Personalize and Protect:

Make a Real Connection with Your Customers

GetResponse 60 second marketer™

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Imagine this –

You're a consumer engaging with a brand that you're only vaguely familiar with. That brand has designed a marketing campaign that provides you with a personalized, customized experience. It's almost as if the brand has been humanized with a personality that's perfectly matched to engage, inspire, and befriend you.

Contrast that with a brand that hasn't taken steps to personalize the experience. Instead of a warm, engaging personality, you're met by a generic, corporate brand that seems inauthentic and insincere.

The fact is, **80% of those surveyed are more likely to do business with a company if it offers personalized experiences**. What's more, 90% indicated that they find personalization appealing.[1]

That's great news for any business interested in finding a competitive advantage. After all, if your competitors are lagging on the personalization front, then personalizing and humanizing your marketing is an opportunity to differentiate your brand.

A separate study from Accenture shows that personalization can mean a deeper connection with your customers. **65% of the consumers in their study were willing to share more personal data in return for a better, more customer-focused experience**.[2]

The Accenture study links up very nicely with the study you're reading now conducted by GetResponse and the 60 Second Marketer. In our study, 42% of those surveyed felt very positive or positive about a brand that sends emails to them after making a purchase on their website.
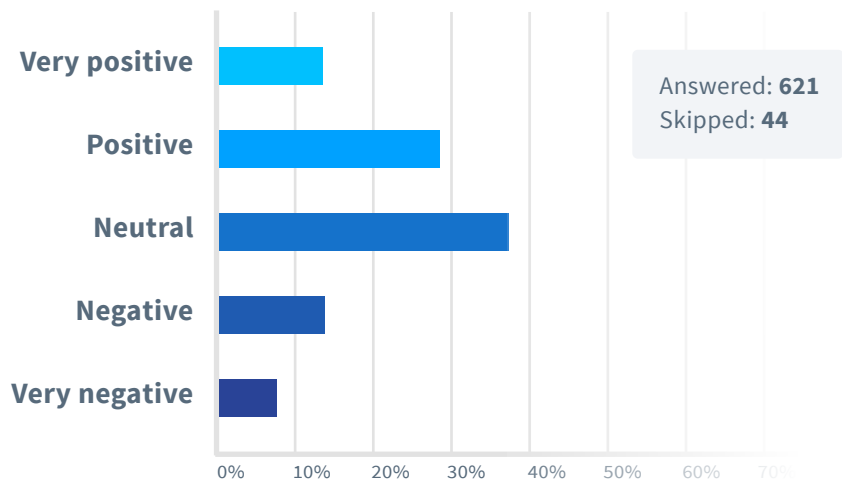
[1] Epsilon Digital Transformation study

[2] Accenture Interactive 2019 Consumer Pulse Survey

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Q17. When I purchase a product from a website and then start receiving emails from the company I purchased from, my feelings about that company are…

Very positive
Positive
Neutral
Negative
Very negative

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%

Answered: **621**
Skipped: **44**

It's clear that personalizing your marketing can be a differentiator for your brand. It's also clear that personalization can mean greater market share and more revenue for your business.

But the question remains – at what point do consumers start to feel as though personalization is an infringement on their privacy? In other words, where is the Privacy Line? At what point do consumers say, "Stop – you're infringing on my privacy and are starting to creep me out."

Good Marketers Use Trust, Privacy, and Relevancy as a Differentiator for Their Brand

There's some good news for brands interested in personalizing their communication – it's not that difficult to execute. In other words, you don't need a data scientist to crunch numbers for you in order to make your marketing more human and authentic.

What you do need is a clear sense of how to use the tools in your toolkit to connect more authenticall y with your prospects and your customers.

Consider this:

 Automated emails triggered by user behavior **generate 2-3x higher engagement** compared to regular newsletters. By shifting focus toward personalized automated communication, you can directly improve your brand's image and your bottom line.
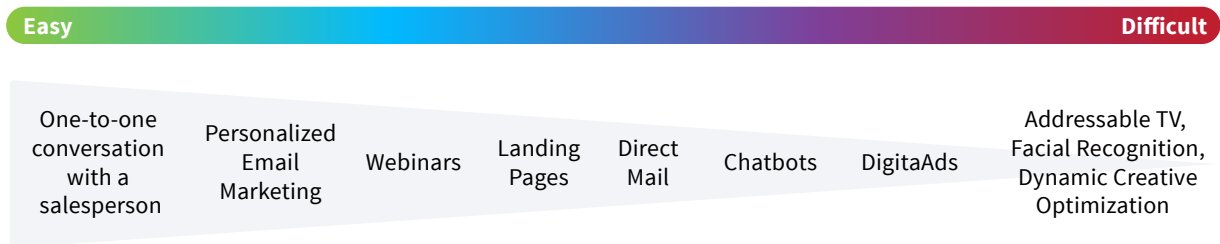
Michal Leszczynski,
Content Marketing Manager at GetResponse

Marketer's Personalization Toolkit

Personalizing your marketing runs the spectrum from easy to difficult

Easy							Difficult
One-to-one conversation with a salesperson	Personalized Email Marketing	Webinars	Landing Pages	Direct Mail	Chatbots	DigitaAds	Addressable TV, Facial Recognition, Dynamic Creative Optimization

By understanding your consumer's sensitivity to the personalization issue, you'll have a clear sense of where the Privacy Line is for your customers and how to engage them without alienating them. Your role as a marketing executive is to understand when you've entered into the creepy zone – that zone where a consumer pulls away from your brand rather than deepening their relationship with your brand.

Brands That Cross the Privacy Line Live to Regret it

There are plenty of examples of brands that have crossed the Privacy Line. The most famous, of course, was when millions of Facebook users' personal data was harvested without consent by Cambridge Analytica to be used for political advertising. That was a Privacy Line violation that still reverberates today.

But that's not the only example. Lenovo computers preloaded software on some laptops that suppressed security and data protections in order to deliver ads to consumers.[3] In another example, Vizio, one of the world's largest manufacturers and sellers of internet-connected "smart" televisions, agreed to pay a $2.2 million settlement because it allegedly installed software on its TVs to collect viewing data on 11 million consumer TVs without the consumers' knowledge or consent.[4]

> "The secret to a successful marketing campaign isn't about personalization. It's about knowing where the line is between your customer welcoming you into their lives and your customer pushing you out of their lives."
>
> **– Chuck Moxley, Senior Vice President, Marketing, Mobivity**

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[3] Lenovo Settles FTC Charges on FTC.gov

[4] Vizio to Pay $2.2 Million to FTC on FTC.gov

And who can forget the Ashley Madison data breach? A group calling itself The Impact Team copied personal information about the site's user based and threatened to release users' names and personally identifying information (PII) if Ashley Madison didn't shut down. Eventually, the group leaked more than 60 gigabytes of company data, including user details.[5]

How to Build Trust with Your Consumer

The starting point for any company interested in humanizing their brand and connecting with their customers is to understand the consumer mindset – how do their consumers feel about privacy? What are their thoughts about brands that use personal data to connect with them? And what makes the consumer uncomfortable when it comes to their personal data?

Those are just some of the questions we set out to ask when we interviewed more than 600 consumers in the United States and Europe.

"The essential question for privacy is this – are you following all the laws and regulations about getting consumer information in the first place? And if you are following all the regulations, then are you doing everything you can to protect their data?"

– Ian Cleary, CEO, RazorSocial

One of the first things we found is that the majority of consumers surveyed (56.39%) always or usually think about the safety and privacy of their personal data. 16.85% of those surveyed rarely or never thought about it, which means that people who are concerned about their data outnumber those who are not concerned by a rate of almost 4 to 1.

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[3] Ashley Madison Data Breach

Q4. How often do you think about the safety and privacy of your personal data?

Answered: **665**
Skipped: **0**
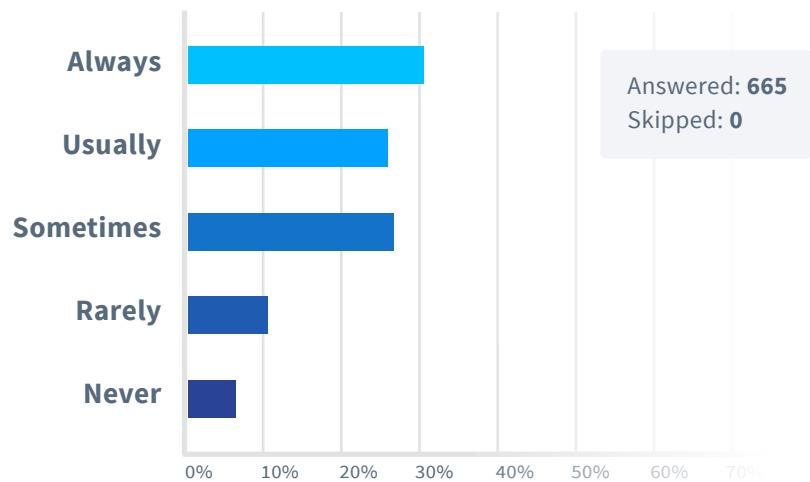
Action Step Based on This Finding: Your consumers take privacy seriously, so you should, too. If you don't, you risk losing their trust which might mean losing them as a customer.

Consider this:

Visualize the entire customer journey and make sure to mitigate your consumers' privacy concerns at every possible touchpoint. Treat your signup forms, landing pages, and emails as another opportunity to strengthen the bond with your audience & reassure them that doing business with you was the right decision.

Michal Leszczynski,
Content Marketing Manager at GetResponse

On a related note, consumers generally trust businesses to be truthful and honest, with 52.63% saying they always or usually trust businesses vs. just 16.24% saying they rarely or never trust businesses. And 62.07% say they strongly agree, agree, or somewhat agree with the statement that most businesses follow privacy laws.

But when those consumers were asked if they trusted advertising to be truthful or honest, the answers weren't as flattering – only 35.19% said they always or usually trusted advertising while 26.61% said they rarely or never trusted advertising.

Q3. How much do you trust advertising to be truthful and honest?

Answered: **665**
Skipped: **0**
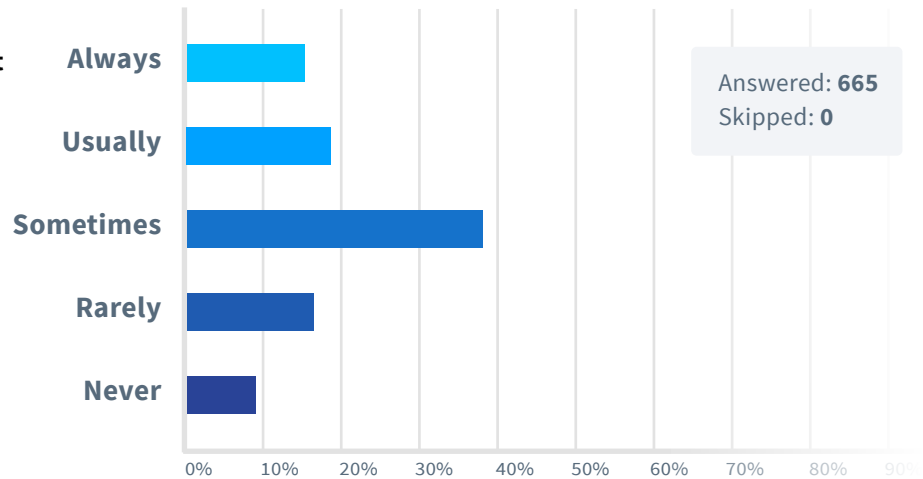
Action Step Based on This Finding: Consumers don't trust advertising as much as they trust the brands that do the advertising. Given that, you could argue that the more authentic, real, and genuine a brand is in their advertising, the more likely a consumer is to believe the claims made in their ad campaigns.

Consider this:

In your communication, be upfront about who you are and what values you stand for. You can do that in many ways – via a personalized welcome email, tailored video greeting, follow-up email introducing the team, or the use of social proof throughout your whole marketing collateral.

Europeans are More Trusting of Government:

When asked "How much do you trust your government to be truthful and honest?" with 1 being always and 5 being never, Europeans averaged a 2.84 while people in the United States averaged 3.01 indicating that members of the E.U. who responded to the survey were more trusting of government than their counterparts in the U.S.

How much do you trust your government to be truthful and honest?
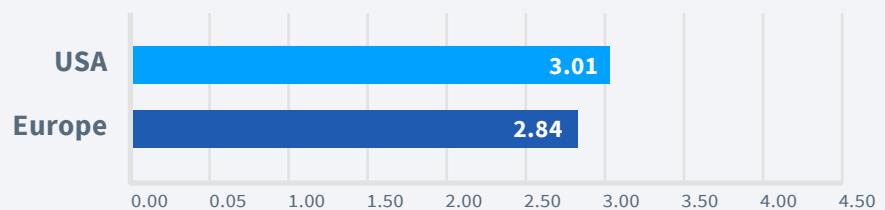
The Impact of Behavioral Targeting on Consumer Trust

In general, people in Europe and the U.S. know that marketers are following them around the internet. In other words, they are aware that when they do a Google search for a product, it won't be long before they see ads for that product in their social media feeds.

That tactic, called Behavioral Targeting, has become a norm for marketers. When a consumer shops for red shoes on a Monday, they can expect that there's a marketer who will send them digital ads for the same red shoes by Tuesday. It's the world we live in.
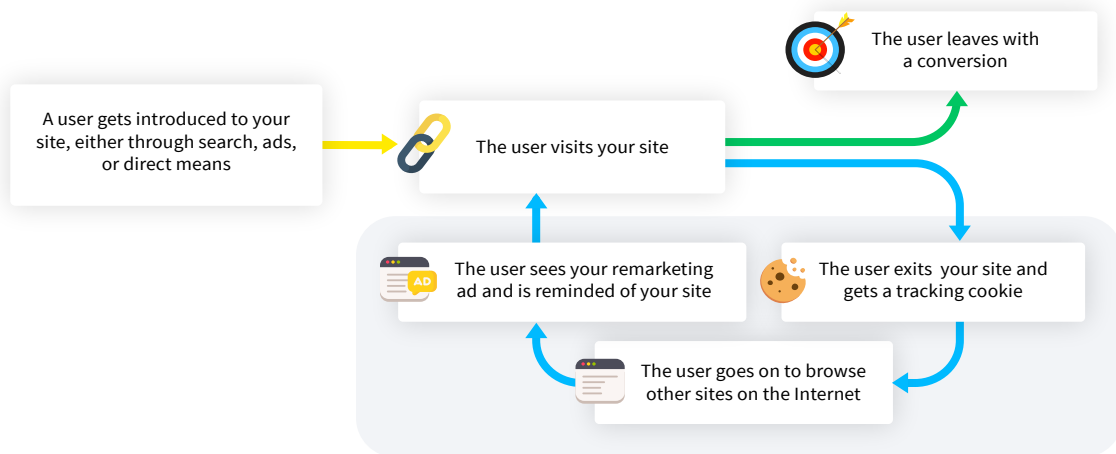
But our survey indicates that older consumers (defined as those age 45 years and up) are not as comfortable with that scenario as their younger counterparts (age 18 to 44). When asked to rate their feelings on a scale of 1 (very positive) to 5 (very negative) on how they feel when they see ads in their social media accounts for products that they previously Googled, the younger respondents averaged 2.61 (indicating a certain level of comfort). The older respondents averaged a 3.10 (indicating a certain level of discomfort).

When I start seeing ads in my social media accounts for products that I previously...
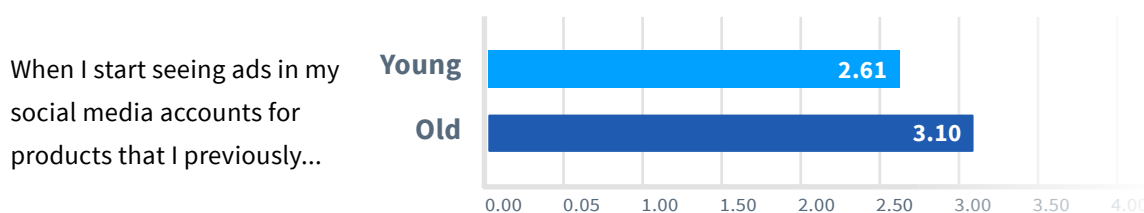
Action Step Based on This Finding: Older consumers are less comfortable with behavioral targeting than younger consumers, so they're likely to be more skeptical about the brands that use technology to hyper-target their campaigns. Keep that in mind if you sell a product or service that targets people older than 45 years of age.

Consider this:

Think about your consumers as human – and not "conversions" or "users". By taking this perspective, you may end up seeing areas in your communication that may be creating "costs" you haven't previously considered, like email list churn, or your ads being reported. Capping your marketing communication can be one way to reduce the side-effects of hyper-targeting.

Michal Leszczynski,
Content Marketing Manager at GetResponse

Does Amazon Have a Trust Problem?

Survey respondents appeared to be less trusting of Amazon than they are of Google. Respondents were asked to rate their feelings on a scale of 1 (very positive) to 5 (very negative) to the question "When I search for a product on Amazon and then notice that ads for that product start appearing in my social media feed, my feelings about the company are … (rate 1 to 5)." For Amazon, 30.76% of those surveyed had negative or very negative feelings, but only 24.31% reported negative or very negative for Google. Does that mean Amazon has a brand reputation problem with consumers? Possibly. Can they turn those sentiments around? Only time will tell.

When is it Acceptable to Create a Data Profile of Your Customer?

Generally speaking, consumers believe that if a company gives them a discount then it's fair for those companies to collect information about them. 56.19% of those surveyed said they strongly agree, agree, or somewhat agree with the statement, "If a company gives me a discount, I believe it is a fair exchange for them to also collect information about me." 28.57% said they somewhat disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with that statement.

Collecting information based on previous purchases is slightly less popular than collecting data in exchange for a discount. 52.7% strongly agree, agree, or somewhat agree with the statement, "It is okay for a company to start a data profile of me based on my previous purchases" with 30.48% saying that they somewhat disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with that statement.

Action Step Based on This Finding: If you're going to collect data from your consumers, try to be sure that they're getting something – like a discount – in return. Consumers don't want to simply give up their data. They want to give it up in return for something of value.

Consider this:

Asking for too much information in your signup process can lower your conversion rates and make the data more difficult to analyze. If you're going to collect it, be sure to use it in a valuable (for your customer) way – like sending personalized birthday emails or curating a list of most-recommended products.

When asked if they would go out of their way to purchase from companies that have reputations for being good stewards of data privacy, the results were clear. 67.45% of those surveyed replied by saying they strongly agree, agree, or somewhat agree with that statement. Only 11.11% said they somewhat disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with that statement.

Q13. I will go out of my way to purchase from companies that have reputations for being good stewards of data privacy.

Answered: **630**
Skipped: **35**
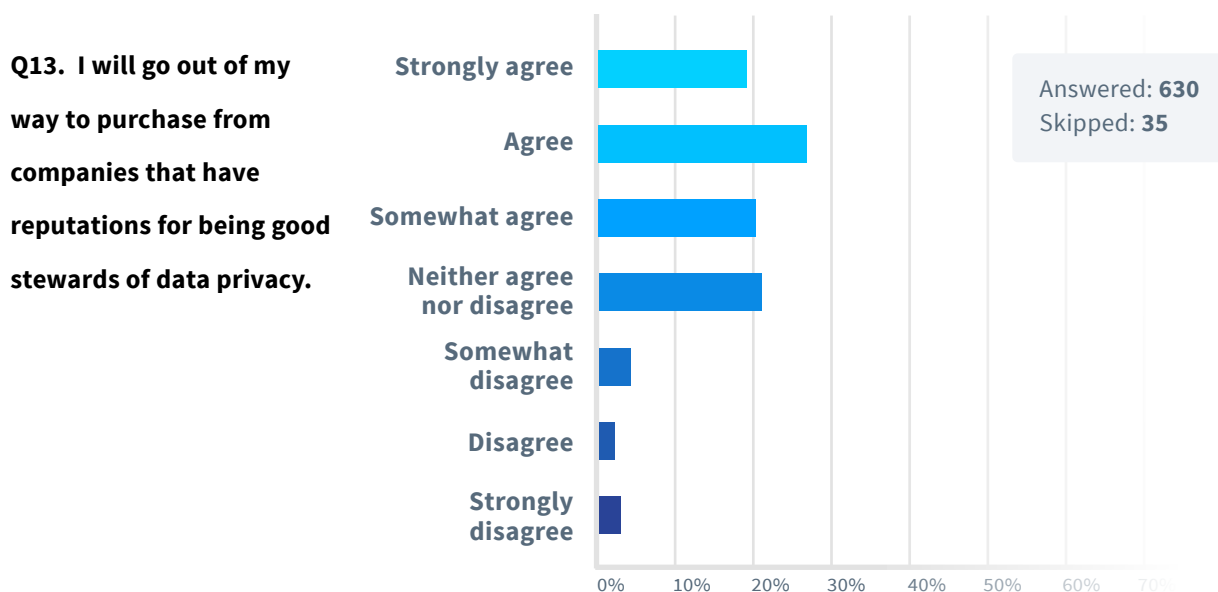
Europeans who responded to this survey are slightly less likely to go out of their way to make a purchase from companies that have reputations for being good stewards of data privacy. It's possible that this sentiment is a reflection of the impact of GDPR. In other words, since all E.U. companies are subject to strict privacy guidelines via GDPR,

Europeans assume that brands will be good stewards of their data, so it's not a true differentiator. Said another way, being a good steward of data privacy is the "greens fee" to enter into business in Europe, so it's not an exception, rather it's the rule.
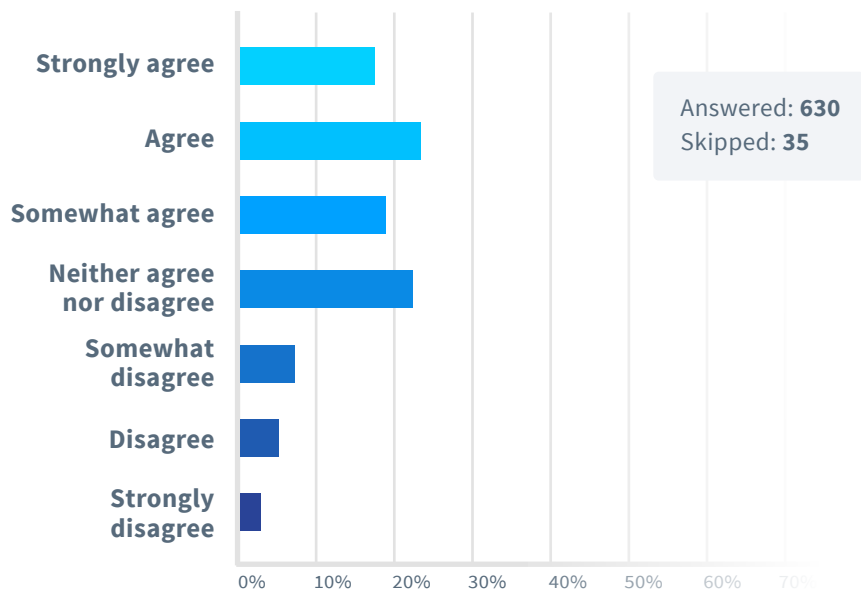
I will go out of my way to purchase from companies that have reputations for being good stewards of data privacy.

USA	2.50
Europe	3.23

0.00 0.05 1.00 1.50 2.00 2.50 3.00 3.50 4.0
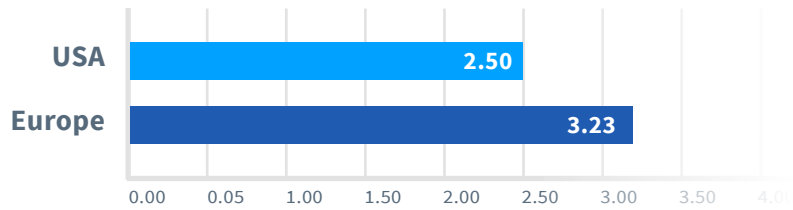
Do Google Home, Alexa, and Siri Share Your Data When You Haven't Alerted them to Wake Up?

The majority of respondents (61.27%) said that they strongly agree, agree, or somewhat agree with the statement that Google, Alexa, and Siri share data about their conversations with other organizations even when they haven't alerted those home bots to wake up. Only 16.03% somewhat disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with that statement.

Q14. I believe that Google Home, Alexa, and/or Siri share data about my conversations with other organizations even I haven't alerted those home bots to "wake up."

Strongly agree
Agree
Somewhat agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%

Answered: **630**
Skipped: **35**

Many consumers with home bots are aware that Google, Amazon, and Apple use the data from voice searches to create consumer profiles so that those organizations can serve relevant digital ads to them in the future.

While the majority of respondents to our survey indicate that they believe that data is

collected and used for marketing purposes even when the bots aren't awake, the reality is that there's no definitive evidence that this takes place. In other words, even though most respondents felt as though the data was being collected and used for marketing purposes when the bots were asleep, there is no quantifiable, scientific study we have found that shows that this is actually the case.

"Privacy is a growing concern for consumers and, as such, should be a growing concern for your brand." **Kirsten McMullen, Chief Privacy Officer and VP of Compliance, 4INFO**

There is plenty of anecdotal information on this subject for both sides of the argument. A quick search online will bring up a variety of qualitative but not quantitative (i.e., statistically viable) studies where individuals claim that they started receiving ads for products or services that they spoke about (prior to waking up their bots).

A similar small-scale study with students from The University of Texas indicated that there was not definitive evidence that the bots were sharing data with marketers prior to the bots being woken up. In The University of Texas study, students spoke about a variety of topics that they hadn't spoken about before, and then tracked whether or not they received ads based on those topics. Other than one exception, the students did not receive ads that would indicate the bots were tracking and leveraging their conversations prior to being woken up.

Whether bots collect and use data prior to being woken up or not will remain a subject of debate for the foreseeable future. No matter what the truth, marketers should be aware that the consumers who participated in this study believe that home bots are, in fact, collecting and using data prior to being woken up. That finding indicates a level of distrust or sensitivity that marketers need to be aware of as they leverage data in the years to come.

Action Step Based on This Finding: Many consumers believe that bots are collecting data prior to be woken up, indicating a level of distrust with those technologies. Given that finding, you should do everything possible to indicate to your prospects and customers that you are a good, ethical, and diligent protector of data privacy. This approach can be a good differentiator for your brand.

Americans Generally Less Trusting of Home Bots than Europeans:

When asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 7 (1 = Strongly Agree and 7 = Strongly Disagree) whether or not the respondent believed that home bots share conversations with marketers when the bot hasn't been alerted to wake up, respondents in the U.S. appeared to be less trusting of the home bots than respondents in Europe. The average response on the 1-to-7 scale in the U.S. was 2.83 indicating a lower level of trust than those who responded in Europe where the average response was a 3.30.

I believe that Google Home, Alexa, and/or Siri share data about my conversations with other organizations even I haven't alerted those home bots to "wake up."

USA	2.83
Europe	3.30

0.00 0.05 1.00 1.50 2.00 2.50 3.00 3.50 4.00
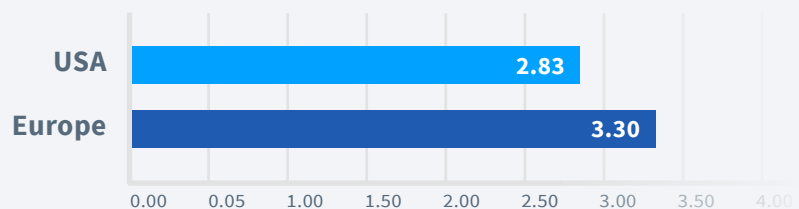
Politicians Use Mobile Tracking Data to Target Citizens Who Might Vote for Them

Mobile technology is a fascinating thing. Not only does it allow consumers to connect with friends, family, and business associates from just about anywhere on the planet, it also allows marketers to track their whereabouts.

Yes, you read that correctly. Marketers can acquire data that shows where non-personally identifiable data sets of consumers are located and have travelled. This may come as a surprise, but it's true.

The good news (if there is any) is that the data marketers use is non-personally identifiable. Marketers go to great lengths to ensure that the data collected is stripped of anything that would allow a marketer to know who the specific individual is.
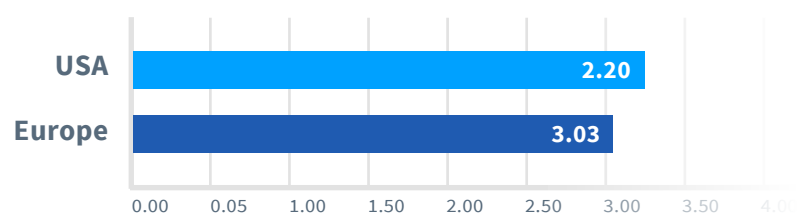
This means that marketers can acquire large sets of statistical data that indicated where people with certain traits are located or have travelled. They don't know that it's Jane Doe they're tracking, but they do know that they're tracking someone who buys Coca-Cola (or Pepsi), who lives in a certain neighborhood, and who travels to Italy every summer for vacation.

> "Brands have two choices when it comes to privacy. Embrace it and use it as a positive differentiator. Or ignore it and let it damage your brand reputation."
> **– Dr. Laura Bright, Associate Professor of Media Analytics at the Stan Richards School of Advertising and Public Relations.**

Politicians use this kind of data to target individuals who have attended political rallies that match causes the politicians have an affinity for. In other words, if Jane Doe attends a rally about Global Warming, then a candidate that has Global Warming on their agenda can target Jane Doe with ads asking for her support. This can happen even if Jane has never filled out a form or indicated in any other trackable way that she supports that cause.

We took a look at this scenario and studied how Europeans and Americans differ (slightly) on their perceptions of this technology.

Respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Very Positive and 5 = Very Negative) how they felt if they saw online ads for a candidate whose rally they attended (even if they didn't fill out forms or give the candidate other personal information). The respondents in Europe seemed to indicate that they were less concerned about that scenario than respondents in the U.S. As seen below, the average response on the 1-to-5 scale in the U.S. was 3.20 indicating a more negative feeling about the candidates than respondents in Europe.

If I attend a rally for a political candidate and then being seeing online ads for that candidate (even though I didn't fill out forms or give them other personal...

	Value
USA	2.20
Europe	3.03

Scale: 0.00 0.05 1.00 1.50 2.00 2.50 3.00 3.50 4.00

Putting This Research to Work for Your Business

You have a lot on your plate already. You're trying to grow your business, trying to improve your marketing campaigns, and trying to lead members of your team to bigger and better things. Given everything that's on your plate, it would be great to have a quick summary that provides action steps so that you can put everything you've learned here to good use.

Good news. We've done that for you. Just take a spin through the insights below to get a clear sense of what the data indicates and how you can put it to use for your business.

Here's everything in a nutshell:

💡 **Consumers surveyed value privacy, possibly more than you think.** We all know that consumers value their privacy, but we might not have known that (56.39%) always or usually think about the safety and privacy of their personal data. 16.85% of those surveyed rarely or never thought about it, which means that people who are more concerned about their safety and privacy outnumber those who are not concerned by a rate of almost 4 to 1.

💡 **Consumers surveyed trust businesses to be truthful and honest and to follow privacy laws.** Consumers generally trust businesses to be truthful and honest, with 52.63% saying they always or usually trust businesses vs. just 16.24% saying they rarely or never trust businesses. And 62.07% say they strongly agree, agree, or somewhat agree with the statement that most businesses follow privacy laws.

💡 **Consumers surveyed will go out of their way to connect with brands they trust.** When asked if they would go out of their way to purchase from companies that have reputations for being good stewards of data privacy, the results were clear. 67.45% of those surveyed replied by saying they strongly agree, agree, or somewhat agree with that statement. Only 11.11% said they somewhat disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with that statement.

💡 **Within reason, most consumers surveyed believe it's fair for companies to collect data in exchange for a discount.** Consumers believe that if a company gives them a discount then it's fair for those companies to collect information about them. 56.19% of those surveyed said they strongly agree, agree, or somewhat agree with the statement, "If a company gives me a discount, I believe it is a fair exchange for them to also collect information about me." 28.57% said they somewhat disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with that statement.

There is some confusion about how organizations use the data they collect.

While the jury is still out on whether or not home bots collect and use data before being woken up, most of those surveyed believe that this does, in fact, happen. In a similar vein, there's a possibility that most consumers are unaware that mobile data can be used to track their whereabouts (in a non-personally identifiable way). Given this level of confusion and lack of awareness of the details surrounding these technologies, it's incumbent upon marketers to keep their prospects and customers aware of how their data is being collected, protected, and used by the brands. The consumer lacks a complete understanding of how their personal data is being used. It's up to you to be fully transparent how your brand uses data so that you can deepen the level of trust you have with your prospects and customers.

Conclusion:

If you're like most people reading this report, you're using email marketing, webinars, landing pages, and possibly some digital advertising in order to attract prospects and convert them to customers. The more you know about how your customers feel about privacy and the more you respect those feelings, the easier it will be to convert prospects into customers. The best marketers will address the privacy issue head-on. In other words, they will use privacy and data collection as a positive differentiator rather than ignoring it or sweeping it under the carpet.

Don't be afraid to promote the fact that you value your customers' need for privacy. Let them know the steps you're taking to protect their data and to use it ethically and responsibly. By doing so, you can position your brand in a positive light and reap the benefits in the years to come.

> "Brands that treat data collection and data strategy as part of the consumer experience can benefit from greater consumer willingness to share information."
>
> **– Accenture Interactive**

5-Step Quick Start Guide

You've read this report and digested the insights. Now you're ready to get started on your journey to humanize your brand without alienating your customers.

Here are 5 steps you can take to make that concept a reality:

1 **Understand What Humanizing Your Brand Actually Means** – Humanizing your brand means creating a one-to-one conversation between your organization and your prospect or customer. When you humanize your brand, you're taking the authentic, real, transparent side of your brand and presenting it to your target audience. In an ideal world, your target audience will respond to this in a positive, genuine way.

2 **Collect, Analyze, and Act Upon Data in an Ethical Manner** – At a minimum, you'll want to follow GDPR and CCPA guidelines that are required in Europe and the U.S. More importantly, you'll want to communicate the steps you're taking to honor the integrity of the data with the members of your target audience.

3 **Don't Just Collect the Data, Use It** – If you're collecting contact information for an email or marketing automation campaign, be sure to use that information in the subject lines, the introductions, or even as a way to segment your lists. And when you create landing pages, customize those landing pages so that each customer segment feels as though the landing page was designed just for them. Of course, you can also create custom audiences or a lookalike audience on Facebook and other digital platforms that leverage the information you have in your database. The key is to act upon the data you've collected to create personalized campaigns. Don't just collect it, use it.

4 **Optimize Your Campaigns** – Run A/B split tests designed to test which variables result in better performance.
Do hyper-personalized campaigns outperform lightly-personalized campaigns? Does one customer segment consistently outperform another customer segment? By running A/B split tests, your campaigns will be in a constant state of improvement.
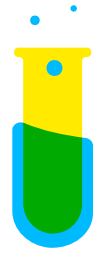
5 **Understand it's not a Revolution, it's an Evolution** –
The most successful campaigns are in a continuous state of evolution. In other words, they're constantly being improved little by little. So, resist the temptation to throw away campaigns that are only marginally successful. Instead, work to improve them little by little. Studies show that successful campaigns generally got there in small increments, not all at once.
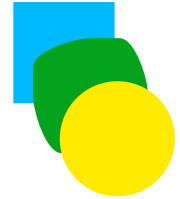
About the Author:

Jamie Turner is an internationally recognized author, speaker, and management consultant who consults with brands around the globe. You may have seen Jamie profiled in Forbes, Entrepreneur, The Wall Street Journal or Business Insider. Or you may have seen him on CNN or HLN, where he is a go-to expert on marketing, branding, and leadership. He is also the CEO and founder of the 60 Second Marketer.

Acknowledgements:

None of the insights in this report would have been possible without the guidance and counsel of Karen Wallach, who assisted with the development of the survey questions and the analysis of the findings. Karen is a PhD Candidate and Researcher at Emory University who is completing her dissertation on corporate social responsibility, branding, and sustainability.

About GetResponse:

GetResponse is an online marketing platform that offers a complete suite of simple-yet-powerful solutions, scaled and customized for small and large companies. Their tools are designed for organizations that want to implement effective, high-impact campaigns that drive marketing ROI.

About the 60 Second Marketer:

The 60 Second Marketer is a marketing website that provides tools, tips, and techniques for hundreds of thousands of marketers around the globe. The website was founded by Jamie Turner, who is an internationally recognized author, speaker, and management consultant.

Methodology:

This study originated from a need to understand consumer attitudes towards data collection, privacy, and the use of that data in marketing campaigns in Europe and the U.S. We surveyed approximately 330 consumers in the United States and 330 consumers in the six most populous countries in Europe (Germany, France, U.K., Italy, Spain, and Poland). Respondents were between the ages of 18 and 65+ years of age. The survey was conducted from June 27–30, 2020.

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