

DAILY NEWS

Stuzo's Approach Drives Business Outcomes

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- [Stuzo \(/Companies/Stuzo-\(1\)\)](#)



Carly Deitrich always makes it a point to illuminate to everyday retail brand customers at Stuzo the importance of the role they play in their consumer's life.

As the company's Director of Strategic Accounts, she often looks at successful brands who know where to place themselves in a consumer's day-to-day life and how to capitalize on that relationship.

"Everyone loves to reference the Starbucks and Dunkin' case studies because they do an exceptional job, but I would argue that has largely been because they understand their role in the consumer's life," Deitrich says.



“They understand what it means to be Starbucks in your life on a day-to-day basis, or what it means to be Dunkin. So, what I encourage retailers that I’m working with to think about is the role they play in their consumer’s life and how they make that role and relationship even stronger by doing that role really well.”

Granted, Deitrich knows that not every brand will resonate with consumers like Starbucks or Dunkin has, but there is a method to the loyalty madness that most brands need to undertake.

“It’s important that we acknowledge the emotional connection consumers have with their retail brands as we’re designing and optimizing programs,” she says.

Activation and Commerce Technology Company

Prior to joining Stuzo, Deitrich worked for Belly, where she focused on developing consumer engagement strategy. She was then with Hatch, a technology company that boasted an adaptable platform designed to help retailers and brands build stronger relationships with their consumers. Hatch was acquired by Stuzo in October of 2019, and Deitrich assumed her current role at that time.

By integrating these relationship building and real-time consumer activation capabilities into their Open Commerce® platform, Stuzo holistically refers to itself as an “activation and commerce technology company,” and offers technology and services to enable intelligent 1:1 loyalty, contactless commerce, and cross-channel consumer experiences.

These days Stuzo is focused primarily in the everyday spend industry, which means fuel, convenience stores, grocery, dollar stores, and restaurant/QSR, where consumers are visiting at a high frequency.

Deitrich and her cohorts are devoted to helping retailers drive measurable business outcomes, offering a combination of software products and managed services including the Open Commerce Activate product, which empowers an organization to build, launch, and manage loyalty programs with hyper-personalized offers, rollback at the pump, sweepstakes, and more, all of which are designed to help a retailer programmatically gain a greater share of their consumers’ wallets and drive net incremental business outcomes.

Stuzo also offers Transact, a contactless commerce product that supports a wide variety of payment types and experiences, as well as its Experience product for a cross-channel customer engagement, built on top of its Activate and Transact products.

“Some of our customers prefer to self-service, so they leverage our Activate and Transact products via API and run with it,” Deitrich says. “Other customers leverage our team and our services as their loyalty marketing departments, so we have a much more fully-featured offering for some of those customers as well.”

Leveraging Data to Produce Business Value

Either way, Deitrich says the challenge and the opportunity are actually largely the same: leveraging consumer data to produce business outcomes and to build those consumer relationships. She says consumers are more informed than ever and expect more from retailers.

“They expect specific things from the retailers that they engage with,” Deitrich says. “On the flip side, I believe retailers are expected to construct programs that perform to higher standards than ever before. Retailers have to ensure that the consumer is getting enough perceived value from the program, and the

retailer is able to drive the outcomes they need in order to justify the business investment.”

In the everyday spend industry, consumers are visiting retailers quite often but spending shorter amounts of time in the establishments, such as convenience stores or fuel stations. Deitrich says those situations call for a unique approach to providing consumers with a perceived value for their patronage in just a short amount of time.

Murphy USA, a Fortune 500 chain of retail gas stations that are primarily located in proximity to Walmart stores, is a customer of Stuzo, whom Deitrich says is an example of a brand that does a lot of things right when it comes to building relationships with their consumers.

She says Murphy USA focused on the simplicity of enrollment by just asking for the consumer's phone number, the immediacy of value, and on delivering that value to consumers in real-time.

“When you're on-site at a convenience store or gas station, you're only there for a few minutes,” Deitrich says. “Delivering that value in real-time is super important for businesses in that space, and they've just generally maintained a focus on driving incrementality for their overall business. That is what has made their program so successful today.”

Advice to Drive Incremental Business

Deitrich offers two pieces of advice for brands looking to drive incremental business and make their engagement and loyalty programs successful. She says the first – and most important– is to identify the business outcomes.

“I will say it until I'm blue in the face; everything else stems from alignment there,” Deitrich says. “You can build the most exciting program in the world, but if it doesn't produce the outcomes that the business requires, it's a real missed opportunity.”

The second goes back to brands understanding their role in the consumer's life, and part of that is understanding how customers are rapidly shifting towards contactless payments, online shopping, same-day delivery, and curbside pick-up.

Deitrich says they are seeing consumers who might never have wanted to become more digital prior to the pandemic, now embracing these technologies quickly and making them a part of their routine shopping habits.

“People that might not have previously engaged in digital engagement programs are actually trying those things for the first time because of the changing circumstances,” she says. “When you have consumers leveraging the program and demonstrating a desire to do that across touchpoints, all of these signs are pointing to how critical it is to have tightly integrated programs out there.”

Deitrich thinks that if brands encourage customers to make those behaviors habitual, those new habits will become sticky and much less likely to change later on.

“There is an opportunity to pursue that in a different way than we might have a year or two ago,” she says. “This is where we're seeing the brands that we work with today focusing their investments and their attention – intelligently using the consumer's data that they're collecting to deliver better, more personalized and relevant customer experiences that lead to the outcome of more loyal behavior to the brand.”

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