

Marketing Data Isn't Just for Ads Anymore

What the marketing department knows can help the whole company make better decisions

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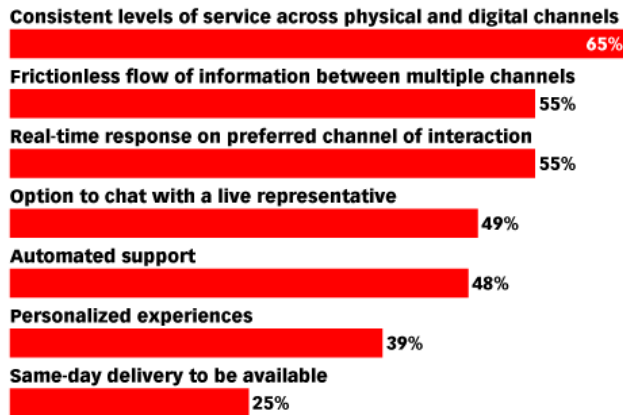
eMarketer Editors

Digital transformation has had a significant effect on nearly all companies over the past couple of years. For some marketers, it has forced them to rethink how systems, tools and team members must work together to successfully meet larger business objectives. For more advanced companies, it's brought about an understanding that such an initiative isn't marketing-specific but rather a companywide mandate, one that affects the company's ability to keep and attract new customers.

Consumers today have high expectations for businesses they interact with often. A majority of US digital shoppers polled by [Medallia](#) and [Ipsos](#) in March 2018 cited consistent levels of service across digital and physical channels (65%) and the frictionless flow of information between channels (55%) as expectations for customer experience.

Customer Experience Expectations that US Digital Shoppers Have for Brands, March 2018

% of respondents



Note: ages 18+

Source: Ipsos and Medallia, "The Customer Experience Tipping Point," June 20, 2018

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Frictionless, however, is hard to deliver. Only a few firms feel that they do it well, and most admit they are far from being able to execute such an experience.

While the portion of companies capable of transforming marketing data and customer insights into actual product and merchandising decisions is small, there is no lack of innovation on this front. Retailers, quick-service retailers and consumer packaged goods (CPG) companies appear to be the most active in this area, though other industries are also starting to see the value in connecting both arenas.

Advanced attribution practices and sophisticated data strategies are required to make the necessary connections and translate marketing data into actual product insights. Interdepartmental cooperation between people, databases and tech is mandatory.

When these connections exist, companies are capable of turning marketing data into strategic insights that can help anticipate proper inventory levels for both in-store and ecommerce efforts, and even fuel new product or service ideas.

According to Katrin Zimmermann, managing director of the Americas at consulting firm TLGG, companies that are successfully moving in

this direction include many of the “digital disruptors” of the past 10 years.

These companies tend to have the digital data strategies and tech stacks in place to take marketing data and use it to inform research and development, as well as product efforts. She cited Amazon, Alibaba and even Dollar Shave Club as companies that fit this bill.

“Their data stack is integrated and collected, and it allows them to consolidate data to whatever degree of information they’ve been able to accommodate to,” she said.

eMarketer’s latest report, “Using Marketing Data for Merchandising: Optimizing Inventory Levels and Launching New Products,” examines how search and social data, as well as data a company has on its customers, can inform larger company efforts, from new product decisions to inventory pipeline decisions.

In the latest episode of eMarketer's "Behind the Numbers" podcast, analysts Lauren Fisher and Patricia Orsini consider the massive challenges associated with holistic attribution and discuss some of the ways marketers are tackling the problem.