

# Free Wi-Fi brings marketing returns for retailers

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24 Mar 2017

Free Wi-Fi is more than just keeping clients longer at a coffee shop or charging for every megabyte of usage for retailers' ISP to collect revenue. Customer engagement via Wi-Fi allows retailers to reach customers without contravening personal information legislation, as customers are incentivised to offer data via their devices or social media profiles in return for high-performance internet.



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A recent white paper by *Retail TouchPoints* titled 'Closing the Gap: Guest Wi-Fi Bridges the Online/Offline Divide' summarises the needs of retailers to combine their digital marketing with their in-store experience.

By taking advantage of Wi-Fi, combined with other technologies deployed in-store, retail, fast food, full service and hospitality, brands can:

- Drive mobile engagement and top-of-mind brand awareness
- Improve in-store personalisation and in-store retention
- Track shopper online-to-offline behaviour
- Improve store operations

Other advantages that can be quantified are that CMOs can:

- Collect feedback via product surveys
- Drive customer loyalty engagement from digital to social media
- Encourage cross-selling and upselling across products, brands and branches
- Introduce incentives to sales employees to keep up product knowledge, and be rewarded for browsing during their break time

## **Maximising data**

Analytics rich Wi-Fi technologies are becoming mainstream in South Africa, especially as local retail CMOs strive to enhance customer journeys: starting from customers researching their products online, to enticing customers in-store to high-value product placements, managing long queue time for purchases and encouraging repeat visits through coupons.

Using data collected across this journey, especially from their Wi-Fi related assets, CMOs can analyse customer habits (measure time in store, push surveys on products, customer device and internet usage behaviours, and heat map customer movement with beaconing). This data can be correlated to customer demographics across their target base. This allows for more personalised user experiences, extrapolating customer's offline behaviour and creating more effective cross-sell opportunities.

## **Targeted campaigns**

Customers can even be tracked across brand stores in other parts of the country, for CMOs to even encourage non-performing demographics to visit brick-and-mortar stores for specials. This can translate into targeted campaigns, say planning a Ladies Night offering prawns and cocktails, for a seafood restaurant chain whose sales derived from female clients is weak on Tuesday evenings. Collecting customer social media information by encouraging sign-up to the free Wi-Fi allows the brand owner to engage their clients directly via their smart devices.

## **Wi-Fi deployment through ICT experts**

Like any marketing tool, planning for maximum return is critical. However, retailers do not need to compromise security of existing network connectivity to their branches, or invest in support personnel. Today, planning, implementation and support of Wi-Fi deployments is offered by managed service providers.

These ICT companies offer integrated Wi-Fi solutions over broadband access, with full-service cover periods for support. Upfront pre-sales consultancy is essential to ensure the retailer brand is incorporated into the technology, both in terms of brand design and customer communications strategy. The retailer should then be able to extract maximum value from their solution.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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