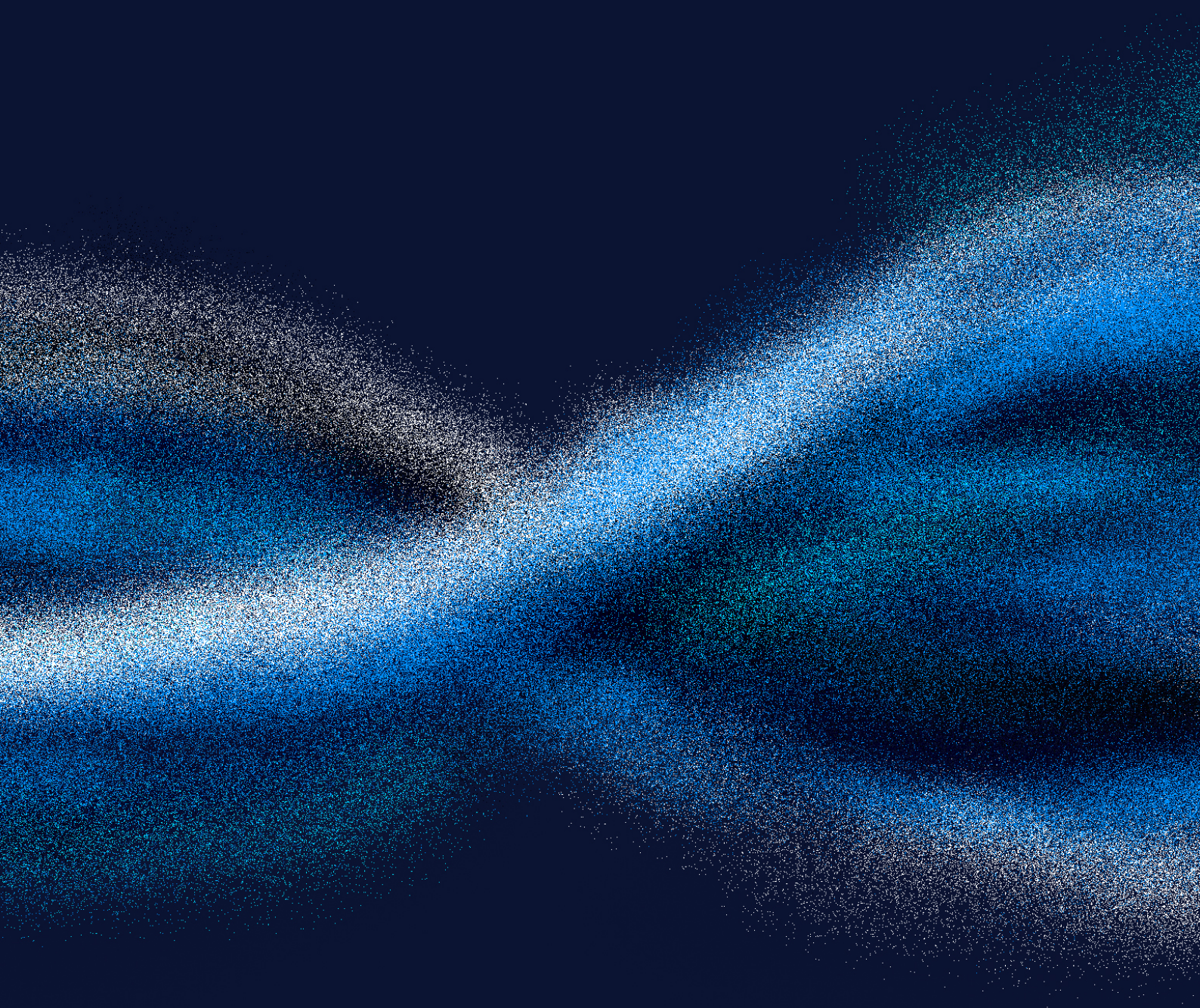
Embedding omnichannel into your marketing approach

PART THREE



B2B Marketing

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Embedding omnichannel into your overall marketing approach

In many ways, omnichannel is the same as any other marketing tactic: it's more about thinking strategically and playing the long game than crossing your fingers and hoping for a quick win. The sharpest marketing minds out there realise the most successful strategies are ongoing: you don't decide to 'do' omnichannel one week and tick it off the to-do list the next.

In this way, omnichannel is viewed best not as a destination but rather as the journey itself, and as such, there is no official completion date. Analysis, revision and adaptation is constantly required: after all, your customer of today is not your customer of tomorrow. Their needs change, their channel preferences change, their attention spans change.

Before you embark on your omnichannel journey there's the important question of ownership and organisational structure. Clearly the word 'omni' suggests that this approach will involve everyone, from the right-brained creatives to the left-brained automation experts. And this is entirely correct – all members of your team need to be bought into this new way of working for it to really take off. Problems, however, can occur when departments broken down into channel marketing siloes veer off on their own paths: this needs to be prevented wherever possible.

Another challenge that marketers might well face involves back-office integration across channels, and difficulties around sharing customer data and analytics across different channels and regions. In order to mitigate any such issues, consider the following actions:

- Bring the wider organisation and team together to discuss what omnichannel marketing looks like and what it'll mean for your customers. Channel managers, marketing, sales, product developers, customer teams – everyone has an important role to play.
- Make sure you know your buyer inside out and that you're taking a customer-centric (instead of product-centric) approach to product development and marketing strategy.
- Become digital natives: in order to stick to every part of the omnichannel promise, having a team full of digital all-rounders is crucial.
- Ensure individuals and teams within the organisation agree the metrics they're reporting on.
- Assign a customer champion who spends a significant portion of their time interacting with the customer. This individual should be able to identify where channel managers need to further collaborate.
- Ensure the technology is integrated and your CRM is able to build that all-important single view of the customer. And make sure you're taking advantage of the post-sales support on offer from the supplier in question.

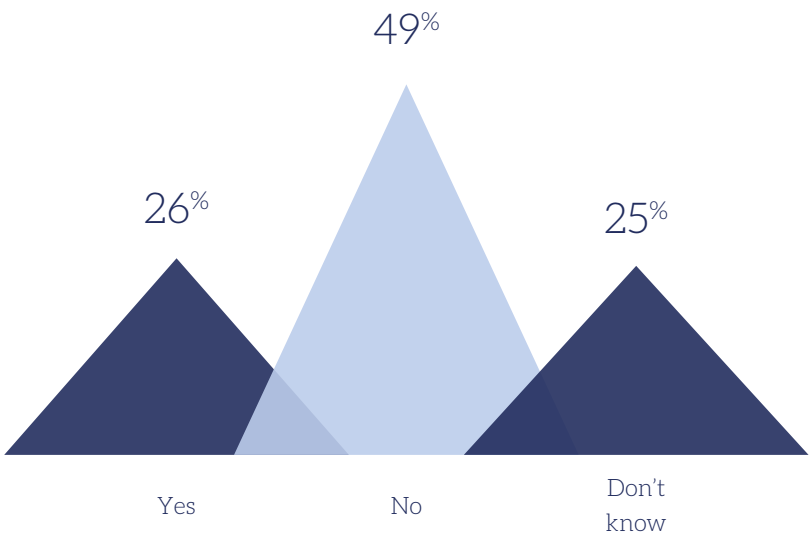
Omnichannel is viewed best not as a destination but rather as the journey itself

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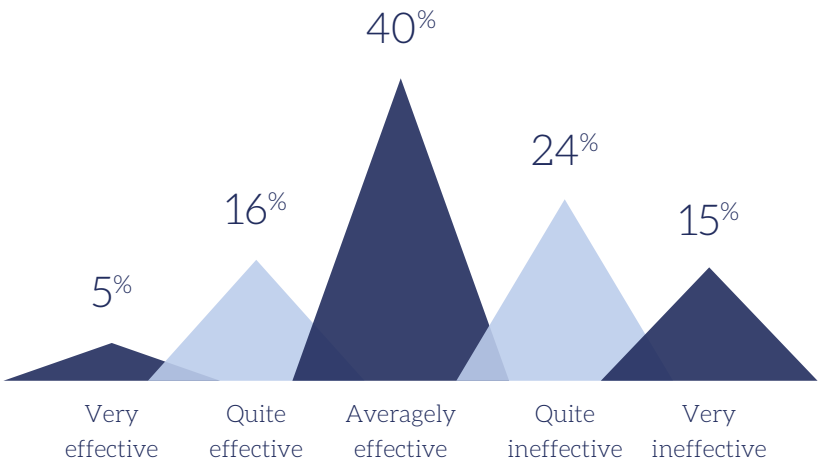
Monitoring customer need in itself is crucial, but monitoring your overall strategy is a no-brainer. In order for omnichannel to really come into its own and get buy-in from the board, it needs to be firstly prioritised and then measured.

With only a quarter of marketers seeing omnichannel success as a priority, success itself will be hard to come by and quantify. And of 211 respondents to our recent survey in association with Sitecore, only 26% admitted that measuring the ROI of omnichannel marketing was a priority. Of those who did measure ROI, an astounding 39% admitted their approach to measurement was either 'quite' or 'very' ineffective.

Is measuring the ROI of omnichannel marketing a priority for our business?



How effective is your measurement in determining the ROI of omnichannel marketing?



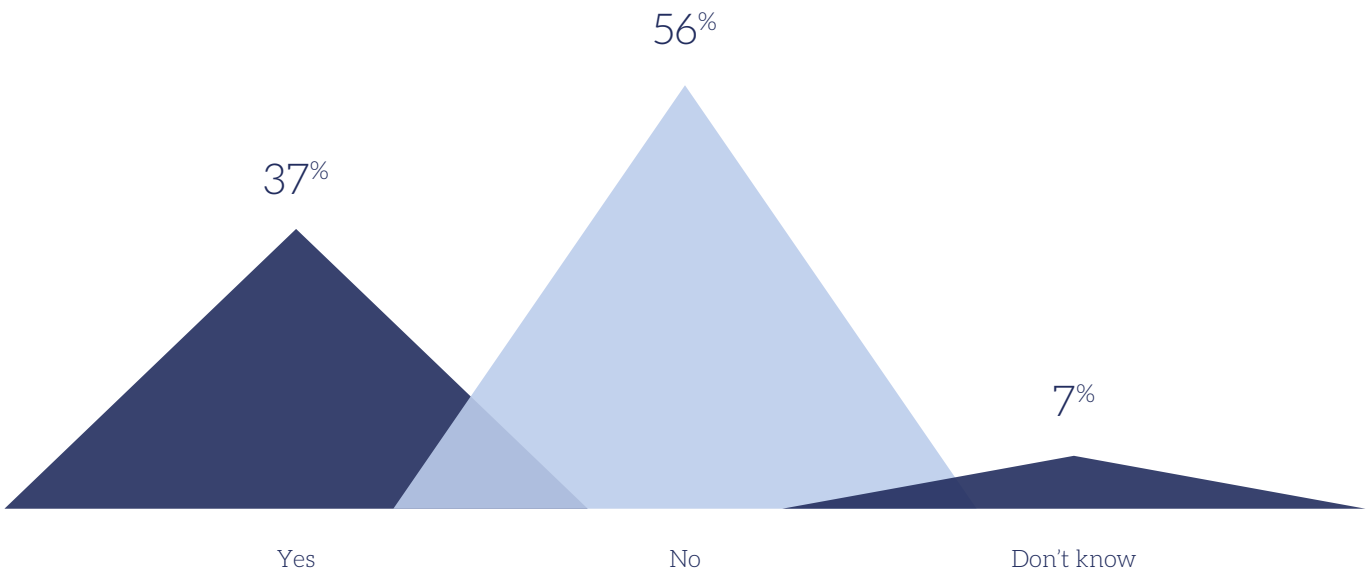
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We might assume the reason for this is a perceived inability to measure its success – and yes, the key barriers do speak for themselves. Lack of resource came out as the biggest challenge, with poor tech integration and data issues coming a close second and third. But omnichannel shouldn't necessarily be seen as a huge departure from any other campaign when it comes to measurement: it's about working out what counts and shunning those vanity metrics in favour of the facts and stats that tell a significant story – think dwell time, actions, conversions and site traffic.

Consider also the software that could harness the power of this intelligence for you – from showing you where your customers are coming from and what they're doing, for example, to testing content before it goes live. With only 37% of respondents admitting they work with external partners to enhance first party data, it might be worth seeking out expert advice – particularly with the abundance of customer data you're working with and the many different channels to master.

We're going to leave you with this: a recent Forrester report revealed that 75% of B2B buyers around the world would buy again from a supplier with good omnichannel capabilities. Such an undeniably telling stat suggests that it's time to sit up and take note of what this approach could do for your business. Omnichannel has arrived and if you're not on board, your business and your customers are definitely missing out.

Do you work with external partners to enhance your first party data



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The five pillars of omnichannel success



Paul Fennemore
Digital experience consultant, Sitecore

There are five foundation stones that are key to developing a successful omnichannel strategy.

› **Data.** Collecting, storing and using data is at the core of any omnichannel strategy.

› **Aggregation.** To succeed, you need to bring together all the data you have that recognises the customer, and the useful content owned by the brand. The aggregated data will help you develop a single customer view that helps you deliver relevant experiences.

› **Standards.** Your customer data and content must be rigorously maintained to a set standard. Those standards cover the data itself, and the way it's used, but perhaps most importantly, these standards must relate to why the brand is doing omnichannel in the first place, and what your objectives are.

› **Insight.** Your understanding of your customers' needs and wants are key to driving useful and intelligent interactions with them. You need to understand what they know, what they are trying to achieve and where you can add value to the interactions with then. You also need to ensure you engage with your customers on their preferred channels, be it email, social, text messages, or via the phone with a customer services representative.

› **Technology.** The final foundation of omnichannel is, of course, technology. It acts as the glue between the previous four foundation stones. It's the facilitator of omnichannel and is key to delivering great omnichannel interactions with customers.

These key principles are the core of Sitecore's Experience Platform, and will allow delivery of what we call context marketing – where the right content is delivered to the right person, in the right place, at the right moment, based on the sum total of their past behaviours and current needs.

Are you ready to transform your business?

To ensure your omnichannel strategy succeeds may also require some fundamental changes in how your business operates. And this means more than just strong leadership and setting a common goal or KPI for the organisation.

Many businesses are still struggling to banish often-outmoded business practices. As *Entrepreneur* magazine points out "Stop thinking of your customers in terms of 'X' number of leads down the funnel. Treat them as real people and focus on personalising each of their interactions and experiences with your brand. This approach not only works for omnichannel marketing but forms the base for any *good* marketing strategy."

An omnichannel approach also requires a T-shaped mindset. The modern marketing team doesn't live in functional siloes, and should be multidisciplinary. People with T-shaped skills have not only a depth of understanding in one specific area of marketing or business, but also understands how all the separate pieces fit together to deliver a seamless customer experience. With customers now in the driving seat, you need to employ an agile workforce with the necessary skills to deliver a relevant response to match your customers' needs and expectations.

However, it's unlikely that this can all be delivered overnight. You'll need to develop a strategic roadmap that's evolutionary, not revolutionary. This will also allow you to not only roll out changes across the business in a structured manner, but also allow you to gauge where your business is in your journey to delivering exceptional customer experiences.

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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

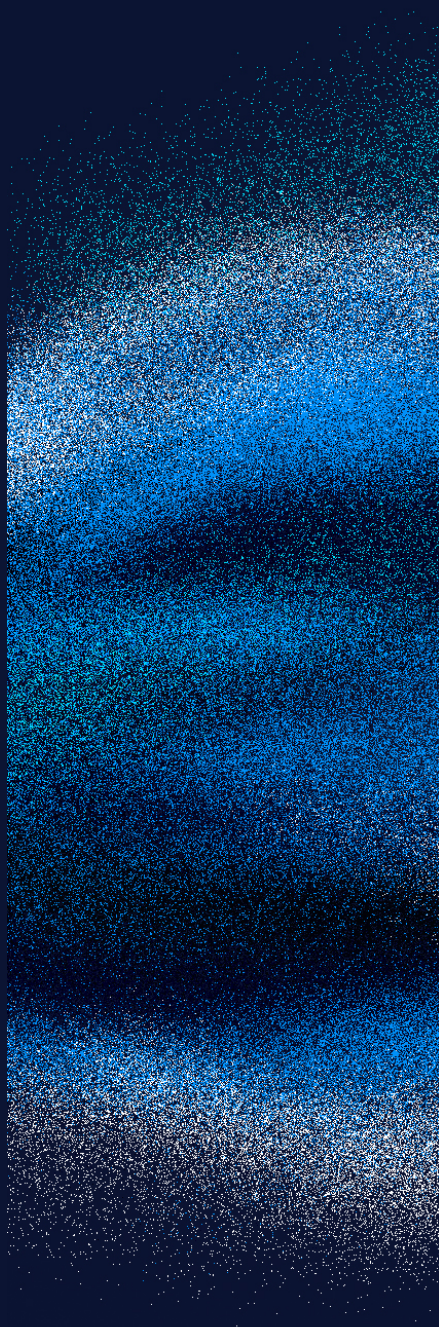
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