junk mail. That's because [62% of consumers](#) prefer getting a Hallmark card to a three-panel mailer, and [72% recognize](#) and prefer Hallmark cards over non-Hallmark cards.⁹

Use your special offer to craft an authentic moment with the consumer by sending it in a way that feels personal, like a note or a greeting card (or both). As a result, your marketing becomes part of your customer experience, and it's delivered in a genuine, authentic way.

5 Celebrate with your consumers

When a moment between a business and a consumer is personal, there's no better expression to affirm that moment than a Hallmark greeting card. With or without a special offer, the consumer feels seen and appreciated. Birthdays, customer anniversaries, apologies, targeted product launches and special sales all mean more when the customer feels, “You didn't just send me a card, you sent me a *Hallmark* card.”



WHY ADD HALLMARK TO YOUR MARKETING MIX?

Hallmark is a brand that has been trusted for more than 100 years to help consumers express their deepest personal and emotional connections. That trust can be leveraged to help businesses build relationships with their consumers—in fact, 75% of people feel more connected to a brand after receiving a Hallmark card.¹⁰

For one client, a Hallmark greeting card boosted response rates to 22%, when a typical direct mail piece had only a 5% response rate.¹¹ Hallmark cards are opened, read and understood—improving the number of prospects and customers who are impacted by your marketing and helping you improve your customer experience metrics.

Hallmark Business Connections can deliver business results better than most direct marketing tactics for this very reason—it creates the kind of experience consumers want to have. Once they open your card, they'll feel good about your brand and consider you one of the top contenders for their loyalty.

When you're eager to stop fighting for consumer attention and ready to start building brand loyalty and better relationships with your consumers, contact a Hallmark representative at

Sales@HallmarkBusinessConnections.com.

Interested in learning more before you get started? Visit HallmarkBusinessConnections.com.

GO BEYOND MARKETING WITH HALLMARK BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

Planning to build emotional connections with consumers shouldn't be limited to your marketing campaigns—it should be part of your entire organization's customer experience. Hallmark Business Connections can help with this, too.



CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

[Customer Care](#)¹² is a web-based software application that allows your customer service representatives and front-line associates to personalize Hallmark cards in less than a minute. The cards are “signed” with the associate’s message and name using Hallmark’s proprietary digital handwriting and are automatically printed, addressed, stamped and mailed to the consumer.

This is a great solution for customer experience beyond the one call that a customer may have with a brand. It makes their interactions with the brand last longer, and it is a pleasant surprise. Learn more about our Customer Care solution.

CUSTOMER LOYALTY AND RETENTION

Hallmark cards can be used for more than just marketing. Consider utilizing them to nurture your relationships with loyal customers, too. Our greeting card solutions allow you to send personalized Hallmark cards to customers to celebrate their birthdays and anniversaries, say

thank you for their business or even connect with them over the holidays. Learn more about our [greetings capabilities](#).¹³

LET'S CONNECT | *About Rhonda Basler*

Rhonda Basler leads the Customer Engagement team at [Hallmark Business Connections](#), Hallmark's B2B subsidiary. An avid business trend watcher, her customer experience expertise comes from combining more than 20 years experience in both Fortune 500s and startups with her strategic insights and knowledge of analytics and technology. When she joined Hallmark eight years ago, she knew she found a job she could truly love. Her true passion is creating innovative approaches to customer experience, employee engagement and omnichannel marketing, transforming them into both human-centered and results-oriented programs.

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LET'S CONNECT | *About Hallmark Business Connections*

As the business-to-business unit of Hallmark Cards, Inc., Hallmark Business Connections leverages more than 100 years of Hallmark heritage, creativity and innovation in the business arena to provide meaningful, memorable and measurable solutions that strengthen business relationships. Hallmark Business Connections is headquartered in Kansas City, Mo., with a second location in Duluth, Minn. For more information, visit HallmarkBusinessConnections.com.

Endnotes

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