

Reaching Retail's Decision-Makers, One Topic at a Time

How Aptos used Topic Affinity to beat goals and benchmarks while driving senior-level engagement across 80+ target accounts.

The Challenge

Aptos set out to reach retail decision-makers actively researching omnichannel and multichannel retail. As a multi-year SmartBrief partner, the team saw Topic Affinity as a way to make an already-successful approach more intent-driven, concentrating delivery around readers already engaging with topics like multichannel retail, who'd be more inclined to lean in further. As a pilot, it was a low-risk way to validate whether the offering could deliver the engagement Aptos cares about.

Why SmartBrief

Aptos chose SmartBrief on the strength of a proven track record and a model that fit how the team likes to run campaigns: intent-aligned targeting with continuous message testing and optimization. The audience quality stood out most — the concentration of engagement from senior decision-makers and ICP-matched titles, as did the value of appearing alongside credible retail coverage, which reinforced Aptos' positioning within the topics and priorities driving the industry.



The Solution: Topic Affinity

Topic Affinity aligns delivery with intent, concentrating a campaign around the readers actively engaging with the topics that matter most to a brand. For Aptos, that meant surfacing content to retail professionals demonstrating affinity for omnichannel and multichannel retail, paired with ongoing message testing and creative optimization designed to reduce waste and sharpen performance across the life of the campaign.



Connect the store experience

When choice overwhelms, shoppers walk. Discover how personalization at the POS helps stores pick up where the customer journey leaves off, reducing decision fatigue and equipping associates to guide faster, higher-confidence decisions that lift conversion and basket size. [Download the eBook](#) to see how personalization can reshape store performance.

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The Results

In roughly a month, Topic Affinity beat benchmark performance and proved out the value of optimization while delivering the engagement quality that mattered most:

- **Optimization more than doubled performance.** Through in-flight testing, the optimized creative outperformed the original by 113%.
- **Senior-led engagement.** A majority of engagement came from director-level titles and above, with the strongest engagement coming from the CEO category.
- **Buying committee alignment.** Job-title detail showed many roles aligned with those involved in a technology buying cycle.
- **80+ target accounts engaged.** Combining SmartBrief portal data with Aptos' owned reporting, the campaign drove engagement from more than 80 target accounts — one of the most meaningful indicators of pilot success.
- **Optimization insight.** Message testing surfaced clear learnings on which headlines and creative performed best — including some unexpected winners that will inform future messaging.

113%

Engagement Lift

6%

Above Benchmark

80+

Target Accounts

“SmartBrief’s reporting is a standout — detailed audience insights down to company and job title. That makes it easier to show ROI internally, because we can tie performance back to the accounts and senior stakeholders we care about, rather than relying on vanity metrics.”

Kerry Eagan

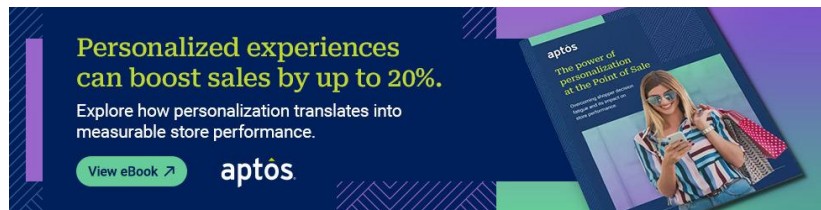
Marketing Manager, Aptos

The Unexpected Win

The biggest surprise was the creative and messaging insight that came out of optimization. Seeing which combinations resonated — and which didn't — gave Aptos a sharper view of how to talk about its content that will prove useful well beyond this single campaign.

The Verdict

The pilot cleared the bar for continued and expanded investment. In a single one-month window, Topic Affinity finished above benchmark and showed the power of in-flight optimization, with the winning creative outperforming the original by 113%, all while concentrating engagement on the senior, in-market decision-makers who actually move a buying cycle forward. Paired with the creative learnings and account-level reporting Aptos can take straight to internal stakeholders, the case for scaling is clear.



Personalized experiences can boost sales by up to 20%.

Explore how personalization translates into measurable store performance.

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The power of personalization at the Point of Sale

Customized product recommendations and personalized offers drive sales and increase customer loyalty.

The eBook cover features a woman in a striped shirt holding a shopping bag.

Next Steps

With the approach proven, Aptos and SmartBrief are aligned on a clear path to build on the pilot:

- **Scale the success.** Extend beyond the one-month pilot into a sustained, always-on Topic Affinity program that keeps Aptos in front of in-market readers over the full buying cycle.
- **Broaden the topic and account set.** Expand the topics and target accounts now that the approach has demonstrated it can concentrate engagement on the right companies and roles.
- **Operationalize the winners.** Roll the top-performing headlines and creative from optimization into upcoming campaigns — and retire the combinations that under delivered.
- **Connect to pipeline.** Layer downstream measurement to tie account-level engagement to opportunities and revenue, strengthening the ROI story for future budget conversations.