

TECHNOLOGY WILL CHANGE YOUR STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

By Ian James, RetailTribe CEO

Leaders from many industries and walks of life meet annually in Davos, Switzerland to talk about innovation and its potential to benefit—or perhaps threaten—human society. Their event is called the World Economic Forum and this year it focused on such topics as Artificial Intelligence, Robotics and Automation. The golf world recently engaged in some futuristic robotics of its own, as a robot golfer scored a hole-in-one during a demonstration at the Waste Management Phoenix Open in Scottsdale, Ariz.

That machine-made ace was great fun for the gallery at TPC Scottsdale and, to my view, it's a clear representation of the change that is upon us. In fact, if you thought the last five years had seen dramatic increases in the use of technology, you should strap yourself in for what it is likely to unfold over the next 24 months.

Shown on the right is a tech-driven marketing scenario. It isn't science fiction. Any of the larger brands could put together a program like this today.



I've left out all the automated steps concerning Vokey online ads and suggested posts in the customer's social feeds. Those aspects are obvious. What might be less obvious is that these campaigns can be set up and run with minimal involvement by people. Such a system can intelligently interpret the patterns of customer behavior—the web pages visited, their survey responses, their collected performance data, the clubs in their bags, how much golf they play and where—then match that golfer profile to the optimal campaign.

By the way, there's also retail A.I. that would allow Acushnet's systems to personalize the skills assessment, training programs and coaching fees to each individual golfer to get the greatest conversion rate.

How do I know this scenario is here and now? Because we can do it for our customers at RetailTribe now (the pricing excepted), and it will be included within our revolutionary new marketing platform in the second quarter of the year.

If we can do it, then every large golf corporation can also do it. Indeed, mass-market businesses are finding ways to develop relationships by collecting far more

information on the customer, their preferences and their priorities than we usually collect in the real world. It also means they can target the development of real-world physical relationships where their "intelligence" has told them they have the most chance of success.

These campaigns will use a mix of communication methods from video links to email to messenger texts to video-conference, all the way to coach-to-student physical interaction. This won't take away the need for golf coaches, but it sure might change who wants to employ and market them.

Now, this is an approach that may not win much favor with customers over 50, but certainly your under-35 golfers will appreciate this engagement.

You need to be prepared for this onslaught, not simply because some coaches will be setting new standards of customer interaction, but because your customers in the under-35 age group are going to expect it. They expect technology to be a part of any solution and they expect technology to keep them supplied with data and information. They expect, and want, to be "connected." **PG**

Do much less selling in your Marketing



We create Campaigns and Content that inspire golfers to engage with their expert.

For world class marketing designed to drive more customers, contact Rick Williams on 215-622-6324 or rickwilliams@retailtribe.com.

Coaching works

Big reasons to swing on plane



And golfers will buy a whole lot more from you,
worrying less about price.