MAROPOST

The Chasm Between Brand Marketers and Their Customers

Introduction: Today's Consumers

Consumer expectations are getting more and more sophisticated. General marketing tactics aren't effective anymore in converting your audience into paying customers. Instead, marketers need to gather information about their brand's audience in order to offer relevant content and personalized experiences for every single customer.

Retail DNA discovered that the heightened customer expectations cross generational lines. Over three-quarters of baby boomers (82%) say their favorite retail brand no longer understands them. Gen Xers agree; 91 percent say advertisers don't understand them—and 25 percent want easy-to-repeat purchases and product recommendations based on those purchases.

Overall, consumers of any age are looking for more personal experiences with brands, and will cough up more cash for those that do. Over half (55%) of customers say they're willing to pay 20 percent more for personalized products and services, and 56 percent are more likely to shop at stores that recognize them by name.

The gap between expectations and reality

All of this being said, consumers are now in control of their buying experiences—a fact impossible for brand marketers to ignore. Nearly 90 percent (89%) of marketers agree that the balance of power has indeed shifted toward the customer, and 95 percent agree that customer expectations are still increasing.

But even with this knowledge, brands are struggling to adapt to these expectations. Only 37% of marketers say they effectively create an omnichannel experience for their customers.

Omnichannel refers to a marketing approach where all avenues and touchpoints (in-store, online, social media feeds, etc.) are integrated to provide a seamless experience for customers.

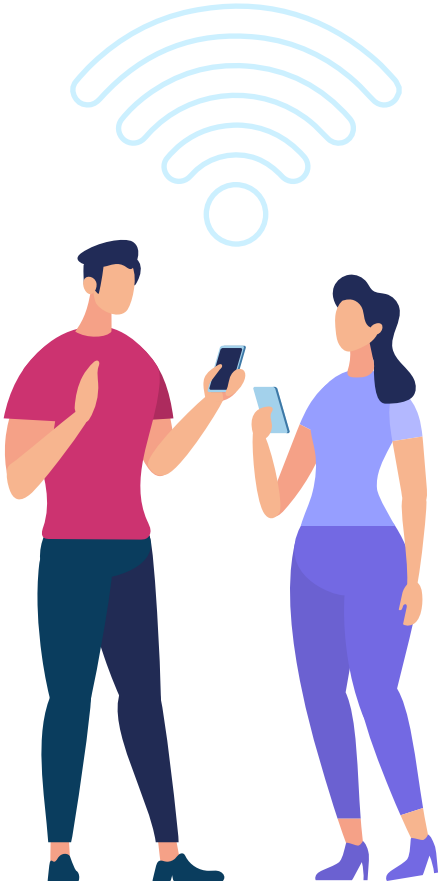
In attempts to improve engagement, marketing teams are investing in more technology to support an omnichannel strategy and meet, if not surpass, customer expectations. However, only 45 percent of businesses note that they are effectively using digital platforms to connect more closely to customers.

So while customers are expecting personalized, smooth and continuous interactions with brands, those brands are failing to provide them. This has severe implications for brands who want to attract and retain loyal customers, considering 55% of shoppers in the U.S. said they would leave a brand after one bad experience.

The Survey

With this disconnect in mind, Maropost conducted a survey with B2B International, an independent international research firm. We surveyed 300 marketing and customer engagement decision makers across North America working in consumer-facing organizations (with 25-999 employees) in the retail, eCommerce, hospitality and media sectors.

The goal of the survey was to understand how companies are optimizing their marketing technology stack to provide impactful omnichannel experiences and meet consumer needs and expectations.



Why are brands struggling to connect with their audiences?

So, where is this disconnect coming from? For starters, many marketers, while putting in great effort, still fail to understand and leverage customer data. Data needs to be actionable in order to segment and target different customers. Unfortunately, there is a disparity between marketers' perception of their data collection and reality.

The key to getting a full picture of customer activity, interests and purchase behavior on an individual basis is a single view that connects the dots between all the channels customers are engaging with. While two-thirds of marketers report they have a single view of their customers, only four percent truly do.

To combat the data disparity, as we mentioned, B2C organizations are implementing more marketing and customer engagement solutions. These solutions support various marketing functions and channels, including:

- Email
- Customer relationship management (CRM)
- Social media
- E-commerce
- Customer service
- Website creation, design and optimization

These platforms are helpful in increasing efficiency within these individual efforts, and have functionality to build emotional relationships with customers, but they are lacking.

First, they don't offer sufficient support. Receiving the proper training and knowledge is the number one challenge preventing organizations from achieving their customer engagement goals. And only one in five marketers describe their primary customer engagement platform provider as a strategic partner.

Second, many of these solutions lack the capabilities marketers need to effectively engage customers across platforms:

35% don't include purchase history

45% don't include social media engagement

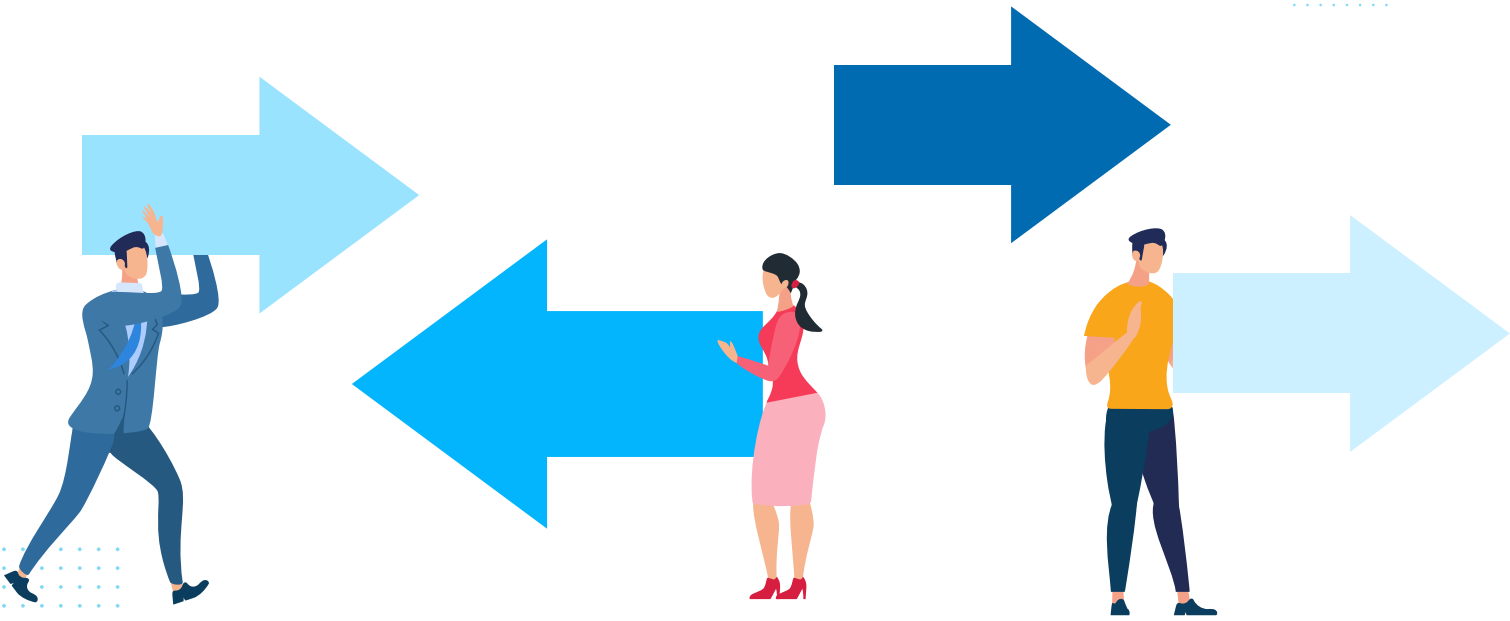
40% don't include website activity

50% don't include customer lifetime value (CLV)

59% don't include app activity

Nearly two-thirds (60%) of respondents indicated they were less than satisfied with their current platform's data aggregation, reporting that it's time consuming and difficult to manage. Additionally, many don't have access to real-time data that can be vital for moving customers further along in their shopping journey.

It's no wonder 69 percent of decision makers say their organization is likely to consider switching or adding a customer engagement platform in the next 12 months.



Why aren't more brands making the switch?

Over half of our survey respondents (54%) indicated they are not fully satisfied with implementation of their current customer engagement platform. Yet they aren't making the move to more streamlined and integrated solutions—for two reasons.

The first is costs; making a large upfront investment with an unknown ROI is not all too appealing for executives. More than four in ten respondents spent at least 50 percent of their annual licensing fee just to implement a platform.

Second is the time being invested in implementation. Not only does IT need to set up the solution, but end users need to be onboarded and trained on how to use it in their day-to-day work. When asked how long it took for marketers to implement their current solution, 79 percent reported that it took over three months, and 35 percent said it took over six months.

Maropost is the All-in-One Customer Engagement Platform

In order to drive success in their marketing efforts while effectively interacting with customers, marketers must leverage a single solution that includes all features and functionalities, implemented in as short a time as possible.

Maropost for Marketing brings together all the tools marketers need to not just reach their audiences, but engage them on an ongoing basis. With Maropost, there's no need to commit to a handful of marketing solutions that don't work together. Our platform is more cost-effective, and supports a more efficient and strategic marketing approach.

With industry-leading white-glove service, our average implementation time is 30 days, and our deliverability and customer success teams have you covered 24/7/365 to bring you peace of mind.

Learn more about Maropost or request a demo by visiting
www.maropost.com