

# A CALL FOR UNIFICATION



A balanced Web strategy is key to your successful online presence today

By Olivier Naimi

Today's digital world is inevitably governed by the principles of multi-channel and multi-screen attribution modeling. New digital channels such as social networks are thriving due to the proliferation of smartphones and tablets, making it crucial for companies to optimize the effectiveness of their online initiatives for all channels in play.

In an effort to support consumers' always-on lifestyles, most organizations end up creating disparate websites that are built on differing or non-standard infrastructures that tend to fall short of delivering engaging Web experiences to their target audiences and create nightmares for organizations to maintain. A unified Web strategy is the key to fulfilling a cross-channel experience that generates both

revenue and interest, building brand loyalty and driving a deeper relationship with the various stakeholders.

So, what is a unified Web strategy? It is a set of Web principles that are leveraged to promote a consistent brand experience across various digital touch points, both online and offline. This can be achieved through the execution of two key underlying strategies: 1) having the right Web platform components and 2) driving towards superior customer engagement.

## Web Platform Components

A web platform provides a single point of access to a broad range of data, knowledge and services—any time, anywhere. From Web hosting, Web content management and Web analytics, to single

# ENTERPRISE READY

sign-on, monitoring and Web operations management, a Web platform includes a set of tools and technology architectures that support the overall Web presence of an organization. Let us dig a little deeper to explore some important Web platform components.

**Hybrid Infrastructure:** Businesses are in a constant need for more agile, adaptable and scalable infrastructures to support their enterprise Web platforms. A hybrid architecture offers multiple deployment models in which on-premise resources can be leveraged to support corporate websites and provide tighter integration with internal systems, while cyclical events such as product launches and promotional campaigns are carried out on remote server-based cloud infrastructure to benefit from the cloud elasticity factor.

**Web Content Management:** A Web content management system (WCMS) makes website content creation and management more efficient by providing a set of website authoring, publishing, collaboration and administration tools. However, the right WCMS should be based on a scalable data model coupled with configurable workflows to ensure that your organization has a solid foundation from which to promote its Web presence.

**Web Analytics:** Web analytics is a source of valuable business intelligence data that can be leveraged to understand and optimize Web experience and evaluate whether a website is contributing to business goals. However, the approach to Web analytics should be holistic and beyond the micro-vision of focusing on the number of attained clicks. The true value of Web analytics data lies in the ability to provide actionable insights into fine-tuning different components of online user engagement.

**Single Sign-on:** Single sign-on provides a single log-in access to multiple applications or systems, reducing the login/registration friction and enabling a more personalized online experience to be carried out across various touch points.

**Web Request System:** Among other benefits, a Web request system helps with estimation and planning, scheduling, budget management and resource allocation, as well as quality management and administration. The Web request system serves as a basic operational and governance mechanism to manage activities impacting digital channels within your organization.

**Localization:** “Global + Local = Glocal” is all about striking the right balance, resulting in wider market reach and expanded connections with global audiences. Different regions require specific tweaks in Web content so that they are localized to effectively communicate brand messages to target audiences and maintain unified brand experiences.

**Monitoring and Feedback Tools:** Monitoring and feedback tools are a strong component of governance, reporting and auditing of your digital presence and operations. These tools help organizations devise a customer-centric strategy via real-time feedback and sentiment analysis as well as to foster customer engagement.

## Online Customer Engagement

In the current competitive marketplace, online customer engagement is becoming increasingly critical to strengthening customer loyalty and creating customer advocacy. Consumers have more options than ever to choose from, making it even more crucial to en-

# ENTERPRISE READY

gage your audience and give them a reason to visit, interact with, buy from, and come back to your brand. Let's explore some strategies that play a decisive role in properly engaging consumers' digital lives.

**Segmentation:** Audience segmentation plays a big role in successful online customer engagement. Organizations leveraging behavioral data to create user segmentation profiles enable their online marketers to not only target different types of audiences, but also to connect with them on an emotional level.

**Personalization:** Personalized experiences cater to each individual and lead to enhanced user engagement, site stickiness and increased customer loyalty. How organizations respond to the needs of different market segments and how they provide targeted services for those segments will affect the revenue potential.

**Social Media & Community Platforms:** Almost every online or offline purchase is influenced by reviews, recommendations and feedback shared on forums, blogs and social networks. Undeniably, social media and community collaboration have become major drivers of Web initiatives. In addition, socializing with your brand influencers can promote brand evangelism and provide a solid foundation to improving your business' bottom line.

**Digital Commerce:** Customers can now be digitally acquired at home, through their friends and peers, on the road or even while waiting in the grocery store checkout line. To capitalize on these opportunities, organizations need to seamlessly integrate traditional e-commerce with social commerce and mobile commerce.

**Traditional E-Commerce, Social and Mobile Commerce:** There's a huge opportunity for organizations that integrate e-commerce across all of their digital channel initiatives. The key is to provide a seamless shopping cart experience across varying touch points, bringing your product catalog to where your customers are already spending the majority of their online time, instead of funneling visitors to a centralized online store.

## Get Unified

Your customers' online needs and expectations are diversifying. They seek for everything to be at their fingertips and expect the ability to transact and engage anywhere at any time.

They are exploiting the digital mediums to find information, compare prices and search for the best possible deals at competitive prices. All of this is happening at a lightning-fast pace, creating a gap between consumer expectations and the ability of businesses to meet those expectations.

A unified Web strategy must intertwine business with digital strategies to support present and future online needs. The goal of a unified Web strategy is to enable organizations to close the gap between evolving business needs and the readiness of various digital touch points to support organizational goals. ■

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Olivier Naimi is the senior director of the global Web platform & analytics for Sony Corporation of America. He has held several key leadership positions for brands such as PlayStation, Hitachi and BEA, with responsibilities for bringing each company's assets and unique business models to life in the digital space.