Chapter 8

ANALYZING PROFITABLE PATTERNS AND SEGMENTS

ONCE YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR DIGITAL RELATIONSHIP to different types of consumers, how you are interacting with them, and how you would prefer to interact with them, you’re prepared to segment and analyze your community, uncovering profitable patterns and segments your organization can capitalize on. These can be discovered through a variety of techniques that incorporate behaviors, trends, demographics, and other factors that help your organization understand which consumers are conforming to the ideal behaviors. This analysis can help you to identify how you can get those falling short of the ideal to behave in more profitable ways.

Let’s look at one organization that used this step in the process with great success.

Comedy Central competes with a wide variety of entertainment outlets for the attention of its core demographic—males aged 18–34. This demographic falls within a sweet spot: old enough for alcohol and car advertisements to resonate but too young for the major networks to really begin competing for advertising dollars. For Comedy Central that is their “one thing”—the core value proposition upon which everything else is built, from the comics they select to their presence on multiple social and mobile platforms. And they’ve done such a good job at focusing on it that after 20 years in business they’ve saturated nearly the entire comedy market.¹
How then can the network continue to grow? New television shows that go mainstream and draw massive new segments of audiences are hard to come by, and expensive. It’s much easier to lure in new viewers by reusing content that will turn them into loyal network viewers that follow shows, storylines, comics, and anticipate the next comedy special or DVD that they could buy. But it is challenging to grab the attention of this demographic, all of whom are social consumers. The solution is to find times—however small—when their perpetually on-the-go target audience is available to be engaged; when they are looking for something to entertain them and relieve the boredom.

According to an analysis of behavioral data, males aged 18–34 are often bored on holidays—when they are stuck at “mandatory” events. During these moments they always have their mobile devices, and have already adopted the behavior of being more engaged with their phones than with their family.

Comedy Central capitalized on these small windows by pushing content out via social, mobile, web, and email channels with greater frequency during these times. They could analyze response to see what was working, and refine the process with each new holiday—each new moment when their audience was most available, even if each window of availability was very small.

Any organization can undertake this step of uncovering profitable patterns and segments if they understand how their organization interacts with each consumer segment and subsegment versus their ideal behaviors. With an integrated approach, the organization will be able to create a moment where this interactivity adds up to tangible value—in this case a nonviewer becomes a viewer (increasing advertising potential and multiplying the organization’s reach) and a potentially loyal viewer (creating long-term value and again multiplying organizational reach). To accomplish this, the organization must have the ability to do two things. First, it must segment their communities at critical moments. And second, it must analyze their community and subsegments of it, to reveal with whom, when, and how they are most successfully getting consumers to behave in ideal ways.

These two abilities combine to create a feedback loop allowing the organization to uncover profitable patterns and segments. It can also spot consumers who are not exhibiting ideal behaviors, discontinuing those interactions that are having a negative impact and testing new interactions and patterns of interaction to create a closer-to-ideal response.