

Amazon:

How Tapping into the Attention Economy Benefited the E-commerce Giant

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Amazon works on the lines of a simple but game-changing strategy: Its sales make more sales.

Whether the e-commerce giant is creating an ever-expanding network of buyers and sellers, using efficient algorithmic coding to create a real-time personalized experience for every individual user, or relying on user-based and item-based collaborative filtering systems for a more enhanced and convenient online shopping experience, Amazon has consistently managed to remain one step ahead of its competitors by capitalizing on what makes today's "attention economy" tick.

Content on the World Wide Web is growing in abundance and immediacy of availability, and today, human attention has become a limiting factor in the consumption of information. Where there is an overload of information, there is a dearth of whatever it is that information consumes, which is in this case, the limited capability of our attention. This is the attention economy – where consumers agree to receive services in exchange for their attention. Amazon's developers have their fingers on the pulse of this economy, and have made strides in understanding the behavior of its consumers, its primary driving force.

According to Kevin Kelly, to combat the problem of our low attention spans, suppliers must provide valuable intangibles that cannot be reproduced. These intangibles include personalization or a 'tailored for you' experience, authenticity of the product or service, ease of accessibility to the portal and its avenues, and importantly, findability of what the consumer is looking for. Amazon has modeled and remodeled itself to cater to these demands, thereby leading to its global success.



The key to capturing and maintaining the attention of consumers is filtering out unimportant and irrelevant information. Amazon ensures consumer attention and loyalty with the use of straight-forward and easy-to-use content filters. One can 'sort by' relevance of the product, price (range, high-to-low, low-to-high), average customer reviews, and newest arrivals, and choose the department, category, and sub-category of

the exact product required. Customers can narrow down on qualitative specifications like the brand, color and type of product, and further explore discount offers and ratings. Even at the back-end, sellers can enter keywords and categorize their products according to their target audience and where and how they wish to be found. Amazon's search system is extremely product and category specific, allowing its customers to filter out unneeded information and use the website in a manner most suitable for them.

Amazon also uses algorithmically generated tracking to change its output and make it more relevant to consumers, as can be seen in its 'frequently bought together' and 'customers who bought this also bought' sections. This allows it to connect brands and sellers to their target consumer demographics and vice versa. Its search engine is optimized to show product listings in ways that not only put Amazon on the path to achieving maximum sales conversion, but also benefit the wide range of sellers and buyers using the platform. These algorithms, using past user activity, determine what a user could purchase during an active buying session, and have a subconscious if not always subtle influence on the consumer's behavior. Amazon can hence provide a personalized experience for the user, and not just an illusion of the same – these recommendations have a demonstrated history of being beneficial for the sellers and buyers as well, creating a win-win situation for those involved in the growth and usage of the platform.

Whether it is Amazon's pioneering act in 5-second YouTube advertisements, flash-sales, Amazon Prime and free shipping services, internal competitive pricing, algorithmic models, search engine optimization or efficient categorization – its

on their feet. An enhanced online shopping experience and increased convenience for its users has successfully managed to capture consumer attention across demographics, and it has seen several ups and booms since its conception. The attention economy is more prevalent than ever today, and Amazon caters to the need of the hour in the e-commerce industry – a tailor-made online shopping experience abundant with recommendations and consumer guidance at every step, yet devoid of 'information pollution' such as spam e-mails and unnecessary/avoidable schemes.

Human attention is a scarce commodity. Amazon, having understood this, tackles the economic problem of a possible information overload in an efficient manner, garnering invaluable attention from those willing and able to sell and buy. It seems to have, at this stage, mastered the traditional AIDA marketing model – Attention, Interest, Desire and Action, leading it to be the ever-growing e-commerce giant that it is today. This is not to say that there is no scope for improvement. As competition arises, it will have to remodel yet again and develop novel ways to cater to its target audience, but in the moment today, it has successfully set an example of how to understand the psychology driving its consumers' behavior, and their short-lived attention spans.