



WHITE PAPER

WHERE EVERYBODY KNOWS YOUR NAME: PERSONALISATION OR INVASION OF PRIVACY?

I recently had a pretty tough week. The kind of week that ends up in the bar across the street from the CANDDi office for a consolatory pint. This is a bar that I have frequented since setting up shop in Manchester city centre two years ago, and the team and I often go in on a Friday evening to wind down (or up) ready for the weekend. On this occasion I was alone as I sat at the bar and got my wallet out.

George, the barman who normally does the Friday evening shift, came over and immediately said: "Tim, you don't look like yourself. I'll bring over a pint of your usual, you just sit back and relax." George quickly went off, got me a pint of Guinness, told me to put my wallet away and just enjoy the drink - it was on the house.

It got me thinking about the things that George knows about me; my usual demeanour, who I normally come into the bar with and when, what I drink and that I don't tend to like to chat when I have things on my mind. George knew the best way to deal with my needs as a customer, because he had this information. And because I am a regular customer, I am happy with this information being known by the people who work in this bar, and I am okay (very much so in this instance) with them acting on it. They got their service spot-on.

But what if I'd gone to a different bar, one that I had never been to before, and was greeted by name? What if the person behind the bar thought they knew what I wanted to drink and commented on my mood? Free pint aside, I think I would find this a little unsettling....

Rather than feeling looked after and valued, I'd feel uneasy – how do they know these things about me, and why do they feel that they can talk to me so freely?

As marketers with access to significant amounts of data on individuals and their behaviours, how can we use the information that we purchase and generate to bring value, rather than appearing intrusive and creepy? It is a very difficult line to tread, as anyone who has read about US retailer Target's foray into personalisation knows!

The exchange of detailed information must be consensual and transparent. And the data should be acted upon in a relevant and sensitive way. Individuals must be in control of which companies they have relationships with, and be aware of how this information is used.

At CANDDi, this measured and considered approach is something we encourage our customers to adopt. One of the ways that CANDDi works is by collecting data through form submissions, and we recommend our clients use the customer insight generated by CANDDi to create better, relevant and useful customer messaging and communications.

Once the trust is there, marketing on an intimate and emotional level can bring huge benefits to both sides of the relationship.

Now that I've shared this, my name is Tim and mine's a pint of Guinness...

