4 Things To Consider Before You Begin Your Multichannel Integration Strategy

Written by Express Analytics

4 Things To Consider Before You Begin Your MultiChannel Integration Strategy

Introduction

Marketers are finding there is no easy way to measure return on investment (ROI) in today's digital landscape. According to a Q4 2014 study by Webmarketing123, ***33% of US business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) marketing professionals still didn't know which channel made the biggest impact on revenues***. While all of these professionals were either exploring or undertaking measures to improve Marketing ROI , nearly 40% of these marketers did not have an attribution model at all. In fact, only 9% indicated that they had used more customized and advanced methods like multichannel for attribution modeling and ROI measurement.

There are a number of primary considerations that Marketing decision makers should be aware of when seeking to provide and track a unified customer experience for their customers. Consumers do not think in terms of channels. Whether it be on a brand's website, its social media channels, its brick & mortar establishment, or via mobile device, Marketers have to meet customers where they are and deliver a consistent experience. This piece explores the 5 primary considerations that Marketing decision makers need to keep in mind when launching a multichannel and attribution modeling strategy for increasing customer engagement while measuring Marketing ROI. Within interested professionals will find a framework for considering the challenges of integrating people, processes, and technology necessary to addressing this key initiative for any Marketing department.

Eliminate Channel Orientation

As stated before, customers and consumers do not think in terms of channels. Regardless of where the customer encounters a brand, the expectation is that the experience will be the same. B2B and B2C Marketers are realizing that the channel-specific approach of the past that delivered a buffet of varying experiences to wary consumers. This inconsistent approach not only limited the Marketer's ability to influence the consumer, but also limited the Marketer's visibility into the channel that had the largest impact.

Decision makers looking to integrate a multichannel approach in their marketing strategy need to first understand that the customer experience - how and where it takes place - is fundamental to providing a similar and lasting experience on all channels. Getting into the mind and shoes of the customer is key. In order to do this successfully involves removing the silos that keep visibility and monitoring of the customer channel-specific. Undertaking exploration of the customer journey from a universal perspective that aligns with observing the customer from all his/her various touch points with the brand from the beginning is crucial.

Focus on Technology Integration

Another challenge facing decision makers considering a multichannel approach is technology integration. This can be a daunting task. On one hand, there are environments with considerable legacy technologies and systems still in use or being employed. Allocating and deploying the resources necessary to integrate these platforms can be substantial in terms of time and capital. On the other hand, other Marketing professionals could be working in Best-Of-Breed ecosystems. Here all of the technologies are cutting-edge "gated communities," where dat is not easily shared between the often-competitive solutions. Integration of these systems can also be costly, with customization and integration coming at notable investment.

However, a recent Forrester study found that retailers that had focused on integration saw **increases in online sales (48 percent), customer satisfaction (36 percent), and profitability (25 percent) while watching their operating costs fall by 28 percent.** True successful multichannel integration requires that technology, teams, and processes be aligned to drive experiences across all the various touchpoints and interactions from the inside out. It is of the utmost importance that technology integration be an enterprise-sponsored and supported initiative that unifies the brand's long-term vision with its tactical short-term goals.

Personalize, Personalize, Personalize . . .

According to a recent, E-Tail Group study, **72% of consumers want an integrated marketing approach**, and this makes perfect sense. Shoppers unique interactions as much as they seek memorable experiences. Marketers must see the world through the eyes of their customers. The key to this is leveraging their most critical asset: customer data. Aggregating, assembling and analyzing that data is essential to accessing the value of these interactions. At this point, mature marketers can proceed with executing targeted engagements and campaigns.

A few areas to focus on:
- In-store and digital analytics
- Customer profile data
- Marketing campaign performance metrics
- Social media profiles
- Inventory data

Marketers have to invest in solutions that enable them to leverage this data to integrate inputs for all aspects of the enterprise across touchpoints. The ability to integrate real-time customer data with responsive modeling and analytics will be crucial to providing a true 360 degree, comprehensive view of multichannel behavior.

Be Flexible. Be Agile.

Meeting the customer no matter where they interact with a brand is crucial to true multichannel integration success. Facilitating the sharing of data across channels and touchpoints increase customer satisfaction and boost revenues. Marketers need to incorporate planning and infrastructure to enable a seamless and considered interface with the consumer. Items viewed on a mobile device should be captured for reference when the consumer visits again from the desk. In-store purchase history can be used to send location-based push notifications to mobile devices. Ensuring a centralized approach and architecture not only delivers authentic customer experiences, but it also lowers demand on internal resources, enhancing the fitness of the overall business. Identifying partners versed in the endeavor of adopting a multichannel strategic position is essential to success. Ultimately, you business will grow as your program grows. This is why you need to seek dynamic and fluid technology that can connect to existing systems and use your legacy data in an efficient, low-cost way. Be flexible. Be agile.

Conclusion

Before you begin your multichannel strategy, you should consider the investment necessary to unify the people, processes, and technology to deliver authentic and consistent experiences for the customer. Marketers must pursue a centralized yet adaptable and insightful framework for observing and interacting with consumers regardless of channel. Plan on investing in technology that allows you manage your customers' experience regardless of where they are through fluid multichannel integration, while lowering your marketing spend and increasing sales with intelligent attribution modeling.

Contact Us

For more information about Express Analytics MultiChannel Integration and Attribution Modeling services, visit www.expressanalytics.com/ or **call (949) 862-8458** to speak with an Express Analytics representative.