

The Challenges Of Cross-Channel Data Integration

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Marketers fail to deliver real-time customer-targeted brand experiences

Increased consumer demand for more personalized and relevant brand experiences has made customer segmentation and targeting an imperative for companies.

According to a November 2011 survey from Acxiom and DIGIDAY, though the majority of US advertisers and agencies were able to identify and segment their customer base, few were capable of doing so in a way that delivers a personalized experience in real time and across multiple channels.

More than half (58%) of advertisers and 39% of agencies said they were able to track and segment their best customers. However, agencies were more than twice as likely (12%) to be able to incorporate both online and offline data into the segmentation process, compared to just 5% of advertisers capable of this more advanced approach.

By segmenting customers, brands can create the more personalized, relevant experience that consumers now demand—especially from retailers. April 2011 data from the e-tailing group and MyBuys showed 50% of US cross-channel shoppers expect to be offered promotions or merchandise that reflect their past online shopping behavior and purchases. More importantly, 46% of shoppers reportedly would buy more from retailers that personalized the shopping experience across channels.

To accomplish the goal of delivering a truly personalized experience in real time, brands must be able to track activity throughout the customer lifecycle and act on this data immediately across channels. But Acxiom and DIGIDAY found advertisers and agencies have yet to make this work—though many are well on their way.

Less than a third of agencies and 37% of advertisers said they had neither the capability to deliver real-time, personalized customer experiences nor to do so across channels, though nearly half of advertisers and 28% of agencies had the ability to at least perform one of these two tasks.

In December 2011, the Winterberry Group and Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) found many marketers hoped to do better in the coming year. Most marketers worldwide planned to focus more closely on customer behavior analysis, and offer optimization and cross-channel touchpoint optimization—tactics required to meet the goal delivering real-time experiences to customers across channels.

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