

PFL'S ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO:

The Value of Human Connection



Contents

- 5 Part I: Introduction
- 7 Part II: True Connection Straddles Worlds
- 12 Part III: What Does 'Connection' Look Like in the Customer Lifecycle?
- 24 Part IV: Conclusion



Part I

Introduction

For as long as humans have wandered this world, we've found ways to connect with each other. Through art, writing, and the spoken word, we've shared our stories, ideas, and emotions. We've explored the world and connected with people from different countries and cultures, and, over the years, more and better ways to connect and communicate were developed.

Today, we connect with each other via computers and tablets and phones—the web and the cloud are where we live, work, and play. We are all part of the digital ecosystem. There is no denying that email and texting have become the main forms of communication for many—especially business.

But, as human beings, we also want to feel acknowledged and connected. People crave

personal contact—those “moments of connection” that bind us together, create shared meaning, deepen ties, and make moments matter.



Part II

True Connection Straddles Worlds

A wise man once said: “In the end, the human experience is hybrid.” In other words, to be meaningful, connection today must evolve beyond digital to include the offline world, as well, to mirror how people truly live and engage. By failing to acknowledge the importance of the human experience and such connections, businesses cut themselves off from half of what people crave—authenticity and reality.

Consumers demand that brands shift with their needs in real time, in both online and offline channels. One recommendation is the addition of modern direct mail—the comingling of analog and digital. When you use direct mail effectively, you’re not just sending a message, you’re creating

Connection
today must evolve
beyond digital
to include the
offline word.



a connection through an authentic, memorable moment. As audiences continue to tune out digital advertising, direct mail strategies—coupled with the measurability and scalability of digital marketing tactics—provide a promising path forward.

Digital/analog; online/offline; email/direct mail—on the surface, they seem like polar opposites. But research, real-world experience, and, most important, our clients' successes make it clear: Not only can they work together, they, in fact, work best in tandem.

When integrated as part of a comprehensive marketing strategy, the combination produces better results than either does alone—truly more than the sum of the parts. Much business-strategy discussion over the last decade has been about digital transformation. Simply defined, digital transformation is “the adoption of digital technology by a company to improve business processes, value for customers and innovation.”

Businesses have come to realize, however, that digital transformation alone is not the answer.

According to an Accenture Interactive report: “The powerful convergence of marketing and technology in today’s marketplace means brands are no longer built through advertising, but through experiences... Experiences that can make

lives easier, healthier, safer, more productive and rewarding.”

No matter what the physical mail, no matter who the sender, no matter who the recipient, automated, personalized direct mail is a powerful way to connect with people. It’s personal, it’s authentic, and it’s memorable.

In short:

Our lives
change
for the better
when we
connect in an
authentic way.

In short: Our lives change for the better when we connect in an authentic way.

Authentic Connections

Successful organizations understand that there is a need for authentic connections with prospects and existing customers. In their bestselling book, *The Power of Moments*, by Chip and Dan Heath, the authors speak how moments of connection bind us together. The Heaths say these moments create:

- **Shared Meaning:** Moments of connection bring members of a group closer together.
- **Stronger Ties:** In individual relationships, responsive interactions deepen ties and bring people together quickly.
- **Moments that Matter:** Generating highly personalized content at scale makes people feel known, heard, and cared for—

that they matter.

These concepts also work well in business. Generating highly personalized content makes customers feel known, heard, and cared for. Suddenly, an organization can communicate with customers on their terms. When these powerful connections are created through personalized messaging, both prospects and existing customers feel as though they're respected and valued.

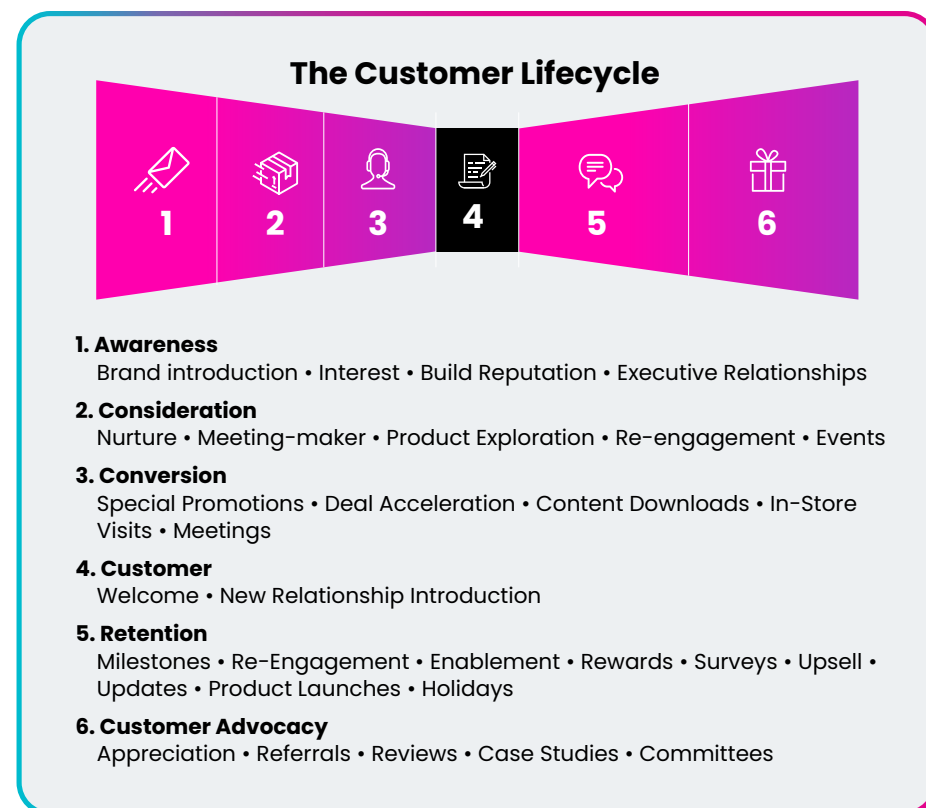


Part III

What Does 'Connection' Look Like in the Customer Lifecycle?

Moments of connection bind us together.

With individual relationships, marketers can create these moments by delivering personalized content that is responsive to the customer's or prospect's needs. Top companies around the world over-index on empathy and authentic storytelling (see sidebar, "Reach Out and Touch Someone: Ring a Bell?").

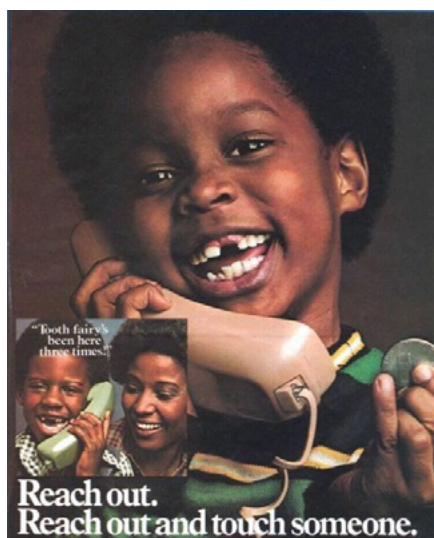


“Reach Out and Touch Someone” — Ring a Bell?

Once upon a time, before consumers began worrying about telephone per-line pricing, smartphone deals, plan options, security, and service reliability, there was a quaint AT&T campaign that focused on something else entirely: Human connection.

Back in the late '70s—just a few years before the historic breakup of The Bell System—AT&T rolled out the now iconic “Reach Out and Touch Someone” campaign. Recognizing the innate human desire to communicate with others, according to a Bell System memorial site: “N.W. Ayer, one of America’s oldest advertising agencies, needed a creative approach to help AT&T soften its image... and position the company as an indispensable element of everyday American life.”

But beyond image, the “Mad Men” of the time intuitively recognized the importance of connection stories to drive more people to make more long-distance calls—the real moneymaker.



*Reach out, reach out and touch someone,
Reach out, call up and just say hi.
Reach out, reach out and touch someone.
Wherever you are you're never too far
They're waiting to share your day.
Reach out, reach out and touch someone
Reach out and touch someone far away
Give 'em a call.*

Each commercial was a story, a snapshot of an everyday human connection—maybe somewhat schmaltzy to us today, but it played well in the '70s and '80s—made possible via a long-distance call. One example would be College Student Calling Mom.

A couple of other “plots” used in the print ads that accompanied the commercials:

Chicken soup via telephone

Reach out and touch someone — Tooth fairy — 1979. Too far away to bring the chicken soup? Well, how about some advice and good cheer by telephone?

Tooth fairy

He's really proud of himself. Lost a tooth right up front and cashed in with the tooth fairy. Now talk to his cross-country friend and fill him in on the news.

You get the idea. A simpler time, simpler stories. They are a great example of creating powerful moments for various groups through stories that many can relate to. People crave personal contact as much now as they did almost 50 years ago—maybe even more. Moments of connection bind us together.

Successful organizations understand that there is a need for authentic connections with prospects and existing customers. They create shared meaning, deepen ties, and make people matter. AT&T knew it and capitalized on it almost a half-century ago.

Storytelling is the most powerful form of communication for sales and marketing, especially for groups. In most people's mind, there is very little difference between real experiences and stories. It's not so much that we hear a story and believe it happened to us, but that the reaction in our brain from hearing a story that we can connect with allows us to feel the way the person telling the story feels.

True Connection

When creating moments of connection between individuals, it's important to include these three elements: understanding, validation, and caring. When people experience any or all of these, true connection takes place. A perfect example of this is when a customer-service representative addresses a customer's issues. First, they make sure they understand the customer's problem; then they validate how frustrating or inconvenient it is; then they

show they care by helping address the problem quickly.

Connection, as with any successful marketing strategy, is about the recipients and their pain points and challenges. It is not about you or your products and strategy. Virtual events and webinars, personalized ‘thank-you’ gifts, and incentives and promotions are all ways to meaningfully connect throughout the lifecycle. Creating powerful moments through connection allows organizations to increase

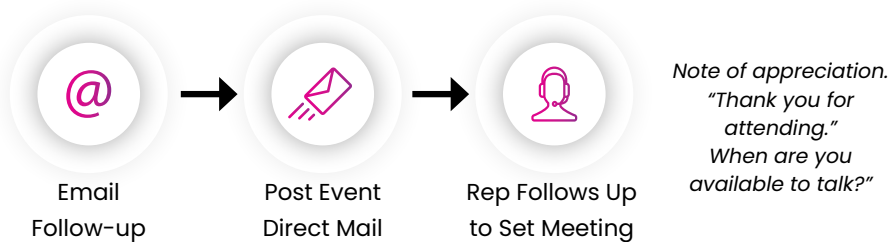
engagement with online and digital touchpoints—and show the recipients that you care. Continue to read some examples of how marketing connection “plays” might work, along with some real-world success stories. Note that making authentic connections with customers and prospects is possible at nearly every stage of the customer lifecycle. It is up to the innovative marketer, therefore, to identify those opportunities for connection that will have the most impact.



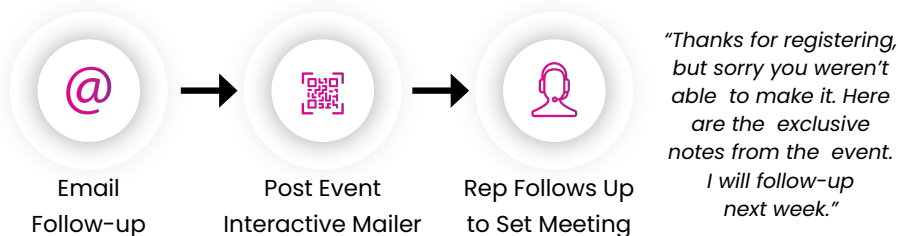
Post Event Meeting-Maker

Try this: After your event has concluded, increase meetings booked by sending higher value direct mail to Ideal Customer Profile (ICP) contacts who attended and a lower value mailer to those in your ICP who registered but didn't attend. Continue to follow-up digitally with prospects who don't respond.

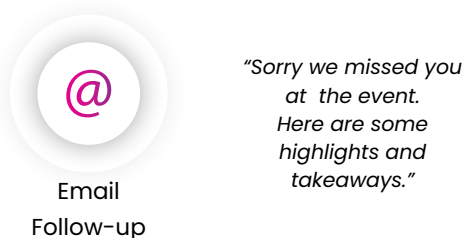
Registered and Attended the Event



Registered, but Did Not Attend Event



Target Leads that Did Not Respond



Results:

10-25%
increase
in meetings
booked

Cybersecurity Leader Connects with Event Attendees Via Personalized Direct Mail

A leading cybersecurity-solutions company was unhappy with the performance of its post-event promotions vendor—many attendees were registering complaints. Sent items were far too often delivered broken or dirty in damaged, unremarkable boxes, resulting in repeated calls and emails from unhappy recipients. This was deemed unacceptable.

What's more, keeping tabs on who showed up and didn't just fill out a form to get a gift was becoming increasingly difficult. This manual approval process was way too time consuming.

This company decided to apply PFL technology to their event strategy, which started with automation. The goal was to remove the manual

attendance-auditing method, which saved time and effort. Adding PFL's technology to an already successful virtual-event strategy was a big win for the team. The new marketing automation improves the customer experience and creates a serendipitous moment.

Further, with the new system in place, the company hasn't received any complaints about unsatisfactory promotional items. A better brand experience and happier customers are, in the end, what it is all about.



THE PLAY

Customer Welcome

Try this: Increase adoption and build momentum from the start by elevating the customer experience with a “Welcome Campaign.” Once a customer makes a purchase, trigger a high-impact thank-you gift that introduces them to your brand or support team and shares next steps.



Results:

20–40% increase in engagement

SUCCESS STORY

Direct Mail Connects with New Customers to Drive Adoption

A financial-data software company was seeing slow adoption of its technology with new customers. The firm had been using direct mail to help with this, but the process was disconnected and manual, creating a good deal of overhead.

They continued to believe that direct mail could be used to better connect with customers—to both welcome them and drive adoption of the technology immediately after launch. So, the marketing team decided to experiment with sending welcome kits using PFL’s platform. After performing rigorous A/B testing, they developed a U.S.-based kit for welcoming new customers that included a

personalized notecard, a Yeti mug, and a detailed story about how the individual who backed Yeti used this company to make the funding decision.

The results? New customers who received the upgraded kit connected with the story in a big way. The financial-software company saw: :

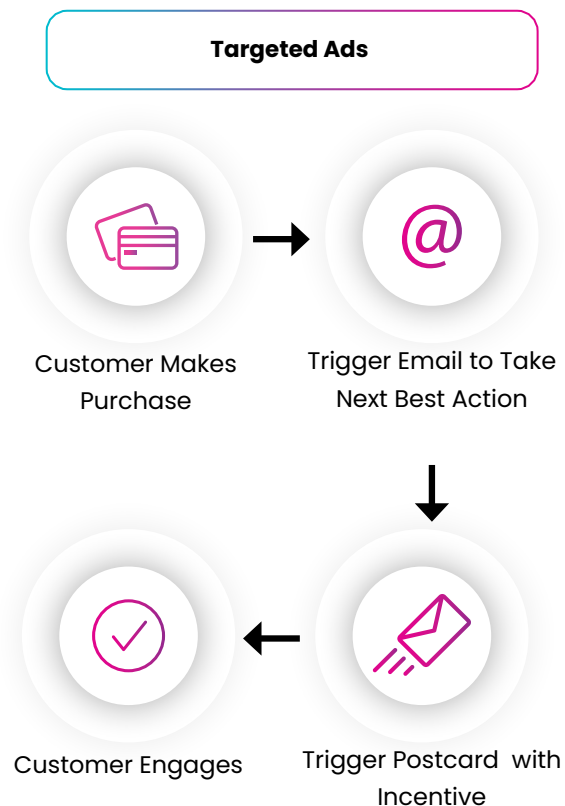
- 47% higher activity with the software.
- 211% increase in downloads of the Google Chrome extension.
- 75% increase in profile views within the software.



THE PLAY

Customer Retention

Try this: It's much easier to retain a customer than to find a new one. Use PFL technology to trigger timely, personalized incentive offers to increase app downloads, in-store visits, or repeat purchases. Once a customer makes a purchase, use digital retargeting ads and promotional offers to get them to engage again. For consumers who are not responding digitally, trigger a postcard with a limited-time offer to increase conversion.



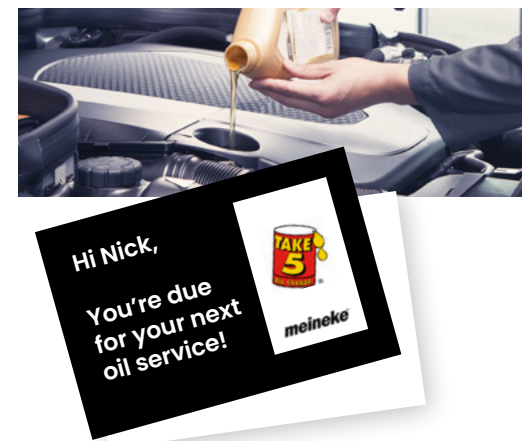
SUCCESS STORY

Driven Brands Taps Automated Direct Mail to Connect with and Retain Customers

Driven Brands was eager to connect with and retain customers. It approached PFL to help accomplish this for their Take 5 Oil and Meineke franchises. The company was already using direct mail to acquire new customers and drive repeat visits. They wanted to scale direct mail and integrate it with digital efforts.

However, their direct mail was siloed, which made execution labor-intensive and difficult. Plus, their disconnected direct mail lacked the personalization and targeting they desired. Take 5 also wanted to interconnect their email and direct mail programs so they could dynamically respond to customer behaviors.

To make this happen, Take 5 Oil now collects various data points from customers that it uses to send email reminders about when they are due for their next oil service. The date of the return visit is calculated based on unique data for each customer. Take 5 Oil now sends an average of 3,000 customer reminders every day (that's 18 million every six months) and achieves an average response rate of 5.25%.



Part IV

Conclusion

It's What Binds Us Together

Since the dawn of time, when cavemen and women sat around the fire drawing simple pictures on their cozy cave walls, finding new ways to communicate and connect with each other has been at the heart of culture and society. Art, writing, and language have all been used to share our stories and ideas because people crave personal contact—"moments of connection" that bind us together.



Today, while email and texting are the main forms of communication for many, there remains one thing that has never changed: We are all human beings, and we want to feel acknowledged

and connected. In our world of marketing, moments of connection create shared meaning, deepen ties, and make people matter. Whatever the physical mail, no matter the sender,



no matter the recipient, personalization can create those moments.

Modern, automated, direct mail has become a powerful way to connect with people. It's personal, it's authentic, and it's memorable. When you use direct mail, you're not just sending a message, you're creating a connection through an authentic, memorable moment. When you create a connection in this way, you're building a relationship through authentic engagement.

Shared Meaning

As marketers, we can create moments of connections with our customers and prospects by being responsive (interacting with the right message, to the right person, at the right time, on their terms) and through storytelling (helping them connect to shared meaning and feeling that makes them part of something more).

PFL has the experience, expertise, and technology platform to help you create those moments and make those connections.

PFL has the experience, expertise, and technology platform to help you create those moments and make those connections. They will boost engagement by combining the emotional power of offline marketing with the measurement and predictability of digital. PFL delivers authentic, powerful moments of connection.

We believe that our lives change for the better when we connect in an authentic way.

Organizations that inspire and help create connections for customers and prospects will stand out and see more positive results. In an increasingly crowded and turbulent business world, these marketers understand how to use the tools that work best in almost any situation. They deliver highly relevant messaging at the right moment—and maximize ROI.

Engage the Senses

Today, no one questions the value of digital marketing. It's an essential piece of the overall marketing puzzle. However, it's exponentially more powerful with the addition of direct mail methods that engage all the senses and generate connections. Organizations that harness direct mail in this

way—with postcards, trifold, samples, treats, and more—are positioned to offer a more complete sensory experience.

PFL is uniquely positioned to help your organization generate personalized moments of connection. By helping create these moments, people will think of your brand as a partner and not just as a business—one that understands your challenges and is not just selling a product or service.

PFL simplifies direct mail at scale by managing the entire process from strategy and production to delivery, measurement, and beyond. We have created a robust marketing-technology platform that brings direct mail into the digital ecosystem, while also providing access to our sophisticated, sustainable e-commerce printing operation

(Printingforless.com).

In short, we do it all. We are the most effective solution in the industry for handling everything required to create personalized, insightful, and impactful direct mail experiences that increase engagement and generate

significant ROI. [Book a demo](#) today and let our customer success team be your expert guides. We'll work with you every step of the way to help create powerful direct mail moments of insight that benefit your customer and your brand.

PFL is uniquely positioned to help your organization generate personalized moments of insight that your prospects and customers can put into action to their benefit. By helping create these insights, people will think of your brand as an expert and a partner—one that understands your challenges and is not just selling a product or service.



Deliver Authentic Moments at Scale

No matter your use case and no matter your audience, personalized direct mail has the power to make people sit up and pay attention.

PFL brings direct mail to the martech stack so you can easily automate personalized direct mail at infinite scale. By addressing individual needs and frustrations, you can start building long-lasting relationships.



TIP

Direct mail is serious marketing... but it's also a chance to unleash your creativity. Bring your story to life, put a smile on someone's face and make an authentic human connection.



About PFL

PFL, a leading direct mail technology company, increases engagement for brands with their key audiences, using data to automate direct mail and create more authentic human experiences at infinite scale. PFL delivers personalized direct mail programs that are measurable and relevant so organizations can earn attention and amplify growth.

READY TO GIVE YOUR ENGAGEMENT A BOOST?

Call us at 877.942.8604 or send
an email to inquire@pfl.com.

WWW.PFL.COM