

T-Mobile's tracking program is a misread of the privacy landscape

Article

The news: T-Mobile's newest advertising effort, **App Insights**, gathers and sells sought-after personal data from users' phones about what apps they download, how often they're used, and what they do on browsers.

Here's the problem: App Insights is being met with reactions calling it "[creepy](#)," "[shady](#)," and "[hawkish](#)," turning what could have been a valuable tool for T-Mobile and advertisers alike into

a cautionary tale about the thin line between personalization and privacy.

Tightrope act: Privacy is important to consumers—but so is personalization.

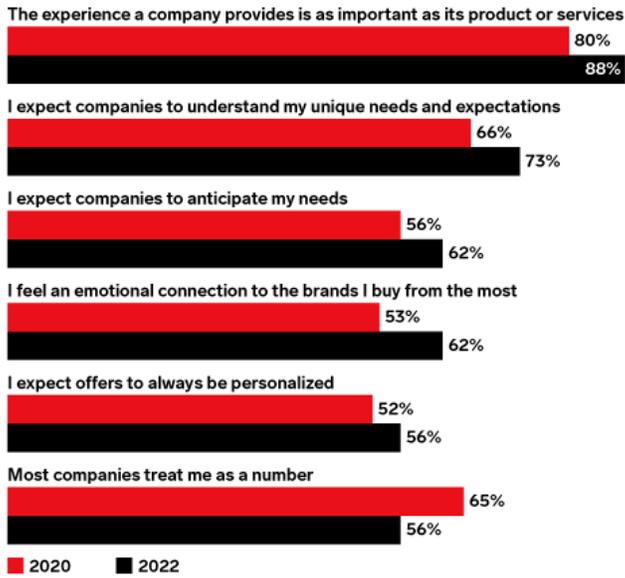
- Now that privacy regulations are prompting sweeping changes to the old ways of user tracking, ad platforms and brands are struggling to find ways to capitalize on the data drought while meeting new standards.
- A January [poll](#) from Ipsos shows the bleak state of consumer trust when it comes to their personal data. **Seventy percent** of respondents said it's become harder to control who has access to their personal information, and **only 34%** agreed that companies do a good job of protecting that info.
- At the same time, customers **care more about personalization** than ever: **88%** of consumers say a company's experience is as important as their products, and **73%** say a company should understand their unique needs and expectations.

Not all is lost: A broad solution that meets the needs of consumers and advertisers alike has [yet to emerge](#), but there are ways for brands to build personal experiences without taking part in the kinds of data collection that consumers have become wary of.

- **Email marketing** and CX investments like **loyalty programs** have proven [relatively immune](#) to the [growing distrust](#) of digital advertising thanks to their opt-in nature.
- **Seventy-nine percent** of consumers say they would rather companies invest in loyalty programs than social media marketing, and **55%** are comfortable disclosing personal info like sizing if it's at their own discretion, according to CheetahDigital.
- Other forms of marketing and tracking can benefit from a similar opt-in approach: Rather than turning on ad-tracking functionality by default, presenting users with the choice as quickly and transparently as possible has helped increase opt-in rates.

Attitude of Consumers Worldwide Toward Personalization and Customer Experience Provided by a Company, 2020 & 2022

% of respondents



Note: ages 10-58

Source: Salesforce, "Fifth Edition State of the Connected Customer," May 13, 2022

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