Vendor Landscape: Mobile Engagement Automation Solutions

Mobile Moments Demand Speed, Speed Demands Automation

by Jennifer Wise and Julie A. Ask
November 5, 2015

Why Read This Report

With over 30 billion mobile moments happening each day in the US alone, marketers need automation to deliver against high customer expectations in real time. Vying to help is a new class of vendors: Mobile engagement automation. This report helps B2C marketers and digital business professionals understand this emerging landscape and find the right partner based on go-to-market strategies, current capabilities, and sophistication of automation.

Key Takeaways

Marketers Need To Improve Their Mobile Moments Strategy
Customers expect relevancy and immediate utility in their mobile moments. Yet superior customer engagement falls short today as companies rely on their traditional preplanned, batch messaging strategy for mobile.

A New Vendor Category Rises To Deliver On Consumer Demands
When mobile moments happen in an instant and the experience needs to be rapid, speed is king. Mobile engagement platforms automate mobile moments’ identification and delivery to keep pace with consumer expectations.

Use Several Criteria To Narrow Down Your Options
To select the right partner in this budding landscape, professionals must understand vendors’ current capabilities, breadth of integration across the customer life cycle, and automation sophistication.
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by Jennifer Wise and Julie A. Ask
with Srividya Sridharan, Laura Naparstek, and Laura Glazer
November 5, 2015

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Forrester interviewed 20 mobile engagement automation vendors for this report.

Related Research Documents

Create Mobile Moments With Messaging
A Marketer’s Guide To The Mobile Mind Shift
Re-Engineer Your Business For Mobile Moments
Mobile Moments Are At The Heart Of Consumer Engagement

Smartphone owners pick up or glance at their mobile phones 150 to 200 times each day, spending on average over two hours a day accessing apps and websites. With more than 200 million smartphones in the US alone, that’s 30 billion mobile moments each day, conservatively. Mobile moments pervade through all stages of the customer life cycle, and with industries such as retail, hospitality, and banking seeing more than half of their web traffic from mobile devices, these mobile moments have become the next battleground for firms to win, serve, and retail customers (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1 Mobile Moments Deliver Value Across All Parts Of The Customer Journey

New Engagement Opportunities Emerge As Mobile Moments Grow, Evolve, And Splinter

The vast majority of mobile moments are on smartphones today and occur within apps, the Web or through text notifications. Consumers expect immediacy, simplicity, and context from brand communication in these moments, and firms have to keep up and adapt as mobile moments quickly evolve in form and factor. Mobile moments will:

› **Shrink into micro moments.** Mobile moments don’t have to be lengthy complex interactions on a mobile phone. In fact, estimates show that up to 75% of interactions consumers have with mobile phones are just a glance to see who called, what meeting is next, or what sale just started. Forrester refers to these nudges, blinks, beeps, and texts as micro moments — a mobile moment that delivers information through only a glance to let the consumer either process or act on it immediately.

› **Extend beyond mobile phones.** Mobile extends to smartwatches, connected cars, and other connected devices like Amazon Dash buttons. The Whistle dog pedometer, for example, alerts dog owners to low battery, goals achieved, and connectivity problems.

› **Disappear into the ether.** Mobile moments are explicit today. In the future, these consumer-triggered moments may disappear as the Internet of Things continues to grow with self-learning products. Lights will turn on, cars will drive themselves, or the temperature in a home will self-adjust to save energy. It will be harder to tell one distinct mobile moment from another.

› **Proactively appear in context, not pulled by consumers.** In today’s mobile moments, consumers primarily pull out their phones to get something, see something, or do something. However, intelligent, virtual agents like Google Now are already resetting expectations for personalized and relevant pushed content and services in the moment of need. Companies like JetBlue are proactively creating personalized, contextually relevant mobile moments like a push notification of a gate change in the airport, instead of waiting for the customer to ask for this information.

Marketers Fall Short In Their Customers’ Mobile Moments Today

Every interaction that a customer has with a brand throughout her journey impacts her experience, which in turn impacts loyalty and fuels business growth and revenues. With mobile in play, consumers move from discovering a brand to doing research, making a purchase, and using a product within seconds if not minutes. And they expect this to be possible: today’s customers demand a seamless, integrated brand experience delivered to them with ultimate simplicity and relevancy in real time. To deliver, mobile demands a new engagement model. Yet marketers are still doing old things in new ways (see Figure 2). In the early stages of mobile maturity, marketers fall short in mobile moments because they:

› **Port existing engagement strategies from direct mail and desktop.** Forty-four percent of marketers today still fall within the “shrink and squeeze” stage of mobile maturity, tweaking existing strategies to fit the mobile screen. This includes setting a communications strategy for mobile moments based on prebuilt messages planned months or weeks in advance to batches
of customers within a segment created from historical CRM data. This doesn’t work. The batch approach to mobile engagement doesn’t account for real-time data to deliver on moments, nor does it help with customer identification when a user walks into a store or when a coupon is about to expire.

- **Lose contextual insights in a portfolio of mobile point-solutions.** Understanding the mobile moment requires an understanding of all customer brand touchpoints, and marketers in the mobile-first phase rely on mobile-first point solutions to manage their apps, track mobile engagement, and send messages. This approach doesn’t offer a view across the customer life cycle — or even a view across channels in some cases. And with moments impacting the entire organization, a messaging strategy doesn’t deliver if it’s based just on mobile behavior and doesn’t incorporate customer service analytics or offline touchpoints. For instance, before sending a notification for a sale, a company should know if the customer already read about it in a promotional email and made a purchase.

- **Fail to plan across business units.** Only once marketers reach the CX transformation phase do they understand the role of the moment across the customer life cycle, and only in the business disruption phase do marketers begin to plan for mobile as a disrupter of the way they do business. Only 14% in the CX transformation phase and less than 1% in the business disruption phase do this today. Most firms are set up with functional groups with an agenda focused on a single sliver of the journey. But today these must collaborate to support and engage customers throughout the entire journey. For example, mobile’s biggest impact on retail is influencing in-store sales — not mCommerce. Capitalizing on this opportunity requires traditionally siloed eBusiness, marketing, merchandizing, and store functions to collaborate just as Walgreens did when it combined digital and in-store photo business into a single unit.
**FIGURE 2 Old Engagement Tactics Won’t Work With New Technologies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who to target</th>
<th>Web: Customer segment</th>
<th>Example: Use CRM solutions to identify groups of customers based on core demographic and historical brand interactions</th>
<th>Mobile: Individuals</th>
<th>Example: Use all brand interactions including mobile behavior and real-time context to send individual, contextually-relevant communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What format and content</td>
<td>Pre-fabricated messages through pre-planned channels</td>
<td>Batch emails, desktop ads, direct mail</td>
<td>Personalized content through optimal touchpoint</td>
<td>Dynamically optimized content and delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When to engage</td>
<td>Triggered by an event the company wants to notify the consumer of</td>
<td>A sale, promotion, or weekly newsletter</td>
<td>Push-based communication triggered by an event the consumer needs to know about</td>
<td>An overdue bill, ready prescription, gate change, flash sale, or customer proximity to a store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where to engage</td>
<td>Any location</td>
<td>Wherever the consumer is when they use the Internet, usually a stationary location like in the home or at work</td>
<td>An explicit location</td>
<td>The optimal location to reach the consumer along their daily path including home, work, restaurant, in-store, while commuting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why the engagement occurs</td>
<td>Proactive interactions to serve the business, or reactive communication to serve the customer</td>
<td>Field customer service calls</td>
<td>Proactive interactions to serve the customer and the business</td>
<td>Provide utility with in-the-moment value, help them accomplish a task quickly, and anticipate their needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A New Vendor Category Emerges: Mobile Engagement Automation**

Consumers have thrown down the gauntlet. They expect to be served in their moments of need, immediately and in context. Adapting, anticipating and delivering in these moments can overwhelm even the most sophisticated, tech-enabled marketers. As a result, marketing technology vendors have their work cut out for them: They must provide marketers with the orchestration and intelligence of real-time interaction management platforms for the scale and complexity of mobile moments. In order to deliver these self-perpetuating cycles of real-time, two-way, insights-driven interactions with individual customers, brands need contextual marketing engines. Today, a new category of vendors has emerged to deliver on this promise for mobile: mobile engagement automation. Forrester categorizes these vendors as:
Mobile Moments Demand Speed, Speed Demands Automation

“Marketing technologies that use real-time and contextual insights to proactively engage with known users in the appropriate mobile moment across the customer life cycle via a mobile device.”

Vendors Automate Mobile Moments From Insights To Analytics

To deliver on shifted consumer expectations, Forrester suggests that marketers follow the IDEA framework. Mobile engagement automation solutions help automate the IDEA life cycle to execute campaign assembly and delivery in real-time against consumer profiles and contextual insights. Today, vendors automate and deliver engagement tools to (see Figure 3):

› **Input: Ingest data and content.** To execute against context at speed, these platforms access creative assets and content repositories and harvest data in real time from a myriad of sources — including first-party data from CRM, systems of record such as inventory and product information systems, and mobile app analytic data. In 2016 and beyond, even data from connected devices or the Internet of Things will be included in real-time data.

› **Identify: Identify both who to serve and in which mobile moments.** In its raw form, big data doesn’t help marketers — turning the big data into meaningful insights does. Marketers must identify and define the right moments for each consumer during the “I” of IDEA — and these platforms help do the heavy lifting by immediately sorting incoming data into audiences and context triggers. For example, they identify when an app user fires up the app for the first time or when a loyal customer enters the geofence around the store. Marketers use these tools to create the rules for their chosen mobile moments.

› **Design: Facilitate the design of mobile moments.** These platforms give marketers tools to design mobile moments and decide what content in what form (e.g., push notifications, in-app messaging) will be delivered to the consumer in her mobile moment. During the input phase, content is loaded into the platform, and once the platform recognizes the context or pattern together with the profile, it configures the right assets for the mobile engagement. For example, the loyal user near the store would trigger a push notification dynamically optimized to include his name and the store’s location.

› **Engineer: Enable execution through to channel delivery.** The ultimate consumer touchpoint will be through a channel — whether it’s app screen content, in-app messages, or email. The platform uses integrations to identify the moment, the right channel through which to deliver the message, and also provide the channel integrations to deliver it. Few of these platforms stand entirely alone. They will require integration with existing CRM and CMS systems, channels for delivery, and analytics solutions among others.

› **Analyze: Measure performance and optimize.** The platforms provide analytics capabilities and dashboards to monitor performance that include in-app behaviors, analytics, and campaign analysis. The platforms further feedback insights to identify and design more mobile moments.
Today, Automation Is Rules-Based, With Limited Machine Intelligence

Today, mobile engagement automation vendors focus on automating the delivery: working within predefined customer segments and events to trigger actions in real time. There are several types of rules that these vendors use in their platforms’ workflows: 1) audience rules that define segments; 2) moments rules that identify mobile moments across the customer life cycle; 3) campaign rules that define content assembly; and 4) action rules that define the right channel to deliver the customer interaction through (see Figure 4). But this still falls short, because ultimately, automation should decrease reliance on human input using machine intelligence. For mobile moments, types of automation available run the gamut from:

- **Deterministic.** Deterministic automation automates the identification and delivery of mobile moments. It relies on explicit rules that define the current state, a trigger, and an action to take. In the mobile context, these require explicit predefined rules that determine what qualities compose a segment, what events trigger a mobile moment, and what content and channels are used to reach that customer in that moment.

- **Heuristic.** Heuristic automation uses artificial intelligence and self-learning to become a self-automating systems with low human intervention. They rely on sophisticated data analysis, pattern recognition, self-learning systems, and decision support. Applied to the mobile moments workflow, heuristic automation delivers analytics directly into the “rules” creation, automating the analysis of the data and subsequent maintenance of the rules.
Mobile Moments Demand Speed, Speed Demands Automation

- **Mixed.** Mixed automation relies on deterministic rules-based automation, but also leverages sophisticated algorithms to offload some decision making on behalf of the marketer. For example, a vendor may offer the capability to automatically turn off a campaign channel to reallocate toward a more effective channel based on A/B testing, or autosort users into machine-identified life-cycle segments.

**FIGURE 4** Today’s Solutions Deliver Speed, But Don’t Completely Automate The Mobile Moments Workflow

Today’s mobile engagement automation workflow

**Today Vendors Provide An Emerging Toolkit**

This vendor landscape is still young, and there are no apples-to-apples comparisons among the major players. In fact, vendors themselves self-identify with a slew of categories today ranging from mobile engagement automation, mobile communication management, and mobile engagement.

In this research, we identified 20 vendors in the mobile engagement automation space. During the analysis of vendor solutions, we identified core platform offerings that most provide to varying degrees (see Figure 5). Along with these category-level competencies, we have created a vendor-specific toolkit to provide individual vendor overviews (see Figure 6). In this toolkit, you can find core facts about companies and their go-to-market strategies and an overview of their campaign tools, analytics abilities, and breadth of automation.

Toolkit: Mobile Engagement Automation Solutions
Mobile Moments Demand Speed, Speed Demands Automation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRM integration</td>
<td>Each solution allows for the creation of user profiles with a combination of existing information from customer relationship management solutions as well as other point-of-sale and third-party information made available by customers. Techniques could include APIs, CSV uploads, and more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeting</td>
<td>Many of these solutions suggest target audiences or cohorts for messaging, but also allow the marketer to create segments. Typically audience targeting capabilities include: existing segments (e.g., from customer CRM), location, purchase history, demographics, device type, mobile OS, in-app engagement, custom properties or events, campaign responses, and the results of A/B testing. Third-party data from customers can also be added to the profiles. In essence, users can choose among CRM, event-driven, location-driven, or behavioral-driven segments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User identity</td>
<td>These solutions engage with a known user. For banks, retailers, and travel companies requiring user logins, user identity is not as challenging. Many companies must start with user downloads of apps even if they don’t know the user’s name. Many of these solutions will build a profile of user behavior for a device until a user is credentialed through a login, email address, or other means, at which time it unifies the profile to account for the user owning multiple devices. Until the user is “named,” his device or app is tagged by a number.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign metrics</td>
<td>Campaign metrics typically include initial engagement such as open rates for messages, click-through on display ads, or email open rates. From there, the tools also track interactions, e.g., app opens, app uninstalls, click-through on URL within messages or display ads. Attribution to a purchase in-store or online is less common today, and tends to be modeled based on whether a user made a purchase or entered a store vicinity within a set period of time after receiving a message or seeing content or a display ad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channel optimization</td>
<td>For those solutions that go beyond mobile messaging to include email, for example, channel optimization tools will track with which channels consumers are most likely to engage. Some providers will require the client to manually vet this data, but several vendors will suggest those channels depending on the event circumstances. For example, if a cart has been abandoned within an app, the optimization tools will choose to deliver either a push notification or an email with a discount or reminder to purchase. Optimization tools will also ideally track total overall digital engagement with consumers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw data</td>
<td>Solutions that collect raw data collect data on every user click within an app or message through SDKs. Some providers will limit the length of time the data is stored. Sophisticated solutions will host their own data to speed access, but it is more common, especially with providers whose core business is not in-app analytics, to use a third-party provider like AWS.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### FIGURE 5 Vet Solution Providers To See How They Stack Up Against Common Elements Offered (Cont.)

| In-app analytics | In-app analytics allow for marketers to follow the actions of users through an app. The most common use case is to track behavior through a defined purchase funnel. Other marketers or digital business professionals will assign value to a specific action, e.g., “customer put an item into a shopping basket” or “customer signed up for a loyalty program.”  

In-app analytics fall into two primary use cases: 1) campaign optimization and 2) app design or user interface optimization. In campaign optimization, solutions will track user engagement in-app to either create profiles or measure the impact of a campaign, e.g., a push notification. In-app analytics are also used to improve the design of apps by analyzing, for example, where consumers drop off in the course of booking a flight or transferring money. Many solutions collect data, but not every solution has built out a web interface for both use cases.  

Some of the solutions ask that the user define the purchase funnels in order to collect the data. The pros of doing so include a more manageable set of data. Other solutions allow for the collection and storage of raw data. Pros included unlimited possibilities. Cons are a lot of potentially messy data and battery drain on the user’s phone. |
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>App usage profiles</td>
<td>App usage profiles automate the creation of segments based on frequency or last use of a mobile app. For example, if a user has downloaded an app but not opened it, or downloads an app, open it, but doesn’t create a profile, the solutions will automatically establish these segments and prompt the marketer to create a message to drive in-app engagement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Location data has many sources including GSP, Wi-Fi, beacons, NFC, and user check-in. Some of this information is explicit, i.e., latitude and longitude, while other information is more qualitative, i.e., “the customer is within 100 meters of our store” or “the customer is in the store.” These platforms do not generate the location data, but rather the data is passed to these platforms that then use it. More sophisticated platforms allow for the creation of geo-fenced areas at a macro level, i.e., within 50 meters of the store, or at a micro level, i.e., within a department within the store.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multivariate testing</td>
<td>Multivariate testing is the extension of A/B testing to more variables. In this solution category, multivariate testing is most commonly used to either test the creative or content within the message or ad, the level of personalization, or the time of day when messages are most likely to be opened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data export</td>
<td>Most if not all of these solutions allow for the export of data. Forrester did not explore this element of the solution in-depth. Companies should reference the list of delivery partners for more detail and interview solution providers regarding the use of APIs and data file types.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The mobile engagement automation vendor toolkit

Vendors included

Delivery model | Headquarters
---|---
Offices (other) | Geographies served
Pricing model | Average annual cost
Founded | Target audience
Number of employees | Delivery partners
Mobile platforms supported | Company roots
Vertical focus (top 3) | Actions

Capabilities overview

**Sweet spot**
What is the specialty of the solution? How does it differentiate itself from the standard?

**Campaign tools**
- Tools and services that help marketers create consumer profiles, segments, and cohorts for targeting.
- Tools/interface offered for the creation and management of campaigns.
- Tools that enable marketers to take action based on insights generated.

**Analytics tools**
- Tools that help marketers understand the effectiveness of their campaigns.
- Types of data generated and how it is stored and/or exported.
- Customer journey or channel engagement performance views offered.

**Automation capabilities**
- Level of automation applied to the campaign.
- Impact of automation on campaign delivery.
- Impact of automation on campaign optimization.
- Level of real-time machine learning capabilities available, if any.
Go-To-Market Strategies Help Tease Out Strengths And Weaknesses

Vendors in this landscape have niche go-to-market strategies, revealing their core competencies along the automation workflow. They also differ on the type of business objectives they help optimize for marketers as well as the breadth and depth of their delivery capabilities (see Figure 7). We find that:

› **Pedigree dictates current offerings.** Vendors have emerged, merged, or morphed to gain mobile engagement automation capabilities, and their roots or type of acquisitions and integration milestones will unveil core competencies and potential shortcomings. For example, while all vendors provide analytics, the degree of detail, speed, and flexibility vary greatly. Kahuna and FollowAnalytics emerged as pure-play mobile engagement automation companies with strengths in app analytics; Urban Airship and Vibes morphed from being pure mobile messaging and aggregation vendors with deep experience in app events identification and optimization; and several others including Adobe, IBM, and Salesforce have morphed and merged to add mobile into their marketing clouds, providing a broader holistic, multichannel view of customer interactions.17

› **Cross-functional buyers impact vendor solution sets.** The vast majority of vendors in this research cited marketers and CMOs as their target audiences. The top three business units that these vendors target are marketing, eCommerce, and app development. But the variety of titles includes the CRM manager, CTO, head of digital, eCommerce director, and sales director. Why this cross-functional focus? Because mobile moments transform businesses and impact many stakeholders, and the traditional buyers of these platforms go beyond marketing, with app developers in IT, product developers, and digital business professionals all interested in these solutions.

› **Engagement isn’t just limited to push notifications among vendors.** Mobile tactics range from mobile sites to mobile display ads to paid search to messages. Apps are the primary mobile engagement-focused asset, and all vendors in this category let you send a campaign via app-centric channels, including a push notification, in-app display, or in-app message. But several offer a broader breadth of app-based delivery channels, and others go beyond the app to deliver to social sites, mobile ads, and through email. For example, Urban Airship also delivers engagement through web pages, display ads, and mobile wallet. MobileIQ enables marketers to activate sections of the app content itself to be customized based on rules. And IBM’s solution can fuel engagement through mobile, but also email, calls, and social media.
## FIGURE 7 Companies Differentiate In Their Go-To-Market Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographies</th>
<th>Vertical focus (Top 3)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial services</td>
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<td>North America</td>
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### Geographies

*North American business takes place in the US only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>North America</th>
<th>EMEA (incl. Rus)</th>
<th>APAC</th>
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### FIGURE 7 Companies Differentiate In Their Go-To-Market Strategies (Cont.)

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<th>Push notifications (rich or simple)</th>
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The Scope Of Customer Journey Management Varies By Vendor

Mobile moments and micro moments go beyond the traditional marketing-led one-off campaign. In addition to mastering individualized, utility-based proactive engagement through mobile moments, marketers need to master the role of these mobile moments in the broader customer journey — whether offline, online, or within mobile exclusively. Traditionally, marketers, product managers, sales, and customer service or support have each touched the consumer directly, but not necessarily through a coordinated or orchestrated plan focused across the in-app life-cycle management at minimum, or the entire customer life cycle (app properties and elsewhere). Vendor solutions today have homed in on one or the other, so marketers have to understand vendor capabilities in:

› **In-app life-cycle management.** On average, brands spend $3.04 to drive a single download of their mobile application. Tragically, consumers use 70% of their downloaded apps only one time or less. Proactive engagement through mobile or micro moments can move consumers through successive steps whether it's creating an account, reminding them of a coupon when shopping, finalizing the purchase of a product added to a shopping cart, or paying for a credit card purchase with points. Several vendors such as Appboy and Kahuna focus on app life-cycle management, using sophisticated app events tracking and analytics to drive objectives including app loyalty, retention, re-activation, and conversion acceleration.

› **Customer life-cycle management.** As consumers move through the customer life cycle, they traverse many devices in the online-offline world — and mobile moments can spur consumers to action across channels and in the real world. For example, for years, Walgreens has been sending mobile notifications to customers when their prescriptions are ready for pickup in the store. Over time, Walgreens became more sophisticated and took a customer's location into context to decide when to send reminders. As a result, it engages customers through multiple channels via mobile and then in-store. Several vendors position their mobile solution to influence the entire customer journey, such as Salesforce's Journey Builder tool that aims to drive a successful result whether that is a purchase, a store visit, or payment of a bill.

Automation With Machine Learning Sets Solutions Apart

The majority of vendors today require a heavy degree of human input to create and manage the rules in the mobile moments workflow — audience, moments, campaign, and action. This maintenance happens during three stages: the rules setup, the rules execution, and the rules optimization. At each of these stages, there is the opportunity for machine learning to manage and optimize the process, and this is the core differentiation among vendors. Pick apart the automation jargon by probing into how the platform self-optimizes at each of the following steps (see Figure 8):

› **Rule setup.** This step involves the creation of the logic and rules in the system that defines the audience, moments, campaign, and action rules that the platform will follow to drive consumer engagement. The majority of vendors require the marketer to do this manually upfront, but several
ship with pre-identified rules that align with the app or customer life cycle. For example, Swrve and ExactTarget include moments rules for users who enter a geofenced area or open the app for the first time.

› **Rule execution.** This step involves turning raw data into a decision through the rules, such as automating audience profiling and assembling creative to deliver. At this stage, the majority of platforms will follow “if . . . then” logic to a T, but more sophisticated automation solutions will leverage predictive analytics or look-a-like modeling to dynamically customize the rules for the individual. For example, if there are two lapsed app users, one who frequently clicks on push notification and the other who is most attentive to her email, the platform will determine that same message will be delivered to both but via different channels.

› **Rule optimization.** This step occurs subsequent to the campaign. Each platform provides the marketer with some type of output, including campaign analytics, app analytics, and the results of A/B testing. Some platforms will require that the marketer manually vet this feedback and update any rules accordingly. In more sophisticated solutions, the system will recognize optimal moments based on campaign effectiveness and optimize the rules accordingly — automatically turning off an ineffective campaign based on A/B testing or changing messaging frequency based on self-identified correlations between cadence and effectiveness.

**FIGURE 8** Probe Vendors For The Extent Of This Automation Capabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule stage</th>
<th>Setup</th>
<th>Execution</th>
<th>Optimization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questions to ask to determine the level of machine-learning for each rule type:</td>
<td>Does the platform ship with pre-identified rules based on triggers or customer life cycle phases, or self-create rules based on objectives?</td>
<td>Does the platform provide any type of predictive modeling to identify and create new engagements in real time that are optimal for that user?</td>
<td>Does the platform automatically ingest performance feedback (ex: A/B testing results, individual-level results) back into the rules to refine and optimize the rules?</td>
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<td><strong>Audience</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Moment</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
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Choose A Strategic Partner With A Shared Future Vision

Choose your partners wisely, especially when solutions vary greatly and the vendor landscape is immature. Mobile engagement automation solutions that can crunch context and customer information in real time to allow you to engage customers proactively in their mobile moments will be a competitive advantage for you. As marketers climb the mobile maturity ladder, these vendors can help scale cross-functional collaboration and execution, and they’ll need to depend on their learnings to keep pace with consumer expectations. To choose a partner best matched to your needs:

1. **Use IDEA to identify the most important mobile moments.** These solutions are not just plug-and-play. Customer journeys and mobile moments will differ by company, and with today’s solutions, you’ll have to expect a degree of manual campaign setup. The first step in the IDEA cycle is to identify and prioritize the most important mobile moments along with their associated context. You do this by mapping out customer journeys, identifying the pain points, and deciding where the immediacy, simplicity, and context of mobile can remove friction or create delight. Next, design the engagement. The engagement could be an app or mobile website or more simply a notification or micro moment.

2. **Build a strategic plan to use mobile to engage customers.** Click down a level on your mobile moments design to flush out a more detailed tactical plan. You’ve already identified the most important mobile moments in the first step. Are you managing in-app journeys or overall customer journeys? What geographies will you serve? Do you need professional services’ help or do you have staff to handle it internally? Will you do proximity marketing to engage consumers onsite or planned communication?

3. **Translate your strategy into requirements.** Creating a set of requirements based on your tactical plan is a critical step that will allow you to drive decisions with vendors rather than the other way around. First, know what mobile technologies you want to use such as push notifications, in-app messaging, or display ads. Know who will use the tool internally and what his or her skills and limitations are as well. Second, identify the gaps in your supporting technologies whether they be CRM, mobile app analytics, or SMS distribution. The list will vary widely by company. Finally, inventory and identify the solutions already in place with which your new solution must integrate. Every vendor will promise integration with every system you have in place. The devil is in the details of what APIs have been created and what work has been done versus where you will be the guinea pig.

4. **Shortlist which vendors can meet those needs.** Each vendor is approaching mobile marketing and the automation from a different position of strength. Choose four to five vendors who you think can meet your requirements from mobile technology, supporting services, and infrastructure to professional services, geography, and industry expertise. Consider the typical deal size of the vendor as well. If you are a vendor’s smallest deal, you risk being ignored. If you are their most
reputable or prestigious customer, they may sell to you at below cost to put your logo in their marketing deck, but they may be underprepared to handle your scale. The profiles in this report can help you create a short list.

5. **Choose the partner who best fulfills your needs.** From your shortlist of vendors, narrow in on the one who can best meet your strategic needs. How do you determine those strategic needs? Ask about its future product plans to ensure it’ll grow with you in your mobile engagement maturity. Then dig deeper into the details of its solution, web-based functionality, and experience within your industry or geography. This will ensure that your mobile engagement automation solution is not a one-off technology purchase, but a part of your larger business technology strategy.

6. **Leverage your strategic partners’ experience, but build your own best practices.** Tap into your mobile engagement automation solution partners to accelerate your learning. Just because you own a hammer and drill doesn’t make you an expert carpenter. The combination of a vision to transform your customer experience through serving your customers in their mobile moments, a strategic partner, and the technology only gives you the tools to succeed — it doesn’t guarantee your success. You will need to put process into place to build your own best practices. Early on, however, you'll lack the scale or data points to develop enough insights to create best practices. For example, very few retail customers will download an app, opt in for notifications, and turn on Bluetooth to receive notifications in-store. A vendor who can look across a portfolio of clients at how their customers engage will learn faster.

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Appboy
FollowAnalytics
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Kahuna
Leanplum
Localytics
moBack
MobileRQ
Oracle
OtherLevels
Salesforce
Selligent
SmartFocus
Swrve
Taplytics
Urban Airship
Vibes
Webtrekk

Endnotes


2  For more information on what drives consumers to adopt and use new mobile products and services, please see the “The Convenience Quotient Of Mobile Services: A Facebook Case Study” Forrester report.

3  The moments that characterize the mobile mind shift are getting shorter. Simple triggers — messages, sounds, even tactile sensations — spur consumers to take action, both on devices and in the real world. Forrester defines this quick-reaction subset of mobile moments as micro moments. For more information on these kinds of moments, see the “Micro Moments Are The Next Frontier For Mobile” Forrester report.

4  Forrester defines a mobile moment as: “A mobile moment is a point in time and space when someone pulls out a mobile device to get what they want in their immediate context.” To understand the basics of mobile moments, see the “Re-Engineer Your Business For Mobile Moments” Forrester report.

5  Great customer experiences drive loyalty and fuel growth. To avoid prioritizing customer experience (CX) investments that are not important to your customers and don’t beat out your peers, you need to add a true CX metric to your roster of customer analytics. Source: “Customer Experience Index (CX Index™),” Forrester Research (https://www.forrester.com/CX-Index/-/e-MPl191).


7  For more information on the stages of maturity within the mobile mind shift framework, please see the “Mobile Mind Shift Maturity Framework” Forrester report.
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To learn more about the mobile mind shift, see the “Mobile Moments Transform Customer Experience” Forrester report.

Forrester defines RTIM as: Enterprise marketing technology that delivers contextually relevant experiences, value, and utility at the appropriate moment in the customer life cycle via preferred customer touchpoints. For more information on RTIM, see the “The Forrester Wave™: Real-Time Interaction Management, Q3 2015” Forrester report.

The mobile mind shift is defined as the expectation that consumers can get anything they want immediately, in context. Context is key in mobile because screens are small and consumers become very task-oriented. They want to open an app or website on the phone, get something done and get back to what they were doing. Enterprises must use context to make experiences relevant and therefore simple for consumers on mobile devices. Context will also help enterprises anticipate what consumers need and serve them proactively. Few companies do this today.

To learn about the IDEA cycle, see the “Re-Engineer Your Business For Mobile Moments” Forrester report.

For more information on the value of insights, please see the “Digital Insights Are the New Currency Of Business” Forrester report.

Definitions have been modified based on previous research. To check the initial reports, see the “Automate I&O To Answer Digital Disruption” Forrester report.

For more information on marketing cloud vendors’ larger suites of services, Forrester’s 35-criteria evaluation of real-time interaction management (RTIM) vendors details how well each vendor fulfills our criteria and where they stand in relation to each other to help customer insights (CI) professionals select the right partner for their RTIM needs. See the “The Forrester Wave™: Real-Time Interaction Management, Q3 2015” Forrester report.


This report, focused on the AD&D professional, provides a broadly applicable overview to understand machine learning. For more on machine learning, see the “A Machine Learning Primer For BT Professionals” Forrester report.
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