Winning the Zero Moment of Truth with Marketing Automation
Part I. Mental Shift

- First Moment of Truth
- What is ZMOT
- A new shopping process
- To whom it matters?
The term „Moment of Truth“, MOT, was coined by Procter & Gamble CEO A.G. Lafley. He wrote:

“The best brands consistently win two moments of truth. The first moment occurs at the store shelf, when a consumer decides whether to buy one brand or another. The second occurs at home, when she uses the brand — and is delighted, or isn’t.”

The shopping process looks like this:

Stimulus (TV ad) ➔ 1st Moment of Truth (in the store, contact with a salesperson) ➔ 2nd Moment of Truth (using the product).

In such paradigm, marketers focus on making the product easy to find in the store and ensuring that product satisfied customer’s needs. These two criteria verify her

Today it’s not enough

That concept doesn’t apply to the modern shopping process anymore. Nowadays between the stimulus and the First Moment of Truth a new stage appears. It’s a research. Contemporary consumers don’t rush to the store the moment they learn about the product. They want to check what others think about it first. Thanks to the internet it requires a few clicks. That’s why in 2011 Jim Lecinski from Google published an ebook entitled „Winning the Zero Moment of Truth“, describing the phenomenon.
WHAT IS ZMOT?

Zero Moment of Truth theory modifies Lafley’s scheme by adding a new stage between stimulus and FMOT:

Stimulus (TV ad) → 0. Moment of Truth (research online) → 1st Moment of Truth (in the store, contact with a salesperson) → 2nd Moment of Truth (using the product).

“ZMOT is that moment when you grab your laptop, mobile phone or some other wired device and start learning about a product or service (or potential boyfriend) you’re thinking about trying or buying.”

(Jim Lecinski, Winning the Zero Moment of Truth)

Decision-making process

Easy access to the web from various and multiple devices changed the web shop. Because we have more and more products and services to choose from, we prefer to start with collecting some information and learning on our own, not from salespeople. We read producer’s website carefully, leaf through his blog, and above all read reviews in social media, review platforms and blogs. Nothing seems more reliable than other users’ opinions.

The ZMOT concept was connected with promoting the AdWords, but it provides plenty of inspiring insights for marketers.
A NEW SHOPPING PROCESS

In the light of Lecinski’s theory, the modern shopping process:

**Is nonlinear:**
so we should depict it rather as a neuron, not a funnel. The customer doesn’t walk a linear path but uses many channels, resources, and devices to get to the brand and make a decision.

**Occurs in the real time:**
customers want feedback instantly. In the store, they research the product they consider and want to find answers immediately. If they can’t, they just resign.

**Is dynamic, not static:**
customer’s needs change fast. With so many stimuli, opportunities and temptations, consumers’ needs shift quickly. They’re eager to modify the initial shopping intent if they find something more attractive.

**Is mobile:**
M-commerce’s growth entails not only need to optimize your shopping experience for mobile but also changing a shopping philosophy. Now shopping relies more on the context and a particular situation and involves a multi-channel research.

**Is spontaneous:**
mobile shoppers buy on impulse. They read a bit, decide that they like it and want to shop now.

**Is visual:**
consumers want more information, but they also want it to be easier to consume. How to eat cake and have it? Think about the form in which you communicate knowledge. Use infographics, presentations, and video to make your content as friendly as it can get.

**Is based on reciprocity:**
the shopping process is a conversation, not a monologue. Listen and react instead of focusing on what YOU have to say.
The new shopping process is big news for everyone: for B2B, B2C, and ecommerce. No matter what type of business do you run, you must know that:

**Customers search for you on the web.**
Even if you have a local company selling bolts. No business can escape the internet today. Your customers are there.

**Customers want to talk.**
Engage in a dialogue, listen to their opinions and react to them. Open yourself to feedback and show how much you care.

**Buyer’s Journey is different:**
multi-stage, split and hard to predict. You must prepare to react to customers’ needs instead of waiting for them to go through the journey you designed. There’re many ways to the purchase!

**Reviews and recommendations are powerful:**
because they are so easy to find and reliable, customers’ reviews become essential.

**No Moment of Truth is too small:**
analyze with what channels users reach you. Take also into consideration these little ones you usually ignore as insignificant.
Part II. What does it mean for marketers?

- Pre-shopping as a part of a shopping process
- How user searches for your product?
- The role of recommendations
Pre-shopping means a set of actions undertaken between the stimuli and the visit in the store (including online store). It signifies all forms of research, such as:

1. Checking the product’s features
2. Learning what the service involves
3. Comparing with competition
4. Looking for the cheapest option (including coupons, discounts, various shipping options, group shopping)

Mapping the pre-shopping process help us answer the crucial question:

**What moves user from "undecided" to "decided"?**

Research concerns most customers. These with limited resources do it passionately because thanks to the market analysis they can save a lot.

An average customer consults 10.4 sources before she buys.
You know that your user does research. But what kind of information does she look for exactly? According to Google, there are 3 types of desired data:

**Other user’s reviews:**
consumers are hungry for all the types of reviews and recommendations, so they check producer’s website, portals with recommendations, dedicated forums, and social media. They look for texts, stars, photos and videos showing how people use the product.

**Discounts, options to buy the product cheaper:**
yes, research serves the purpose of finding the most favorable option. Knowing that customers will look for opportunities to save, provide them: coupons, discounts for subscription, outlets and sales. There’re so many tools at your fingertips! In such situation, it’s vital to remember about customer segmentation. If your loyal customer sees the offer “Subscribe and gets -10% for the first shopping” she might feel some resentment. But if she is identified on the website and a dedicated offer is displayed to her ... Well, that provides an entirely different, personalized experience!

**Product/service details:**
what are the ingredients? Was the product tested on animals? Does it contain any allergen? Where was it produced? What exactly does the service include? What are the warranty terms? How to preserve the product? How to use it in practice? List the frequently asked questions so that you can provide answers on your blog or product sites.
THE ROLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Reviews are vital
Users’ reviews and recommendations have never played such a crucial role in the shopping process. Sharing your opinion takes a few minutes. Finding somebody else’s is a matter of a couple of mouse clicks. That type of content is perceived as more reliable than producer’s materials. What conclusion should you draw from all these observations? That you should start encouraging your users to producing reviews on as many platforms as possible.

Don’t be afraid of bad reviews
Many marketers fear that opening themselves to the discussion will expose them to negative feedback. They don’t allow for comments on their website and don’t ask for opinions in social media, because they fear the avalanche of malicious, hateful reactions. That’s unjustified. Most users’ reviews oscillate around 4 on the 5-grade scale. Research proves that we prefer to share positive experiences and recommend brands we believe should be noticed.

A negative comment won’t hurt
A single bad review won’t ruin your business. On the contrary: it will add authenticity (a brand that has only positive comments all around the web is simply creepy, don’t you think?). It shows that real people and actual customers write the comments. And if you react to it in a nice, helpful way, it might actually work in your favor as a proof of brand’s respect for the audience. So don’t be afraid of asking for feedback. We describe the specific techniques in the third part of the ebook.
Part III. Marketing Automation Practices that Will Help You Win ZMOT

1. Learn what customers search and deliver it
2. Advanced contact analysis
3. Creating the map of moments
4. Real Time Marketing
5. Lead Generation
6. Recommendation Engines
7. Engaging users in products reviews
8. Addressing the nonlinear shopping process
9. Mobile
10. Social media: monitoring and automation
11. Third Moment of Truth
12. Don’t Be Afraid of Failure
Find keywords
When a stimulus (ad, information) appears, the customers research the product. For you it’s vital to discover what will they type into the search box.

Keyword research tools
Let these tools help you find words and phrases customers search.

- Google Keyword Planner
- Keyword Tool
- Wordsteam. The Free Keyword Tool
- SpyFu (to research competition)

Ubersuggest
KWFinder
SERPs

Check your keyword regularly; they might evolve. Another way to discover what your customers might search is forums and portals such as Quora. Keep your finger on the pulse of Facebook, LinkedIn and another social media groups where people ask questions about products and services they’re interested in.

Remember about You Tube
It’s the second the biggest search engine in the world. What will users find if they research your brand and products that way? Be sure to provide valuable video materials: tutorials, event reports, and interviews.
2. ADVANCED CONTACT ANALYSIS

Advanced analytical tools will help you understand customers better. Identify:

- The source of their visits,
- What marketing actions lead to a given point of conversion (like subscribing or purchase)? Attribution analysis will enable you to reconstruct the Buyer’s Journey,
- What content generates new leads,
- How audience responds to various types of content (posts, infographic, video, ebooks, podcasts) and messages.

Analytics helps you identify ZMOT

An in-depth diagnosis of actual customer’s behavior helps build Buyer’s Journey models and discover their diversity. Thanks to that you will be able to optimize your content according to what users really need, and answer the question: what makes them buy? With advanced analytics you will see where your ZMOT happens and how to improve your experience.

When you lose ZMOT?

Analytics will also tell when your leads leak: then they quit, resign, and forget. These are points where you lose the ZMOT. When you can pinpoint these places, you can discover what users need but don’t get from you – and how to provide it.
After keywords research and contact analytics, you can produce a map of your company’s Moments of Truth, including ZMOT. They can involve:

- Price comparison sites
- Group buying sites and online coupons
- Company’s blog
- Reviews and recommendations sites
- Sponsored links
- Particular landing pages
- Social media.

When you make your map, there is one thing to do: making sure that your audience can find you there. Nothing more. Just make sure that you’re there. As Woody Allen says,

"Showing up is 80% of your life."

With such a list you can move on to working on enhancing Moments of Truth.
4. REAL TIME MARKETING

**Beyoncé’s yellow eye shadow**
When Lady Gaga released the „Telephone” clip featuring Beyoncé wearing yellow eye shadow, millions of girls typed in their search boxes „Beyoncé yellow eye shadow“. A perfect moment for a cosmetic company to react and use the buzz to promote their products, for example with a quick tutorial showing how to make hot Beyoncé makeup, offering brand’s yellow eye shadows. On the web everything happens in a flash and after a week the hype evaporates. Hence, adopt an agile approach. Look for the context to promote your products among the current events and react fast.

**Real Time Paradigm**

When a marketer thinks in the Real Time paradigm, she doesn’t limit the term to witty responses to trends. It’s about an attitude towards the audience when you focus on delivering what user wants instantly. For example, your website is customized in the Real Time to address the current needs.

**What features will help you realize that approach?**

1. **Dynamic content** on the website and in the mobile app: basing on users’ behavior, personalize the banners, recommendation frames and content suggested. It’s also possible for anonymous, not identified users of your website. The rule applies to mobile apps too – use Mobile Marketing Automation tools (such as APPmanago).

2. **Geolocation and beacons**: use the knowledge about customer’s current location to know when to send her a message (and when not to). Send a notification or an SMS when she passes your physical store or when she is at home and has some time to make shopping online (depending on identified your user’s habits).

3. **Push notifications**: but only if they’re personalized and sent in a 1-to-1 mode. Respond to user’s behavior: a visit in the store, browsing your materials, interest in products. Spot the moment when she is considering the purchase (finds herself in the pre-shopping phase) and she needs some additional motivation.
4. REAL TIME MARKETING

4. Alerts for Sales Department: as we mentioned above, ZMOT is not a B2C or Ecommerce-only strategy. B2B clients also research and want it to be as painless as possible. So use alerts for Sales Department to know when to approach the leads. For most of them, implementing new solutions is not a high-priority task, so market exploration takes them more time and is often conducted irregularly: they see the demo, read some blog posts, but then they must go to their tasks and don’t want to be distracted from work. Find their ZMOT: most probably it happens after a couple of website visits, when they look at your price lists or offer. Set an alert for a salesperson responsible for a lead, so she can make a call in the most suitable time.

Speed beats perfection

As Lecinski writes, reacting in Real Time (other than automated actions) requires quick decisions, what will demand accepting possible failures and knowing that speed beats perfection. When something is hot (like yellow eye shadow), you might not have time to craft a perfect copy or assemble an Oscar-winning video. Know it. Prepare for it. When an opportunity arises, act fast even at the cost of some shortcomings.
5. LEAD GENERATION

When a customer appears on the website, work on keeping her for longer and starting a relationship. Remember, your aim is not just to attract a visitor but make her move from “undecided” to “decided.” To achieve that goal, ensure that a visitor searching for a product like yours keeps you on the top of her mind.

**Contact forms**

To obtain an email address, put a form on your website and make sure it’s visible and easy to find. Consider displaying forms on popups. Personalize your forms – use the knowledge about what that particular user searched on the website and add a reference to her interests on the form. It can increase Lead Generation by 45%.

**Gated Content**

Offer exhaustive and detailed content available after logging in or giving an email address. That way you select people who are genuinely interested and acquire high-quality leads.

**Offer what she looks for**

If the user is not ready, try to get her email address, so you can send her valuable content, the content she wants. Customers need most:

- Discounts and coupons,
- Other customers’ reviews (user-generated content, case studies, recommendations, success stories),
- Detailed information on the product.

Include such materials in your communication. Promise these to get the address and deliver it. Don’t waste your recipient’s time on irrelevant messages.
6. RECOMMENDATION ENGINES

What happens when somebody undecided appears on your website during her research? She might feel overwhelmed: you present myriads of products, and she finds it difficult to browse and navigate the catalog or features. If you post new pieces regularly, your blog might also seem beginner-unfriendly and too expert for a layman.

That’s why you should customize website content. Suggest materials for freshmen and use predictive engines to recommend the most suitable products for each user. Read their Digital Body Language (interests, the history of materials read and products bought, reactions to the messages).

Advanced recommendation engines, such as NextGen, use both data about particular contact’s history and your total traffic in general, indicating relations between products (customers who buy A, happen to buy B often), what makes the predictions more accurate.

The power of recommendations

On Netflix, 2/3 movies are watched thanks to recommendations. On Amazon, 34-36% of purchases are made basing on recommendations. On Spotify, 26% of music played is from recommendation.

The mechanism of suggesting new products basing on users’ behavior and particular customer’s behavior is a powerful sales tool.
How a recommendation engine works

Imagine a recommendation engine, such as NextGen, integrated with Marketing Automation platform. How does it work? The duo monitors users’ behavior (what customers click, what they view, and what they buy) and then identifies correlations (for example, which products are viewed or bought together). That way you utilize knowledge about customers’ behavior to create efficient models of suggesting attractive products to others. Each customer gets personalized recommendation, based on her history and the products she viewed or bought.

On the banners or in email messages you can recommend:

- Products often viewed with the one viewed by the user,
- Products most often bought with the one bought by the user,
- Complementary products,
- Products from the same category.

Effects

Thanks to implementation of recommendation engine, users see exactly the products they might be interested in, not random items. It increases the probability of a purchase.
7. ENGAGING USERS IN PRODUCTS REVIEWS

How to tap into the review trend? For the beginning invest in encouraging your existing customers to share their opinions.

Email asking for review

Marketing Automation Platform sends automated 1-to-1 emails after a defined time from the purchase. In such message, ask your customers: “Are you satisfied with the purchase? Maybe we can help you in some way? Maybe you have some questions? Please share your opinions to help others choose”.

Customers’ reviews are perceived as extremely constructive and search for them, so they’ll share their opinions. It’s also a significant feedback for you – knowing HOW customers describe products, what words they use, what applications they indicate, what features are the most important to them. It will guide you to improvement.

Pareto rule

Pareto rule applies to reviews too: 20% of the customers deliver 80% of reviews. That’s why you should spoil your loyal customers. Use scoring to segment them (also in mobile app marketing, if you have an app) and send them special offers to reward their commitment.
The main problem with a modern shopping process? It’s nonlinear, indirect and intermittent. It occurs on many devices and among many channels with mobile getting more and more important.

**Multiscreening**

According to Mobify report, 90% of consumers use a couple of devices to accomplish one task. That’s why Marketing Automation – a tool that helps you manage a personalized multichannel experience - will become increasingly influential. Thanks to such solutions you can ensure that user gets cohesive, customized and relevant messages in all channels: from www, to email marketing, to social media, to physical stores, to mobile app.

**What does it mean for marketers?**

- **Mobile first**: mobile is no longer a side dish or an additional option. In 2014 mobile content consumption exceeded desktop. It’s a central and fundamental channel now.

- **ROPO effect**: the role of brick and mortar stores evolves. Now consumers prefer to migrate between online and offline in search for the best offer. The process entails a necessity to address the online-offline gap with beacons, mobile apps and geolocation.

- **Data from various sources must be integrated**: when a shopping process is nonlinear, marketers must integrate data about customers from many sources: website, social media, physical stores, mobile app. The most challenging is combining the desktop data with mobile app (Marketing Automation with Mobile Marketing Automation).
To describe the mobile experience, Google team coined the term “micro-moments”.

Why?
Because on mobile devices our visits are shorter. We act faster, more impulsively and spontaneously.

Be fast
Remove any unnecessary stages of the shopping process. Customize the message and make sure it suits the context: and sent at the right time for the user to read it. React quickly to customers’ needs and expect them. How? When customer passes by your physical stores, send a push notification with a discount on the products she viewed recently online.

Mobile research
82% of smartphone owners use the devices for product research during the visit in the store. Smartphones changed our attitude to shopping, both in the physical stores (where consumers immediately check the products online to read reviews and see if they can’t have it cheaper, and where marketers use beacons, geolocation and apps to personalize messages) and online (when users are always a few clicks from becoming experts in our products).

Types of micro moments
Mobile users show 4 types of needs:

1. I want to get there
2. I want to know it
3. I want to do it
4. I want to buy it.

Think: which of these apply to your offer and analyze which stages mobile users must go through to achieve that aim. Isn’t the path too long? Are there any obstacles you could remove? How is the content displayed? Does the website load fast?
Adam, a Virgin Train passenger, was traveling from Euston to Glasgow when he felt a pressing need to go to the toilet. Unfortunately, he encountered a problem. So he tweeted immediately about the issue:

“I've just had a reasonably large poo and there is no toilet roll left on the @virgintrains 7.30 train from Euton to Glasgow pls send help.”

Maybe he just wanted to complain or found it funny. But the brand surprised him: they responded, asking for details, and a moment later a member of the train crew was sent to the rescue. The saved passenger posted proudly a photo of received toilet paper.

It’s trivial but thanks to a quick response the brand didn’t only help one user. It also created a viral story.

Conclusion?

Monitor social media
Be visible where your brand or products are discussed. Answer the questions and doubts. Don’t be scared of interaction and reaching to people.

Engage in discussions
Talk to the audience and listen. Try rather to encourage them to express their thoughts and make sure that they know how much do you welcome their reviews.

Integrate social media with Marketing
Give scoring points to users who talk about your brand in social media, who share your content or review your products. They’re your ambassadors!
In response to ZMOT, another interesting supplemental concept was created: Third Moment of Truth. TMOT means loyalty and retention, when customer is not only happy (as in SMOT) but comes back regularly. So it’s not about the first impressions, but about a long-term relationship.

What happens after the Second Moment of Truth?
It’s the moment when we write reviews ourselves, share opinions, rate and post product pictures or videos. In other words, we create brand-related content. In such a way we close the circle: we share our emotional reactions that will become someone else’s ZMOT.

Engagement
That’s why you should provide your customers something to talk about. Something they want to show and brag about. Something beside the product – rather a bonus, something personal and unnecessary. It could be an amazing package, a funny transactional email or sweet birthday wishes.
12. DON’T BE AFRAID OF FAILURE

In the ZMOT methodology you must act fast and adapt to new circumstances quickly. That’s why you must be prepared for failure. Don’t treat it as consent to inattention, but as accepting the inevitable mistakes that will happen if you are agile.

In ZMOT speed beats perfection.

Monitor effects

Thanks to Marketing Automation Platform you can measure ROI of each action easily and on regular basis, so you can see what works and what doesn’t. Use that knowledge to correct your projects quickly.

Just start!

To be the artist is to fail.
Samuel Beckett

Fail Better!
Slavoj Žižek

Fail Faster!
Avinash Kaushnik

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Jim Lecinski, Winning the Zero Moment of Truth,
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