

With Big Tech slow to adapt to privacy changes, brands rush to gather their own customer data

Article

The trend: Following Apple's privacy changes—and in anticipation of those to come from Google—many advertisers are taking consumer data collection into their own hands, rather

than relying on social platforms or ad tech firms, **per** The Wall Street Journal.

- Meanwhile, Big Tech is trying its best to hold on to advertisers and their spending, but progress is slow.

Dig deeper: Brands are using a variety of tactics and incentives to access this data:

- Some are using big-ticket sweepstakes. **Miller High Life** was able to collect 40,000 emails and phone numbers by raffling off a branded patio set in exchange for the data, per the Journal.
- Other companies, like **Avocados From Mexico**, are utilizing QR codes on store displays to get brick-and-mortar shoppers' data, a valuable tactic for consumer packaged goods brands that don't directly touch the customer.
- Even digital companies that already have a treasure trove of data are hungry for more. In September, **HBO Max** began offering subscriptions at 50% off in a bid to bring users to subscribe directly from its platform rather than through **Amazon Channels**. This way, it owns the data of those 5 million customers instead of relying on Amazon.

But some incentives are more attractive than others, and effectiveness varies across age groups. Overall, discounts, free trials, and mixes of multiple offers were the strongest at driving customers to share their email with a brand, according to March 2021 **Fluent** data.

- *For more, read: **Consumers know their data is worth something—but what exactly should marketers offer them in exchange?***

Incentives for Which US Internet Users Are Most Willing to Share Their Email Address with a Brand, by Generation, March 2021

% of respondents in each group

	Gen Z (1997- 2012)	Millennials (1981- 1996)	Gen X (1965- 1980)	Baby boomers (1946-1964)	Seniors (1928- 1945)
Discounts	35%	18%	12%	9%	14%
Free trial offer	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%
Mix of offers	15%	31%	38%	38%	29%
Free gifts	10%	7%	6%	6%	6%
Loyalty rewards	7%	5%	6%	7%	6%
Giveaways	2%	3%	4%	5%	5%
Exclusive content	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%
Other	10%	14%	13%	14%	18%

Source: Fluent, "Consumers, Data, and Control: Driving Loyalty and Trust Through a Strong Value Exchange," June 3, 2021

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Meanwhile: Big Tech platforms are adapting to privacy changes, but it's unlikely that advertisers will ever be able to see the same granular metrics that they've gotten used to.

- **Snap** has made some progress with its Advanced Conversions **tool**, which obfuscates conversion data before it's sent off the platform. Still, CEO **Evan Spiegel** **admitted** when the company reported Q3 earnings that getting to a pre-AppTrackingTransparency normal would take "a while."
- **Meta** echoed the sentiment: "Targeting is a longer-term challenge," COO **Sheryl Sandberg** said.
- **LinkedIn** last week rolled out a new "Group Identity for B2B" targeting option. It categorizes users into segments, allowing advertisers to "reach intended audiences across channels, like the LinkedIn Audience Network, without the need for individual-level tracking across sites," **per** a company blog post.
- In the absence of super-granular metrics, LinkedIn is also testing using AI to measure conversions—but it will likely be a while before those tests yield meaningful results.

The bottom line: Given how long it's taking Big Tech to adapt to privacy changes, brands' shift to first-party data in the interim is a necessary move. In the future, however, it's likely that marketers will need to incorporate a variety of different tactics—including collecting first-party data, but also making use of social platforms' new tools, diversifying media mixes, and reallocating ad budgets.