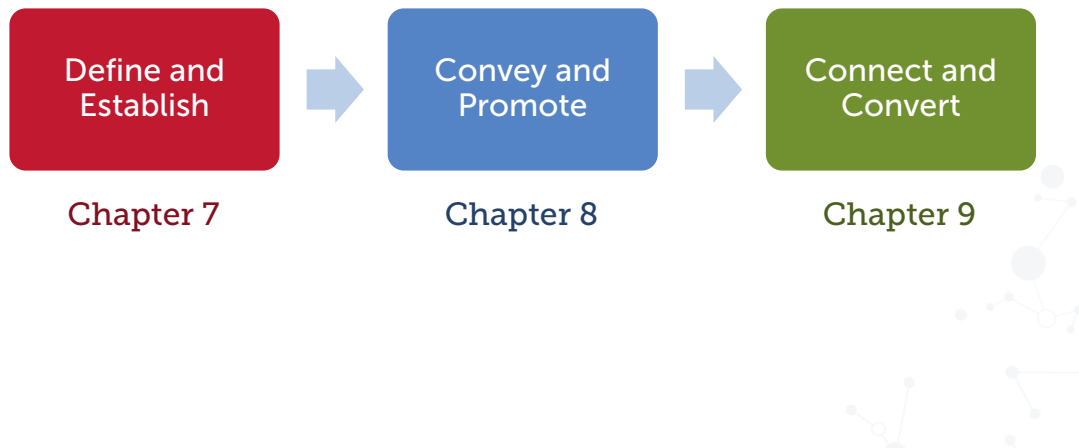*DS 780*

Data Science and Strategic Decision-Making

Lesson 10 Introduction
Strategy: Connect and Convert

Next Steps in IDM: Connect and Convert

| Define and Establish		Convey and Promote		Connect and Convert
Chapter 7		**Chapter 8**		**Chapter 9**

Well, welcome to Week 10 and Chapter 9. And just to provide a little bit of context to our journey here, we started the strategy section with a Chapter 7. We talked about defining and establishing, and then moved on the Chapter 8 to talk about convey and promote. And now we'll talk about Chapter 9, connect and convert.

Meaning of Connect and Convert

Connect:
Establish Relationship

Convert:
Persuade to Use and Advocate
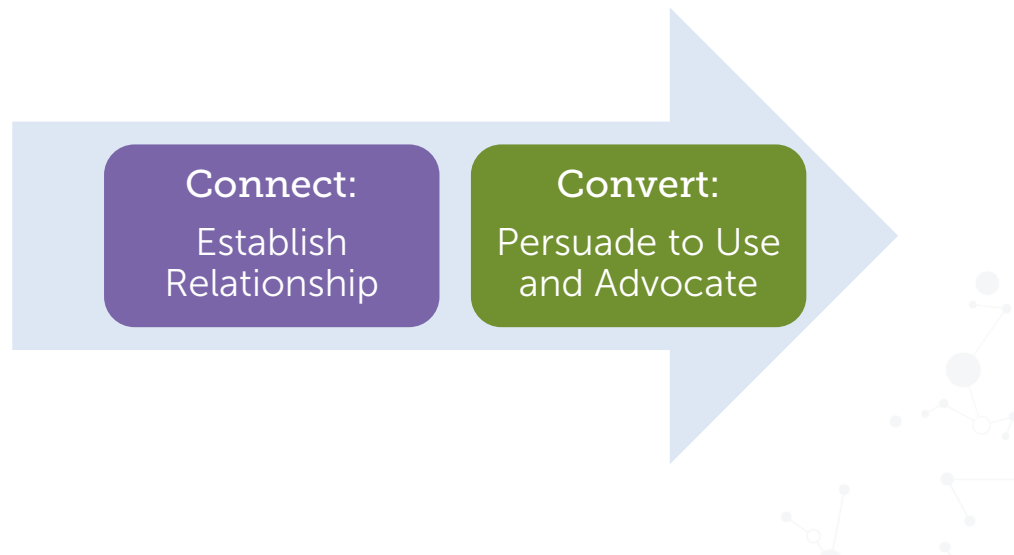
Now by connect what we really mean is establish a relationship. So we're establishing relationships with prospects and customers. And by convert, we mean persuade those prospects and customers to actually use our product or buy our product as the case may be, and then also to advocate for us as we move them up to the next level.

Tactics for Connect and Convert
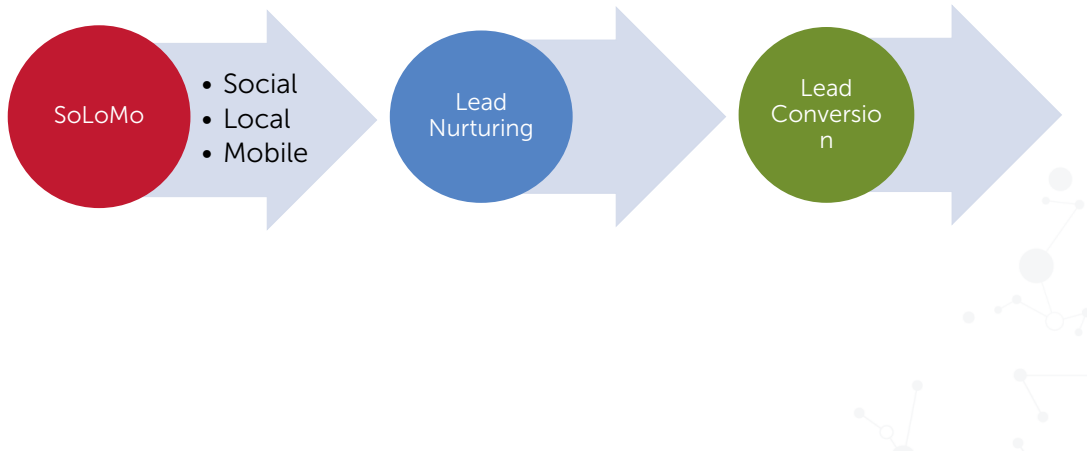
Now as we try and do all this connecting and converting, there's really three sort of categories of tactics. The first is the social, local, mobile, or SoLoMo. Second is lead nurturing. And the third category is lead conversion.

SoLoMo Get Social

- Platform
- Convey and promote brand image
- Connect with target audience
  - Shared content amplifies brand's online presence
  - Transparent social exchanges project authenticity

To get started with the first category, that's all about social. So really social media are simply platforms that we can use to communicate and then build relationships with our prospects and customers. The idea is we want to convey and promote our brand image, and we certainly want to connect with our target audience, these prospects and our customers as well. Keep in mind, these social platforms are two-way communications channels. So they're ideal for this whole notion of making connections.

Now a lot of the shared content can amplify really your brand's online presence. And also the transparent social exchanges-- you know, what goes on in any particular social media platform, the communications that goes on-- can lend a certain sense of authenticity to your product and to your brand, because consumers realize that you're not orchestrating every comment and everything that they're reading. So that leads to this feeling of authenticity.

SoLoMo Tools for Social

Social Data

- People share personal information on social channels
- Windows into desires, wants & needs of prospects/customers
- Use to personalize brand message and content & grow relationships

Social Advertising

- Reach prospects searching for solution provider
- Content marketing useful at this (involvement) stage of DIC

In terms of the tools for the social element of this whole process, it's important to realize that there's a lot of data sloshing around out there in the social media world. People are sharing personal information across these social channels. And they provide actually excellent windows into what the desires and wants and needs of our prospects and customers. And if we listen to those and we use them to personalize brand messages and content, it'll help us grow our relationships with these prospects and customers.

Now social advertising is also an important part of the puzzle. A lot of times the folks that are out on social media and talking about things that might be of interest to us, they're pretty far along on their journey. And they already realize they have a need. And they're quite often at the point where they're looking for a particular solution or a particular solution provider. Now content marketing, of course, can be very useful at this involvement stage of the digital involvement cycle.

SoLoMo Think Local

Proximity

- Geographic closeness = easier to find firm to fulfill needs
- Online proximity (ease of finding business online) also exists

Affinity + Proximity = Contextual Relevance

- Top of mind awareness
- Connection

Contextual Relevance drives conversion

All right the next part really is about thinking local. So it's all about proximity. And there's two uses for this term really. One is geographic closeness. And that's simply being easier to find a firm that fulfills needs.

So the obvious thing is if somebody's looking for a restaurant because they want to eat lunch now, they're interested in a restaurant that's relatively close to wherever they are. And that's what the whole geographic closeness is. It really doesn't make much sense for anybody if they're in downtown Chicago to learn about a restaurant in San Francisco. So that's what the geographic piece is.

But there's also online proximity. And this is really all about how easy it is to find a business online. So you want to be something that is going to come up. And, of course, that goes back to some other things that we've already gone over, already talked about in terms of search engine optimization and all of that.

Now what happens is when you add proximity to affinity, which is, again, a whole area that we've covered earlier, you mix those two together, you've got a pretty potent formula. And it really results in something called contextual relevance. All that really means is that you would end up being top of mind and the awareness be top of mind with customers and prospects if somehow or other you've managed to develop an affinity prior to this timing where they're looking for something locally and it turns out that you are approximate to them either geographically or online. And then that creates a stronger connection.

So at the end this whole contextual relevance thing drives conversion. And that's why this whole process is so important.

SoLoMo Tools for Local

Local SEO

- Attract prospects from your business area
- Localize keywords, plus options on search engines & AdWords

Social Check-Ins

- Encourage customers to check-in while at your location

Geofencing

- Permits broadcasting information or offers to nearby users

Now if we take a look at in terms of tools for this whole local idea, certainly local search engine optimization is an important piece of it. It allows you to attract prospects from your business area.

So as in the previous example, if somebody is looking for a restaurant in downtown Chicago and you're a restaurant in downtown Chicago, you certainly want to be in on this particular game. And to get there, you're going to want to use localized keywords of course. But you're also going to want to take care of whatever localization options that are available on Google and Bing and the rest of the search engines and also AdWorks.

Another area where you can capitalize on localization is with social check-ins. So if you encourage customers to check in while they're at your location in whatever platform or platforms they might be using at the time, it's essentially promoting your business on those platforms and particularly of course kind of amplifying your voice and message anything the consumer might also be talking about during this check-in process among their relationships in social media.

And then the last area is this idea of geofencing. And it does also going to take into account the whole concept of beacons as well. But the point is to allow for you to be able to broadcast information, especially things that might be of immediate use in value to prospects and customers who are nearby. So that might be special offers or coupons, or maybe if you've got a sale on to let them know about that, anything along that line. What you're doing is providing a very valuable sort of communication to those folks who have opted in to whatever method you're using for geofencing, or if you're using beacons.

SoLoMo Integrate Mobile

Mobile is driving force of SoLoMo

Factors driving Mobile UX
- Convenience
  - Devices allow connection almost anywhere
- Simplicity
  - Apps and mobile optimized web sites provide ease of use
- Proximity (geographic or online)
  - With convenience and simplicity, offers contextual relevance

All right, the third leg of the stool is integrating mobile. So mobile, first of all, is really the driving force of this whole SoLoMo idea. And you have to take a look at what's driving the user experience in mobile.

You can't expect mobile users to be able to get a good experience out of standard web pages and all of that. You're going to have to take a look at what's unique about mobile and make sure that you're providing this user experiences that's optimized for somebody using a phone.

Now there's three main factors that drive this user experience. First is convenience. And that's really kind of baked into the whole idea of using a mobile phone, because it's a device that allows you to connect almost anywhere as a consumer.

But it's important to make the process simple for those consumers. And that means using mobile apps and/or really mobile optimized websites to provide this ease of use, because I think we've all tried to use regular websites on a phone, because there is no mobile app for an organization and it's definitely not an optimal experience. So whether you go apps and/or with mobile optimized websites, that's an important part of making this whole thing work.

And then the third piece is the proximity. And again, just like we talked about, that can be either geographic or online. But a along with the convenience and simplicity, it offers this contextual relevance they really can strengthen or increase the chance that you're going to be able to attract a consumer in.

But in this case, we're looking at it really from the idea of using mobile. With the consumer with a mobile device in hand walking around, this proximity thing can be kind of a tool that they're using because they realized that the different potential places they can purchase a product or a service, they can get information out of these local sorts of activities that the businesses might be doing.

SoLoMo Tools for Mobile

Mobile Optimization

- Mobile apps
- Mobile website
- Responsive web design (RWD)

Mobile Advertising

Mobile-Friendly Ad Copy

- Relevant copy for on-the-go consumer, including business phone number
- Links to directions, coupons, web/social sites with reviews

Now in terms of the tools for mobile, really it's the things we've just been talking about. So it's all about optimization for mobile, using either apps, mobile apps, a mobile website, or in addition to a mobile website, really the whole idea of responsive web design.

You also to take a look at it mobile advertising. If you can trigger advertising in a geographic sense, that's important. But also you need to look at the ad copy, really the ad design entirely in terms of being mobile friendly. So you'd certainly want relevant copy for somebody who's out there running around with their phone on the go.

And you want to make it easy to get information, further information, about your place of business, your products, your services. So you want to have your phone number included, say, in a mobile friendly ad and in a way so they can simply, of course, click on it and call you to get directions or to find out if you have something in stock or whatever it might be. That's something that really adds value for the consumer.

But also you'd want links to direction so maybe they don't have to call you for something as simple as directions. And also if you can generate or make available to them, coupons or your website, obviously mobile optimized, or possibly social sites, other social sites that might have previews of your business. So all of these things, it's really making it easy for the consumer who's running around with their phone and looking to compare and eventually buy something that you're selling. That's what it's all about.

Lead Nurturing Tactics for Lead Nurturing

- Communications (Touches) with viable prospects
  - Consistent and meaningful
  - Prospects in all stages of development (time to purchase)
- Relies on content
- Builds deeper relationships with prospects and customers

All right, now we'll talk a little bit about the tactics for lead nurturing. And, of course, this depends on one communications or touches if you prefer with viable prospects. And these communications or touches need to be consistent, and they need to be meaningful.

You can't just go out there and have a communication once a year. You can't communicate at any frequency with messages that aren't going to be meaningful for the consumer that's being targeted.

So you want to be consistent. You want to have messages going out in intervals. And each one of those it better be meaningful and have value for the consumer that's being targeted.

Now keep in mind that you're going to have prospects in all stages of development. So your messages need to be-- well, ideally, they'd be tailored to the prospects in each stage the development. That's not always possible. It depends on the business model you're using.

So you may not know exactly which stage of development they're in. In which case, the messages have to be tailored to that reality so you can use messages that would speak and be useful to anybody in any stage of the development if that's the case.

Now a lot of times, these are going to rely on content, whether it's content in the message or content marketing. That's what provides the value in this situation. And as we know, at the end of the day, it's all about providing value to the consumer.

It also builds this deeper relationships that we're trying to develop for a long-term relationship with the prospect who hopefully will become a customer and with our current customers. So in the process of lead nurturing, we're really either starting or continuing this relationship building.

Lead Nurturing Tools for Lead Nurturing

- Premium Content Offers
  - Bait for attracting new prospects
- CTA's and Landing Page
  - Promote content offers and capture new prospect contact info
- Email Campaigns
  - Used to stay in touch and increase interest of prospects
  - Design of campaigns important:
    - Number of messages – A search for the Goldilocks solution
    - Timing of messages – Start with Thank You, follow up over 2 to 3 weeks
    - Content of messages – Add value for prospect, consider progressive content offers

Well, to understand how we go about this lead nurturing process, it's important to take a look at the tools that are available for us. Up top, we've got premium content offers. So we're back to content marketing. And it all comes down to these offers being a bait or being the bait for attracting new prospects and keeping current customers interested and maybe apprised of changes in our products or services or new products or services that we've brought out.

Now another tool is sort of a combo of two things really. One is called actions in ads or emails, whatever method you're using to push it out, and then also the landing page that gets paired with that call to action, the landing page on your website.

So you'd want to promote to your content offers, of course. And then you need to capture the new prospect contact info. So the promoting part is out there in the emails or the ads or wherever it is. And those communications have a call to action.

So it's very clear call to action that says, you know, click here to receive the free white paper or free coupons or whatever your offer is. But then when they end up on a landing page on your website where you're going to fulfill this offer, you want to make sure that landing page does its job in making it clear on what action is needed.

And usually you're going to be collecting information on the consumer before you provide the content, so you know whether it's somebody you already are aware of or whether it's a new contact, all of that sort of thing. And it also

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continues to promote the content and explain why it's valuable to consumers so that they push through, provide the information, and click the Download button.

Now the third thing is email campaigns. So it's a great way of getting information out. You're going to use that to you to obviously keep in touch with prospects. And with each message, hopefully you're increasing their interest in your product or service and not annoying them, which, of course, is the danger if you don't provide value with each of these new messages.

Now in terms of designing email campaigns, there's three important elements or parts of it, I guess. One is how many messages are you going to send out? And what you're looking for is it kind of a Goldilocks solution.

You want to have enough so that you ping them enough so that you've broken through the busy, daily lives, and they may be interested but they have to put off all of that. So you've got to have enough to break through that. But you don't want to have so many that you become just a pain and a nuisance, because that's going to detract from your image and your reputation with these consumers over the long term.

Now the other part is the timing of the messages. Now this can vary widely really, depending on the product or the service. But one thing that almost any product or service would start with is a thank you email. Once they've downloaded content and you give them on a day or so two to see it, then if you follow up with a thank you-- appreciate your interest and all of that.

And then following that, usually over a period of two to three weeks, but that's the part the can vary by the product and the industry and so forth, you're going to send out that series of messages at the appropriate numbers that experience with your consumers, because you're always testing and checking, tells you is the right number of messages.

And then, of course, the content of the messages, again, has to add value for the prospect, absolutely has to. That's crucial. Or this whole thing can turn negative on you.

And then you also might want to consider making progressive content offers. Gee, I'm glad you requested that. I hope you enjoyed reading it and it was useful to. Here's something we think you might be interested in as well.

And you make another content offer. That, in a lot of cases, is exactly what can add value. So again, it depends on your product, your service, your industry, but these are things to consider.

Lead Conversion Tactics for Lead Conversion

- Consumers demanding assistance and personalized marketing
- Social CRM (SCRM) software used to satisfy this need
- Integrates social media with CRM
  - Listen and monitor prospect/customer conversations
  - Participate in conversations and other digital interactions
  - Manage customer loyalty and advocacy programs
- Interact with prospect/customer through Digital Involvement Cycle

OK, the last section in the chapter is about lead conversion. And if we talk about the tactics for lead conversion, we'll first have to recognize that consumers are really demanding, both assistance but also personalized marketing. So they like the idea of getting messages that are meaningful to them and not a message that looks like it was meant for somebody else and then just becomes a nuisance and a negative factor in terms of your brand image.

So social CRM, or SCRM, software is one of the-- is probably the most important tool that can be used to satisfy this whole need of personalized marketing while providing assistance in this whole drive to convert leads. And what it does is it integrates social media with CRM, or Customer Relationship Management, systems that have been around for probably 20 years or so now.

And they had predecessors they were not necessarily web enabled or even automated. So CRM itself has been around for a very long time. But the more modern, automated systems probably over the last 20 years.

Now what these systems can do, these integrated systems, the SCRM, is they're going to listen and monitor prospects or customer conversations. You know, now that sounds a little creepy, but we're talking about is monitoring social media. And it's the same thing that people do all the time with their own accounts.

But what we're doing here is we're out there looking for mentions of our product or our product line or our industry, that sort of thing, among prospects and customers. And that helps us if we're-- one of the big rules in marketing is listening to the customer. So this is just another way we can listen to these prospects and customers.

Now we also want to, when appropriate, participate in the conversations that are going on out there. So whatever the social media platform is and how the conversations occur on that platform and also maybe there's other digital interactions that might be available on a platform in terms of photos or whatever the platform happens to make use of.

And then, of course, we have to manage our-- assuming that we have it and hopefully you would in most cases-- have some kind of customer loyalty and advocacy programs, whether those are one in the same or not, that can vary. But with social CRM, you can tie that back to this loyalty program that you're running and add information to the loyalty program so that the two work together in concert. Finally, it definitely allows us to interact with our prospects and customers, pretty much throughout the digital involvement cycle.

Lead Conversion Tool for Lead Conversion

SCRM Functionality

- Customer Data Management
- Interaction Tracking
- Engaging Relationship - using multiple channels
- Workflow Automation
- Reporting

All right, in our last slide for this chapter, we talk about the tools or in this case really tool for lead conversion. And the way it really comes down to SCRM. So let's take a look at the functionality and why this tool would be so important to us.

First of all, it's simply customer data management. And that's something that regular old CRM does as well. You have to have an easy way to keep track customers and the information for each of those customers. And it has to be shareable and all the things we've come to expect from CRM.

It's also important to have interaction tracking. Now regular CRM has places where you can put in emails and summaries of phone conversations and those sorts of things. But here what we're doing is tracking interactions in other places, like social media, so that we capture that and we're bringing all the information about the customer into one place.

Third, you know, it's all about having an engaging relationship with the customers and using multiple channels for it. So again, the ability to bring social into the picture is improving the relationship, not just the interaction tracking, but it's actually improving the relationship.

Workflow automation, something regular CRM obviously does and does very well in most systems. It needs to be expanded, of course, now because if you're going to be involved with all these social media, as well as traditional communication methods, then your CRM system, in this case SCRM system, needs to be able to automate the workflow that's related to the activities in social media, as well as the traditional ones.

And then finally, just like CRM, but again with an expanded coverage, the reporting is important so you can manage the process. And the reporting has valuable information management needs to best run the company and increase sales.

All right, well, that concludes this chapter. At the end of the day, it's all about the conversion. So the three chapter run up to this idea of what we need to finally, after we've developed prospects and continued communications with customers, to go for the conversion, to go for the sale is it's kind of a high point in the process, to say at least.

I hope you have a great week. And we'll be back next time.