BIZCOMMUNITY

Meet me at the 'ZMOT'

By Patrick Carmody

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"Unless conventional merchants adopt an entirely new perspective-one that allows them to integrate disparate channels into a single seamless omnichannel experience-they are likely to be swept away." *HBR - The Future of Shopping.*

YAY, ANOTHER ACRONYM! Heck, I know, but here goes: so ZMOT is a term coined by Google and it refers to the actions we take once we have been stimulated to act by marketing stimuli.

Let's say you are on the lookout for a tablet and see an ad on TV for the new Blackberry Playbook. Your next step might be to do a web search seeking out reviews, prices, packages etc. You may also jump onto Facebook and elicit an opinion from your friends. The information gathered at ZMOT has a major influence on your in-store behavior (in this case, get an iPad instead!).

The zero moment of truth has become the norm - ZMOT happens 98% of the time before purchasing a high-ticket item - and never used to happen because we didn't have the technology to have a truly meaningful ZMOT. Instead, we relied on word of mouth and visits to an actual store (or first moments of truth).

From audience to individuals

Having a strong ZMOT presence allows brands to have more granular relationships with consumers. They can operate at a hyper-local, individually tailored level. Granular marketing is a big step forward for retailers and it is what makes mobile marketing so powerful.

Your social network is already in your pocket, along with your personal profile on Facebook and a few other online tools. Now you can receive offers, news, product launch info and coupons based on your social graph, location, time of day, previous purchase etc.

You can also opt out of all of this if you so wish. Compare this to the clumsy approach taken by that by that billboard you just drove past or that radio ad you just heard.



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From 'check in' to check out

Think of the following scenario of a consumer travelling via taxi to do a monthly shop:

- Sees an ad for a new hair product on taxi media (stimulus)
- Jumps onto the mobile web to do a web search (ZMOT)
- Finds the product website informative
- Asks her friends about the product on Facebook (ZMOT)
- Puts the brand on her shopping list
- SMSes the shopping list to a short code
- Receives a mobile coupon
- Enters store and checks out the product (first moment of truth)
- Redeems coupon at POS
- Tells her friends about it on social media (second moment of truth)

Pregnant with meaning

We can tell all sorts of things about a consumer from their ZMOT behavior: which store they are near to, whether they have children, their socio-economic profile, what their attitude is towards environmental responsibility etc.

Much like when we decide that it is ok for Facebook to use some of our profile information in exchange for the social utility the platform provides, we will do the same for retailers if they can make our shopping experience easier.

App or mobile site in SA?

A mobisite is the first port of call for South African marketers who want to beef up their ZMOT presence as, unlike in the case of mobile apps, the site can be accessed across platforms and handsets.

From this base, you can look at developing proprietary mobile web tools and apps, which add even more value to the consumers shopping journey.

Sources: www.zeromomentoftruth.com, hbr.org/2011/12/the-future-of-shopping

ABOUT PATRICK CARMODY

Patrick Carmody is head of strategy at Thumbtribe (www.thumbtribe.co.za; thumbtribe.mobi; @thumbtribebiz) and promises to not use granular, sticky and omnichannel in a sentence. Email him at patrick.carmody@thumbtribe.mobi and follow @paddycarmody on Twitter.

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