THE NEXT GENERATION OF TAG MANAGEMENT DELIVERS MARKETING DATA UNIFICATION

The Evolving Benefits of Tag Management Systems
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Persuasion Path Signals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Beyond Search (PPC) Signals: a Multitude of Attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Data Activated Persuasion and Targeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The Silo Stalemate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The Trouble with Managing Tags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Tag Management as Data Unification Agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Enter Tag Management Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>The Evolution of Tag Management to Marketing Data Unification Platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>The Benefits of Marketing Data Unification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>About the Author</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While Tag Management Systems (TMS) have become necessary for the administration of the growing variety of tags used by advertising and marketing services, a new benefit has been discovered. Tag management systems can now be the agent of marketing data unification, helping marketers more easily classify individual visitors for the purposes of customer experience improvement and persuasion optimization.

TAG MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS CAN NOW BE THE AGENT OF MARKETING DATA UNIFICATION, HELPING MARKETERS MORE EASILY CLASSIFY INDIVIDUAL VISITORS FOR THE PURPOSES OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IMPROVEMENT AND PERSUASION OPTIMIZATION.
The advertiser’s goal has always been to put the right message in front of the right person at the right time. Once the right person’s attention has been captured, the marketer is responsible for guiding the prospect through the buying cycle. Between the two, their shared goal is to increase customer lifetime value.

Search marketing has proven to be an outstanding channel for illuminating customer intent. Advertisers spend billions of dollars to capture the very strong signals about customer desire as expressed through keyword searches.

However, ecommerce and digital marketing have always inferred the possibility of a much more sophisticated promise: the ability to automatically give the right person the right message at the right time and guide them down the proper persuasion path based on a multitude of attributes.

To harness the potential of highly targeted consumer persuasion, organizations need access to multiple sources of clean data. A more comprehensive view of buyer signals would include search, display, website, email, mobile, social, etc., combined with offline CRM and point-of-sale data.
BEYOND SEARCH (PPC) SIGNALS: A MULTITUDE OF ATTRIBUTES

The more signals (i.e. data elements) collected across multiple channels, the more comprehensive the digital profile of each individual.

The better the profile, the more effective the targeted message. One can collect a great deal of diverse shopper data over time and compare them against thousands or millions of other customers.

- Where did they come from? (search, banner ad, blog post, press release, etc.)
- When did they show up? (day part, day of week, season, etc.)
- How much content did they consume? (pages, videos, PDF’s, etc.)
- How recently and how frequently do they interact?
- How have they responded to other promotional efforts?
These attributes fall into four basic categories: Market Segment, Contextual, Behavioral and Attitudinal Data.
Market Segment Attributes
Demographic, psychographic and geographic data have long been part of the advertiser’s tool kit. Age, gender and education; political affiliations, cultural associations and hobbies; and specific location have consistently been used to target prospects with tailored messaging.

Contextual Attributes
Perhaps the most common and oldest means of segmenting marketing is the use of contextual categories. If you sell golf clubs, a golfing magazine is a good place to advertise. An upscale leisure magazine might be a good bet as well even though the context is indirect. People who like yachts are likely to like golf.

- Somebody buying airline tickets is likely to need a rental car.
- Somebody studying data analytics engines is likely to need expert consulting.
- Somebody looking at back-to-school fashions is likely to need school supplies.

The advertiser is leveraging information about what the consumer is reading and intuiting an affiliation to their product category. Search engines start here, but trip over into behavioral attributes almost immediately.
Behavioral Attributes

Rather than focusing purely on the content the consumer is perusing, behavioral attributes are a compendium of what the consumer is doing.

For example, an individual sees a tweet about a new product and clicks a link to an article. The contextual information is still crucial at this point. The subject matter of the tweet prompted action - but the focus now shifts to actions taken.

The captured attributes might include:

- Twitter influence
- Influencers and followers
- Time of day
- Day of week
- Content consumption

Later in the day, the individual enters the product category into a search engine and clicks on a paid search link...

- Keyword (generic)
- Clickthrough

... and then searches for the product by brand name and clicks an organic link.

- Keyword (branded)
- Clickthrough
Visualizing the Customer Journey

As the consumer interacts with the seller, more information is collected about what the individual looks at on the website, how often he/she visits the company’s Facebook page, whether they download PDF materials, calls the customer service department, visits the mobile version of the website, registers for the email newsletter, responds to offers of any kind, and much more.
**Attitudinal**

The oldest attitudinal information organizations have relied on are surveys. How do people feel about a company, a brand, a product, a website or a promotion? Direct surveys allow the firm to query their customers directly while market research is able to ask broader questions of the public in general.

Social media has added a new channel for attitudinal data. In addition to the stilted responses to our specific questions, we now have the ability to listen in on spontaneous online conversations. Gathering and analyzing this unstructured data has developed into a new industry of social media monitoring.

“The more these data elements, collected across multiple channels are combined, the more comprehensive the digital profile of each individual. The better the profile, the more effective the targeted message.”

The more targeted the message, the more successfully the right message can be put in front of just the right person at the just the right time, whether it be a retargeted banner ad, an email offer, a live chat window, a direct tweet or a modified home page of the company’s website.
Combining disparate data collected across multiple channels to build audience profile, begins with a simple question: What do the majority of people buy, once they have looked at products A, B and C? If the answer is D, then the logical step is to recommend D to everybody who has looked at A, B and C.

When more customer attributes are brought into the equation, the offer efficacy improves. Given a large database of prior activity, algorithms of purchase propensity can produce offers that cannot be refused.

This does not work consistently because tastes change, new products enter the market, the economy changes, etc. Therefore, this is not a matter of identifying a business rule, codifying it and moving on. Leveraging this sort of data integration requires making it part of an automated process so it can continuously and fluidly upsell and cross-sell.

When more customer attributes are brought into the equation, the offer efficacy improves. Given a large database of prior activity, algorithms of purchase propensity can produce offers that cannot be refused.
If the individual in question...

- redeemed one of these coupons in the past month and
- saw this banner ad in the past three weeks and
- opened and clicked through on any of these email offers in the past two weeks and
- read this blog post in the past week and
- came to the website using one of these keywords in the past five days and
- retweeted this offer in the past three days and
- clicked on one of these three links in the past ten minutes
- on one of these days of the week
- from an IP address in this region
- when the outside temperature was below this...

...then predictive analytics might suggest that there is an 93% likelihood of them purchasing this item if it is offered with free shipping compared to only a 65% likelihood if it is offered with a 5% discount, even though the 5% discount represents a higher dollar savings.

Statistics, probability and predictive analytics favor a data rich environment.

We use the term “data activated persuasion and targeting” to describe the ability to use a variety of data sources to algorithmically choose the right message for the right person at the right time.

The major obstacle to this data driven, customer communication automation has been the inability to combine the pertinent data sets in a timely way.
As more types of systems come online, more ways to collect more shopper attributes are created. But few of these systems are created with data sharing in mind. Each stores information in its own way for its own purposes. Unique storage techniques make these systems more efficient and therefore more valuable in and of themselves.

But when it comes time to retrieve pertinent data for external uses, it is necessary to create a specific fetch routine for each data silo. This is the classic Electronic Data Interchange problem that has plagued us since the early 1980’s. There was hope that the Internet and Extensible Markup Language (XML) would provide the universal transport and the universal data dictionary required to open the inter-system flow of data.

Alas, the inability to get a unified view of cross-channel data from Search, Website, Mobile, email and offline customer interactions has kept most of us from taking advantage of this data leveraging opportunity.

- Ad servers
- Web analytics
- Browser data
- Mobile app data
- Rich media interaction data
- Call center repositories
- Sales force automation tools
- Accounting programs
- Customer relationship management systems (CRM)
- Social graphing tools,
- Etc.

These systems are designed to be self-referential and tend to be owned and operated by different organizations within a large company.
As a result, accessing them is technically and politically complex. Furthermore, they are constantly evolving in features and storage methods. This makes data connectivity across a multitude of systems the equivalent of refueling and repairing an entire fleet of airplanes in flight.

Even if we can build data links to all the systems that might be beneficial, delivering the liberated data to where it needs to be, in time to be useful, has been another stumbling block.

But a straight forward solution to a very different online data management problem is making many of these shopper attribute values accessible and punctual: the Tag Management System.
The **TROUBLE** with Managing Tags

Page tags are snippets of code on web pages and other online assets that call out to ancillary online services and widgets.

The most common tag allows web analytics tools to keep track of website behavior. But tags are also used to launch routines such as recommendation engines, live chat sessions, telephone call back routines, ad network displays, pop-up customer surveys, multivariate testing tools, tweet stream displays, etc.

Each service requires its own tag and herding these tags can be much more than a full time job.

Page tags become overwhelming in number and are typically controlled by myriad groups within an organization. They are easily broken, often forgotten and can have a devastating effect on a site’s load time.

Because tags live on every page of a website, they are labor-intensive to manage and an enormous barrier to switching to an alternative web analytics tool, testing tool or other service supplier.

Each tag is also inherently complex. Many systems stuff a great deal of logic into their tags (conditional execution, generation of output text, application flow management, etc.) sometimes creating entire JavaScript routines that call additional logic to be loaded.

Tags are often customized for a given company, a given set of pages and even a given promotional campaign. This requires a great deal of professional consulting support.

Hence the need for a Tag Management System (TMS).
TAGS ARE EVERYWHERE

73% Tag Management System (TMS) users edit tags at least once a month

59% TMS users add new tags every month

Source: Forrester survey, 2012
Rather than trying to extract pertinent data from disparate data stores, they can be collected and used as they are being written to those stores.
While managing Internet tags, the TMS can manage all communication from the tags to the services and back.

- The TMS deploys tags, configured with their intended parameters
- The tags call their services and store the collected data
- The TMS communicates the updated tags content to the Services

Performing this humble task puts the TMS in a unique position of being the junction box through which all visitor attribute values flow.

The TMS is the one place where all the shopper data attribute values coexist. This is the data that might be used to target prospects with tailored messaging.

Rather than trying to extract pertinent data from disparate data stores, they can be collected and used as they are being written to those stores.

As a result, just-in-time, data activated persuasion and targeting decisions can be made on the fly and the unique capabilities of each ancillary service are preserved.

The use of a TMS as the data conduit liberates a shopper’s market segment, contextual, behavioral and attitudinal data and delivers on the promise of delivering highly targeted marketing campaigns in real-time.
Enter Tag Management Systems

Tag management is the science of replacing a multitude of tags with a single, container tag. Its job is to call the central tag administration system where multiple tags are controlled in concert. This greatly eases and speeds the deployment, maintenance and modification of tags.

Tag management systems occupy a unique position on websites as the focal point for coordinating the delivery and collection of data and content. Vendors are starting to explore various extensions that build upon foundational tag management capabilities. We’re entering an exciting phase in the development of the tag management solutions market.

Joe Stanhope, Forrester Research

A good TMS simplifies and codifies the deployment, maintenance and modification of tags. They provide templates and offer a tiered architecture of tag configuration, core coding and targeting.

In the process of speeding the implementation of new website features, a TMS passes crucial data between the web server and the systems that leverage the data for their own purposes.
Since the TMS is directing data traffic between the website and the variety of services, it can act as the missing link between customer data set silos.
A TMS manages all vendors’ code and as such is placed on all the client assets from web site to mobile app to digital advertising and digital marketing. From this strategic, advantageous position, a TMS can use a first-party cookie to enable the brand to have a unique and unified view of how the consumer moves from the mobile app, tablet site, website, affiliate site, email and purchase pages.

This ability to join together what is otherwise siloed consumer data from the ad server to web analytics to email system to social media management platform forms the foundation of dynamic, data activated marketing.

Online interaction is important to consumers but offline interaction with the brand can be even more engaging to consumers and more valuable to marketers. The real world - bricks and mortar shops, direct marketing catalogues and call centers - are all staple diets for the consumer.

In 2012, US e-commerce was only 5.2% of all US sales (source: U.S. Commerce Department). At the same time, more than 96% consumers do research online before making a purchase offline in the US and UK (source: Econsultancy, 2012).

The challenge is measuring the cross channel effect. A TMS offers the opportunity to solve the problem by joining the 1st party cookie to the consumer’s customer relationship management (CRM) ID at purchase.

By providing this key at scale, huge data sets can be tied together. The opportunity is to offer consumers better service and better, more effective marketing.

“This ability to join together what is otherwise siloed consumer data from the ad server to web analytics to email system to social media management platform forms the foundation of dynamic, data activated marketing.”
Advertiser: Web sites and apps

Marketing dashboard/tag and data control panel

CLOUD
Master consumer data, tags

ALL consumer marketing data

Online ads: Search, social, display, video

THE NEXT GENERATION OF TAG MANAGEMENT DELIVERS MARKETING DATA UNIFICATION
In addition to finally being able to put the right message in front of the right person at the right time, with marketing data unification, the following becomes possible and/or more practical:

- Track customers’ entire marketing experience on any device across all channels.

- Activate and share data for campaign optimization, personalization, and site experience. Determine which combination of promotional messages in which sequence produced the best results.

- Adjust the budget on media and channels to optimize their return on spend via Attribution Modeling. Simulate historic campaign data and evaluate different scenarios via predictive analytics.
Conclusion

While Tag Management Systems have been a life saver for organizations juggling a growing number of tag-based services, they now offer a new utility that opens the door to a better customer experience and removes the biggest stumbling block to taking full advantage of customer data activated marketing through data unification.
About the Author

Jim Sterne is an international consultant focused on measuring the value of the online marketing for creating and strengthening customer relationships. Sterne has written eight books on using the Internet for marketing, produces the eMetrics Summit and is co-founder and current Chairman of the Digital Analytics Association. He can be found at targeting.com

About TagMan

TagMan is a leading global Tag Management System (TMS), Marketing Data, and Marketing Attribution provider. Since 2007, e-commerce professionals and digital marketers have relied on TagMan to improve website performance and to take control of marketing tags. TagMan introduced the next generation of TMS in 2013 launching the industry’s first Marketing Data Platform (MDP), providing access to TagMan’s marketing data layer collected in real-time and unified by tags. Marketers can now visualize the customer journey and path to purchase with marketing analytics dashboards to reveal the true impact of advertising spend and drive revenue through tag powered data. More than 350 enterprise websites across all major industries make TagMan their go-to partner including clients like Vodafone, Travelocity, Spotify, John Lewis, Virgin Atlantic, The Body Shop, Air New Zealand, Debenhams, DIRECTV, TiVo, and Tesco Mobile. Find out more at www.tagman.com

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