

Gartner for Marketers

Multichannel Marketing Primer for 2016



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Published: 19 January 2016

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Multichannel marketing activities need to move off of uncoordinated push messages. Gartner's 2016 research helps marketers plan, orchestrate and execute interactions across channels that build enduring, profitable relationships with customers.

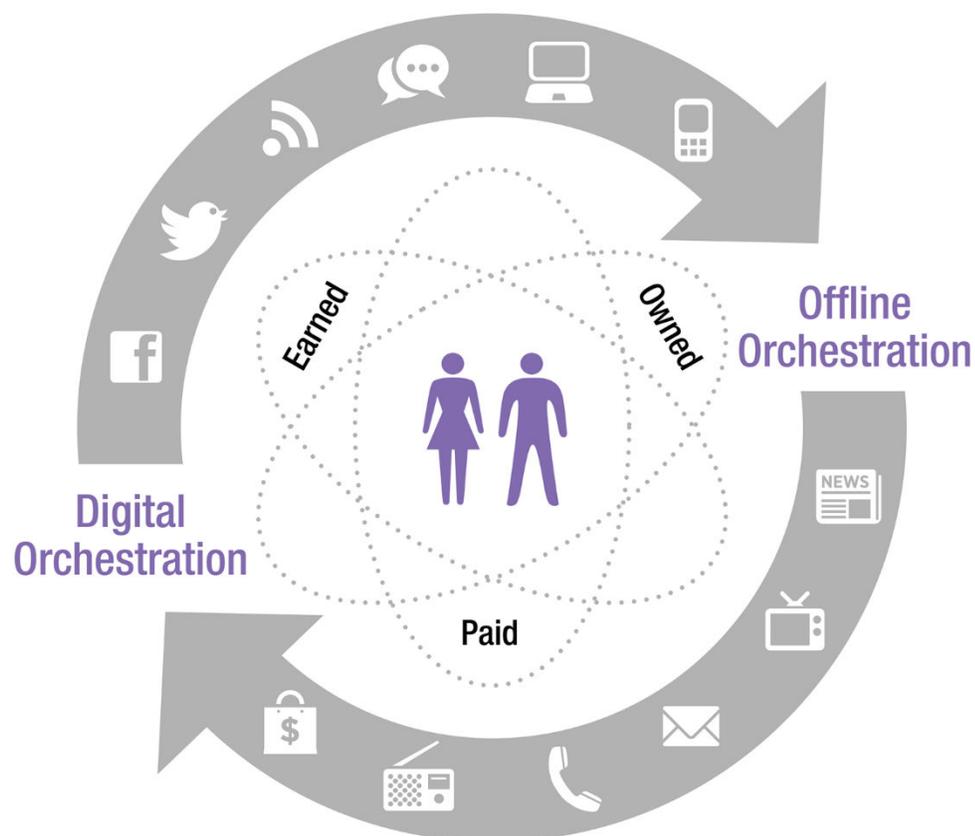
Scope

Multichannel marketing represents orchestrated interaction across digital and traditional customer touch points. Marketers seek to acquire, convert and retain customers through:

- An understanding of the audience
- The timing and targeting of moments
- The automation of multichannel execution

Analysis

Figure 1. Multichannel Marketing Key Initiative



Source: Gartner (January 2016)

Many multichannel marketing techniques have not progressed beyond company-led push campaigns, having a loose assortment of channels that break communication flow. Messaging such as batch and blast emails has become largely ineffective. Noncontextual digital ads and organic social media reach are shrinking as consumers tune out brands and social network promotional restrictions rise. True multichannel marketing means orchestrating the right combination of responsive channels at the moment of need by building profitable relationships with customers. Seamless two-way multichannel marketing should mimic a real conversation. Dividends come in the form of loyalty and advocacy, higher revenue, profit and customer lifetime value.

Our 2015 multichannel marketing survey revealed that multichannel marketers' top three challenges revolve around the tactics and techniques for real-time, relevant conversations. Multichannel marketers need to get three actions right. **Understand the audience:** You need data about customers' behavior and interests, goals and needs to segment and target them, and know which combination of channels to use. **Time and target moments:** You need rules and intelligence to determine the right moment to connect with audiences and the exchange you will have. **Automate**

multichannel execution: You need to establish a skilled multichannel marketing team to execute your plans, and marketing technology applications and architecture to automate evolving channels and functions.

Top Challenges and How Gartner Can Help

How do multichannel marketers better understand their audience?

Multichannel marketers consume and create lots of audience data. All play important roles from defining audiences to understanding context and the multiple channels where you'll focus interactions and campaigns. First-party data, third-party data and anonymous customer/consumer data all contribute the right interaction, at the right time and in the right channel.

Marketers need more information than basic demographics to truly understand their audiences. They need customer journey analytics, which are largely based on behavioral data. To segment and target the right audiences, multichannel marketers use behavioral information — such as website activity, ad networks and content interaction, context from mobile devices, activity from attitudes and beliefs in social networks — and continually discover audiences' growing interests over time from other third-party data sources. They need advanced analytics to pull insights from all this data, more often in real-time. Mobile devices play a role here in helping marketers understand the user's context.

Planned Research

- The Multidimensional Multichannel Marketer
- How to Unite Advertising with Multichannel Marketing
- Search Marketing's Evolution and What it Means to Multichannel Marketing
- What Multichannel Marketing Needs From Digital Marketing Hubs

How do multichannel marketers know when to engage their audience?

Multichannel strategies start with clearly defined purposes, goals and audiences. If marketers do not clearly understand the purpose of each multichannel interaction, have an idea of the expected outcomes and where the engagement might lead next, then their audience won't either. The difference isn't in the number of channels, it's in the nature of the interactions.

Multichannel marketing needs to consistently conduct a mutual exchange of value between company and customer, conducted with an understanding of the customer's motivations, needs and goals.

To do this, multichannel marketers must operate at multiple speeds — maintaining always-on interaction with continuous contextual engagement, and automating big and small campaigns and campaigns built from results of campaigns. Advanced analytics and techniques such as event

triggering, predictive analytics, personalization and real-time recommendation tools will help guide the right conversation at the right time.

Planned Research

- Gartner's Multichannel Orchestration Model Makes Campaign Management a Science
- Toolkit: Orchestration Model for Mapping Multichannel Marketing Campaigns
- Toolkit: Automate B2B Lead Nurturing in Four Steps
- How Content Marketers Use Visual Storytelling to Engage Audiences

How do multichannel marketers organize effective multichannel interactions?

Multichannel execution is a huge challenge. The most brilliant game plan will go awry if you can't convert customer data and rules into successful interactions. A skilled multichannel marketing organization is required either in a centralized or a distributed organization. In both B2C and B2B environments, a multichannel marketing team will have analytical and content marketing competency, and work across channels, cultures, languages and internal boundaries. B2B2C marketers will have the added burden of having to successfully conduct distributed marketing to their customer's customer.

Marketers will also need the right technology with automation and infrastructure to support multichannel marketing. That infrastructure will consist of multichannel campaign management applications, emerging digital marketing hubs, and multiple data sources that are available in real time. These will connect to additional marketing applications in the right channels, such as social marketing, mobile marketing, email marketing, search marketing and ad networks.

Moreover, multichannel marketers need to be able to add new channels to their multichannel environment. New customer-facing technologies such as digital assistants will develop that bind together the seams of marketing in multiple channels. Finally, multichannel marketing will need to align campaigns all the way through the buying journey and with all touchpoints, including customer service, sales and digital commerce.

Planned Research

- Maturity Model for Multichannel Marketing
- Marketing Maturity Model for Content Marketing
- Virtual Assistants Will bridge the Multichannel Marketing Relationship
- Magic Quadrant for Multichannel Campaign Management
- Critical Capabilities for Multichannel Campaign Management
- How to Align Content Strategy and Content Marketing Across a Large Global Organization
- Market Guide for Video Ad Networks and Platforms

- Market Guide for Email Marketing

Related Priorities

Table 1. Related Priorities

Priority	Focus
Customer Experience	Today, 89% of marketers compete primarily on the basis of customer experience — discrete moments that, together, strengthen or weaken a customer's preference, loyalty and advocacy.
Marketing Management	Marketing management involves the sourcing, alignment and continuous optimization of people, processes, enabling technology and data to help deliver on business goals in a digitally led world.
Social Marketing	Social marketing listens to and engages customers, distributes content, and cultivates brand advocates. Successful social marketing can increase awareness, consideration, conversion and advocacy.
Mobile Marketing	Mobile marketing involves using information about people's context (location, identity, relationships and intentions) to tailor information and products that increase customer engagement and sales.

Source: Gartner (January 2016)

Suggested First Steps

- "Five Steps for Event-Triggered Multichannel Marketing"
- "How to Build a Digital Marketing Campaign"
- "How To Measure a Digital Marketing Campaign"
- "Multichannel Marketing Survey 2015 Results Help Clients Benchmark Progress"
- "How to Evaluate Multichannel Campaign Management Applications"
- ["Multichannel Marketing In Real Time"](#)

Essential Reading

- "Survey Analysis: How Leaders Manage Their Multichannel Marketing Activities"
- "B2B Multichannel Marketers Must Accelerate Persona Targeting"
- "Critical Capabilities for Multichannel Campaign Management"
- "Magic Quadrant for Multichannel Campaign Management"
- "Toolkit: Multichannel Marketing Heat Map, 2015"

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

- [Gartner for Marketing Leaders' Research Overview for 2016](#)

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Digital has redefined the role of marketing, adding new players and creating bigger complexities.

Gartner for Marketers helps you get up to speed on and stay smarter in the eight marketing areas that matter most: social, mobile, multichannel and data-driven marketing, digital commerce, customer experience, marketing management, and emerging marketing technology & trends.

Our clients say that they use our real-time, expert advice and objective research, data and tools to:

- Target the right audiences
- Choose the right channels
- Quickly shortlist marketing and technology providers
- Stay informed on market and competitors
- Save time and avoid costly mistakes

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