

5 tips to leverage data-driven insights to understand your audience

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A few years ago, a substantial 75% of consumers said in a research report that they didn't mind sharing personal data online as long as they got something valuable in return.



Keira Burton [Flexels](#) Mongezi Mati, brand strategist at Rogerwilco says customers give away data about themselves every time they are online

Consumers give away far more information about themselves than they realise, so while they're doing you the favour, why don't brands reciprocate and give them the very thing the data tells you they want and need?

In today's hyper-competitive landscape, the market will increasingly belong to brands that leverage data-driven insights to understand their audience and then captivate them with messaging that has a meaningful impact on their lives.

5 tips to leverage data-driven insights to understand your audience

Here are tips on how to make sense of the data your current and future customers give away about themselves every time they get online.

1. Understand your competitive landscape

You couldn't manage, let alone be, a truly successful brand without knowing who your real-world competitors are. But surprisingly few brand and marketing managers fully grasp the websites that compete with theirs for eyeballs—and let's be clear, it's not just that other shoe or soft drink brand; consumers are searching for a wide variety of products and solutions, so bidding for space against the brand you think is your biggest competitor, is no guarantee of getting those valuable eyeballs.

Tracking your online market share of search, compared to that of your competitors, using tools like Rogerwilco's Wolf report, can provide a strong indicator of future commercial performance but also invaluable insights into what sorts of brand communications turn your audience on, or off, and how you can do it better.

2. Create customer personas

These are archetypal representations of your customers (and subsets thereof) developed by examining their behaviours, motivations, goals, expectations and needs. A customer persona is an excellent way of visualising your audience so you can communicate more appropriately and personally with them.

It should be based on actual, not just theoretical, research, which means conducting surveys and focus groups, interviewing existing customers, observing them in the market or at work, and tracking their online habits in granular detail.

A thorough customer persona should include the following:

- Demographic data such as age, gender, income, location and occupation.
- Behavioural data around brand and product interactions and purchase history.
- Psychographic data that delves a little deeper into your audience to illuminate their values, lifestyle, interests and mindset.
- Feedback data that helps understand their response to your product, gleaned from surveys, social media, reviews and the like.

3. Audit your search engine optimisation

Communicating with your customers the right way often requires taking a good, hard look at your SEO practices, including your keyword research, indexing, site architecture and that all-important user experience. If your SEO doesn't measure up, there's a good chance your audience isn't picking up what you're putting down.

4. Keep an eye on social media

This one's a no-brainer. Social media is a treasure trove of insights into what your customers think, feel and want – but also how they talk about these thoughts, feelings and desires. What sort of language do they use? What are the most used words? On which platforms are your audience most active, and how do their respective segments vary across these? When are they most active, and how long do they typically spend engaging with content? Learning the answers to these questions will go a long way in helping you speak their language.

5. Read the data story

It's clear that to understand your audience – and ensure that they understand you – you need data. Lots of data. But with so much data available, it can be difficult to structure it and spot trends.

Dashboards that draw together information from disparate sources are a good start, but they come to life when they're designed to weave all those data points into a rich, data-driven narrative.

A narrative-driven dashboard takes as its starting point the question “What happened?” and by following the story that unfolds from there, you can gain tangible, actionable insights into customer behaviour. Think of it as understanding their story, so you can better tell yours.

As the digital landscape continues to evolve, brands face the daunting task of crafting strategies that resonate across multiple touchpoints. But are you truly speaking your audience’s language or simply adding to the digital noise?

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