Q&A: McDonald's on the role of data in increasing customer loyalty
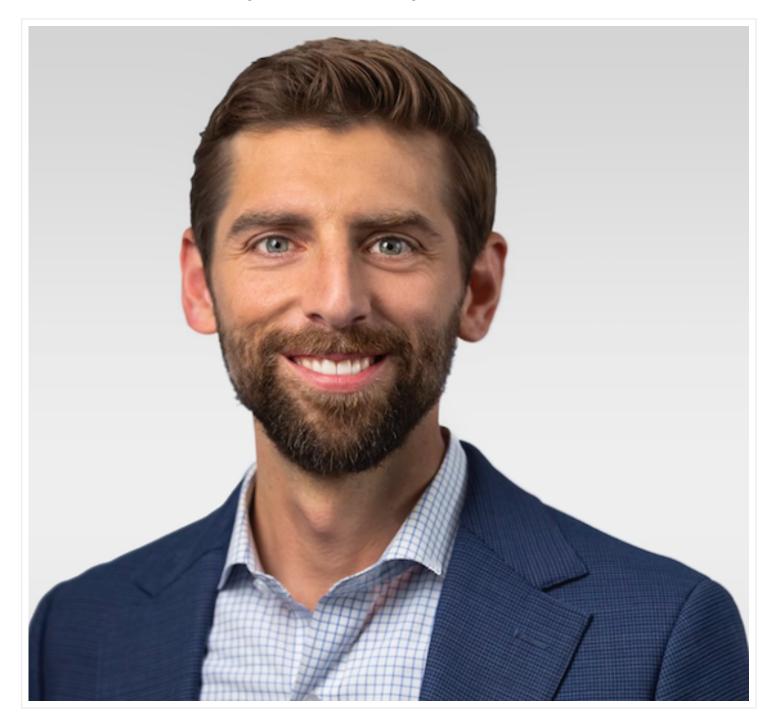
Article

It can be challenging to earn customer loyalty as consumers often favor the least expensive, most convenient options. Caleb Pearson shares how McDonald's uses customer data to keep consumers coming back.

Caleb Pearson

Vice President, Media and Digital for US Marketing, McDonald's

How is McDonald's using data to drive customer loyalty?

Customer loyalty is much more than just a rewards program at McDonald's. The past three years have been about driving rapid digital customer growth across our business, from

launching new digital experiences in our app through MyMcDonald's rewards, in-app delivery, and enhanced mobile order and pay capabilities, to providing personalized customer engagement across our paid and owned channels. We're focused on how we can use data across the entire business to deliver the best customer experience and drive customer lifetime value.

Your session at Shoptalk is about using customer data to surprise and delight. What are a few takeaways that you hope attendees come away with?

I am passionate about the intersection of data, technology, and of course—food! That's why I love being at McDonald's; we are focused on putting the brand at the center of culture, which requires a deep understanding of our customers. Without giving away any spoilers, my hope is attendees will walk away from my talk with two important strategic approaches:

1. Build a culture that celebrates learning. The more you create a culture that celebrates constant learning and adjusting, the more you will create a team that tests and leans into building "surprise and delight" moments that customers will love.

2. Extend utilizing customer data beyond marketing in the organization. Using customer data throughout the entire customer experience—whether it's in operations, customer care, or ordering and fulfillment channels—creates meaningful opportunities to improve the customer experience. If you're just using data for marketing, you're leaving a lot on the table. This is about building mutually beneficial relationships.

What does the future of personalization look like for McDonald's?

Our ambition is to transform from a brand that serves billions all the same way to serving billions with personalized and relevant products, rewards, offers, and experiences. In doing so, we will create deeper and more meaningful relationships with our customers and ultimately even stronger brand love and loyalty for McDonald's.

What are you looking forward to hearing or learning about at Shoptalk?

This year, I am most looking forward to learning about how the consumer has evolved in the past year and where they are headed in the future. Considering the unprecedented macroeconomic landscape we are living in, I expect more significant consumer behavior changes as well as technological advances. I'm excited to hear how leading companies are

using technology and data to meet the consumers' needs today while continuing to build for the future.

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