According to a recent study, 45% of Canadian consumers refuse to give personal information to a retailer when asked, and 50% question why the retailer wants the information.

I am one of those consumers and actually have a hotmail address just for this purpose. Other retailers know exactly where to find me, and do send me updates and offers. I choose to receive this information. If they send out too much information too often or information that is irrelevant to me, I remove myself from their list.

The truth is we are no longer receptive to the messages that companies bombard us with. There is too much noise. Consumers are changing the landscape and we have decided that we are in control. The companies that will succeed in the future are the ones who are listening to consumers, creating dialogue with consumers and sending them only the information that is relevant to them. I know that if my favourite store is having a sale on my favourite products, I'd like to know. If a company asks me

- what information I want,
- how often I want it,
- when I want the information, and
- in what format,

and then respects my wishes, I will be receptive to the messages that they do send out. The company will not be wasting money on the wrong target market. I will have less marketing noise in my life. It is a win-win situation. How will this happen? I predict that social technologies will lead the way.

I encourage even more consumers to ask questions before giving out information. Find out what the information will be used for and how often you might hear from them. If you do give out information, make sure the company will use it to enhance your experience with that company, not to bombard you with useless offers for products you'll never use.

The study also indicated that that 13% of consumers have provided false information. To the marketing team at Company ABC, contact me anytime at meowe@hotmail.com.

For the full CBC article…

45% of Canadians rebuff retailers' requests for personal info: survey

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