



FROM ISOLATION TO INTEGRATION

Dramatic changes in channels, customer behaviour and technology are driving the need to reinvent marketing, but how can marketers leverage them for their competitive advantage?

In today's fragmented media scene, marketing is a multi-platform effort across a wide range of touch points. But too often, each channel works independently and is unaware of the effort made in others. The result is duplicated efforts and a complicated mix of missed opportunities.

An alternative is to build a strategy that coordinates communications into one integrated effort. Cross-channel marketing puts the marketing department in the centre of all customer interactions.

It means enabling the marketing team to control various touch-points from advertising, direct sales to websites, and to engage customers individually in a cross-channel dialogue that builds upon his or her behaviour.

This type of interactive and innovative marketing requires the entire organisation to work together seamlessly. It is a tall order, especially for corporations with multiple marketing teams across the globe.

To make it possible, sophisticated technology plays a key role. What technology can do is make cross-channel marketing more feasible, but it is not the final answer.

Technology adoption is the path, and here is a five-step best practice that IBM has been working with more than 1,000 organisations to go from isolation to integration and ultimately turn their business into a successful one.

This approach enables organisations to understand their customers and use that

understanding to engage them in highly relevant dialogues across digital, social, and traditional marketing channels.

Step 1: Identify a place to start

Get the right marketing technology to help improve one aspect of marketing. For example, focus on improving email or web personalisation, improve targeting, lower cost and use this first step as the foundation of further expansion.

Step 2: Enrich your sources with data

Improve the quality of the data used for targeting and personalisation in the selected channels. Take email as an example, collect behavioural data such as open rate, number of click-through and incomplete conversion. This data can be used to identify patterns that indicate something important such as events leading up to a major purchase.

Step 3: Share customer information across channels

This is a big step, and is made possible by the technology foundation laid in the first two steps. It involves breaking channels out of their autonomous boxes and coordinating every channel's communication strategy with the others. Use a shared customer interaction history to ensure all efforts are cycled across channels.

Step 4: Centralise decisions and decide based on customers, not channel, needs
Sharing a customer interaction history

across touchpoints is important, but still some channels may compete for customer attention rather than advancing for the overall communication. Set the goal as fostering one relationship with the customer, regardless of channel. Make choices based on what best advances your relationship with the customers, not by channels such as increasing number of click-through.

Step 5: Cross-channel optimisation

Leverage analytics to gain new insight about customers and optimise contact strategies. Use algorithms to find the best timing for a message, the most appropriate channel for any given customer, and the most productive follow-up communications, etc.

With the help of enterprise marketing management software solutions, marketers are in a much better position to build customer relationships through centralised data and decision-making. The last step makes sure marketers are fully leveraging analytics to gain new insight about their customers, plan their strategies according to individuals, and ultimately optimise the lifetime value of each customer.

Content contributed by IBM.
ibm.com/hk/emm/