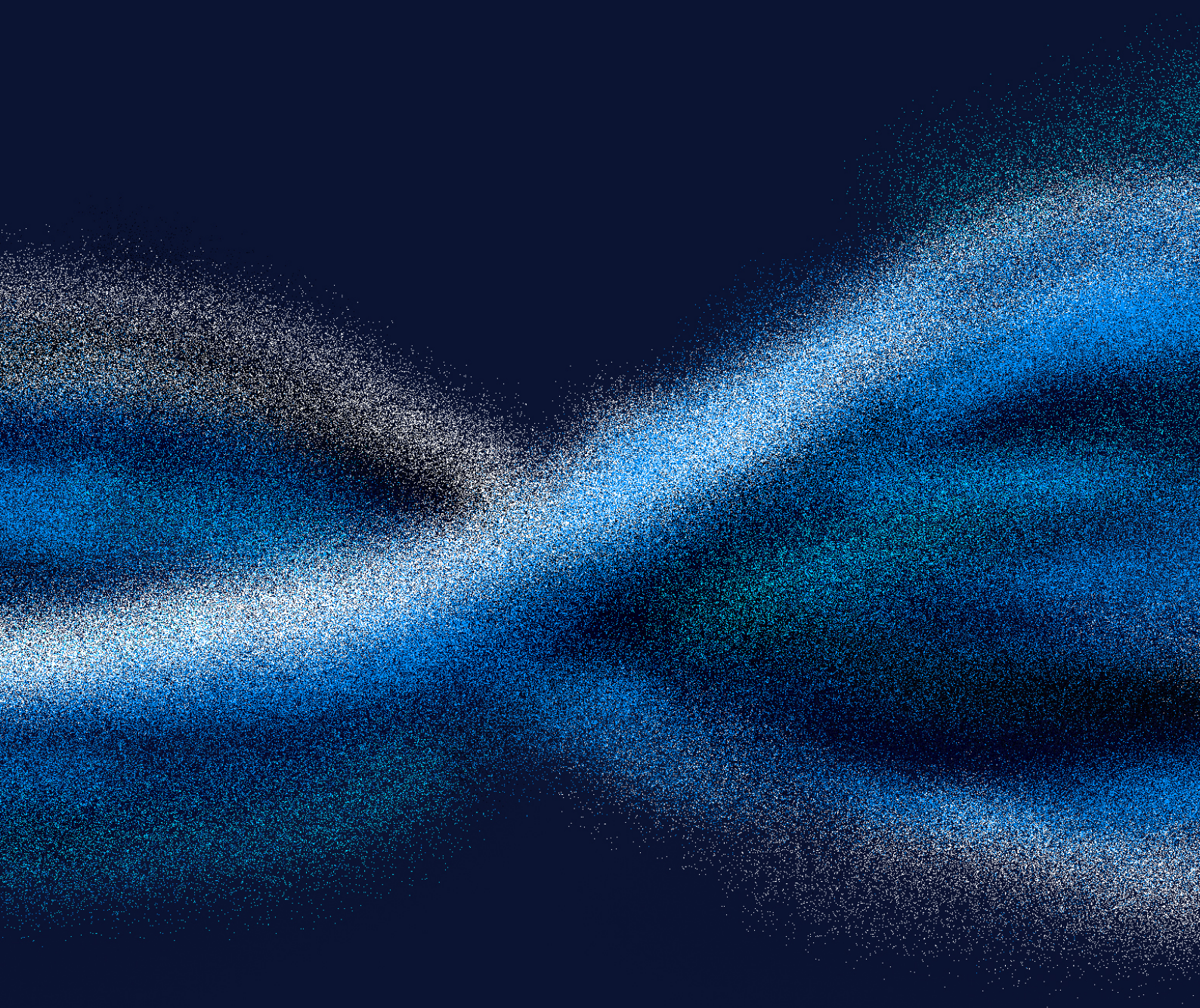
Making omnichannel a reality in your organisation

PART TWO



B2B Marketing

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Aligning marketing and business objectives

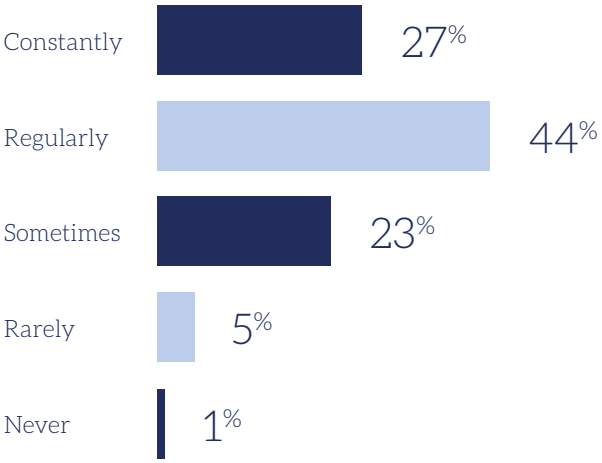
Omnichannel isn't yet business as usual for B2B organisations, and the reasons for this are familiar: if it's not a lack of alignment between sales and marketing, problems with legacy systems, non-customer-oriented processes or siloed data, it's limited skills or employee resistance – or an unhappy combination of all of the above.

As we know, marketing success hinges, to a large extent, around that much-talked-about alignment between marketing and business objectives. A siloed way of working has been proven to lead nowhere, causing frustration in the sales and marketing departments, as well as in the boardroom.

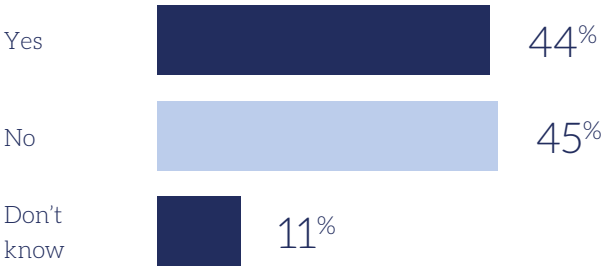
Omnichannel is no different: the main driver of success will always be the agreement of shared goals. And although the majority (71%) of the 211 respondents to our recent survey with Sitecore said the alignment of business and marketing objectives is discussed either regularly or constantly, the degree to which this is being reflected in their omnichannel approach is questionable. A worrying 45% admit they aren't able to tailor channel-appropriate messaging to customers based on experiences with their brand.

The strongest business strategies will encompass everything the customer wants and needs – and it's worth reflecting on yours to gauge whether it's delivering on that. Don't underestimate, for example, the role the sales team, support team, product team and customer service team can play in enhancing your understanding of the customer; their insight can prove invaluable.

How regularly is the alignment between marketing and business objectives discussed among your marketing team?



Do you feel you are able to successfully tailor channel-appropriate messaging to customers based on their interactions with your brand?



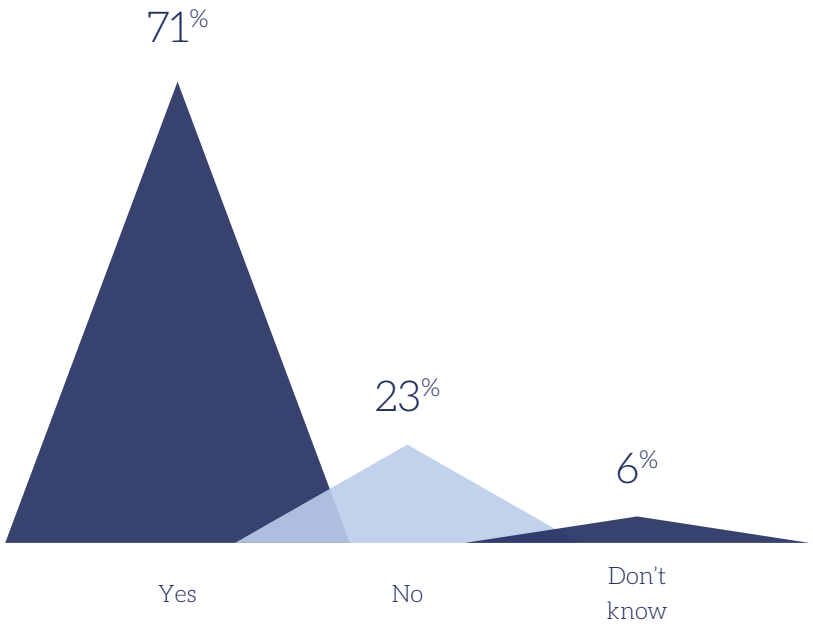
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Getting the right data and tech in place

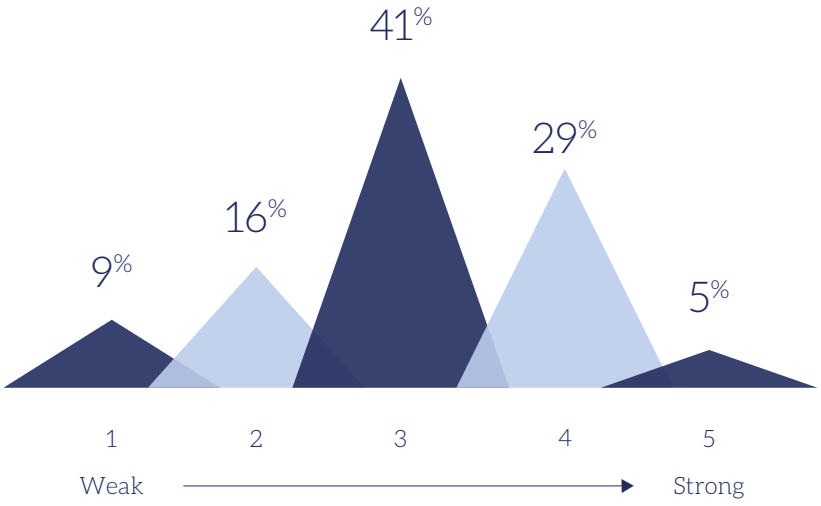
If the first step on the journey to omnichannel enlightenment is alignment of marketing and the business objectives, the second should be a full audit of your tech and data capabilities. These, as we all know, are among the most powerful tools in the marketer's armory and enable them to reach the right people in the right way, which is what omnichannel's all about.

It's no secret that in today's marketing departments gathering data that counts is a perennial struggle; indeed, studies show that marketers spend more than 50% of their time pulling together data, and only between one and 10% on the campaigns themselves. And although our survey showed that 71% admit they do have data determining which devices customers are using to interact with their brand, the usability of this data has been thrown into question. Some 41% described it as a three out of five, with only 5% feeling confident enough to describe it as 'strong'.

Do you have data determining which devices your customers use to interact with your brand?



Rate the usability of your data in terms of providing insight for improving customer experience



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Putting the customer at the heart of your business

And confidence in the technology itself isn't much higher. Tools like marketing automation (MA) might be widely used, but few marketers believe it's able to effectively capture information about customers and the customer journey. Indeed, over a third (34%) described it as 'ineffective'.

Without the right data about your customers, or the ability to capture it, you're going to struggle to make inroads with any attempt at omnichannel. To provide that seamless approach it's imperative that you're able to clearly map your customer journey. So what's the first step to remedying your tech-related woes? Firstly, carry out a tech audit – find out what data you're able to access and which platforms you're using. Secondly, consider whether the automation platform you're using is able to deliver the right content on the right channel at precisely the right moment. If it's not, it might be time to look at the alternatives.

Action points

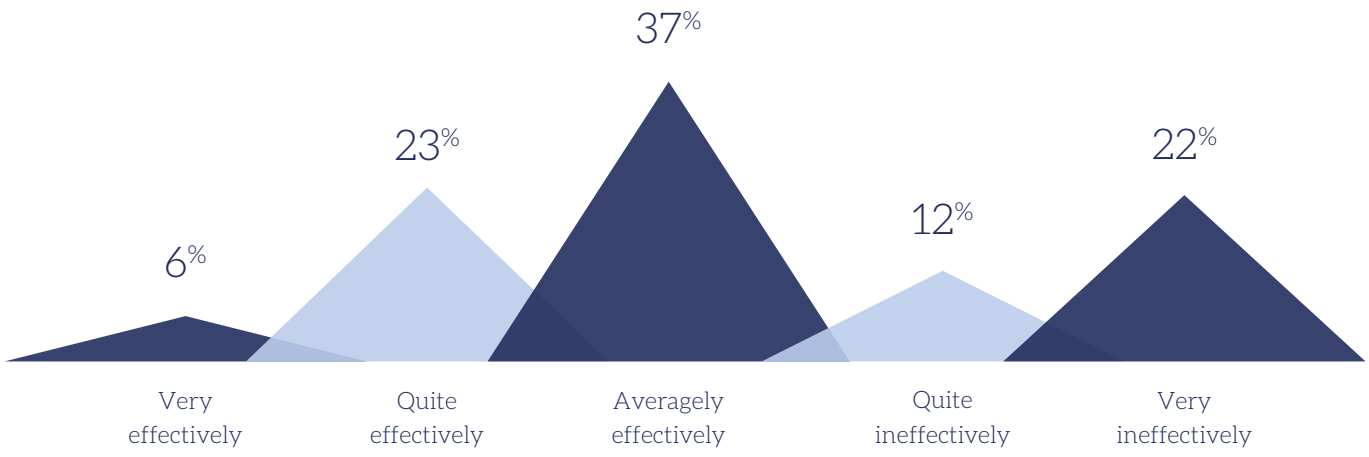
Ask yourself the following questions to determine where your brand sits on the omnichannel maturity index.

- Do you store customer data in one centralised location?
- Are your channels integrated?
- Have you established a unified platform?

Clearly these points highlight the fact that success in omnichannel marketing is determined by how well channels are integrated. If the answer to any of these questions is 'no', you'll need to rethink your platform choice.

Remember, though, that an advanced approach to data collection and discovery requires resource in terms of technology as well as knowledge: think about whether your CMS is a truly integrated, well-connected platform. After all, the challenge that many marketers come up against is the sheer volume of technology used to gather customer intelligence, much of which is being operated in silos. The answer? One neat platform that gathers intelligence from every channel and creates a 360-degree view of your customer.

How effectively are you able to use MA to capture information about your customers and the customer journey?



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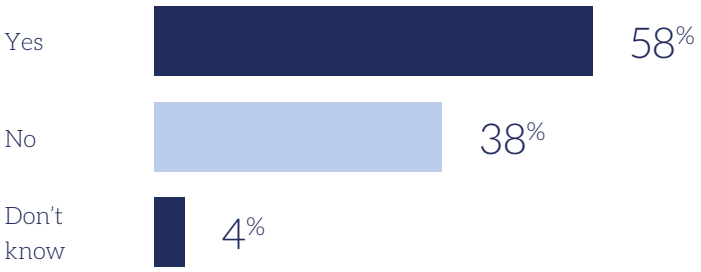
Understanding your customer

Another big blocker to omnichannel success is a marketer's ability to understand their customers. After all, the omnichannel journey is owned by your customers, so understanding their specific challenges and what it is they're looking for is key. If you're going to be delivering what they need, you'll need to know which pages they visited on your website last week and what they last bought from you – as a bare minimum.

Because although marketers around the globe may claim to 'know' their customers, the extent to which this is true can be easily deduced by asking a few simple questions. According to our survey, 38% admit they don't regularly review the experience customers have when interacting with their brand. This is something that needs urgently addressing: how can you claim to understand your customer if you're not regularly interacting with them?

Even more worrying is the fact that a huge 69% of respondents don't test the customer experience (see graph overleaf). Again, how can you really fathom your customers or prospects if you're unable to get a sense of how they're interacting with and viewing your brand?

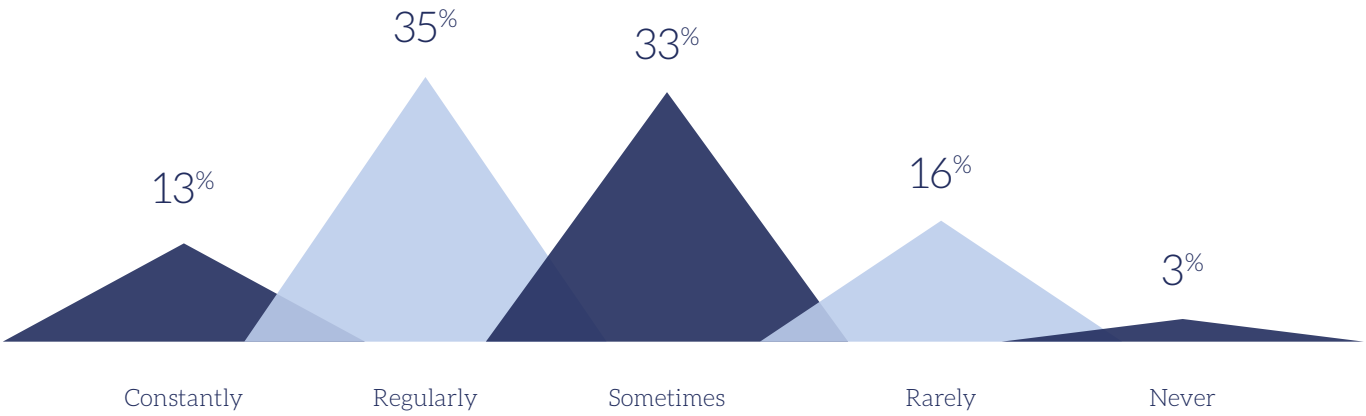
Do you regularly review the experience your customers have when interacting with your brand?



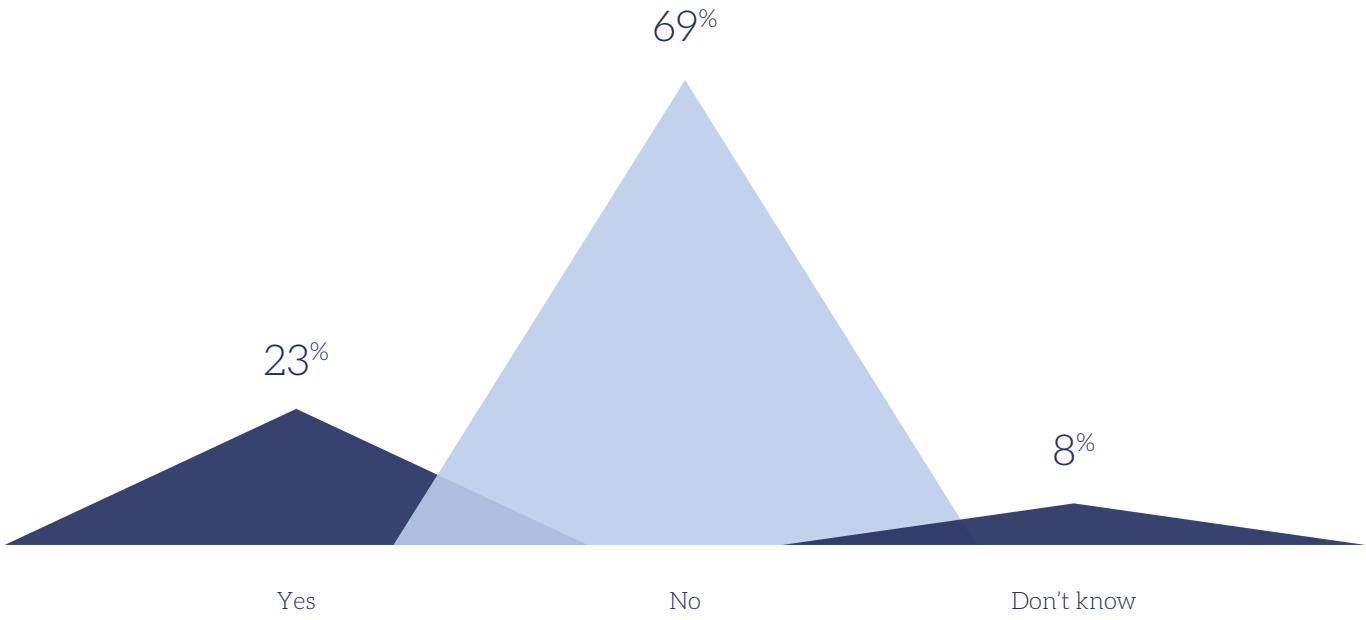
After all, the omnichannel journey is owned by your customers, so understanding their specific challenges and what it is they're looking for is key

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How regularly do you review the customer experience?



Do you test your customer experience, for example, through interaction via all available channels, mystery shopping, etc?



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The testing of customer experience doesn't have to be costly or time-consuming: it can be as simple as calling your sales support team with a difficult query and seeing how they respond, or asking a friend to act as a mystery shopper on your company's website. The key here is the need for a better understanding of the people you're trying to nudge down the funnel – personas are a good place to start and will help ensure you're on track when it comes to your omnichannel approach.

Customer experience top tips

When it comes to the measurement and reporting of CX, consider the below metrics:

- Website user data and UX analysis
- Email engagement metrics
- Pipeline metrics
- Customer transactional data
- Customer satisfaction survey results
- Net promoter score (NPS)
- Sentiment analysis.

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It's also worth remembering that underpinning the strategic approach to omnichannel is the tactical approach, which is about delivering the right message to the right person at the right time – context marketing. This in itself requires a reshuffling of priorities.

Contextual intelligence

What you need is an experience repository that provides a true single view of the customer, giving marketers contextual intelligence about customer interactions that span a multitude of online and offline touchpoints. Contextual intelligence will tell you who your customer is, what he/she has been doing and what their intention is right now.

Content management

Customers move seamlessly across channels so it's important to be able to deliver information, content and experiences in the way the customer wants: personalised and based on current need and previous interaction at scale. Consider whether a content management system like Sitecore's will make it easier to re-use content and to adapt it to the preferred channel of the customer.

Omnichannel automation

Once you have contextual intelligence and content management, the final requirement is orchestrating the customer experience over a set period of time. Think of this as MA, but delivered across all channels and interactions as opposed to just email; this will deliver contextual intelligence insights to make the right automated decisions.

So, what are you waiting for? Making omnichannel a reality in your organisation shouldn't be a cause for concern or sleepless nights. With a joined-up approach and the right technology, you'll be well placed to deliver the kind of experience that will help you nestle your way into the hearts and minds of each and every customer.

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What is omnichannel and why should we be doing it?



Paul Fennemore
Digital experience consultant

B2B buyers' expectations have increased as a result of the experiences delivered by consumer-facing businesses. But they're increasingly prepared to pay a premium for a product or service that delivers great customer service.

However, delivering a relevant, consistent and contextual customer experience requires some fundamental changes within your business.

Strong leadership is key if the customer is to be put at the centre of the business. This is not only about providing the vision and direction for the organisation, but also ensuring that everyone across the organisation buys into a common goal. Management needs to set clear KPIs for themselves and their teams that are also customer centric.

For omnichannel to work the whole business needs to be aligned around the customer. This may require both structural and cultural changes within your organisation, allowing you to respond in a fast-flowing agile way that delivers against customers needs and expectations.

Cross-departmental collaboration is key to delivering a consistent and relevant experience for customers. Breaking down departmental silos will allow the business to more effectively listen to your customers, and what they have to say about your business, and then respond appropriately. Successfully delivering omnichannel experiences not only requires a change in thinking and behaviour, but will also require you to provide your teams with new skillsets and tools, while processes will need to be clearly defined and consistent across the business.

It's important to say that management and organisational change is not trivial and is often the first and biggest reason for failure when companies do try and deliver omnichannel services and communication.

Ominchannel success may not only require the break up of functional and technology silos that exist within your business, but will also require customer data to be shared across the whole organisation.

Data is the oil of any truly omnichannel business

Every interaction with the customer will help you understand where they are in their journey, and what the next appropriate action should be. Collecting, storing and using data effectively is key to delivering effective omnichannel experiences. This means aggregating customer data from across the business to develop a single customer view, which allows you to recognise the customer no matter what device or touchpoints they decide to use. This may require consolidating data from not only sales and marketing, but also from other departments such as customer service and finance.

Data-driven insights will help you understand not only what the customer is trying to do, but also where you can add value to their interactions with your brand. In fact, your customers are increasingly expecting you to have the ability to second-guess them. They want you to know what they want. They absolutely want you to know what conversations you've had with them before. And they want you to be able to act on this knowledge through whichever channel or device they happen to be using at that specific time. This requires a deep understanding of the customer journey and certainly capturing those parts of it that are under your control.

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About

B2B Marketing

B2B Marketing is the comprehensive information resource for B2B marketers. Its mission is to provide practitioners with the information they need to perform better and achieve more, whatever sector of the B2B space they are operating in.

Launched in 2004 as *B2B Marketing* magazine, it has since evolved into a multi-faceted resource, delivering a broad range of content in a variety of different forms and formats.

Its key products are:

- Online community
- Magazine
- Awards
- Research and reports
- Training
- Events
- Membership

For more information on any of these products or services go to b2bmarketing.net or call +44 (0)20 7014 4920

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Sitecore

Sitecore is the global leader in experience management software that enables context marketing. The Sitecore® Experience Platform™ manages content, supplies contextual intelligence, and automates communications, at scale. It empowers marketers to deliver content in context of how customers have engaged with their brand, across every channel, in real time. This context marketing is the only way to manage meaningful customer experiences that delight audiences, build loyalty, and drive revenue. More than 4600 customers – including American Express, Carnival Cruise Lines, easyJet, and L'Oréal – trust Sitecore to help them deliver the personalised interactions that win loyal customers.

For more information, please visit sitecore.net or contact us on +44 (0)203 327 0630 or info-emea@sitecore.net

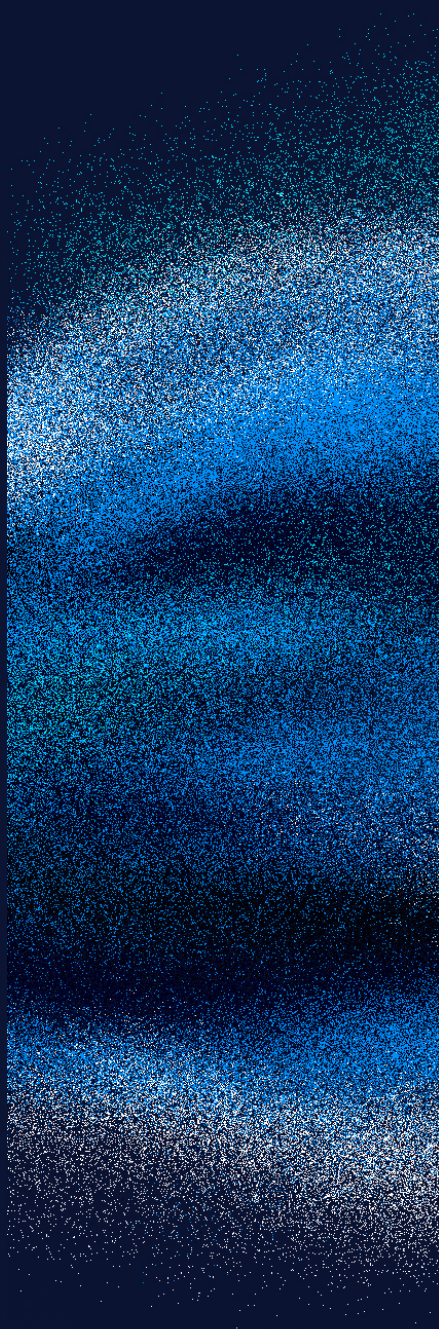
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