



CAPTURING MOMENTS OF TRUTH: STRATEGY TO WIN OVER THE CUSTOMERS

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ABSTRACT:

Users no longer wait for what they need. They can search, educate ourselves and make purchases at any time. Patience is at an all-time low, and the potential consumers can act immediately and expect to find relevant, useful content to aid them in their decision-making process. It is these micro-moments that shape their needs and inform the purchase decisions. Businesses that do the best job of helping users in these Moments of Truth will beat out the competition. In this paper, an overview of these crucial moments of truth is focused upon and how the marketers can capitalize on them. The paper also focuses on one of the newer additions to this thinking — what Google is calling the Zero Moment of Truth (ZMOT) — and how our always-on internet connections and mobile devices are driving purchase decisions as never before. The paper discusses how the customer journey has changed in the digital age and recommends ways to reach consumers at each stage of the journey via SEO. Each micro-moment must connect consumer intent with the desired outcome. The future of marketing depends on identifying these new moments and learning how to make each micro-moment matter.

KEYWORDS: FMOT, ZMOT, UMOT, SEO, POS, Content Marketing.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the passage of time, the number of impulsive buyers is diminishing. They are being replaced by people who have the thirst for getting more information about products and services that interest them. A decade ago, the marketing messages we received were all thrust at us via TV, radio, print, PR and word of mouth. Now, everything has changed. We no longer take the marketing messages delivered to us at face value. We take matters into our own hands and seek out information on the products we wish to purchase. For marketers, every one of these search moments is an opportunity to help shape the decisions your customers make. Though, stimulus, shelf and experience still remain the main components of a complete buying cycle; ZMOT has taken a place between stimulus and shelf.

In recent years, mature companies with far-flung networks of frontline sales staff have devoted a great deal of money and effort to retaining their current customers. As many academic studies have noted, the costs of doing so tend to be much lower than those of acquiring new ones. The success of this strategy ultimately depends



on expanding the breadth and depth of customer relationships and on translating the resulting loyalty into higher sales of goods and services. Although companies are investing record amounts of money in traditional loyalty programs, in customer-relationship-management (CRM) technology, and in general service-quality improvements, most of these initiatives end in disappointment. What's regularly missing, in our experience, is the spark between the customer and frontline staff members—the spark that helps transform wary or skeptical people into strong and committed brand followers. That spark and the emotionally driven behavior that creates it

explain how great customer service companies earn trust and loyalty during "moments of truth": those few interactions (for instance, a lost credit card, a canceled flight, a damaged piece of clothing, or investment advice) when customers invest a high amount of emotional energy in the outcome. Superb handling of these moments requires an instinctive frontline response that puts the customer's emotional needs ahead of the company's and the employee's agendas.

2. EVOLUTION: THE MOMENTS OF TRUTH

In 1981, the then-CEO of the struggling Scandinavian Airlines suggested a change to the prevailing customer service philosophy, which became known as Moments of Truth. These moments were focused on really dealing with the emotional needs of the airline's customers during customer service interactions. The company could experience thousands of these moments throughout any given day, and a positive interaction could result in a favorable feeling towards the brand and continued loyalty. Customer loyalty would then lead to profits in subsequent interactions. Increased customer service focusing on emotionally charged moments led to more brand loyalty and further business. Soon, the airline was struggling no more.

Fast forward 35 years, and the only thing that has changed is everything. Customer touch points with brands have multiplied: smartphones, social media, search engines, reviews, live chat, email, phone or in person. There are now many more moments of truth, and dealing with the emotional needs of the customer is more important than ever over multiple touch points. People expect answers quickly, via multiple channels. And the marketers, businesses and brands — must provide the information the customers seek.

3. PHASES: THE MOMENTS OF TRUTH

The Four (4) Moments of Truth

Zero Moment of Truth (ZMOT, coined by Google): A buyer has a need, and goes online searching for a product or service to meet that need.

First Moment of Truth (FMOT, coined by P&G): A buyer has an a-ha moment when confronted with your brand offering, and related alternatives.

Second Moment of Truth (SMOT, coined by P&G): A customer has purchased and used your brand offering, resulting in an experience that either meets or fails to meet the brand promise.

Third Moment of Truth (TMOT, coined by Pete Blackshaw, ex-P&G): A customer makes their voice heard by providing word-of-mouth, either positive or negative, through reviews and social engagement.

3.1 First Moments Of Truth (FMOT)

The First Moment of Truth (FMOT) is a concept proposed by Procter & Gamble in 2005. The FMOT relates to that moment when a potential customer experiences a product on a store shelf (physical or digital in 2016). In this micro-moment, the brand has the best possible chance of creating an unplanned or impulse

purchase and converting a browser into a buyer. Impulse purchases are largely emotionally driven, so this is achieved by appealing to the customer's senses, values and emotions at the point of sale (POS). If you have ever wondered why the supermarket moves everything around, then you will find answers in the studies conducted into impulse or unplanned purchases. Certainly, there are indications that reducing shopper efficiency results in more time in store, more product interaction and more unplanned or impulse purchases. In our modern marketing environment, the First Moment of Truth is not restricted to viewing products on shelves. It could also occur in a variety of instances, such as:

- A customer viewing a range of products on a store shelf or in a POS display.
- A potential diner viewing a restaurant menu in the window.
- A customer visiting the website of a potential service provider for the first time.

It's important to realize that this is not the beginning of this customer's journey, and the first moment of truth is essentially crunch time. This is where the presales marketing and branding rubber hits the road. In most cases, a user would have been exposed to a stimulus — be that some advertising or even possibly word of mouth — that set up the FMOT.

3.2 Second Moment Of Truth: The Usage Phase

The second moment of truth is when the customer uses the product. Whether this is eating the meal that sounded so good on the menu (FMOT) or shaving with the shaving foam that promises no skin irritation. This is where your product or service has to deliver on the promises made by your marketing. Fail at the second moment of truth, and your chances of repeat customers are slim.

3.3 Third Moment/ The Ultimate Moment of Truth (UMOT): The Advocacy Phase

This is the moment of advocacy. Much like a typical sales funnel, we must go from awareness (stimulus) through to the sale, and ideally, to post-sale recommendation. This is where you transform a customer into a fan. This is where you build true brand loyalty. In the real world, generating advocacy often requires a business process to stimulate those happy customers to review you or share positive feelings on your social media channels.

3.4 The Zero Moment Of Truth (ZMOT)

Whether we are shopping for cars, hobbies or holidays, the internet has changed how we decide what to buy. Now, after the initial stimulus and before users reach the First Moment of Truth, they will encounter multiple decision-making moments that Google calls the "Zero Moment of Truth," or ZMOT. The Zero Moment of Truth was initially conceived on the back of a study conducted by Google in 2011. The study determined that the customer journey is changing:

- 50 percent of shoppers used a search engine to research a product or brand.
- 38 percent comparison shopped online (reviews, prices and so on).
- 36 percent checked out the brand/manufacturer's website.
- 31 percent read online endorsements, reviews or recommendations.

This was way back in 2011, and smartphone adoption has only grown ever since. In fact, a follow-up study in 2017 showed that users are grabbing their smartphone to research a product even earlier now, and there are even more touch points on the way to a purchase. The Zero Moment of Truth is this new moment that sits between a stimulus (ad) and the FMOT. The ZMOT can happen on search engines and social networks, and the net result is a more confident and well-informed purchase decision. The 2015 study indicated that 79 percent of consumers use a smartphone to help with shopping, and 83 percent of mothers claim to do online research after seeing a TV advertisement. Given the age of these stats and the stratospheric rise of smartphones and the mobile internet, we can only imagine these statistics are conservative at best.

The takeaway here is that users now conduct research, read reviews, compare brands, talk to friends, watch videos, interact on socially driven sites (from Facebook to Trip Advisor), read news and even

visit brand websites to make decisions — and all of this is done at the Zero Moment of Truth. The basic concept is that the customer journey is now broken into hundreds of micro-moments. Want-to-know moments, want-to-go moments, want-to-do and want-to-buy moments.

It’s in these **moments** that decisions are made and preferences are shaped.

- a) **I-want-to-know moment:** When smartphone user looks up for information
- b) **I-want-to-go moments:** When smartphone user searches customize information eg: near me, in the city, local business etc.
- c) **I-want-to-do moments:** When smartphone user turns his/her phone up for ideas while doing a task
- d) **I-want-to-buy moments:** When smartphone user consults his/her phone for deciding what to buy

The following diagram shows where the ZMOT exists in this proposed model:

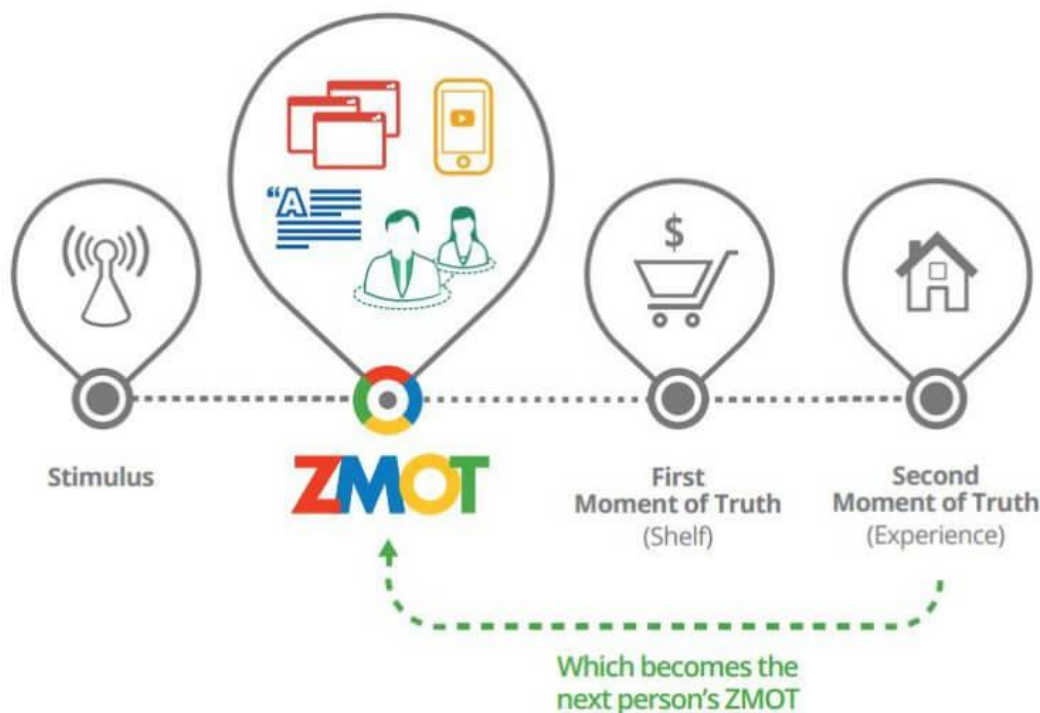


Fig : Phases of Moment of Truth

It is these micro-moments that represent the Zero Moment of Truth and present an opportunity for your brand to get in front of a potential customer.

4. Content Marketing, SEO & Moments Of Truth: Implications for the Marketers

Today’s is a game of content marketing. Customers have questions, and the marketers must have the answers. In reality, delivering those answers may need a more nuanced approach, and the marketers must use the armaments provided to them to promote content. The exact approach will vary depending upon business, location and too many variables to cover here (social media, search ads, display ads and content amplification are at least a start in the right direction). However, the type of content may be broadly categorized as needed by users at each stage of this new user journey and buying cycle. This framework may then be used to research the specific questions that the prospects have at each stage of this newly revised customer journey model.

4.1 The Zero Moment Of Truth

Content at the Zero Moment of Truth needs to be self-serve information regarding your product, industry, category and service. You need to understand the needs of your audience, and then present this in a format they can easily access. At this stage, being present in multiple locations and formats is how you win the ZMOT.

4.2 The First Moment Of Truth

At this point, the shopper has likely got a solid idea of what they are looking for, and content should support and reinforce the purchase decision. Such content might include:

- **Product Specifics** — Delivery, specifications, FAQ and so on.
- **Special Offers** — Clinch that deal when the customer is primed with a special offer.
- **Reviews** — 80 percent of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations.
- **Testimonials** — Real customers talking about your products.
- **Case Studies** — Show how your product made the difference it promises.
- **Social Media Engagement** — Actively responding on social channels is critical here.
- **Customer Support** — Allow your prospects to easily ask questions via your website (real-time chat, support forms and so on).

When we are looking at credibility, it is crucially important to review the landscape and understand all the potential locations for presenting a positive reputation. Again, this will be completely unique depending on your location and industry, so you have to get inside your customer's head and start looking around (Customer profiling can be a useful tool here).

4.3 The Second Moment Of Truth

The second moment of truth relates to your customer using your product or service and ideally, having a great experience. Their experience can easily create negative or positive feedback that feeds into the Zero Moment of Truth for future customers, so it is critical to support and encourage advocacy at this stage.

Here are some content types that can support the Second Moment of Truth:

- **Product FAQ** — Help customers with common questions or problems.
- **User Guides** — The more complex the product, the more support you should provide here.
- **Social Media** — Most folks won't read, so be sure to be active and direct them to your FAQ/Guides.
- **How-To Guides** — Support customers in the advanced use of your products.
- **Questionnaires** — These can help mine feedback for future improvements and improve all your moment of truth marketing.

The second moment of truth is all about helping your customer have a smooth experience with your product, whether that is a razor or a holiday, a burger or a mountain bike. Be there to answer all questions and support those users, and you are ensuring a positive second moment of truth (and brand experience).

4.4 The Third Moment Of Truth

The third moment of truth is after the experience. This is when you move a customer towards becoming a true fan and advocate of your brand. Some nurturing is needed here, and instances of stellar customer support can help.

5. SUMMARY

The idea behind micro-moment marketing is that in the world today, consumers are bombarded by content, ads, offers, emails, texts, tweets, push notifications and everything else imaginable. As a whole, the industry has reached a point of "content shock" where consumers cannot consume much more content than they already are. Consumers already spend an average of 4.7 hours each day on their smartphones, thus, the

way brands and marketers think about capturing the attention of consumers needs to change. That's where the tactical side of micro-moment marketing comes in. Google publish loads of data to support this idea. But the crux is Google's concept of micro-moments represents the new frontier of digital marketing. It is suggesting smartphones brought behavioral change in consumers. And today they like to consuming content anytime on-demand. These pocket computers made consumers information rich but attention poor. Their expectation has been skyrocketed. Consumers nowadays expect the solutions at the very moment when they find the problem.

Everything happens in real-time and everything is on demand. Each micro-moment must connect consumer intent with the desired outcome. The future of marketing depends on identifying these new moments and learning how to make each micro-moment matter.

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