Midas Touch: Turning Customer Trigger Points into Engagement and Monetization Gold

By Yaniv Sulkes

In an age when communication service providers (CSPs) are faced with increasingly cut-throat competition, ballooning network data usage and declining revenues, mobile operators are being forced to find new avenues and strategies that can be leveraged to "up the ante." When it comes to delivering a differentiated experience to business and individual consumers, one of the most important things a CSP can do to monetize their networks and create loyal and satisfied customers, is to increase touch-point interactions – or points of engagement - with consumers, says recent data.

Each and every customer interaction is absolutely critical when it comes to customer satisfaction, service quality and overall brand image. The digital customer experience is essential to understanding the user's perception of a network, their behavior on the network, and what applications and features they are using for business or personal reasons. On average, users have roughly 72 online interactions daily with the mobile network, allowing for 72 different opportunities that can contribute to an overall positive perception of the digital customer experience. While certain aspects of the customer experience cannot be fully controlled or managed by service providers, subjective factors such as individual perceptions, emotions and behavior can alter and impact the customer's impression of their mobile network and how they use it.

By optimizing each exchange and leveraging actual network usage data, CSPs can identify and present targeted offerings based on specific customer triggers – ultimately shifting away from byte-driven or "bucket" plans. Not only do these trigger points help CSPs discover new, smarter ways to propose customized and valuable offers to subscribers in real-time, but they also enable CSPs to increase service uptake, reduce time-to-revenue for new services and foster greater customer loyalty.

For CSPs, the challenge is taking millions of unique mobile subscribers and their complex, multitudinous interests, exhibited by their online behavior, and matching this with the different digital services that they like to use or subscribe to. When done properly, CSPs that are able to skillfully leverage users' digital

experience data to enhance customer satisfaction all while reducing churn and increasing revenue will be more successful in a very competitive marketplace.

In this complex mobile environment, service providers should take note of six key triggers that are highly likely to impact subscriber behaviors, including:

Using Risk to Seek Reward

According to the survey, males and millennials tend to visit 'risky sites,' or websites that are identified as a potential sources of malware, spyware and phishing scams, more than any other user demographic. The survey found that males are 7.5 times more likely, while millennials are 21(!) times more likely, to visit a risky site than a typical subscriber. On that same note, due to the sheer volume of websites they visit on a daily basis, business men and women also come into regular contact with these types of sites.

With business users and consumers spending more time in the mobile environment, it's important for them to know that their device and data are safe while they connect to new or public networks to conduct sensitive business. Open, free networks may offer convenience, but personal and business data is more susceptible to criminal activity. To prevent and prohibit incoming and outgoing threats, such as spam, blacklisting and phishing, to name a few, CSPs can provide network-based security solutions that scan devices and protect users to help put their minds at ease, while not having an impact on battery life and device performance.

As the online threat landscape evolves and becomes more complex, Security-as-a-Service (SECaas) solutions work to protect users and their content. Whether in the office, an academic environment or at home, networks have an ever present need for effective security solutions in a rapidly growing and connected world.

Business users especially are more likely to invest in, and value, protection from threats that could infect their device and potentially jeopardize or compromise critical business data. CSPs should not only offer, but highlight, security services to these user groups in particular. These offerings, including anti-malware, anti-virus and content filtering, can not only help to mitigate the number of daily threats subscribers are exposed to, but also can act as an enormous draw for subscribers looking for safe and secure networks to trust with their personal and professional data.

Hopping on the Video Bandwagon

In the last couple of years, video streaming has become a major driver for smartphone adoption and thus an important trigger point for mobile subscribers across the globe to take note of. It's no surprise that sharing videos across social channels, like Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, has become as predominant and popular as photo sharing, with business users, millennials and the "digitally hooked" – heavy mobile users - having the most transactions with video sharing and streaming sites every day. With an understanding of these groups and what they're looking for in the video realm, CSPs can offer video-centric packages, especially those that include application and content bundling, shared data plans and other premium packages, to these mobile users to rapidly and exponentially increase revenue and build customer engagement and loyalty.

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Turning Lemons into Lemonade

It may seem like an unlikely touchpoint, but a significant amount of network users - the digitally hooked, millennials, business users and males making up the majority - are visiting the websites of their communication provider's competitors. More than one might think. Approximately .75 percent of subscribers visit a competitor CSP site on a daily basis,whether browsing for better mobile offerings or seeking a deal. These user profiles tend to churn rather quickly in hopes of snagging an advantageous, cost-saving plan, or one that appeals to their particular mobile wants and

needs better than their current provider. Having this information in their back pocket, CSPs can engage with these individuals by offering targeted retention packages designed to keep valued subscribers from leaving the network.

Lifting Your Head to the Cloud

Applications are increasingly hosted in the cloud for improved accessibility and better management. Until now, Dropbox and other over-the-top (OTT) file storage services have been a hugely untapped opportunity for CSPs. By offering file storage alternatives, CSPs have an opportunity to better engage with multiple groups of users, from business professionals to students, while creating a new source of revenue by differentiating available service offerings. Communication providers should also consider offering their own file storage solutions with unique CSP backup services and security add-ons to pique the interest of this user demographic. Since protection against cyber threats and criminals in the cloud might be weaker and potentially questionable, cloud security is crucial for patching any weak links and managing shared access efficiently and effectively.

Monetizing on the Wanderers

It's no surprise that users who frequent airline, hotel and even entertainment sites are oftentimes on the move. To monetize engagement with this segment of the population, CSPs would be wise to offer voice and data roaming packages relevant to travelers - especially business users, who visit travel sites up to three times more than a typical subscriber. International travel and roaming charges can add up quickly, deterring users
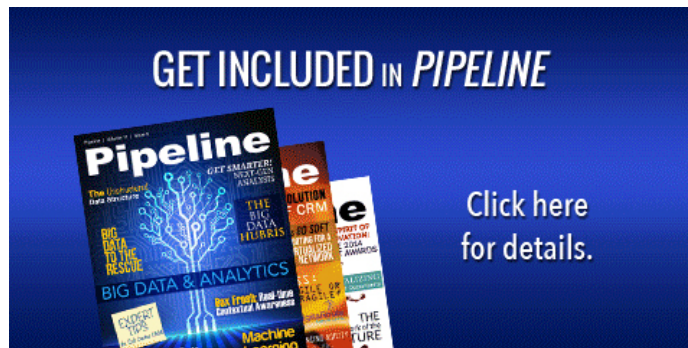
from purchasing or extending their call, messaging or data plans, and such charges also have an impact on customer satisfaction. Roaming offers can oftentimes be generic, which is why CSPs that go above and beyond to offer application-specific or customized offerings, according to an individual's profile, tend to reap the increased benefits in terms of monetization and loyalty.

Making Hotspots Even Hotter

Accessing free WiFi is as easy as walking to a local coffee shop or even some select department stores. Successful upsell engagement can be achieved by CSPs that offer users a shared data package that potentially eliminates their need for tethering entirely, all while allowing subscribers to browse securely from wherever they are. Multi-device plans and WiFi add-ons can monetize engagement with millennials, youth and business users that utilize mobile hotspots more than other user groups. In fact, business professionals use mobile hotspots 69% more than the typical customer profile and millennials sit at 45% more, according to the study.

In today's increasingly competitive environment, CSPs have an opportunity to completely transform the customer experience and increase loyalty by analyzing online behavior and actions, without having an impact on privacy, to offer relevant digital services that match mobile users' diverse interests. As CSPs continue to step into their role as digital lifestyle providers, examining their customers' daily interactions within the network will give CSPs the upper hand in becoming better equipped to not only understanding user diversity, but also providing an opportunity to offer relevant services to each customer at the most opportune moment for uptake. In addition, CSPs can offer security solutions to safeguard users, their devices and data from cyber threats and attacks. It is crucial for CSPs to be aware of - and take advantage of - these triggers and the insights that subscriber intelligence enables in order to monetize and maximize their data assets and network investments.