IBM Enterprise Marketing Management

Australia Online Retail
Holiday Readiness Report

*Industry Benchmark Analysis and Best Practices Guide
to Maximise Holiday Returns*

SmarterCommerce

IBM

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Introduction

The holiday season is the proving ground for online retailers in Australia. The opportunity to drive sales and engage customers over the holidays is huge, with online retail spending having risen 15.5 per cent between March 2011 and March 2012, reaching $11.1 billion, according to a new report by the National Australia Bank Limited.[1]

But simply running a web storefront is no guarantee of success. To win business among discriminating consumers, it's essential to assess how your retail business compares to the competition and to understand key best practices in online marketing and web analytics that leading companies use to drive sales and engage customers. Companies that excel this holiday season are moving now to capitalise on such trends as mobile device usage, which in March 2012 accounted for a remarkable 26.5 per cent of online sales in Australia. They are striving to understand the fast-moving behaviour of customers that IBM calls "Generation C." — the C for "connected" — who are empowered like never before by mobile devices and social media.

In this annual holiday guide from IBM® Coremetrics®, part of the IBM Enterprise Marketing Management (EMM) group and IBM's Smarter Commerce initiative, you'll find detailed analyses of key online shopping metrics across Australia and the US based on anonymous data aggregated from more than 500 retailers participating in the Coremetrics Benchmark program. This report also highlights best practices and technologies that can help your retail business

reap rewards in the 2012 holiday season and position you for greater success in 2013 and beyond.

In preparing this guide, our goal is to help online retailers and e-commerce executives formulate powerful programs and strategies to take this holiday season head on.

Happy selling!

About Coremetrics Benchmark

Data in this report is based on Coremetrics Benchmark, which captures online marketing results and commerce data from contributing AU retailers. The industry's only peer-level benchmarking solution enables Coremetrics customers to measure performance against the competition (in anonymised, aggregated form). Coremetrics Benchmark comes standard with Coremetrics Web Analytics at no additional cost.

Mobile device traffic and sales surge

IBM Coremetrics Benchmark data reveals a strong and steady increase in both website visits and sales from mobile devices. Mobile usage for online commerce is clearly rising and proving a critical channel that online retailers should not ignore. In particular, Aussie shoppers have taken to the mobile channel. Mobile site traffic in Australia continues to grow and is now outstripping similar growth in the US.

Sales via mobile devices in Australia—at 5 per cent of all site sales in Q1 2011—have now exploded to drive more than 20 per cent of online sales in Q1 2012, reaching 26.5 per cent in March 2012. A similar, but slower and smaller trend is evident in the US where mobile devices doubled from 7 per cent of sales in Q1 2011 to over 13 per cent in Q1 2012. This takeup rate in Australia is impressively high and illustrates that consumers are using iPhones, iPads, Android and other tablet devices for more than just finding directions to a store.

IBM Coremetrics Benchmark data indicates that mobile surfers are less engaged than the overall population, with fewer page views, less time on site, lower conversion and higher bounce rates. Though this is not surprising, it does underscore the need for retailers to monitor and optimise the mobile user experience. iPhones are the current device of choice for more than two-thirds of Australian online shoppers.

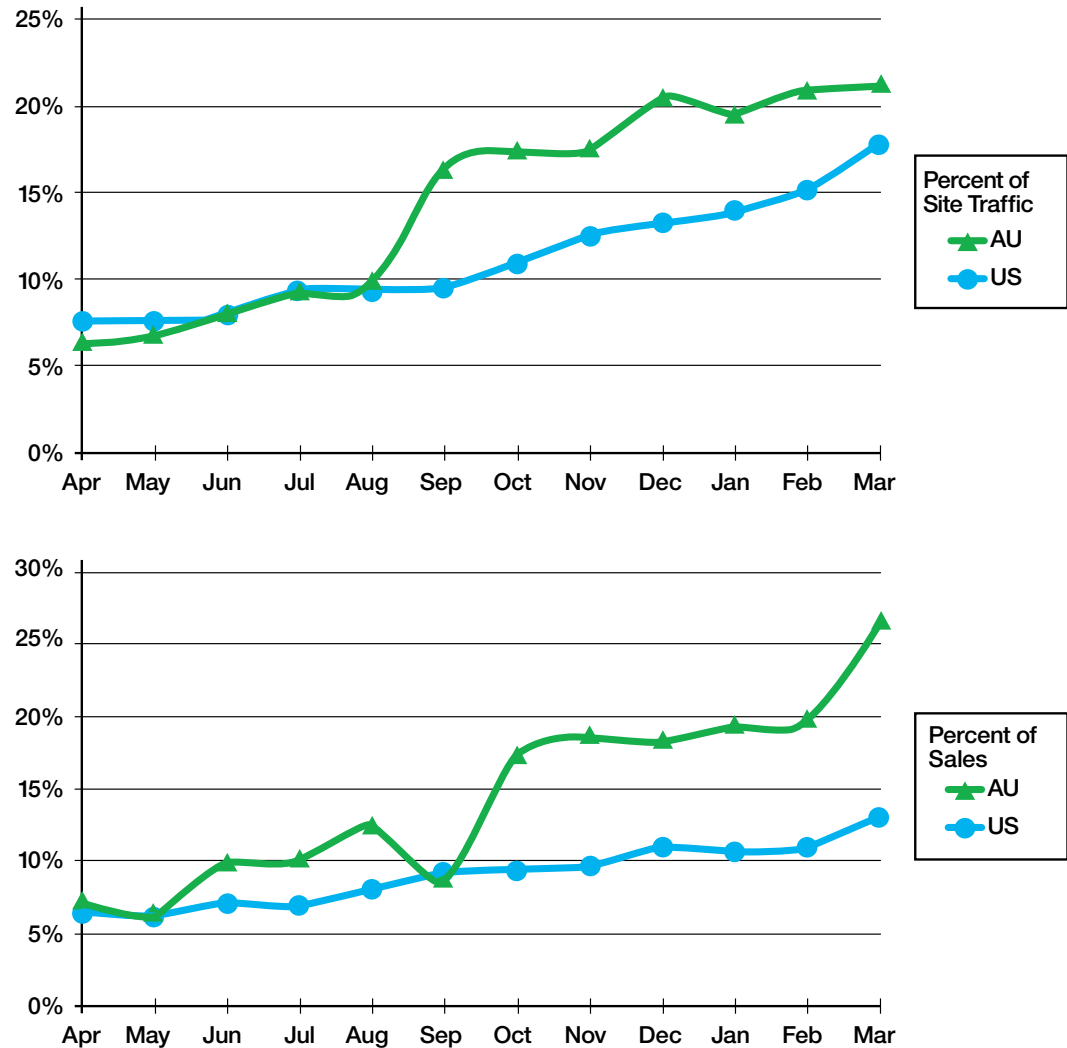**Mobile Site Traffic and Sales Per centage (2011-2012)**

Figure 1: The mobile channel shows strong growth in per cent of both site visits and sales.

Delving deeper into the data, we find a somewhat surprising but interesting trend: Shoppers using small screen devices (iPhones, etc.) tend to convert to sales at around half the rate of PC/desktop users. On the other hand, users of larger screen mobile devices (e.g., iPad) tend to convert at nearly double the rate of PC/desktop users. It is possible that shoppers who can afford a large-screen mobile device would tend to have a higher disposable income and are more comfortable with online buying. Regardless of the reason, the trend is clear and suggests that online retailers should find ways to maximise the experience for shoppers on the larger screen mobile devices.

Conclusion

As mobile shoppers continue to grow in importance, smart retailers will optimise sites for mobile devices, segment mobile consumers (e.g., by large- and small-screen users) and deliver personalised interactions consistent across mobile and other channels.

Social-driven sales show promise

Australian socializers accounted for 1.5 per cent of online retail sales in March 2012, less than the 2.4 per cent of social-driven sales in the US for the same month. However, sales to Aussie visitors who clicked from Facebook, Twitter and other social media peaked at 4.4 per cent in October 2011, nearly three times the 1.6 per cent in the US. Though the social-driven per cent of sales and site traffic remained fairly low, social media in Australia shows potential to drive a growing share of incremental sales.

It should also be recognised that Coremetrics Benchmark measures only same-session conversion; it does not account for the longer-term downstream impact of social media marketing and elevating brand awareness among, for example, Facebook fans and Twitter followers. As outlined in the Best Practices section, retailers should look to attribution reporting to measure the influence of exposure to unclicked content on conversion.

A comparison of key metrics across social and mobile visitor populations in the US reveals some interesting insights that online retailers in Australia should keep close watch on. In particular, social visitors convert at a rate of 7.5 per cent in the US, notably higher than the 5.4 per cent conversion for all channels (as of March 2012). But social visitors are more likely to bounce after a single page view, as are mobile visitors (see Figure 3).

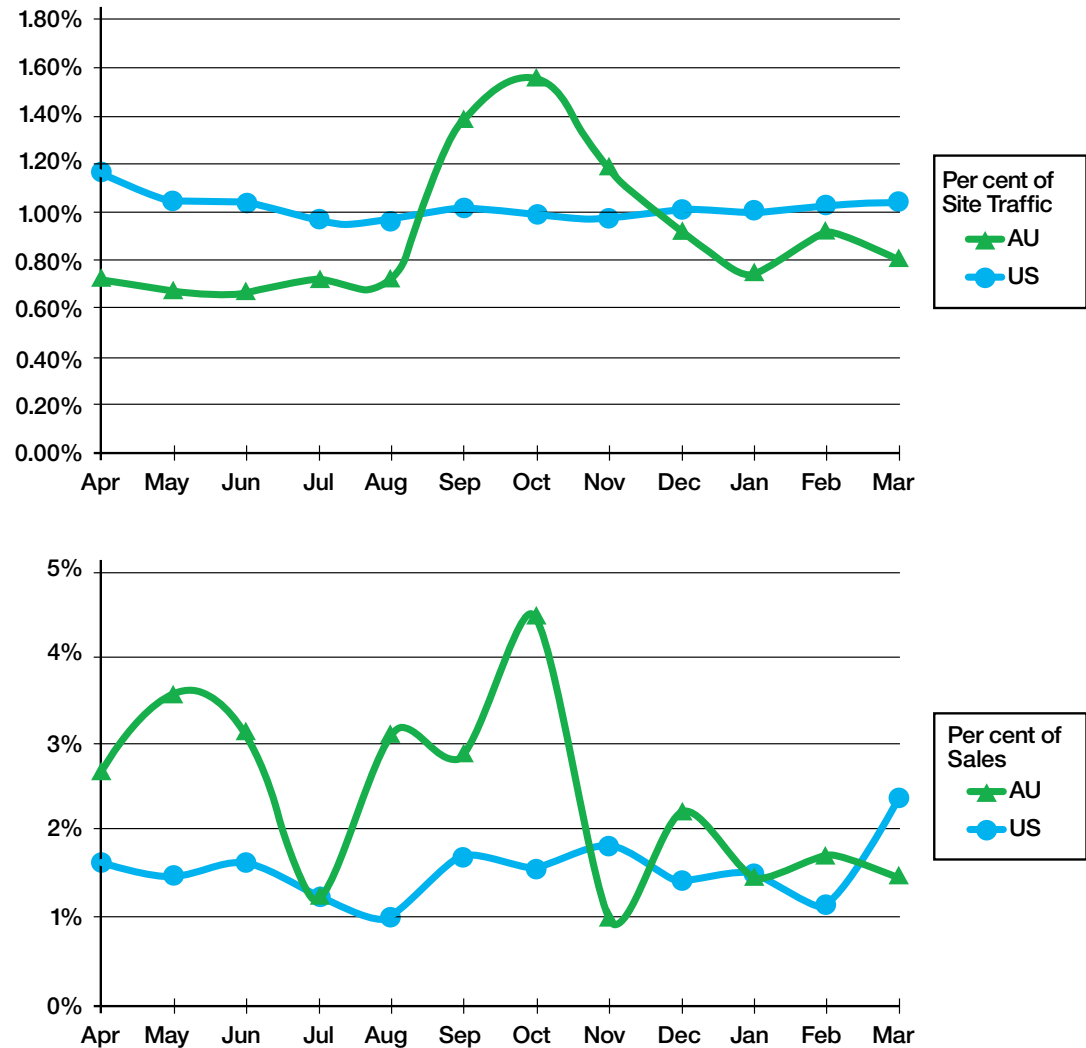**Social Site Traffic and Per cent Sales**

Figure 2: At the peak, social-driven sales in Australia were nearly three times greater than those in the US.

Conversion & Bounce Rates

	All Means	Mobile	Social
Conversion Rate	5.4%	2.8%	7.5%
Bounce Rate	39.6%	44.4%	60.5%

Figure 3: In the US, social and mobile visitors are more likely to bounce, but social visitors show a higher conversion rate.

Conclusion

Though social media as a same-session sales channel remains modest, retailers should adopt attribution reporting to measure the true impact of social media marketing on conversion. Enabling social sharing within mobile applications can also help take advantage of the higher conversion propensity among social visitors.

Consumer attention is in decline

In Australia, our data indicates that consumer attention has decreased over the last year and is continuing to decline. IBM Coremetrics Benchmark data shows that discriminating visitors are spending less time browsing retail sites than they did a year ago (average online session length dropped from 5:37 minutes in Q1 2011 to just under 5 minutes in Q1 2012).

In comparison with the US average, Australian shoppers spend nearly 2 minutes less on a retail website. This is likely an indication that consumers are shopping more surgically, zeroing in quickly on the items they want. It is likely also an indication of the increase in visitors going to sites via their mobile

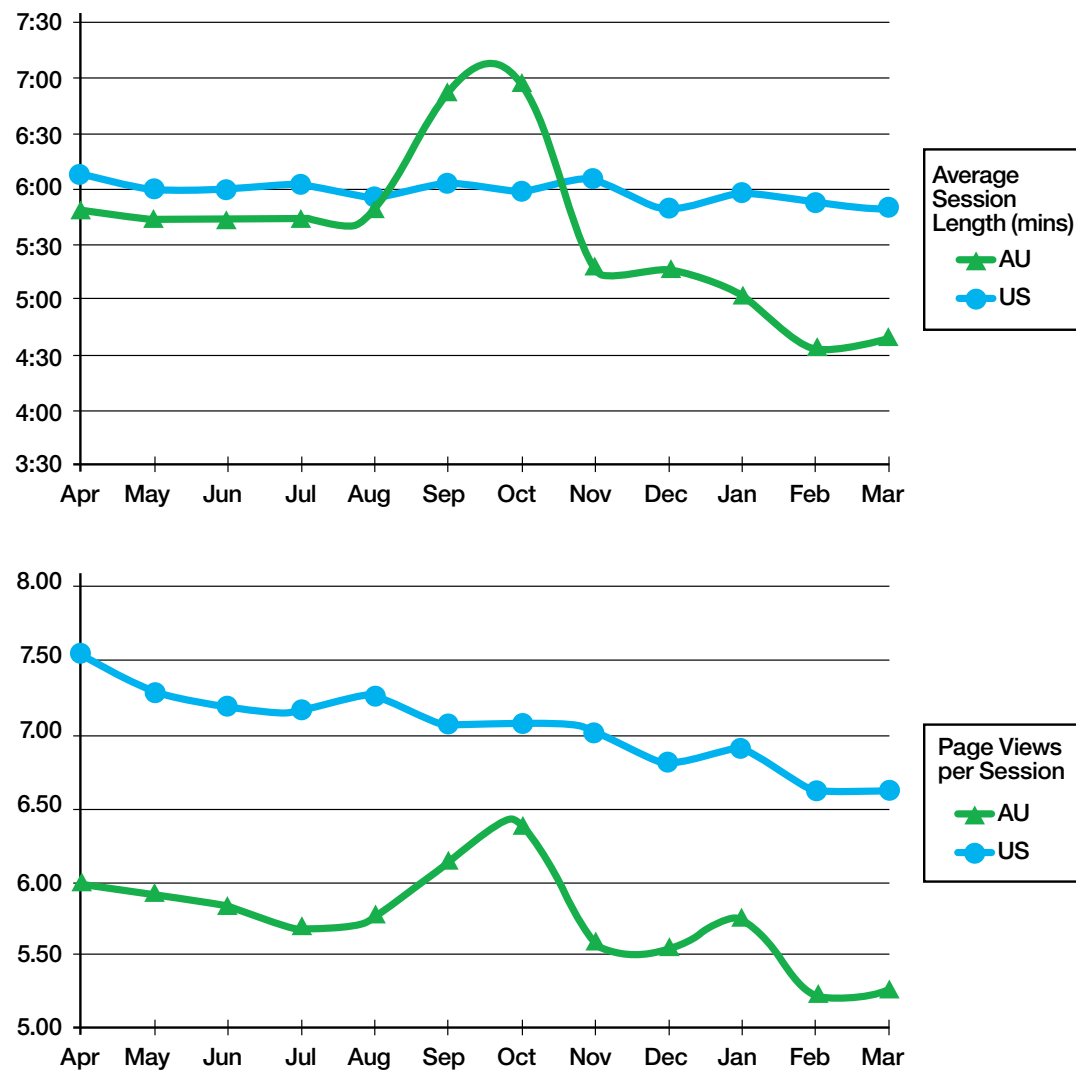## Average Time on Site and Page Views per Session

Figure 4: Session length and page views per session are lower in Australia vs. the US.

devices. The average session length for mobile is nearly half that of traditional online channels. The average page views per session is also down, with Australians averaging 5.2 pages per session compared to 6.6 in the US as of March 2012.

These trends may indicate a number of consumer behaviours. It could be a sign of consumers' apprehension to shop online; it could be an indication that retailers aren't investing in their online presence and, thus, consumers aren't able to find the information or products they're looking for and departing quickly; or it could be a sign that Australian consumers are becoming much more savvy and quick in their online shopping decisions. The impact of the broader trend towards mobile browsing, with shorter average session lengths, is a likely contributor to the reduction in time spent per session.

Conclusion

To counter these trends and shrunken windows of engagement, retailers may want to consider redoubling efforts to make sites personalised and compelling. Use of personalised product recommendations, product review sections and social media are generally accepted as good techniques to lengthen site visits. Retailers should also revisit fundamental web analytics and A/B testing to help optimise site navigation and the overall browsing experience.
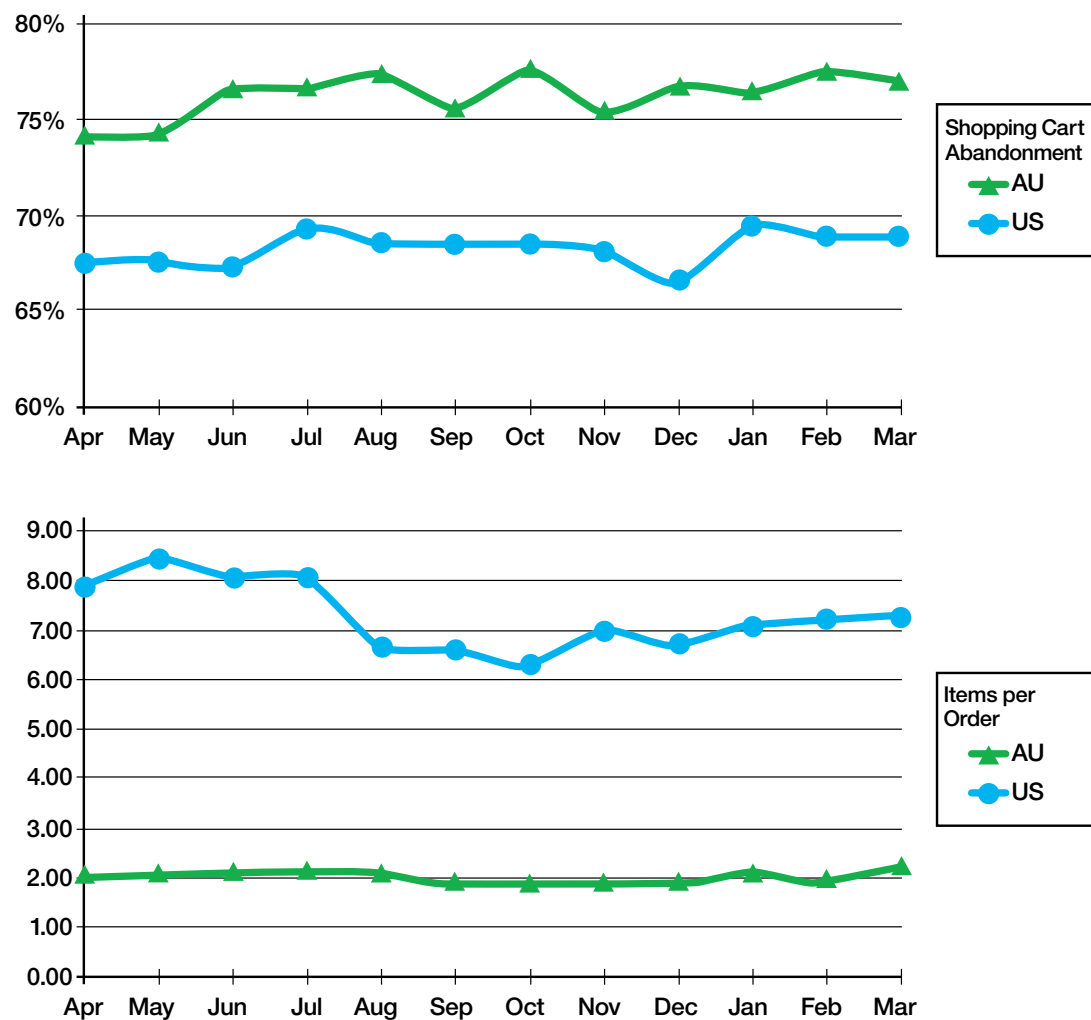
Shopping Cart Conversion & Abandonment Rates

Cart abandonment and items per order have room for improvement

Australians are far more likely than Americans to abandon a shopping cart with items in it. As of March 2012, Australia's cart abandonment rate was 77 per cent, compared to 69 per cent in the US, with the gap remaining steady over the preceding 12 months. Australian shoppers who do check out and pay average just two items in their carts, compared to about seven in the US.

The higher cart abandonment rate likely reflects a lower comfort level with online purchasing in Australia; we expect this metric to improve as online shopping becomes an increasingly popular and trusted means of retail commerce. Items per order, too, is likely to increase as Australian retailers take advantage of on-site product recommendations technology proven to increase items per order via cross-sell and upsell.

Conclusion

Australian retailers can benefit by examining post-cart processes to identify issues contributing to high cart abandonment, and should explore retargeting abandoners with display ads or emails to recapture some of the lost revenue opportunity. To increase items per order, increase emphasis on cross-sell and personalisation, using on-site product recommendations based on a user's browsing and purchasing history, as well as "wisdom of the crowds."

Figure 5: Abandoned carts and items per order lag in Australia.

Site stickiness remains a challenge

Getting visitors to websites is one of the big online marketing challenges. Even harder is keeping the customer on the site by engaging them with relevant content and offers. One measure of "site stickiness" is the bounce rate (visitors to a website who look at one page only and leave).

As seen in Figure 6, Aussies are more likely than Americans to bounce after a single page view — 44 per cent versus 40 per cent in February 2012. This trend may be due to the slow takeup and low experience levels of online marketers in Australia. We expect an improvement in the bounce rate as Australian experts emerge, learn from the overseas experience and employ smarter tactics (like personalised cross sell recommendations) to engage website visitors.

Conclusion

Landing page testing and optimisation, personalization and social media strategies such as ratings and reviews are proven techniques for enticing consumers into longer multi-page shopping sessions. The ability to capture and replay web sessions using customer experience management solutions should be used for qualitative digital analytics towards understanding why visitors may be dropping out so that marketers can improve the site and increase success.
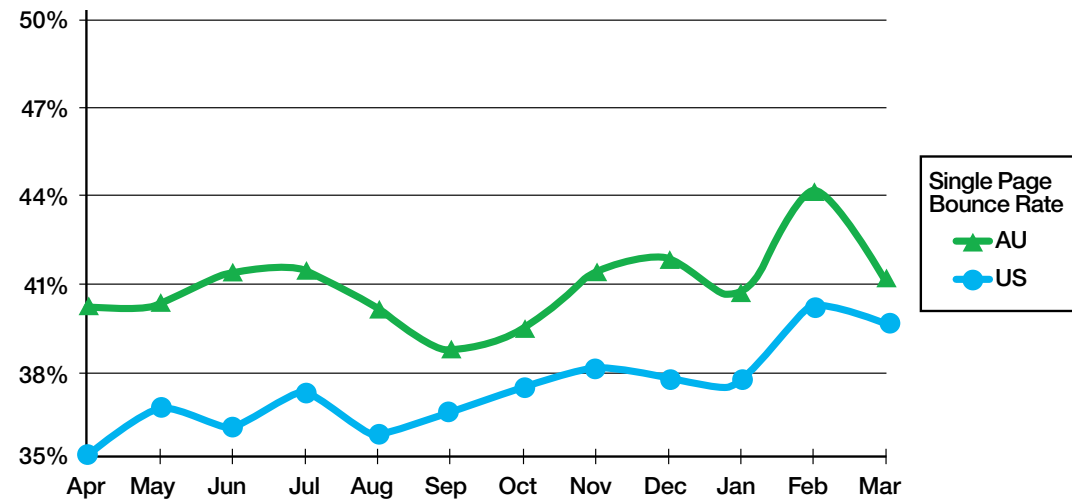
**Bounce Rate
Average Session Length**

Figure 6: Australians are more likely than Americans to bounce after a single page view.

Best practices

With months to go before the holiday season gets under way, your retail business has an opportunity to devise strategies to delight customers with personalised, mobile-friendly visits and build brand loyalty that extends into 2013. The following section examines best practices in six key areas:

- Mobile shopping and browsing
- Pervasive personalisation
- Display ad and email retargeting
- Social media marketing
- Email rendering and deliverability
- Unified cross-channel marketing

Seize the mobile opportunity

Technological innovation in the mobile realm has empowered customers like never before. With a few swipes on a touch screen, they can find and order products anywhere, from a coffee shop to a brick-and-mortar store. Mobile devices have begun to double as credit and debit cards, with the use of near-field communications (NFC) technology. To keep pace, retailers need to turn to innovation as well. Though the mobile channel is still new, technological innovations are fast emerging that help retailers meet customer expectations for a rewarding mobile experience while driving engagement and sales with a customer segment that is more affluent and tech-savvy than the norm.

Creating and optimising mobile websites and apps is an essential and ongoing element of a sound mobile strategy. Sites and apps must function cleanly across various devices, and retailers should strategise how to take advantage of phone and tablet functionality such as GPS, for location-based marketing, and bar-code scanning for QR code offers and in-store use. Marketers also stand to gain by appealing to the "mobile deal hunter," delivering personalised offers and discounts to opted-in customers. Best practices to keep in mind:

Optimise by mobile device details

Understanding which devices mobile customers use can give retailers a decisive edge. New IBM EMM mobile analytics capabilities provide deep visibility into more than 12 device characteristics (such as type, model, screen size, cookie support and more) for use in reporting and segmentation. Meanwhile, IBM Unica® Email Optimisation helps marketers verify that email content renders adequately on the mobile devices most frequently used by prospects. IBM Unica Digital Profiler identifies the email clients on mobile, web and desktop systems that customers use to read email, enabling marketers to determine when their customers are most likely to engage on a mobile device and allow them to optimise their messaging cadence by device and platform.

The data enables marketers to automate delivery of device-optimised content and assess, for example, the funnel for devices with larger screens as compared to devices with smaller screens. Also, customer experience management solutions can be used to capture and replay selected mobile sessions in order to step into the shoes of visitors and understand usability obstacles that may impede the experience of mobile visitors. These innovations build on base functionality that illustrates devices used; as of March 2012 in Australia, Apple's iPhone was the most popular mobile device with 12.9 per cent of site traffic, followed by Android devices and the iPad. .

Understand mobile and non-mobile device usage

A smartphone or tablet is rarely the only device a consumer uses. New "device pathing" capabilities in IBM EMM mobile analytics help retailers understand how a consumer uses smartphones, tablets and PCs to interact with a shopping site. Tracking the full device spectrum by individual users (who have logged in from

multiple devices) generates insights to better align the mobile channel within an overall strategy. Marketers also gain new visibility into which devices are used mostly for browsing and which for purchasing, time or day and day of week of peak usage by device, and other characteristics.

Increase focus on mobile marketing

As consumers grow more comfortable with mobile devices, they are also more receptive to marketing messages and engagement. Marketers are seizing the opportunity—worldwide mobile advertising revenue is forecast to increase more than six-fold, from $3.3 billion in 2011 to $20.6 billion in 2015, Gartner predicts.[2] Test and measure mobile marketing techniques such as targeted ads, location-based offers and personalised recommendations based on a complete customer profile that includes mobile activity. New IBM Coremetrics capabilities let retailers deliver personalised content recommendations (such as how-to articles) to deepen user engagement, along with standard product recommendations, email, paid search and display ads, based on a customer's browsing and purchasing behaviour.

Benchmark against your competitors

Given the rapid pace of change in the mobile world, understanding how your efforts compare to your competitors is important for driving marketing priorities and strategies. Coremetrics Benchmark gives users visibility into such key mobile metrics as average order value, time on site and conversion for the retail industry as a whole and in subverticals such as sporting goods, electronics, jewelry, office supplies and others.

New Device Pathing

Figure 7: Coremetrics mobile analytics supplies visibility into usage of all mobile and non-mobile devices.

"We have a focus on testing and tweaking business rules in Coremetrics Intelligent Offer to find out what recommendations work best for our business and where we can get the greatest increase. Intelligent Offer is definitely driving revenue for us. It's a very intuitive and robust tool and cross-sales have improved as a result."

— Sanam Jivani
  Ecommerce Manager
  Lucky Brand

Make personalisation pervasive

In a holiday gift exchange, the best presents are often those uniquely chosen for a recipient's interests. The same is true in online retail—the more closely a retailer can match offers, products and content to an individual customer, the greater the reward for both merchant and buyer. The deluge of data that customers generate across websites, social media, mobile devices and traditional channels opens new opportunities to fine-tune personalisation. To take advantage, leading retailers are intensifying efforts to capture cross-channel data to build complete customer profiles that serve as the foundation for personalised marketing.

Particularly in the holiday season, serving personalised recommendations and content to site visitors enriches the experience for harried shoppers. Personalised recommendations are increasingly used to drive sales and cross-sell, with many retailers netting sizable gains with IBM Coremetrics Intelligent Offer. For example, clothing retailer Lucky Brand has recorded Intelligent Offer-influenced site sales at nearly 16 per cent of total sales. Focus areas include:

Extend personalisation across channels

Customers expect consistency and relevance regardless of which channel they choose. By tracking customer activity and response to marketing campaigns, retailers are positioned to turn data into insight into personalised interactions, from greeting Facebook fans with an email to making a relevant offer to a customer phoning a call centre. Marketers can benefit by collaborating with IT to strengthen the data collection infrastructure and applying analytics.

Broaden the recommendations footprint

Personalised recommendations aren't just for a handful of prime product pages. Look to augment on-site search results with "Other Customers Liked" or similar recommendations, and feature cross-sell products in shopping carts, checkout pages, order confirmation emails and ratings and reviews pages.

Leverage flexibility

Product and content recommendations can be fully automated through built-in algorithms or managed manually; some retailers use a hybrid of the two with custom business rules to test different approaches or promote high-margin or overstock items. A/B testing capabilities in Intelligent Offer enable retailers to test offers, page placement, creative and more to maximise returns.

Content Recommendations

Consider content recommendations

In spring 2012, IBM Coremetrics introduced new content recommendations capabilities to Intelligent Offer, enabling merchants to highlight how-to guides, FAQs, videos, blog posts and other content personalised to the visitor's purchasing and browsing activity. By adding this helpful, personal element to the interaction, retailers can build trust and prolong site visits, increasing sales opportunities. Figure 8 depicts personalised content recommendations.

Figure 8: New content recommendations technology helps retailers personalise the site experience.

"The results are remarkable— we're seeing a 45 per cent increase in return site visits and 20 per cent higher repurchasing with IBM Coremetrics AdTarget. We're very happy with our return on investment from display ad retargeting."

— Lynnette Montgomery
   Director of Ecommerce and Digital Marketing
   Burt's Bees

Prompt return visits with display ad and email retargeting

Retargeting—the use of display ads and emails to re-engage with visitors who browsed or cart an item without purchase—is growing rapidly among retailers (and B2B companies) to drive sales and elevate brand awareness. It's a low-cost option to higher-cost paid search ads and is highly effective. For instance, IBM Coremetrics AdTarget user Burt's Bees, a Clorox subsidiary, experienced a 45 per cent increase in site visits by viewers of retargeting display ads, translating into a 20 per cent gain in repurchasing and deeper customer engagement with the health and beauty company's website.

For browsers or cart abandoners registered with a site, email also generates good results in prompting return visits and conversion. In the busy holiday season and compressed shopping windows, retargeting is especially valuable in courting would-be customers before they purchase elsewhere, and to remind them of your brand in the days following their visit. Tips:

Flex your retargeting options

Retargeting gives retailers a choice of serving product-specific or brand-level ads. By monitoring results, leading retargeting practitioners determine the optimal approach for given segments of products and/or customers. Take advantage of flexibility in timing, frequency and ad network syndication to extend your reach and impact.

Appeal to the surgical shopper

As shown by Coremetrics Benchmark data, consumer attention is diminishing. By presenting a particular product or brand, retailers can align with the surgical shopping mentality, presenting a distinct call to action that's convenient and relevant. Segmentation and monitoring by those who browsed a product page versus abandoned a cart can help improve your efforts and identify the areas of greatest payback.

Optimise your landing pages

A landing page that doesn't align with the content in a display ad or email increases the likelihood a consumer will click away. Ensure landing pages are spot-on with your promotions, with clear navigation paths that lead the visitor to purchase. A/B testing various landing pages can help tune your efforts and avoid miscues.

Assess view-through impact

An unclicked display ad is not necessarily wasted—it increases your brand exposure and contributes to subsequent visits to your website. Look to impression attribution technology to measure the influence of unclicked display ads (called view-through traffic) on conversion for a more accurate picture of retargeting ROI and to optimise your marketing mix and budget decisions.
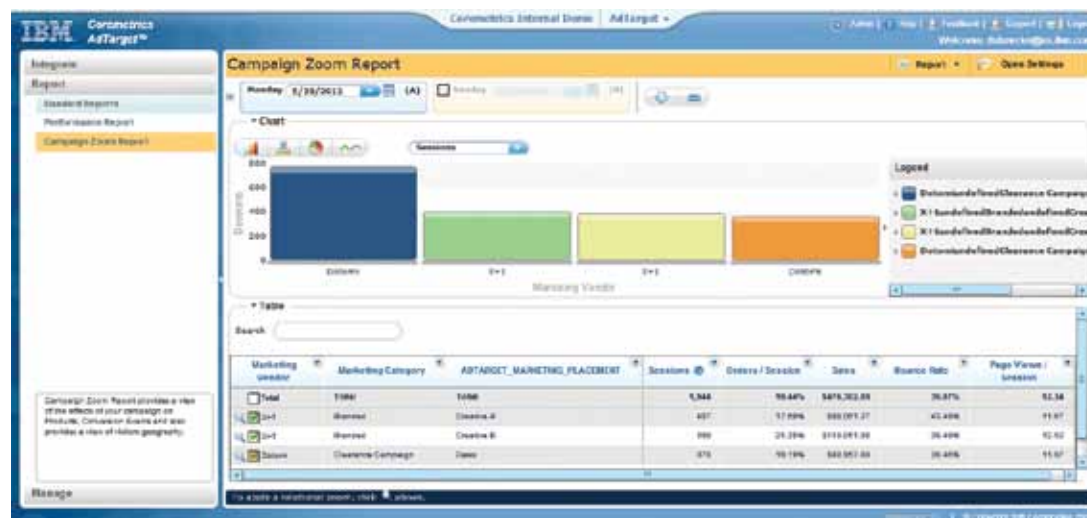
AdTarget

Figure 9: IBM Coremetrics AdTarget automates segmentation and delivery of display ads to browsers and abandoners.

Measure the impact of social media marketing

At about 2 per cent of total site sales across retail, direct clicks from social media advertising and links may seem like a modest return on investments in Twitter, Facebook and other social media channels. It's important to note that Coremetrics Benchmark measures only same-session conversion. Retailers can benefit by taking a broader view of how unclicked brand exposure via social media influences conversion and sales.

Much like a highway billboard or display ad, social media raises brand awareness and contributes to subsequent site visits and conversion. Impression attribution technology empowers retailers to assess the impact of marketing on all channels, including social media, whether or not an asset was clicked. Using cookie technology that uniquely identifies a device, impression attribution provides a more comprehensive and accurate means of determining ROI by channel than first- or last-click attribution, which continues to be used by some retailers, an approach that credits only the first or final interaction for a conversion.

In its spring release, IBM EMM strengthens its market-leading attribution reporting with new capabilities and deeper visibility for marketers. A new report called Channel Stream enables marketers to determine channel combinations that customers use before conversion (for example, Google+, email, Facebook), the average days between sessions and other metrics across paid (advertising), owned (on-site) and earned

Channel Stream

Figure 10: IBM Channel Stream lets marketers understand which channel interactions contributed to conversion.

(third-party content such as blogs) media. Figure 10 shows a sample Channel Stream report.

A new Channel Venn report provides a visual display of which marketing combinations are driving conversions and events. Using these insights, marketers can address such questions as whether customers who view a display ad and Facebook page convert at a higher rate than those coming from paid search and targeted email. Another new report illustrates how your top 1,000 visitors and customers are behaving to better target high-value customers. Besides attribution, other best practices include:

Enrich customer profiles

The information that fans and followers share on social media is unique in revealing preferences, attitudes and interests. Part of the "big data" phenomenon, social media data can be captured and consolidated into existing customer profiles to give marketers vital new insights for finer personalisation.

Understand brand sentiment

IBM Coremetrics Social Analytics provides connectors that let retailers plug in to Facebook, Twitter and other social media conversations to monitor praise and criticisms of products and services. Besides a high-

level view of consumer sentiment, this technology enables marketers to identify brand advocates and cultivate them for word-of-mouth marketing.

Understand email's reach

Consumers are sharing more than just a company domain or clicking the "Share with Your Network" link in an email; they are copying and pasting whole URLs and offers into social networks. Email is feeding social activity and it's important to learn the viral value of your email. Through IBM Unica Digital Profiler, marketers can gauge which pieces of content are the most compelling and capitalise on the unique email insight.

Optimise marketing email rendering and delivery

For your holiday promotion emails to be effective, they need to reach the inbox and render nicely across a broad range of desktop and web email clients, mobile devices, browsers and ISPs. Attention to rendering and deliverability can boost your email returns, yet many retailers overlook these critical aspects of email marketing. According to IBM figures, about 20 per cent of emails don't reach the inbox because they are labeled as spam or blocked by an ISP. Among those that do reach the inbox, clickthrough and conversion can suffer if your message is in visual disarray because of inattention to rendering.

Some best practices to optimise your returns from email marketing:

Final Email Destinations
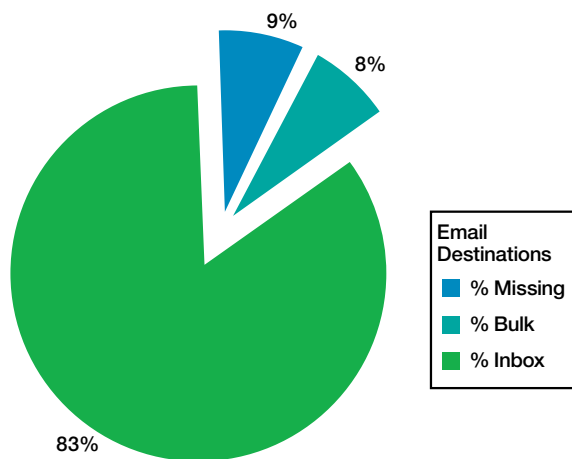
Figure 11: About one in five emails fails to reach the inbox.

Test and tune rendering

As clients, browsers and devices multiply, it becomes more difficult to ensure optimal rendering. Be sure to use W3C-compliant code to improve uniformity. Test your email rendering with a solution such as IBM Unica Email Optimisation, which can handle more than 100 different views across dozens of scenarios and browsers, email clients and devices.

Monitor and measure deliverability

Covering more than 150 domains in 68 countries, Unica Email Optimisation tracks email deliverability and provides marketers with critical tools and insights that will help them remediate deliverability challenges as they arise. It reports emails marked as spam, quarantined or blacklisted, time of day an email was opened and provides industry deliverability benchmarks based on over 5 billion emails a month. By measuring deliverability across ISPs and regions marketers can avoid losing money by ensuring their emails reach the inbox and in a timely fashion.

Mobile email optimisation

To capitalise on the mobile trend, pay close attention to rendering on iPhones, Android and other devices, and ensure that landing pages are optimised for mobile access. For email, use brief subject lines and "From" names, avoid multi-column layouts, and position calls to action and branding as high as possible. Make your buttons large enough to click easily on a mobile device. Avoid CSS style sheets because of their limited support across web email clients; we recommend using in-line styles instead.

Email Rendering on Different Mobiles

Figure 12: Emails render differently on an Android (left) and an iPhone.

Evolve towards unified cross-channel marketing

As critical as the online channel is, it does not exist in a vacuum. Smart retailers are striving towards a unified cross-channel marketing approach that presents a consistent, personalised experience across all offline and online touch points. As it is, much retail marketing is conducted across standalone channels, often based on fragmented views of the same customer, compromising your ability to measure overall performance and risking customer alienation with off-target or duplicate campaigns.

Cross-channel marketing is the evolution of multichannel marketing, seeking to deliver a unified customer experience across outbound and inbound channels. A unified platform enables retailers to progressively choreograph messaging and offers across all touchpoints, rather than simply repeating the same message through different channels. Figure 13 compares the silos that can result among standalone multichannel initiatives versus the focused funnel of cross-channel marketing.

Effective cross-channel marketing requires an understanding of customer behaviour across all touch points. Consider how a consumer can interact with a retail brand by about 10 different channels. She browses a retail website from her iPhone and enters her email address to receive discounts. The next day, she clicks on a welcome email and browses jewelry. Later, she Googles "diamond necklace" and clicks on a paid search ad and browses more, reading a few product reviews. Days later, she clicks on a retargeting display and carts a diamond necklace. The next day, she accepts an email offer to complete the purchase with free shipping, paying for the necklace with her Visa card before checking out the retailer's Facebook page, which she decides to "Like."

A week later, she visits a store and buys matching earrings using an in-store coupon she downloaded from the Facebook page. She also uses a coupon for a men's watch she captured to her iPhone by scanning a QR code the retailer included in a fashion magazine ad, paying for both pieces with her Visa card. Days later, she contributes a product review on the website,

Multi-Channel Marketing versus Cross-Channel Marketing
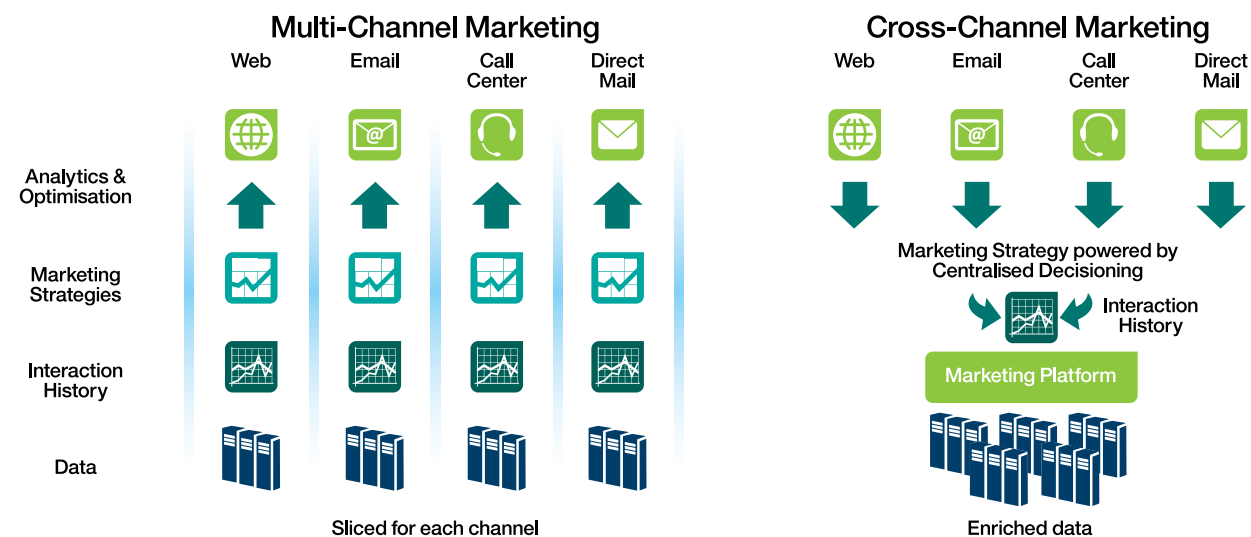

Figure 13: Cross-channel marketing unifies complementary customer initiatives.

orders the retailer's print catalog and phones the call centre with a question about the watch she bought for her husband. The customer told the retailer a lot about herself—but can marketers put it together into an actionable whole? Some best practices to consider:

Build a complete customer profile
Today's data capture and integration technologies make it practical to combine customer activity data from divergent sources into a single profile. In-store transactions, website and social activity, call centre interactions and marketing response are key interaction points to leverage to gain insights into the customer for personalised marketing that can translate into long-term value.

Make your channels work together
Brick-and-mortar retailers have enjoyed great success in driving in-store traffic through the use of store-only coupons downloadable through email or a website. Similarly, offering coupons for online redemption through offline channels drives additional site visits, as do Facebook-only promotions and QR codes. By encouraging cross-channel activity, retailers can broaden the brand experience and test the most effective techniques for engaging various customer segments.

Make the holiday season profitable

The holiday season is the proving ground for the strategies and technologies your retail business adopts in its quest to attract customers and grow sales. As data from IBM Coremetrics Benchmark and independent analysts makes clear, the opportunities are enormous. Leading retailers are poised to take advantage, and all signs point to another banner holiday season for online sales in 2012.

The competition is tough. Generation C connected customers are tougher still. By understanding macro-level trends such as declining consumer attention and applying best practices for mobile commerce and marketing, personalisation, retargeting and social media, you'll be positioned to meet the demands of discriminating customers and maximise your holiday returns.

Happy selling!

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2   Gartner Inc., "Gartner Says Worldwide Mobile
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For more information

To learn more about IBM Coremetrics Benchmark and Generation C: The Connected Customer, visit the following website: http://www.ibmconnectedcustomer.com/us

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