

# unPredictions

## 8 Retail Marketing Priorities for 2021



Insights from:

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 **TOTAL TOOLS**

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 **CONTORION**  
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With five years' worth of e-commerce growth in less than a year, brands have had to quickly adapt to survive. There is uncertainty everywhere, but in a marketer's world, the focus should be clearer than ever – doubling down was a key theme of 2020.

So, this year, no lofty trends. After all, the change has already happened.

We bring you a set of “unPredictions” – your priorities for 2021 – with enough of the why, but much more of the what and the how (including the necessary strategy, planning, and key actions) which will enable you to provide the superior brand experiences your customers desire, and the growth and revenue you're tasked with delivering as a marketer.



**Alex Timlin**  
SVP Verticals



“If we're looking at the average marketer and the average piece of technology they've got right now, it's almost impossible to make sure that a customer goes to where you want them to go. Customers are fragmented in terms of where they spend their time and how they interact with your brand...

**Our customers are everywhere, but they're very, very demanding, and they're expecting a really personalized and really informative experience at all [the] different touchpoints.”**

# #1

# Customers Must Be the Priority

Deliver Personalized Experiences  
and You WILL Drive Growth



*With so many brands competing for the same audience, customers have limited tolerance for a status quo experience.*



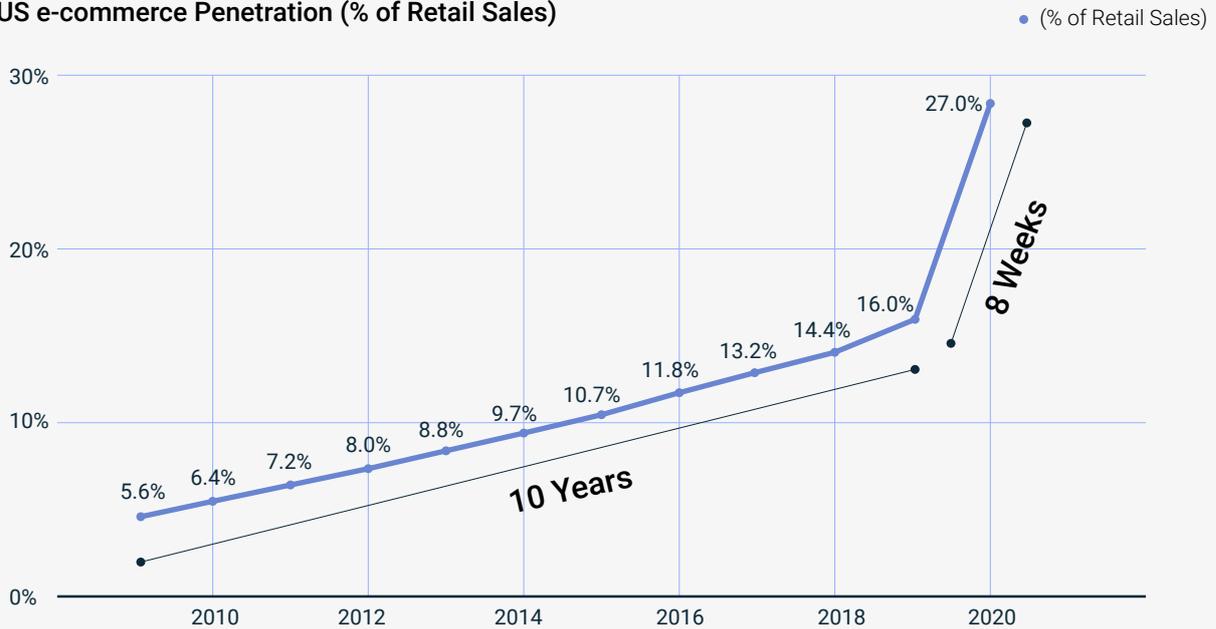
## Stats you need to know

- ▶ Brands at higher digital maturity witness an average of 11% incremental uplift and 18% cost efficiency. (Boston Consulting Group x Google)
- ▶ 41% of customer-obsessed companies grew their revenues at more than 10% annually, compared to only 10% of customer-naïve companies. (Forrester)
- ▶ Digital transformation and a focus on customer experience can increase customer satisfaction by [20%-30%](#) and revenue gains of 20%-50%. (McKinsey)

Shopping has changed, and e-commerce growth has accelerated as new buyers have moved online over this past year.

## 10 years of e-commerce growth in 8 weeks

US e-commerce Penetration (% of Retail Sales)



Source: Bank of America & Department of Commerce 2020.

While the shift to digital is huge, brands (retailers and pure players alike) compete on the quality of the customer experience. If that experience is poor, customers will quickly jump to another brand that provides an experience they desire.



**Beth Horn**

Director, Head of Industry, Retail & Ecommerce

FACEBOOK

“We then have to think about how to make shopping easier at every step of the journey. So how slick is your mobile checkout? How integrated are your online and in-store experiences? Is your mobile site easy to read? Are you using messaging to connect with your customers? **So getting obsessed with removing friction from the customer journey is key here.**”

It's vital to place customers at the center of everything your brand does, focus on what *they* want and need, and double down on personalization. Many marketers will personalize one single element in an otherwise one-size-fits-all engagement (say, a first name, gender-based product, etc.), but that's not enough.

*True* personalization requires using all of a customer's unique attributes, behaviors, and preferences — drawn from your various data sets — to create and deliver a one-of-a-kind experience that is highly relevant and valuable (and scalable). It's the only way to ensure your customers receive the satisfying, exceptional experiences that entice them to continue shopping with you again and again.

Everything you need to do strategically in order to deliver business results in 2021 will hinge on having a customer-centric approach to marketing. If your brand can't do this, enough of your competitors can.



**Shar VanBoskirk**

VP and Principal  
Analyst

**FORRESTER**<sup>®</sup>

“Customer obsession is deliberately a little bit different than customer focus or customer service. If you think about something you are obsessed with, it is the thing you can't get out of your mind. The thing that — even when you try — comes to the front and center of everything you do. Customer obsession is putting the customer at the center of your leadership strategy and operations.”

## Actions:

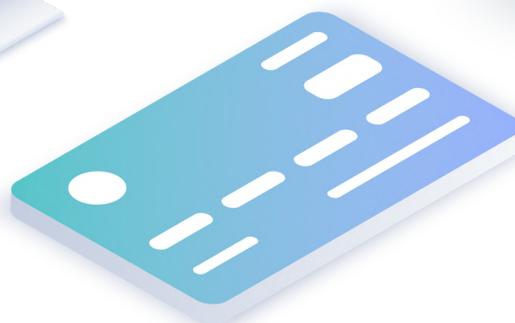
- ✓ Revise your marketing strategy to place the customer front and center, and then consider which channels they are using when engaging with your brand.
- ✓ Determine if your technology stack / ecosystem is integrated and open in a way that lets you connect to other systems unhindered, so that you can unlock the full value in all your data sets and scale efficiently.
- ✓ Make sure your data is unified and accessible to other applications and systems, because executing true 1:1 personalization, at scale, requires access to multiple data sources.



# #2

## Customer Data, Policies & Privacy Are Rapidly Changing

You Must Build a First-Party,  
Permission-Based,  
Data-Driven Strategy



*Marketing permission is tightening as new laws, regulations, and stricter privacy controls continue to emerge.*



## Stats you need to know

- ▶ [59% of brands](#) say they are meeting GDPR requirements, leaving lots of room for improvement. (Data Privacy Manager)
- ▶ Only 10% of US companies are actively working to comply with 50 or more privacy laws. (TrustArc)

When it comes to their data, customers have increasingly greater expectations for privacy, and those expectations are being met.

The passing of regulations like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe, the [California Consumer Privacy Act \(CCPA\) in the US](#), and the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) in Singapore, among others, has led to [107 countries](#) drawing up their own data privacy policies. Apple's recently released iOS 14 includes privacy controls such as with the "opt-in for IDFA" option (set to be switched on in 2021) that will allow a customer to restrict the amount of their data shared with companies.

In addition to data privacy regulations, marketers have to be ready for the impending end of web-tracking cookies. Apple's Safari and Mozilla's Firefox now block third-party cookies, and Google

will be doing away with third-party cookies by 2022, making pixel tracking impossible. Going forward, marketers have no way to glean insights from customer behavior unless the customer provides explicit permission to track and use first-party data.

**If you don't have permission, you have no way to personalize the experience.**

With greater control over data now shifting to the customer, brands have to develop a data permissions approach that allows them to legally communicate with customers, and more importantly, clearly explains the legitimate value customers will receive in exchange for sharing their data.



**David Eldridge**  
Chairman  
& Co-Founder



“Right now I believe that **marketers have a huge opportunity to get on the front foot with regard to customer data, how they gather and use it, and how they explain and demonstrate the value to customers for giving them the permission to use that for a period of time ...** Marketers are absolutely thinking about their data strategy and how they're going to move into that totally different mindset.”

Processing permissioned data correctly across multiple systems and countries is difficult enough, fraught with legal and technical

challenges. But the tech stacks of many companies are siloed, which renders them unable to cope with the impending change in data ownership, and makes it difficult for brands who deal with external barriers outside of the marketing team's control:

- ▶ It's labor-intensive when web browsers require permission for every type of data.
- ▶ Desktop commerce in Europe is moving to two-factor authorization (2FA).

So with all these impending changes to the data landscape, you will need to be clear in your plan to gain the necessary permissions for acquiring a customer's data, and for managing, processing, and enabling that data in a safe, compliant way.



**Brendan Witcher**  
VP/Principal Analyst  
of Digital Business

**FORRESTER**<sup>®</sup>

“Data is the new sexy and the reason that data is the new sexy is because **you cannot create great customer experiences without a great data strategy.** Take a look at some of these numbers here. 48% say they're data-driven. That's probably where most people try to get to. Again, that's good. It's not great. Data-led organizations are what's great. What is the difference? Well, data-led organizations avoid preconceived notions about the customer, preconceived notions about their business, and they make strategic, not tactical, strategic decisions based on that data.”

## Actions:

- ✓ Have a strategy in place to identify more customers and capture their consent.
- ✓ To secure a customer's consent (and to ensure they don't revoke it), clearly define the value a customer will receive in exchange, such as more personalized, tailor-made experiences, loyalty incentives, etc.
- ✓ Customer consent may be owned by your legislation or data protection teams, but you need a plan that will enable all teams within the business to access and use the same customer data (and the right customer data).



# #3

# Earn the Right to Use Customer Data

Make It Your Competitive Edge



*First-party and zero-party customer data allows you to provide 1:1 interactions and personalized customer journeys that your competitors can't.*



## Stats you need to know

- ▶ Marketers who use customer data in marketing [outperform peers by 85%](#) in sales growth and more than 25% in gross margin. (Google)
- ▶ [75% of consumers](#) are more likely to buy from a retailer that recognizes them by name, recommends options based on past purchases, or knows their purchase history. (Instapage)

Undoubtedly, stricter data privacy regulations make marketing efforts more difficult. Customers are increasingly empowered in a way that allows them to be more judicious with who they share their data with, and to what extent. Brands must earn the right to connect with customers by observing their privacy and ensuring they have explicit permission to market to them.

## Data Collection Is Changing

Collecting data is no longer a one-way deal, as a customer has a right to view the information a brand collects on them. Collection isn't a one-time interaction as a brand must continue delivering value to customers or risk them revoking your permission (yes, this can happen).

If your brand doesn't take data permission seriously, there will be consequences beyond paying a penalty fee:

- ▶ Customers may lose trust in your brand, which increases their risk of churning.
- ▶ Customers who have a bad experience will jump to another brand, and they are likely to leave a negative review in a public forum.
- ▶ Once a customer withdraws permission for you to use their data, it's impossible to retrieve it, as all identifiers are removed. This means you'll have to spend more of your acquisition budget to try and re-acquire them.

## The Best Data Is Earned

You learn a great deal about your customer based on how they interact with your brand. Web browsing behavior, SMS interactions, email CTRs, etc., manifest in the form of first-party

data. Much of what you do as a marketer requires this actionable data, but you have to earn the right to use it.

Fortunately, the customer's desire for highly individualized content is increasing. So if you are upfront about how you'll use and protect their data, and what value you will offer the customer in terms of truly personalized experiences, they are likely to give you the necessary consent.

Moreover, if you establish a clear benefit for the customer, they may willingly offer data you couldn't have collected otherwise. This zero-party data — information a customer shares with your brand directly, such as purchase preferences, etc. — is particularly powerful as it eliminates the guesswork in determining how to market to them, because they are telling you explicitly.



**Fatima Yusuf**

Director of  
Partnerships



“This has become pretty table stakes in most e-commerce stores now, since 64% of consumers do ask for personalized offers from retailers and brands. And even in a world of heightened privacy, 90% of consumers are willing to share behavioral data if it benefits them and provides them with an easier shopping experience.”

## Your Data Is Also Your Competitive Advantage

The first-party and zero-party data you obtain is unique to your brand. Thus, if you know how to leverage it, you'll be able to [differentiate yourself from competitors](#) and unearth unique business opportunities.

For example, you can easily identify product trends, and then deploy programs like “Back In Stock” and “Price Drop” for quick wins in sales and revenue. You can readily spot buying patterns, and then run campaigns to win back customers, inspire their next purchase, and move them further in the customer lifecycle — targeting a customer with the right incentive, at the right time, and on the right channel to drive first-time to repeat purchases, and ultimately, create more loyal customers.

These are golden opportunities that your competitors won't have, because they won't be working with the same data.

## Actions:

- ✓ Follow the strategy you've put in place to identify more customers.
- ✓ Provide clear value in exchange for customers allowing you to collect and use their data. The power to be marketed to now lies with customers. If they say no, you can't identify them.
- ✓ Use pre-built use cases proven to drive more customers further down the lifecycle – this will save you valuable time and resources in execution.



# #4

## Loyalty Is More Than Points and Prizes

Create Meaningful Value Exchanges  
That Deliver Personalized Experiences



*Loyalty goes beyond points in exchange for a purchase – it's all about building long-lasting customer relationships that lead to greater revenue.*



## Stats you need to know

- ▶ [80% of profits](#) come from 20% of a brand's customers. (Forbes)
- ▶ A [5% increase in customer retention](#) correlates with at least a 25% increase in profit. (Bain & Company)

How important is loyalty? **Loyal customers have a [306% higher lifetime value](#) and will recommend a brand at a rate of 71%.**

Loyalty is no longer a nice-to-have program. It's a vital opportunity for a brand to deliver true 1:1 personalized experiences, and the most effective way for maintaining an ongoing relationship with a customer.

## True Brand Loyalty Is Built on Experiences

Loyalty doesn't mean just discounts and free gifts. Consider what value-adding experiences you can offer your customers in return for being loyal to your brand:

- ▶ Prioritized customer service
- ▶ Personalized shopping
- ▶ Early access to new products or sales
- ▶ Behind-the-scenes access or content
- ▶ Premium shopping experience reserved for the best customers

You may always have a use for discounts in your marketing strategy. But focusing on members-only experiences lets you break away from indiscriminate discounting, while still providing attractive, high-value experiences that earn a customer's continued loyalty.



**Elisse Jones**

National Loyalty  
Manager



“In our stores, when one of our loyalty customers comes in, we can identify them at POS through a loyalty ID that’s attached to their profile. So, from that, our stores can engage with a customer on a first name level. They know what tier they’re in, what trade they are, what products they may have recently purchased, or also to better recommend products that they may be interested in, because they know who that customer is, and they’ve really built up that relationship. And for us, it’s all about that personalized experience, because if you only lead by price and product, you’ll really lose relevance.”

## Loyalty Success



Contorion: The German e-commerce business serving B2B craftsmen and B2C customers implemented a loyalty program to enhance their current marketing efforts to achieve several ambitious goals. Within one month of launching their loyalty program, Contorion saw:

- ▶ 62% more repeat purchases
- ▶ 12.7% higher average order value
- ▶ 34% higher conversion rate from first-time to second-time buyer
- ▶ 5% more activity on their website



**Christian Efendic**  
Head of CRM



“What we have found is the customers in the loyalty (program) becoming much more active, they were visiting the website 5% more often. Customers who joined loyalty made 62% more purchases than non-members, the AOV increased by 12.7% and we could see that the conversion from 1st time buyer to 2nd time buyer increased by 34%.”

## **gebrüder götz**

[Gebrüder Götz](#): This shoe retailer decided to be more strategic about how they use discounts. By offering discount vouchers only to customers who sign up for the loyalty program, Gebrüder Götz still processed the same dollar amount as they did with indiscriminate discounts, but in the long run, these customers were more loyal shoppers.

As an added bonus, Gebrüder Götz leveraged their loyalty program to help identify more customers online and in-store, in particular, identifying 50% of their customers from the use of loyalty membership cards alone.



**Marcel Heck**

Head of CRM

**gebrüder götz**

“As a brand, we needed to drive repeat purchases and convert more first-time customers. Although we could do that with indiscriminate discounting, we knew a loyalty program would be a better strategy... Within two months of launching Emarsys Loyalty, we were able to see positive business results, and within the first week, average cart value increased by 10%.”

## Actions:

- ✓ Re-evaluate your use of indiscriminate discounting as the primary means of driving customers further down the lifecycle. Give your customer a reason to come back to your brand besides the discounts alone.
- ✓ Ensure a customer's loyalty to your brand (and their continued consent to use their data) by delivering high-value experiences, such as early access to new products, free shipping, VIP shopper status, etc.
- ✓ Fully integrate loyalty into your marketing execution, with use cases that are designed to move customers further along the lifecycle — such as price drop, back-in-stock, etc.



# #5

# Omnichannel CX Is Fundamental

Connect Customer Engagement  
Across Any Touchpoint



*Connect 1:1 with customers wherever they interact with your brand, and deliver consistent, seamless, and personalized experiences to customers both online and in-store.*



## Stats you need to know

- ▶ 71% of customers confirm they want a consistent experience across channels, but [only 29% say they get it](#). (Forbes)
- ▶ Shoppers that buy in-store and online have a [30% higher lifetime value](#) than those who shop using only one channel. (Google)

The two biggest changes in omnichannel retail this past year are that:

- 1** **Customers have had to turn to e-commerce and rapidly embrace more digital channels than ever before (and in many cases, now prefer them).**
- 2** **In response to changes in the market and customer demand, many retailers had to quickly shift their business to a digital-first approach, and become more customer-centric. Retailers that had already established a strong digital foundation prior to 2020 experienced better outcomes.**

With the rise in cross-device shopping, you need to find a platform solution that sits right next to all your other omnichannel data. Everything you do, every channel, every bit of customer data can be maximized to create 1:1 personalized experiences across any channel.

But simply having the means to reach a customer on every channel isn't enough. Those personalized experiences must be crafted in such a way that the customer has a continuous, seamless experience along every touchpoint. What's more, the modern customer is more savvy and demanding than ever. They move quickly and effortlessly between multiple channels like your website, your mobile site, and your mobile app. This makes it imperative to deliver interactions at precisely the right moment, on the right channel, with the right content — all in real time.



**Elisse Jones**  
National Loyalty  
Manager



**“We wanted to deliver that unified customer experience, something that was connected and seamless and frictionless.** We wanted to respond in real time too, so trade tools are needs-based products, they're not one space. If a plumber gets called out to your house to fix a job, they need tools now to do that job. So **we wanted to make sure that we could really coordinate our messaging across the channels,** so when a customer shows interest in a particular product, we can support them in that moment of need.”

When leveraged properly, every channel can yield revenue opportunities. Consider how you'll use the following channels within your omnichannel strategy so you can cultivate consistent customer journeys with your brand:

## Email

This might be surprising, but [70% of brands fail](#) to use personalized emails. That presents a huge opportunity to wield a personalized email program as a competitive advantage, as long as you have the customer's permission to send them an email.

With 3.9 billion email users in the world, email remains one of the most effective ways to engage customers for the following reasons:

- ▶ This past Black Friday (2020), [21% more promotional emails](#) were distributed than the previous year, with a 12% increase in click-throughs.
- ▶ Personalized emails deliver [6X higher transaction rates](#).  
(Instapage)

## Website

As the main brand interface that customers engage with, your website is as critical as a brick-and-mortar store, especially in cases where stores have closed. [89% of digital businesses](#) are investing in web personalization for good reason:

- ▶ [80% of brands](#) report an uplift after implementing web personalization. (Econsultancy)
- ▶ Personalized, dynamic homepage promotions influence [85% of customers](#) to purchase. (Instapage)
- ▶ Product recommendations can provide an uplift in sales of [11.2% YoY](#). (Fresh Relevance)

Keep in mind, customers will move quickly between channels, and you'll need to seize the moment when it comes to engaging them. In order to convert them, you'll want technology in place that allows you to send automated real-time, relevant, and personalized messages based on their on-site or in-app behavior.

## Social Media

In growing numbers, customers discover brands and products via social media ads as well as social recommendations.

[54% of customers](#) research products using social media before purchasing, and positive comments and likes influence customers to purchase. What's more, influencer marketing has become an increasingly popular way to engage customers.

Today, out of the 4.57 billion people who have access to the internet, 346 million arrived online within the last 12 months. The following stats show how crucial it is to serve these new and existing customers:

- ▶ [49% of consumers](#) say that they depend on influencer recommendations. (Four Communications)
- ▶ B2B organizations prefer to use LinkedIn, while B2C companies use Facebook.
- ▶ Pre-pandemic, people spent an average of 2 hours and 22 minutes a day on social media. (GlobalWebIndex)

## Mobile and Mobile Apps

With [52% of all web traffic](#) coming from mobile, the mobile web experience is more critical today than ever before. If it's not mobile-friendly, [50% of customers will stop shopping](#) with a brand, even if they like the company.

Mobile apps offer a single point of brand-customer interaction, giving the brand:

- ▶ Better customer insights
- ▶ Simpler permission handling
- ▶ Stronger loyalty
- ▶ Better overall CX
- ▶ Easier downstream CX integration, delivery scheduling, and feedback ratings

Much like with your website, your mobile site and mobile app are important touchpoints for conversion, particularly when customers are using these channels to browse your products.

Here's where you need technology to enable automated programs that, when triggered by a customer's actions, will send highly relevant, personalized content to help move that customer further along their journey with your brand.

## SMS

Like email and mobile, SMS continues to be a strong channel for brands to connect with customers. In 2020, the channel rewarded brands with the following:

- ▶ Omnichannel campaigns that include SMS are [47.7% more likely to convert](#). (SuperOffice)
- ▶ Average click-through rates for SMS is over 14%. (SuperOffice)
- ▶ On average, e-commerce brands are seeing more than 2,700% ROI from SMS. (SuperOffice)

## In-Store

Technology has been the savior for brands this year, specifically in extending the offline in-store experience to include an online component, from research and recommendations to ordering online and picking up at the store.

At the very least, in-store strategies can track individual device IDs and, as long as you have permission to use the customer's data, you can build a complete profile of each shopper.

## Direct Mail

Tried and true, direct mail is having a resurgence, even as digital channels are becoming the most viable means of engagement. The fact that this physical touchpoint can also be highly personalized can make for a particularly impactful customer experience, and lead a customer to more interactive, digital channels, like your website or mobile app.

Using your first-party data to create a personalized letter, package, or gift can serve as a core part of a campaign, and a stand-out touchpoint along a customer's journey with your brand.



**Simon Rowlands**

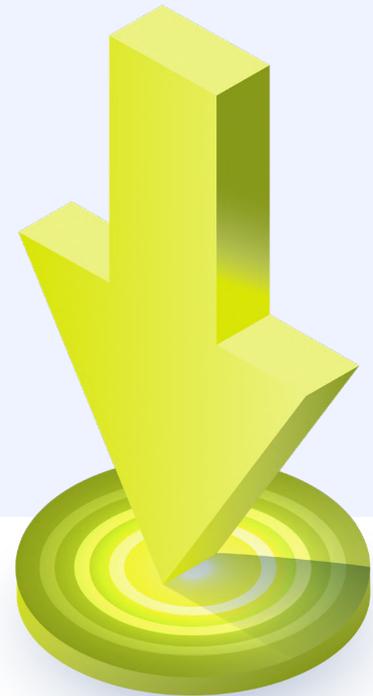
Head of Customer  
Marketing & Comms



“We use [Emarsys] as our enhanced SCV, and we link this with our other agencies and channels for contact. Then we go on to the channel that the customer purchases on. So whenever they purchase in-store, online, or the call center, that purchase behavior is fed into that one single source. **And having all that data in the one single source, that allows us then to interrogate that data, to make decisions whether to reward or target customers through whatever channel then best resonates with that customer.** Having that breadth of channels available to us allows us to be sure that we are hitting the customer where they want to see the most relevant message.”

## Actions:

- ✓ Ensure your tech stack is fully integrated with an open architecture where you can connect to any system, all relevant data, and any digital and physical customer touchpoint.
- ✓ Personalize for the customer first, regardless of which channel they choose for engaging with your brand. Offer them contextually relevant, real-time personalization through their preferred channels.
- ✓ Use proven omnichannel strategies that allow you to connect with customers in a highly personalized way no matter the channel, with an emphasis on delivering value at every touchpoint to increase CLTV.



# #6

## Intelligent Personalization Anywhere

Invest in AI to Power Relevant  
and Contextual Experiences  
Across All Touchpoints



*The zero-party and first-party data within your organization can be used to provide a more personalized omnichannel shopping experience that's tailored to the individual... no matter if they're shopping online or in-store.*

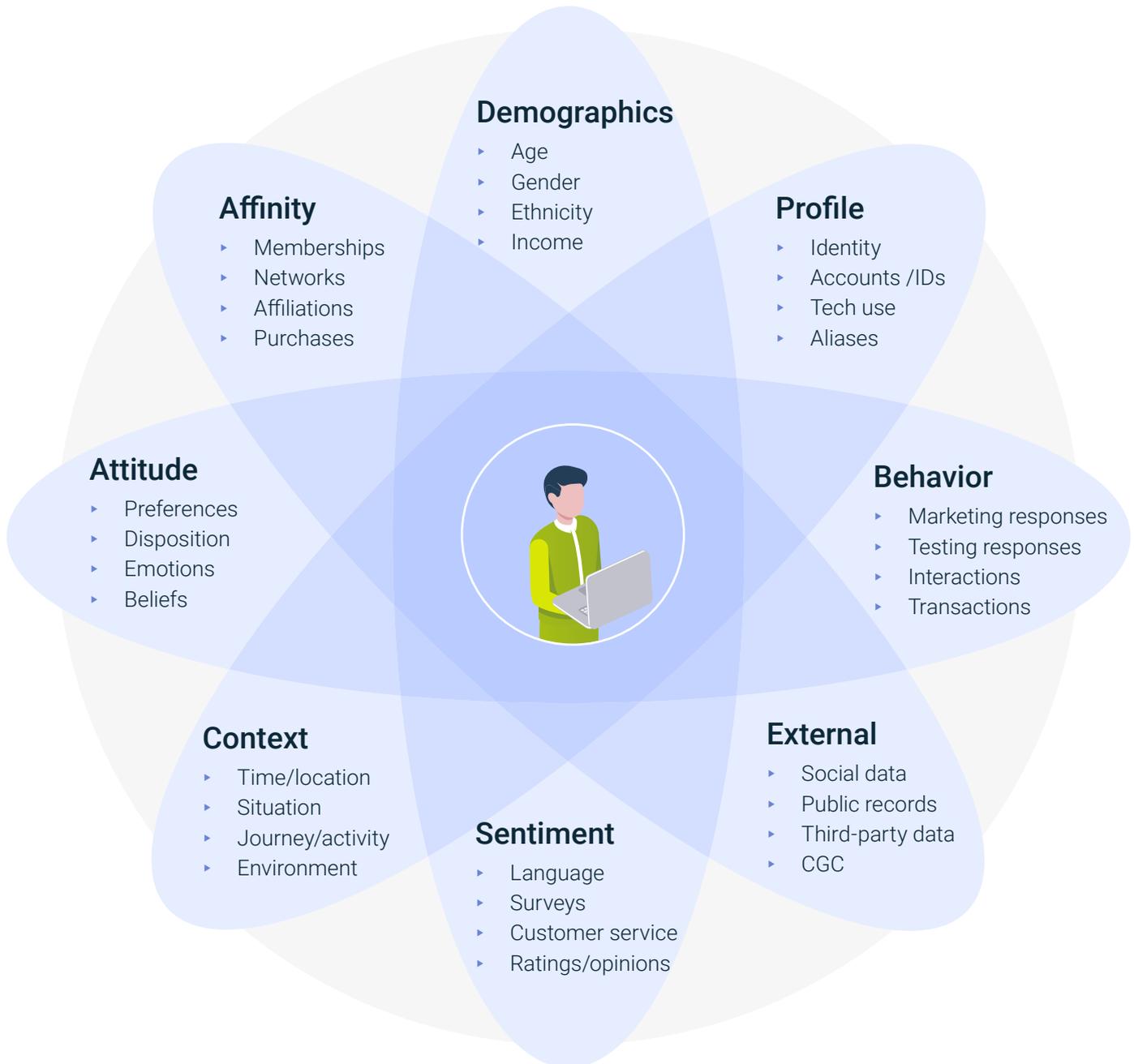


## Stats you need to know

- ▶ Companies that use advanced personalization are seeing a [\\$20 return for every \\$1 spent](#), and 95% of companies that implement personalization see [3X ROI](#) in the year after the personalization investment.
- ▶ [75% of consumers](#) are more likely to buy from a retailer that recognizes them by name, recommends options based on past purchases, or knows their purchase history. (Instapage)

Basic personalization doesn't cut it anymore. For solid and consistent engagement, your personalization has to access the right data (with permission) and draw the right insights about past purchases, preferences, and behavior, and you have to be able to do it consistently across all your brand's touchpoints and provide relevant offers and content.

## 360-degree view of the customer



Even though marketers still shape strategy and define goals, technology plays a big role in truly personalizing the customer experience. You cannot scale your 1:1 engagement without technology. For example, one of the best uses of technology is personalized shopping cart recommendations which influence [92% of shoppers](#) online to buy products.



**Allie Donovan**

Director of Email  
and Retention

**brooklinen**

“Whether it’s something simple like using a first name in a certain way when you’re talking about an offer or telling a story, [personalization] has been so impactful for us. One of the great examples we’ve had earlier this year was our birthday sale ... The other huge promotion that we tend to run and we tell kind of a story that was like how many nights you’ve slept on Brooklinen, your most coveted item, things that you’ve had in your cart. So that we could really kind of start nurturing that relationship. It was very functional data... I think it might have been the highest generating email we’ve ever had.”

## Personalization ROI

Investing in personalization technology is a growth strategy. In fact, [77% of retail marketing executives](#) intend to use personalization to drive ongoing customer relationships, such as loyalty, repeat purchases, and customer retention.

Going forward, the most important things you want to do as a marketer, and all the ways you look to build meaningful relationships with your customers, require personalization. And the businesses using the most advanced forms of personalization will see the best results (and reap the greatest rewards).

## **Live Chat Personalization**

Marketing technology and access to customer data makes it easy and frictionless for a customer to get help through live chat on a brand's website. If a customer wants to buy a dress, but is unsure about color or sizing, she can go to the website and have a live chat representative answer questions and perhaps provide recommendations if the item she wants is out of stock.

The live chat rep can bring up the customer's data, product affinity, preferences, and even unused discount vouchers to provide efficient and more informed assistance to the customer. Personalizing your call center is crucial in providing a complete and consistent experience.

## **AI-Driven Personalization**

Deep personalization, also called hyper personalization, runs on customer, product, and sales data and allows a brand to go beyond basic personalization. Customers clearly want more complex personalized experiences. With AI, machine learning, and strategic automations running in the background, deep personalization matches up permissioned data with individual customers no matter which channel they come through.

You can go a step further with advanced AI technology to personalize nearly every aspect of a customer's journey... in real time.

Recommend products to shoppers based on their unique tastes and preferences — a level of personalization that even Amazon can't achieve:

**14%**

of buyers purchased a virtual version of something that can also be done in person.

Of that 14%,

**25%**

did this for the first time during the pandemic.

Of that 14%,

**63%**

did this more during the pandemic than they did before the pandemic.



## Deep Personalization

Advanced AI can help personalize web and mobile experiences for the customer in the moment, or deliver a highly relevant loyalty incentive at just the right time, bringing the real-time element into your marketing.

Watch for increasingly advanced AI-driven virtual experiences over the next year. For example, [Sports Direct](#) has implemented an automated data-driven AI Stylist that, in many cases, is as good as

if not better and faster than a human chat representative. It uses Google Cloud's image recognition technology to analyze the tactile properties of each product, citing specific characteristics that humans might not detect. It can also denote behaviors of each customer to determine preferences for certain features, and track products viewed or purchased to define genuine interest in a product.



**Paul Gunn**

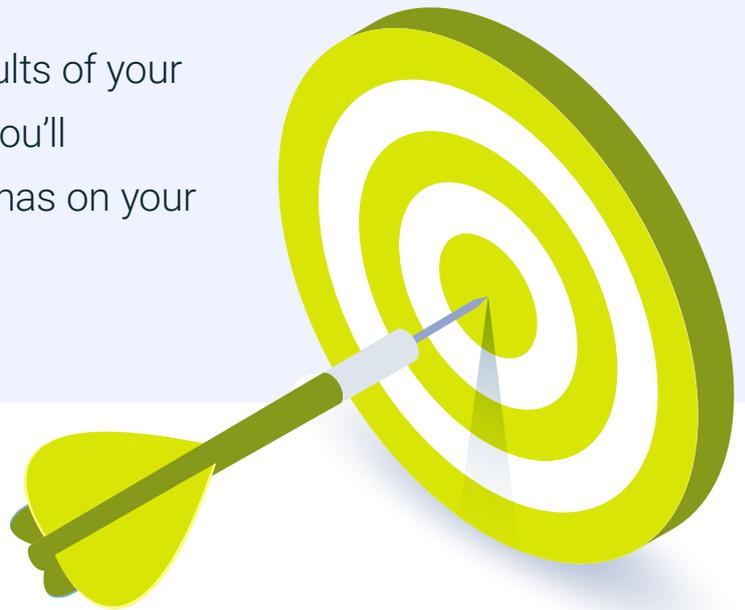
Head of Digital  
Marketing and CRM

F R A S E R S  
G R O U P

“It’s about shifting from thinking about broad terms like ‘demand’ to the individual preferences and need of individual customers. One of the things that COVID highlighted was the fact that trends are very difficult [to identify] if you’re always looking at them in retrospect, and AI Stylist enables us to automate in a way that recognizes trends as they’re being created.”

## Actions:

- ✓ Make sure your data is organized and unified within your tech stack so you can unlock the full value of your customer, product, and sales data – use this to enrich the deeply personalized experiences you can offer.
- ✓ Determine what is unique about your data, your customer, your products, and campaigns – be data-driven in determining the personalization use cases that align with organizational objectives.
- ✓ Track and measure the results of your personalization efforts so you'll understand what impact it has on your business.



# #7

# Break Down Your Operational and Data Silos

Unlock Personalization  
and Experience Potential



*Seamless end-to-end experiences customers demand only happen when silos are dissolved, and your data is organized, unified, and centralized in a way that allows it to be fully utilized.*



## Stats you need to know

- ▶ Nearly [90% of leading marketers](#) say they are building teams that solve for end-to-end customer experiences, and journeys, across channels and devices. (Google)
- ▶ [84% of CMOs](#) believe data collection, management, and analytics that drive consumer insight are important to future success, but only 49% believe they are effectively delivering on that today. (eMarketer)

Over the last year, we've seen most companies recognizing there's a silo problem. Not only are data silos more expensive for a brand to manage, they are also one of the greatest obstacles preventing brands from achieving true customer-centric marketing. So long as teams and their respective data sets are siloed, the view of the customer will be fragmented.



**Elisse Jones**

National Loyalty  
Manager



**“One of the biggest challenges that we had in our existing environment is that our channel data was in silos, so we couldn’t deliver that coordinated communication or conversation with our customer.** Now ... we’ve been able to combine all of our data. So our sales data, the big ones — offline and online — loyalty profiles, product catalogues, web interactions, email engagement data, [are] all in one central location in the CDP.”

## **Customer-Centricity Requires a Single Source of Truth**

Many brands built their companies around their business or industry, not the customer. They ended up with departments and leaders that were cut off from each other. Sales, services, marketing, and analytics were islands. But if all these teams have their own data (and thus a different view) of the customer, how can they obtain a complete 360-degree view of the customer?

By unifying your product, sales, and first-party data into a single platform where everyone’s dealing with the same truth, you keep the customer at the center of your marketing.

## **Holistic View of the Customer’s Journey**

Operational silos, by their nature, keep teams focused on only one aspect of a customer’s engagement with the brand.

But the goal is to work in concert to obtain a holistic view of the entire customer lifecycle.

The service team should be looking at the exact same data as the sales team, and vice-versa, so they'll know how to best engage the customer, no matter where that customer is. Aligned teams help reduce the cost of acquisition, create better customer experiences (and more of them), and increase CLTV.

## **Silos Hinder Cohesion and Compliance for the Business**

CMOs and their teams are beholden to help deliver results for the business. This makes attribution, and establishing marketing's impact on the bottom line, critical. Silos prevent teams from collaborating and aligning on the broader business goals of growth and revenue.

Remember, now that customer data consent, permission, and privacy are mandatory, you'll no longer be able to simply buy the data you need to build a complete customer profile. You'll have to earn, capture, and store it yourself. So it's imperative all teams are sharing and working from an absolute source of customer data, obtained with the necessary permissions, to form that complete profile. If you have to ID the customer and continuously ask for consent at every touchpoint, it'll cause undue friction and create an inferior experience.

## Actions:

- ✓ Remove any barriers to data and analytics that prevent teams in your company from achieving company-wide goals.
- ✓ Get an integrated tech stack with an open architecture that will connect to any system, any data source, and every digital and physical customer touchpoint.
- ✓ Ensure all teams are working with unified data that provides a single source of truth about the customer.



# #8

# Growth Lies in Customer Lifetime Value

Market Across  
the Full Customer Lifecycle



*Successful brands are increasing purchase frequency and driving revenue by making the transition from sporadic transactional-based touchpoints to customer-focused lifecycle marketing.*



## Stats you need to know

- ▶ Brands have a [60%-70%](#) better chance of selling to an existing customer than to a new customer. (Altfeld)
- ▶ Repeat customers spend an average of 67% more when they have more than 30 months of loyalty with a brand. (Bain & Co)

Lifelong value exchanges that build brand trust must replace intermittent, fragmented interactions that, candidly, too many retailers succumb to... even still today.



**Rick Almeida**

Vice President  
E-commerce



**“Create value through engagement and relevance. It’s not just a transactional mindset that e-commerce businesses have.** Now more than ever, consumers will gravitate toward digital even for pre- or post-purchase experience from awareness to consideration to post-purchase... how do first-timers perceive the brand... you’ve got to be thinking about creating value and loyalty from start to finish. How we engage and communicate with them is going to be very important in the future.”

Acquiring and retaining are still important. But, these are becoming secondary to identifying customers and keeping them enticed, engaged, and educated until they're ready to buy.

Lifecycle marketing is about:

Getting → Giving

Hunting → Helping

Selling → Inspiring

Retailers that dominate – like Amazon, Apple, and Microsoft – get customers to come to them. They don't beg, and their marketing doesn't feel tacky. Whether it's the customer's first purchase with the brand or a longtime customer making a return, the experience they have is part of a fluid, helpful, enjoyable overall journey.



**Jodie Gardner**  
Head of CRM



“Customer experience is absolutely central and at the heart of everything we do, and we want every single customer to feel like they have a great experience when engaging with AO. So we're here to help those customers navigate through that time, purchase the product and the services they need, and then have it delivered quickly. We see it as though we're here to show them that the whole journey can be quick and hassle-free. **And then when they do have that great online experience, they come back to us again and again.**”

The scope of what constitutes customer experience includes awareness, acquisition, first-time purchase, payment, delivery, returns, second-time and repeat purchases, service, win-back and re-engagement.

Companies like Zappos and Google are experience-oriented, even internally. These customer-obsessed brands don't organize processes, people, or tech by function but by fulfilling lifecycle stages.

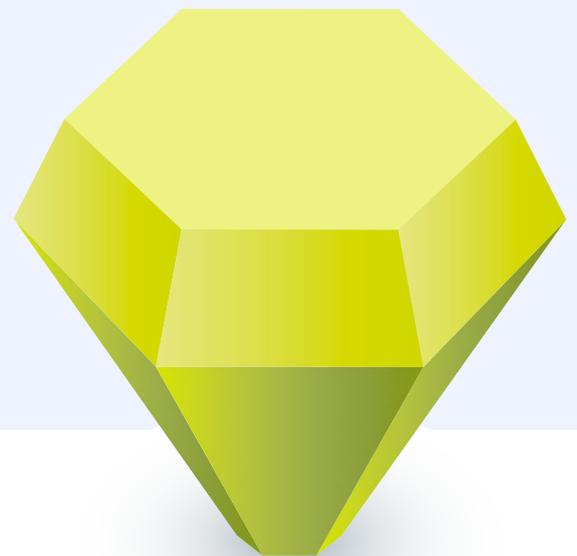
Customer lifecycle marketing means matching customers' experiences with both reactive and proactive marketing strategies — that includes personalized content — at every moment when, where, and how customers interact in a truly channel-agnostic way.

If driving ongoing revenue is your goal, then you have to create a lifelong bond with buyers.

Customer lifecycle marketing is one of the most undervalued overarching strategies for e-commerce companies, and it should be a priority in 2021. Avoid fragmented, disconnected customer experiences, aim for value instead of volume, offer speedy and seductive service, and provide unparalleled personalized marketing.

## Actions:

- ✓ Don't view acquisition as a single purchase; think more about long-term engagement.
- ✓ Change your perspective to customer-first and business-second.
- ✓ Switch from team ownerships (sales, marketing, support) to experience ownership.
- ✓ Ensure your customer experience is powered by the right infrastructure so that you can handle payment, delivery, returns, and service.



# Final Thoughts

Customers have led brands to expand and strengthen their digital channels. For marketers, that means putting the customer first, with deep personalization across every channel and in some cases, creating hybrid BOPIS services and policies to continue engaging customers.

First-party data is a brand's most valuable asset, but as cookies die and greater data privacy regulations go into effect, you have to guarantee that your customers will get a valuable experience in return for allowing you to use their data. You also have to ensure you've eliminated data silos, and a customer engagement platform best solves that challenge.



**Lindsay Ball**  
Sr. Digital Marketing  
Manager

**Corelle  
Brands**

“Essentially, [customers will] come back and want more because, for us, **it's really not just selling a product to the customer, it's connecting in that whole experience.** So we leveraged the data to be an extension of our team, and really just expand[ed] when so many people within the industry were under so many constraints.”

Customers have chosen omnichannel shopping. Email, SMS, and mobile are wildly successful channels and still growing, but don't forget about in-store, your loyalty program (a channel in itself), paid media, and personalized web experiences.

Considering that [64% of customers](#) gladly exchange purchase history and preferences if retailers offer more personalized experiences, brands don't face a data problem. Instead, retailers and e-commerce brands need to clearly communicate to customers what kind of added value they'll get in exchange for their data. Then brands can consistently deliver the personalized shopping experience customers want.



**Alex Timlin**  
SVP Verticals



**“What’s in it for the customer?”** What’s in it for the business? What data do I have available? What am I going to do with that data responsibility that’s going to be good, not just for the business, but good for the customer as well? That takes people. It takes resources, and it takes a certain element of bravery in some brands to be able to stand in front of people and say I want to do something different. **I want to do something better.”**



**Shar VanBoskirk**  
VP and Principal Analyst



**“In periods of stress, it is the companies that are customer-obsessed that will survive and thrive.”**



# About Emarsys

Emarsys empowers digital marketing leaders and business owners with the only omnichannel customer engagement platform built to accelerate business outcomes.

By rapidly aligning desired business results with proven omnichannel customer engagement strategies — crowdsourced from leading brands across your industry — our platform enables you to accelerate time to value, deliver superior 1:1 experiences and produce measurable results ... fast.

Join more than 1,500 companies who trust Emarsys to deliver the predictable, profitable outcomes that their businesses demand and the highly personalized omnichannel experiences that their customers deserve.

[Watch our 3-minute demo ▶](#)



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