

The 4 Biggest Challenges Facing B2B Tech Marketers Today (Part Four)

Unifying communication strategies across channels throughout the customer journey

by Chris Ronald

Head of B2B Global Teleservices, Harte Hanks

Over the past few weeks, we've been exploring the four biggest marketing challenges faced by B2B tech companies. The first three challenges are utilising all available tools and technologies, leveraging high-quality, real-time data and generating ROI with less budget and fewer resources.

For the fourth and final challenge, I will discuss the best strategies to unify communications across channels in order to drive the customer journey.

CHALLENGE #4:

How do I unify communication strategies across channels to drive customers through the buyer journey?

Your brand is a powerful thing. Not only does it represent the essence and promise of your company, it also embodies the expectations and opinions of your customers as they move through their buying journies. Each touchpoint with your brand is a chance to enhance—or diminish—a customer's perception.

That means each piece of advertising, each call to your contact centre and each visit to your landing page should work in tandem to convey a consistent message that represents your brand. Just one negative interaction can damage your customer's perception. And it's much more difficult to reverse a negative perception than it is to proactively ensure positive customer interactions from the start of a campaign.



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So how can we ensure a single view of the customer across their entire journey with consistent brand touchpoints and a clear, unified message? Read on:

1. **Start with a clear definition of your brand:** First and foremost, you need to clearly define what your brand represents. Your brand platform needs to be articulated and shared with everyone in the company, particularly the external-facing representatives. A marketing program is the creative output built on top of the brand, designed to build awareness and the desire to purchase.
2. **Decide what you are trying to achieve with your marketing efforts:** What is your vision of success? What are you trying to do, and why are you trying to do it? At this stage, it's helpful to look at what Harte Hanks Creative Director Alan Kittle calls "The Beautiful Intersection". Draw two intersecting circles. In one, write out what you or your client wants to say. In the other, detail what your audience wants to hear. The intersection of this Venn diagram is your sweet spot—the message that will tell your story while resonating with your audience.
3. **Identify the necessary building blocks and workstreams:** After you define your end goal and key objective, work backwards to figure out what will get you there. Start with a solid strategist or planner. This individual or team should gather and interpret all available data and determine how that insight into the customer will enable a connection with the brand. Data intelligence should help form creative briefs and build a campaign message that is highly measurable.
4. **Cut through with a single unifying thought:** In a complex, multi-channel, multi-territory campaign, it is essential to have one unifying idea that all marketing efforts tie back to. In fact, the more complex the marketing campaign—the more channels, audiences, periods of time—the simpler the message should be. By looking at the whole picture, you can determine how all the pieces fit together throughout the journey: how an audience reacts to an email, then a phone call a few weeks later and a piece of advertising leading them to a customer landing page a few days after that.
5. **Create an ecosystem of collaboration and information sharing:** It is essential that all agencies plug into the brand and work together in a creative, synergistic manner to tell the same story. Branding agencies need to work in tandem with creative teams—the strongest teams collaborate to deliver an outcome that is greater than the sum of its parts.

By following these steps for a new marketing idea or to increase the effectiveness of an in-progress marketing program, it is possible to unify communications across channels and create that single unifying thought that weaves through the entire customer journey. Data helps inform and define this thought and to create a cycle of excellence. Use data to create something with the best chance of success, then look at what to improve and start the process again.

Email lets.talk@hartehanks.com to learn more.

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