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White Paper

Isolation versus Integration

Making the Move to Cross-Channel
Customer Communications



IF YOU'RE NOT WORKING ACROSS CHANNELS, ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE GETTING YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS?

In many enterprises, marketing is a multi-channel effort that includes a wide range of touch points – from websites and email promotions to traditional print advertising, postal mail, broadcast, plus direct sales by phone and in-person sales teams.

But too often, each channel works independently, accountable to its own objectives, unaware of the efforts (or results) made within other marketing channels. As a consequence, call centers speak to customers without knowing which offers they previously accepted or rejected; emails launch without reference to online promotions; websites present messages with no regard to their visitors' previous contact history.

THE END RESULT IS A MORASS OF MISSED MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

What's the alternative? A communications strategy that centrally coordinates customer communications into one integrated effort – making sure that channels are informed and engaging each customer and prospect in a cross-channel dialogue.

Making the move to cross-channel marketing is a great opportunity to increase customer loyalty and improve marketing ROI. Cross-channel marketing puts the marketing department in the center of all customer interactions – enabling it to take the lead on orchestrating interactions across channels.

But how do you make it happen? How do you break down the channel-specific silos that typify marketing organisations today? The technology needed to do this is available – it's Interactive Marketing.

Cross-channel marketing is no longer an ideal to strive for, but a practical reality you can achieve. However, technology is never the whole answer – organisational readiness is another key factor, and often requires a step-wise approach. In this white paper, we lay

out a five-step technology adoption path that takes you from the confusion of multi-channel marketing to the clarity of true cross-channel customer communications.

STEP 1: PICK A PLACE TO START

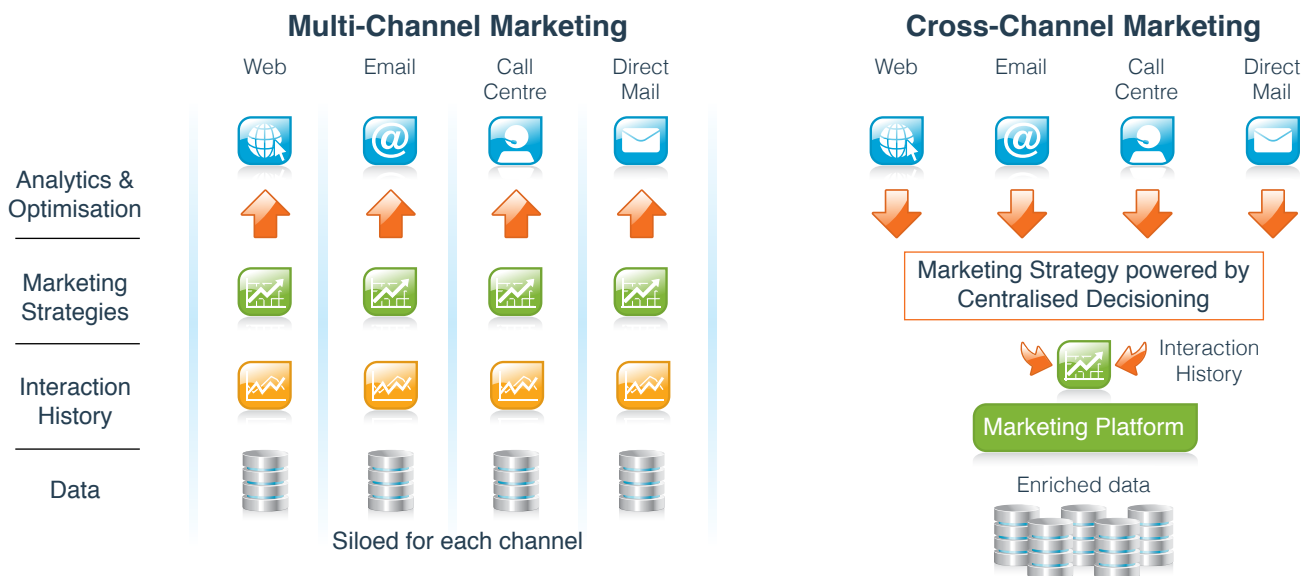
The first step is to pick a place to start and get the right marketing technology into place that will both improve a focused aspect of your marketing approach and also serve as the foundation for later expansion. Most marketing organisations choose one or a few channels as their initial focus, e.g., improving email or Web personalisation. With the help of marketing software, these first channels can achieve great stand-alone benefits from better targeting, increased efficiency, and lower costs. By choosing the technology for this first step wisely, later expansion is easier.

STEP 2: ENRICH YOUR SOURCES WITH DEEPER DATA

Once you've got the basics of a marketing solution in place and have automated the processes for one or a few marketing channels, your next move is to improve the quality of the data used for targeting and personalisation in those channels. With richer and more complete data, your marketing technology can be put to even better use.

For marketers using typical outbound marketing channels, such as email or direct mail, this may mean adding web behavioral data, drawn from your own site, which creates detailed profiles of customer web activity by including:

- Page visits/links followed
- Click-throughs from emails, banner ads, PPC campaigns, AdWords, etc.
- Online applications
- Incomplete conversion and/or cart abandonments
- Purchasing histories and more



For example, people who abandoned a shopping cart or dropped out of a multi-page registration form could now be easily targeted with a remarketing email campaign to get them to come back to the site and complete their purchase or fill out the rest of the form.

For online marketers, particularly those marketing through websites, search, and online advertising campaigns, this may mean pulling data from a customer data warehouse or CRM system into the online marketing system, to create a more complete customer picture than is available based just on online data.

Both types of marketers may benefit from the addition of other data types, such as by monitoring customer transactions (credit card purchases, phone calls, etc.) for patterns indicating an important event has occurred (a major purchase, or signs of attrition), that may impact how you treat that customer in the channel of focus.

STEP 3: SHARE CUSTOMER INFORMATION ACROSS CHANNELS

Centralising and supplementing data is the prelude for the next big step: breaking channels out of their autonomous boxes and instead, beginning to coordinate each channel's communications strategy with the others'. The best way to do this is for each channel to leverage a shared contact and response history – think of it as a “customer interaction history” – so that the results of each channel's marketing efforts are cycled back and can become part of the institutional memory of the marketing organisation.

All channels should understand the following about customer/prospect behavior:

- What offers has the organisation presented (across any of the channels)?
- How many times were they made?
- How did customers/prospects respond?
- What were the results?

The technology foundation implemented during steps one and two should make it easy to create this interaction history and share it across all channels.

STEP 4: CENTRALISE DECISIONS AND MAKE THEM BASED ON CUSTOMER, NOT CHANNEL, NEEDS

Sharing a customer interaction history across interactions is an important step, but you may still have channels competing for customer attention, rather than advancing the overall, cross-channel dialogue with the customer. Your goal is one dialogue, one relationship with the customer, regardless of channel. By centralising the decision-making process, choices are made, not on the basis of channel objectives (number of click-throughs, number of opens, call volume) but on what best advances your relationship with customer.

For example, imagine that one of a retailer's top customers predominantly buys in the store, but uses the website to research and occasionally buy online. Without centralised decisioning, the ecommerce group might send the customer incentives to encourage more online spending – but in doing so winds up providing discounts on products the customer would otherwise have purchased at full price in the store. This improves ecommerce results but reduces overall company profitability. With centralised decisioning, the marketing organisation can create a customer contact strategy that spans competing channels and encourages spending regardless of channel, growing the customer's loyalty and lifetime value.

Once the decision-making is centralised, the channels no longer operate in isolation. Instead, every marketing tactic builds upon the experience of previous efforts.

STEP 5: CROSS-CHANNEL OPTIMISATION

With centralised data and decision-making in place, marketers are in a much better position to build customer relationships through dialogues. However, if cross-channel marketing strategies are driven only by marketers' intuition, opportunity to maximise the lifetime value of each customer can still be left on the table. But with the previous steps taken, marketers are in a good position to fully leverage analytics to gain new insight into customers and optimise customer contact strategies.

Using predictive and optimisation algorithms, cross-channel marketers can fine-tune their tactics to find:

- The best timing for a message
- The most appropriate channel for any given customer
- The optimal offer for each customer, selected from among competing alternative
- The most productive follow-up communications, triggered by the customer's response to the previous message

YOUR NEXT STEP: LEARN MORE ABOUT PUTTING CROSS-CHANNEL MARKETING INTO ACTION

For even more insights on how to make the move from fragmented multi-channel to integrated cross-channel marketing, explore the full range of capabilities and benefits that Interactive Marketing solutions provide. Request a demo or visit <http://www.unica.com/solutions/interactive-marketing-solution.htm>

ABOUT UNICA

Unica, an IBM Company, is the recognised leader in marketing software solutions. Unica's advanced set of enterprise marketing management and cloud-based marketing solutions empowers organisations and individuals to turn their passion for marketing into valuable customer relationships and more profitable, timely, and measurable business outcomes. These solutions integrate and streamline all aspects of online and offline marketing. Unica's unique Interactive Marketing approach incorporates customer analytics and web analytics, centralised decisioning, cross-channel execution, and integrated marketing operations. More than 1,500 organisations worldwide depend on Unica for their marketing management solutions. Unica is headquartered in Waltham, Massachusetts with offices around the globe. For more information, visit www.unica.com.



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