

IN YOUR VIEW

BIG IDEAS FROM BIG DATA

Technology is driving innovation more than ever, enabling brands to be proactive in their relationships with customers.

Forum members provided their thoughts on ways the industry could harness technological advances to bring ideas more quickly to market and better engage customers through personalisation of contact, among other developments.

It seems the possibilities are endless.



DATA-DRIVEN INSIGHT



PAUL BIRKS

Decision Solutions Director, Equifax

To drive innovation and engage customers, financial services providers need to be targeting the right people with the right products at the right time. Technological advancements such as the use of data-driven insights can help providers meet their compliance obligations for 'know your customer' and 'treating customers fairly'. In identifying what their customers have bought in the past, providers can ensure product suitability. It also leads to improved customer engagement and enables better management of relationships throughout the customer journey. Organisations can harness characteristics to enhance understanding of their customers' investment purchase behaviours, such as inferred goals and attitudes to risk.

PERSONALISATION IS KEY



KEVIN MOUNTFORD

Head of Banking, Moneysupermarket

In recent years, it has become apparent that, in its desire to drive down costs, the industry has looked to deliver more automated solutions. As a result, the various products and services on offer have become more generic and failed to take into account the way in which consumers are beginning to adapt to the modern world, increasingly demanding greater personalisation and non-standard offerings. There are many reasons for this and no doubt technology has helped to shape this change in behaviour. The industry now needs to harness this and in turn use new technology to provide more customer-centric products and services.

BETTER ENGAGEMENT



MARK LOFTHOUSE

CEO, Mortgage Brain

Traditionally, financial advice was a face-to-face process from beginning to end. While a broker's expertise will never be replaced, technology continues to play a key role in customer engagement and delivery of new products. The rise of cloud computing, mass adoption of mobile and tablet devices, and the related development of financial services apps, means that brokers can now work and engage efficiently with their customers whether they are at home, in the office or on the train. The next few years will see a major growth in the development and use of tablets, websites and other forms of mobile connectivity, driven largely by increased consumer demand for faster and more efficient ways of buying financial services, as well as 24/7 access.

USE BIG DATA WISELY



BENJAMIN TRESHAM

UK Accounts, Deep Insight Ltd

Recent research from IBM's CMO Insight study states 85% of Chief Marketing Officers are not ready for Big Data. This presents a risk to the industry; people want to choose channels of communication and are increasingly expecting a personalised experience. To deny them this is to eventually damage your brand. Organisations that utilise big data properly will be able to spot data trends, understand customer behaviour properly and provide a truly customised experience. To do this, you have to look at the different customer touch points. This should be a 'holistic' 360° view of your organisation, which might sound simple, but the reality is far more complex. This should be planned into the organisation's customer experience and analysis framework.

GAIN COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE



MARK HOLLYOAKE

Founder, Customer Attuned

Maximising opportunities from customer insights depends on effectively and quickly communicating knowledge to co-create value solutions. The windows of opportunity are ever shorter in B2B and first-mover advantage is increasingly more difficult to realise. Technology offers opportunities to share value-adding insight and deepen trust. This then lays the groundwork for increased share and portfolio development, early adoption and longer-term strategic platforms. Harness developments with information platforms (secure forums, social media group) and access points (cloud). Ensure information is up-to-date, relevant, accessible, consistent and reliable.

MAKING IT MEANINGFUL



PETER VEASH

CEO, The BIO Agency

Consumers are no longer passive recipients of financial services; they are far more discerning and seek meaningful experiences. That means making their lives easier. It's about understanding how customers interact with the brand and looking to make services personalised towards the consumer. To be a success, services need to integrate the online and offline experience, which can take the form of tablets in high-street branches to support customer transactions, for example, while messages sent via email, texts and social networking sites from the banks will start to appear in the same way. This approach requires a rethink of business models to place digital at the core, by adopting the right infrastructure to react to the changing digital world. A new culture of digital and exciting technology must come from the top down and become institutional.

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PETER VEASH

QUICK AND NIMBLE



JANE PARRY

Group Marketing Executive, Camellia PLC

The great thing about technology is that you can service customer needs exactly where and, perhaps more importantly, when and how they want. You also don't need to be a 24-hour company to show people their portfolio details at 3am, or to let them read/watch your latest market commentary. It works for even the smallest company, which can create and email a PDF across the world in under a minute, or develop podcasts or videos as alternative means of engagement, rather than being constrained to just a printed newsletter. In the same way, technology allows you to offer customers the chance to comment or ask questions. You can readily and cost-effectively seek feedback on your products and services to inform future developments. Technology can level the playing field, ultimately driving competition and innovation.

THE CONNECTED CONSUMER



ALAN THORPE

Business Development Director, Indicia

Technology gives marketers new ways to converse with customers. But it has also fundamentally changed the way they respond to marketing. In a short space of time, driven by the mass adoption of social media, the 'connected consumer' has evolved. Individuals have moved from a passive role of listening to a state of active engagement, filtering, rating and selecting within their networks. If you're faceless, people won't want to connect with you. Instead, they want to get to know you, like you, follow you and eventually trust you – crucial in the financial services sector. With more of us conducting at least some of our financial affairs on the go through mobile banking and home budgeting apps, FS brands must be visible on social media because if you're not talking about your brand, you can be sure someone else is.

THE REVOLUTION IS HERE



RICHARD BROADBENT

Vice President of Strategy & Channel Development, International Group, Fiserv

Technology innovation is happening at breakneck speed, contributing to radical change occurring in our everyday lives. The financial services industry has historically been a late adopter when it comes to technology, mainly because it didn't have a need to differentiate itself with consumers to be competitive commercially, but that is changing. With the emergence of social platforms, availability of new devices and immediate access to information, banks customers are becoming far more demanding – and rightly so. Technology can revolutionise banking as it has for buying music or catching up with friends and should be front and centre for any bank that wants to win the race for hearts and minds.

GET TO KNOW YOUR CUSTOMER



LAURA HURFORD

Director, Convertr Media

Embracing new technology means implementing intelligent solutions designed to make life simpler. As a provider of innovative Customer Acquisition Tools, Convertr believes the industry would naturally benefit from embracing technology

that enables them to create richer, truer (not just behavioural) profiles of their customers and prospects, allowing them to market to individuals in the most effective way – be it via channel, product or content. To develop innovation and engagement, the sector requires transparency to understand exactly who their customers are, where they are from and what to do to move the relationship forward. By using available software to customise marketing campaigns and connect with prospective customers on a personal level, the resulting ROI, efficiency and lifetime value of that engaged consumer is maximised.

USE THE RIGHT TECH



JANE TWEDDLE

Financial Services Principal, SAP UKI

We are operating in a data-driven world where advanced technology needs to sit at the core of financial services organisations. It is vital that businesses implement the correct technologies, such as the cloud, in-memory technology and predictive analytics to utilise this data. As well as helping to minimise risk and increase efficiency, they provide the opportunity for organisations to identify new opportunities. In this way, organisations can differentiate themselves through innovation, targeting the right products at the right time to meet the needs of the customer. More so, they are able to use this insight to improve customer service and satisfaction levels, ultimately increasing customer loyalty.

SHIFT TO WEARABLES



DAVID EVANS

Managing Director, Collinson Insurance Group

Technology now runs like a spine through everything we do. The 'always on' world is truly with us and the next big shift will be towards wearables. From banking to insurance, how we monitor the activity of individuals to create more accurate premiums or more secure payments and transfers will be crucial. By latching on to an innate desire to know how well we slept, how far we walked, how fast we drove, we should, as an industry, embrace the technology that drives engagement and allow us to create bespoke pricing for customers. Payments and transfers from your watch with fingerprint ID will be commonplace. Customer engagement will occur if the insight that technology delivers is applied to the experiences that we offer our customers.

TO YOUR CONVENIENCE



IAN EWART

Head of Products, Services & Marketing, Coutts

At Coutts, we want our clients to use a variety of channels to manage their banking and investments, to their convenience. Notably, we've seen a distinct shift in the increased use of mobile devices. The challenge is in providing our clients with the tools and information they need and to leverage data to deliver truly personalised experiences that meet those needs. One way we increase client connectivity is through social media – using Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook to provide timely information and research to clients. Beyond service, our prime concern for our clients is their security and operating safety when accessing their accounts and transacting online.

WORKING BACKWARDS



JILL HOLOHAN
UK Propositions Director,
Fidelity Worldwide Investment

In 1997, before the rise of Apple into its current megalithic form, Steve Jobs addressed a conference saying: 'We have to start with the customer experience and work backwards to the technology.' This is the key point – harnessing technology to genuinely drive better customer outcomes rather than technology for technology's sake. We operate in an industry beset by customer apathy and mistrust. Many customers don't engage because it's easier to do nothing and, as a result, they fail to meet their savings and retirement needs. At Fidelity we're looking to technology to make things more accessible and remove barriers to engagement, making it easy to access and engage with investments through mobile and personalised help, analysis and guidance.

TRUST BUILDING



PAUL WOLFERSTAN
Head of Organic Media, Teamspirit

Technology is now the wallpaper for many customers' lives, and should no longer be the reason that a product or service is created, just one of the enablers. I see the biggest opportunity for technology being the chance to personalise at scale and yet make relationships with customers more human than they have been for the last 30 years. Talking less about product, and instead using the ubiquity of mobile to help people solve the everyday problems of their lives allows the rebuilding of trust from small moments of reciprocity. Once that trust is there, the same ubiquitous technology can be used to nudge behaviour in positive ways that are good for brands and their customers.

INFORMATION WAREHOUSE



WARREN TUDOR
Chief Technology Officer, Collinson Group

Previously only large corporations with seven-figure budgets could contemplate developing an enterprise 'data warehouse'. Roll forward to 2014 and the landscape has changed. Technology is no longer the key barrier to delivering not only big data, but the big insights that can drive behavioural change. Specialist vendors now offer powerful platforms and tools which can be rapidly configured and deployed to capture customer data to feed in to insightful business strategies. Aligning this with effective technical and project management and clear business objectives remains critical for success. The only limitations remain business commitment and the expertise to derive game-changing insights from this vast information resource.

THE BIGGER PICTURE



RONNIE BROWN
Group Digital Manager, Hiscox

Gaining insight into the needs of customers is extremely important, be it from their behaviour or from your frontline employees' feedback. However, this is only part of the story. Having a vision around the use of technology within wider society and culture should act as your north star,

as customers need to be led to innovation as well as drive it. Finally, setting yourself up to be flexible and quick to change is imperative as the world gets even more complicated in terms of technology and media choices.

FREERING UP RESOURCES



KIM BRIEN
Chief Information Officer, HML

Customer experience should be put at the centre of all decisions involving harnessing new technology. At HML, we have invested over £30 million into our IT over the past four years, and in the space of a few months we have secured the Gartner Business Process Management Excellence Award and the Mortgage Finance Gazette Award for Best Use of Technology – non-lender. These two awards focused on our introduction of new technology that enabled consultants to spend more time on customer service than data entry, improving customer experience. Using technology to free up resources so frontline staff can spend more time with customers is essential within our industry. Traceability of customer requests has also been improved, and the full audit trail left means customer queries are dealt with quickly and accurately. This leads to less frustration all round and results in a more positive customer experience.

REAL-TIME CUSTOMER SERVICE



MICHAEL GAUGHAN
Chief Executive, FWD Group

People use technology as and when it is convenient to them, often hopping between phones, tablets and laptops. Innovations such as advanced virtual helpdesks, Facetime and telepresence, supported by real people at the end of the line, are great examples of how financial services can harness technology to provide something that is genuinely useful to customers. Technology has made us all impatient and even waiting a few seconds for a webpage to load can feel a long time. But allowing access through multiple devices to a variety of remote helpers will provide real-time service, meaning customers might start to embrace financial services with the same enthusiasm that they embrace technology.

CAPTURE THE CUSTOMER VOICE



DAVID JACKSON
CEO, ClickTools

While technology generates opportunities to create new products and business models, more emphasis should be placed on something available now but rarely used effectively. That is the role technology plays in capturing the voice of the customer and synthesising its different elements into a picture that the whole company can use to personalise interactions and products. Customers also speak through their actions with competitors. What share of wallet do we have? Why choose Competitor X over us? Synthesising this myriad data is innovation itself. More important is how a comprehensive customer view uncovers opportunities for innovation.

'SYNTHESISING THIS MYRIAD DATA IS INNOVATION ITSELF. MORE IMPORTANT IS HOW A COMPREHENSIVE CUSTOMER VIEW UNCOVERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATION.'

DAVID JACKSON

CONTENT IS KING



RUPERT HODSON

Founder and Director, Dianomi

Financial content, whether in the form of words, graphics, images or videos, is emerging as a critical driver of both revenue and reputation, as financial brands position themselves as thought leaders with their target audiences. Content marketing allows brands to differentiate themselves and reach, acquire and retain customers more effectively. Content is very much king, but it is the distribution of this content that is queen. Content discovery networks such as Outbrain, Taboola and Dianomi provide a cost-effective channel through which brands are able to engage and build their audiences. This content discovery technology enables brands to 'surface' links to their content across premium publishers and only pay when a user clicks through to view the content on the brand's site.

GET MOBILE



DAVID HAMILTON

Director, Dog Digital

Technology as an enabler for innovation and engagement is particularly relevant in the mobile/tablet space, which must rise in its strategic importance across marketing plans in 2014. Technology allows us to deliver true personalisation within content-driven campaigns, but low device usage analytics or subjective misgivings often still excludes mobile as a critical aspect of our campaigns. Yet that same data regularly shows us that customers are using mobile technology at key moments of the day (commute, lunch and home) that would enable the delivery of highly customised content-driven experiences alongside digital outdoor, desktop, second screen and yes, even print. Positive and innovative customer experiences are critical for 2014 and embracing mobile technology will be fundamental for success. Social media offers an unrivalled opportunity to connect directly with them - whether they are customers, graduates, investors or employees.

STEP BY STEP



NEIL EVANS

Managing Director, Occam

There are three steps to consider in order to get the most from technology. First, you have to understand who your customers are and what kind of interaction they want. Here, you're trying to define what you're trying to achieve and why you're doing it. Once that is established, you can move onto the second step - understanding how you can make this happen, ie what channels to use and what kind of content. The final step is to work out how to deliver this using the technology available to you. It's vital at this point to think about your team's skills, abilities and processes to deliver your outcomes.

EVOLVE TO ENGAGE



EMMA DALTON

Research Manager, Harris Interactive

Our research has shown that 43% of customers want a closer relationship with their bank. The institutions that really innovate, taking customer experience to the next level and connecting with customers most effectively, will be the ones who achieve this. Many financial services are already paving the way, with some US banks introducing mobile photo balance transfers and mobile photo bill payments. Further examples of leading technological innovation include Virgin Money's Money Lounges and Allied Irish Bank's Lab interactive branch. These help provide that elusive connection with customers which simply does not exist with generic online banking.

ADVICE ON THE GO



TUNDE COCKSHOT

Creative Consultant, Amaze

Consumers' purchasing patterns are a gold mine of information, so far undisturbed. With the rise of mobile digital banking, an interesting new ingredient has been added to the data mix - context. Banks will need to make use of this real-time data and immediately respond to a consumer's purchase, or even a potential purchase. A digital bank of the future, where all purchases are facilitated via a mobile phone, means a virtual financial advisor can accompany the consumer at all times. They can advise on potential purchases and how to afford big-ticket items; make timely offers; send relevant targeted personal marketing messages; offer live price comparisons; and help consumers to visualise their monthly budgeting. To achieve this means highly responsive data analysis, and banks will have to invest heavily in solving big-data problems. However, they will also have to take a real-time mindset to customer relations.

MOBILE MARKETING



SANDY WOOD

Head of Business Development, Electrum

In today's world of mobile platforms, it is vital that marketers in the financial services industry learn to utilise this fast and effective method of delivery. The ability to increase customer engagement through regular contact and real-time information will be the decisive factor in engaging with customers or falling behind. All marketers should be aware of the monumental shift towards mobile and realise the potential gains of engagement through apps, responsive websites and the power of mobile social media. Using technology to rapidly increase speed to market to show responsiveness to current events and issues will greatly increase engagement and trust.

'THE KEY IS A COMMUNICATION SYSTEM THAT CAN UNLOCK THE INSIGHTS WITHIN FINANCIAL AND PROFILE DATA.'

MATTHEW WALKO

HEALTHY OPPORTUNITIES



SIMON MILLER

Head of Marketing, Individual Health, AXA PPP Healthcare

Wearable tech in the form of health monitoring devices is already a well-established mainstream reality. You only have to visit the iTunes Health & Fitness App Store to see the plethora of mobile health tools currently available. From an insurer's perspective, cynics might immediately jump to the conclusion that this will only be used as a tool for underwriters to assess risk. However, in the small but fiercely competitive health insurance market, that's the opposite of our mindset. Rather, we are seeking to find ways to harness the technology and use the data to open up the market, to help members avoid health risks, and to facilitate more focused and timely intervention with our expert medical support. The challenge is as much about reassuring and supporting consumers in making meaningful added-value use of the data as it is about harnessing the technology.

CUTTING THROUGH THE NOISE



MATTHEW WALKO

Head of Strategy, Omobono

There is further potential in leveraging technology to personalise insights and communications at scale. Particularly with younger customers, there is a new expectation brought about by recommendation-driven services to receive relevance at all times. These customers want content based on their personal situation, needs and behaviour, accessed on their own terms and in their preferred medium. Designing a personalised content user experience across their customer journey can help build engagement in a world of overwhelming choice. The key is a communication system that can unlock the insights within financial and profile data, which can then be mapped into a repository of engaging content, housed in templated communication formats. The result: engaging customers with personalised advice and insight, at scale and in real time.

SECURITY DRIVES TAKE-UP



STEVE SHAW

Head of Digital, Branded3

I believe that the financial industry can harness digital channels such as mobile devices, smart TVs coupled with technology platforms, and stacks to provide a wider-appealing service. Ensuring that the technology they implement includes the latest security features, secure data layers and encryption techniques will drive confidence for consumers with an increased uptake in services. These on-demand services via digital channels will broaden appeal to a more technology-savvy audience

and increase customer engagement. Using new technology for user profiling, financial services can monitor the use of its digital services and combine this with customer personas, content tagging and functionality tracking, to provide a personalised service and, more importantly, identify opportunities with its customers.

IT'S SIMPLE, REALLY



CHRIS STEAD

Joint MD, Consensus Research

I love the phrase 'harness technology'. Close your eyes and imagine Larry Page or Mark Zuckerberg being strapped up to a cart on a long rein. We all think fondly about the Pony Express. Just 150 years ago, its record for communicating between the east and west coasts of America was just under eight days; the public were astonished. My first game of Space Invaders blew my mind. Now my kids refuse to use the 'ancient' PS2. Technology and innovation don't need to be harnessed or driven; it will happen, it will evolve. Get the basics right. Honest, decent service, with the customer at the centre of all you do. It's the same in Dodge City as it is in hyperspace.

PEER-TO-PEER LEADS THE WAY



JULIAN WELLS

Director, Whitecap Consulting Limited

The place where technology, innovation and customer engagement are all coming together in financial services is the fast-emerging peer-to-peer lending sector. Peer-to-peer lending is using a combination of new technology and changing consumer attitudes to create genuine disruption in the industry. While new names like Zopa, RateSetter, Funding Circle, ThinCats, and rebuildingociety.com are now featuring regularly in the national press, established providers are also now taking an interest. Many large brands are looking to tackle customer engagement and retention by embracing the speed of technological change and innovation. They recognise this provides a compelling proposition of an engaging brand experience and the best value service. Peer-to-peer is a perfect vehicle to deliver exactly that.

BEHIND THE TIMES?



PETER BRODNICKI

Chief Executive, Mortgage Advice Bureau

Technology in terms of the customer experience is pretty much restricted to comparison sites, with intermediaries behind the times and not meeting customers' rapidly changing expectations. Websites are generally poor and are not responsive to tablet/mobile access, and the use of social media in terms of Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn is virtually non-existent, with the exception of a handful of firms. In fact, potential customers increasingly assess the credibility of the firm or adviser they are speaking to by online presence and social media. In fairness, the vast majority of these systems have not been designed to engage customers and yet the customer experience and consistency of advice can be significantly enhanced if intermediaries are given the tools and trained on how to adapt their sales process to embrace the benefits technology can bring.

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