8 Tips for Driving Revenue with Omni-Channel Marketing

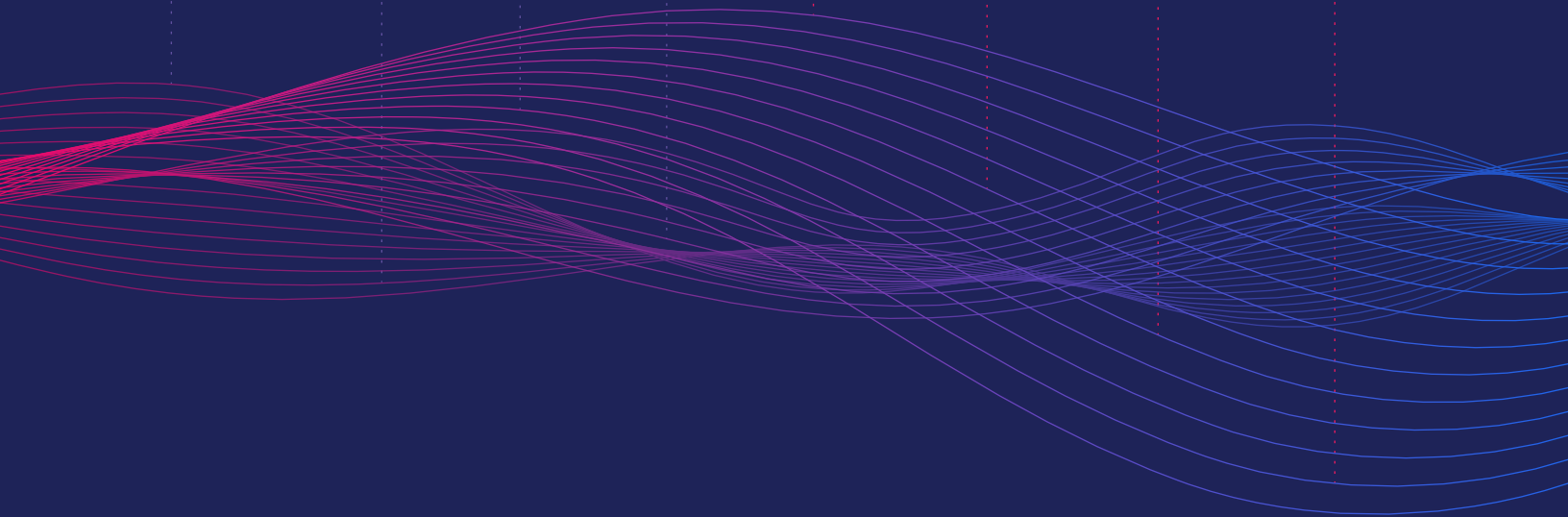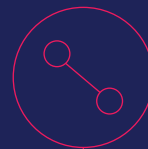*iterable*

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Why Omni-Channel Matters

E-tailers, retailers and online businesses of all types are being pressured to deliver more personalized experiences seamlessly across communication channels. Yet shoppers and customers continue to be inundated with irrelevant messaging from brands and their affiliates. It's no surprise that Accenture found that 80% of all consumers suffer fragmented brand messaging experiences as they travel from channel to channel, whether going from email to SMS or social media, or from digital to offline.

Such a disconnect can cause permanent brand damage. An in-depth study found 94% of consumers have discontinued a relationship with a brand due to irrelevant messaging. In a world where the average consumer is exposed to nearly 10,000 brand messages per day, a burned bridge will quickly leave you forgotten.

This cause-and-effect makes it imperative to deliver personalized messaging consistently across channels. Read on to better understand the challenges to achieving omni-channel relevance across channels, and eight tips for getting it right.

80%

Accenture found that **80%** of all consumers suffer fragmented brand messaging experiences as they travel from channel to channel.

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10k

The average consumer is exposed to nearly **10,000** brand messages per day.

What is omni-channel relevance?

Consistently creating and delivering personalized, relevant messaging for each individual across all channels.

The 4 Essential Elements of Omni-Channel Relevance

The first step to achieving omni-channel relevance is understanding the core elements that make it possible. Put in place a foundation built upon these essentials, and your business is on the right track.

1. **Customer data:** When it comes to delivering personalized messaging, marketers need to comprehend their buyers inside and out in the form of buyer profiles or personas. It's a matter of gathering implicit and explicit data to gain insight into each person's unique identity, along with behaviors, buying intent, product interests and preferences.

2. **Component-based content.** To activate mass personalization at scale, marketers need access to bite-sized content they can present to different personas at different buying stages in a variety of personalized campaigns. Marketers can dynamically integrate content aligned with specific use cases or scenarios into messaging in response to buyers' real-time behaviors and interactions.

3. **Established presence across channels.** Marketers should engage using the channels their customers prefer. Find out if they favor email, mobile, direct mail or social media when engaging with your brand. Knowing this helps prioritize messaging and drive campaign decision making as part of an effective omni-channel strategy.

4. **Marketing campaigns of one.** Using the right technology stack and messaging platform capable of coordinating digital and offline data makes it possible to send personalized messaging on a one-to-one level at scale. Automatically customizing messaging and content across multiple audience segments makes buyers feel understood and engaged.

Quantifying Omni-Channel Relevance

14%

Marketers achieve **14%** higher engagement using personalized messaging and personalized campaigns.

39%

39% year-over-year increase in new customer revenue when using personalized omni-channel campaigns.

91%

Marketers are seeing a **91%** year-to-year increase in retention with an omni-channel strategy.

The 3 Main Barriers to Omni-Channel Relevance

So what stands in the way of marketers successfully personalizing experiences across all the channels? In most cases, the following three shortcomings make it challenging to activate omni-channel relevance.

1. **Dispersed customer data.** Most companies rely on a marketing technology stack featuring numerous systems and solutions. In fact, the average mid-market company uses <u>16 different platforms</u>. That equates to 16 silos where customer data lives. Without a 360-degree view of each customer and their explicit and implicit data, it's nearly impossible to personalize messages and interactions.

2. **No component-based content.** Few marketing organizations have ready access to component-based content. Yet it's essential to inject persona-focused campaigns with relevant, short-form content that maps to buyers' behaviors and interactions with your brand. Generic and catch-all content won't resonate with consumers who expect high-touch digital experiences from your brand.

3. **Insufficient internal readiness.** Many companies organize their marketing teams around a single channel, such as email, mobile, or direct mail. It's challenging moving to an omni-channel approach when teams, data, and expertise are aligned with independent channels.
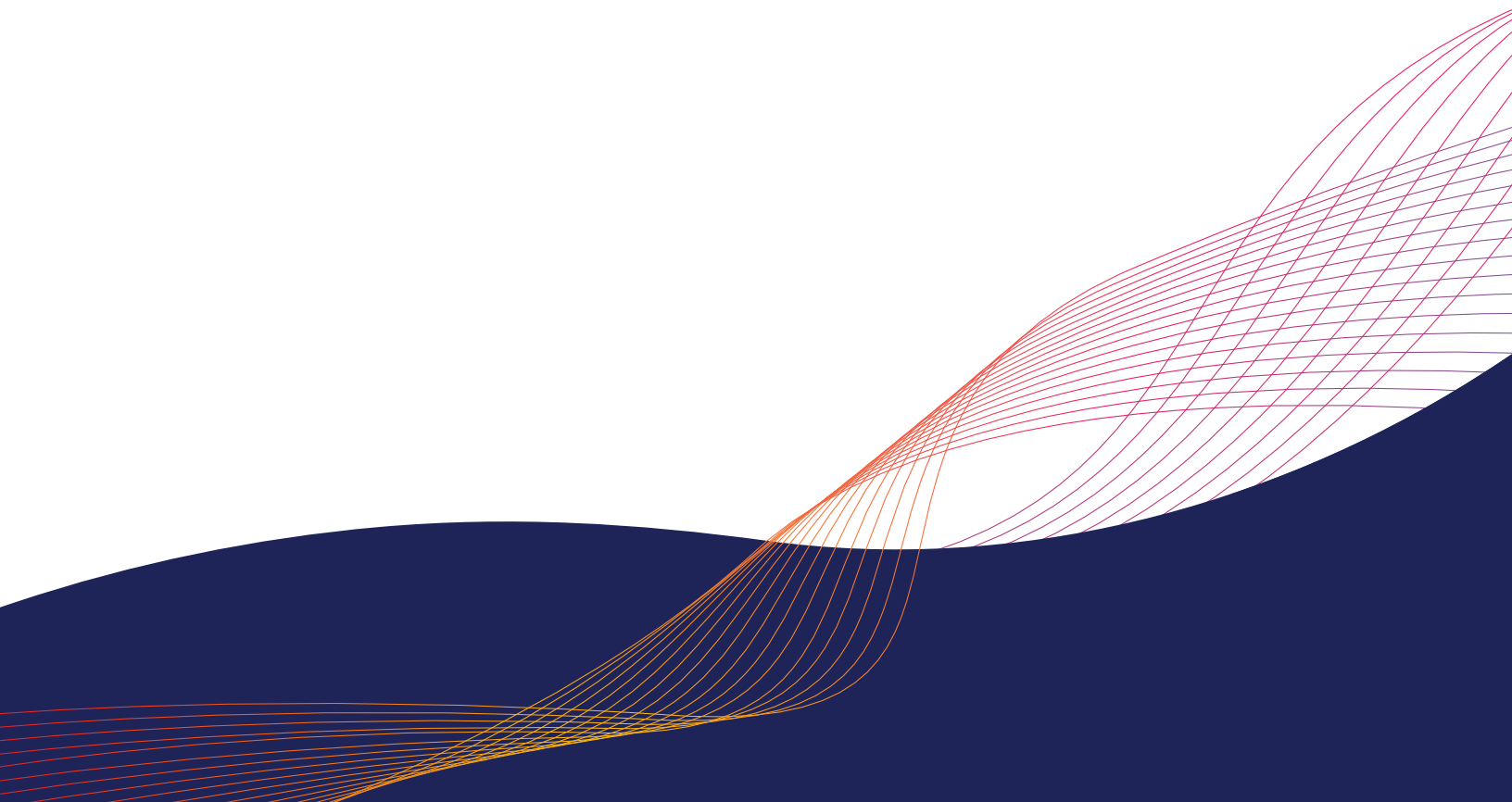
Getting Started with Omni-Channel Marketing in 8 Steps

It might feel daunting to succeed with omni-channel marketing if your organization is lacking the essential building blocks. But the good news is that you can get started today and quickly realize success. Here are eight proven tips for doing just that.

1. Take one step at a time.

2. Allow customers to drive the conversation.

3. Identify data gaps.

4. Create a smarter buyer journey.

5. Enable anywhere, everywhere personalization.

6. Research and benchmark best-in-class experiences.

7. Streamline your execution processes.

8. Set realistic goals.

1 Take One Step at a Time

To avoid getting overwhelmed by the prospect of adopting an omni-channel strategy, focus on a single use case initially. Pinpoint the primary case that is causing your business the most pain—cases like: shopping cart abandonment, promotional campaigns, customer retention or other business-critical issues. Then devise an omni-channel strategy to address it.

For example, let's say you've chosen shopping cart abandonment to address. Take the time to explore the user experience to find out what needs improvement.

- What is our current shopping cart abandonment end-to-end experience?
- Where can we make enhancements?
- Which resources do we need to get there?

To answer these questions, you'll need real-time data about abandonment. This requires looking into your data set and then strategizing how to best fill the experience gaps. Then you need the ability to create relevant messaging and the technology or expertise to reverse the abandonment trends.

Once you've improved shopping cart abandonment, move on to the next most important use case calling upon the framework above. Nail down the approach across a handful of use cases and you'll be executing a full-fledged omni-channel strategy before you know it.

Start small and scale as you go

An incremental, phased approach raises the likelihood of succeeding with omni-channel marketing.
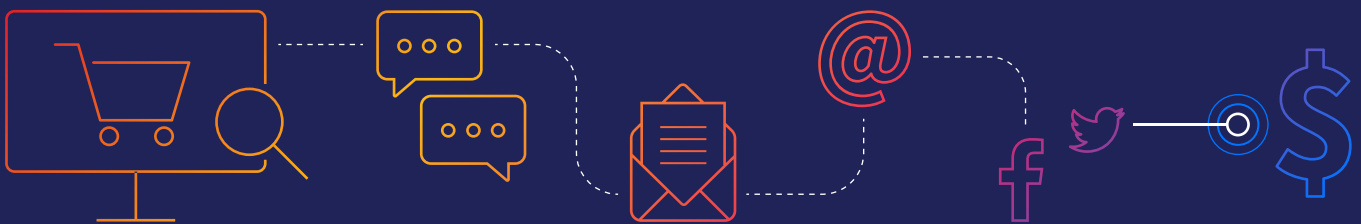
2 Pinpoint Your Customers' Preferences

Don't just aim to tailor communications to your customers; make it a priority to let them control those conversations. Knowing which communication channels they prefer is a start, and you can find this out by combing through internal data and directly asking them about their preferences.

Be sure to determine whether they give each preferred channel equal weight, or if they use a certain channel more heavily than others. Let data be your guide so you don't make wrong assumptions about channel superiority.

You might believe email is the most important channel, when in fact, your best engagement occurs via mobile in-app notifications or push notifications. A proven way to avoid false premises is using data to inform your understanding and conducting A/B testing to validate your approach.

Next figure out whether customers can take their conversations with them as they change channels. Does the conversation continue or come to a halt as they move from email to mobile, or from online to offline? This insight will inform how you adapt your messaging strategy and approach.

Be scientific about understanding channel preferences

Never make assumptions about channel preferences. Instead use data and testing to pinpoint the most promising channels for engaging and converting customers.
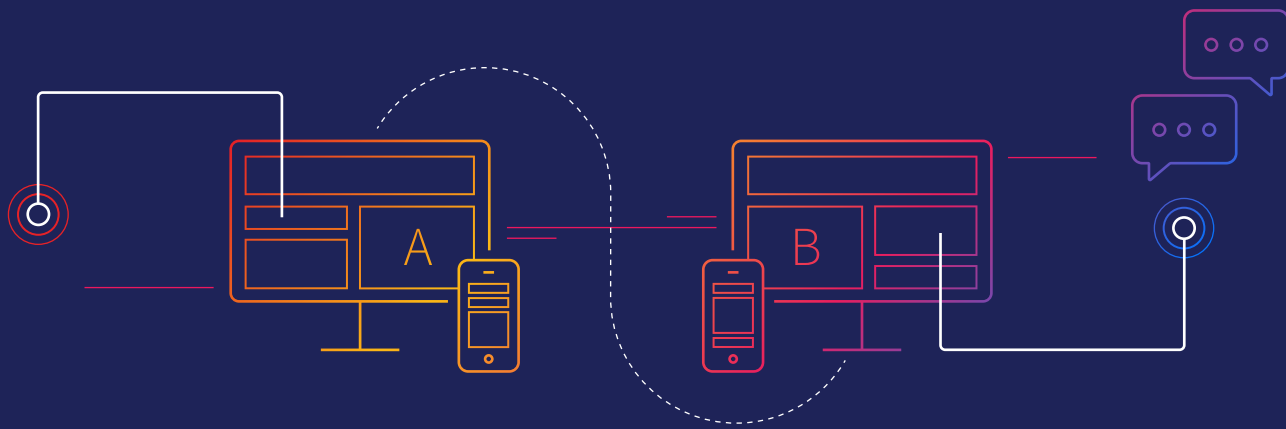
3 Identify Data Gaps

Think of data gaps as your mortal enemy in a quest for relevance—they're the top barrier to enacting an effective omni-channel marketing strategy. To seal the gaps, conduct an audit of your customer profiles and all data you've collected during interactions—demographic, behavior, sentiment and context. Your goal is to identify all gaps because fragmented data limits your ability to personalize messages and deliver memorable experiences.

Start by identifying all places where customer data lives, including:

- Customer service platforms
- Point-of-sale systems
- E-commerce software
- Web servers
- Third-party services

Next, audit the data in those locations to understand precisely what is being captured and what essential data you're missing. Next, create an engagement plan focused on acquiring, aggregating and centralizing all of this critical customer-related data. With a central store of complete customer data, you'll be in a strong position to personalize messages.

Best practices for centralizing data

Identify and audit all your data sources, and use real-time exporting mechanisms into a single data platform.

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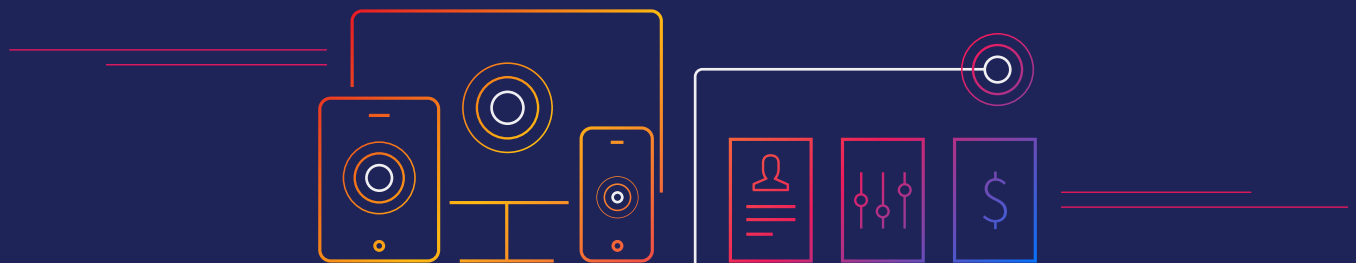
4 Create a Smarter Buyer Journey

Remember that customers don't engage with you in a vacuum: they are at a certain point in their buying journey and you want to make sure the journey stays relevant and consistent across channels.

Align the use cases you deployed in step one with the end-to-end buyer journey, starting from initial engagement to onboarding through retention and upselling. With this framework in place, you can develop an omni-channel strategy that maps to the specific stages of the buying journey.

As always, you'll need access to a centralized, 360-degree view of each customer. And you'll want to dynamically slice and dice your data by customer and segments, so you can support stage-based engagement across the customer lifecycle. Ideally you will soon be able to filter outreach based on customers' demographic and behavioral data, along with journey stage for intuitive buying experiences.

In other words, you should be able to determine if a customer is:

- Onboarding, mid-funnel or end of funnel
- Approaching renewal time (if relevant)
- In a win-back campaign

With data-informed messaging and personalized workflows, you can effectively engage each customer and improve conversions throughout every stage of the buyer journey.

Enable a seamless customer journey

Welcome	Promotions	Announcements	Transactional	Re-Engagement
Welcome Series	Daily Special	Newsletters	Order Confirmation	Cart Abandonment
Free Trial	Sale Items	Product Updates	Package Tracking	We Miss You
Product Catalog	Upcoming Events	Notifications	Returns and Refunds	Cross Sell/Upsell
Product Onboarding	Seasonal Campaign	One-off Blasts	Password Resets	Milestone Recognition

5 Enable Anywhere, Everywhere Personalization

Today's customers want to be treated as markets of one—as individuals with their own styles and preferences. You can satisfy that craving by harnessing unique data to enhance your personalization efforts.

This is your chance to get creative in showing customers that you appreciate them for who they are. Call upon relevant, real-time data—such as weather or location—to personalize interactions and offers.

Perhaps you serve up the latest regional sports scores to a segment of customers on a mobile app or notify a customer via email or social media about a sale at your local store.

Your customers leave behind signals about their ever-changing locations, preferences and behaviors in their digital footsteps. By following their paths and deducing where they're headed, you can keep the conversation moving in the right direction.

Keep customers engaged

Rather than rely on templated personalization, use real-time data signals from customers to personalize interactions and offers on the fly.
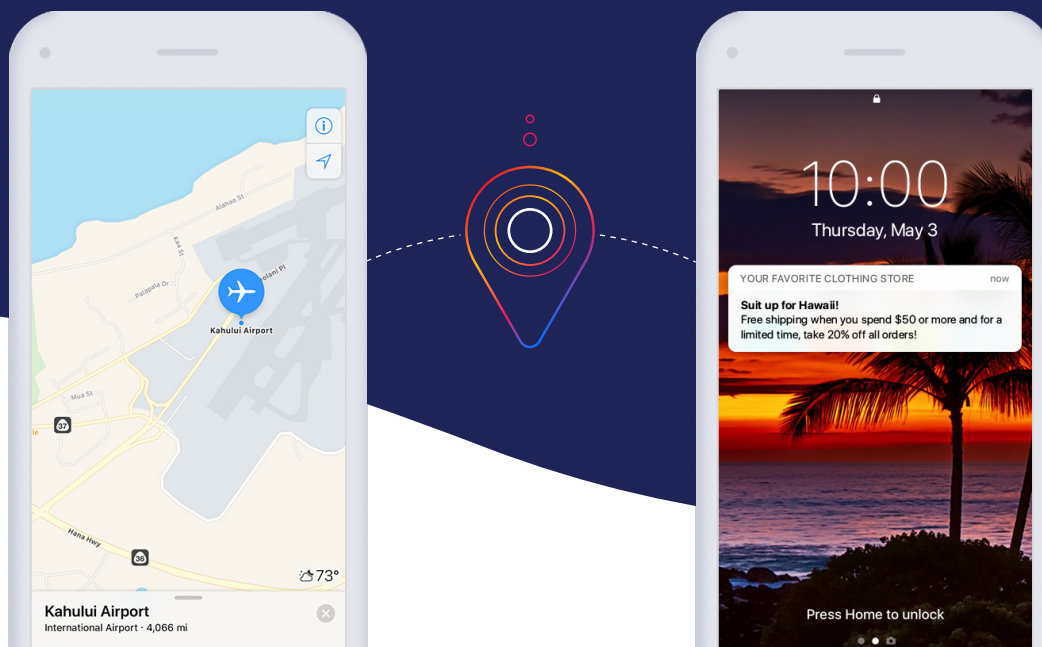
6 Research and Benchmark Best-in-Class Experiences

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They say mimicry is the highest form of flattery, so seize the opportunity to accelerate your success by studying how other marketers achieve omni-channel relevance. Understand what's working within and beyond your industry, and then apply best practices to your own marketing. To jump-start your efforts, we've compiled these notable best-in-class examples.

Starbucks. Calling upon centralized data about its loyalty rewards customers, Starbucks serves up offers based on real-time behavior. It also notifies customers of order status in real time via mobile push, and sends promotional SMS to encourage store visits.

Curology

Curology. This prescription skincare company excels at real-time messaging at scale via email and SMS, using reminders and product announcements to engage and convert first-time buyers and drive re-orders.

benefit

SAN FRANCISCO

benefit. A popular cosmetics brand, Benefit is best in class when it comes to transactional and promotional engagement. The company onboards new customers through a welcome series on its mobile app and via email, and seamlessly merges online promotional campaigns with in-store buying. It also personalizes messages and offers in real time on social media based on observed buying behavior. It has even established a creative physical presence by setting up "browmobiles" in airports. Featuring Internet of Things and mobile capabilities, these trucks enable benefit to link email, SMS, and mobile in-app notifications.

CLASSPASS

ClassPass. This fitness subscription company is in great shape when it comes to sending real-time email confirmations and reminders – such as "Get ready for your class" – to gym-goers. It also continually re-engages its customers by recognizing users for completing a workout segments or entire classes. Plus, it smartly uses omni-channel marketing to encourage customers to return or purchase an additional class.

Learn from the best

For inspiration and insight into what works and what doesn't, study the omni-channel efforts of industry-leading businesses.

# 7 Simplify Your Stack to Streamline Processes

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If your organization is like most, it relies on separate marketing technologies to power email, mobile, SMS, direct mail, and social media. Those deployments create data silos that can prevent you from creating a seamless, personalized, omni-channel buying journey. To eliminate these silos, evaluate whether it makes sense to unify your marketing technology by following these steps:

1. Conduct an internal technology audit to identify current data silos and note the current processes to use that data.
2. Identify the silos creating the most execution hindrances and determine how this affects campaign deployment processes.
3. Note any external dependencies (engineering, professional services, administration, third party resources, etc.) and how they impact marketing production.
4. Calculate the total time spent using the current technology stack and platforms for an end-to-end campaign.
5. Document areas of high and low engagement against stage-specific campaigns and try to determine how campaign development and execution impacts engagement.

After running through this exercise, use this information to pinpoint the areas that need the most attention. Just like the first tip, start with the areas that create the most detrimental impact and find tools that can streamline or consolidate multi-step processes.

Break down the silos

Find ways to aggregate all the customer data you collect across your business so you can personalize at the most granular level possible.

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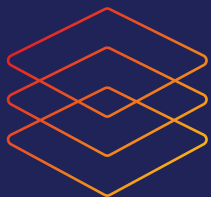
8 Set Realistic Goals

The quickest way to lose momentum on your journey to omni-channel marketing maturity is to set unrealistic expectations from the start. Instead, align your goals with your stage in the maturity cycle.

Stage 1: Batch and Blast. Companies at this stage are just getting started with omni-channel strategies, and have relied on a single channel (usually email). A fitting goal would be to engage and support one use case with omni-channel execution, such as using email and SMS or in-app notification for shopping cart abandonment.

Stage 2: Uncoordinated Cross-Channel. At this stage, companies operate in two or more channels but in an uncoordinated fashion. Oftentimes this is the result of using multiple different marketing technologies and separate teams to support each channel. Focus on improving your engagement and conversion results from stage one.

Stage 3: Coordinated Cross-Channel. Further along the maturity cycle, companies are engaging customers across two or three channels in a coordinated – though not fully personalized – way. When moving from stage two to stage three, best-in-class performance is to increase engagement by 15%, conversions by 10% and overall revenue by 8% either quarter over quarter or year over year.

Stage 4: Omni-channel. When companies reach the pinnacle of omni-channel marketing maturity, they are executing full personalization across three or more channels in a highly coordinated manner. Success metrics at this stage are increasing engagement by 20%, conversion by 15%, return visitors by 15% and total revenue by 8%. At the same time, the goal is to reduce shopping cart abandonment by 10%.

Establish and improve upon a baseline

Match your success metrics to your stage of omni-channel maturity, and make plans to continually improve and climb the maturity scale.

Conclusion: Embrace Omni-Channel Marketing Today

It would be sheer madness trying to execute on a full omni-channel strategy from day one. The good news is that you can succeed with a phased approach, racking up meaningful wins as you go. Keep in mind: omni-channel for the sake of omni-channel is not an effective strategy. The true value of omni-channel marketing is being able to consistently deliver personalized experiences at scale. Start by defining the goals you want to achieve—whether that's better engagement, higher conversion or more revenue—and then apply the eight tips outlined in this guide to drive better business results every day.
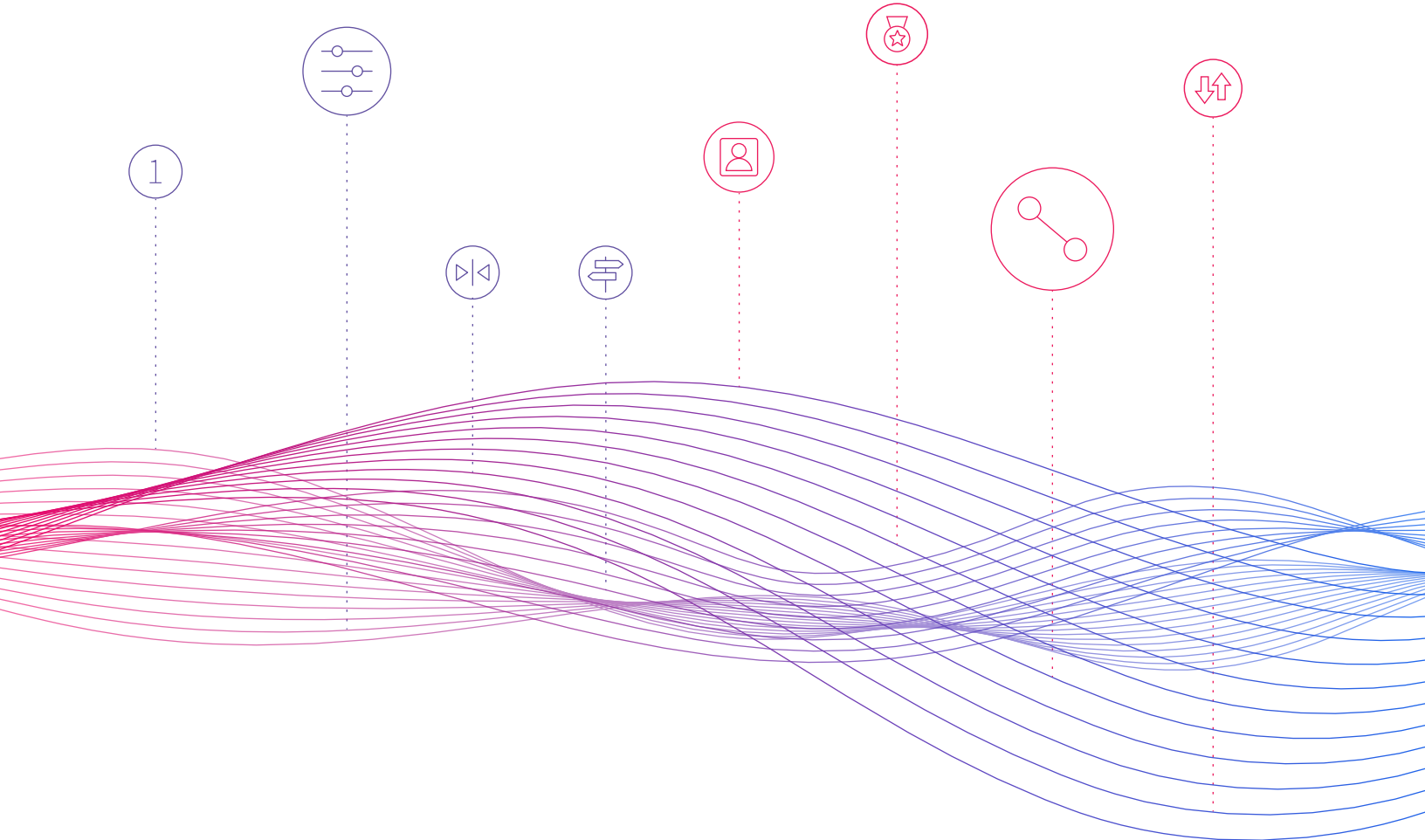
About Iterable

Iterable is the growth marketing platform that powers personalized omni-channel marketing at scale. Iterable captivates consumers with highly relevant and personalized messaging, activates campaigns on any type of internal and external customer data, and allows marketers to automate campaigns across all channels that matter to their consumer.

Iterable exists to create rewarding relationships between people and brands. By making it easy to build campaigns and test strategies at scale without engineering support, Iterable gives marketers the freedom to focus on the nuance in messaging and magic in storytelling.

How Is Iterable Different?

Modern Architecture. Iterable is built with industry-leading Elasticsearch technology. Onboard unlimited data, segment on real-time behaviors, personalize your message at scale and deliver to millions across multiple channels.

True Omni-Channel. Amplify your messaging resonance at enterprise scale with a personalized, true omni-channel experience across email, mobile, direct mail, web and social.

Single Data Platform. Ingest unlimited data from any platform, including commerce, service and data providers. Understand your customers' actions while reducing data silos.

Workflow Studio. Iterable's highly visual, drag-and-drop workflow builder triggers campaigns with an unlimited number of steps, branching and A/B tests.

Easy to Use. Iterable is built for marketers, who can now create sophisticated campaigns without technical resources. Use one platform to plan, execute and manage omni-channel campaigns.

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