

# 6 Pillars Powering **Cross-Channel Personalization**

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The days of status quo, one-size-fits-all marketing are over.

When it comes to customer engagement, the ability to deliver personalized 1:1 experiences is no longer a “nice to have.”

Personalization is now table stakes — if you can't personalize your content to the customer and deliver it consistently and effectively, you won't earn their loyalty.

That's because today's customer is too savvy, too discerning, and flush with too many options to tolerate a cookie-cutter experience with a brand. In fact, 63% of North American and UK consumers expect personalized communications from brands ([eMarketer](#)), and that number will continue to grow.

Customers deserve and demand tailored 1:1 experiences. And not just first-name-in-an-email kind of personalization — we're talking about sophisticated, highly relevant communications crafted specifically for an individual customer.

Personalization is fundamental to reaching your business objectives of driving customer growth and revenue, and thus, an essential part of a successful marketing strategy. That's why many of today's most successful marketing teams are pulling away from campaigns that lack personalization and instead are building their strategy around personalized 1:1 campaigns.

To build a truly powerful personalization strategy that not only satisfies and delights customers but actually drives tangible business results, you'll need to incorporate these six essential pillars:

**1**

**Get your data right**

**2**

**Think relevant, real time, and right now**

**3**

**Meet customers where they are at**

**4**

**Personalize for the customer, not the channel**

**5**

**Use AI to make true 1:1 personalization scalable**

**6**

**Measure your results (so you know what works)**

**1**

**Get Your  
Data Right**



85%

25%

*Marketers who use customer data in marketing outperform peers by 85% in sales growth and more than 25% in gross margin.*

*(McKinsey)*

Without data, you simply cannot personalize your marketing. What's more, without the right kind of data, you won't be able to do much more than the weakest form of personalized communications.

The high-quality data you need for high-quality personalization is not so easy to come by, particularly with data privacy and regulations like GDPR, the California Consumer Privacy Act, and Apple's "opt-in for IDFA" — all of which can impact your ability to gather data and identify customers.

Yet personalization isn't just about targeting at the top of the funnel. **If your goal is to deliver meaningful 1:1 experiences to your customers, you need to truly know your customers, which requires rich first- and zero-party customer data.**



**“Your data is so, so important.** A lot of brands talk about it, [and] it seems to be a bit of a buzzword. But in reality, **you really need to understand your customer data.** Who are your customers? Who are your VIPs? Who are you active spenders? Who are your loyal spenders? How do we engage them? How do we [as marketers] approach them at the right space, at the right time, and the right wording, in the right language? These are things that are so important, and **developing our tech stack is absolutely key for us to grow the business.”**

**Kiran Bains**, Chief Marketing Officer

LOUNGE

# First-Party and Zero-Party Customer Data

First-party customer data is the data about your customers your business owns and collects. Examples include behavioral data, sales and transactional data, and demographic data. Because you collect this data yourself and know the source, you get several benefits:

- **You can trust the quality**
- **Your competitors don't have it**
- **You don't have to buy it from another company.**

Zero-party customer data is any data openly and intentionally shared or told to you by the customer, oftentimes granular and specific in nature (such as their preferences and interests). This data is freely given by the customer, not just out of the kindness of their heart, but with the understanding that there is value in it for them — namely, an improved, more personalized shopping experience. Keep in mind, you'd only collect this from customers you've already identified, not anonymous shoppers.

The beauty of this insights-rich data is that it can be brought together along with your other data sets to form a more



complete composite of your customer — a unified customer profile. A unified customer profile takes into account data such as your customer's email responses, purchase history, product affinity, and more, giving you a holistic view of the customer. Having this data unified ensures you can deliver content to your customer that is always personalized and relevant seamlessly across any channel.

## Strategy for Capturing Data

It's critical to have a plan in place for capturing the data you need for personalization. After all, the better your data is, the better your personalization strategy will be. You'll be relying on your customers to provide this data, so whether you ask for it when they sign up for a newsletter, complete a new user registration, complete a survey, or any other method, you'll want to keep these three things in mind:

- **Provide value in exchange for the customer's data**
- **Be upfront in how you intend to use data**
- **Put the customer's data to good use**

Consider different points in the customer's journey where it's appropriate to ask for data (e.g., when registering for your

mailing list, following a purchase, etc.). After you capture the customer data, deliver on your end of the deal: offer a superior experience *uniquely tailored to the customer, one that your competitors can't provide.*

## Get Rid of Silos

For truly powerful personalization, you need to personalize communications to customers across any and all channels (more on channels later). But to do that, your data needs to be freely accessible at every touchpoint. **Your data cannot be siloed.**

Instead, unify all your data sets (product, sales, and first-party customer data) into a single platform. Ideally, you want an integrated tech stack with an open architecture that will connect to any system, any data source, and every digital and physical customer touchpoint. Then, you can fully leverage the data for consistent omnichannel personalization, placing the customer at the center of your marketing.



**“One of the issues we had originally was how our data was siloed. Our transaction data wasn't talking to the data we had in an email platform. So being able to neatly tie up customers with what they were buying, what we had available in our product feed, for example, and where the customer was on the journey really helped. [...] But really, it starts with analyzing the data that you've got, bringing that all together in one place so the data is no longer siloed, analyzing [it], and then making use of all of the technology that Emarsys has in terms of recommendations.”**

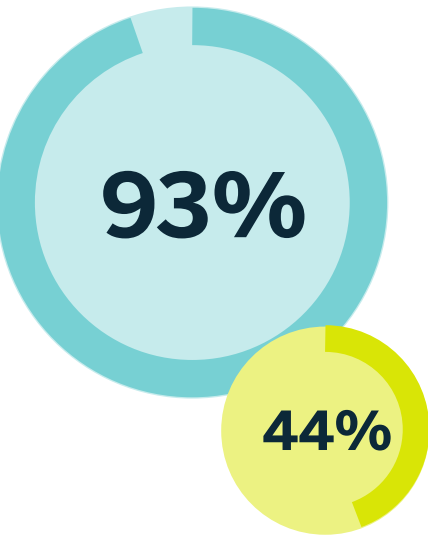
**Sebastiano Elia**, Head of CRM & Customer Insight

**ORLEBAR BROWN**

The background features a teal gradient with several overlapping geometric shapes. A large yellow circle is positioned in the top right corner. A dark teal semi-circle is located at the bottom right. The overall design is modern and minimalist.

**2**

**Think Relevant,  
Real Time,  
and Right Now**



*93% of consumers report receiving marketing communications that are not relevant to them, and 44% of consumers are willing to switch to brands who better personalize marketing communication.*

(Infogroup via [eMarketer](#))

Imagine you receive an email from one of your favorite athletic apparel companies. Inside is a personalized offer for the perfect pair of sneakers — your exact size, preferred fit, and completely in sync with your style. In fact, they're so perfect... that you already bought those shoes when you were visiting that website a few months ago.

What a let down, right?

With personalization, the name of the game is delivering the right message to the right customer at the right time. And although the right message to the right person is critical, it's the "right time" part that really locks in the win. That's why one of the biggest difference-makers for taking your brand's personalization from basic to potent comes down to **relevance plus timing**. Personalized communications that happen in real time and are relevant to the customer (either based on their behavior, preferences, or otherwise) make a greater impact.



**“If someone's looking at a product at any of your touchpoints or communicating with your teams, [you want] the ability to transact in the moment. And if you can't transact in the moment, you then hope that, at a later point, the customer can jump on a convenient channel for you as the retailer — not necessarily [one that's] convenient for that customer — and then hope that they transact [and] remember [to] stay connected to the brand and the product. So contextual commerce really breaks down those barriers and facilitates a transaction there and then.”**

**Shane Lenton**, Chief Innovation Officer

**CUE**

When customers are engaging with your brand, regardless of channel, seek out ways to engage them in real time. For example, if you have an app, you can provide users with personalized communications via in-app messages or push notifications that correlate with actions they take while using your app. These live reactions can include a specific offer (such as a free trial period), request for feedback, or instructions that will help them get more value from the app.

The same goes for customers browsing or taking actions on your website. In-the-moment 1:1 communications should be **contextual**, based on what that specific user is doing, and **relevant**, based on that user's individual data. This is what creates that personal feeling, one that will actually captivate your customer, leading to a more satisfying experience.



**"You need to make sure your product is relevant first. [...] But also, [when] driving awareness or driving consideration, look at your customer segments. Look at what channels are most effective for those segments and make sure that you're talking to those segments in the most relevant way in the channels where they're going to be present."**

Catriona Woodward, Head of Digital Marketing

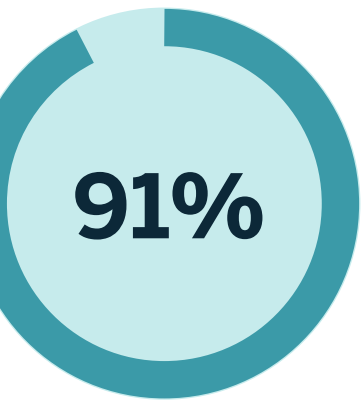






**3**

**Meet Customers  
Where They Are At**



*91% of consumers prefer to shop with brands that connect with them across their preferred channels.*

*(Loyalty360)*

In the not-too-distant past, when the majority of commerce was conducted in physical spaces, customer engagement was all about driving customers to your brand. The idea was: Make enough noise and capture enough attention, and the customers will find you.

In today's world of digital-first commerce, the name of the customer engagement game has changed. It's not about bringing the customers to *your* brand, it's about bringing your brand *to the customers*. You can no longer assume that, with a strong enough product offering and message, customers will put in the leg work to go and find you.

If your goal is to drive growth and revenue, you need to connect with customers at the most opportune time, delivering the right message when it will have the greatest impact. But real-time personalization can only happen when you put yourself (your brand) out there on all the channels your customers prefer.

Instead of waiting for customers to come to you, meet customers where they are at, so you never miss an opportunity to connect.



“So we leverage the information of ‘Where are people accessing Facebook?’ and we prioritized that pop-up on the phone, and **we saw results that completely supported that [information]**. So where on desktop it may have hovered around a two-to-five percent click through rate, on Mobile we saw those numbers skyrocket ... And so it wasn't just about putting out there what we wanted the consumer to see, it was **putting it out there in the right channel, giving them the right experience,** and then if you do that, they're going to react.”

**Lindsay Ball**, Sr. Digital Marketing Manager

**Instant brands**

## More Channels Means More Flexibility, More Personalized Content

We're in a golden age for shoppers. As technology accelerates, so too does the breadth of channels available and overall convenience of the shopping experience. Whether you want to research a product or service, or make a purchase, simply take out your smartphone, and with a few swipes of your thumb, mission accomplished.

Customers like the convenience of shopping and engaging with a brand on their own terms – when, where, and how they prefer. In fact, they've grown accustomed to it. They don't just value choices and flexibility, they *demand* them.

By following an omnichannel approach where your channels and data are fully connected, you give customers the choice and flexibility that they expect. The multi-channel data you receive from your customer will then allow you to provide more relevant recommendations, accurate product information, and personalized content that reflects their individual channel, purchase, and product preferences. Once you embrace omnichannel marketing and have your channels and systems connected, you can meet customers where they are, whichever channel they prefer, with the content they want.

## Multi-Channel Customers are More Valuable

Omnichannel marketing makes for a better customer experience because you're better suited to cater to individuals' needs and preferences. But adopting omnichannel so you can meet customers where they're at is also just good business. That's because multi-channel customers are more valuable to your brand.

According to [Google](#), customers that use multiple channels to interact with a brand have a 30% higher LTV than single-channel shoppers, compared to shoppers that only use one channel. [Harvard Business Review](#) tells us that omnichannel customers spend "10% more online than single-channel customers." Long story short: *more channels equal more revenue*.

As you broaden your breadth of channels, you increase the likelihood that you'll have at least more than one channel that any given customer will prefer. Plus, the more channels you utilize for your omnichannel marketing strategy, the more opportunity you have to convert customers, drive a purchase, and increase revenue. Once you go omnichannel, your customers and your business will be happier.

**4**

**Personalize  
for the Customer,  
Not the Channel**

A light blue circular graphic with a white border, containing the text '71%' in bold black font. The circle is partially filled with a darker blue segment.A yellow circular graphic with a white border, containing the text '29%' in bold black font. The circle is partially filled with a darker yellow segment.

*71% of customers confirm they want a consistent experience across channels, but only 29% say they get it.*

*(Forbes)*

Digital commerce has seen explosive growth recently, something that was accelerated out of necessity but nevertheless was inevitable. This has driven customers to wholeheartedly embrace the full breadth of digital channels available for engaging with a brand. But as teams become savvy with their multi-channel approach to 1:1 marketing, an all-too-common mistake is to personalize for the channel, rather than for the customer

Customers often choose to move across channels seamlessly. And although you may view each and every channel as having its own special place in your integrated marketing strategy, to the customer, it isn't that way at all. To them, it's all your brand, no matter which channel they choose. **This makes it vital to provide a cohesive brand experience for customers along every touchpoint, regardless of whether they shop online or in-store.**

If your personalization efforts on one channel (your website, for example) differ noticeably from other channels (email, mobile, call center, and in-store), you'll create a fragmented experience for the customer. The right technology will help you avoid this friction. If your data is unified, and fully integrated within your customer engagement platform, you can create consistent 1:1 experiences for your customers across any channel.



**"[Don't] separate online and offline in terms of mindset, operations, and philosophy. That has to be blended in one, because, as I said, it's one brand. And even if you're [shopping from] your sofa, you talk to one brand. You don't talk to just the store manager [in the store], you talk to them and talk to the brand, full stop. Whatever, wherever — it has to be the consistent experience and the quality."**

**Benoit Lavaud**, Global Head of E-Commerce





# Each Channel Contributes to a Complete, Consistent Customer Experience

Every channel will yield unique insights about a customer, and a customer's behavior might change depending on which channel they're using. However, instead of viewing those channel-specific insights as a complete story, they should be viewed in context with every other channel and as part of a bigger picture.

As you're building out your cross-channel personalization strategy, keep the following channels in mind and think about how they can work in concert to form a unified, consistent experience for the customer.

## Email

Email is the most popular channel from a customer perspective, and the biggest revenue-driver for your marketing. Get email right, and it will serve as a strong foundation for your entire cross-channel personalization strategy. What does getting it right look like? Your email content should be highly relevant and personalized.

Instead of focusing on the message you want to send to the customer, consider what messages they want to receive.

Personalizing email with relevant content based on context (e.g., your customer's behaviors, where they are at in their lifecycle) makes your message meaningful, and even appreciated, by the customer. A well-timed, relevant email message can also be a jumping off point to get your customer to engage with your other channels, like your website or mobile app.

### **Web**

The lines between digital and physical are so blurred that it's fair to say your website defines your brand just as strongly as your brick-and-mortar stores. In fact, many customers see these as one continuous brand experience. So it's crucial that your online experience be as highly engaging as your in-store experience.

Consider how you can personalize the web experience for your customers. At the store level, your staff can get to know each customer, learn their needs and interests, and offer personalized recommendations or service accordingly. You should approach customer engagement the same way on your website. With the right tech in place, you can pull your real-time session data and historical CRM data and create customized, targeted content and offers for customers visiting your website.



"So the ability to **easily set up a web channel campaign** in Emarsys has really allowed us to target specific users. We can now choose an identified segment, or even unidentified users, and run some great tactical campaigns to achieve real ROI for the business. [...] **With the use of Emarsys, we could serve up the right overlay to the customer**, whether that was encouraging them to sign up or log in. Plus, by having the overlay pop up in front of the customer's faces while shopping online, **we've really noticed the difference in online sign ups and overall conversion.**"

**Sarah Neeson**, Customer Engagement Specialist



## Mobile App and In-box

Your mobile app provides a unique, highly interactive way for a customer to engage with your brand that differs from any other channel. It is also a more focused, self-contained experience compared to your website. However, that doesn't mean it should be disconnected from the complete customer experience.

For example, in-app offers are fantastic for inspiring a purchase. But if the offers are inconsistent with offers you provide on other channels, this results in a poor customer experience. Provide your customers with relevant, personalized offers that make the most sense based on their complete history with your brand, rather than their app behavior or preferences alone.

## Push

The wrong push notification — e.g., irrelevant and poorly timed — will annoy your customer and therefore runs the risk of being intrusive. However, a highly relevant, personalized push notification with a value-adding message will be welcomed by your customer, and a great way to re-engage a customer and drive them to take action.



**"You can try to implement every different kind of communication tool, but you really have to see which communication tool the customer wants. So, you can implement emails and can send out emails per day but if the customer doesn't show any engagement, then maybe email is not the correct tool. So you really have to see which communication tool fits to what you need [to reach the customer] and also in which part of the lifecycle."**

Janina Kraus , Team Lead CRM



Remember, none of this personalization happens if your data is not connected. Having strong connections between data and channels will give you the ability to personalize with a complete view of your customer, ensuring efficient execution of your omnichannel 1:1 campaigns, and maximizing their impact.



**5**

**Use AI to Make  
True Personalization  
Scalable**

[Customer-centric personalization](#) is what many, if not all, brands aspire to achieve. The problem is that such a high degree of personalization is difficult to scale.

Although there are many martech solutions designed to help you scale your marketing in a general sense, they might not facilitate true 1:1 personalized marketing. That's because scalable marketing, more often than not, is by its very nature *depersonalized*. That's what makes it scalable — you don't have to make it special to any one person.

But depersonalized marketing won't be tolerated by your customers. And they don't care that you're trying to market to hundreds, thousands, or millions of other customers, too. The expectation for personalized experiences remains. So how do you scale your marketing while still delivering relevant 1:1 content to every customer, every time?

Enter AI.



**"What has been really rewarding to see since we started using AI is that we saw an increase [of] 10% in our average basket value on a particular set of customer lifecycle. But we also won back 24% of the customers that were likely to defect. So for us, the numbers were really incredible, because for anyone that knows BrandAlley, they know how many emails we send to our base on a daily and weekly basis."**

**Alexandra Vancea**, Head of Marketing

**BRANDALLEY**  
THE NON-STOP DESIGNER SALE

Artificial intelligence and machine learning allow you to collect large amounts of rich customer data and create [highly personalized 1:1 marketing](#) that you can automate and scale. AI uses self-learning algorithms and predictive analytics to inform



and project events in the future, more accurately predicting customer behavior. It's an essential tool that helps determine which content will be most relevant and personal for a specific customer, as well as when and where it should be delivered, to have the most impact.

The tech can also help enrich customer profiles with predicted scores that tell you when a customer is most likely to convert, churn, or simply remain inactive. Having AI send automated 1:1 communications at these pivotal times in a customer's journey can be the difference between a one-and-done shopper or a loyal, lifelong customer. And again, with AI, you don't have to do this all one at a time by hand (or more accurately, mouse or trackpad). Instead, you can do this at scale, whether you have 100, 1,000, or 100,000 customers in your brand's database — and if your brand engages with global audiences, AI will help you scale across multiple regions and in different languages.

Your business must grow. At least, that's how your C-suite sees it. And for your part as a marketer, you're on board. But for true 1:1 personalization that can be executed at scale — which is necessary for driving growth and revenue — you'll need artificial intelligence.



**"We have such a large database of people and a lot of different customers, and they have all different shopping behaviors. So by the time we sent an offer to that customer, to all those customers at that set time, it was basically too late for us, or it was a lot harder for us to win them back ... [Now] we're able to actually use the AI to identify which customers, on a more 1:1 level, are going to defect, and then trigger the communications before they actually defect, not after the fact when it's a lot harder to win them back."**

Lara Donnelly, Customer Lifecycle Manager



# 6

## **Measure Your Results (So You Know What Works)**



*60% of marketers say they struggle to meet the increasing pressure to prove ROI.*

*(eConsultancy)*

As a marketer, you are focused on engaging, delighting, and satisfying customers that shop with your brand. But of course, that's not your only priority. You also have a responsibility to generate positive results for the business.

It's important to keep an eye on how marketing is directly impacting the bottom line — because of course, your C-suite will be. This is especially true if you've invested considerable resources into technology to better personalize the customer experience.

That's why, when it comes to personalization, your ability to measure the results is just as important as your ability to execute. Personalization for the sake of personalization isn't the goal. You need to know what aspects of your personalization strategy are (or are not) working, so that you can continue to optimize and adjust, thus ensuring your efforts are **generating results**.



**"We have really limited resources. We're doing a whole lot with a very small team. [...] And so lifetime value really gives us an idea of where to focus, where should prioritization be, what should we be building, what are the needs, and really also, what are our shortcomings? Where are we falling short? If you can measure that with a number, you can then compare it to other things or [areas of] impact and figure out where [you] need to focus."**

**Greg Holmes**, Covetrus Marketing Operations Manager



You have a way of directly tying your campaigns and programs to marketing-generated sales. Attributing purchases to specific programs allows you to identify the highest-performing endeavors as well as the campaigns that aren't working. This level of analytics can also indicate where opportunities with a campaign might lie — is it the creative content? Is it timing or execution? Which variables can be adjusted for better results?

An even better setup includes having your analytics *built directly into your customer engagement platform*. This way, you can see the sales generated by personalized email, push, and SMS campaigns — down to the individual campaign level — as a percentage of your total revenue. This leads to better allocation of your resources over time and proves to the C-suite just how impactful your 1:1 marketing efforts are when it comes to driving results for the business.



“One of my favorite features in Emarsys is being able to see exactly where the customer clicked, and we didn't have that information before. So that shapes a lot of our decisions, [and] **we now know the strongest revenue potential group to target**. Send Time Optimization is another favorite of mine. We use that for almost every campaign, and that's actually **increased our open rate by over 8%.**”

**Kelly Ringel**, Digital Marketing Coordinator

**JOLYN**

## Conclusion

Customers are more sophisticated than ever before.

Fortunately, so is our technology. Personalization will continue to be an exceedingly important component of a brand's marketing strategy as customers grow to expect it, and the technology to facilitate it advances.

But again, not all personalization is created equal. If you want to distinguish your brand from competitors and cement it in your customers' minds as the brand that truly understands them, you need to go beyond basic personalization. The degree of personalization your brand offers must be much more potent — truly impactful 1:1 marketing that delights and satisfies customers.

As you evaluate your strategy to power-up your personalization (and seek out the technology solution that will get you there), remember the six pillars:

**1**

**Get your data right**

**2**

**Think relevant, real time, and right now**

**3**

**Meet customers where they are at**

**4**

**Personalize for the customer, not the channel**

**5**

**Use AI to make true 1:1 personalization scalable**

**6**

**Measure your results (so you know what works)**

By fine-tuning your personalization strategy, you can provide the exceptional 1:1 experiences your customers deserve at scale and deliver the results and growth your business demands.

Want to see what an **omnichannel customer engagement platform** built for truly impactful 1:1 marketing looks like?

Head to **[emarsys.com/demo](https://www.emarsys.com/demo)** to get started.





# About Emarsys

Emarsys, now an SAP company, empowers digital marketing leaders and business owners with the only omnichannel customer engagement platform built to accelerate business outcomes.

By rapidly aligning desired business results with proven omnichannel customer engagement strategies — crowdsourced from leading brands across your industry — our platform enables you to accelerate time to value, deliver superior one-on-one experiences and produce measurable results... fast.

Emarsys is the platform of choice for more than 1,600 customers around the world. Join thousands of leading brands who trust Emarsys to deliver the predictable, profitable outcomes that their businesses demand and the highly personalized omnichannel experiences that their customers deserve.

For more information, visit [www.emarsys.com](http://www.emarsys.com)



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