

Consumer Products Engagement

The Global Consumer Products Engagement Report UAE Edition

Mapping Customer
Engagement Maturity

SAP Emarsys in association with **Deloitte.**





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Executive Summary: The Engagement Era

Consumer products (CP) brands are under immense pressure: inflation driving costs up, supply chain disruptions, market saturation, and more. And perhaps the most intense pressure comes from consumer brand loyalty — or rather, the lack of it.

Based on our decades-long experience partnering with 1,500+ brands to provide personalized consumer experiences, we've found that consumers today expect more in exchange for their loyalty. For this reason, we sought to

explore how digital transformation is impacting the status quo of marketing, both for consumers and brands. What we found is that transformation is already underway:

Marketing has entered the *Engagement Era*.



In this era, brands differentiate themselves by creating a dialogue with consumers, taking an omnichannel approach across the entire customer lifecycle. For this type of engagement, a foundation of connected data across every touchpoint of a business — as well as the ability to understand and leverage that data — is essential to success.

How are CP brands navigating this new era? What are their priorities around enabling their data strategy, and what role does AI play? Which channels are brands relying on to connect with consumers? Are they going beyond traditional marketing (like TV ads) to engage on emerging platform?

On the consumer side, how do consumers feel about brands? How are Gen Z shoppers impacting consumption?

These questions and more were the drivers behind this Global Consumer Products Engagement Report, which was conducted in association with Deloitte. This edition of the report pulls out insights specific to the United Arab Emirates. We hope the findings here will prove insightful for you as you work towards your engagement transformation.



Sara Richter
CMO, SAP Emarsys

Key Findings

Marketer Highlights

72% of all consumer product marketers say it's becoming harder to engage meaningfully with customers.

69% Two in three consumer product marketers say their organization's data is too unstructured to use effectively.

66% of all consumer product marketers believe consumer behavior is becoming harder to predict.

65% of all consumer product marketers believe AI will be essential for engaging new customers.

Consumer Highlights

93% of consumers say they've made spending cutbacks, but with notable generational differences in where they make those cuts.

72% of consumers are put off by brands asking for data but not explaining how it will be used.

67% of consumers have switched to own-label alternatives because they are more affordable.

61% of Gen Z say they don't care about "brands" as long as a consumer product meets their needs — more than any previous generation.

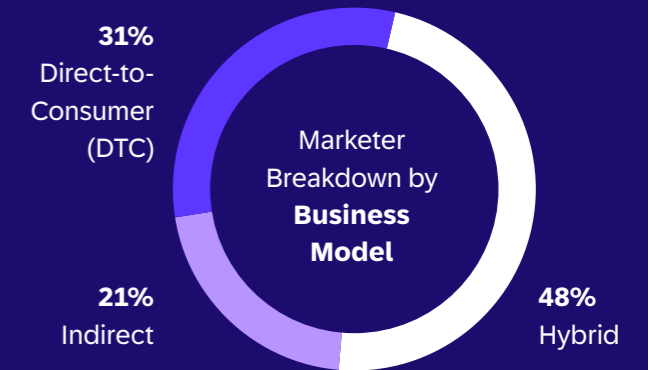
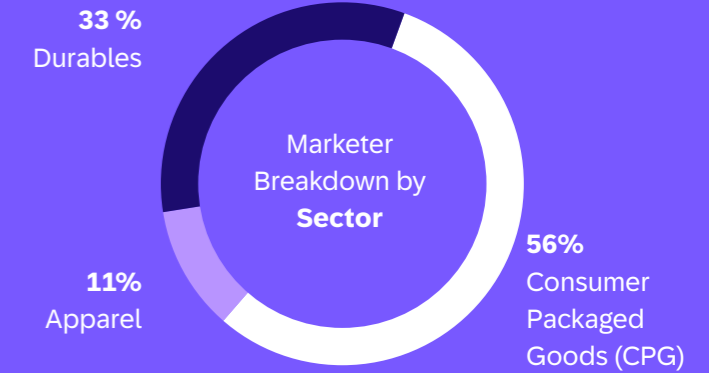


Methodology

This research was conducted by Opinium as part of a global research among a sample of 14,000 general respondents and 750 senior marketers across the United Arab Emirates (UAE), UK, US, Germany, Australia, Taiwan and Brazil. Opinium abides by and employs members of the Market Research Society and follows the MRS code of conduct which is based on the ESOMAR principles. Opinium is also a member of the British Polling Council.

The consumer research was conducted among a sample of 2,000 general respondents across the UAE. The data was collected between 20 – 28 February 2025.

The marketer research was conducted among a sample of 100 senior decision makers in the marketing team for enterprise-level businesses with 500+ employees and with \$250m+ annual turnover across the UAE. The data was collected between 3 – 24 February 2025.



Commentary from Deloitte

Consumer products brands face a paradox: customers expect more personalized experiences but are increasingly selective about how they engage. The Global Consumer Products Report decodes this complexity, offering vital insights for companies navigating the new rules of customer connection.

Among the various engagement trends, the dichotomy between marketer enthusiasm and consumer selectivity regarding AI stands out — representing both a challenge and opportunity for forward-thinking brands.

Our experience confirms this nuanced reality, we've seen substantial enthusiasm for AI-generated content, particularly in three key areas:

- 1. Strategic personalization where customers want it:** AI excels at creating tailored content across locales, segments, and product catalogs—precisely where consumers actually want personalization rather than simulated interactions.
- 2. Rapid content updates for market responsiveness:** The technology can enable swift adaptation to changing market dynamics, such as seasonal shifts and emerging trends.
- 3. Faster delivery with human quality control:** While AI reduces time-to-market, thoughtful human guardrails remain critical for brand consistency and quality control.

This capability gap between AI's production capacity and traditional content creation represents a significant advantage for early adopters who balance automation with authentic brand voice. Forward-thinking organizations can establish frameworks that maximize AI's efficiency while maintaining the human-centered experiences consumers prefer.

By deploying AI where it adds value while respecting consumer preferences, brands can transform their engagement capabilities in an increasingly competitive marketplace.



Russell McLean
Principal, Deloitte Consulting LLP



The Maturity Index Score





CEM: The Maturity Index Score

Leveraging our 25 years of experience in orchestrating consumer engagement, we've developed a scoring system to analyze how advanced each respondent's engagement practices are. We scored each brand against our **Customer Engagement Maturity (CEM)*** matrix, which is based on the brand's ongoing investment in:



Connected data strategy



Omnichannel engagement



Use of email marketing



Real-time personalization



AI and automation adoption



Customer loyalty

***Customer Engagement Maturity (CEM) Levels:** Given the sample sizes, the figures for CEM in this report are indicative. High vs low CEM can be analyzed robustly at a global level.

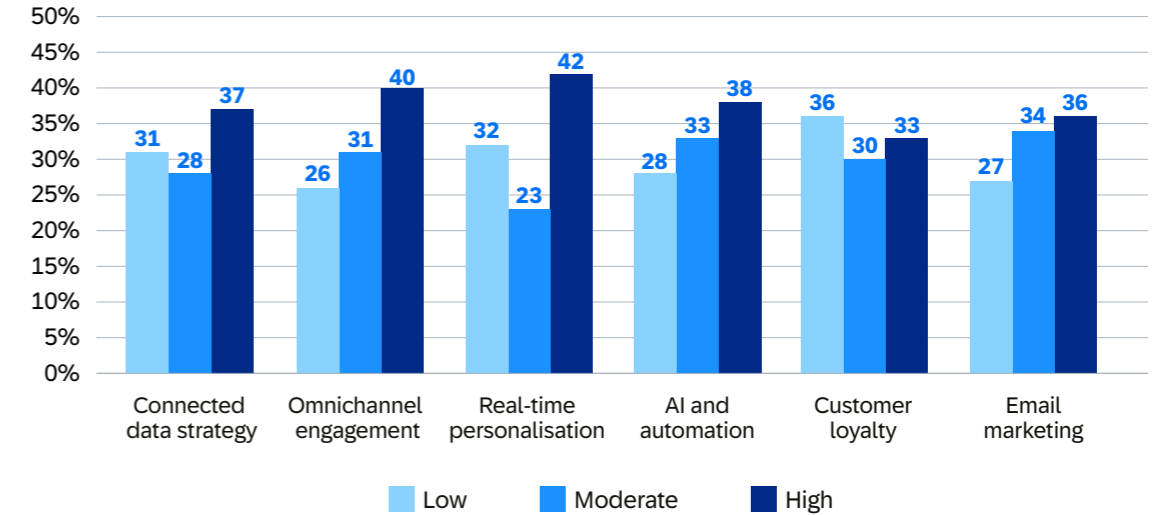


Consumer products sectors with the highest CEM scores

1. Electronics
2. Consumer packaged goods (CPG)
3. Automotive

	Engagement Adoption	Engagement Capabilities
Low CEM Score	Minimal adoption of customer engagement technologies and strategies.	Customer data tends to be siloed, and marketers struggle to track and understand consumer behaviors. They lack real-time visibility and have limited access to advanced tools for AI and automation. Driving consumer loyalty is a major pain point.
Moderate CEM Score	Medium level of adoption of customer engagement technologies and strategies.	Brands have some insight into consumer data and offer basic personalization, but cross-channel interactions may be disjointed from the consumer's perspective. These brands often rely heavily on discounting to drive loyalty, struggling to develop deeper brand affinity.
High CEM Score	Advanced in their adoption of engagement technologies and strategies.	High maturity brands can rapidly adapt to changes in the market, and they use integrated data to understand their consumers and drive true brand loyalty. They leverage strategies and tools like AI to deliver personalized, omnichannel engagement in real time, at scale.

Customer Engagement — Features and Maturity in CP, UAE

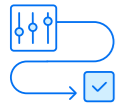


Maturity and the Impact of Investment

Investing in engagement requires both financial support and time, so both marketers and the C-suite need full confidence that the effort will lead to measurable growth. Is investing in consumer engagement beneficial? Of brands who invested, what outcomes have they seen?

This research revealed that high CEM brands saw increased benefits from their investment in their data foundation and consumer engagement technology.

Benefits of High CEM Maturity



Brands are better able to make **real-time decisions.**



Brands can more effectively **optimize campaigns.**



Brands are better at **predicting consumer behaviours.**



Brands experience **fewer issues with “dark data.”**



Consumers are **more loyal.**



Consumers show **greater affinity.**



Consumers are more likely to be **brand advocates.**

	Low CEM Brands	Moderate CEM Brands	High CEM Brands
Consumers actively advocate for the brand	74%	69%	79%
Marketers feel the brand has a strong emotional connection with consumers	65%	60%	79%
Marketers experience issues with “dark data”	70%	57%	79%
Marketers experience issues accessing and using data in real time	57%	47%	68%
Marketers are likely to be transparent with consumers about how their data is used	70%	77%	86%
Marketers optimize campaigns in real time	19%	29%	31%
Marketers are better at predicting future consumer behaviors	30%	34%	41%
The brand has a high customer retention rate	83%	66%	68%
Marketers currently learn from past campaigns and optimize them	15%	25%	15%



Trends for 2025





Consumer Products: Five Trends Defining 2025

The results of this research underscore the volatility of the consumer products market, not only in the US but around the world. These trends are pushing brands and marketers away from using their traditional strategies like price hikes and increased ad spending. Continual price increases in the face of fierce competition for consumer loyalty becomes unsustainable, and the cost of digital advertising has only gone up.

Savvy CP marketers know that survival in this Era of Engagement means more drastic change is not only essential but in fact urgent.

In the following sections, we'll break down the five top trends that have become the driving forces for innovation, opening new opportunities for marketers to leap forward and raise their engagement maturity:

- 1 Consumers have become harder to engage... and retain**
- 2 AI and the demand for personalization-driven innovation**
- 3 Consumer channels become more varied and volatile**
- 4 Consumers push back on “dark data”**
- 5 Millennials lead the digital commerce charge**

72%

of all consumer product marketers say it's becoming harder to engage meaningfully with customers.

61%

of Gen Z say they don't care about “brands” as long as a consumer product meets their needs — less than any previous generation.

Trend 1: Consumers have become harder to engage... and retain

Before brands can engage consumers with meaningful experiences, marketers first need to understand those consumers — what messages interest them, what channels they're using, when they're likely to engage, what their spending habits are, etc.

That's a lot to ask of CP brands, especially considering the point of purchase is indirect.

66%

of all consumer product marketers believe consumer behavior is becoming harder to predict.

72%

of all consumer product marketers say it's becoming harder to engage meaningfully with customers.

57%

of all consumer product marketers believe they must adapt to change faster than ever before.

From the consumer's perspective, while managing the cost of living is high on their list of priorities, interestingly, 68% of them actively advocate for their favorite brands in public. This indicates that brand loyalty is still alive and kicking, despite the fact that 67% of consumers have switched to own-label products to cut down on costs.

67%

Nearly three-quarters of consumers have switched to own-label alternative products because they are more affordable.

73%

of consumers believe that if they buy directly from a product's website, it should cost less.

68%

Nearly three-quarters of consumers actively advocate for their favorite brands in public.

17%

of consumers will only read the subject line of an email from a brand, while 26% won't make it further than the first 1-2 sentences.

Areas where consumers are cutting back on spending

45%

Luxury and premium products

32%

Fitness or wellness products (e.g. supplements, equipment)

41%

Big purchases (e.g. electronics, furniture)

30%

Subscriptions (e.g. streaming services, meal kits)

36%

Travel or holidays

27%

Branded groceries (switching to own-label alternatives)

35%

Eating out or takeaway meals

24%

Eco-friendly or sustainable products

33%

Non-essential items (e.g. beauty products, accessories)



Ferrara.

“Our marketing teams are really looking to engage directly with consumers to provide them with content and campaigns, because we want happy brand fans.”



Dan Bartelsen,
Director of Information Technology Business
Partners for E-Commerce and Digital, Ferrara



Case Study

How Ferrara Sweetened Their Direct Consumer Engagement

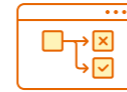
Ferrara is a leader in sweet snacking (including brands like NERDS, Jelly Belly, Trolli, SweeTARTS, and more), delighting customers with high-quality products and innovative creations.

Challenge:

Operating in a competitive market with volatile consumer channels and increasingly savvy consumers, Ferrara sought to create a modern omnichannel experience but was limited by legacy technologies. They needed a way to modernize their consumer engagement platforms and data management systems to effectively address evolving market demands and consumer preferences.

Solution:

By partnering with SAP and Deloitte and pivoting to a more data-informed and consumer-centric approach, Ferrara uncovered insights into their fan base, such as the fact that many enjoy Ferrara candies while gaming. Using their findings, the brand enhanced its consumer engagement strategies, resulting in better consumer retention and satisfaction. This also sets Ferrara in a position to easily scale and adapt to evolving consumer preferences and market conditions in the future, making it **a high scoring CEM brand.**



Personalized Marketing

Utilizing SAP Emarsys together with the SAP suite to effectively reveal hidden connections and deliver hyper-personalized experiences that not only engage consumers but convert them into true fans.



Unified Customer Profile

Deployed SAP Customer Identity and Access Management (CIAM) for B2C, SAP Customer Data Platform, and SAP Emarsys to create a unified and centralized customer profile across its scattered databases.



Real-time Data Integration

Integrated consumer, retail, and supply chain insights using SAP HANA database and SAP Analytics for seamless data processing in real-time.

The Results

59%

increase
in contactable customers

20%

above industry average
open rates
for email campaigns

300%

fan growth
of Trolli brand

Trend 2

AI and the demand for personalization-driven innovation


Artificial intelligence (AI) has been used in marketing for a long time now — SAP Emarsys introduced its first AI features more than a decade ago. However, in the past few years AI has seen a meteoric rise in attention and widespread availability.

While marketers are enthusiastic about AI (65% believe AI will be essential for engaging new customers), consumers showed less keen interest, with only 14% indicating that they want brands to create more personal interactions with AI. This apparently low number could be a reflection of a lack of consumer awareness around the essential nature of AI for creating personalization at scale.


The consumer appetite for personalized content was much greater, with 44% of consumer respondents wanting more personal deals and offers. In order to accomplish advanced personalization at scale, marketers require the ability to predict and respond to consumer behavior in real time while maximizing their creative efficiency, which is why they're so keen on AI.

Marketers' views on AI


The increased awareness of AI, plus the proliferation of generative AI, means marketers have new tools on hand for developing campaigns and increasing their efficiency. Additionally, marketers are keenly aware that they may need to adapt rapidly as new data regulations come into effect around the world.



65% of all consumer product marketers believe AI will be essential for engaging new customers.




68% of all consumer product marketers think it will be essential for retaining existing customers.




61% of all consumer product marketers say they are prepared to react quickly to new data regulations.

Consumers' views on AI


Though a significant percentage (70%) of consumers value AI generated products or content, only 14% want brands to create more personal interactions using AI. This indicates that consumers value AI innovation but don't want to feel like they are interacting with AI.



70% of consumers want/value products or content created by AI (e.g., customized designs or tools).



44% of consumers want more personal deals and offers.



14% want brands to create more personal interactions using AI.

Trend 3 Consumer channels become more varied and volatile

Supply chains haven't cornered the market on disruption — popular engagement channels can also be disrupted, sometimes drastically (as we've seen with TikTok).

Historically, CP brands have focused on traditional marketing (TV ads, print, radio, event sponsorships, etc.), and those channels will continue to be of value going forward. However, this research has revealed that there are other emerging channels beyond retail media that are impacting this industry.

Channels compete for limited audience attention, and consumers may change their preferences or adopt alternative social apps, as with Bluesky. The channel that a consumer chooses for interaction may be different from the channel they use to research product information and make a purchasing decision (or even a repeat subscription).

An interesting trend that surfaced in UAE is the high prevalence of consumers that value engaging with innovative tech such as virtual and augmented reality (71%) and voice assistants like Alexa or Google Assistant (63%).

These new kinds of brand experiences are disrupting the status quo. Shoppers are discovering options like immersive shopping via virtual reality and are ordering products by speaking aloud to their in-home voice assistant.

Social media engagement has gone from being straightforward to trying to hit a moving target.

69%

of all consumer product marketers have been preparing for a possible ban of TikTok.

How are consumers using channels to increase savings?

61%

Nearly 2 in 3 consumers have signed up to a loyalty card for consumer products to save on costs.

51%

Half of customers are buying consumer products via repeat subscriptions to save on costs.

Are new and innovative shopping experiences driving engagement?

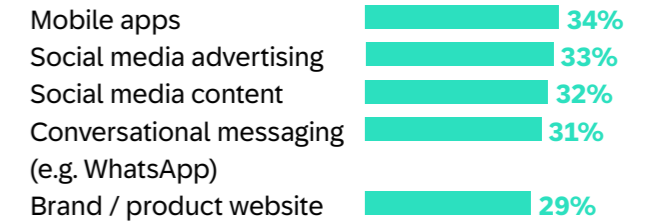
71%

of consumers value immersive shopping experiences (e.g., virtual reality or augmented reality).

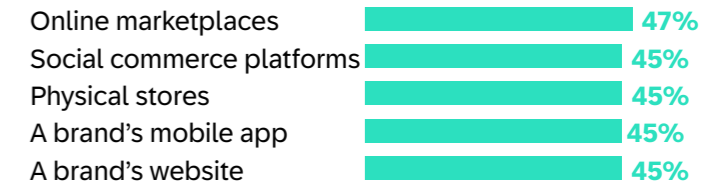
63%

of consumers value marketing through voice assistants (e.g., Alexa or Google Assistant).

What channels do consumers prefer for interacting with brands?



What channels are consumers using to research new products?



Trend 4 Consumers push back on “dark data”

No consumer wants to share their personal data only for it to fall into a digital void, where it becomes what’s known as dark data. Dark data, in short, is data collected by marketers with no clear purpose or use, which is then also not used in a way that shows benefit to the consumer.

Not only is dark data an irritation for consumers, fostering doubt about their relationship with the brand, but it’s a waste of marketers’ resources. Marketers are essentially burning money on collecting and storing dark data — and this trend is especially given the growing privacy regulations.

It’s interesting to note that in UAE, a high percentage (63%) of consumers feel they understand what they are getting in return for sharing data. This speaks to a high degree of transparency when it comes to data policies and goes a long way when it comes to building consumer trust and overall brand confidence.

64%

Half of consumer product marketers say their organization suffers from “dark data” (data that is collected but not effectively used).

Consumer expectations about data

85%

of consumers say it’s important that brands have a clear data privacy policy.

75%

of consumers are put off when brands ask for a lot of personal data.

72%

of consumers are put off by brands asking for data but not explaining how it will be used.

63%

of consumers feel they understand what they get in return for sharing their data with consumer brands.

57%

of consumers feel brands collect their data and don’t use it at all.

58%

of consumers think brands take too long to use their data in ways that benefit them.

Trend 5 Millennials lead the digital commerce charge

It should come as no surprise that Millennials, known as the first generation to witness the rise of the digital age are the most likely demographic to use social commerce platforms and browse on online marketplaces. Meanwhile, Gen Z are the most likely to indulge in luxury items, large purchases and travel and holidays.

The Engagement Era belongs to the upcoming generations more than any other, but each generation will have its own way of using digital channels. The ability to segment and personalize for the different generations will be critical for

marketers who want to future-proof their engagement strategy.

One area where the generations agree is that almost everyone is looking for ways to save: **93%** of both Gen Zers and Gen Xers have made spending cutbacks. Across all generations, only **5%** of consumers indicated that they haven't cut back on anything. The more consumers are looking to save, the greater the competition, and this is where personalized engagement will make a difference and help drive more purchasing decisions.





Browsing and Buying Habits	Gen Z Age 18-27	Millennials Age 28-43	Gen X Age 44-59
Use social commerce platforms (e.g. Instagram Shop)	45%	45%	44%
Browse on online marketplaces (e.g. Amazon, eBay, etc.)	39%	49%	47%
Prefer shopping in-store	37%	44%	52%
Prefer traditional customer reviews	37%	43%	46%
Browse directly from a brand's app	36%	45%	50%

Likelihood to Cut Back On...	Gen Z Age 18-27	Millennials Age 28-43	Gen X Age 44-59
Luxury items	39%	43%	50%
Large purchases (e.g. electronics and furniture)	35%	41%	42%
Travels or holidays	32%	35%	41%
Eating out or takeaway meals	31%	34%	42%
Fitness products	30%	30%	36%
Non-essential items (e.g. beauty products, accessories)	29%	33%	34%
Subscriptions (e.g. streaming services, meal kits)	29%	31%	32%
Branded groceries (switching to own-label alternatives)	24%	27%	32%
Eco-friendly or sustainable products	24%	25%	24%



Engagement Priorities





Customer Engagement Priorities for 2025

In the face of the current trends and challenges, how are marketers preparing to respond? What are their plans for growing their business and addressing waning consumer loyalty? Are they seeking quick solutions for immediate wins or laying a foundation for long-term strategies and success? And how does this align with consumer expectations?

We found that 44% of consumers in the UAE want brands to give them personalized deals and offers. For marketers to improve personalization, they need to be able to unify demographic, sales, support and behavioral first-party data to build customer profiles that allow them to engage customers with relevant content and offers.

Similarly, the strategy for increasing customer engagement across existing channels (which 52% of marketers are prioritizing) is clear considering 44% of consumers are saying they want personalized deals and offers.

Top customer engagement priorities for marketers

1. Increasing customer engagement across existing channels (52%)
2. Engaging consumers in new markets, regions, or sectors (44%)
3. Improving customer loyalty and retention (39%)
4. Launching new channels for customer engagement (37%)
5. Reducing complexity (e.g., streamlining tools, processes) (34%)
6. Automating more activities and campaigns (33%)

Top customer engagement priorities for consumers

1. Give me personalized deals and offers (44%)
2. Provide more transparent communication about their products or values (30%)
3. Help me discover products I didn't know I'd love (28%)
4. Improve my experience on existing channels (e.g. website, mobile, social) (25%)
5. Introduce new customer loyalty schemes and rewards (24%)
6. Use more channels to reach me (e.g. social media, WhatsApp, SMS) 23%

Our research revealed that marketers' priorities change across the spectrum of Customer Engagement Maturity (CEM) levels.



Low CEM Brands

Marketers for low CEM brands are prioritizing strengthening customer relationships while expanding their audience. Their top priority is improving customer loyalty and retention (52%) and engaging consumers in new markets (48%), as they work to establish a foothold.

- **Focus:** Strengthening loyalty and expanding the audience
- **Engagement Strategies:** To build loyalty and expand, low CEM brands should use personalized retention tactics like rewards programs and exclusive content. Success in new markets requires localized strategies – adapting messaging, offers, and AI-driven personalization.



Moderate CEM Brands

Marketers for moderate CEM brands focus heavily on expanding their audience. Our data shows that increasing customer engagement across existing channels (53%) and engaging consumers in new markets, regions or sectors (43%) are top priorities.

- **Focus:** Expanding the audience
- **Engagement Strategies:** Expanding into new markets requires localized messaging, region-specific promotions, and leveraging high-performing channels in each area. Combining these tactics ensures deeper customer connections while scaling effectively.



High CEM Brands

Marketers for high CEM brands shift toward increasing customer engagement across existing channels (63%) and improving customer loyalty and retention (47%). With strong customer bases in place, they focus on refining their approach and enhancing engagement through innovation.

- **Focus:** Refining engagement strategies
- **Engagement Strategies:** To increase engagement, leverage emerging technologies like interactive experiences, gamification, and real-time engagement across web, mobile, and social. Dynamic loyalty programs, and exclusive content and rewards for VIPs can both improve loyalty and retention.



DTC Brands

DTC marketers typically focus on expanding their audience and driving engagement, with engaging new markets (52%) and increasing customer engagement (52%) as top priorities.

- **Focus:** Expanding the audience and driving engagement
- **Engagement Strategies:** DTC brands can use the same strategies for expansion and retention as pure CP brands, but with the added option of point-of-sale engagement, such as in-store and digital loyalty rewards as well as Mobile Wallet offers, referral programs (using solutions such as Mention Me), and mobile app engagement.



Hybrid Selling Brands

Hybrid businesses (which use both direct and indirect selling strategies) align with DTC brands, with 54% prioritizing customer engagement and 46% prioritizing engaging consumers in new markets. With their flexible selling model, these brands can use similar strategies as DTC brands.

- **Focus:** Improving engagement and market expansion
- **Engagement Strategies:** Enhancing existing channels with AI-driven personalization, dynamic content, and loyalty incentives are strong tactics to improve engagement. For market expansion, region-specific messaging, localized promotions, and channel optimization will help attract and retain new customers effectively.

The Common Factor: Data

Regardless of CEM maturity, consumer data is the common requirement in every marketer's priorities for engagement and retention. More mature brands — ones that use advanced engagement strategies and leverage integrated data to engage consumers — will be in a stronger position to address their priorities and meet consumers expectations.



Engagement Channels





Top Channels Used to Drive Engagement

Consumers are using a wider range of channels for interaction and research, requiring brands to adapt their strategies. We sought to uncover how marketers are prioritizing channel engagement... and also how that stacks up against consumer behavior.

Channels used by consumer product marketers to engage customers

1. E-commerce (46%)
2. SMS (Text messaging) (38%)
3. Email (33%)
4. Conversational messaging (WhatsApp, etc.) (32%)
5. Web (30%)
6. TV advertisements (29%)
7. Social media posts/content (26%)
8. Social media advertising (23%)
9. Live chat (e.g. on website, app) (22%)
10. Out of home (billboards, etc.) (17%)

Channels used by consumers to interact with brands

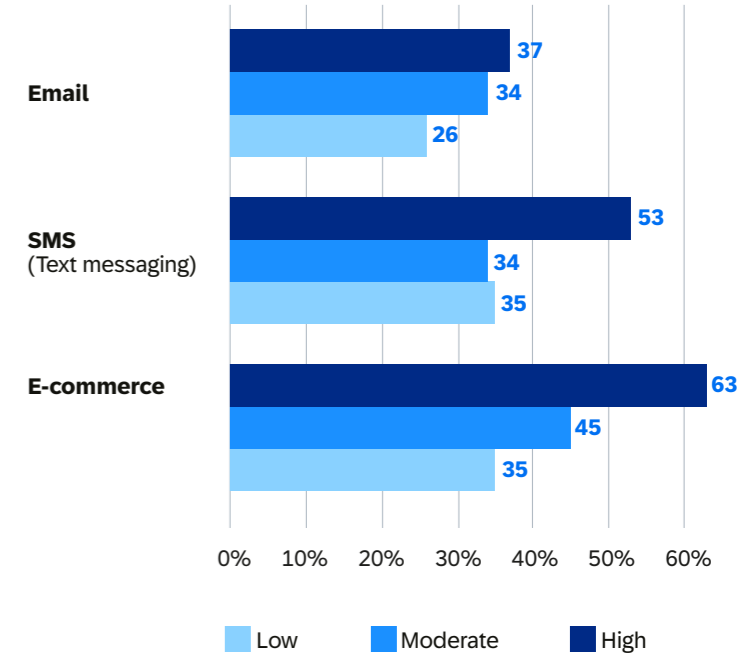
1. Mobile apps (41%)
2. Social media content (38%)
3. Social media advertising (38%)
4. Brand website (34%)
5. Social media messaging (Instagram Broadcast Channels, etc.) (33%)
6. Digital advertising (Google ads, etc) (32%)
7. Email (31%)
8. Conversational messaging (WhatsApp, etc.) (31%)
9. Promotion via retail media networks (Amazon ads, etc) (25%)
10. TV advertisements (21%)

The data reveals a clear misalignment between where CP marketers in the UAE are focusing their engagement efforts and where consumers are actually interacting with brands.

Put simply, CP marketers in the UAE aren't currently fishing where the fish are. Marketers are prioritizing e-commerce (46%), SMS (38%), and email (33%), while consumers are far more engaged with mobile apps (41%), social media content (38%), and social media advertising (38%). The mobile app stat is especially telling when you consider it ranks no.1 for consumers but doesn't even feature in the top 10 for CP marketers.

Notably, social media messaging (33%) and digital advertising (32%) also rank high for consumers but are underutilized by marketers. This gap suggests that brands may be relying on traditional direct channels instead of meeting customers in the digital spaces they actively use, missing key opportunities for engagement. Channel adoption also changes as marketers become more mature in their customer engagement approach.

Channel by CEM Brand Usage





JOHN FRIEDA®

For lifecycle marketing, we wanted to provide personalized experiences for increased conversion rate, develop segmentation strategies for improved retention and conversion, implement automation triggers to nurture current and future customers, and educate our existing audience and identify customer needs for this new product line. ”



Lyla Holt,
Global Digital Marketing Manager,
Consumer Care at John Frieda



Case-Study

John Frieda Mastered the Art of Product Launches

The John Frieda brand was founded on the revolutionary idea of disrupting the haircare industry with salon-quality products tailored to specific hair concerns. John Frieda aims to empower its customers with transformational products to achieve their individual goals.

Challenge:

With a presence in 24 countries and over 88 products, the hair expert faced difficulties in effectively connecting with its customers in ways that drive sales. The marketing team needed the ability to identify their audience and increase conversion rates for new products.

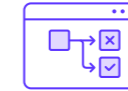
Solution:

Partnering with personalization and omnichannel marketing experts, SAP Emarsys and BlueWheel, John Frieda was able to develop and execute a comprehensive omnichannel launch strategy in the US for the ULTRAFiller+ product, across email, social media, paid social ads, web, and online and physical stores.



Segmentation and Targeting

Data analysis to identify key customer segments most likely to benefit from ULTRAFiller+.



Marketing Automations

Thorough audit of available assets to create personalized marketing automations that scaled across 24 countries.



Seamless Customer Journey

Optimized website and checkout process for a frictionless buyer experience.



Effective Email Strategy

Winning subject lines, engaging content, GIFs, surveys, and clear calls-to-action to drive open rates and increase awareness.

The Results

1

most popular product
in John Frieda catalogue
during ramp-up campaign

4x

conversion rate
compared with John Frieda
average CVR

88%

**of users purchased two
or more products**
during ramp up campaign



Barriers to Engagement





The #1 Barrier to Engagement

Consumer product marketers cited **complexity within the marketing department** as their biggest barrier to customer engagement (31%).

53%

Half of all consumer product marketers say they can't access and use data in real time.

69%

Two in three consumer product marketers say their organization's data is too unstructured to use effectively.

Barriers to Customer Engagement

Marketers are highly motivated to drive measurable growth for CP brands. However, to increase their effectiveness and relevance in the Engagement Era, many will have to overcome common roadblocks that are holding them back.

Key Barriers to Customer Engagement

- Complexity within the marketing department (31%)
- Growing complexity of the marketing landscape (31%)
- Customer engagement is not a business priority (29%)
- Inability to act on current data and insight (27%)
- Lack of brand affinity (26%)
- Lack of brand differentiation (25%)

Accessing Data and Engagement Technology

The first step to data-driven, personalized engagement is access to consumer data and engagement technology. A foundation of data that's integrated across the business, from back office to front office, gives marketers the insights they need to create compelling, relevant campaigns. But conversely, without that foundation, they face significant barriers.

Leveraging Data and Engagement Technology

To some degree or another, all marketers have a level of access to consumer data and martech solutions. Regardless of the level of sophistication, how well do marketers feel they're able to leverage that data and technology?

The data above clearly shows, once again, a disconnect between CP marketers in UAE and their consumers. Given the disparity between marketers and consumers highlighted above when it comes to top channels used to drive engagement, the data would suggest that CP marketers should focus more on channel strategy and less on personalization to improve engagement.

How effective are marketers at personalization?

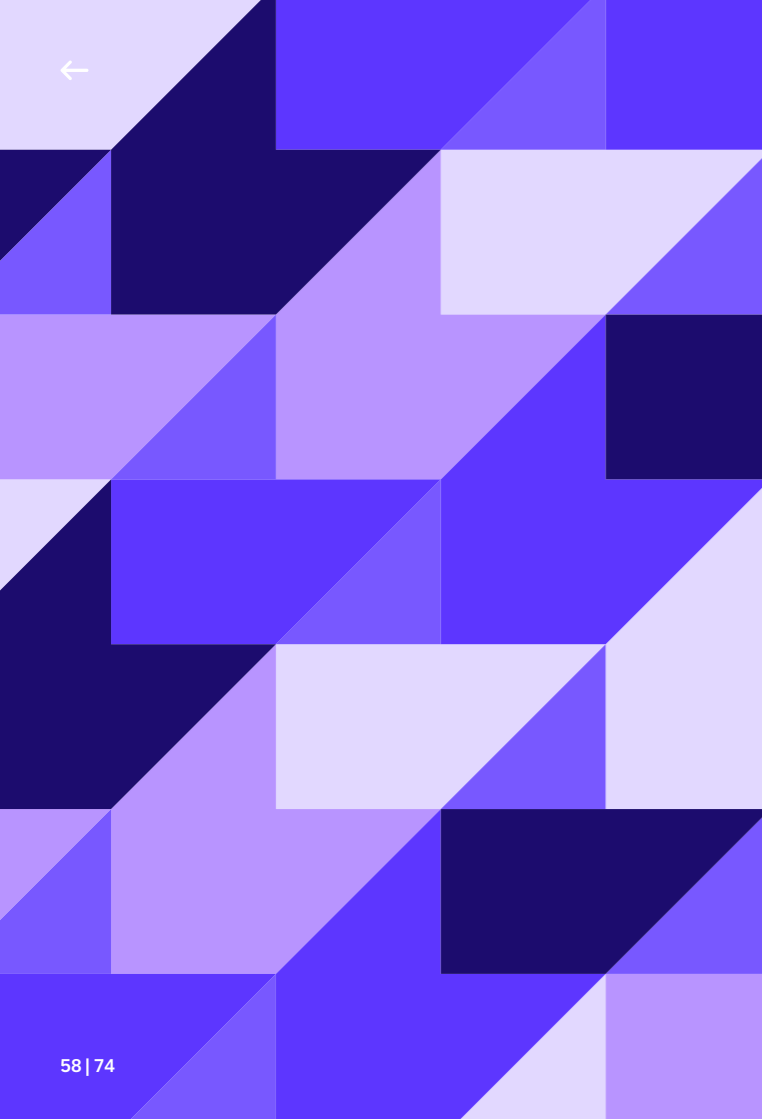
Only **35%** of all consumer product marketers feel they can effectively personalize their marketing content and campaigns. However, almost 2 in 3 consumers (**64%**) claim their experience with consumer product brands feels personalized.

Only 28%

of all consumer product marketers feel they can predict future consumer behaviors.

Only 30%

of all consumer product marketers believe they can effectively segment and analyze audiences.



Barriers to Engagement: By Maturity Level

A barrier that may pose a significant obstacle to one brand may be effortlessly resolved by another. Additionally, as some challenges are resolved, new ones may take their place. As brands invest in integrated data and advanced engagement technology, marketers may resolve their issues with resourcing and data accessibility... and then they discover that the demand for IT support increases due to the complexity of the system.

What concerns do marketers face at brands of different levels of maturity?

	Greatest Barrier	Possible Root Issue
Low CEM Brands	Marketers for low CEM brands struggle most with lack of brand affinity and differentiation (35%) and customer engagement not being a priority (35%).	Brands with low marketing maturity lack the sophistication to engage customers with effective loyalty and retention campaigns.
Moderate CEM Brands	Marketers for moderate CEM brands face more complexity issues (31%) and growing costs of advertising (31%).	These brands are dealing with scaling pains.
High CEM Brands	Marketers for high CEM brands are more likely to cite complexities within the marketing department and marketing landscape (42% both).	These brands have fully embraced personalization, automation, and omnichannel engagement but may have outgrown their marketing platform, possibly struggling to connect data from end to end.



Investment Areas & Strategies





65%

of all consumer product marketers believe they need to “significantly transform” their organization’s customer engagement approach in 2025.

Key Investment Areas for Customer Engagement

CP marketers have identified priorities for engagement, and they’re keenly aware of the challenges they’re facing, but are they truly ready to take a bold leap into the Engagement Era? Our research indicates they are.

Marketers are well aware that any disjointed consumer engagement approaches and technologies require strategic improvements.

With marketers eager to make changes, the next most important question is, what investments are brands making to turn engagement goals into reality?

Top Areas of Investment in Consumer Engagement in 2025*

1. AI-powered customer engagement (33%)
2. Retail media (32%)
3. Personalization (29%)

* Percentage that ranked “high investment”

Current Data Strategy for All CP Marketers

Goals

Only 34% share their customer engagement data with a dedicated ERP.	>	50% plan to improve this in future.
Only 30% share their customer engagement data with a dedicated CRM.	>	45% plan to improve this in future.
Only 39% can currently tie their customer engagement data to their CX approach.	>	42% plan to improve this in future.
Only 40% have fully integrated their CX, ERP, and marketing approach.	>	46% plan to improve this in future.
Only 40% have fully integrated their CX, ERP, and marketing technologies.	>	42% plan to improve this in the future.

69%

of all consumer product marketers believe personalization will be a key differentiator in the year ahead.

77%

of consumers value highly personalized content.



MOLTON BROWN

LONDON

“At Molton Brown, our customers are our top priority, so the technology we use is critical to our success and operational efficiency. Our collaboration with SAP Emarsys has been exceptional from the start. It has empowered us to transform customer engagement by delivering seamless experiences across both digital and traditional channels, keeping our customers at the center of our business.

“For example, in 2023, we launched refillable solutions as part of our Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategy. With the support of SAP Emarsys, we implemented loyalty programs, promotions, subscription channels, and more to bolster this initiative. The result was a game-changing **68% increase in customer value** compared to non-ESG customers.”



Naresh Krishnamurthy,
Senior Manager of Business
Transformation, Molton Brown



Key Differentiators and Strategies

The CP industry is transitioning into an exciting phase where customer engagement is the dominant factor for driving brand differentiation and ultimately customer loyalty.

This report identifies key differentiators for businesses to effectively transform their digital engagement, embracing big data, advanced technologies, and new strategies to remain competitive, relevant, and meet the elevated expectations of current consumers.

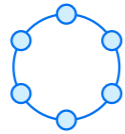


Connected Data

The ability to access and leverage consumer's data effectively is pivotal for understanding customer needs and behaviors. This empowers marketers to create personalized experiences and predict future consumer behaviors, enhancing engagement strategies.

Strategic Action:

Brands of all maturity levels should lay the foundation for integrated data across your organization, sharing customer engagement data with financial and operational processes and systems (e.g. Enterprise Resource Planning or ERPs).



Omnichannel Flexibility

Consumer interaction channels are rapidly changing and evolving, take for instance the TikTok ban in the US or Virtual Reality becoming part of the customer journey.

Strategic Action:

Brands must be present in all channels that are relevant to their consumers to meet them where they are. This demands flexibility and preparation in the various engagement approaches. Low CEM brands should use consumer data to identify the right channels to use, while high CEM brands should experiment with new channels and A/B testing for optimization.



Advanced Personalization

Personalization is moving beyond basic product recommendations to the entire consumer journey.

Strategic Action:

Brands of all maturity levels need the ability to leverage data for deep personalization across all touchpoints to enhance consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Consumers are willing to exchange their data in return for value, so be sure to meet their expectations.



AI Integration

AI is positively revolutionizing how brands interact and engage with consumers, while facilitating repetitive tasks for marketers, leaving them time to be more creative. AI facilitates automation, real-time personalization, and efficiency, enabling brands to deliver more relevant and engaging consumer experiences.

Strategic Action:

Brands of all maturity levels should ensure they are fully integrating AI within marketing teams. This includes both investing in AI tools and driving adoption. Consider the use of GenAI to locate products faster as product portfolios grow or generate high value segments with just a few prompts.



Scalable Growth

Preparing for the future means understanding current trends and predicting future ones, but also it means the ability to move up along the CEM score, increasing maturity stage by stage. As consumers (and particularly Gen Z) continue driving digital transformation, and marketers must be ready for what comes next.

Strategic Action:

Marketers need technical solutions that are agile and adaptable to rapid changes in the market. Low and moderate CEM brands in particular should focus on building a foundation that can scale with ease as they seek to enter new markets and drive loyalty, and high CEM brands should focus on streamlining solutions and reducing complexity.



Measurable Growth

The true goal of personalized engagement is to drive measurable growth for a brand, so marketers must be able to tie real value to their work.

Strategic Action:

Brands of all maturity levels should ensure they have the means to tie campaigns and programs to marketing-generated sales. Having strategic dashboards built directly into a customer engagement platform grants visibility into sales, channel growth, segment comparison, etc. Additionally, insight into the complete customer lifecycle helps marketers prioritize their time and effort for maximum value. Low CEM brands in particular should prioritize gaining access to real-time insights for.



Conclusion





Conclusion

Brands must adeptly navigate this always-changing consumer terrain. As they seek out solutions to address current trends, shifting consumer behaviors, and other barriers to engagement, these challenges mean marketers have an opportunity to set their brand apart. This era is filled with opportunity and marketers are in a unique position to lead the way.

Embracing advanced technologies and strategies position brands to not only meet but exceed the elevated expectations of modern consumers, ensuring continued relevance and success. By offering the next-level interactive and personalized experiences, brands can secure their competitive edge by fostering deeper emotional connections.

Are you ready to unleash the power of engagement?



Supercharge your
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Experience

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Learn how PUMA
Elevated its
Consumer
Engagement

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SAP Emarsys is the customer engagement solution of Intelligent CX from SAP, empowering businesses to deliver personalized, AI-driven, omnichannel experiences. Built for scalability and extensibility, Intelligent CX from SAP integrates commerce, sales, service, marketing, and customer data, enabling businesses to exceed customer expectations with real-time, relevant engagement. From digitally native disruptors to global enterprises, SAP Emarsys helps bring out the best CX in every business by meeting customers where they are with the products, information, and experiences they need, exactly when and where they need them.

For more information, visit www.emarsys.com

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