

Take
personalisation
beyond
“Hello,
[firstname]”



A decade ago,

the idea of personalised communication with consumers was considered the absolute zenith of marketing.

But today, when most people think of “consumer personalisation”, they picture a generic email with their first name copied and pasted in. Does that mean personalisation is dead?

Not a chance.

Because anybody who’s had a truly individual experience with a business—a handwritten note from the owner, maybe, or a bartender who remembers your order—knows how nice it feels.

And that’s why I’ve written this e-book: to convince you that the goal of accurate, impactful personalisation is not only alive and kicking, but worth fighting for.

And I hope to show you how Twilio is helping more brands realise that goal.

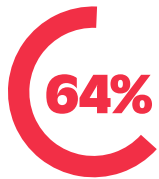


* . . * . i Nicholas Kontopoulos * . .



Consumers want personalised experiences

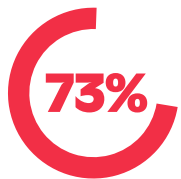
Few facts are clearer than this. A recent study found that:



of consumers say they will spend more on a brand that personalises their experience.



say that personalisation increases their brand loyalty.



go as far as quitting a brand if their experience isn't personalised.

Clearly, consumers want brands to connect with them on a personal level—and are more than happy to punish brands that fail to do so. Most marketers understand both the value of personalisation and the risk of not personalising their communication.



The only problem is brands and consumers seem to see “personalisation” very differently.



Over half of the companies in APAC think they've mastered personalisation, but customers beg to differ. The impact of most personalisation efforts is negligible, and personalisation can be actively harmful when you get it wrong.

What accounts for this discrepancy? Well, the unfortunate truth is...




Expectations have adapted, but personalisation strategies haven't

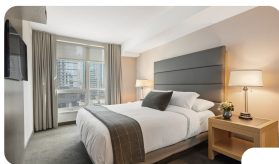
There was a time when including your customer's first name in a marketing email seemed like witchcraft. You'd see a big increase in conversion simply because customers were impressed by your personalisation efforts. But almost every business now includes that basic level of personal information, which means customers see it as the bare minimum.

This creates a tension between consumers and brands.

Brands think they're giving consumers a positive experience, but the reality is most of it has no impact at all. Basic personalisation is no longer witchcraft; consumers know exactly how it works. And given the volume of data they are giving you, most consumers expect to be repaid with a truly spectacular experience.



OWL RESERVATIONS



Standard

Hello, Paola. We have confirmed your booking. We look forward to seeing you soon!

1 Adult

07.16.2023

We just had a cancellation, would you prefer the 2nd floor garden view like your last visit?

Prices
\$198.00 **\$159.00** \$256.00

Book Now

Brands need to achieve true *“individualisation”*

In our industry, personalisation has become shorthand for basic data fields that help us treat consumers like people, but not individuals. We need to make a clear break from this simplistic approach that assumes consumers will be impressed that we know their names—and embrace what I call “individualisation”.

The concept is simple: We use all of the data we’ve amassed about our consumers to build a **real relationship with them**. We extend the premise of “personalised” content across every touchpoint, from marketing and sales to customer support. And we ask questions that really matter, like:

- What makes each customer unique?
- What do they actually care about?
- And how do they want to engage with our brand?

This might sound difficult, but it’s the only way to truly stand out when every brand is trying to connect with customers.



How zenyum made the leap to *individualisation*

With Twilio Segment, Zenyum is able to add a customer’s e-commerce history to a customer profile, letting them provide a more tailored experience and relevant product recommendations. For example, Zenyum can remind customers to replenish their supply of toothpaste or let them know it’s time to change their toothbrush head—at just the right time.

[Read the Full Story](#)





But if that's possible, why aren't more brands doing it?

It's simple: most businesses don't believe it is possible. A lot of this comes down to technical limitations: 39% of businesses struggle to implement personalisation technology effectively. In fact, the number of companies that say getting accurate data for personalisation is a challenge has actually increased ten points since 2022—with 50% now struggling.

There are several reasons technology troubles companies so much, from data silos between teams to duplicate entries. No matter the exact reason, the result is a big lag between data collection and activation. That is not a great experience for anyone—it creates a disconnect between leaders and their teams; brands and their customers.



Did you know?
Businesses spend up to 30% of their time trying to clean their data.

But the solution isn't to give up—it's to rethink your approach. So let's explore how a combination of new technology and creative thinking can help businesses build a proactive strategy that achieves true "individualisation".



Four steps towards *individualisation* you can take right now



Rethink your data

Every business understands that data is the essence of personalisation. We call it the “signal and trigger” model: Consumers send signals about their intentions, desires and challenges; and brands use data to respond immediately to those signals by triggering a message.

But recent changes in the industry have made this harder. The disappearance of cookies dealt a blow to businesses that were used to purchasing all of their data, while increasingly complicated martech and CRM ecosystems have created silos and made it harder to actually use all of the data that they’ve amassed.



The solution is to *Rethink* how you use data.

Our goal is not to collect endless volumes of data on consumers; that would generate too much noise, which actually gets in the way of meaningful engagement. Instead, our goal is to collect quality, actionable data so we have a better picture of what consumers really want—and deliver it. Today, technology is making that possible at scale.

Twilio Segment Customer Data Platform (CDP) serves as a single source for all your real-time customer and communication data, allowing you to see data in real time and create triggers that operate on real-time data—so you’re no longer relying on last week’s manually generated dataset.

AI tools take this a step further, allowing you to predict the next step. When every consumer signal is fed into a system that is highly attuned to larger patterns of behaviour and intent—you’re ultimately able to make far more accurate predictions about consumers’ desires.

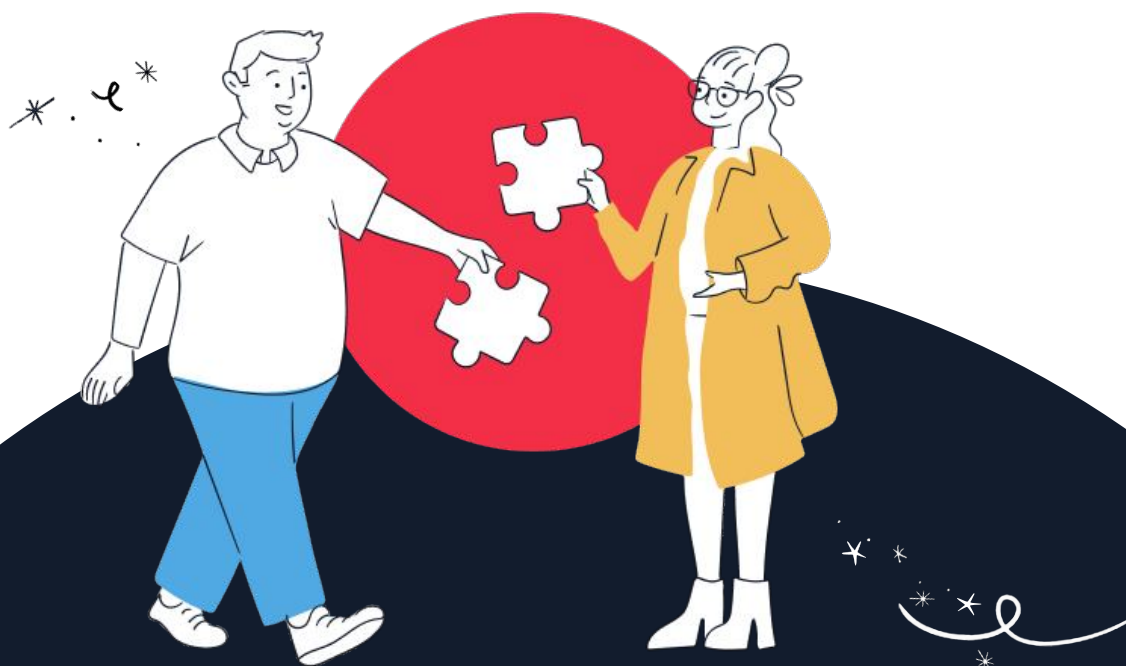


Learn the art of *timing*

Another problem with the traditional approach to personalisation is its limited conception of context. It often nails **environmental context**—the specific place where a consumer interaction occurs, like your website or social media. But it overlooks **temporal context**—the actual moment they are interacting in.

Like physicists, we need to think about these as a single inextricable concept: spacetime. We all understand intuitively that a person browsing gym memberships at noon on an average Tuesday is different to one browsing them on New Year's Eve. But few brands currently make use of that knowledge.

How do you start factoring in time? There are two easy wins:



Create logic that avoids obviously irrelevant messages. A simple example is remarketing messages. Yes, it's good to stay in contact with consumers who looked at your product recently. But if three months have passed since the consumer looked at your Wi-Fi service, it's fair to assume they've gone with another brand.

Create logic that delivers messages based on simple events. Events could be birthdays, anniversaries or offers nearing an end. These are things you almost certainly have data on, but many brands just don't think to commemorate or remind consumers about them.

These two seemingly simple steps will get you thinking about timing in a whole new way. And from there, you're ready to start being more creative about how consumer's intentions and desires change at different times.



Shift from *upselling* to *uplifting*

The worst examples of personalisation tend to centre on brands being too pushy. Pushing ads for a product the consumer already bought; reminding consumers they abandoned their cart, as if it was a terrible accident—they must've thought they'd completed their purchase! These are two examples of “best practices” gone wrong, and you need to move away from them immediately.

It's true that some of these strategies can produce a small increase in sales. But they're so cookie-cutter that they may actually undermine your relationship with the consumer. In fact, they probably signal that you're not thinking about the consumer's needs at all.

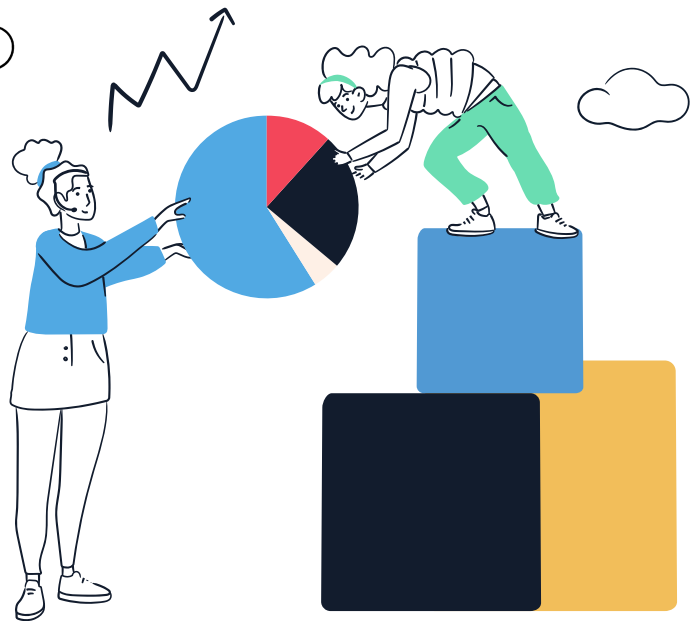


You need to move away from upselling to uplifting customers. Think about what will help the consumer, not convince them to buy more rain boots. This could still lead to a sale: you might recommend complementary products, or let them know about a new product that improves upon something they bought a year ago.



But it also means engaging with the consumer about their passions and problems. The goal is to make consumers feel your brand actually has their best interests at heart, and is using their data to help them make better choices.





Embrace *channel-less CX*

Imagine making friends with someone at your local bowling league, then running into them at the grocery store. Would you expect them to ignore you? And if they did, wouldn't that make you rethink the relationship?

The same is true of personalisation. Customers don't think much about separate channels. They simply expect a cohesive experience across the board. That is the essence of channel-less CX and it means brands need to build a system that allows them to interact in the same way, with the same level of understanding, across every channel—from website to social to customer service messages.

The key is building a centralised “golden profile”.

This is one of the major benefits of Twilio Segment: it is a customer data platform (CDP) that can be deployed across the entire customer journey, ensuring all of your historical data about the consumer is factored in, as well as new real-time information.



As a result, every customer experience reflects and builds upon the last—creating unparalleled loyalty.





But wait: what if you get *individualisation* wrong?

The biggest resistance to personalisation comes from a fear of “creeping out” the consumer with hyper-targeted messages. But in reality, these fears are overblown:



Three out of four consumers say a business has never communicated with them online in a way that felt too personalised or invasive.



And of the one-quarter who have received a personal or invasive brand experience, 64% say it was because the brand had information about them they didn't knowingly share.



Ultimately, consumers want personalisation—they just want it to be on their terms. That's why the end of cookies and the growing reliance on first-person data from platforms like Twilio are likely to reduce the instances of “creepy” personalisation.

The question is not how to avoid excessive personalisation—it's how to scale your efforts.



How to scale *individualisation* using CDP and AI

Move from data gathering to data activation

Despite widespread efforts to improve personalisation, most brands struggle to achieve real efficiency. A recent study found that 57% of marketing leaders believe they are currently spending money on ineffective tools, and if I've convinced you of anything so far, I hope it's that they are not wrong!

However, the key to efficient scaling is not generating higher volumes of data or using more tools—it's moving from a data-gathering mindset to a focus on data activation. Most brands have enough data; their problem is they can't leverage it in a meaningful way—and therefore cannot scale their personalisation efforts.



This is where your CDP comes in: it brings data together from a variety of sources to create enriched customer profiles that tell you more about each individual.

The result? Brands avoid silos and are able to analyse data in a way that leads to meaningful action. Twilio Segment CDP allows you to activate real-time customer data, build a 360-degree view of your customers across all touchpoints, deliver more relevant advertising that generates greater returns, and drive repeat purchases, upselling, and cross-selling at scale.



The next step is introducing AI to take things to another level



While brands have a lot of data, the cost of more intelligence still often proves a barrier. But AI is driving the cost down, and unlocking a new way to leverage your data—through the concept of a “digital twin”.

By leveraging a range of behavioural data, companies can build highly accurate digital profiles that are then fine-tuned through extensive testing and iteration. This helps take your baseline CDP and turn it into a tool that anticipates customers’ needs, enhances decision-making, and delivers unparalleled value for both customers and brands alike.

The three pillars of CDP *success*

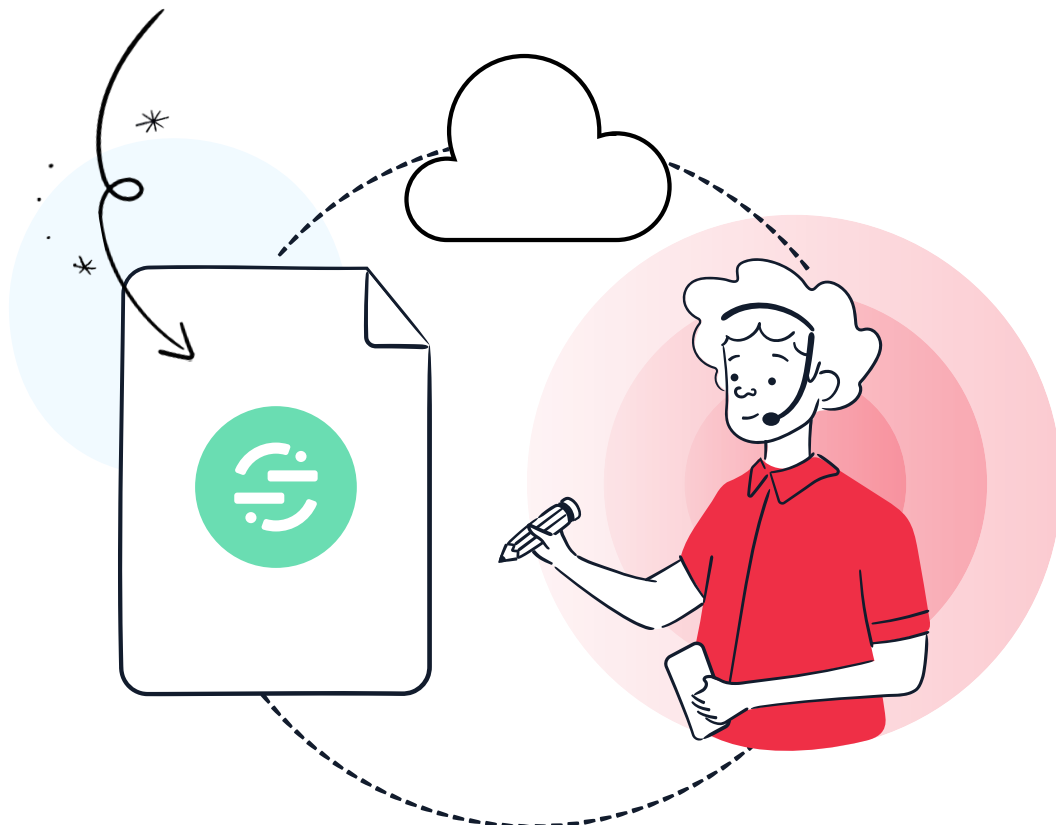


Build a *data foundation*

Everything you do stems from your data, so it’s important to assess the volume, accuracy and maturity of your data. How do you collect data? How do you clean and analyse it? And how does it feed into personalisation efforts?

Not sure where you’re at with data?

Book a free consultation with the Segment team.





2* Create complex profiles

Once you have a solid data foundation, you need to resolve it into increasingly complex profiles. This is a question of strategy as much as technical prowess: What factors will best predict your customers' behaviour? How can you gain a deeper understanding of your customers? When do customers want to interact with your brand?

Here's how *Fender* uses CDP to *transform* their e-commerce experience

A secret weapon that helps brands understand their customers is Identity Resolution. In Fender's case, Identity Resolution merges the history of every Fender user into a single profile so they can personalise each Fender Play® user's learning experience and display the right products to them.

With access to consolidated customer data, creating audiences with similar user traits is easy.

[Read the full story](#)





Build an *engagement* strategy

The final question is simple: how are you going to leverage individualisation to meet specific business goals? Once you have a reliable and complex picture of your customers, it's time to start mapping your triggers onto outcomes and planning how individualisation can help you achieve them.

This could be increasing loyalty, boosting sales, or simply building a reputation as a brand that treats its customers well.



Nice for Business, *Nice* for People

Technology can make individualisation possible, making collaboration easier for teams and an experience that customers love.

Ready for more? I recommend starting with The State of Personalization Report, one of our most popular reports. It details the role of data and AI in personalisation, and explores how businesses envision the future of personalised interactions.



[**Read it today**](#)