

# Q and A: Oath on the Internet of Things

LIAM BRENNAN, GLOBAL DIRECTOR OF INNOVATION PROGRAMMES, MEDIACOM, AND SEAN GALLIGAN, VP - SALES, TECHNOLOGY

VERTICAL, OATH 01 NOV 2017

The Internet of things (IoT) has finally hit the mass market. From voice-activated assistants to internet-enabled fridges, the world has been flooded with everyday objects capable of connecting to the internet – inside and outside of the home. But do consumers really care?

*With insights from Oath's research on IoT, Sean Galligan, Oath's VP – Sales, Technology Vertical, tells MediaCom's Global Director of Innovation Programmes, Liam Brennan, how tech marketers can drive adoption of their devices.*

Liam Brennan: There's a multitude of connected devices available to consumers these

days, but do they really care about them? If so, who's buying?

Sean Galligan: Right now, IoT entertainment devices such as Smart TVs and next-gen Video Game Consoles have the highest ownership and adoption, but our research shows there is significant interest in devices with smart appliances, automation and security.

Most people still don't know a lot about IoT devices, though. We found that 60% of people are familiar with the concept of connected devices, but only 28% know what the term 'Internet of Things' means.

In terms of consumers, people who are more likely to be interested in IoT devices tend to be younger and have higher incomes, and not surprisingly, very tech savvy. However, one in three classify themselves as 'pragmatists' – they like devices that make their lives easier, rather than purely for the love of tech.

But even among these people there can be a lack of understanding. Among those who already own connected devices, nearly 50% don't know that devices can be connected together. There's still an awareness issue.

**LB: What are the main barriers preventing more widespread adoption?**

SG: To improve awareness and get more devices into homes, manufacturers and advertisers really need to start talking more about benefits – not just the tech that powers them. There's definitely interest there; we know over 40% of consumers are keen to find out more about IoT devices.

Cost can be a barrier as well. Connected devices are still fairly expensive at the moment, and many people don't know why they should own them. The onus is on IoT companies to provide a value proposition that justifies their pricing.

One way they could do this is to invest in targeted advertising aligned with product innovation, and create engaging content marketing that helps people understand how

connected devices can help make their lives better. That's the first step towards mainstream understanding and adoption.

Beyond that, IoT companies need to address security. We know consumers are concerned about privacy and the security implications of having devices connected to the internet all the time. Nearly two in three people want to know IoT devices can handle their data securely.



*Above: Sean Galligan, VP – Sales, Technology Vertical*

**LB:** Which companies are getting it right with their connected devices?

**SG:** A number of tech companies have been early winners in IoT, and their success can be attributed to their ability to not only drive brand recognition but also drive awareness around the features and benefits of their devices.

Google and Amazon, with their launches of Home and Echo, have done well to earn consumers' trust by introducing products to market that are intuitive and easy to use. And these products have obvious benefits: they make it even easier to order supplies or search for information. It's no surprise they've had success in the IoT space.

We'll soon see if the HomePod – Apple's late entry into the smart speaker market, which hits stores in December 2017 – can gain traction against these devices. We know that brand is important for the majority of consumers (over 80%) when purchasing various types of IoT devices, and given Apple's strong brand, it could attract a new audience.

LB: What about connected devices outside of the home?

SG: Outside of the home, IoT devices remain in the early adopter phase, so manufacturers need to work even harder to drive awareness and purchase intent. According to our recent IoT research study, for instance, only one in three people say they are definitely or probably going to buy a connected car device – one of the more commonly cited use cases for IoT tech outside of the home.

So, companies need to do some work here to convince people of the benefits of this technology to drive sales. Indeed, there is probably also a need to look at points of consumer tension in the environment outside the home, and build products that ease that tension or add value to consumers' lives. We often talk about the potential of wearables, like connected health trackers, for instance, but few have lived up to the potential or driven mass adoption.

---

Companies need to convince people of the benefits of [their connected] technology to drive sales.

---

LB: What advice would you give brands looking to take advantage of IoT?

SG: IoT is a new frontier. Connected devices offer big opportunities for brands to reach and learn about consumers through entirely new platforms. But it's early days and brands are still learning the best ways to capitalise on these new technologies.

Understanding how consumers use technology – either changing current behaviour or introducing new behaviours – will allow brands to see whether this is a space where they can add value to the consumer experience. It will be those earlier adopter brands who will be equipped with learnings to better dominate the space.

---

Get insights in your inbox

Interested in the future of media and marketing?

Get actionable advice, insights and opinion from MediaCom experts every month

[Sign me up](#)

---

OPINION