Simon

The Definitive Guide to Cross-Channel Marketing

Everything you need to know before investing in a cross-channel marketing platform to orchestrate your customer journeys

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Introduction

The modern customer has evolved. The way they behave and buy has changed, and the choices they have to make have changed. Most importantly, their expectations have changed. It's up to you to stay on top of these changes. This shift requires new approaches, new strategies, new tactics, and new marketing methods. It requires automated cross-channel marketing.

Customers exist everywhere. They are in multiple physical locations, across a variety of channels, and they control the interaction more than ever. You can find customers at home or on the road. You can reach them with print or broadcast advertisements. However, today's customers are more frequently online. Some customers want to buy from a store, order from a website, or shop with their mobile phone. All these patrons want and deserve the same quality experience regardless of how they choose to interact with your business.

Wherever your customers may be, cross-channel marketing helps you meet them. Cross-channel marketing combines the strength of multiple different marketing channels and enables you to create and deliver a more cohesive customer experience.

Integrated channels

Marketing channels need to be integrated and work in concert with all other channels.

Your strategy should provide a connected, unified, and consistent messaging whether your customer sees a mobile ad, targeted messaging on social media, or a message through another channel entirely. You need to embrace and comfort your customer with a consistent, connected message, and consistency helps establish a stronger relationship with the potential customer.

That bond will also prove to be a more lucrative connection. Typically, customers who connect with cross-channel marketing spend three to four times more than those who respond to single-channel messaging.

Cross-channel marketing also helps inform future marketing campaigns. As you connect customers across various touchpoints, you can gather and aggregate customer data on preferences, purchasing history, and other behaviors. This data helps streamline and optimize future cross-channel marketing efforts. It truly builds on itself over time.

What is Cross-Channel Marketing?

Cross-channel marketing isn't just putting a message out there on various channels—it's about capitalizing on the strengths of those individual channels. It also connects them all to present a clear and consistent marketing message to your customers. That way, customers can absorb, understand, and appreciate your message no matter when or where they see it.

The Cross-Channel – Multichannel Difference

Multichannel refers to using a variety of channels, such as print ads, broadcast ads, catalogs, email marketing, social media, podcasts, and so on.

While cross-channel also uses those channels, the messages on all channels are more deeply connected and targeted to lead customers from one channel to the other.

Cross-channel marketing initiatives connect not only with the customer but also connect each channel. For example, a customer clicks on a social media ad. This ad would direct them to a web page where they enter their email address to receive additional information or a coupon toward a future purchase.

Cross-channel marketing helps you deepen your knowledge of customer preferences and behaviors across all channels. Here's a closer look at the four pillars of cross-channel marketing—**visibility**, **measurement**, **personalization**, and **optimization**.

Visibility

Visibility is a critical pillar of cross-channel marketing.

You have to know your customer to deliver a compelling message. Some key things to know are where they are, what channels they prefer, and how they react. Achieving this visibility is one reason gathering and analyzing customer data is so important.

One reason cross-channel marketing is so effective is that customers typically move from channel to channel. For instance, they may see a television ad that attracts their attention, and if they see the same ad on Facebook, they may click on it to learn more. You have to have a clear view of how they are likely to respond to each ad from any channel.

Accurate and clear visibility into customer behavior and preferences regardless of the channel you're using to reach them is critical. If a customer feels as if they're starting from scratch when moving from one channel to another, you may lose their attention. For marketers, it's essential to have full insight into your customer's journey from when they first learn about your product to when they finally make a purchase. Automating the processes with which you gather that data makes the process more effective.

Measurement

Once you have achieved that level of visibility into customer behaviors and preferences, you can measure the effectiveness of your campaigns.

In the same way you achieve customer visibility across all digital and traditional channels, you must measure the effectiveness of all those channels. You need to see and measure how they respond to social media ads, web pages, broadcast ads, and how they react to different platforms and devices.

Armed with sufficient data on cross-channel customer behavior, you can measure the effectiveness of your marketing campaigns. This measurement includes a timely and accurate picture of how each campaign is performing across all channels. Then you can adjust or re-prioritize as needed.

Comprehensively and accurately measuring the efficacy of every channel helps you determine how well your cross-channel marketing is working. Establish a baseline for every channel, measure every channel, and compare the results. These comparative values give you an idea of how every channel supports each other and drives your campaign success.

Personalization

Customers want to feel special; they want to feel like you know them and care about their needs and desires.
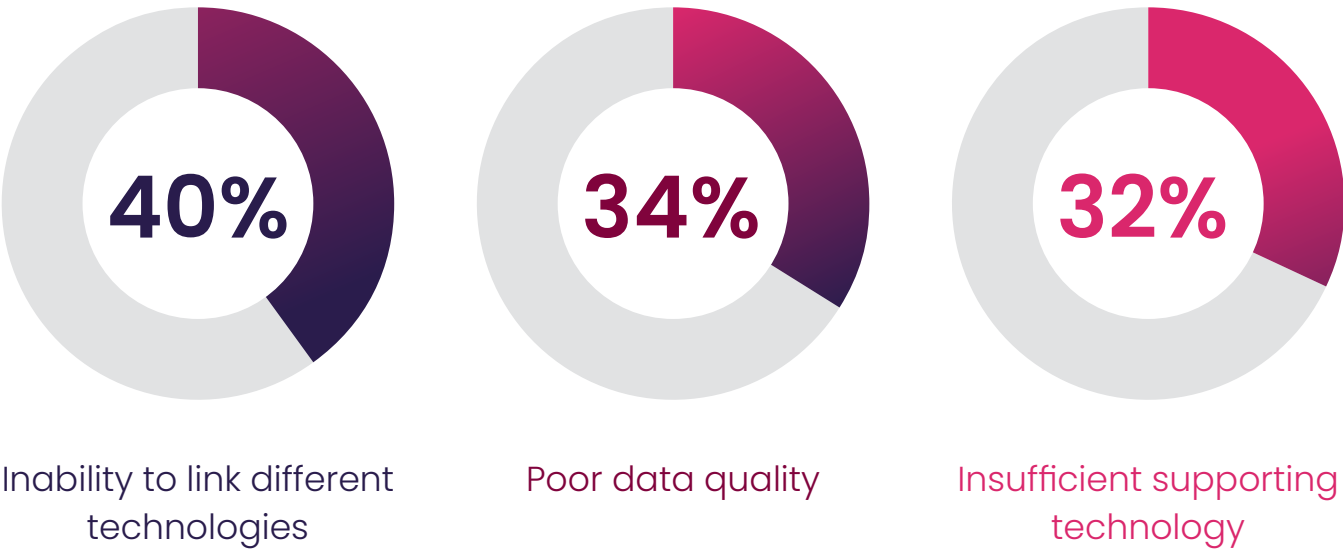
Every customer needs to feel as if you are speaking directly to them. This need for a deeper connection is why personalization is such a critical component of any marketing effort—especially cross-channel marketing.

Developing deep and meaningful personalization can also pose significant challenges. It requires gathering customer data, and that data must be not only accurate but also timely. Analyzing that information provides valuable insights into how to approach the customer.

A recent survey conducted by Experian revealed the most significant challenges to effective personalization:

40%

Rapidly achieving insights from data

39%

Sufficient quantity of data

38%

Inaccurate data
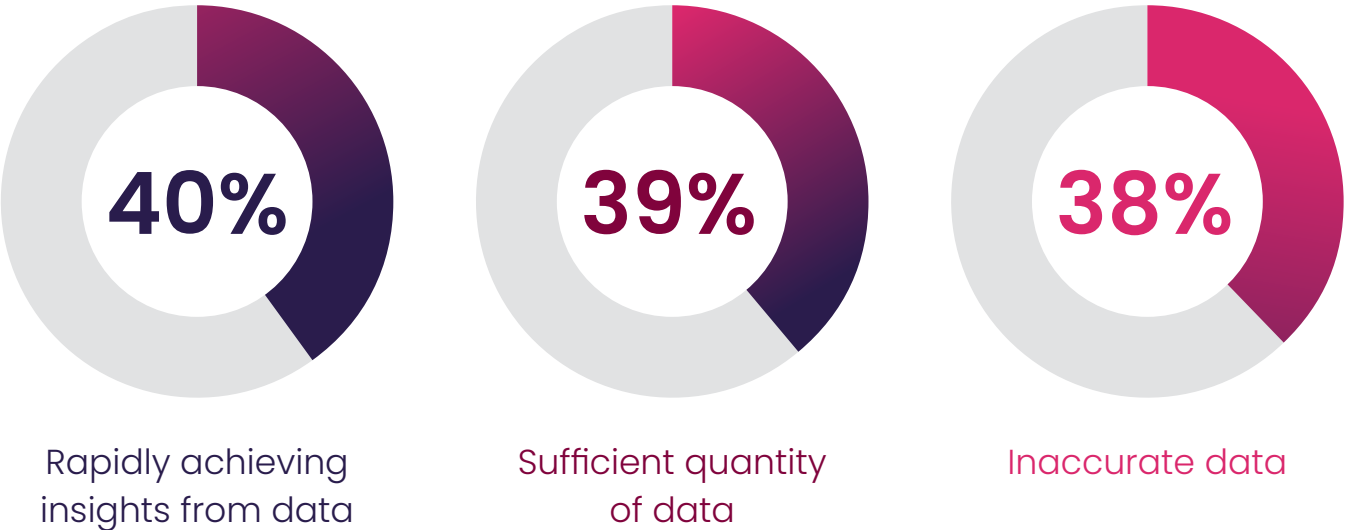
These challenges directly impact cross-channel marketing. They stand in the way of achieving a comprehensive view of the customer. Survey respondents also noted several technological challenges, including:

40%

Inability to link different technologies

34%

Poor data quality

32%

Insufficient supporting technology

While there are many procedural and technological challenges to personalization, it is a promising tactic. Every customer interaction with every channel generates data. Amassing that customer data across all channels can better inform your marketing efforts.

Optimization

Once you've gathered and analyzed all your customer data, it's time to put it to work. You can increase the performance of your marketing strategy by knowing what channels are working best and how those work together.

For the best outcome, look at each channel individually and improve how you're using that channel. Look at how well your marketing efforts are performing on that channel. Then expand that view to examine how each channel is affecting the other channels you're using.

This type of cross-channel marketing optimization will most certainly result in increased sales and customer satisfaction.

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Why is Cross-Channel Marketing Necessary?

Current marketing trends are making cross-channel marketing an essential component of any marketing plan. Customer preferences and purchasing behaviors are changing. Therefore, you have to meet those evolving expectations and develop a deeper connection with your customers.

Cross-channel marketing can help you present the customer with a consistent, cohesive experience on any platform or type of media. You can reach more customers, make every connection more reliable, and build customer loyalty.

A truly successful cross-channel marketing campaign has a direct impact on the customer experience and business performance. A wide-ranging and effective cross-channel marketing campaign can vastly increase revenue and steer your ROI in the right direction.
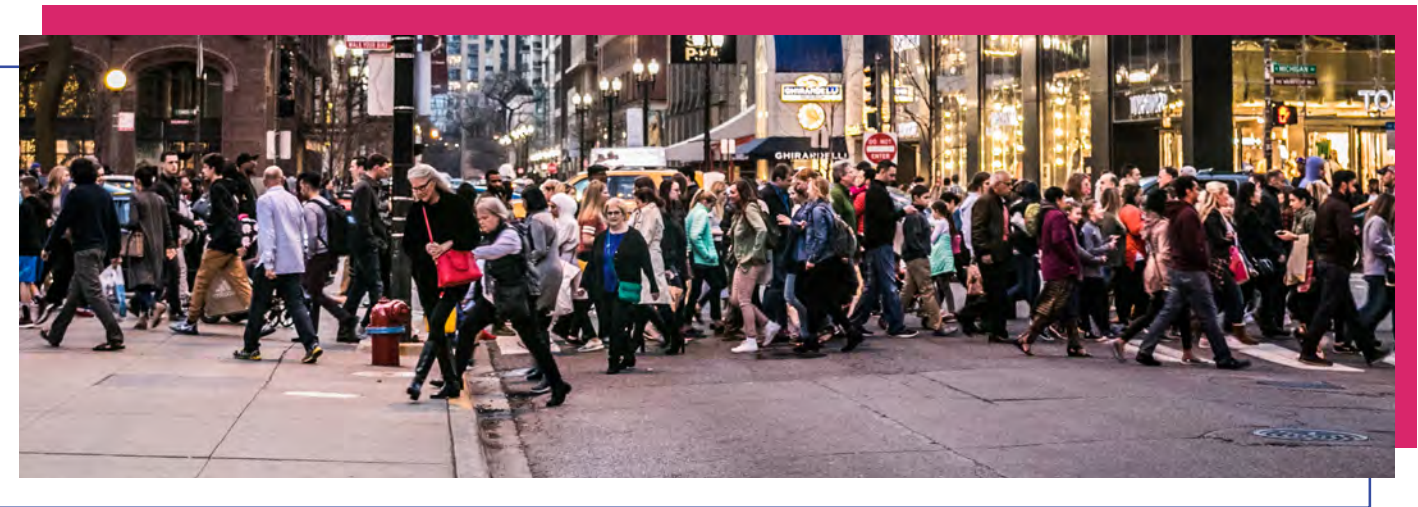
In this complex and evolving world, cross-channel marketing benefits the customer experience and the business.

These benefits include:

- Increased visibility by presenting across numerous channels
- Driving customers from one channel to the other
- Gathering data from every customer interaction on every channel
- Amassing customer data across all channels
- Customers can choose which channel they prefer
- Data helps develop a clear, consistent, and personalized message
- Customer has a more fulfilling journey

Data is the foundation of any cross-channel marketing strategy. Therefore, awareness and compliance with data privacy regulations is a primary concern. You must also pay attention to evolving privacy issues. When you're gathering the volume and variety of customer data required to fuel an effective cross-channel marketing campaign, legally and ethically managing that data is essential.

Cross-channel marketing is the idea of reaching customers wherever they are and no matter what they're doing at the moment. You have to be in many places and on many channels simultaneously with the same message. While this requires more effort, larger budgets, and technological support, you will reap the benefits when you do it right.

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What Should Cross-Channel Marketing Do?

Personalized messaging is the foundation of cross-channel marketing.

You can use tailor messaging to suit whichever channel you're using—whether social media, email, or a web page. Those messages convey consistency and familiarity at every touchpoint throughout the customer journey.

Cross-channel marketing may be a more complex strategy than single or even multichannel. Still, it can vastly increase your chances of success as you go right to the customer with a personalized message. This deeper connection helps foster greater customer engagement and increased loyalty to your brand.

Once your campaign is underway, you can also apply complex testing to ensure your message and the channel are working. You can perform A/B testing on select portions of your audience, test specific channels, and test multiple versions of a message. That entire time, you are gathering valuable data to better inform future efforts.

This expanded personalization and data integrated from all channels helps you give customers a rich, valuable journey. The volume and variety of touchpoints from email messages, clicks on web pages, or social media interactions add up to an immensely valuable data store. You will holistically analyze, determine, and predict customer behavior to further personalize and fine-tune the experience.

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That accurate and comprehensive customer data is critical to the entire marketing process, and it differentiates you from your competitors.

The key is knowing which customers and products, what messaging, and when to drive your message. The right customer data platform (CDP) can help you learn about your customers at that level and help you optimize the value of the data.

And the right CDP will help you hit your marketing targets with this five-pronged approach:

The Right Target	**The Right Message**	**The Right Time**	**The Right Place**	**The Right Impact**
Learn what marketing campaigns resonate. Businesses want to find repeat and loyal customers, yet there's so much focus on whom to target and why it's easy to overlook that customer data can also inform you of who is not worth approaching. Targeting the right customer reduces waste, inefficiency, and marketing spend.	The most effective marketing campaigns are always accurately targeted. Customers need to feel as if they have been reached and understood. This connection is critical to ensuring a seamless customer experience and fostering a long relationship.	An ill-timed message can completely miss the mark. You need to truly understand what customer data is telling you about previous purchases. Then you can accurately identify when a customer is ready to connect—and most likely to respond.	Some customers still prefer physical stores, while others like to talk on the phone. Still others prefer to shop online, and some prefer their phone to their computer. A few will do a variety of those things, or perhaps all of them. This complex environment means you have to deliver the right message at the right time and the right place and through the right channel.	When you gather and analyze customer data, it can have a tremendous impact. It should inform the right message, target, time, and channel. You can ensure your messaging has the desired outcome and better target future campaigns.

Marketing done right is getting the right message to the right customer at the right time and place. Customer data drives all these factors. Using the right customer data platform to ingest data from all channels, process that data, and use it to develop meaningful messaging is the key to marketing magic.

Choosing the Right Cross-Channel Marketing Solution for your Business

What should you look for when selecting the best technology to ensure cross-channel marketing success?

Customer Data Platforms (CDPs) are cutting edge in delivering the right messaging to the right customer.

A CDP operates behind the scenes, providing four key marketing and sales functions:

- Data collection
- Customer profile unification
- Data segmentation
- Data orchestration

An effective CDP collects and presents the correct customer data where and when it is needed most.

Access to that data helps you attract customers and create accurate and comprehensive customer profiles.

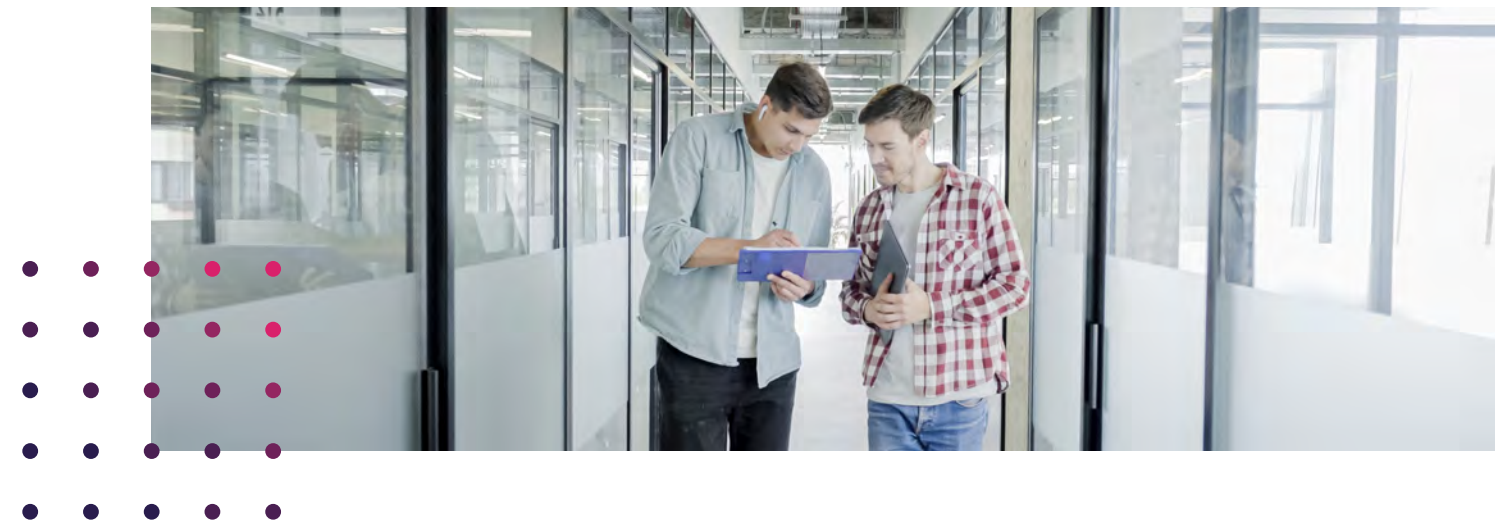### A powerful, cross-channel marketing CDP should also provide:

- Accurate segmentation
- Predictive modeling
- Complex experimentation
- Increased personalization
- Optimized results, insights, and reporting
- Integrated external and internal data
- Present data in a single location

The goal is to deliver the ultimate customer journey.

You need access to customer data wherever it is stored and whenever you need it, and not having timely access equates directly to lost opportunity. A CDP integrates with existing customer platforms to provide the right data to activate that customer at the right moment. This type of efficient engagement helps drive customer loyalty and inspires customers to seek out your products and services.

Marketing is all about providing the right product at the right time; and you can accomplish that more effectively when you drive your marketing efforts with accurate, timely, and accessible data. This depth of understanding also helps deepen customer relationships.

The right CDP can also streamline internal operations. These solutions help marketing teams work together more efficiently, require fewer resources, expedite marketing initiatives, and manage all channel data.

The Future of Cross-Channel Marketing with a Customer Data Platform

Cross-channel marketing is here to stay, and it is truly the future of marketing. How can you reimagine your cross-channel marketing initiatives to ensure continued success? If you had to select a one-word answer, that word might well be "automation."

Armed with the right customer data platform, you will be able to keep close track of your cross-channel marketing efforts, measure the efficacy of those efforts, and constantly test and hone your strategy. You'll be able to maintain a unified customer view across all channels, both digital and traditional. Tracking those marketing efforts will help you craft and deliver truly personalized marketing campaigns.

Gathering customer data at every touchpoint will fuel and help improve future cross-channel marketing efforts. Once you have collected and aggregated that data, you can apply data segmentation to analyze groups of customers or particular campaigns. Data segmentation provides considerable predictive value in helping determine the message or channel most likely to resonate.

And this data comes into play when developing a deeply personalized customer profile. You can apply this profile to cross-channel marketing campaigns to deliver a seamless, consistent customer journey across all channels, making each channel more powerful than it would be on its own. Constantly measuring and testing your message will help you ensure it's working and continues to work. These automated and integrated efforts are truly the future of cross-channel marketing.

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The Journey Continues

The customer is in the driver's seat more than ever. Reaching them where they are, knowing your customer, and giving them what they want are critical success factors. There are also myriad customer touchpoints these days, and you need to approach them all and use them all to your best advantage.

Data will drive your cross-channel marketing campaigns. You'll continue to gather and analyze more data so that data must be clean, consistent, and available when and where you need it to capitalize on sales opportunities. Your customers aren't going to wait—you have to be ready.

Providing this consistent, personalized message to your customers will help drive marketing success. It will ensure your customers are happy, have a positive image of your brand, and emerge as truly loyal customers.

See how Simon can unlock the power of your customer data.

REQUEST A CUSTOMIZED DEMO!

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