emarsys

OMNICHANNEL MARKETING AUTOMATION

AUTOMATE OMNICHANNEL MARKETING STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Omnichannel marketing. That's a phrase marketers and e-commerce brands have been hearing quite a bit lately. While marketers have become accustomed to hearing new industry buzzwords, and the term 'omnichannel' may seem no different, the concept actually demonstrates a very important fundamental shift, both in how marketers think about reaching customers, and in the brand experience customers have come to expect.

Over the past several years, the term 'omnichannel marketing' has become defined as the approach in which brands combine all the channels they offer to consumers, both offline and online, into one cohesive strategy. As consumers interact more and more across all channels, and sometimes even multiple channels at the same time, it's more important than ever for e-commerce and retail marketers to devise a strategy for how they will create a unified message for their consumers across all channels.

Given the changing landscape and evolving consumer demands, how should e-commerce and brand marketers view omnichannel marketing? And more importantly, how should they begin to apply and even automate omnichannel strategies to improve their respective customer journeys? E-commerce marketers need to move from simply operating multiple channels into having a truly holistic multi-channel strategy, today known as the 'omnichannel strategy'.

Marketers can begin by learning from the omnichannel success other brands have already experienced, along with understanding the value of several important omnichannel marketing tactics as a starting point to implement their own effective omnichannel marketing strategies. These are some of the topics we will be considering as we walk through today's omnichannel landscape.

WHAT IS OMNICHANNEL MARKETING?

Regardless of whether a customer comes into a brick-and-mortar store, shops via a website, uses a mobile app, or browses social media channels (and sometimes all at the same time), they want the experience to be smooth and consistent, regardless of the channel.

Omnichannel marketing strategies take that expectation into consideration, and build on the understanding that a customer may begin their journey on one platform, only to jump to another, and finally convert by way of a third. As such, marketers must design their processes to be interconnected, integrated, and flexible enough to respond appropriately to a multitude of possible customer journeys.

Omnichannel marketing strategies must take into consideration that a customer may begin their journey on one platform, only to jump to another, and finally convert by way of a third.
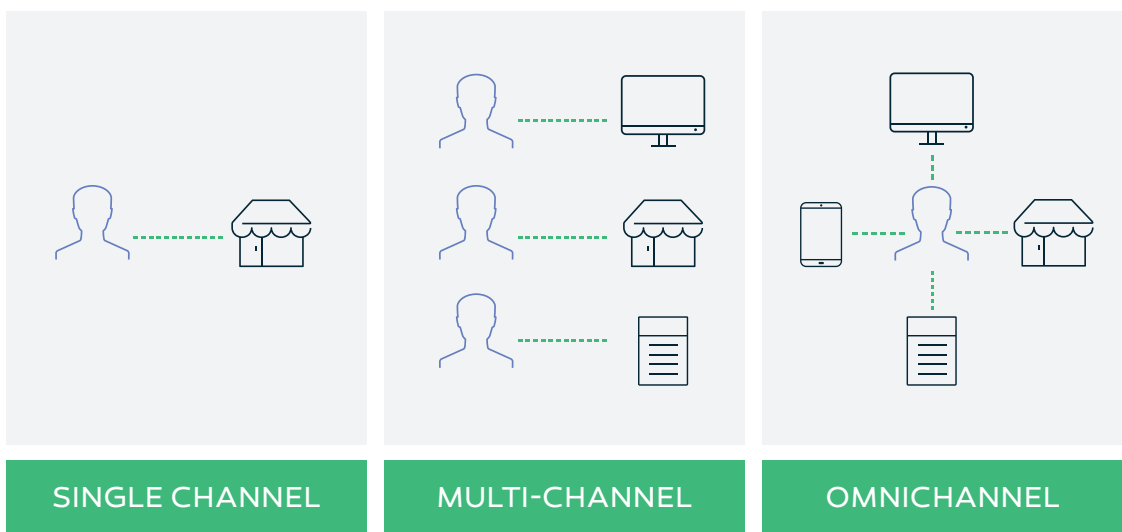
So what exactly is the difference between multi-channel and omnichannel marketing? Multi-channel marketing often just means selling the same product through various channels, each with a different message. For example, a brand's mobile app may offer a unique experience, one that's very different to the brand's website.

That may be different to how consumers are able to interact with a brand via its Facebook or Twitter page. Because each channel in this scenario is managed with each unique channel pushing out content to consumers, it describes a multi-channel approach. The brand has multiple channels, but each operates independent of the next.

On the other hand, omnichannel marketing is much more than that; it is about creating a truly unified brand experience, regardless of channel. For instance, a brand's mobile app, website, social channels, and even in-store experience are all reflective of one another. If a customer starts a purchase on a brand's website, the mobile app will recognize that, even days later when the consumer begins to browse for another product. As a result of unification across all channels, the consumer is reminded of their uncompleted transaction from several days prior.

| SINGLE CHANNEL | MULTI-CHANNEL | OMNICHANNEL |

With this seamless strategy across all channels, a consumer is placed at the center.

What an individual sees in an email should mirror the same message they can view on the brand's website, social media, and other channels.

If a brand's channels are not interconnected or able to adapt based on website or mobile actions, then this strategy may in fact be multi-channel, as multiple channels are involved, but it is definitely not omnichannel. Why? Because the customer journey through the multiple channels isn't unified into one overarching strategy focused on the customer.

Omnichannel marketing is about providing appropriate and relevant content across different channels, that ties together to create a unified message without becoming repetitive.

Omnichannel marketing is about creating that unified brand experience, regardless of channel.

WHY IS OMNICHANNEL MARKETING AUTOMATION IMPORTANT?

WHY IS OMNICHANNEL MARKETING AUTOMATION IMPORTANT?

Combining multiple channels across a brand to form a cohesive omnichannel strategy and ensure consistency can seem like a daunting undertaking, and understandably so! Omnichannel marketing automation provides a way to maximize engagement across all of the many channels a brand has at its disposal, with minimum operational effort.

How is it possible to build such a complex strategy with minimal effort? Omnichannel marketing technology allows brands to run all aspects of their marketing strategy on a single platform, from concept to execution. An omnichannel marketing automation platform allows marketers to create strategies ranging from initial touchpoints, such as a first welcome notification, to complex multi-step programs. With an omnichannel platform, all actions are performed in a unified manner across all channels. By automating the process, marketing teams can segment and personalize strategies to be displayed to various sets of individuals and define when to deploy what kind of content, all without sinking an overwhelming amount of time into operational overheads. This leaves marketing teams free to analyze campaign performance and make refinements along the way, to ensure the effectiveness of their omnichannel campaigns.

Creating programs that combine email, text messages, and social ads, for example, will maximize a marketer's reach. Omnichannel campaigns should include all of the channels that an individual can use, including website, email, mobile, social, and so on. However, marketers must ensure that each channel provides a unique value, while still linking into the brand's overall strategy. It's important that the messages reflect the nature of the channel they are on, and that the marketing automation strategies are applied effectively to the customer journey.[1]

By automating omnichannel marketing processes, marketing teams can tailor strategies to target individuals

Creating programs that combine email, text messages, social ads, and other channels will maximize a marketer's reach.

Marketers must ensure that each channel has its own unique message, while still being tied into the brand's overall strategy.

1 https://www.emarsys.com/en/resources/blog/11-best-examples-of-b2c-marketing-automation/

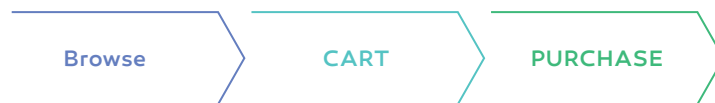# OMNICHANNEL MARKETING AND THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

OMNICHANNEL MARKETING AND THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

In theory, the customer journey should be linear. In a textbook, for instance, a customer would progress through a set number of stages from start to finish, with little variation in between. But when matching theoretical stages with what actually takes place for e-commerce and retail brands, most customer journeys end up being anything but linear.

It's crucial to consider the entire journey, along with the possible permutations, when automating omnichannel marketing strategies, as the programs can be configured to accommodate any scenario. From a single platform, brands can truly nurture and optimize engagement by easily adding more channels or branches to the existing multi-channel mix, addressing the crucial stages within the journey where automation will have the biggest impact and drive the best results.

The stages of a digital customer journey for retail and e-commerce brands, when reduced to the most simplified definition, consists of:

Browse　　CART　　PURCHASE

However, the customer journey is so much more than just fitting contacts into these three key stages of an omnichannel marketing strategy. It is vital to understand how the customer experience can vary within each stage, the implications for the customer journey as a whole, and what each customer sees at each stage.[2]

2 https://www.emarsys.com/en/resources/blog/creating-personalized-experience-across-digital-customer-journey/

THE BROWSE PHASE: GETTING BROWSERS TO BECOME BUYERS

THE BROWSE PHASE: GETTING BROWSERS TO BECOME BUYERS

In the omnichannel customer experience, the 'Browse' phase pertains to any contact that an individual has with a brand that does not result in them initiating a purchase, and includes visiting a website, a mobile app, and so on.

By using online and onsite customer behavior data, the omnichannel marketing automation platform can trigger timely and relevant messaging that displays content that relates to, or complements, the products already browsed. By looking at the behavior of similar visitors, the automation system can provide relevant, valued content, appropriate to where the customer presently is along their journey. Marketers should consider how their organization can best apply omnichannel marketing automation in the browse phase, where individuals are actively engaged with the brand's experience.

THE SHOPPING CART PHASE: EXPANDING CUSTOMER OPTIONS

THE SHOPPING CART PHASE: EXPANDING CUSTOMER OPTIONS

The 'Cart' phase of the omnichannel customer experience is where a consumer shows an intent to purchase by initiating the process, i.e. adding an item to a cart. Here, the message needs to be carefully managed and nuanced, as 70% of visitors who enter the cart stage never progress to the final purchase stage.

Using abandoned cart programs, marketers can encourage the individual to come back and finish the purchase, regardless of the channel on which they began the interaction. But how important can these programs be? Is there really any point or significant gain in revenue recovery? Yes! If a business recovers even 1% of lost customer base, they can increase their revenue by 10%.[3] To further illustrate, if 70%

loss of sales equals 700% loss of potential revenue, then the importance of abandoned cart programs becomes integral to recovering revenue. Marketing teams that leverage the power of omnichannel marketing automation platforms can recover that 1%, and turn it into a positive recovery of sales, even up to a 10% or greater return.

3 https://www.emarsys.com/en/resources/blog/6-abandoned-cart-email-tricks-work/

THE PURCHASE PHASE: GOING BEYOND THE 'CONFIRMATION' PAGE

THE PURCHASE PHASE: GOING BEYOND THE 'CONFIRMATION' PAGE

Finally, there is the 'Purchase' phase of the omnichannel customer experience. If a marketer thinks their job is done once the customer enters the purchase phase, then they are missing a very important aspect. The purchase phase is a huge opportunity to cross- or up-sell other recommended products during the checkout process, because the customer has already made it very clear they intend to do business.

Automated follow-up messages, such as thanking customers for their purchase or offering a discount on a future purchase, are a great start, and tie in perfectly to a broader omnichannel strategy. Marketers that take a more predictive, data-based approach can offer the customer truly individualized content through their device and platform of preference, or whatever channel they are using at the moment. For instance, marketers can use e-commerce data to build purchase patterns and predict, or help influence, a customer's next move. Omnichannel marketing automation helps brands create a full customer profile, offering a win-win for both customer and marketer. For the best results, the user experience across all platforms and devices should work hand in hand with an effective, timely omnichannel marketing automation platform.

CONTINUOUS TESTING AND OPTIMIZING FOR ONGOING SUCCESS

CONTINUOUS TESTING AND OPTIMIZING FOR ONGOING SUCCESS

As seasoned marketing experts know, "nothing is ever finished when it's done", and campaigns work best when they are continually tested and optimized. Even with automation, marketers have easier access to data that allows them to continuously refine and optimize strategies – as long as they choose to use it.

Multi-branch testing lets marketers test multiple campaign elements, identifying the best course of action for optimization and seamlessly moving to the next omnichannel campaign phase, such as 'Cart' or 'Purchase'.

What should marketers look for as success indicators? The most obvious answer is sales conversion rates or usage increase, but other potential metrics include:

- Increased number of conversions from one-off purchases.
- Increased click-through rates on email campaigns.
- Reduced shopping cart abandonment rate, or winning back a percentage of defecting buyers.

Based on the goals and results testing across all channels, marketers can determine the best alternate strategy and refine programs accordingly.

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE: USING OPTIMIZATION TO REFINE WIN-BACK PROGRAMS

When testing the best methods for abandoned cart programs, marketers should not only test different offers and channels, but should also test timing and frequency. For example, online retailer RuLaLa[4] now displays an abandoned cart message to visitors before they leave the site, rather than sending an email later.

Within omnichannel automation platforms, segmentation can target win-back audiences with multiple approaches. Demographics can be named, segmented by percentage, and then sent on automated paths, such as sending one group a 'come back' email with information, and another a 'come back' email with an incentive.

Customer action at this point will dictate what content is served next, and marketers can analyze each method to see which is most effective by segment response rates.

They can also test whether a 'come back' email works best after three or five days, or, as mentioned above, whether an immediate message issued before the customer leaves the site works better than either of the email approaches.

4 https://www.emarsys.com/en/resources/blog/individual-customer-engagement-at-its-best-how-rue-la-la-uses-testing-and-real-time-personalization/

REAL-TIME MESSAGING AND WEB-BASED TRIGGERS

REAL-TIME MESSAGING AND WEB-BASED TRIGGERS

Another benefit of automating omnichannel strategies is the ability to create and deploy real-time messages using web-based triggers, allowing brands to immediately react to customer actions, increasing engagement at that very moment.

Brands can then incorporate customer responses into the automated program, customizing how campaigns treat one outcome versus another, enhancing the entire customer experience, and providing overall consistent brand interactions. These brand interactions should reflect the overarching message of the omnichannel strategy.

There are key touch points along the journey where consumers will most benefit from real-time messaging and web-based triggers. These include 'first purchase', 'browsed categories but didn't buy', 'followed brand on social media', 'abandoned cart', and 'post-purchase'.

By receiving this relevant content in a timely, consistent, and personalized way, the customer feels less like a simple sales target and more like an individual. If a customer looks at dresses on a site but doesn't buy one, then receives a targeted offer on dresses via mobile app or the social channel where they just followed the brand, they are being provided a truly individualized omnichannel experience.

USE CASE EXAMPLE: AUTOMATICALLY FOLLOWING UP POST-PURCHASE

After a purchase, it's imperative that marketers enter 'retention mode'. Retaining customers is not only less expensive than acquiring new ones, it also helps to build loyalty and create brand evangelists.

Most marketers provide a basic post-purchase experience, such as order and shipping confirmations or a customer service check-in, but truly integrated data also provides powerful opportunities to use triggered messaging, such as the post-purchase follow up. By integrating the aggregate post-purchase behavior of similar audiences, marketers have an invaluable customer profile to enrich omnichannel marketing strategies; all of which can be automated.

If audience retention is a pain point, learn more by downloading the whitepaper '7 Steps to Successful Retention Automation'.

ABANDONMENT PROGRAMS AND WIN-BACK CAMPAIGNS

ABANDONMENT PROGRAMS AND WIN-BACK CAMPAIGNS

Billions of dollars' worth of merchandise will be abandoned in online shopping carts this year, a scary number for any brand. However, automated omnichannel marketing platforms can allow marketers to use revenue recovery strategies, such as abandoned shopping cart events, to trigger smart campaigns as part of their overarching omnichannel strategies.

These campaigns help to encourage customers who may be hesitant to follow through with the purchase, to do so with timely, relevant, and personalized follow-up emails or messages on other channels.

It's also possible to optimize the performance of recovery campaigns by, for example, adding predictive recommendations.[5] With predictive recommendations, not only are abandoned products shown, but also similar products purchased by other customers. This typically results in far higher recovery rates than standard abandoned cart campaigns, with some experiencing 67% higher click-through rates with emails that contain recommendations. By combining superior site tracking and automated responses, brands can recover up to 30% more carts.

Why should a brand invest in this type of automation strategy? Because acquiring new customers is more expensive than ever before.

New research discussed in the whitepaper 'Predict, protect, and recover revenue across the digital customer journey' shows that 98% of first-time visitors never convert, and of the few that do, 70% never come back. In the e-commerce world, it typically costs a brand seven times more to acquire a new customer than to retain an existing one, so a first-time purchase is rarely profitable. Thus, there is just as much (or even greater) need to target returning customers as there is for first-time shoppers.

5 https://www.emarsys.com/en/products/

BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE OMNICHANNEL MARKETING AUTOMATION PROGRAM

Reaching the right audience, continually interacting with them on an impactful level, and ensuring that interaction is consistent and complementary, are crucial. But how can e-commerce retailers build an omnichannel marketing strategy, and where should they start? By examining the key areas as outlined, the framework for an effective program begins to take shape.

One of the first areas to review is the type of marketing technology needed. Ultimately, the chosen solution should be able to automate omnichannel marketing needs, allowing personalized communication with customers in real time and on their terms. The platform should collect real-time, digital, lifestyle, and transactional data to create unified customer profiles, allowing the development of marketing campaigns that are data-driven and make the customer feel like the true individual that they are.

The digital transformation e-commerce retailers and brands are seeing today has forced marketers to change their focus significantly in recent years. Consumers are changing their behavior faster than most retailers can adapt their legacy marketing approaches and strategies. In order to remain competitive and relevant, retailers must engage savvy consumers along their journey across the complex and intertwined landscape of channels, or risk losing sales.

Omnichannel marketing gives e-commerce brands and retailers the opportunity to truly engage with their customers across all channels, with a cohesive and compelling message, as opposed to disjointed experiences and confusing messages. In order to capitalize on the omnichannel opportunity, marketers should begin to evaluate their current customers' journeys and begin exploring an omnichannel marketing automation platform that can help their customers build a lasting relationship with the brand.

Ready to learn more about the future of marketing and apply omnichannel marketing strategies to your customers' journeys? Explore recent Emarsys resources for practical tips and guidance, or request a demo to see the B2C Marketing Automation Solution in action: https://www.emarsys.com/.

CONTACT US TODAY ON:

Phone: +1 844-693-6277 | Email: us@emarsys.com

🐦 @Emarsys   in Emarsys   f Emarsys

TRUSTED BY THE WORLD'S SMARTEST MARKETERS:

blue-tomato.com

butter | LONDON™

SHERIDYNSWIM
sydney

Rakuten

Thomas Sabo

MATAHARI
DEPARTMENT STORE

THE CONRAN SHOP

ebay

Canon

WorldShop
Lufthansa

Marc O'Polo

KLINGEL

ESCADA

limango

mytheresa.com

TEMPLE & WEBSTER

zalando lounge
Exklusive Marken für besondere Kunden

kikki.K
www.kikki-k.com

L'ORÉAL

Rawlings
Est. 1887

Media Markt

prezzybox.com
gifts for everyone

Toys Я us

ghd

MEMBERSHIPS:

DDV

Certified Sender Alliance

Sender Score Certified

DMA

TÜV SÜD
ISO 27001

sncd

emarsys
THE B2C MARKETING CLOUD