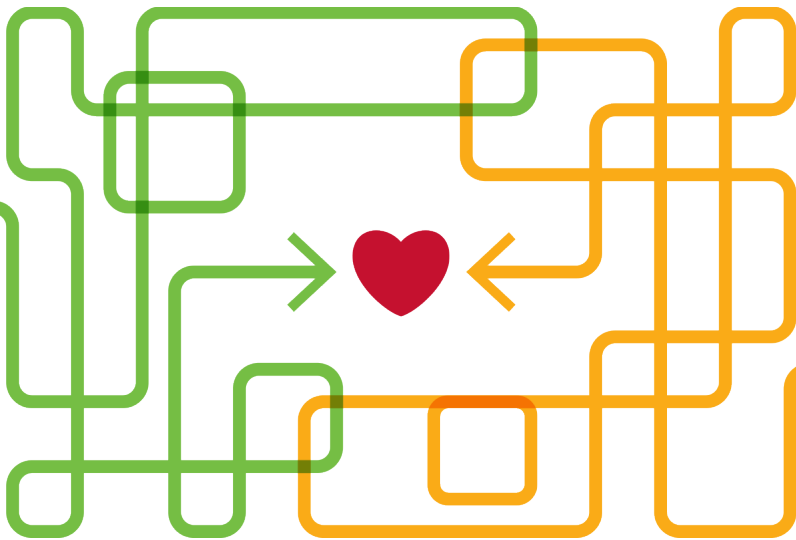


Meaningful Engagement

Connecting at the Moments That MatterSM



Has customer engagement lost its meaning or just its way?

In this guide, we explore the path toward meaningful engagement—an approach to research, insight development and design that leads straight to the heart of your customers.

Has customer engagement lost its meaning?



Matt Hummel
President

The concept of customer engagement emerged to describe the transition from discrete, transactional interactions between brands and their customers to the ongoing, richly-textured relationships characteristic of the digital era. Engagement was touted as the panacea for healing all that ails the marketing department. Declining sales, decreased retention rates and climbing acquisition costs could all be reversed by “engaging” customers more effectively.

Customer engagement initiatives (and the agencies to execute them) multiplied overnight. “Engagement” became the secret buzzword that unlocked doors to bigger budgets and corner offices for CMOs. Customers were engaged on web sites, social media platforms, in stores, on smartphones, in video players, through loyalty programs—any channel was fair game. There were customer engagement metrics, books, analysts, conferences and, of course, awards.

It’s no wonder that both the phrase and the practice of customer engagement seem to have lost their meaning. Or even worse, customer engagement is used to describe programs that actually undermine the power of the very principle that makes engagement work: reciprocity.

At Red Privet, we’re bringing meaning back to customer engagement. We’ve created this guide for executives, marketers and technologists who are looking to truly connect with their customers and achieve sustainable return on investment for customer engagement initiatives.

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In this guide, you’ll learn:

- The three types of “engagement imposters”
- The definition of meaningful engagement
- How to find the Moments That MatterSM for your brand

Engagement Imposters

At the heart of every customer engagement is a value exchange. At its best, engagement is a fair trade of value between the customer and the brand over time. Unfortunately, not every value exchange is equal. When the scales get tipped too far in either direction, we get engagement imposters—experiences that might be labeled as customer engagement, but are missing the essential ingredient of reciprocity.

Imposter #1: Unprofitable Engagement

Unprofitable engagement happens when the desire to “engage” with a customer supersedes the brand’s financial objectives or resources. In this scenario, the customer derives a high value from the engagement, but at a price that is not sustainable for the business. Consider the many small businesses that promoted their companies using Groupon. A Rice University professor released a research study that found that over 40% of businesses that used the promotional offers, found them to be unprofitable. Consumers got great deals, but at the expense of the company’s bottom line. These high-profile, often trendy, marketing programs can fly high, only to crash and burn followed by agency reviews, budget cuts and executive shifts.

Imposter #2: Opportunistic Engagement

If unprofitable engagement is unsustainable in the short-term, opportunistic engagement is unsustainable in the long-term. Here, the engagement equation is weighted too heavily in favor of the brand’s objectives—contributing to the top or bottom line, but at the cost of brand equity, loyalty and advocacy. Think of businesses that lock down contracts by enacting large penalties for cancellation or “automatic renewals” that aren’t explicitly requested by customers. Companies that practice opportunistic engagement are prone to competitive threats, having eroded all goodwill with their customers in service of turning a profit.

Imposter #3: Meaningless Engagement

Meaningless engagement is exactly what it sounds like. It’s an interaction that meets neither the consumer’s objectives nor the brand’s objectives. This type of engagement often occurs when a brand tries to meet needs their customers do not expect or want them to meet. Take the example of a dental insurance provider who posts general health news daily to a Facebook page frequented by less than 100 fans. Do their customers want to get their health news on Facebook from their dental insurance provider? No. Does receiving these updates make them more likely to do business with their dental insurance provider? No. Meaningless engagement makes you wonder: what’s the point?

Are your customers engagement avoiders?

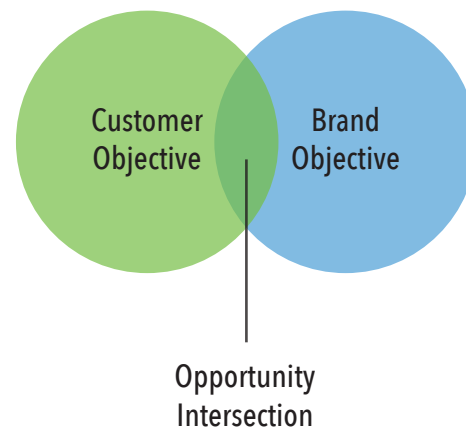
Are brands always to blame for awkward attempts at engagement? Not necessarily. There are certain categories that consumers would simply prefer to avoid when possible. Industries that require people to face their own mortality, remind people of their lack of financial resources or provide little autonomy in terms of decision-making find it more difficult to engage consumers—in any channel. Financial services like insurance and home mortgages, routine healthcare appointments, utilities and home maintenance services all fall into the

category of “necessary evils.” Engagement strategies for these products and services are often counter-intuitive. Instead of creating “sticky” experiences that encourage lengthy or ongoing interactions with the brand, winning engagement strategies for these categories focus on delivering frictionless, pain-free experiences that make quick work of required interactions and alleviate the consumers need to think about the brand otherwise.

Toward Meaningful Engagement

One of the definitions of the word engagement is “to attract and hold fast.” This implies that there are two laws at work in true engagement: attraction and retention. Engagement isn’t just about getting someone’s attention, it’s about holding his or her attention long enough to create sustainable value—be it financial, transactional, emotional or relational. It’s about creating something both valuable and desirable.

Imagine two circles. One represents the customer’s objectives, the other represents the brand’s objectives. Engagement opportunities exist anytime these two circles intersect.



The goal of any opportunity intersection is to create meaningful engagement. Meaningful engagement is when the needs of both the customer and the business are met in a sustainable way—providing value for all stakeholders.

Moments That Matter

The pinnacle of meaningful engagement is the “engagement eclipse”—when both brand and customer needs are met fully in a single interaction. Just like real-life eclipses, these opportunities don’t just happen everyday, but when they do, they are magical. The good news is you don’t have to sit around waiting for the planets to align to see one. Your odds of witnessing an engagement eclipse increase exponentially when you understand the moments that matter to your brand and to your customer.

Moments That MatterSM hold the potential for a meaningful connection with your customer. Humans create meaning to connect their experiences and interactions to their needs, desires and deeply held values. In the same way, Moments That Matter provide brands with the opportunity to:

- Meet needs
- Fulfill desires
- Exemplify shared value

What makes a moment matter?

Moments That Matter hold the potential for a meaningful connection with your client.

Moments That Matter Meet Needs

Moments that meet needs matter because they relieve or prevent pain or inconvenience. Since most companies are built on a value proposition that solves a customer problem, many brands make the mistake of thinking that this core problem, like securing a mortgage, filing an insurance claim or visiting the doctor, is the only moment that matters. But in order to meet the needs of customers completely, the moment has to extend beyond just the transactional need to emotional needs as well. For example, a person who has just purchased a home not only has a need to set up their online bill payment account, but they also need help navigating their new neighborhood.

When the customer’s needs are considered more fully, we find that the greater opportunity for meaning often lies in preventing a problem with helpful reminders and preventative services or mitigating a problem that has already occurred with thoughtful customer service.

Moments That Matter Fulfill Desires

Moments that fulfill desires matter because they demonstrate deep empathy and understanding of what the customer truly wants to accomplish or feel. These moments can also address goals and desires not even fully recognized by the customer themselves. By tapping into the human need to be known and understood, these “surprise and delight” or “above and beyond” interactions can galvanize customer loyalty and lead customers to engage in viral, word-of-mouth evangelism for your brand.

Moments That Matter Exemplify Shared Values

Moments that exemplify shared values matter because they create a sense of purpose and community. People long to belong. When your organization demonstrates what matters most to you, it resonates with those who also hold those deeply shared values. The result is a relationship built on more than a transaction—it’s built on trust.

Finding the Moments That Matter

So how do you find the Moments That Matter and what are you supposed to do with them once you find them?

At Red Privet, we utilize a three-step Meaningful Engagement Framework to identify Moments That Matter and create meaningful engagement.

THE MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK



Step 1: Meaningful Research

Meaningful research isn't about validating your own assumptions, it's about unearthing insights. Research should be designed to provide insight into three core components of the customer's experience:

Intent

- *What are they trying to achieve?*
- *What are their goals?*
- *Their expectations?*
- *Their assumptions?*
- *How do they want to feel?*

Context

- *What is their environment?*
- *What tools and resources do they have?*
- *Who influences their decision-making process?*

Behavior

- *What do they actually do, think and feel throughout the process?*

Contextual inquiry techniques such as contextual interviews, intercepts, and ethnography provide unprecedented access into the mind and world of your customer. These observation-oriented methods allow you to see your brand used in the context of the customer's daily life and social networks. The goal in this step is to observe without judgment and seek to understand and empathize with your customers.

Step 2: Meaningful Insights

The next step in the process is uncovering Meaningful Insights. If you conducted your research well, you will be overwhelmed by information documenting the user experience. But information does not equal insight. In order to make meaning of what you have learned, we place that information in models and frameworks designed to highlight opportunity intersections.

Journey maps are a popular tool for planning customer engagement tactics. These artifacts provide a visual representation of all of the touchpoints a customer encounters as they use a brand's product or service. The best journey maps are rich with real-life insights unearthed during Meaningful Research—through active listening and judgment-free observation of the customer. We call these Meaning Maps. In a Meaning Map, you identify not only the transactional interactions, but the emotional and social interplay as well.

Once all of the touchpoints have been identified and the entire customer experience has been plotted on a Meaning Map, the next step is to look at the map through your engagement binoculars—one lens viewing it from the customer's perspective, while the other considers the brand's needs. The moments that matter are the interactions where you have the highest likelihood of achieving both the customers' needs and business needs at the same time. This is where you invest your engagement energy to design the most meaning possible into each interaction.

**For examples of journey maps and other
Meaningful Engagement artifacts,
visit redprivet.com**

Step 3: Meaningful Design

Meaningful Design isn't just about creating a slick app or beautiful user interface. Meaningful Design goes beyond aesthetics to design complete, integrated experiences that meet needs, fulfill desires or exemplify shared values. In this step, Meaningful Insights become the design criteria and Meaningful Research informs the design process so every interaction is designed with the customer's intent, context and behavior in mind.

Meaningful Design is also measurable design. Regardless of what form the experience takes—from a smartphone app to a customer call center script—a brand should be able to measure the impact of the interaction on both the top and bottom line.

Making Meaning in a Moment That Matters: Colonoscopy Prep

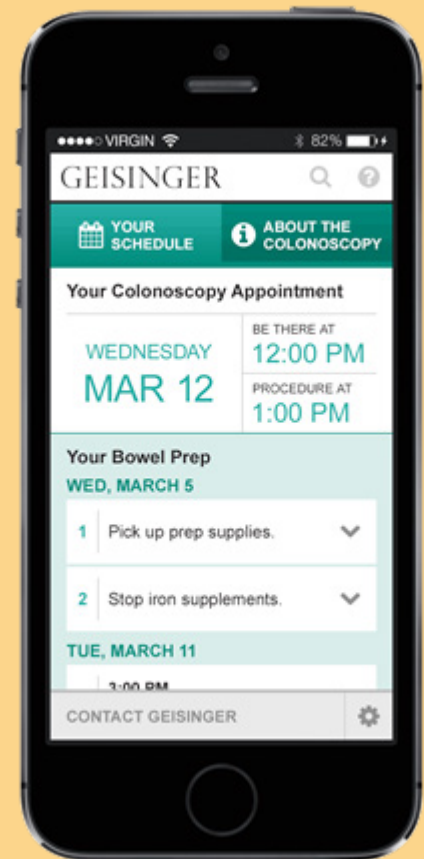
Colonoscopies are recommended for all adults over the age of 50, yet according to the United States Preventative Services Task Force, only one in three adults from ages 50-75 have actually had the procedure. Many people avoid getting a colonoscopy not only because the procedure itself is invasive, but also because the preparation process requires a very specific (and often, unpleasant) protocol. If a patient fails to complete all of the steps leading up to the procedure, the colonoscopy has to be rescheduled—incurring costs for the hospital and creating anxiety and frustration as the patient must repeat the preparation process once again.

Using the Meaningful Engagement framework, a nationally-known regional health system was able to identify that the “moment that matters” was not having to experience this moment twice. Meaningful Research showed that patients really didn’t want to think about the process and needed alerts, remind-

ers and resources to help them remember and follow the protocol. Meaning Maps pointed toward the need for “just-in-time” information while shopping at the pharmacy or following the procedure at home.

Building on meaningful research and insights, Red Privet was able to design and develop a mobile app for colonoscopy patients that educates them on appropriate preparation protocols and reminds them of critical steps through a “push” alert system. The app also includes shopping lists for preparation supplies.

By understanding their customers needs and desires, the brand was able to create meaningful engagement in a moment that most brands wouldn’t even think to engage their customers—and gained customer loyalty at an unexpected opportunity intersection.



The mobile app provides colonoscopy patients with preparation checklists, shopping lists and appointment reminders delivered through a “push” alert system.

What does this mean for you?

It’s simple. Meaningful engagement leads to meaningful business results.

When you concentrate on meaningful engagement at the Moments That Matter, the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts. The customer not only accomplishes the critical tasks they set out to achieve, they feel understood, supported and a deep sense of belonging. At the same time, your brand not only achieves its top line transactional and financial objectives, you also reap the benefits of bottom line efficiencies—while developing loyal brand advocates.

Creating even more Moments That Matter.



We make meaning.

Not every opportunity for customer engagement is the same. At Red Privet, we help your brand identify the Moments That MatterSM—those critical interactions where customer needs are met and customer loyalty is earned. We combine immersive research, thoughtful design and innovative execution to create meaningful engagement and deliver meaningful business results.

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