

The Acquisition Of Marketing Permissions In Professional Football Clubs

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Aim of the research

The acquisition of personal fan data is some of the main digital transformation challenges professional football clubs are faced with. The reason: in order to contact a fan via interactive communication, the clubs require the fans' marketing permission. But cross-industry companies such as professional football clubs are struggling with this acquisition so that the gap between potential customers and those who can be effectively contacted, is enormous. Regarding to this challenges, the aim of this study was to examine how the acquisition of marketing permissions needs to be configured in order to increase the customer's willingness to reveal personal data without neglecting the case law.

Theoretical background

Out of the duty and responsibility of a transparent handling of personal (fan) data, the research field of permission marketing is grown. It preaches to understand the necessary marketing permission as a chance to increase the acceptance of advertising, instead of perceiving it as a statutory duty. The underlying theoretical framework of this approach is the theory of psychological reactance: when people perceive that their freedom is reduced or threatened by others, they are likely to experience a psychological reactance where they attempt to restore the freedom (Lee & Lee, 2009). Transferred to the present context, reactance arises when the costs of a marketing permission exceed the benefits. If that is the case, costumers desire to preserve self-determination by refusing the marketing permission (Wissmann, 2013). Several studies such as those from Krishnamurthy (2001), Phelps, Nowak and Ferrell (2000) or Premazzi, Castaldo, Grosso, Raman, Brudvig, and Hofacker (2010) have identified certain (possible) value drivers and barriers of an advertising consent. It was found out that (among others) incentives, the relevance of the advertisement content and a high self-determination during the data provision increase the willingness to provide data. Whereas a high registration effort, the assumed effort for the permission withdrawal, privacy concerns and concerns about annoying marketing communication reduce the willingness. But the findings seem clearer than they are: the few existing studies provide quiet different results, which determinants are drivers or barriers of a permission decision making process. Furthermore, barely studies were executed in Europe (where the data privacy act is eminently restrictive) and none of them in the context of sports (with its exception of fans as consumers).

Methods

To answer the research question, two methods have been used: for the purpose of identifying potential for optimization concerning the permission acquisition, an online-experiment using a between-subjects design with twelve sample groups each with 52 subjects (N = 624) was conducted. The main research question was if and to what extent the willingness to provide a marketing permission can be positively influenced by changing the contact channel (Newsletter registration, raffle participation or online shop purchase), the offered incentives (with or without a €5 online shop coupon) and/or the detailedness of the explanatory text (extend of prior information about the data usage). This independent variables were chosen, because they are simplest stimuable by the clubs and delivered contradictory results in former studies. The participants received a description of a specific situation as the experimental stimulus. Afterwards an evaluation of preferences and operational intent between the different sample groups followed.

Furthermore an analysis of documents (such as newsletter registration forms, raffle participation cards or online shop transactions) from the 36 clubs of the first and second German Bundesliga was conducted (followed by a content analysis), in order to verify the current permission acquisition.

Results and discussion

As the online-survey approved, the type of demanded personal information, the contact channel and the detailedness of the prior information do have a significant impact on the fans' willingness to provide a marketing permission. So the privacy concerns increase significantly, when asking the consumer for more personal data than the name and the e-mail address, whereas detailed prior information lower those. A newsletter registration offers the best boundary condition for seeking marketing permissions. Moreover the study underlines former results that the usage of incentives is not necessarily a proper way to increase the willingness to provide data.

The content analysis has shown that almost none of the 36 clubs of the first and second German Bundesliga conducts a gapless, legally impeccable permission acquisition with a high stimulative nature. Thereby they waste potential to decrease reactance and increase the willingness to provide a marketing permission. Although the survey results bared a number of significant improvement potentials, the explanatory power of the findings lies in the lower mid-range so that further studies with additional variables need to be done.

References

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