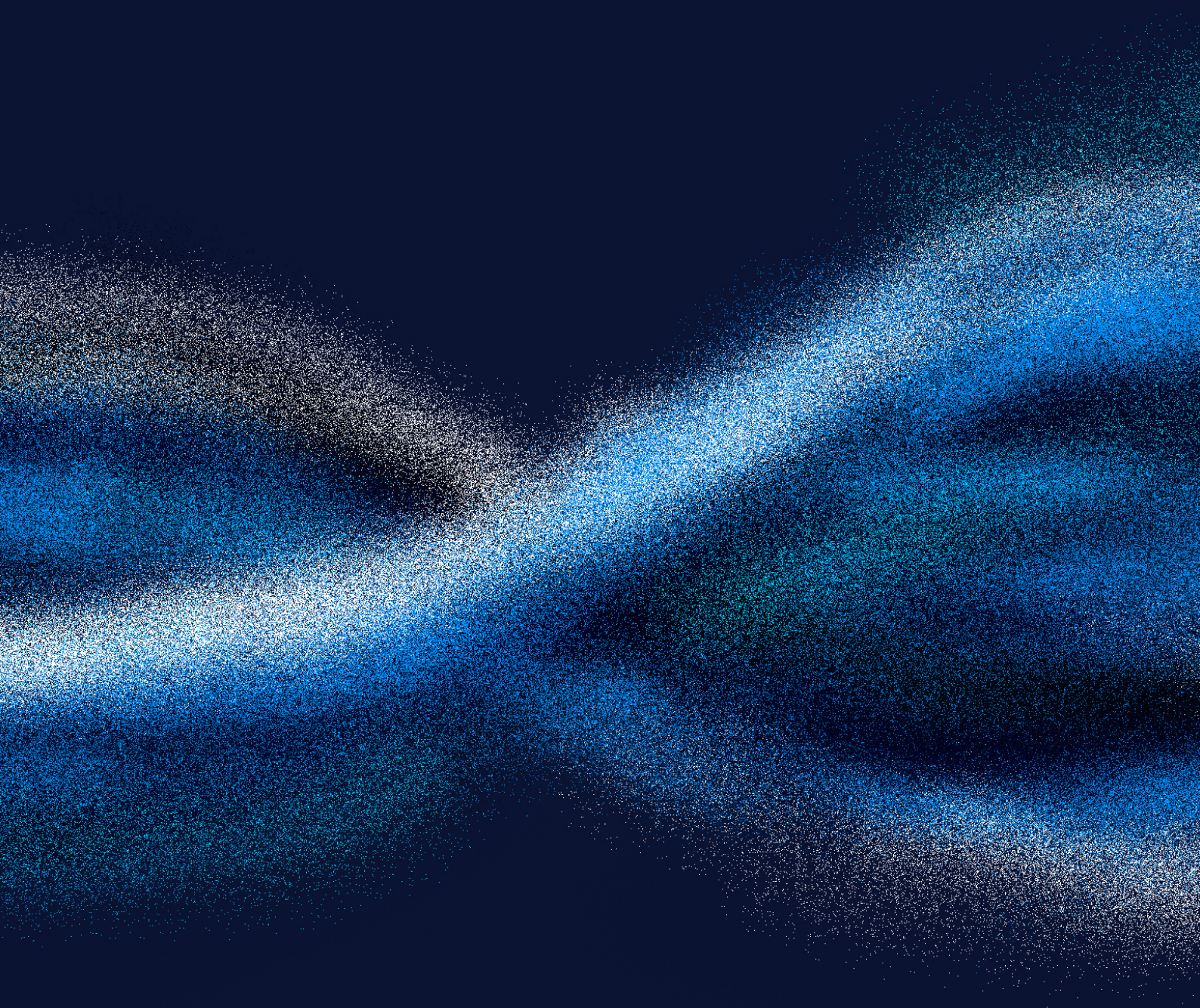
What is omnichannel and why should we be doing it?

PART ONE



B2B Marketing

sitecore®

What is omnichannel and why should we be doing it?

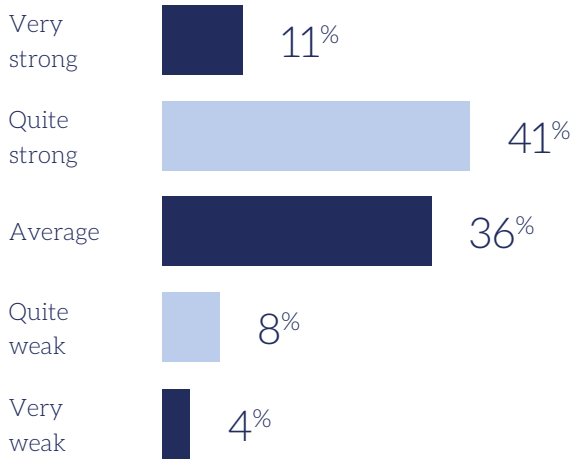
In a world where acronyms and buzzwords abound, it can sometimes be easier to assume a term's meaning than clarify it. Marketers, and their colleagues over in sales, are talking omnichannel, multichannel, cross-channel and single channel, and chances are that not everyone's on the same page.

Omnichannel is only a very distant relation of single channel and multichannel: they are not all one and the same. While multichannel's about reaching out to your customers on multiple devices and platforms, for example, omnichannel takes this to the next level: its focus is providing a seamless experience, regardless of channel or device. And then you've got cross-channel, which encourages the user to migrate from one channel to another: it's a step behind multichannel, where each channel often has its own defined strategy and is managed separately.

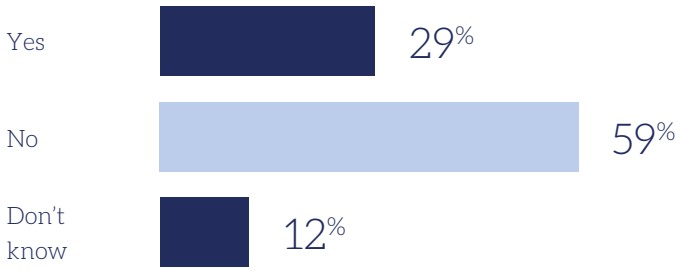
Despite the difference in term meanings, many marketers out there think they're doing omnichannel when in fact they're doing cross-channel; the widely misused funnel metaphor is partly to blame here, with many B2B organisations still hung up on the idea that customer behaviour can and should be mapped to the funnel in a completely linear way. This, in turn, impacts their wider channel approach.

Back in July we carried out a survey in association with Sitecore to pinpoint exactly where B2B marketers are on their omnichannel journey; it found that although 41% of our 211 respondents rated their understanding of omnichannel as very strong, the real meaning of the term seems rather open to interpretation: only 29% had an agreed upon definition within their marketing department.

Q: How would you rate your understanding of omnichannel marketing?



Q: Do you have an agreed upon definition of omnichannel marketing within your marketing department?



© B2B Marketing 2016

Putting the customer at the heart of your business

Omnichannel success is all about making sure your customer, on any given day or week, sees consistency across every output – if they visit your website or Facebook page, receive an email or see an advert (print, banner or retargeted), each talks the same language and drives home the same message. Put simply, the brand focus at that particular time acts as the unifying strand linking each channel's output.

Omnichannel requires every touchpoint on the customer journey to be in sync – everything from channels, content and campaign management to marketing automation, data analytics and CRM. Many marketers can only dream of delivering an almost 'custom made' experience to their customers. But omnichannel success revolves around thinking holistically about the customer, and making sure every single touchpoint – online and offline – is aligned.

The challenge arises when you use channels in isolation (think website, social media, emails, mobile apps, print adverts and physical stores); with disparate channels it becomes harder to track the customer journey and provide that seamless experience every ambitious B2B marketer is looking for.

Omnichannel success revolves around thinking holistically about the customer, and making sure every single touchpoint – online and offline – is aligned

© B2B Marketing 2016

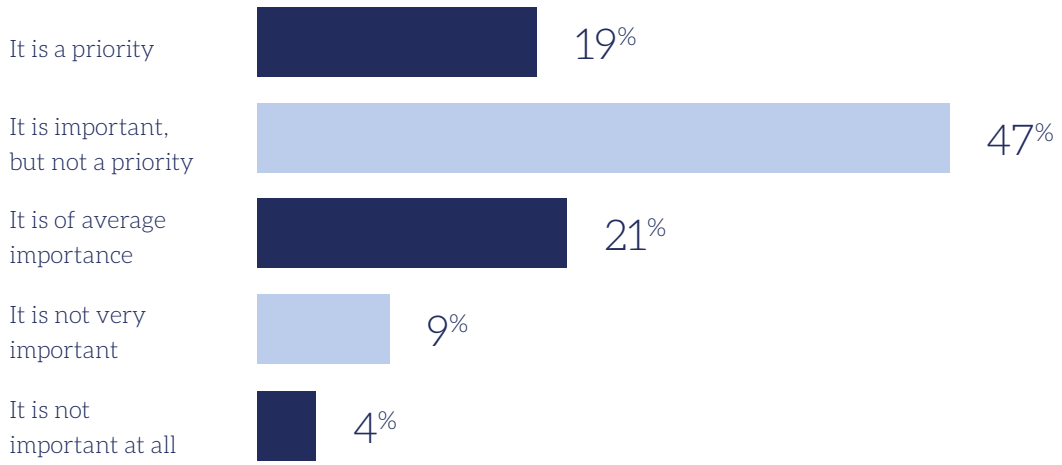
Why should you be doing it?

The benefits of omnichannel are pretty compelling – customer loyalty, affection, and satisfaction to name but three. A recent Forrester report revealed 75% of B2B buyers around the world would buy again from a supplier with good omnichannel capabilities, which says it all. Customers today have an incredible amount of choice, and are more informed and empowered than ever before. Their experience with a brand is the number one driver of whether they'll do business with that brand again or instead choose a competitor – and a successful omnichannel approach can have a big impact on that decision.

Looking to the B2B space, very few brands are excelling in omnichannel – something reflected in our research, which revealed only 19% of B2B marketers see it as a priority, with 28% describing their approach as ineffective.

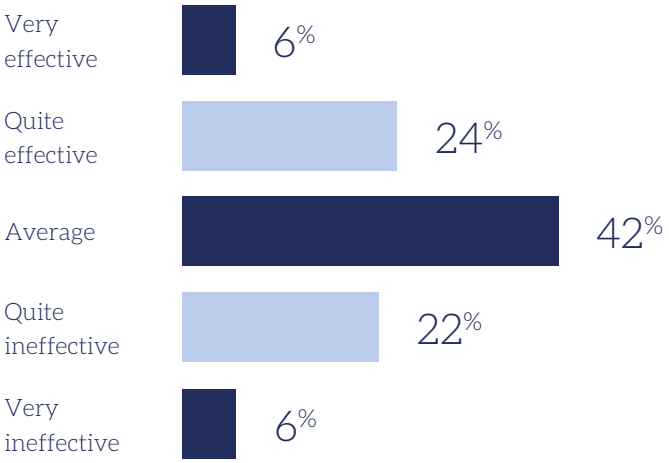
This is the exact reason why taking a more strategic approach will be a big differentiator for marketers in the future. While B2C might have invented the term (it actually dates back to Best Buy's use of customer centricity to compete with Walmart's electronic department in 2003), many marketers will argue that B2B is far better placed to make omnichannel happen – partly because of B2B marketers' proximity to customer data and their experience with CRM.

Q: Is omnichannel marketing a priority for the marketing department within your business?



© B2B Marketing 2016

Q: How effective do you currently consider your organisation to be at omnichannel marketing?



Marketers have got a lot to lose by failing to get on board

When it comes to implementing an omnichannel approach, B2B marketers have got a lot to lose by failing to get on board. Customers' expectations of B2B brands are rapidly evolving – thanks in part to their experiences as consumers – and omnichannel isn't so much a 'nice to do' but a top-of-the-priority-list no-brainer.

Over the coming months we'll be analysing our research to determine how you can improve your approach through aligning marketing and business objectives, harnessing the power of your data and technology, understanding your customers, and reviewing, analysing and updating your strategy.

© B2B Marketing 2016

We live in the age of the consumer



Paul Fennemore
Digital experience consultant

The last 20 years have seen an unparalleled change in the context of how we market to consumers. Technology, audience attitudes and the relationship between brand and customer have reshaped brand communications and put the power in the hands of the customer.

Today's smart and connected consumers now have access to almost perfect information that allows them to analyse your company's products or services, and compare them with those of your competitors. They put their trust in online reviews, and will use social media to help validate their choices and decision-making. And increasingly they expect brands to deliver a personalised and seamless experience, no matter which channel, touchpoint or device they choose to use. And all of this delivered in real-time. The balance of power has truly shifted towards your customers. And increasingly their expectations of how B2B businesses behave in this new world will be the same as for consumer-facing brands that put have put their customers at the centre of their organisations, such as Amazon, Disney and Apple. And if you don't deliver? Increasingly your customers will go elsewhere.

Customer experience is transforming business

The experience you deliver to consumers will not only define your brand but also set you apart from your competitors. McKinsey underlined "…how an organisation delivers for customers is beginning to be as important as what it delivers".

So how do you go about delivering the great experiences?

Omnichannel is deeply embedded in the broader concept of delivering great customer experiences. In fact, it's almost impossible to think of them without omnichannel.

Technologies such as Sitecore's Experience Platform allow businesses to brings together your customer data and insights, and combine it with content to provide a personalised experience that delivers the right message, to the right person, at the right time, through the right channel.

Great experiences are not only a priority because consumers increasingly expect it, but as Accenture highlights, "the businesses that focus on delivering and executing customer experiences are the businesses that will win". In fact, as Deloitte has revealed, customer-centric companies are 60% more profitable than companies who aren't customer focused.

Great omnichannel experiences can also deliver other benefits. Customer trust has always been key to B2B organisations. The experience that customers have with your organisation will increasingly become the deciding factor in not only who they choose to buy from, but also who becomes a regular and trusted supplier. Providing experiences that not only allow you to meet customer expectations but surpass them will provide a feel-good factor that not only delivers trust, but drives customer loyalty, advocacy and increased sales.

And adopting a omnichannel mind-set will be critical for B2B businesses as customer expectations rise. The ability to deliver a personalised experience across multiple touchpoints that not only chimes with buyers, but also end users of your products and services, will be key in delivering omnichannel success.

© B2B Marketing 2016

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

B2B Marketing

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 4,600 customers—including American Express, Carnival Cruise Lines, easyJet, and L'Oréal—trust Sitecore to help them deliver the personalized interactions that win loyal customers.

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

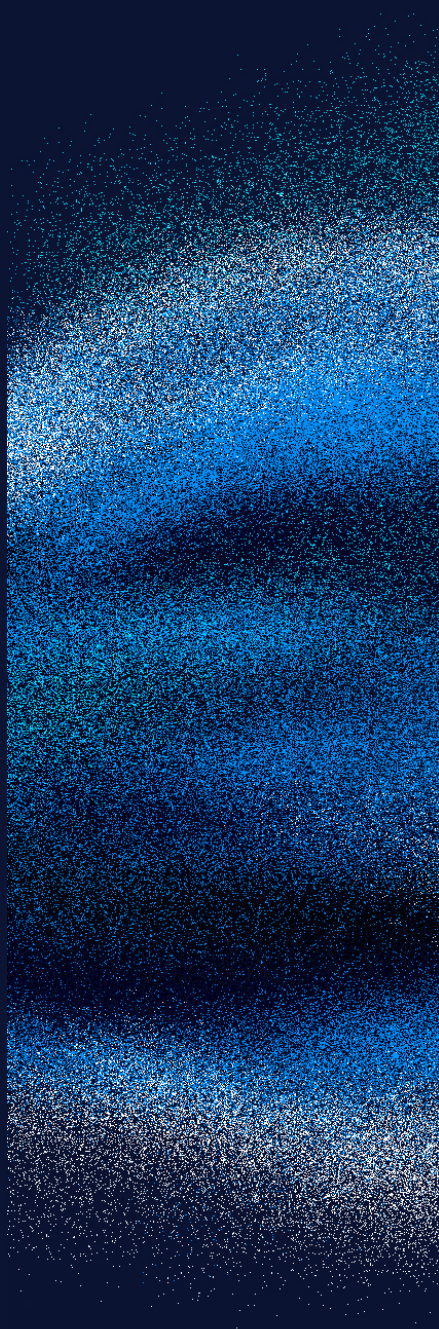
sitecore®

© B2B Marketing 2016

B2B Marketing
Clover House
147–149 Farringdon Road
London
EC1R 3HN

Tel: +44 (0)20 7014 4920

info@b2bmarketing.net
b2bmarketing.net



B2B Marketing