

MULTICHANNEL MARKETING PRIMER FOR 2017

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SUMMARY

With the right tools, talent and data, marketing leaders can deliver personalized, real-time multichannel engagements for growth. Gartner's 2017 multichannel marketing research will show you how to strengthen customer relationships and align multichannel efforts to exceed business goals.

Scope

Multichannel marketing constitutes continual, orchestrated engagement across digital and traditional customer touchpoints.

Marketers seek to acquire, convert and retain customers through:

- Comprehensive understanding of audience behaviors, attitudes and actions
- Rules and intelligence for the timing and targeting of engagement at the right moment
- Automation and scale of multichannel marketing execution



Over 90% of marketers struggle to seamlessly connect more than three channels on the buyer journey.

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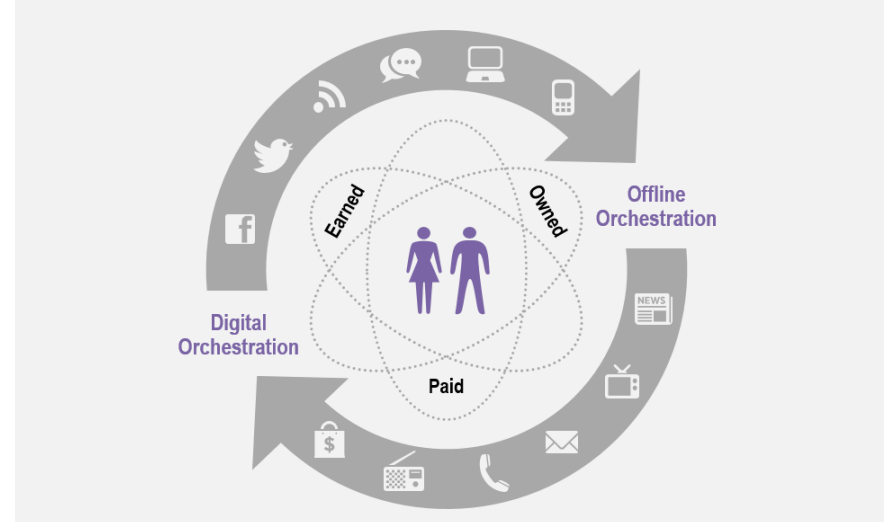
ANALYSIS

Marketing leaders are growing revenue through customer engagements across multichannel marketing, including digital commerce, social media, mobile marketing and emerging channels such as the Internet of Things (IoT). Yet many companies' ability to convert these connections into purposeful, cohesive, ongoing company/customer engagement falls short of expectations. Our multichannel marketing maturity model (see ["Maturity Model for Multichannel Marketing"](#)) shows that most marketers rate themselves a two out of a possible five on our maturity scale. When compared with other marketing initiatives, marketers reported multichannel marketing as one of the biggest gaps between their current state and their desired level of maturity.

Whether you call it multichannel campaign management, cross-channel or omnichannel marketing, and regardless of whether your efforts involve a CRM or a digital marketing hub, success means delivering a unified customer experience across the right channels. Critical performance metrics hinge on the ability to share data and coordinate engagement across multiple teams. Orchestration is crucial for B2B brands pursuing account-based marketing and sophisticated lead management initiatives.

Lead your team's growth efforts this year by strengthening multichannel marketing operations. Build a team aligned to customer segments and supported by the right mix of skills. Leverage customer data to act on and advance each interaction. Make customer data integration a top priority, connecting with customer service, sales, digital commerce and other customer-facing functions to extend real-time interactions via established and emerging channels. Adopt tools and technologies best suited to meet your company's business goals and help scale multichannel operations for sustainable results.

Figure 1. Multichannel Marketing Overview



Source: Gartner (January 2017)

Top Challenges and How Gartner Can Help

Gartner's 2017 research agenda for multichannel marketing will help your organization strengthen customer loyalty and advocacy by better understanding your audience. Use this research to align your multichannel marketing efforts to data-informed customer personas, strengthen your team's capabilities and demonstrate a direct impact on bottom-line results.

The multichannel marketing agenda will help marketing leaders answer the following questions:

How can you get a comprehensive understanding of your customers?

Effective multichannel marketing means engaging in relationship-building, goal-oriented conversations with customers where they are, at key moments of interest. Audience and customer data fuel those engagements, empowering marketing leaders to act faster in the moment across customer-preferred channels. You need strong persona and segmentation development and refinement along with access to first-, second- and third-party data sources to keep up with customers' evolving needs and wants. Understand the context of each engagement in each channel to recognize, predict and take action — increasingly in real time — on key customer insights.



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Planned Research

- **What multichannel marketers need from customer data platforms and/or digital marketing hubs** — When orchestrating multiple customer engagements across multiple touchpoints, success relies on the multichannel campaign management strategies and technologies at your disposal. The same tenet applies to your customer data platforms and digital marketing hubs when managing and distributing multiple forms of customer data. Use this research to understand these evolving technologies — and inform your expectations for customer data platforms and hubs.
- **Predictive and real-time decision making in multichannel marketing** — Predictive analytics and real-time decision-making tools can identify customer needs and take action at precise moments. Use this research to compare and contrast predictive and real-time decision-making capabilities within multichannel offerings and learn how to take advantage of them.
- **Know your audience: segmentation advances that will improve multichannel marketing** — Traditional segmentation attributes focus on products: Who bought and who is likely to buy? Newer groupings focus on profitability, applying improved criteria for increasing segment value. Other strategies focus on grouping personas, life cycles and lifestyles. Use this research to identify the multiple approaches and best practices for leveraging each one.

How can you align multichannel marketing initiatives to business goals?

Successful multichannel marketing initiatives increasingly rely on automated, real-time engagement. Results depend on the seamless integration of your digital and traditional marketing channels for maximum impact. Strengthen the components of your multichannel marketing mix for business goal alignment, including awareness, conversion, loyalty and advocacy. Discover and assess tools driving relevant, personalized digital interactions based on customer personas, journey maps and predictive insights.

B2C and B2B marketing leaders focused on multichannel marketing must define the rules for channel engagement, informed by customer personas and behavior analytics. Yet most marketing organizations are structured around products or industries, frustrating efforts to align, orchestrate and scale customer-focused campaigns. Define a distinct multichannel marketing management role in your organization that can lead orchestrated, customer-focused engagement across channels.

Prove the value of each engagement by using multiple approaches to channel attribution. Understand key and supporting roles of each channel across a buying process. Establish and build toward success milestones to evangelize the mission-critical contribution of multichannel marketing to senior management.

Planned Research

- **Maturity Model for Multichannel Marketing** — Many marketing leaders see a gap between their current and desired multichannel marketing maturity. Advanced multichannel marketing programs build customer relationships, nurture advocates and provide steady customer data intelligence. Use this Maturity Model to assess the best investments for maximum impact.
- **Toolkit: How to Hire a Multichannel Marketing Orchestrator** — Our research underlines the importance of having an “orchestrator” to lead multichannel initiatives and shows the evolving skills needed to perform the role. This Toolkit will provide a detailed job description to help you hire the best candidate to fulfill the position.
- **Give Credit Where Credit Is Due: Channel Attribution Strategies, Tools and Approaches** — Attribution is a thorny issue for multichannel marketers, replete with gaps in methodologies. As customer journey-centric marketing becomes the norm, use the insight Gartner offers in this research to learn how to tackle attribution and what tools and approaches to use.



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When evaluating multichannel marketing technology and service providers, which criteria should guide your choice?

To effectively support multichannel marketing, marketers need a comprehensive technology infrastructure that includes both automation and services. That infrastructure consists of multichannel campaign management applications with access to multiple data sources. These sources must be available in real time and connected to additional marketing applications, such as digital asset management and content marketing platforms and predictive decision-making tools. Connected applications, drawing on a pool of connected data, help orchestrate and execute engagement across multiple marketing channels, such as mobile, email marketing, search, ad networks, and the emerging IoT and digital assistant space. Cut through the hype of many promising but still evolving technologies, and focus on core capabilities first. Execute the basics well, then add in other channels and technologies, building on a strong foundation.



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Planned Research

- **Magic Quadrant for Multichannel Campaign Management** — Multichannel campaign management applications continue to evolve with new entrants, new access to customer data and new channels to extend a connected conversation. Use our research to get visual framework, in-depth analyses and actionable advice for a comprehensive look at a market's direction, maturity and participants.
- **Market Guide for Email Marketing** — B2B marketing leaders are prioritizing conversion by identifying groups of buyers and influencers within new and existing accounts. Use our research to understand this emerging area of strategy, process and technology — and review the landscape of vendors participating in this market.
- **Market Guide for Account-Based Marketing** — B2B marketing leaders are prioritizing conversion by identifying groups of buyers and influencers within new and existing accounts. Our research will explain this emerging area of strategy, process and technology to you, as well as review the vendor landscape.

Related Priorities

Table 1. Related Priorities	
Priority	Focus
Customer Experience	Customer experience (CX) management is the practice of designing and reacting to customer interactions so as to meet or exceed expectations and increase customer satisfaction, loyalty and advocacy.
Content Marketing and Management	Content marketing and management focuses on creating, distributing and amplifying content assets via digital and offline channels. This content fuels audience engagement to drive business results.
Mobile Marketing	Effective mobile marketing balances targeting audiences with gathering data on how mobile device use informs marketing strategy, which is critical to successful multichannel marketing teams.
Social Marketing	Social marketing involves listening to and engaging customers, distributing content and cultivating brand advocates. It can increase awareness, consideration, conversion and advocacy.
Marketing Management	Marketing management involves setting marketing strategy, and sourcing, aligning and optimizing people, processes and data to align results to strategic business goals.
Advertising	Advertising now encompasses the creation, delivery and orchestration of precision-targeted marketing messages across channels and in real time.

Source: Gartner

GARTNER RECOMMENDED READING

Suggested First Steps

[“Maturity Model for Multichannel Marketing”](#)

[“Five Steps for Event-Triggered Multichannel Marketing”](#)

[“How to Build a Digital Marketing Campaign”](#)

[“How to Measure a Digital Marketing Campaign”](#)

[“How to Evaluate Multichannel Campaign Management Applications”](#)

Essential Reading

[“Magic Quadrant for Multichannel Campaign Management”](#)

[“Critical Capabilities for Multichannel Campaign Management”](#)

[“Account-Based Marketing Defined”](#)

[“How to Manage the Challenges of Distributed Marketing”](#)

[“Survey Analysis: How Leaders Manage Their Multichannel Marketing Activities”](#)

[“B2B Multichannel Marketers Must Accelerate Persona Targeting”](#)

[“Prepare Your Multichannel Marketing for the Internet of Things”](#)

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Digital has redefined the role of marketing, adding new players and creating bigger complexities

Gartner for Marketers helps you get up to speed on and stay smarter in the eight marketing areas that matter most: social, mobile, multichannel and data-driven marketing, digital commerce, customer experience, marketing management, and emerging marketing technology & trends. Our clients say that they use our real-time, expert advice and objective research, data and tools to:

- Target the right audiences
- Choose the right channels
- Quickly shortlist marketing and technology providers
- Stay informed on market and competitors
- Save time and avoid costly mistakes

Gartner helps companies improve their business results through the use of technology. Our independent research and advice is trusted by business and technology leaders in more than 10,000 distinct enterprises around the world.

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