2014 ESSENTIAL GUIDE

OMNI-CHANNEL MARKETING

- 5 ways to evolve your marketing to omnichannel
- 3 companies successfully measuring cross-channel marketing performance
- 4 strategies for optimizing the marketing channel mix
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“Marketers who continue to tie their campaigns to the notion of a funnel will increasingly become less effective.”

Bruce Temkin
Temkin Group
EDITOR’S NOTE | Omnichannel Marketing Essential Guide 2014

Omnichannel Vision, Multichannel Reality?

Back in the day all the industry hype was around integrated marketing. The goal of integrated marketing—as you’ll recall if you were in marketing at the time—was to connect your marketing channels to deliver a holistic customer experience in terms of offers, messaging, and the like. Orchestrating campaigns and communications across several channels enabled each channel to support the others—improving not only the impact and performance of each individual channel, but also the outcome of the integrated campaign overall.

Sound familiar? Of course it does. Depending on your preferred jargon, you could swap the term integrated marketing for cross-channel, multichannel, or omnichannel marketing.

But, wait—before you rush to judgment, ready to debate whether these terms are actually interchangeable—let’s review the nuances commonly cited for the three “-channel” definitions.

Multichannel

Although some marketing pundits say that the term multichannel marketing has replaced integrated marketing, others take the term at its most literal: simply using more than one channel to market to customers, no orchestration required. Some industry insiders claim that this somewhat disconnected approach is all too common today.

Cross-channel

Similarly, while some marketing insiders consider cross-channel marketing a mere synonym for multichannel marketing, others define it as a basic integrated orchestration of marketing using multiple channels where the sharing of data from each channel helps enhance the performance of the others and of campaigns overall.

Omnichannel

Marketers who consider multichannel marketing to be the integrated marketing of today are exasperated by yet another new name for marketing via multiple channels in an integrated fashion. But omnichannel is far more than that to many other marketers, especially those in retail who have to deal with on- and offline integration. Indeed, some think that it’s marketing nirvana, as it goes beyond a simple orchestration of multiple channels to a holistic, fully integrated approach that starts with shared data and ends with comprehensive attribution. Few have achieved this ideal state of holistic marketing, many pundits say.

Marketing and the technologies that influence and support it have evolved—and so has the terminology defining the many-tentacled outreach marketers use today to connect and interact with, engage, and inspire consumers across the multiplicity of channels those customers use to discover, research, and purchase. The current hype is around omnichannel. Considering the depth and comprehensiveness of omnichannel marketing as many marketers define it, you can see why. But is there substance behind the hype, or is the reality that all marketing today should be deeply integrated despite what marketers call it?

Is there substance behind the hype, or is the reality that all marketing today should be deeply integrated despite what marketers call it?
One piece of data can change the way you see your customers.

Looking at your customer data in the right way can tell you if they need dog treats or a beard trimmer. #dogbeard.

Check out StrongView’s Success Guide “10 Warning Signs You Need Better Marketing Analytics” to find out if your email service provider is giving you a complete picture of your customers.

Download at www.StrongView.com/10
By Perry Simpson

Contemporary marketing has been deeply influenced by the titanic shifts in customer culture largely brought about by technology. Companies such as Apple, Amazon, and Google continue to disrupt conventional approaches, driving up consumer expectations for ease and relevance. And increasingly, as customers channel hop their way through the purchase process, they expect a harmonized omnichannel experience. With 89% of customers saying they’ve stopped doing business with a company after one poor experience, according to the Rightnow Customer Experience Impact Report, it’s never been more important for marketers to deliver an outstanding one.

“At its core, omnichannel marketing is the fundamental practice of providing a seamless marketing experience across multiple channels,” explains Jennifer James, director of marketing at loyalty marketing company Kobie Marketing. “Marketers need to ask themselves, ‘What experience will make my customers more loyal?’”

This is perhaps the crux of an omnichannel strategy. Brands that understand their customers’ preferences can use that data to foster relationships by offering what customers would deem a desirable omnichannel experience. But, many brands have been sluggish in their evolution to omnichannel. This is due to a number of factors, including too many silos and not enough collaboration, a lack of technology, and misaligned goals.

But much of that conceptual and technological red tape has been cut, so businesses are much better positioned to make the leap from a multichannel orientation (often defined as using more than one channel, but not necessarily orchestrating them or connecting the related data) to a more holistic omnichannel approach. Here are five ways marketers can evolve their marketing and business strategies to fit the omnichannel demands of the day.

1. Think holistically

The first step to evolving to omnichannel is recognizing its necessity. “Some marketers need to wake up and look at the reality of how we’re all working today,” says Jeffrey Wilks, SVP of eBay Enterprise. “It doesn’t take a lot of research to see that the marketing community and its influencers are all thinking in an omnichannel way.”

For this reason, “omnichannel has to be at the core of your strategy as a business—whether B2B or B2C,” says Meyar Sheik, CEO and cofounder of Certona, a personalization solutions provider. “Omnichannel is not a technology or a fad.”

Few marketers contest the importance of delivering a unified brand experience to customers, but many marketers are still wrangling the challenges of more basic multichannel optimization. Advancements in technology, however, have made executing marketing campaigns cohesively across channels easier than it once was. Marketers who focus on multichannel may see some gains from multiple channels supporting each other, but risk the wrath of confused customers who expect a unified brand experience if that experience is disconnected or the related communications are inconsistent.

“Marketing changes in waves and omnichannel is a wave that’s going to keep going, and there’ll be a wave behind it that changes things again. That doesn’t take away from the importance of thinking in an omnichannel way,” Wilks says. “If you’re any kind of marketer and you’re not seeing the writing on the wall, then you probably aren’t doing your job.”

2. Build collaboration

Not surprisingly, holistic omnichannel marketing that also delivers a top-notch customer experience requires collaboration from not only customer-facing teams (e.g., customer service, marketing, sales), but also...
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Consumer Insights and Targeting
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“I wouldn’t underestimate the power of relatively low-tech techniques like surveys. Companies like Amazon ask people to tell them about themselves. If people feel there’s value in telling you about themselves, then they will.”

David Grisim
Exact Media

“Many organizations face the challenge of breaking down silos for omnichannel marketing,” says Teradata Applications’ Deb Woods. “Achieving level of teamwork required to break down silos for omnichannel marketing requires a culture shift within an organization. It’s not easy, but it’s important. In order to achieve omnichannel, you have to be sure your organization can work together and share information.”

Collaboration begins with corporate leadership and aligned goals. But technology can help, too. “There are a lot of tools marketers can use to help break down silos. Data warehouses are one of them,” Woods explains. “You can store all the customer information, responses, and social interaction in one place. You want to have a single view of the customer, so you have to tie the organizations together on the back end.”

3. Map the experience

It may be cliché, but reaching a destination requires a plan and a map. Omnichannel marketing is no exception. “Evolving to omnichannel is a strategic challenge. You’re talking about affecting change through channels where people buy products and communication channels,” Wilks says. “This strategic challenge is really around experience mapping.”

Marketers making a foray into omnichannel marketing must have a clear view of what the omnichannel experience for their brand should look like. Customer journey maps can be powerful tools to achieve this, giving marketers a perspective from customers’ eyes in an environment where customers’ paths to purchase can be mystifying yet their expectations for relevance and timeliness are high. “Marketers need to understand what experience they want customers to have that moves them through the purchase path meaningfully, as well as understand where the potential barriers to that advancement lie,” Wilks notes.

4. Explore low-tech solutions

Technologies such as marketing automation and customer analytics have made omnichannel marketing more accessible. Indeed, these tools may prove essential to delivering the optimal customer experience across channels by providing insight into customers’ expectations and preference. But sometimes it’s just as powerful to simply ask what customers want through polls, questionnaires, and surveys.

“I wouldn’t underestimate the power of relatively low-tech techniques like surveys. Companies like Amazon ask people to tell them about themselves,” says David Grisim, CMO at survey provider Exact Media. “If people feel there’s value in telling you about themselves, then they will.”

5. Embrace transparency

Companies that market inconsistently across channels, expecting customers to not notice or ignore the differences may face a rude awakening. Customers displeased by such actions as inconsistent pricing won’t hesitate to expose, ridicule, or crucify brands that apply ages-old marketing logic to their business. Transparency in such areas as pricing and promotions can help propel the success of omnichannel marketing.

“In an era of complete transparency, marketers have to learn to embrace that transparency,” says eBay’s Wilks. “People will simply ignore you if you have a bad message, or they’ll aggressively complain about their bad experience with your brand.”
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As omnichannel marketing becomes the norm, measuring performance across channels moves from optional to elemental.
By Cindy Waxer

Wine Enthusiast is a long way away from its roots as a direct mail business. “We have people here who pine for the good old days when you dropped a catalog in the mail,” says Glenn Edelman, VP of digital marketing for the nearly 40-year-old wine accessories and storage company. “Those days are long gone. The future is coming and it’s coming fast.”

That future is omnichannel marketing. And as with traditional direct marketing, measuring performance across channels is essential to help determine how much and where to invest, as well as to show success and garner budget. What’s more, even as marketers struggle to determine which channels are delivering the best results, “there’s a rising bar and expectation for accountability in all aspects of marketing spend,” says Conor McGovern, managing director at Accenture Interactive.

Considering how challenging it can be to measure marketing performance in individual channels, measuring performance across channels can seem like an impossible task. In fact, according to a recent report by the CMO Club and Visual IQ, 84.6% of respondents say they’re either not measuring their cross-channel marketing performance at all or are measuring it using anecdotal, subjective measures such as first-touch, last-touch, or some other criteria they’ve established.

It’s precisely that inability to measure cross-channel performance, according to 82% of respondents, that’s standing in the way of implementing effective omnichannel marketing.

McGovern says part of the problem is “the deluge of data that our [marketers] are facing.” Gathering, aggregating, and integrating volumes of consumer data across multiple channels is an enormous undertaking with its own host of storage, processing, and analytics challenges.

The good news is that savvy CMOs are finding new strategies and high-tech tools to crack the code and accurately measure their omnichannel initiatives. Wine Enthusiast, for example, relies on Converto’s marketing attribution technology to measure the impact its direct mail, online, email, paid search, display ads, social media channels, and affiliate programs are having on sales and customer engagement. Rather than simply track website traffic, Wine Enthusiast has adopted an integrated approach that measures which email campaigns or online customer support channels are guiding consumers effectively to its telephone channel, Edelman says.

Wine Enthusiast’s products are a highly considered purchase. Consequently, many prospective customers need “TLC from a wine storage consultant,” Edelman says. “So, we drive a lot of [customers browsing on our site] to our phone with chat and pop-ups. [With Converto], we can see what programs are driving people to the phone and that’s important for us because it’s difficult to track that online and offline behavior.”

Another way Wine Enthusiast is measuring its omnichannel marketing is by calculating how much affiliate sources contribute to conversions or sales. “One of the things that was always concerning to me were the coupon sites,” Edelman says. Using Converto to determine what value these sites were delivering, Wine Enthusiast discovered that customers were visiting the wine accesso-ry site first, leaving the website to retrieve the coupon from an affiliate, and then returning to the site to complete their purchases.

“We thought these coupon affiliate programs were great, but they really weren’t doing much for us other than glomming off of our brand name and getting undue credit for an order,” Edelman says. “So we made a daring move and removed all coupon sites from our affiliate program. It was a huge, huge money saver for us—enough that it paid for Converto for the year.”

Gearing up for omnichannel

Wattbike is another company that’s catching on to the benefits of measuring marketing across channels. By establishing a strong social presence on channels including Twitter and Facebook, the bike training system has helped drive sales of its indoor bike, which delivers performance data and technical feedback to its riders. Prior to cycling events and trade shows, for instance, Wattbike generates buzz via social media channels by highlighting visitors who have pre-booked demonstrations, emphasizing event promotions, and encouraging social followers to post their Wattbike experiences on Facebook and Twitter.

To measure the impact of its social marketing strategies on complementary channels such as the Web for an aggregated view of its marketing efforts, Wattbike works with digital marketing agency Meta to track variables such as engagement rates and attribution. “We can

THE NUMBERS

85% ➔ CMOs who say their efforts at implementing an omnichannel marketing strategy are challenged by a lack of access to data and inadequate tools/technology. -CMO Club and Visual IQ

82% ➔ CMOs who say an inability to measure cross-channel performance is interfering with implementing an effective strategy, and 80% cite a lack of in-house talent. -CMO Club and Visual IQ

62% ➔ Companies that currently have or plan to implement an omnichannel strategy; of that 62%, 35% have an omnichannel strategy and 27% plan to implement one in the near-term. -Neustar

41% ➔ Marketers who felt they realized or expect to experience a sales lift of between 6 to 15% with an omnichannel marketing strategy. -Neustar

75% ➔ Retailers who rated omnichannel fulfillment as “very important.” -Retail Systems Research
see the impact our social media interactions have on our Web traffic and then our Web traffic’s impact on sales,” says Alex Skelton, marketing director at Watt-bike. “This is the key to making sure that our marketing investments are paying off, and that not only do we have a growing number of followers on Facebook and Twitter, but that it’s driving a higher number of people to our website, and as a result, driving sales.”

That’s not to suggest, however, that measuring social’s return on investment as part of an omnichannel approach is easy. Rather, because of the challenges presented by integrating data across channels, Watt-bike still performs a lot of its measuring manually. “We still need someone to plough through the data, put it in a spreadsheet, crunch the numbers, and spend quite a lot of time looking at where people are coming from, where we’re losing them, and which channels are the best in terms of delivering a return on investment,” Skelton says.

Hanging up attribution
Fashion retailer Deb Shops is certainly no stranger to the difficulties of measuring marketing across channels, especially when those channels traverse online and offline worlds. “It’s hard when we spend dollars on certain types of digital marketing to measure what the impact is on brick-and-mortar,” says David Cost, a Deb Shops digital marketing executive. “Attribution is really where the challenge comes from.”

To help bridge this gap, Deb Shops has shifted its focus from attribution to customer engagement. For instance, the retailer relies on Listrak’s integrated digital marketing platform to track how often a customer clicks on an email, how often they interact with social media content, how long they spend on a particular part of a website, and how frequently they view product videos.

“We’re not looking to get a specific conversion rate out of a single channel,” Cost says. “We’re really looking at how much our users use a particular channel and how much time they spend with it— is it something they find helpful or engaging?”

Once Deb Shops gauges engagement, the next step is to create a personalized customer experience. Even so, “when we’re engaging with customers, we really don’t know if they’re a brick-and-mortar, online, or multichannel customer,” Cost says. “We truly take an omnichannel view. As long as they buy Deb Shops, we really don’t have any preference for which channel they use to make the purchase.”

It’s too soon to tell whether the best approach to measuring marketing across channels involves sales conversion tools, analytics-fueled spreadsheets, or high-tech customer engagement tools. What is certain is that omnichannel marketing strategies are here to stay and that their success hinges on marketers’ ability to measure their results.
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4 key areas marketers can manipulate to master the ever-increasing array of customer touchpoints.
CHANNEL MIX OPTIMIZATION

By Jason Compton

Is it possible that we now have too many ways to reach customers? Individuals are connected to global networks around the clock. An eMarketer study found that the average adult spends more than five hours per day engaged with digital media—more time than is spent in front of the TV. Traditional marketing channels from billboards to cold calls continue to reinvent themselves and retain their place in the marketing mix.

Choice is liberating, but it can also be oppressive, and matching the right medium with the right message is only going to get more complicated. “Back in the late 1990s people thought we had channel fragmentation,” says George Corugedo, CTO of marketing software developer RedPoint. “They had no idea what was coming.”

The good news is that strategy and data analysis have evolved to the point where marketers can make informed decisions about the best channels for their target audiences. The bad news is that the ability to optimize the channel mix is going to be table stakes in the ever-escalating competition for customers’ attention.

Here’s how to design a channel mix that delivers.

THE NUMBERS

97% Text messages opened within three minutes of receipt - Nielsen Mobile

2.35% Median click-through rate for Google AdWords - Wordstream

42% Share of QR code scanners who are under age 35 - ScanLife

40% Marketers ranking paid search as the best channel to drive online sales, ahead of online display (26%) and social media (18%) - Econsultancy/Adobe

83% B2B firms marketing on LinkedIn, the highest of any network - Content Marketing Institute

65% B2B marketers planning to increase email spending - eMarketer

HAVE THE RIGHT MINDSET

Don’t follow the crowd. Energy snack maker Perky Jerky competes with global CPG brands that can dominate the airwaves and drown it out in conventional media. The brand’s goal is to highlight its taste advantage, so Perky Jerky focuses marketing efforts on getting physical samples into people’s hands. The sample bags are emblazoned with QR codes provided by NeoMedia, which guide consumers to the next step in the customer journey. “We can’t do a massively large traditional media campaign, so we spend just about everything on mobile and social that leads to sampling the product and then converting to a purchase,” says Brian Levin, chairman of Perky Jerky.

Know where your audience is. The population of high school students in the Midwest is in a demographic trough, so colleges such as University of Wisconsin-Stout have been competing for a shrinking audience. “The dip started in 2006 and we are expecting it to last two more years,” says Melissa Perez, marketing coordinator for the school’s undergraduate admissions office. Realizing that the single mailer that had been part of its prospect campaigns wasn’t enough to grab and hold the audience, UW-Stout added text messages, lifecycle emails, and hand-tailored postcards to remind high school students of upcoming visits by admissions counselors. The school was rewarded with a 107% increase year-over-year in high school student appointments.

Get a view across channels. Optimizing the channel mix requires cross-channel insights. It’s impossible to understand relative performance if data and strategy for each channel are walled off. Public broadcaster WGBH revitalized its fundraising and is staying ahead of budget projections by linking its channels. “We were siloed,” says Cate Tvothill, senior director of technical product development for WGBH. “Now, we use our broadcast inventory to promote local events and drive traffic to the website, where we can capture more information on landing pages and better track what [donors] are doing.”

Commit to a program of continuous evaluation. “The worst channel mix optimizations are done by the organization every year or two—turn TV down, turn paid search up, come back in another 12 to 24 months and do it again,” says Conor McGovern, managing director of Accenture Digital. “That is not the path to success.”

RIDE YOUR WINNERS

Don’t abandon a winning strategy, even if it feels quaint. SAP’s global VP of product marketing Jamie Anderson points to a successful Las Vegas casino which, despite a sophisticated loyalty program with extremely detailed real-time data, doesn’t do any digital marketing. Personalized printed mailers are its chief stock in trade. “They understand that the customer already receives hundreds of emails executed by great marketing automation systems,” he says. “The CMO told me that they want to send customers things they will pin to their fridge, something tailored and relevant, so direct mail is their biggest and most impactful channel.”

Test email frequency. Email may be noisy, but it’s virtually free. B2C buyers in particular have come to expect a steady hum of communication. Rather than fret about fatigue, run tests to determine whether your spigot is active enough. “All of the ‘mainstream mall brands’ have gone to a daily email stream, so consumers expect a daily campaign,” says Ross Kramer, Listrak CEO.

Get found. Search marketing is a low-conversion grind and always will be, but it remains a crucial channel for capturing active buyers. Jake Sweeney Automotive of Cincinnati focuses its digital advertising budget on search engine marketing, reflecting the modern consumer’s wide, multi-source path to a vehicle purchase. “We still have our traditional roots and a lot of TV and radio advertising, and that’s the usual path the shopper takes: seeing the ad on TV or hearing it on the radio, then doing a search,” says Sarah Sweeney, the dealership’s e-commerce director. The dealership converts about 2% of search engine marketing (SEM) displays—in line with the digital industry average. And even that average flow is vital to keeping the sales pipeline moving.

Omnichannel Marketing Essential Guide 2014 | CHANNEL MIX OPTIMIZATION
CUT TIES WITH LOSERS
Don’t use a channel because you “should.” If you’re spending in a channel just to reach an arbitrary goal or check a box, you’re probably wasting time and money. One of the latest traps has been brands making a push for a large number of Facebook fans, often attracted by giveaways in exchange for likes. “It was a common brand goal, but a lot of [likes] were bought and you can usually see bought ‘fans’ quickly—you see [demographics] that don’t look like they make sense for your brand and have zero engagement rates,” says John Andrews, CMO of agency Ignite Social Media. “I’d rather have 10,000 highly engaged fans than one million fans who don’t care and are going to hide me in their newsfeed.”

Devising a social media strategy strong enough to weather rapid changes in pricing and access. Leaving it on autopilot could cost you customers, or drain your budget in a hurry. “Overnight, Facebook flipped a switch, and a post that the week before would have been seen by 50,000 people gets 5,000,” Perky Jerky’s Levin says. “A year ago it was far and away the most important outlet we had. Now, Facebook is not as valuable as it was, not as exciting as it was...now it’s almost irrelevant [for us].”

Don’t allow flawed attribution to kill off non-digital channels. Digital channels have a huge advantage because it can be easy to track conversions, but marketers can’t lose sight of the overall customer journey. “It’s hugely important to understand interplay, such as that between TV and paid search, and not just do last-click attribution,” Accenture Digital’s McGovern says. “You need a multichannel, multi-activity view of the world, because that’s how consumers respond to messages.”

KEEP EXPERIMENTING
Ride the innovation. New channels will turn proven strategies on their heads, so be prepared to test and learn. Perky Jerky embraced the Ibotta app, which inverts the retail coupon model by providing customers with instant rebate offers. “For something like that to be compelling to a brand marketer it needs a critical mass of users, and they’re not there yet,” Levin says. “But the results we’ve seen early on are awesome, and I’d spend as much as I could with them if they could deliver a larger audience.”

Embrace texting. The opt-in requirements are stringent and the penalties for missteps are high, but don’t let Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) developments scare you away from the text message channel, which remains one of the world’s most popular, immediate, and universal channels of communication. “It’s only a 160-character payload, and a lot of that is legalese, but for deliverability nothing beats SMS,” says Dan Smith, VP of product at marketing platform vendor Outsell.

Use social to create opportunities for targeting. Cisco has hundreds of thousands of followers each on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn with broad brand marketing directives. But not all social programs are about the broadest reach. The company’s social media group recently launched a Tumblr aimed at a relatively small audience of media members and tech influencers to support an innovation outreach campaign. The platform gives Cisco the desired mix of visual and textual storytelling. “An image often captures somebody’s eye more than 140 characters, and it opens up a different audience than Twitter,” says Joie Healy, Cisco’s senior manager of social media communications. “Tumblr lets us build from a snapshot to tell a story.”

Track results. An effective channel mix requires an unflagging dedication to analysis, and understanding how each customer contact is reflected in the bottom line. “I ask new hires what percentage of new sales went through marketing at their previous firm,” says You Mon Tsang, CMO of social agency Vocus. “If you can’t answer that, especially as a senior person, two years from now you will not be a credible marketer.”

COOKING UP A HEALTHY MIX
Nick Robinson, CMO of Quest Nutrition, which sells protein bars and gluten-free pasta to health enthusiasts, discusses the company’s recipe for optimizing the marketing channel mix.

How would you describe your marketing channel mix? We have no traditional advertising—we’re all online, all social. We built this company through social media.

What made a digital-first strategy possible? Quest is three years old. The three founders decided that they were going to build their business through social channels. They didn’t know exactly how, so they hired me to figure it out.

How have you changed your channel mix in the three years since you began? Our marketing message evolved when it became clear that our audience was 70 to 75% female, depending on the channel.

Why did that discovery surprise you? In the early days our Facebook spend was 95% targeted at men. But Facebook’s advantage is that we can get super-granular and specify exactly the audience we want to reach, and not build on false assumptions. So now the reality dictates the content and has brought more lighthearted fun to what we create.

How has Facebook’s paid content distribution policy affected your social media strategy? All other channels have always been pay-to-play. Facebook has value, and the value is in the eyeballs they bring. We always assumed we would eventually have to pay-to-play on Facebook, and we’re happy to do that.

How do you fulfill the demand for fresh content through a growing range of digital and social channels? We have six full-time people creating content, and a 10,000-square-foot soundstage for YouTube and Instagram shoots.
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HARD HABITS TO BREAK

WHAT’S BLOCKING OMNICHANNEL MARKETING SUCCESS?
SOMETIMES MARKETERS THEMSELVES.

By Ginger Conlon

We all have bad habits, but poor marketing practices can cause big performance problems—including mixed messages, disconnected customer experiences, and low response rates. According to a study by CFI Group and eBay Enterprise, 73% of consumers experience price and promotion inconsistencies between brands’ websites and stores; of those consumers, 28% stop shopping with a brand altogether or look elsewhere first.

What’s more, bad marketing habits that keep marketers mired in “the way we’ve always done things” can seriously hamper the ability to move to true omnichannel marketing. With all that in mind we asked 15 marketing industry pundits, “What bad habit is preventing marketers from getting the most from omnichannel marketing, and what should they do instead?” Here’s their insight and advice:

MARK DIMASSIMO
CEO, DiMassimo Goldstein

Marketers don’t do “loyal acquisition.” When customers choose us for the wrong reasons, we end up with an increasingly fickle and confusing customer base. To solve this, put the brand lover’s inner experience—a key insight—in the center of every touchpoint. Translate this through a truly differentiating brand idea. Raise the standard of truth for traditional programs and channels, lower it for newer, novel, and on-brand programs and channels. Then optimize into proven performers much more quickly.

GRAEME GRANT
COO, CQuotient

To get the most from omnichannel marketing, retailers need to shake their dependence on Web cookies. Omnichannel by its very definition means that channels don’t matter and that all touchpoints are synchronized. A cookie is helpful in this regard, but it’s certainly not sufficient to fully understand a customer whose actions cross many devices and many channels. Before deciding to send a customer a catalog in the mail, a marketer should be aware of what that consumer has bought online, searched for in the mobile app, recently returned in-store, as well as emails they’ve opened, etc. A Web cookie is part of that picture, but shouldn’t be confused with the full picture. If your current approach to personalization is solely reliant on Java script on your website, then you aren’t omnichannel, you are silo-channel. That is not what today’s consumers want, and it could send them right to the competition.
Omnichannel Marketing Essential Guide 2014 | TRENDS

BARBARA APPLE SULLIVAN
Founder and managing partner, Sullivan + Company
While the progress toward omnichannel thinking is a significant leap forward, the continued distinction between B2B and B2C marketing strategies prevents marketers from getting the most out of their efforts.

All brands today face the same challenge: presenting a single, cohesive idea, and then pulling it through the entire brand experience. Companies like Apple and GE have successfully erased the distinction by following a few simple rules:

• Thoroughly examine your business’s entire ecosystem of decision-makers, including internal and external stakeholders, distribution channels, and end consumers.
• Take into account an audience’s rational and human drivers, using emotion when necessary to strike a cord.
• Effectively use a diversity of channels to reach multiple constituencies at once in creative, unusual ways.

I’m calling B.S. on the distinction between B2B and B2C marketing. I challenge our industry to worry less about B2B and B2C, and more about reaching every human who has the potential to touch a brand.

KURT ANDERSEN
Executive VP of sales enablement and marketing, SAVO
Typically, one hears omnichannel marketing nowadays and thinks social media, a website, or maybe a targeted email drip campaign. An all-too-common mistake marketers make, however, is overlooking their most critical channel: the sales team. Without holistic alignment between marketing’s efforts and sales’s execution, valuable conversations are being thrown away. Instead, each conversation a sales rep has with prospects or customers must deliver the optimal value, and be on-brand and in step with a company’s chosen sales methodology.

Another often-overlooked component to omnichannel marketing is data—big and small. While metrics reflecting your followers, traffic, and email opens are incredibly important, they shouldn’t overshadow deal-stage velocity and time taken to convert leads. By not expanding the omnichannel vision to include sales-related data, marketing is missing valuable insight and opportunities to influence and convert a greater portion of deals.

DAN MCDERMOTT
Senior product marketing manager, messaging, Epsilon
Too many marketers are focused on the outbound aspect of omnichannel marketing: sending consumers the same message in an email campaign, a Facebook post, a tweet, a text, and so on. Not enough consideration is given to how a message should be customized to the channel. Worse, many marketers are ignoring the true power of omnichannel marketing: How they can use consumers’ cross-channel behavior to inform and deliver a highly personalized and compelling campaign in a single channel, such as email. Of all the digital channels, email remains the most reliable for delivering targeted messages and consistent revenue.

When the real-time consumer behavior inferred from social media and mobile interactions is used to drive email campaigns, it’s proven to increase performance exponentially. Think of omnichannel as an effort to use all of your channels wisely, but not necessarily all of your channels all of the time.
MAURICIO AGUAYO
Director, digital strategy, Click 3X

The great promise of omnichannel marketing is the ability to reach audiences wherever they are. Businesses seize this opportunity to syndicate content across their digital networks but often treat these channels as interchangeable properties in the hopes of driving engagement. But without paying attention to the unique function of each channel, this strategy misses the point.

Customers use different platforms for different reasons. Yet, brands often repurpose the exact same image and copy in their content calendars across all digital and social networks. It’s a bad habit that’s hard to break.

Not only should content be tailored visually for each network’s architecture, but tone and copy should cater to the reason why people are there in the first place. Perhaps this will scare marketers, but digital continues to evolve around serving people’s needs. A little more time and effort will go a long way.

DALE RENNER
CEO and founder, RedPoint Global

One “habit” hobbles far too many marketers: fragmentation. I see it everywhere, but especially in data, rules, and content. When these are widely scattered, everything’s harder, slower, and less effective. Say you want to send birthday offers. You create an email rule: all “emailable” customers get one. Fine, but what about SMS, mobile apps, and Facebook? More rules, but built in different systems, by different teams, with different interfaces, using different databases. The result: Some customers get nothing. Others are barraged with inconsistent messages. Across channels, you can’t coordinate, compare, experiment, measure, audit, or improve. Solving “simple” problems requires complex processes that add no value. Preference management is almost impossible. The solution is to unify access to all rules, all content, and your complete “record of engagement” with each customer. Then, make sure your unified system easily integrates new data sources and channels, so you stop creating new “silos” in the future.

CHRIS ANDRASICK
CEO, Tacit Knowledge

An omnichannel marketing strategy depends on successfully addressing channel conflict. This is often because of a company’s organizational structure and associated budgets. Scrutinize the old and familiar channel strategies and focus on your customers: who they are and how they behave. This should drive the channels to use and when to use them.

LAURA MARRIOTT
CEO, NeoMedia

Here are two issues and how to overcome them.

One size does not fit all: Marketers should always put the needs of their customers first. This means, to run a successful omnichannel campaign, understand who your target customers are and what appeals to them, and then target the campaign strategy accordingly, by each unique channel. One size does not fit all, and by understanding who your customers are and how they like to engage, you’ll be able to deliver value and drive brand promise in a compelling and consistent manner. In other words, understanding engagement across channels.

Not having the right skill-set internally: Realizing the success and performance of omnichannel initiatives requires a specialized skill-set within your team to leverage the statistics derived from cross-channel campaigns. Marketers must ensure that they recruit staff with the right skill-set to be able to process and manage the extensive campaign data required to drive continual improvement and engagement.

ROGER BARNETTE
President, IgnitionOne

The bad habit I’d like to see marketers overcome is poor measurement. It’s interesting that 53% of CMOs measure success by ROI, yet only 2% measure marketing ROI based on sales and leads. To get the most out of omnichannel marketing, you have to have data that provides a complete view of your customer across channels, devices, and throughout their lifecycle. This allows for meaningful attribution, particularly when you can see the influence of one activity by another. It also allows for a deeper understanding of intent, which you can then leverage to influence the ROI you’re supposed to be measuring in the first place. So yes, the bad habit that’s getting in the way of success is the measurement. Get it right and the rest gets easier.

DM News
Cory Munchbach

Analyst, customer insights, Forrester

Marketers’ habit to break is complacency. For decades marketing activity was straightforward and bounded by some clear limits about what marketing could do. Today we’re in the age of the customer—an era characterized by empowered customers setting their own terms of engagement with brands and companies. That has fundamentally changed the marketing function into one that has to be concerned with providing useful and contextual engagement across the entire customer lifecycle to acquire and retain customers. Not, in other words, continuing to spend disproportionately on getting customers into a funnel and stopping there. Marketers cannot simply be comfortable using new channels to accomplish the same old goals. Instead, they must use the data at their disposal to understand how a customer moves through the lifecycle, and invest in the channels and content that facilitate their effort. Don’t be complacent: Ditch the funnel mentality and embrace the customer lifecycle.

James Green

CEO, Magnetic

There are a few reasons why marketers aren’t reaping all of the benefits of omnichannel marketing. To start, as some organizations evolve and grow, once-unified goals and messages can get blurred. In many larger organizations, departments are siloed (TV, social, programmatic, search, etc.), and siloed departments tend to develop their own objectives. Also, many marketers are stuck with the conundrum that half of their budget is spent based on audience targeting (online) and the other half is spent on content targeting to help you reach that audience (offline). The metrics used for these two strategies are entirely different and often conflicting.

To break these habits, marketers should create one analytics department that oversees all strategies and constantly brings them together to make sure they’re all delivering the same message. Even better, you should create strategies that can be implemented seamlessly across media channels so that they support one another naturally.

Wilson Raj

Global director of customer intelligence, SAS

Marketers need to resist the urge to prefer pure intuition over data. This bad habit comes in two forms: Not using existing corporate data enough; that is, to overlook enriching your data sources from service, ops, and contact center data. And not using external data enough—to overlook expanding your data sources from social, open data, etc.

Shift the focus from whether the data is right to whether it’s the right data. Not all data is created equal. This is where experimentation is more powerful than data analysis. Try small, fast trials on a specific omnichannel customer goal—e.g., how is the customer discovering needs, exploring choices, or buying your offerings? This limits bias and lets you learn at low risk. Test a micro-segment or a subset of your services against varying offers to home in on the right data. Test decisions in a smaller universe of channels, then confidently scale it out.

Neil Capel

CEO and founder, Sailthru

The bad habit that is truly preventing marketers from getting the most from omnichannel marketing is continuing to hold on to the mind-set that massive budgets are needed for acquisition rather than focusing on retention efforts.

Every marketer is looking to improve sales and ROI, but you stand to only produce short-term results by looking outside. By looking inside, to customers who are already within your ecosystem, you’re more likely to drive profits. This is where shifting investment in omnichannel comes in: by focusing on retention, there are more resources available to create programs for customers based on specific acquisition sources, thus making acquiring new customers easier and more cost-effective. It also means more resources can be put toward targeting customers based on purchase histories, engagement lapses, etc. Focusing on strategy development for retention will allow omnichannel to yield the potential long-term results that every marketer knows is possible.

Sid Bhatt

CEO, Aarki

One bad practice marketers need to change is repurposing desktop banners for mobile marketing initiatives. To break out of this habit, marketers should take advantage of the multiscreen creative capabilities that are evolving along with the unique functionality of the mobile platform. For example, Showtime’s advertising campaign for Penny Dreadful takes advantage of the gyroscopic function on mobile devices to increase interactivity and ad engagement. This isn’t possible on desktops. Each platform contains unique qualities that marketers can leverage, measure, and bring to life by taking a multiscreen, multichannel advertising approach from the get-go.
Embrace Journey-Centric Marketing

The new realities of how customers interact with brands mean thinking beyond the funnel.

Marketing funnels are dead. Let me say that again so it doesn’t get lost: Marketing funnels are dead. The notion that customers go through an orderly, sequential process that nicely aligns with marketing efforts in each stage of the funnel (awareness, preference, etc.) is as outdated as fax machines. Marketers who continue to tie their campaigns to the notion of a funnel will increasingly become less effective.

What killed off this tried-and-true marketing concept? Customer experiences have changed. The marketing funnel was a wonderful model for decades when people gathered information through a limited, dependable set of sources and then interacted with companies in dependable ways. But new technologies have enabled people to behave in a different way today than they did even five or two years ago.

The realities of today’s customer interactions

In fact, compared with just a few years ago, customer interactions are more:

- **Information-rich:** Companies used to dole out pieces of information knowing that customers had little access to anything more that could validate or repudiate their message. Information is now widely available. Marketing messages, therefore, have much less influence today on what people think about a company.

- **Multichannel:** Companies used to depend on a stable set of interactions in each channel: sales in stores, service over the phone, etc. But an increasing number of interactions are happening in online and other digital channels, and are being blended with those traditional channels. A recent Temkin Group study found, for example, that 43% of U.S. consumers check competitors’ prices on their mobile phone when they’re in a store.

- **Interconnected:** Companies are recognizing that marketing and service interactions aren’t isolated events. When a customer has a great service experience, they’re open to messages about making additional purchases or believing positive comments about your brand. After a bad experience, any marketing event will likely fall flat.

- **Beyond you:** With the growth of social channels and technologies for sharing information, people rely less on what they hear directly from companies. As a result, influencing an individual is no longer sufficient for affecting behaviors. Marketers need to support the customers’ ecosystem.

Embrace journey-centric marketing

How can marketers thrive in the post-funnel era? By infusing what we’ve learned about customer experience into marketing processes. Fusing those disciplines together, I created a concept called journey-centric marketing (JCM), defined as:

**Supporting customers along their paths to becoming loyal customers.**

The JCM process starts by defining key customers and identifying their preferred interaction paths. This isn’t about looking at internal processes or specific touchpoints, it’s about understanding how your organization fits within the context of your customers’ lives. How can marketers gain this insight? By tapping into the growing customer experience methodology called customer journey mapping.

Customer journey maps are a representation of the steps and emotional states a customer goes through during a period of time that includes, but is not limited to, interactions with an organization. Journey maps are valuable because they help identify how a customer views an organization by putting interactions in the context of the customer’s broader activities and goals.

Marketers should use this tool to identify the key paths that high-value customers take and opportunities for helping them succeed. Understand how you can provide customers with the information and encouragement to satisfy their needs and desires.

Marketers also can get a great deal of the value if they actively consider customers’ journeys in everything they do. Temkin Group has identified a methodology called customer journey thinking, where organizations can gain broad understanding of customers by continually asking and answering these five questions:

- **Who is the customer?** Different customers have different needs. Understand who the person is before thinking about his specific journey.

- **What is the customer’s real goal?** Customers aren’t usually contacting a company because they want to; they’re doing it because of a deeper need. To understand how customers will view an interaction with your company and what’s shaping their expectations, you need to think about what they’re trying to accomplish.

- **What did the customer do right before?** When customers interact with your company, it’s almost always part of a longer journey. So you need to think about where they’ve been prior to the interaction to understand how they’ll respond to an interaction with your company. In many cases previous interactions will include people and organizations outside of your company.

- **What will the customer do right after?** When customers interact with your company, it’s almost never the last step on their journey. So you need to think about what they will do next to understand how you can best help them. In many cases these subsequent interactions will include people and organizations outside of your company.

- **What will make the customer happy?** Rather than just aiming to satisfy customers’ basic needs, think about what it will take to provide each customer with the most positive experience. The focus on customers’ emotional state will help employees stay mindful of customers’ holistic needs.

The bottom line: Don’t push customers through a funnel, support their journeys.
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