

## Behavior Analytics, Smart Segmentation and Personalized Messaging all built on a platform that gives you complete control



**Sunil Thomas**  
Cofounder &  
Chief Executive Officer  
CleverTap

**CEOCFO:** *Mr. Thomas, according to your site the mission of CleverTap is to personalize every app interaction. What do you do to accomplish that?*

**Mr. Thomas:** We help companies understand their customers by analyzing their behavior down to every individual. We then help them to engage with their customers through relevant and personalized campaigns over multiple channels like push notifications, in-app messages, SMS, email and even when their users are on Facebook. Because we enable our customers to breakup their users into smaller, micro segments, they are able to communicate with these segments in very precise ways in order to engage and retain them. I compare this to talking to a small room with 10 or 15 people as compared to addressing an auditorium filled with 1,000 people.

**CEOCFO:** *What kind of information are you able to provide? What might people find out using your platform that they would not otherwise?*

**Mr. Thomas:** Our customers decide what information they record on our platform. It is primarily user behavior data depending on what your application enables. For example, if it is an e-commerce application you record things like a product viewed, added to cart and purchased. If it's a social media app it is about what videos people are watching, who is writing comments and what videos are being shared or liked. You can also record attributes like the name of the user, maybe the customer type and other demographic information that is useful for your business. We automatically create a unique user profile for every new user who downloads the app or visits your website. Then over a period of time as the person uses the app, these profiles get very rich with all this behavior and attribute data.

What we offer that is a single platform for companies to understand all this user behavior and then use every part of it in order to reach out to individually to these people. For example, within a food delivery application for people who have added to cart at noon but not purchased within the next 15 minutes I can reach out to them with maybe an offer or discount. In this case, if the message is not timely the customer will lose that particular lunch order for sure. Another very common use case among our customers is to track users based on how they were acquired – for example we can answer questions like how many people that I acquired via. an advertisement campaign in March and still active within my app in the month of July.

**CEOCFO:** *Have people been looking for a better way. Do people realize the depth of information that can be found and used effectively?*

**Mr. Thomas:** That is a great question. We do end up sharing a lot of best practices, teaching and in general helping with a lot of use-cases and more with our customers. Part of the issue is that people are in some sort of a comfort-zone using techniques of from older days – for example recurring campaigns or even broadcast campaigns to large groups of their users. On the other extreme many apps don't even attempt to engage with their users.

I honestly feel that the speed of smart phone adoption in the world has taken marketers by surprise and we are still trying to adapt. This extremely personal, always-ON device is truly different from anything we have experienced before and all our jobs are changing because of it. In terms of app usage we've seen that session times within apps on average are about 50% shorter compared to websites; but in contrast the average time between multiple sessions for a user is 50% lesser for apps compared to websites. In other words it is shorter more frequent sessions on mobile and the difference is dramatic. There is no choice but to be timely and relevant in every interaction with your users.

CleverTap is lucky to be working with more than 2500 different apps today across the world. We do see Asia and certain parts of Europe to be much more advanced in mobile user engagement as compared to the US.

**CEOCFO: *Why is it harder in the US?***

**Mr. Thomas:** I'm not a 100% sure – but part of the reason I'm sure is that the US has such a strong and mature legacy with websites and email marketing. People in charge today have grown up online and are more used to what has worked traditionally. In the US the mobile phone has been our second device – we have always had our desktops as the first connected device and many people are still more comfortable on the desktops especially for e-commerce, financial applications and more.

The way I see it – If mobile is a key part of your future growth you have to adapt significantly. You cannot treat today's mobile world like your website or other digital business from 5 years ago.

**CEOCFO: *How are you reaching out to the various parties that should learn about CleverTap?***

**Mr. Thomas:** Our business is growing significantly. The capabilities we offer in our product are way ahead of where the market is today and that helps a lot. We have very strong word of mouth growth. We listen a lot to our existing customers and use their inputs and feedback everyday to prioritize our product roadmap. We write a lot of content sharing tips, best practices and more on mobile growth – on our blog as well as many different publications. We share a lot of data and trends about what is going on in the mobile world today, why it matters and how it is changing people who use it. We teach a lot – in classrooms with organizations like the General Assembly and more. We have mobile specialists in different cities across the world going to events, meeting people who create and manage mobile apps and websites. Our investors Accel Partners and Sequoia Capital are extremely supportive and help a lot with outreach within their networks.

**“If mobile is a key part of your future growth you have to adapt significantly. You cannot treat today's mobile world like your website or other digital business from 5 years ago.”- Sunil Thomas**

**CEOCFO: *Do you offer a complete solution and users can pick-and-choose, or are there different modules or parts to purchase?***

**Mr. Thomas:** Our benefit is that we offer a single solution that combines the best of analytics and the best of user engagement. Fundamentally we think this is critical in today's world – you have to be able to directly act on your analytics. For example it's one thing to use a funnel report to see the percentage of people who drop-off; but a lot better if you can directly message those people in ways to get them to convert through your funnel. This is the power of what we enable.

In terms of pricing plans our solution is completely free for recording up to 1 Million user actions every month. User actions refer to activities done by a user in a mobile app or website. We have a lot of customers in our free tier. Being a startup we want to help other startups – many will grow up, acquire a lot of users and eventually fall into one of our paid tiers. Depending on how much your app volume is CleverTap is anywhere from being 5 to 20 times less expensive than any competitor. This is not a case of undercutting our competition with price – it is the technology that we've invented and our lean team that allows us to offer this kind of pricing and still maintain healthy margins. The more our customers grow and win in their respective markets the more we win so we are very proactive help them along their way. No matter which pricing tier you fall under, including the free tier we offer unlimited messaging and unlimited users.

**CEOCFO: *Are there features you offer that are not getting the traction you would expect?***

**Mr. Thomas:** We instrument our own dashboard using CleverTap – so that we can understand how our customers are using our product. We know exactly what features are being used and not being used by our customers. Internally within our dashboard we have built an “engagement ladder” whose job is to guide our customers forward by recommending the next best thing that we think is relevant to them. We think of this as our customer's journey using our product and try to help them at every stage – automatically or manually with our customer success team. Of course it is a very broad product and we are learning a lot everyday - so there is a lot of scope for improvement and we continue to get better with time.

Our product roadmap for the future has a significant chunk of data science in it where we hope to automatically expose audiences that are interesting and actionable for our customers. We also will recommend campaigns for our customers. For example, these 200 people are most likely to uninstall your app within the next 10 days – is very actionable by our customers to try and retain them. Because we can pinpoint every individual it makes all the difference.

**CEOCFO: *What has changed in your approach over time? What are you able to do now that you could not do a couple of years back?***

**Mr. Thomas:** The biggest benefit we've had is the traction we've got and the customers we've been able to sign up in such a short period of time. Two years ago it was a dream and a vision and we were trying to build what we thought was the best product in the industry. Today we have thousands of customers telling us what they expect; putting their real life problems and scenarios in front of us. We do a great deal of listening and I cannot emphasize how valuable this is. We certainly didn't have this luxury and privilege a couple of years ago.

**CEOCFO: *Put it together for our readers. How does CleverTap make a difference for a company and for their success?***

**Mr. Thomas:** CleverTap does 3 things for your business:

1. Helps you understand and track your business like no one else does – because it tracks it in realtime; it tracks it down to every individual within your apps.
2. Helps you segment and group your users based on their behavior and other attributes in very complex ways. Our user segmentation capability is leaps and bounds ahead of any competitor and in fact is the one feature our customers love us for the best for.
3. Helps you message these segment of users individually, using multiple channels to systematically move them forward in their own respective customer journey through your apps. We support push notifications, web/browser notifications, SMS and Email messages, in-app notifications and allows you to reach out to your user segments via Facebook.

Because everything is realtime and we have very rich behavior data on every person that users your app, we enable extremely timely, relevant and personalized notifications to give you the best shot at increasing the lifetime value of your users.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine

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