



New Year's Resolutions Toward a  
**Successful Omni-Channel  
Approach**

# It's time to get serious about omni-channel marketing

It's that time. We wake up to a new year full of possibility. We aspire to get better and we set our goals. It's never too late to aim higher.

Developing omni-channel marketing is on most marketers' minds this year. Big data and new technologies are putting a more personalized, responsive customer experience within reach. Customers' expectations for this kind of relationship are on the rise. A recent survey of marketing executives showed over 70% believed in the critical importance of omni-channel marketing (Source: Forester Research). Implementation is much less robust, however. The same survey showed that only 35% were beginning to make good on this aspiration.

## Why omni-channel?

So is it worth it? In today's marketing environment, it's becoming a necessity.

Technology is changing fast. Customers are relying more and more frequently on the web and mobile devices – on average, adults in the U.S. have 4.3 connected devices (Source: Forester Research), and 70% have smart phones. Websites have become the most important customer touch point, with email and mobile close behind.

These technologies can benefit companies that take advantage of their interactive, personalized nature. 68% of companies are now prioritizing personalized experiences for their customers. Two thirds put money into personalized websites and mobile apps in 2016 (Source: Forester Research). Websites, product recommendations, email offers, and apps are becoming more tailored to each customer's preferences.

## Omni-channel vs. Multi-channel



A mistake frequently made is to conflate multichannel marketing with omni-channel. While omni-channel incorporates a multichannel approach, not all multichannel campaigns are omni-channel. Even if you are doing amazing marketing via email, phone, the web and in the real world, it does not become omni-channel until you connect the dots.

The key is the seamless, compelling customer experience as buyers shop online, via apps, or by walking into a brick and mortar store. Whether for B2B or B2C, omni-channel marketing allows you to engage customers with a consistent, personalized experience.

The mobile nature of today's technologies also means that consumer interactions with your company can happen anytime, anywhere. Customers frequently communicate with companies over multiple channels at once – on an app as they walk through the store, for instance, or looking at a website after receiving an email. It follows that marketers are responding by making their marketing more seamless as well.

Omni-channel marketing simply puts these trends together with consistent, personalized campaigns that deepen the user experience beyond what traditional marketing efforts could ever dream to achieve.

### How to make good on an omni-channel approach

Delivering truly omni-channel marketing is hard. Moving your company toward an omni-channel approach involves immense planning, preparation, and investments. Like all your personal resolutions, having the goal in mind is one thing, having a step-by-step way to get there is another. You may need to have some principles to guide you on your way.

Don't be discouraged. Omni-channel works if done right. With a deeper understanding of what makes an omni-channel approach tick, you can begin to take a day by day approach to an amazing marketing result. Successful resolutions almost always demand a focus on the journey, not the outcome.



The mobile nature of today's technologies also means that consumer interactions with your company can happen anytime, anywhere.

## Resolution #1: Be more relevant to your customers

Your customers should be at the center of your omni-channel strategy, and they are increasingly expecting their interactions with your company to be real-time, highly personalized, and tailored.

Whether it is through your website, at your stores, or on phone calls, customers are providing you with information and expect you to respond to their preferences and needs. It is up to you to make use of that information and create the experience they are after. Consistently providing customers with content and products that are relevant, at the right time and place, is the core of a successful omni-channel campaign.

### It starts with data

How do you accomplish it? Your customer relationships are providing you an ever-increasing amount of data over time. If you are a retailer, buyers might be putting products in an online shopping basket, browsing products in your app, and purchasing something at your store. Each of these interactions can provide a wealth of information.

You can then match this with third-party data to get further information about who your customers are, where they live, their purchase history from other retailers, and how they can be contacted with special offers. The sheer amount of information available about each customer is now enough to provide a highly personalized experience and allow you to give customers what they are looking for, when they want it.

But that quantity of data can also be overwhelming, and without an understanding of what's important, what's not, and a plan to put the data to work, big data can end up being an expensive burden. That's where having the experienced support from a data partner is so important. For instance, they can build customer segments based on crucial data points like sales volume, frequency of purchase over a time period, customer loyalty, pricing/promotions and product value groups. They can also help determine the right channel to communicate with each segment. Whether it's a social media platform, the web, email or an app, you can reach your customers where and when they are going to be the most responsive.

## Resolution #2: Be more consistent across channels

When building an omni-channel user experience, consistency is crucial. Nothing can damage the trust you are building with your customer more than providing conflicting information. A majority of customers expect the products, prices and promotions they see to be the same across all channels (Source: Forrester Consulting). Your presentation needs to be consistent—it is your promise to the customer.

For a larger company, this can be difficult. Silos can form, and all of a sudden your digital team, stores, and your catalog are no longer in alignment. It is easy for one part of the organization to keep its operations separate from the other. The nature of an omni-channel approach, however, is to take the perspective of your customer. It doesn't matter to them what channel they are looking at, they expect the same message no matter how they are interacting with you. Your omni-channel strategy must do the work required to resolve conflicts and bridge across the different internal divisions inside your company.

This is particularly true with customer data. Providing a personalized experience for the customer across platforms demands a high level of communication and data sharing within your company. Additionally, if you are not able to collate data about your customers across multiple channels, you could be missing essential insights that could improve the overall strategy.

Integrating data and analysis will enhance customer experience by helping to create more relevant content, more effective self-service tools, cross-selling recommendations, and timely offers. If you haven't gotten each facet of the company together to figure out how to provide a single integrated, consistent, personalized experience for your customer, now is the time to organize.

The sheer amount of information available about each customer is now enough to provide a highly personalized experience and allow you to give customers what they are looking for, when they want it.

## Resolution #3: Empower your customers

One of the biggest advantages of omni-channel marketing is that it can generate immense customer loyalty. 80% of revenue for most companies comes from 20% of their customers. Your probability of success in cross-selling or upselling to an existing customer is 3 to 20 times higher than with a prospect.

(Source: [www.second-to-none.com/5-staggering-statistics-on-brand-loyalty/](http://www.second-to-none.com/5-staggering-statistics-on-brand-loyalty/))

How can you maximize how successful your omni-channel marketing efforts are in building loyalty? Brands that empower their customers to make the best purchasing decisions are generating an immense amount of good will and loyalty. Taking steps to know your customers is essential to this effort.

### Create relevant content

Matching the right content to the right audience on the right channel is essential to generating loyalty. Millennials might be responsive to engaging with you on Snapchat or Instagram, while older generations might prefer email or direct mail. When developing content, it is crucial to invest in creative talent and provide them with the data they need to connect consistently to the right audience.

### Research and respond

Always put your customer first. If you don't feel like you have the answers yet about what customers are looking for, consider user-testing, and feed that data right into your campaign decisions.

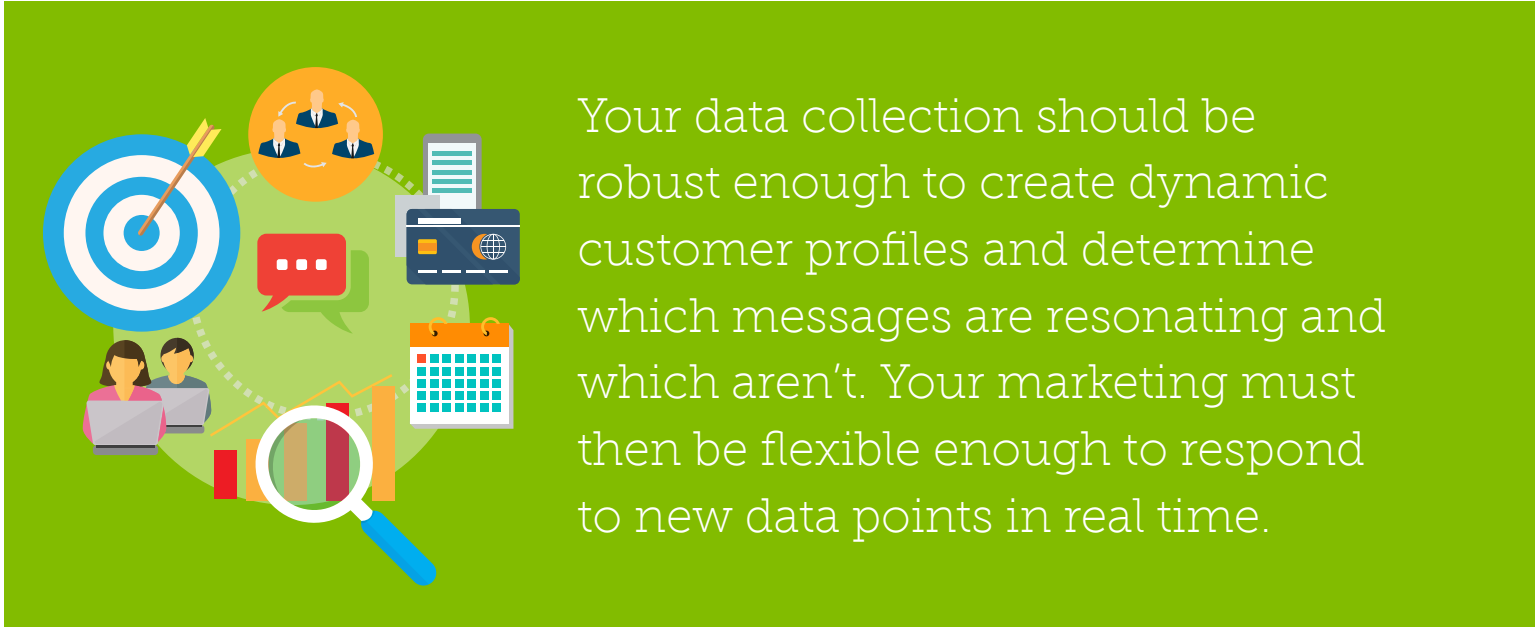
Then, implement your customers' feedback. It will help make your customers feel valued, and you will have acted on the points in your customer relationship you can improve.

### Customer service counts

Involving customer service in the omni-channel strategy is also a smart strategy. Not only does a positive customer service experience play a crucial role in generating loyalty, it can also provide valuable data on customers' experiences and help you identify gaps in your marketing that you would otherwise ignore.



Brands that empower their customers to make the best purchasing decisions are generating an immense amount of good will and loyalty. Taking steps to know your customers is essential to this effort.



Your data collection should be robust enough to create dynamic customer profiles and determine which messages are resonating and which aren't. Your marketing must then be flexible enough to respond to new data points in real time.

## Resolution #4: Become More Agile

The preferences of your audience are changing faster than ever, aided by the rapid acceleration of new technology. It can be like trying to hit a constantly moving target. Attempting to connect with them tests your company's ability to stay agile. It sounds like a simple idea to implement, but surveys have shown that companies are struggling to activate the resources and technology necessary for agile omni-channel marketing, despite an increase in investment in 2016 (Source: Forrester Research).

It comes down to adopting the tools and analytics that recognize shifts in buyer behavior and scalable systems that enable speedy action when opportunities present themselves. Your data collection should be robust enough to create dynamic customer profiles and determine which messages are resonating and which aren't. Your marketing must then be flexible enough to respond to new data points in real time.

You also need to nurture a culture that strives for improvement based on customer feedback. Customer expectations can change subtly based on the creative things your competitors are doing, and if you don't have your ear to the ground, you might find your brand falling behind. If you are prepared, and in fact actively include monitoring and change in your planning, then you can more effectively act in the moment before it passes you by.

## Resolution #5: Make measurement part of the plan

True omni-channel marketing, as should be obvious by now, is hard to implement and extremely resource intensive. Positive results may take a while to materialize. But when they do, it is crucial that you have a plan on how to measure performance and ROI. The ability to measure the impact of your efforts is a key indicator that your company may ultimately develop successful omni-channel campaigns.

If you don't feel like you are there yet, you are not alone. Just 20% of CMOs feel like they are good at quantifying the impact of one channel over another (Source: CMO Club). This leads to an inability to measure omni-channel's impact. Unfortunately, there is no silver bullet. It just requires time and attention from the very start to develop a coherent measurement strategy. An experienced data partner can help by identifying ways to include performance measurement among the data you are tracking across all channels as part of your omni-channel strategy. This in turn can lead to improved personalization and identify the areas you need to improve. And, when done right, it all can lead to a more optimized experience for your customers.

The ability to measure the impact of your efforts is a key indicator that your company may ultimately develop successful omni-channel campaigns.

## Omni-channel equals better customer relationships

Omni-channel strategies can seem complex. They can incorporate a vast amount of data and be running on a growing number of channels. But the principles that guide them are really very simple: they are built around improving your relationship with your customers.

The same characteristics you'd strive for in a one-on-one customer interaction—being consistent, listening to feedback, responding quickly to individual needs—is what a good omni-channel campaign should strive for, just on a far larger scale. Considered this way, the changes you might need to make to improve your omni-channel approach might seem more intuitive.

If you can embrace the improved customer relationship that data can empower, new, creative ways to deepen that relationship can reveal themselves. It could be an app that makes in-store purchases faster and easier (think the Starbucks app) or websites that respond to the customer's location and serve up more relevant products and deals. It doesn't even have to be some new technological marvel. It just requires finding new ways to leverage the data you already have access to in service of a better customer experience. With these principles, planning, and bit of patience, adopting a truly omni-channel approach is well within reach in this new year.



## About Infogroup Media Solutions

Infogroup Media Solutions empowers business, consumer, and nonprofit marketing professionals. Through our innovative data sets, media management, analytics, brokerage services and marketing solutions, we help lower the cost to acquire new revenue and hold on to current customers.

## For more information on our data-driven solutions

Visit [www.infogroupmediasolutions.com](http://www.infogroupmediasolutions.com) or contact us at 1.800.223.2194.

1020 E 1st Street  
Papillion, NE 68046

P: 1.800.223.2194  
[infogroupmediasolutions@infogroup.com](mailto:infogroupmediasolutions@infogroup.com)



[linkedin.com/company/infogroup](http://linkedin.com/company/infogroup)



[twitter.com/infogroup](http://twitter.com/infogroup)



[facebook.com/infogroup](http://facebook.com/infogroup)