

Case Study

Vodafone integrates web, email and mobile to enhance prospective customers' online shopping experience



Experian Marketing Services transforms Vodafone's abandoned basket process with true mobile optimisation — helping to turn prospects into customers and realise robust ROI

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**Charlotte Crideford,
Marketing Manager - Mobile
and Multi-Channel Innovation,
Vodafone**



vodafone

Background

Vodafone launched the UK's first mobile phone network nearly three decades ago, going on to become one of the largest mobile operators in the world. It is success that's built on state-of-the-art approaches — and identifying partners who are similarly at the cutting edge.

Vodafone is working with Experian Marketing Services, calling on its unparalleled know-how across all mobile platforms, the ability to create mobile architectures that support business objectives and deep email marketing expertise. It's a partnership that is, for the first time, fully integrating web, email and mobile — allowing Vodafone to better understand, acquire and retain its customers.

Challenge

Smartphones are becoming ubiquitous; with mobile email one of the many applications driving their uptake. As a leading UK mobile operator, Vodafone needed to develop a comprehensive, mobile optimised experience for its customers whilst being able to measure its mobile marketing impact to increase the efficiency and impact of its future campaign activities. While this posed some technical challenges, the potential return on investment could be significant.

One of the key challenges to unifying the mobile and desktop journey is the use of cookies. Vodafone uses cookies to remind customers that

they've previously added products to their online shopping basket, but haven't completed the transaction. Customers receive an email containing a link to return them to the basket as they left it, with content recreated from information contained in cookies left on their computer when they shopped. However, if customers initially browse the online shop on their laptop but receive and open the reminder email on their smartphone, there is no cookie to recreate the basket — and valuable sales opportunities are lost.

When the vast majority of emails were accessed from a desktop, Vodafone could produce messages that encouraged click through and conversion. When accessed via mobile devices with different operating systems and screen sizes, however, desktop email features often didn't work, display properly or render at all.

Solution

Vodafone asked Experian Marketing Services to deliver definitive integration of web, email and mobile platforms. It was no easy task, as Charlotte Crideford, Marketing Manager, Mobile and Multi-Channel Innovation explained, “It may sound simple, but the use of cookies to link web and email is fundamental. By throwing mobile into the mix, we were asking for a truly multi-channel approach but we were confident it could be achieved with the right team involved.”

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To achieve Vodafone's objectives and deliver a new, cookie-free and mobile optimised experience, Experian Marketing Services started from scratch, re-building the abandoned basket email process from the ground up, both in terms of back-end construction and front-end look and usability.

Experian Marketing Services has developed a new form of 'Deep Linking' tracking that captures customers' behaviour across websites. This information is then gathered by Experian Marketing Services' CheetahMail platform and integrated into the abandoned basket reminder email. It delivers all the data Vodafone needs to recreate the customer's basket as they left it — including the phone, tariff and add-ons — without a cookie in sight. Customers can now access their basket wherever they are on whatever device they choose.

At the front end, Experian Marketing Services refreshed the dated look and feel of the shopping basket email so that it displays perfectly across all email clients. The result is that now, rather than choosing between feature-light emails that work for both desktop and mobile, or feature-rich emails focused for desktop and mobile separately, Vodafone is able to deploy a single email that automatically recognises and is optimised for the device it's opened on.

This is possible because of Experian Marketing Services' unique insight across the entire mobile architecture. A combination of innovative tracking techniques and coding designed specifically for Vodafone allows the capture of customer behaviour data in granular detail.

Using this, it's possible to identify the device on which email traffic was initiated to deliver a perfectly rendered message.

Results

Experian Marketing Services' work with Vodafone has helped to re-define its approach to channel integration, and it's a project that was developed, tested and refined in just six weeks. In addition, while the project was initially focused on improving the experience of a single marketing email, Experian Marketing Services' intimate knowledge of web, email and mobile platforms is transforming the way that Vodafone communicates with its customers.

It's an elegant solution that encourages far greater interaction with the Vodafone online store, driving traffic to the website, converting prospective web visitors into customers and delivering bottom-line, business process and customer benefit:

- over 40%¹ of Vodafone customers who receive responsive emails open them on their mobile device, demonstrating the importance of an integrated approach;
- from roll out, orders from formerly abandoned baskets have leapt by 30%;²
- pioneering tracking technologies bring business process improvement, with the ability, for example, to see how long transactions take and continually refine the process to make it easier and faster for customers;
- detailed metrics allow Vodafone to see which campaign components generate the most revenue, and focus marketing resources where they will deliver maximum returns.

Charlotte Crivedford, said, "We originally asked Experian Marketing Services to enable us to recreate baskets without cookies. What we got was a cookie-free, mobile maximised and device optimised email engagement solution — turning prospects who may have lost to us into customers. It's that kind of added value and broader understanding of business objectives that sets Experian Marketing Services apart."