



Dear Publishing Professional,

During a gold rush, sell shovels. Sometimes it pays to think differently than everyone else. One of my goals with this letter is to help you do that – to get outside the ordinary. Another goal is to give you my take on what's important now.

It's time to re-think our rejection of 3p cookies

Publishers should focus on collecting and using first-party data. First-party data allows companies to tailor experiences, offers, and content directly to individual customer preferences, which increases customer loyalty and retention.

A CDP is a good tool for collecting and managing first-party data, but there are other (often less-expensive) options to consider.

Without saying anything against the emphasis on first-party data, **third-party cookies are still useful!** Especially if you own multiple websites. It's hard to track identity across domains without 3p cookies – which is why they were created in the first place.



I've written more on this subject on the Martech site. If you're curious, scan the QR code to the right.

12 ways to use a Customer Data Platform

1. The first and most obvious way to use a Customer Data Platform (CDP) is **as your centralized hub for data and reporting**. If you don't already have a centralized database for your customer data, a CDP can serve well in that function. However, don't assume that if you already have a customer database you don't need a CDP. There are plenty of other ways to use a CDP effectively in combination with other technologies, as I outline below.
2. **Audience Segmentation and Targeting**. By aggregating data from multiple sources, the CDP enables dynamic segmentation of audiences based on behavioral, demographic, and transactional data, allowing for more precise targeting.
3. **Source of truth**. Usually your "source of truth" will be some other system, but since the CDP can track activity to the user, it can be a useful source of truth in some cases, especially the things it uniquely orchestrates, like on-screen dialogues or personalization.
4. **Activation hub**. Since a CDP has a broad and deep picture of your customers, it can act as the central hub for multi-track campaigns, including customer journey mapping, cross-channel, and multi-site orchestration.

5. **Personalization Engine.** A CDP is well-positioned to personalize a customer's experience because it has access to the customer's browsing and subscription history, job title, industry, past purchases, and so on.
6. **Consent Management.** A CDP can make it easier to comply with privacy regulations like GDPR and CCPA, especially when handling opt-in/opt-out requests and consent history across channels.
7. **Churn Prediction.** Using predictive analytics, a CDP can analyze customer behavior and engagement patterns to identify at-risk customers, enabling proactive retention strategies.
8. **Onboarding and Retention Campaigns.** The CDP is a great place to manage such campaigns because it can identify new purchasers, manage cross-channel efforts to help with customer loyalty, and automate onboarding workflows and customer retention strategies.
9. **Revenue Attribution.** A CDP can gather data from all (okay, most) customer touch points and help marketers to make a more educated guess as to which efforts were most closely correlated with a purchase.
10. **Customer Service.** Because the CDP provides the closest thing to a "360 view of the customer," it can be a useful resource for customer service reps.
11. **Predictive Modeling.** AI and machine learning algorithms can help forecast customer lifetime value, next best actions, and other critical business metrics.
12. **Testing and Optimization.** The benefit of incorporating a CDP into A/B tests is that it allows you to compare results across segments. Your e-newsletter subscribers might react very differently than the rest of your audience, and that distinction might be lost in a generic A/B split test.

However ... **You might not need a CDP!** Read through those functions and decide (1) if you need them, (2) if existing technology can serve the purpose, and (3) where you have gaps. A CDP might be the answer, but **a simpler solution might also fit the bill.**

Preparing for AI agents: What's your strategy?

The main threat to publishers from AI is not AI-generated content. That is a big threat, but **the bigger threat is AI-curated content.**

I discussed the effect of AI agents in the October issue, and the more I think about it, the more I'm convinced publishers need a strategy now. AI agents will start curating access to content sooner than you expect.

How will your business survive in an era where readers can get what they want through an artificially intelligent feed that collects everything they care about, and can transform said content into any desired format: summaries, bullet points, audio, video, and charts, for example?

I have some ideas. Give me a call if you want to discuss the issue.

Plan now for the turbulence ahead

You need a strategy to deal with the upheaval that will follow this election.

My recommendation is to remain entirely neutral and stick to what you do best.

Remember George Floyd. That was such a traumatic experience for the country that many companies felt compelled to issue a statement on it.

People received emails that were supposed to comfort them from companies they didn't even know had their email address! **I don't think those emails were helpful in any way.**

My prediction: **George Floyd is nothing compared to what's coming in November.** Campaign rhetoric has been over the top. No matter who wins, there will be chaos and division, and you'll be urged to make some sort of statement.

Don't do it! And be prepared to tell your internal agitators why you choose to stay out of it.

On the other hand Not everyone takes that view. There is a school of thought that consumers (especially younger consumers) want to associate with companies that share their values. If you think that will be a significant influence on your market, you may believe you have to choose sides. Yes, you may lose 50 percent of your current customers, but you may also gain enough true believers to make it worthwhile.

I don't believe that, and I think it's a foolish gamble. But no matter where you fall on that question, you'd better start thinking now, before you're in the thick of it.

How to make people love your content

I recently read *Nobody Wants to Read Your Sh*t* by Steven Pressfield. **It explains the difference between compelling and boring content.**

To put it in a nutshell: **Good content respects the reader's time by delivering value and eliminating everything the reader doesn't care about.**

The reader wants something interesting, compelling, fun, inventive, and **not boring**. The reader wants something that's a better use of his time than a popular TV show.

Creators have to give the reader what they crave, and what they crave – whether they know it or not – is content that follows certain rules. Here's a summary of those rules.

You need a concept and a theme. The concept is what the story is about at a high level, such as "Scientists bring dinosaurs back to life and then lose control of them." It should put the idea in a context that makes the reader / viewer see it with fresh eyes.

A theme is the deeper meaning, like "the dangers of playing God and tampering with nature."

You need a beginning, a middle, and an end. Or, in other words, a hook, a build, and a payoff.

There has to be an inciting incident that starts the story and grabs the listener's attention. In a world filled with content, why should a reader bother with this?

There has to be a hero and a villain. The villain dominates the second part of the story, building tension, suspense, what's at stake, and so on

There has to be a resolution where the hero wins against the forces of darkness.

Story is everything. We often don't appreciate how deeply story is embedded in our thinking, our emotions, and our decisions. The sequence of events is not think, then behave, but feel, then behave, then think.

Cut excess. Strive for simplicity, precision, and discipline in writing.

You may think the content you provide is exempt from these sorts of rules, which apply to fiction and screenplays and such. Maybe, but it's wise to apply them to the extent you can.

There's a lot more in the book, and if you're in the content creation business I recommend that you read it. Unlike most business books, it's short and easy to read.

My last issue?

No, I'm not closing down, but this is a free publication, and **I'd like to know if you're reading it.** If so, I'm **more than happy** to send it to you. But just like a controlled-circulation pub, I need to update my list from time to time.

If you want to continue to receive this letter (and I hope you do), please email, phone, message, send an owl, drop by after 5:00 for a cocktail, or whatever works for you.

Also, if you know someone else who would benefit from this letter, please forward it with my compliments.

Sincerely,



Greg Krehbiel



P.S. -- I recently wrote a short book on Customer Data Platforms. It's called "What is a Customer Data Platform? And why should I care?"

You can download the e-book from my website or get the paperback from Amazon.

Special Offer - Buy either version of the book and **get an hour of my time for free!**

P.P.S - I don't want this to be a one-way conversation. If you have questions, observations, disagreements, or suggestions, please let me know!

