

Date: 29 April 2014

Source: Website Bangkok Post

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/business/news/407124/raising-your-company-s-digital-iq-to-connect-with-always-on-customers>

LEADING THE WAY

Raising your company's digital IQ to connect with 'always on' customers

Published: 29 Apr 2014 at 06.04 | Viewed: 416 | Comments: 0

Newspaper section: [Business](#)

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Digital technology has become the foundation for everything we do today. Digital technologies — mobile computing, social media, business analytics, big data, cloud computing, etc — are not only changing customer behaviour but also business models, products and services.

Today's customers want to be able to interact with businesses at any time using multiple channels and devices. With consumers always connected, businesses need to redefine ways to interact seamlessly with them. They must embrace this "always on" relationship if they want to survive.

Defining the "always on" customer: Customers no longer are controlled. They use digital technology to research or buy the products and services that satisfy their needs. To reach the always-on customer, businesses must shift from a broadcast model and re-evaluate their product and market fit as well as their approach to connecting with consumers. To do this, they need to understand the following eight characteristics defined in the PwC publication, "The New Wave of Business: Embracing the 'Always on' Customer":

1. Mobile: "I'm lost without my mobile." Mobiles are for more than just calls. Used for various activities — e-mail, photos, video, entertainment, shopping, social networking and work — they hold the power to map a customer's movements, habits and needs for almost every second of his or her life.
2. Connected: "I expect my experience to be seamless from device to device." Customers armed with mobiles, tablets and now, wearable technologies, want the same apps and data seamlessly available on multiple devices.
3. Borderless: "I'm up at 3am, why aren't you?" The internet has broken down barriers in providing products or services with immediacy, whether locally or internationally. As accessibility grows and specialist businesses able to serve these needs emerge, convenience will be a key to success.
4. Simultaneous: "I'm a multi-tasker and I'm always interacting." Experiences are no longer one-dimensional; customers often interact with others while performing everyday tasks. A lot of people use their devices while watching TV to chat on social networking sites about things they're watching. Businesses can provide dynamic, multi-dimensional connected experiences and be involved in these interactions.