Multichannel marketing is where content and context meet and where brand experiences are built. Gartner's 2015 research will help multichannel marketers plan, execute and optimize increasingly complex programs across channels to deliver value to customers and your business.
The multichannel marketing manager is under increased pressure to stimulate growth through faster, smarter and better-integrated interactions with prospects and customers. Because resources are limited, multichannel marketers will want to invest in the right tools and techniques that bring the most value to your brand and buyers. Gartner’s 2015 research will help you develop a comprehensive multichannel strategy to meet and engage with customers according to their preferences and permissions.

Multichannel marketers will also need to strike a balance between what the brand needs and what buyers want. Eighteen percent of marketing budgets are now earmarked for customer experience (CX) innovation. Multichannel marketers will need to come to the table with their expertise in disciplines and channels, armed with customer data and insights around what drives loyalty and advocacy, and what is required to bring all the elements together. And they’ll need to provide value through content marketing strategies before and after the sale to acquire and retain increasingly sophisticated buyers.
2015 research helps multichannel marketers prioritize through the myriad channel choices — from the website, through to mobile applications, social networks, email, call centers, ad networks, kiosks, direct mail and physical locales. We'll help multichannel marketers find ways to continually orchestrate both inbound and outbound channels to multiple customer segments with increasing speed and relevancy.

In 2015, we’ll help multichannel marketers prepare for those changes with research that discusses how:

- The multichannel marketer’s expanded charter, in terms of shaping the overall brand experience from presale to postsale, requires collaboration with constituencies outside of marketing — including sales and customer service.
- Content marketing disciplines enrich and extend the multichannel experience — from awareness to advocacy — fueled by curating user-generated content.
- The right selection of tools and technologies can support your investment strategies.
- Multichannel marketers are expanding capabilities in multidimensional segmentation techniques: For example, techniques enable the grouping of audiences based on different attributes along multiple dimensions. Traditional attributes have focused on products and who would be likely buyers. Newer groupings focus on potential profitability and the customer life cycle. New and old data play an important role in defining the right audience with the right offer at the right time in the right channel.
- Marketers will be pressed to focus their efforts on a complementary set of best-performing channels for both the company and the customer — rather than simply expanding channels. Marketers will achieve better results when they aggregate, analyze and act on customer insights and trends from multiple sources to drive real-time and event-driven marketing, using automated and personalized approaches.

Key Issues

**Multichannel Marketing Strategies**

- What are the top considerations for designing and executing successful multichannel marketing campaigns?

**Multichannel Marketing Best Practices**

- What combination of digital techniques, channels and processes is the most effective for attracting, acquiring and retaining loyal and profitable customers?

**Multichannel Marketing Critical Capabilities**

- What are the evolving criteria for choosing technology and service providers to help develop and manage multichannel marketing?
Multichannel Marketing Strategies

What are the top considerations for designing and executing successful multichannel marketing campaigns?

As the lead digital marketing conductor, multichannel marketers orchestrate the work and processes of multiple specialists: email marketing and search marketing experts, social media rock stars, data and analytics wizards, and visualization artists. Depending on the size of their marketing team, the list can go on.

Their digital marketing programs will tie into initiatives in traditional channels, such as TV and radio, direct mail, and out-of-home media and print media, requiring further coordination so messaging and offers are consistent yet designed to take advantage of the attributes of a particular channel.

Gartner’s 2014 Customer Experience Survey results suggest multichannel marketers will look beyond channels, campaigns and offers to help identify the business practices and high-value interactions with the brand that will define an enduring and differentiated CX.

Planned Research

In 2015, we’ll publish our multichannel marketing survey. Our key findings will compare what channels delivered the best results and why. We’ll also highlight the top multichannel marketing priorities for benchmarking their own priorities.

Our multichannel marketing heat map shows what’s hot and what’s not in digital marketing tactics across 14 channels and 46 industry verticals. By knowing what marketers are doing in other industries, especially one with similar approaches, multichannel marketers will have access to additional information when deciding on how to allocate their marketing campaign budget.

Multichannel Marketing Best Practices

What combination of digital techniques, channels and processes is the most effective for attracting, acquiring and retaining loyal and profitable customers?

The fundamental objectives of attracting, acquiring and retaining high-value customers play out in program designs that are choreographed to cascade from one campaign to the next and make use of the appropriate mix of channels. From broad segmentation to highly personalized engagement, multichannel marketing is about getting the right mix based on where prospects are in the buying journey and leading them along their own desired path. We’ll look at who has figured it out and share best — not common — practices based on marketers’ own personal journey through digital marketing. This information will guide their ongoing investment strategies, depending on whether they’re targeting new customer acquisition, growth in existing accounts, loyalty building or other tactics.

Planned Research

Our annual Hype Cycle for Digital Marketing will examine emerging technologies and techniques for use in multichannel campaigns. This research profiles technologies against five phases of a
technology life cycle, starting with potential technology breakthroughs (Innovation Trigger) and their relative maturation when a technology moves into the mainstream (Plateau of Productivity). We’ll look at 10 emerging trends in digital marketing that make smart use of data, channel designs and creative. Based on our CMO surveys, we’ll reveal new ways to look at loyalty and customer advocacy.

Our Market Guides, including one devoted to advanced marketing analytics platforms, will discuss the latest tools available to assist multichannel marketers with segmentation, lead scoring and propensity modeling.

**Multichannel Marketing Critical Capabilities**

*What are the evolving criteria for choosing technology and service providers to help develop and manage multichannel marketing?*

Digital marketers use technology to automate campaign management in four critical areas: campaign creation, orchestration, execution and measurement. But any anticipated efficiencies could fail to materialize if you select an unsuitable multichannel campaign management application.

For instance, one provider could excel at campaign creation and orchestration, while another provider could be better at ad management. Depending on the marketing organization’s needs, multichannel marketers will want to select those solutions that can help them achieve immediate and longer-term marketing objectives.

**Planned Research**

Our 2015 research will discuss products, including market-leading ones that support campaign management scenarios. Our Critical Capabilities and Magic Quadrant reports will point out distinctions in offerings to help multichannel marketers identify the products that best support their strategy long term and short term. Additional research will show them how to evaluate lead management and multichannel campaign management applications.

Gartner’s [Digital Marketing Transit Map](#) will give multichannel marketers a comprehensive landscape of marketing technologies. They can use this map to visualize the interrelationships of marketing disciplines and drill down to learn about representative products and services for those disciplines.

We’ll continue to build on our maturity model to help you bring your organization to the next level. And we’ll share best practices through interviews with companies that are experiencing breakthrough results in multichannel marketing.

**Related Priorities**

Key Initiatives address significant business opportunities and threats, and typically have defined objectives, substantial financial implications, and high organizational visibility. They are normally
implemented by a designated team with clear roles and responsibilities, as well as defined performance objectives.

### Table 1. Related Priorities for Multichannel Marketing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Initiative</th>
<th>Focus</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Management</td>
<td>CMOs are redesigning the organization, building business advantage through multidisciplinary teams and adopting new capabilities to penetrate customer segments and explore growth opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Experience</td>
<td>Customer experience encompasses the sum of all brand interactions across customer-facing touchpoints in sales, marketing and support across a brand's products, processes — and even people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Marketing Technology and Trends</td>
<td>Emerging marketing technology and trends, such as big data, social media, augmented reality and context-aware computing, create new opportunities to acquire and retain customers, fueling growth and taking market share.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data-Driven Marketing</td>
<td>Data-driven marketing refers to acquiring, analyzing and applying all information about customer and consumer wants, needs and motivations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Marketing</td>
<td>Mobile marketing involves using information about people's context (location, identity, relationships and intentions) to tailor information and products that will increase customer engagement and sales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Commerce</td>
<td>Digital commerce uses the Internet, mobile networks and commerce infrastructure to execute transactions with consumers or businesses and to support marketing and other activities around these transactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Marketing</td>
<td>Social marketing is a strategy that uses social media to listen to and engage customers and cultivate brand advocates. It can shorten product development cycles, boost innovation and increase conversion rates.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gartner (December 2014)

### Suggested Next Steps

- Do the essential research on your target buyers, your competition and your market opportunities to inform the design of continuous, connected conversations. And think orchestration when you think multichannel. It’s about the right mix of channels and the right timing.

- Inventory and analyze the touchpoints across your business. Where is the zero moment of truth when a buyer makes a decision to engage or disengage?

- Consider the three Cs of content marketing as a needed core competency: **creation** — working with internal resources, agencies and freelance resources to produce content; **curation** — discovering, organizing and annotating third-party content to help communicate value and how to cultivate; **cultivate** — mobilizing a community to contribute content back in the form of comments, ratings, review or richer content driven by games and contests.
Manage a pipeline of great creative and engaging storytelling ideas that earn you the right to engage with a customer. You can get all the downstream activities right, but no one will listen if you don’t have anything worth talking about.

Gartner Recommended Reading

*Some documents may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.*

"Magic Quadrant for Multichannel Campaign Management"

"Critical Capabilities for Multichannel Campaign Management"

"Gartner's Multichannel Orchestration Model Makes Campaign Management a Science"

"A Repeatable Framework for Building Great Digital Campaigns"

"Maturity Model for Digital Marketing Operations"

"Market Guide for Advanced Marketing Analytics Platforms"

"Know the Capabilities of B2B Lead Management Providers"

"Toolkit: Multichannel Marketing Heat Map, 2014"

"Toolkit: What’s the New Black on the 2014 Digital Marketing Hype Cycle?"

"How to Turn Disruptive Digital Marketing Technologies to Your Advantage"

Agenda Manager Profiles

Adam Sarner specializes in marketing strategy and technology, including digital marketing, multichannel marketing, campaign management, lead management, segmentation, loyalty marketing, social, and overall customer relationship management strategy and technology. He serves digital marketers, helping them assess and take advantage of innovative and emerging marketing technologies and put them to business use. Prior to joining Gartner, Mr. Sarner was responsible for developing CRM applications in the insurance industry.
Jennifer Beck serves digital marketing leaders, specializing in multichannel marketing across digital and offline channels, branding and business strategies. She offers advice to CMOs and CEOs on how to competitively position their companies, create and manage their brands, enter the digital arena and maximize marketing and sales investments. Jennifer has also developed a series of models and planning tools to help companies make better marketing investment decisions, and develop plans to have a great impact on business results.

More on This Topic
This is part of an in-depth collection of research. See the collection:

- Agenda Overviews for Gartner for Marketing Leaders, 2015