



2013 CUSTOMER CHAMPION

Julie Bernard

SVP, Customer Strategy,
Marketing & Advertising,
Macy's

2013 Customer
Champion Julie Bernard,
Macy's, repositioned
data as a competitive
advantage.

Giving Data a Seat at the Table

Many customer-centric leaders inspire the customer centricity movements at their companies by elevating customer-focused departments like the contact center or marketing to positions of accountability with their boards or executives. Julie Bernard, of Macy's, took a rather unconventional tactic: She gave data a seat at the table.

As the senior vice president of strategy, marketing, and advertising, she took the lid off the retailer's customer database. In doing so, Macy's now leverages rich insights across all channels to deliver personalized direct mail and communications to millions of customers each year.

When Bernard started at Macy's in 2007, she almost immediately saw the company's untapped opportunity of approaching data in a more thoughtful and calculated way—not just as a marketing asset, but as a strategic company asset. Her plan included repositioning customer data as a competitive advantage when applied against traditional business decisions throughout all areas of the organization including marketing, merchandising, the stores, and in the field.

This strategy was a huge leap for the organization and Bernard inspired the data transformation every chance she could get, essentially pulling the lid off the customer database. She started Macy's data movement by going straight to the top of the company. She presented her strategic data plan to CMO Peter Sachse who quickly got on board and helped to facilitate the idea enterprisewide.

Bernard attributes Macy's successful shift in centralizing data to having this executive support. "Everyone likes to say that they have top-down support, but I not only have that with Peter, I have it with [CEO] Terry Lundgren," she says. "The other part was being able to have the freedom to interact with specific executives and ask them what's keeping them up at night."

According to Bernard, support alone isn't enough to advance a data plan; success must also rely on rolling up your sleeves, talking with key leaders about their most pressing issues, and then acting on the data collected. "We don't just report on the data. I say, 'What does this mean and what do we do with it?' I tell my team, don't just come back to me with a deck of information; come back to me with a point of view. A lot of times there's just a spreadsheet. That's not analysis, that's reporting. Real analysis requires studying a lot of information that feels disparate and connecting the dots across the information to tell the story."

Bernard's efforts and commitment to moving the needle on making data a strategic asset is seeing positive results. Today's Macy's consolidates and organizes granular customer behavioral insights from across numerous channels. This has led to Macy's ability to tie 70 percent of all transactions to individual customer records and build on those profiles. The retailer also has the ability to identify key growth opportunities that benefit the customer. She explains that these capabilities allow Macy's to make accurate decisions across all business units. Even merchandising now understands exactly where it needs customized assortments in the stores and how to market those in an omnichannel manner.

From a marketing perspective, data allowed the company to create tens of thousands of personalized versions of its catalog and has expand its custom content including email, online displays, and mobile. Bernard says the catalog personalization efforts led to a double-digit lift in the high teens over a two-year time period.

Macy's advances the level of analysis

Such positive results don't have Macy's resting on its laurels. Bernard says the retailer wants to evolve data analytics beyond

marketing to include the entire omnichannel experience piece. The company is currently conducting behavioral analysis and targeting to send custom content across the digital landscape. "We want to think differently about the store experience not only onsite but on mobile, and also think about the contextual differences based on where their devices are located in the moment," she says. "It's really about those different customer journeys.... Advancing the level of depth behind omnichannel analysis is really important to us." ■



A TRUE CUSTOMER CHAMPION



**Congratulations to 1to1 Media Customer Champion
Julie Bernard of Macy's for always putting the customer first.**

When Macy's opened 150 years ago, it quickly became known for exceptional customer service. Today, the company has renewed its focus on the customer – and Julie Bernard has played an indispensable role in making that happen. As SVP, customer strategy, marketing and advertising, Julie has led the company's push to better understand customers, put them at the center of all decisions, and personalize their experience in store and online. Congrats, Julie, for never forgetting it's all about the customer.

