

Why You Should Go Omni-Channel in 2015 - Geary LSF | Internet Marketing Agency | Interactive Advertising Company

What do Target, Nordstrom, Sephora, Starbucks, Chipotle, and Crate & Barrel have in common? These brands are tackling omni-channel marketing head on — winning customers and edging out their competitors in the process. Omni-channel marketing has become the next frontier for marketers in all industries.

But when it comes to making the most of all available channels, consumers today are way ahead of most marketers. With more of us shopping on our smartphones and tablets, the key to success for any brand is creating a 1:1 seamless customer experience across all channels.

Meet Joe, your typical U.S. consumer. Joe has decided to get some projects done around the house before the relatives arrive for Thanksgiving. He sits down with his laptop to see if he can find a drill on sale. After Googling “drills” and reading a few reviews on Consumer Reports, he visits the Home Depot website and checks on its selection. He puts two in his shopping cart but decides he’d rather try before he buys, so he drives to the closest store. Once he’s there he calls up the site on his smartphone so he can remember which ones he wanted to try. He finds a Black and Decker 12v that will do the job, but he wants to find a better price. He ends up buying it from Amazon on his iPad while he’s watching the game later that afternoon.

Welcome to the future! Omni-channel marketing is here and, like many things, consumers are leading the way and marketers are playing catch-up. The ease and availability of information on our mobile devices has created a significant shift in what we expect from the brands we like. Omni-channel is about enabling 1:1 experiences across the gamut of devices that consumers use. Success depends on being able to experience the journey through the eyes of your customer.

These statistics show the growing importance of omni-channel marketing:

- Mobile devices will account for 30% of global retail e-commerce spending by 2018, up from 15 percent in 2013. (Juniper Research, 2014)
- 59% of U.S. smartphone owners have used their devices to research an item before purchasing it, and 65% of tablet owners have. (Nielsen, 2014)
- 84% of U.S. smartphone shoppers use their phones to assist them in their shopping while in physical stores. (Google Shopper Council, 2013)
- 65% of U.S. shoppers research products and services on a PC and make a purchase in-store. (Cisco,

2013)

- Of the 70% of shoppers who used a mobile phone while in a store, 62% accessed that store's site or app and only 37% of respondents accessed a competitor's site or app. (ForeSee, 2013)
- 84% of respondents ranked "consistent customer experience across all channels" first out of all aspects of a company's multichannel strategy. (Retail Systems Research 2013)

What is omni-channel marketing?

The term "omni-channel" means that consumers are using all available channels, and marketers should too. Consumers can now engage with a brand in a physical store, on an online website or mobile app, through a catalog, or through social media. They can access products and services by calling a company on the phone, by using an app on their smartphone, or with a tablet, a laptop, or a desktop computer. With all of the options, consumers expect that their behavior in one place will influence the experience in another. This raises the bar for marketers, who must now create consistent and complimentary consumer experiences no matter where their customers are.

How does it differ from multi-channel marketing?

Multi-channel is the use of more than one channel. For example, offering a promotion on Facebook, your website, and print magazine. Omni-channel is the use of ALL available channels. Each channel needs to have an awareness of the other. The website needs to know what experience the customer had on your website, on Facebook, or on your brand's apps, and what kind of in-store digital experiences they might have had. This means that marketers need to provide a seamless experience, regardless of channel or device.

Why is an omni-channel strategy critical?

This approach is essential to attract, engage, convert and retain today's customer. Consumers are moving back and forth between devices, from smartphones to desktops, and from laptops to tablets to TVs. Most consumers start a task on one device and finish it on another. The omni-channel consumer expects everything to be readily available at his or her fingertips and expects the overall brand experience to be consistently great. Consumers are approaching their experience from multiple angles — and marketers need to as well.

How does it work?

Omni-channel means managing the customer experience across all channels so that it is seamless, integrated, and consistent — a significant challenge for most brands. Ensuring that your brand can reach potential and existing customers on every channel takes some work. *As customers move from one channel to another, the back-end connections must be invisible.* Doing so in a way that's customized and optimized for each medium takes significant planning, a smart digital strategy, and strong execution.

How do I get started?

Every marketer needs to start by building a holistic understanding of your customers' digital engagement

path. Omni-channel allows brands to be smarter marketers, reaching consumers at all touch points along the same campaign, and leveraging the strengths of one channel to support success in another. It's the era of the truly multi-touch engagement strategy that can significantly improve digital campaign performance while maximizing consumer insight and ROI.

To find out more about designing an omni-channel strategy for your brand, call Geary LSF at 877.616.8226 or email sales@gearylsf.com.