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# IDENTITY AND ATTRIBUTION ROUNDUP

Marketer demand for a more complete, holistic attribution approach is rising, but given the complexity and companywide participation needed to make it work, it's early days for those actively pursuing it. eMarketer has curated this Roundup of articles, insights and interviews to help you unravel identity and attribution.

presented by



# IDENTITY AND ATTRIBUTION ROUNDUP

## OVERVIEW

Marketers need to account for all touchpoints in the customer journey.

Marketer demand for a more complete, holistic attribution approach is rising, but given the complexity and companywide participation needed to make it work, it's early days for those actively pursuing it.

A June 2017 poll conducted by the Data & Marketing Association (DMA) and Winterberry Group found almost two-thirds of US marketing professionals said their company had increased its prioritization of marketing attribution in the past year, with just 4.5% reporting decreased emphasis on this function.

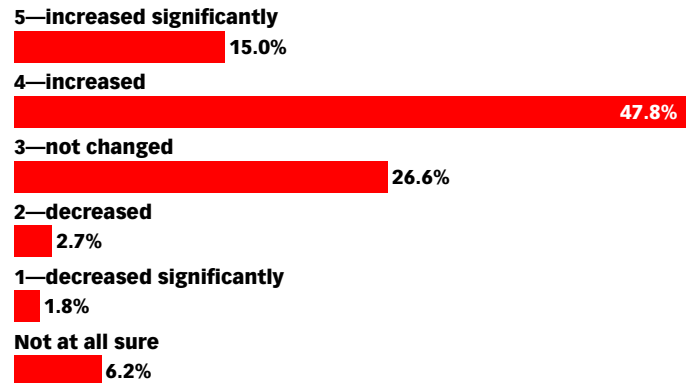
Bear in mind, these professionals were asked about rising interest in any form of attribution, not just holistic attribution practices.

While eMarketer projects that more than six in 10 US companies will use multichannel attribution in 2018, and Econsultancy estimates 37% of in-house marketers worldwide used marketing attribution last year, very few marketers are using more advanced attribution practices.

A May 2017 survey conducted by the DMA and marketing research firm Demand Metric found just 13% of US marketers reported using advanced attribution for marketing.

### Change in Their Company's Prioritization of Marketing Attribution According to US Marketing Professionals, June 2017

% of respondents



Note: in the past year; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding  
Source: Data & Marketing Association (DMA) and Winterberry Group, "DMA Business Report: Economic Trend Monitor / January-June 2017," Aug 15, 2017

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# Better Data Analysis Is Critical to Improving Customer Experience

## But the fragmentation of touchpoints makes that difficult

If marketers want to upgrade their customer experience, they will have to take a hard look at revamping their data analytics.

According to an Econsultancy and Adobe survey of client-side marketers worldwide, 65% of respondents said improving their data analysis is a very important factor in delivering a better customer experience. That was the most popular answer for the second year in a row, up from a 63% response rate in 2017.

Providing a reputable digital experience for customers is important for marketers because it is one of the main ways that brands can differentiate themselves from competitors, according to Adam Kleinberg, CEO of ad agency Traction.

"In order to improve your customer experience, you need to understand the customer journey in relation to your brand and then identify moments of friction you can fix or moments of delight you can build upon," Kleinberg said. "Analyzing data is essential to identify these insights, which can become business-building opportunities."

The results of this survey are in line with previous research. A 2016 study by Forbes Insights and SAS found that 90% of executives worldwide who use data analytics noticed it improved their ability to deliver a superior customer experience.

According to a January 2018 survey of US senior decision-makers conducted by customer experience agency Verndale, big data/analytics was listed as the most important emerging technology for enhancing customer experience, cited by 63% of respondents.

While data analysis may be critical to improving customer experience, there are technical challenges to leveraging big data. For instance, identifying users and assigning attribution across devices remains a struggle for some marketers. In a Q1 2017 survey of marketers worldwide by the CMO Council and RedPoint Global, 38% of respondents indicated that customers' fragmented digital consumption is a primary challenge in implementing a data-driven customer experience strategy.

"As we move into an omnichannel world, where the line between digital and retail is blurred, the complexity and number of types of data become greater, from sales figures, store traffic, geographic behavior patterns," Kleinberg said. "Often, it's the creative application of data that uncovers the best opportunities to transform a customer experience."

### Important Internal Factors in Delivering a Great Future Customer Experience According to Client-Side Marketers Worldwide, 2017 & 2018

	2017	2018
Improving data analysis capabilities to better understand customer experience requirements	63%	65%
Optimizing internal collaboration between creative and marketing teams	53%	52%
Optimizing creative workflows to facilitate the rapid creation and deployment of content across multiple platforms	53%	51%
Improving content marketing through immersive storytelling	-	49%
Building more 'native' online content (e.g., interactive applications, short-form video)	45%	44%
Ongoing and widespread testing of creative variations	35%	34%
Experimentation with channel-specific creative formats (e.g., Facebook 360 video, Instagram Stories)	29%	34%

Note: 2017 n=3,812 and 2018 n=2,919; "very important"; in the next year  
Source: Econsultancy and Adobe, "Digital Intelligence Briefing: 2018 Digital Trends," Feb 13, 2018

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### Primary Challenge of Executing Their Data-Driven Customer Experience Strategy According to Marketers Worldwide, Q1 2017

% of respondents

**Fragmented engagement systems that fail to connect or deliver a unified view of the customer experience across touchpoints**

38%

**Silos of customer data that remain inaccessible across the entire organization**

30%

**Marketing is the only team fully invested in a data-driven customer strategy, and it has been frustrating to get other teams and stakeholders involved**

16%

**Data is centralized, but it is not universally available across the organization or is hard to access without specialized skills or training**

13%

**Customer intelligence is available but is not relevant to the business or fails to inform the strategy to move forward**

3%

Note: across all customer interaction channels  
Source: CMO Council, "Empowering the Data-Driven Customer Strategy: Addressing Customer Engagement From the Foundation Up" in partnership with RedPoint Global, March 21, 2017

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# Getting Detailed Insights Is Top Challenge for Programmatic Marketers

## Many campaign reports aren't providing sufficient data

Marketers are always on the hunt for data that can improve their audience-buying strategies, but many find their campaign reports to be wanting.

In a January 2018 survey of US agency and marketing professionals by Centro and Advertiser Perceptions, 73% of respondents cited getting better insights/reporting deliverables from data sources and analytics as a challenge of programmatic ad management. The thoroughness of campaign reports is likely only going to become more consequential, since programmatic advertising is on track to account for more than 80% of total US digital display ad spending this year, eMarketer estimates.

The rapidly changing programmatic advertising landscape makes campaign reporting difficult for the vendors that marketers work with. For instance, over the past year, several supply-side platforms (SSPs) began frequently using first-price auctions, in which the highest bid determines the amount of money that the auction winner will pay. Previously, programmatic auctions almost always ran on a second-price setup, with the second-highest bid determining the clearing price.

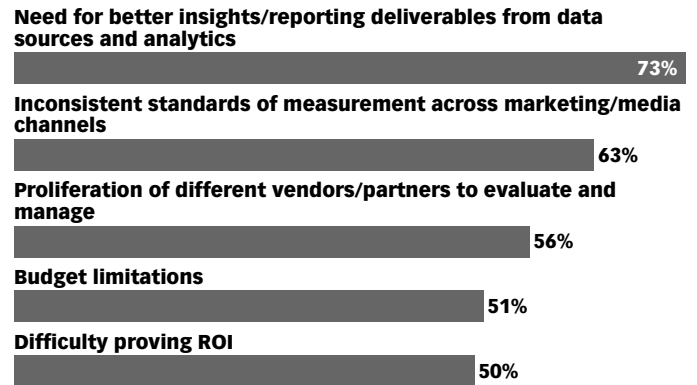
The changing price structure became problematic for marketers because their demand-side platforms (DSPs) didn't always make it clear what type of auction they were bidding into. Until DSPs started including auction-type variables in their reports, marketers struggled to anticipate how much they'd pay for impressions that they won. Thankfully for marketers, DSPs began fixing this issue.

Another issue that makes campaign report management difficult is that the data for a single campaign can be scattered across a plethora of different vendors.

"In an ideal world, we would have a solution that allows us to track all of our brand metrics with a single partner," said Carrie Dino, associate media director at ad agency Mekanism. "Some agencies invest in proprietary tools to aggregate all of this information, but it is a long and expensive process that still forces them to rely on outside data provided by third parties."

### Challenges of Programmatic Ad Management According to US Agency and Marketing Professionals, 2017

% of respondents



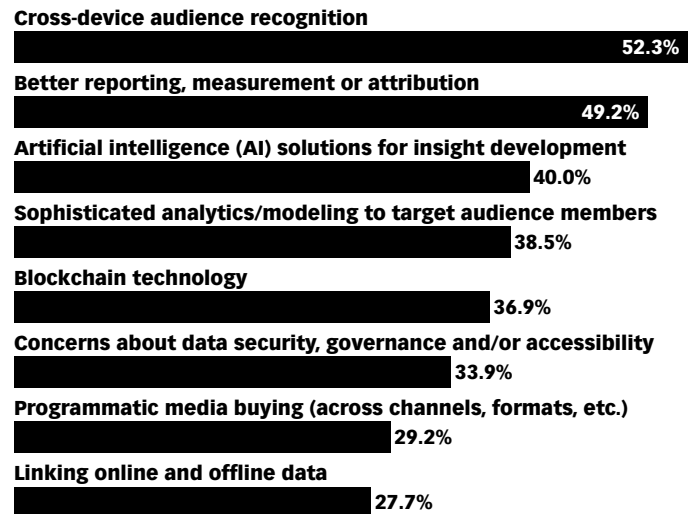
Source: Centro and Advertiser Perceptions, "Advertisers and Marketers Talk: Tech, Programmatic and Expectations," Jan 16, 2018

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### General Marketing Topics or Developments that Will Command the Most Attention in 2018 According to US Senior Marketing Professionals

% of respondents



Source: Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) and Winterberry Group, "The Outlook for Data 2018: A Snapshot Into the Evolving Role of Audience Insight," Feb 12, 2018

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Campaign reporting is further complicated by the fact that each time a new trend emerges in digital ad buying, marketers demand additional data from their vendors. As ads.txt—a text file on publishers’ sites that lists all the vendors that are authorized to sell their inventory—gained popularity, marketers suddenly wanted the ability to filter inventory by whether or not it was ads.txt-compliant. Several vendors built ads.txt tools in their dashboards, but it took a few months because updates had to be scheduled, tested and integrated into their products.

Another area where marketers would like to see more detailed insights is in attribution, as more complicated multitouch attribution models give advertisers a clearer picture of what’s driving sales than do last-touch models, according to Evan Fjeld, associate director of programmatic

strategy at ad agency AKQA. In a survey of US senior marketing professionals by Winterberry Group and Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB), respondents indicated that the demand for better reporting, measurement and attribution will be one of the most popular developments in digital advertising this year.

The call for more comprehensive reporting is also found among publishers that sell their inventory programmatically. The reports that publishers receive from their header bidding wrappers—which collect and centralize all the bid requests and responses in programmatic auctions—often do not include information regarding how much money individual DSPs and individual brands spent on the publisher’s website.

## The Challenges of Personalization

### Many haven’t fully realized the technology’s potential just yet

For most marketers, personalization is essential to delivering a good customer experience.

In fact, more than nine in 10 US senior decision-makers surveyed by Verndale from November 2017 to January 2018 said so.

Still, many (84%) also agreed that the technology’s potential has not been fully realized just yet.

What’s more, 91% acknowledged that their company needs to improve upon its personalization capabilities. And more than half said their organization “often fails to deliver the personalization ... customers crave.”

But respondents were aware of which areas they need to improve on. Which is good, since a personalization failure can certainly be costly.

More than four in 10 said they need more real-time data and insights, and almost as many felt they need to gather more customer data. Investing in more advanced technology, like artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, and improving web content management were other key areas of focus.

Separate data from Sailthru mirrors this sentiment: To achieve personalization, marketers need resources. Among the many challenges mentioned in the firm’s survey, a plurality of UK and US marketers—roughly four in 10—said one of the leading barriers to meeting their goals was a lack of resources, such as time, people and money.

#### Importance of Customer Experience (CX) Personalization for Select Business Goals According to US Senior Decision-Makers, Jan 2018

% of respondents

	1 Crucially important	2 Very important	3 Somewhat important	4 Not very important	5 Not important at all	6 Don't know
Improving customer satisfaction	55%	32%	14%	1%	0%	0%
Improving customer retention	51%	36%	11%	3%	0%	0%
Increasing sales	42%	45%	13%	2%	0%	0%
Increasing revenues	38%	42%	20%	1%	0%	0%
Attracting new customers	35%	30%	28%	7%	1%	1%
Improving employee engagement	29%	40%	23%	8%	1%	0%
Reducing costs	18%	29%	30%	14%	10%	0%

Note: n=200; read as 55% of respondents say CX personalization is crucially important to improving customer satisfaction, and 38% of respondents say CX personalization is crucially important to increasing revenues; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding  
Source: Verndale, "Customer experience (CX) journey research," Feb 20, 2018

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# How CPG Brands Are Inserting Themselves in the Customer Journey

## Consumers expect personalized messages, offers

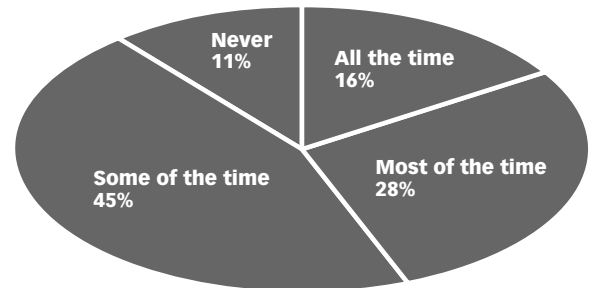
Two consumer behaviors are driving brands' ability to gain insights into purchase behavior: the rise of pre-shopping research on products, and the adoption of ecommerce. Even as in-store buying remains far and away the preferred method to purchase groceries, the insights gained through digital touchpoints are helping consumer packaged goods (CPG) brands shape the new customer journey.

The overwhelming majority of CPG sales are still done in-store. But consumers are increasingly engaging with these products online, and searches often lead to ecommerce platforms. The most forward-thinking brand managers are now viewing ecommerce as one more marketing channel.

Shopper marketing data—the consumer behavior information culled from retailers' loyalty programs—remains a key component for brand ad targeting. However, brands' ability to collect first-party data from their own sites, in addition to third-party sources, gives a more nuanced picture of individual shoppers and allows for more targeted messages.

Meanwhile, relevancy is the new currency in digital brand marketing: For CPG brands, selling mass-market products to targeted audiences is not easy, but it's a critical tactic to master. Consumers expect personalized messages and offers, and brands that can deliver this will have a huge advantage.

**Frequency with Which US Internet Users Research CPG Products Before Making a Purchase, June 2017**  
% of respondents



Note: ages 18+  
Source: YA, "Changing Behavior," Aug 30, 2017  
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### Listen in!

Check out an episode of the ["Behind the Numbers,"](#) podcast, in which eMarketer analysts **Lauren Fisher and Yory Wurmser** discuss the important touchpoints required to build a more holistic, customer-centric attribution view.

# Defining the Customer Journey Is Top Barrier to Effective Marketing Attribution

## Data is still complex, but marketers are having an easier time with it

A dearth of knowledge is making it difficult for marketers to execute attribution strategies. According to a survey from AdRoll, in association with Econsultancy, more than a third (35%) of marketers worldwide say defining the online customer journey is the greatest barrier to using attribution more effectively, up from the 27% who said so last year.

Consumers are not making tracking their online journey an easy task, given the rising number of potential touchpoints available to them in an increasingly digital world, along with the complexity of following them as they move between online and offline channels.

AdRoll polled a mix of in-house marketing professionals and supply-side participants from Europe, Asia-Pacific and North America and Australia for the study. Its research revealed that while some barriers to attribution are diminishing, others are growing.

For example, marketers also continue to struggle with taking action on insights that they've gathered. Some 29% of respondents said it's one of the greatest obstacles they face this year, vs. only 18% who felt the same last year.

But they appear to be getting a handle on the surfeit of data available to them. Just under a third (32%) of respondents said the complexity of data is a significant barrier to attribution in 2017. By comparison, four in 10 said so the previous year.

Regardless, attribution has become a de rigeur practice for a majority of marketers in both North America and Europe. Some 80% of North American respondents said they carry out attribution on at least some campaigns and analyze results, while two-thirds of those in Europe do the same.

### Barriers to Using Marketing Attribution More Effectively According to In-House Marketers Worldwide, 2016 & 2017

% of respondents

	2016	2017
Defining the online customer journey	27%	35%
Business culture (analytics not prioritized)	29%	32%
Complexity of data	40%	32%
Disparate tech platforms/data sources	33%	29%
Actioning the insights we get	18%	29%
Lack of resources (including budget and staff)	22%	19%
Internal politics	22%	18%
Siloed company structure	12%	13%
Lack of skills	10%	11%
Lack of ROI	6%	4%
Don't trust the data	5%	4%
Other	7%	2%

Note: 2016 n=277; 2017 n=484; respondents selected up to 3  
Source: Econsultancy, "The State of Marketing Attribution 2017" in association with AdRoll, Oct 4, 2017

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# Why the Future of Business Involves Creating Complete Customer Data to Build Better Relationships

*This post was contributed and sponsored by [FullContact](#).*

Want to increase your marketing ROI? Increase your return on identity first.

The business of marketing involves building relationships. No matter how large your CRM, or customer database, the activities of reaching, engaging and driving audiences to action now involve creating one-to-one relationships at scale.

Whether you work in B2B or B2C, your customer or prospect is a real person with an ever-broadening digital footprint.

They have a personal and a professional persona, often disparate in nature, and cannot be effectively profiled or understood by data captured from any single channel.

To truly understand the whole person behind the data, from all dimensions and across channels, you need to embrace the future of creating complete customer profiles using identity resolution.

## The What and Why of Identity Resolution

Identity resolution is the science of taking a single piece of contact data about your customer or prospect—an email address, social handle or telephone number—and connecting it to signals from that same person across other channels and devices.

It enables you to understand someone's psychographic and demographic profile, as well as their brand affinities and interests, based on their social media activity.

The resulting "whole person" view of an individual provides the ability to engage them seamlessly in an omnichannel manner. Moreover, the quality and authenticity of the relationship you have with them increases exponentially.

Three key benefits of identity resolution:

- Identify and connect with your customer across channels
- Create a complete picture of a customer starting with a single piece of data
- Build authentic, lasting relationships through deeper customer understanding

## Using Identity Resolution for Audience Insights, Development and Expansion

Businesses can take advantage of identity resolution for more than individual engagement. Companies are building distinct competitive advantage by using it to derive insights and development opportunities at an aggregated audience level.

Taking the principles of identity resolution and aggregating the data provided by individual profiles, companies are discovering previously unrecognized audience segments that engage with their brands. They can build new data-driven personas, design more targeted campaigns and reach the right people in the right channels at the right times with the right messages. They can also build look-alike audiences to expand their reach.

## Return on Identity

The shift in marketing effectiveness that happened with the dawn of digital marketing was unprecedented. Mass media became a vehicle for branding and awareness campaigns, while digital marketing allowed for a new level of targeting, measurement and optimization.

Identity resolution is poised to have the same impact. By identifying, understanding and engaging individuals and audiences across channels and devices, companies can build deeper, more authentic and more valuable relationships than ever before.

Return on identity might just be the new ROI.



# Attribution Won't Work Without Putting the Consumer at the Center

## Don't treat everyone the same



Rolf Olsen

Chief Data Officer

Mindshare North America

No marketer will argue that attributing consumers' exposures to marketing and advertising is unimportant, but many have realized it's only one piece of a bigger puzzle. eMarketer's Lauren Fisher spoke with Rolf Olsen, chief data officer at advertising agency Mindshare North America, about customer-centric approaches to attribution and how they're benefiting businesses.

**eMarketer:** Many companies are embracing a more holistic approach to attribution. Where do conventional attribution models fall short?

**Rolf Olsen:** Businesses spend a lot of time looking at their core customer group and understanding what they look like. What are their immediate behaviors? What are their personal behaviors? They want to make sure they market best to those people.

But typical attribution models ignore that. They assume everyone responds in the same way, and then you get channel-specific learnings about what works. Typical models ignore the fact that you start the process by thinking about the consumer.

This is starting to come through in some digital attribution solutions. It's a core tenet of agent-based modeling.

**eMarketer:** What is agent-based modeling, and how does it fit with holistic attribution?

**Rolf Olsen:** Roughly speaking, it's segment-based modeling. It focuses on the fact that each consumer segment behaves differently, and therefore should be treated differently within the marketing ecosystem and the measurement ecosystem.

This is important because if you make assumptions in aggregate, you assume that all consumers respond to all channels in the same way. That's not true. Each segment has some nuance.

**"If you make assumptions in aggregate, you assume that all consumers respond to all channels in the same way. That's not true."**

**eMarketer:** Can this way of thinking also extend beyond marketing and advertising?

**Rolf Olsen:** Yes. There's also activity around store satisfaction. Many of these things are connected.

The role of marketing is often to drive people somewhere. "I want you to be aware of my brand," or "I want you to go to my store." Typically, these things are ignored from the attribution modeling exercise, but they're important. If someone goes to a store and the staff is rude or the product is displayed weirdly, it will diminish your ability to convert that consumer into a sale.

These metrics should be measured and addressed with the right attribution solution.

**eMarketer:** How is this approach changing the way companies view marketing success?

**Rolf Olsen:** Marketing is more than just ads. It's about the experience, and that experience needs to connect with what consumers are looking for. It's more than just talking about the value of your products and services. The experience has to be full circle.

If you believe that the success of your business is tied to ads, you're missing the bigger picture. From time to time, we hear that marketing isn't delivering the sales a company expected. But marketing is just a part of what goes into the marketplace.

You need to understand how everything connects with the consumer. Think about how you can create the quantitative components that go with those measures, and be able to account for them in your attribution model.

**“If you believe that the success of your business is tied to ads, you’re missing the bigger picture.”**

**eMarketer:** Can you give an example of this?

**Rolf Olsen:** You can use your attribution model to understand if increasing store satisfaction by 5 points has an impact on the bottom line. As a brand leader, you can then determine if you need to invest more in traditional marketing or the product. What’s the trade-off between the two?

It’s always about striking the right balance. By not having the right measures included in your modeling, you’re ignoring the underlying values.

**eMarketer:** How are companies dealing with these significant changes organizationally?

**Rolf Olsen:** It varies. Some companies are more ad-driven, some are more product-driven, and there’s everything in between. But across the board, more stakeholders—like the brand owners and the distribution, pricing and finance teams, not just the marketers—are getting involved in the analysis.

Attribution is a journey, not a destination. The businesses making strides are the ones that understand the consumer at heart and understand how to connect all those pieces.

## Content Shouldn’t Live and Die in Marketing, Says Hootsuite

### A case for internal systems that give all teams access



**Amber Naslund**

*Senior Director, Industry Leadership*

**Hootsuite**

Marketers create a lot of content that can be leveraged by other teams. However, internal content management is a facet of content marketing that is often overlooked. As a result, these assets rarely leave the marketing department. Amber Naslund, senior director of industry leadership at social media management software company Hootsuite, tells eMarketer’s Jillian Ryan why it’s so important for content to be available to all customer-facing teams.

**eMarketer:** Many business-to-business [B2B] companies create great content, but are they using that content to its full potential?

**Amber Naslund:** The team responsible for building content usually resides in the marketing organization. But getting that content to actually be leveraged in other areas of the business, where it needs to be used most, is a perpetual challenge. Content lives and dies in marketing, but it shouldn’t.

A marketer’s job is not just to create the demand, but to help support the entire sales cycle. At Hootsuite, we use content across all teams. We think about supporting our sales organization through content to actually close the marketing qualified leads [MQLs] that come down the pipeline. Otherwise, it’s an incomplete strategy.

**“A marketer’s job is not just to create the demand, but to help support the entire sales cycle.”**

**eMarketer:** What’s an example of how another team can benefit from having access to content?

**Amber Naslund:** B2B sales and customer success teams should be learning how to leverage content so they have the resources and assets to speak to their prospect or

customer. For example, when they're having a conversation with a customer, they should be able to hear that customer's problem and have a relevant piece of content to send over to them that speaks to that concern.

**eMarketer:** Why is it important for organizations to begin developing internal systems that give all teams real-time access to content, and where do they start?

**Amber Naslund:** Marketers spend a lot of time, money and energy producing top-notch content, but sometimes it doesn't get pushed into the market or used by the sales team. Sometimes assets get created and they only have a short shelf life: One is shared with a client and another is used as a deck for an industry event, but sometimes they go nowhere after that.

One way to stop that cycle and give content more life within an organization is leveraging technology to help them, whether it's centralized content management or a sales enablement platform.

**“How many times does an organization waste resources recreating an asset that already exists but isn't saved and labeled properly?”**

But technology does not create the behavior change that's necessary for it to be successful. You can roll out a platform, put all the assets there and tell people they're there. But unless they have a habit of looking for content in that system, there will still be disconnects and silos. Content won't be maximized across the company.

**eMarketer:** What's another incentive for companies to enact a system for internal content management and break down those silos?

**Amber Naslund:** How many times does an organization waste resources recreating an asset that already exists but isn't saved and labeled properly? The same piece of content has probably been reinvented countless times within multiple areas of a company. But rather than recreating the wheel because we don't know an asset exists, wouldn't it be easier to have all of the assets centralized so anyone can go into the system and check? That's another benefit.

# What, Where, When and How mean nothing until you know **Who.**

Discover the power of authentic connections with identity resolution from FullContact. Create breakthrough understanding of audiences and individuals.

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**Return on Identity**  
- the new ROI.



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