

Cashing in on customer experience

CREATING **CONNECTED BANKING EXPERIENCES**
THAT DRIVE GREATER CUSTOMER VALUE AND
ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH



Executive summary

Within the financial services sector, organizations face a plethora of issues, competing priorities and operational pitfalls that slow them down from better serving their customers – across retail banking, wealth planning and insurance. From the perspective of a financial institution, the customer journey of managing day-to-day finances to retirement planning is still a very complex (and oftentimes confusing) process. More and more consumers of banking and financial services are demanding a tailored and simplified experience as a part of their journey.

Unfortunately, great experiences tend to be the exception, not the norm. It goes without saying that the experience an organization delivers to its constituents is what helps set it apart.

In this whitepaper, we'll demonstrate how leveraging the Salesforce and Sitecore technology suite of offerings can drive superior banking experiences by:

Seamlessly fusing purpose-built financial service customer relationship management (CRMs), which securely and safely capture PII data, into the martech stack for better service and support

Leveraging marketing automation for relevant messaging – from banking financial product and service offerings to estate planning and wealth management

Implementing a digital experience platform (DXP) to create exceptional digital experiences, while activating client and customer data

Harnessing holistic customer data in a centralized repository like a customer data platform (CDP) for organization's functions, departments and teams to support the entire journey

Utilizing the power of a real-time interaction management (RTIM) solution to aid in orchestrating personalization across channels

All of these culminate to build personalized, omni-channel, connected experiences for clients and customers.

build
personalized,
omni-channel,
connected
experiences

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01

The state of banking

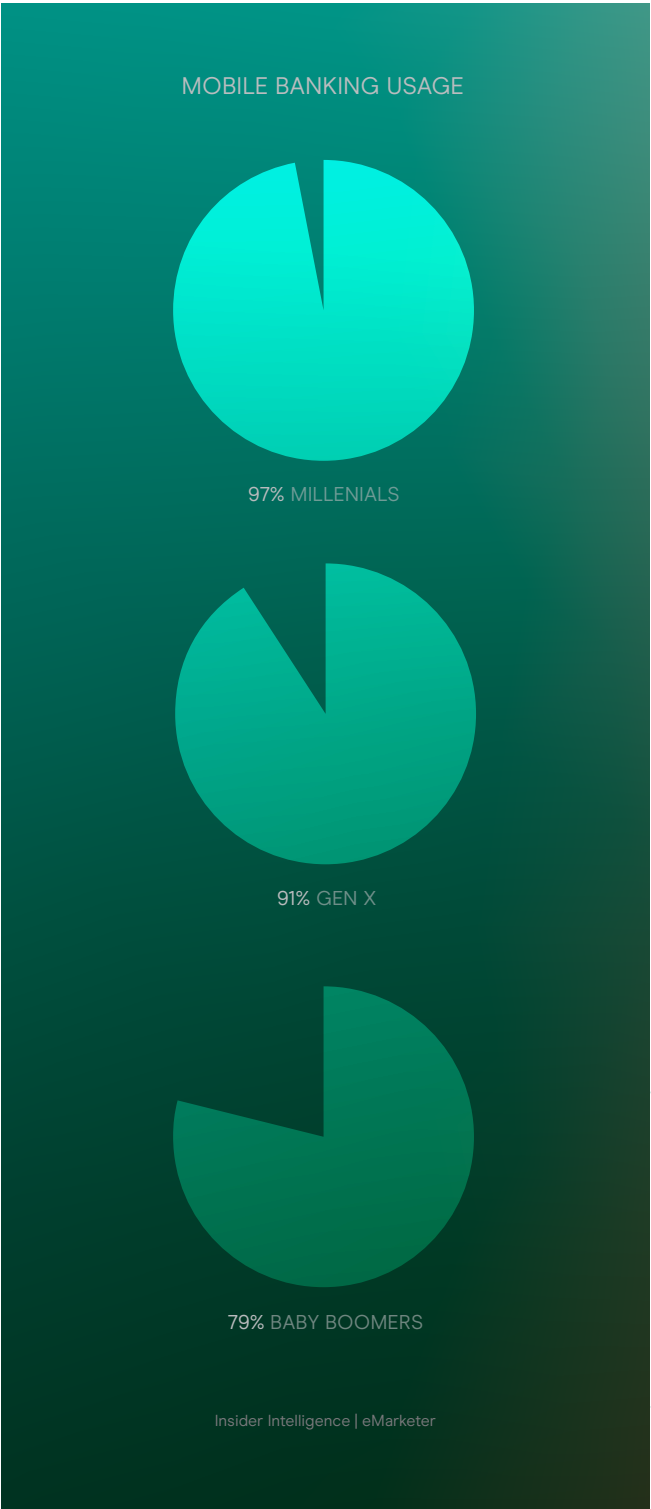
Landscape trends and
organizational imperatives

Modernization and digital maturity for banking institutions continue to be critical imperatives

Banking executives and organizational leaders are prioritizing customer experience (CX) technology and martech initiatives. According to Forrester Research, 35% of global banking executives are satisfied with their digital banking initiatives. However, 65% of respondents are unsatisfied with the progress made with implementing these plans. Specifically, 12% claim to be stuck in planning and 6% do not have any transformation plans.

In Europe, North America and developed Asia, the imperative for retail banks is to embrace new technology — including a digital-first business model and hybrid-cloud core technology stack — to move to a fundamentally lower cost curve, fight attackers on innovation, and identify new sources of revenue in complex lending and wealth/protection via end-to-end journeys and personalization. (McKinsey | Reshaping retail banks: Enhancing banking for the next digital age)

This coupled with customer behaviors and usage of digital banking remains a pillar of the experience when managing personal finances. In particular, mobile banking is a ubiquitous channel touchpoint across most generations. An Intelligence’s Mobile Banking Competitive Edge Study found 89% of surveyed respondents said they use mobile banking. Interestingly, at the same time, customers and banking institutions are still seeing value with in-person interactions. This is especially true when it comes to new products/services or more involved products beyond account management – such as loans, lines of credit, home equity and refinancing.



Customers today do most of their banking on their mobile devices, with only 3% of interactions happening face-to-face. However, an in-person meeting remains the preferred option when opening new products— 27% of consumers said it was their first choice, ahead of mobile apps (22%) and websites (21%). (Accenture – Banking Top Trends for 2023)

As banks invite and welcome people back to branch locations, they will devote these in-person moments to improving the overall financial well-being of their customers and members rather than solely meeting day-to-day account management needs and selling specific products.

This leaves room for the continual rise and advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) to be embedded in portals, chatbots/chat assistants or FAQ allowing customers to take care of their own problems. AI has instantaneous responses that make them a convenient solution for automating answers to simple customer questions.

All this points to the need for banking institutions and credit unions to keep omni-channel customer strategies and programs at the forefront of their CX plans. Ultimately, this will enable financial institutions to strike the balance between self-serve digital tools and human support that meets customer expectations.

At the same time, customers and banking institutions are still seeing value with in-person interactions



Data is the lifeblood for connected customer experiences

Getting valuable insights can also be challenging, especially in banking. The use of customer data must be secure, transparent and ethical, which is not an easy task for financial institution professionals seeking actionable insights.

A survey of banking executives found that 95% identified legacy systems and core banking modules as culprits of inhibiting efforts to optimize data. (Capgemini: World Retail Banking Report 2022)

In order to thrive, it will be essential for banks to demonstrate their value proposition in the new digital environment, keeping in mind the power of simplifying, upgrading and creating elevated moments of interaction through data. By treating data as a product, the foundations of banking can be transformed. Banks possess vast and varied amounts of customer data — geospatial, financial, social media, lifestyle, behavioral — but 73% of the executives surveyed struggle to turn it into useful insights.

To unlock and use this rich data, it may take a data product manager and a data-driven mindset for banks to realize actionable insights that inform results-driven tactics trapped in their data.

Assigning a key role that champions this data-driven sensibility can own critical functions such as

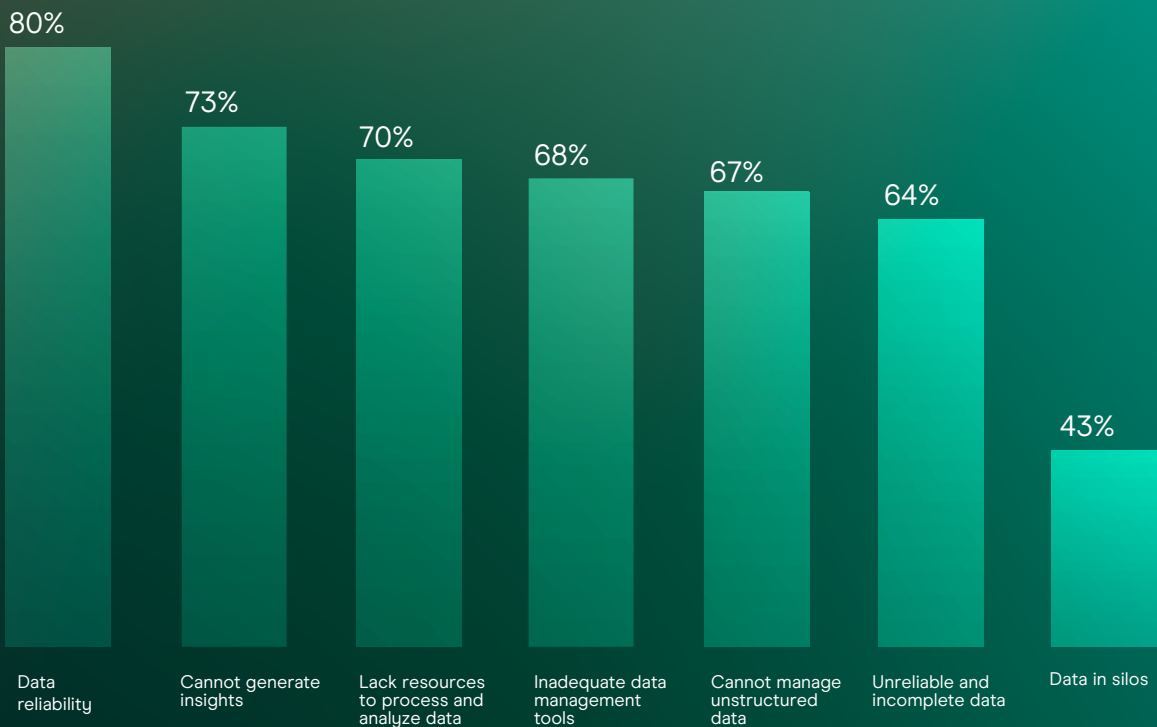
- Identifying and defining the use cases
- Cleansing the data
- Setting up application programming interfaces (APIs) and structures that enable different teams and systems throughout the bank access to the data

This role is important to help promote the data and assist the business in making the most of it.

To compete for data on an equal footing with technology companies, banks will need a comprehensive data infrastructure to support data collection, storage, and advanced analytics, as well as a digital marketing engine to translate analytical insights into personalized messages that anticipate individual customer needs and intentions.

– McKinsey

Banks face a range of data challenges



Sources: Capgemini Research Institute for Financial Services Analysis, 2022; Capgemini marketing executives survey, N=142.



Omni-channel marketing

Advancement of modern
channel marketing

History of omni-channel personalization and why it's still a business-critical imperative

Omni-channel marketing became an industry buzzword in the early 2010s. The inception of the term was the dawn of brands trying to crack the code of going from single-channel to multi-channel, and finally to the proverbial peak of the summit – omni-channel marketing.

Starting with single-channel marketing...

Single-channel marketing is ubiquitous with organizations creating departments and operational models focusing on an individual channel within a channel mix. This often leads to siloed teams and disjointed journeys or customer experiences.

To then multi-channel marketing...

Multi-channel marketing aims to maximize the number of potential channels to reach and engage customers; however, they are not connected to one another. This strategy and approach can be effective, but certainly is not the most efficient way to drive conversion, nor does it provide an ideal experience for customers.

The reason for this is — as customers traverse the various points of engagement (with a brand that's leveraging a multi-channel strategy), there are frequent restart moments.

For instance, if a customer begins researching and discovering a brand's product offering on a website, but then decides to call a sales rep to learn more — they'll have to restart the discovery process from ground zero once they get in contact with a rep. This is because the information and/or behavioral data (digital footprint) the customer created on the website was left behind, within the confines of the website, and not passed on to a system that a sales rep then has access to. Think of the missed opportunity to create continuity of experience if the sales rep already knew who that customer was and what they may be interested in, saving time for both the customer AND the rep.

Omni-channel campaigns saw an 18.96% engagement rate, while single-channel saw just a 5.4% engagement rate.
– Forbes

Omni-channel is the synchronization of channels – mobile, desktop and store – to support the purchase process from discovery to fulfillment and post-purchase.

– Gartner



And ultimately to **Omni-channel marketing**, with a focus on infusing personalization for individual customers

Omni-channel marketing takes orchestration of a brand's entire channel mix and ensures all elements are working in unison. So, it's a seamless and completely cohesive journey for customers as they flow through the funnel — from touchpoint to touchpoint jumping in and out of channels they're engaged with. Back to our earlier example of a customer starting at the brand website and then contacting a sales rep, a truly omni-channel connected experience captures the customer's interactions from the website and passes them on, or ensures the sales rep has access to them, so they can more effectively carry through the continuity of the experience between those two touchpoints.

71% of European private banking clients now prefer multichannel interactions while 25% want a fully digitally-enabled private banking journey with the option of remote human help when necessary.

– McKinsey, 2020

01

Single Channel



02

Multi Channel



03

Cross Channel



04

Omni Channel





Connected experiences

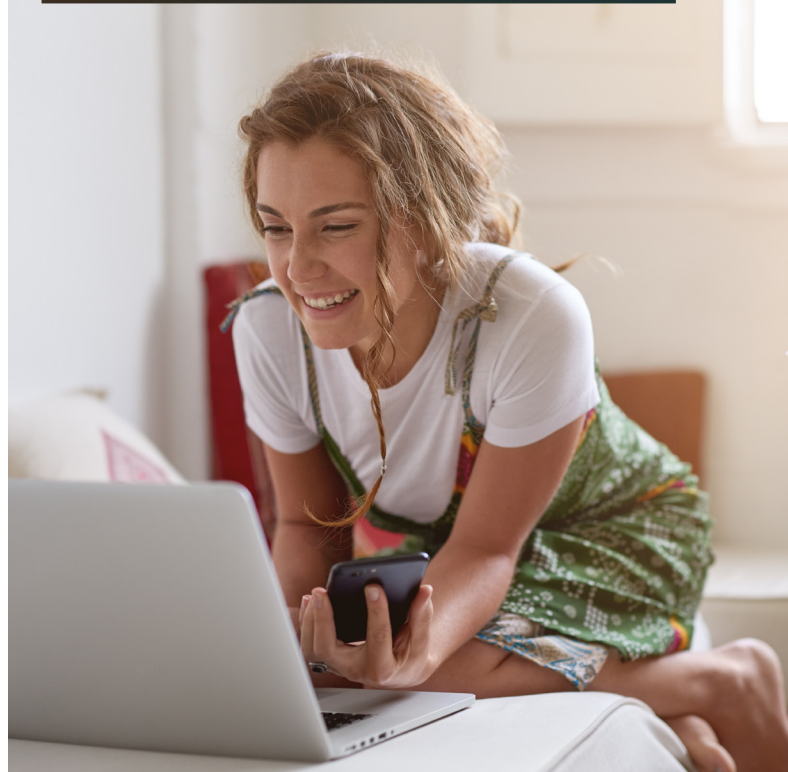
Personalizing omni-channel, end-to-end customer journeys

Omni-channel marketing is the basis of realizing a connected experience for your customers

Realizing connected experiences relies on an exceptionally designed, end-to-end customer experience. This experience is activated via a customer data-enabled, integrated tech stack that seamlessly captures customer data – from digital behavioral interactions to self-selected preferences and past purchase history – as a customer engages with a brand's website, e-commerce destination, in-store/point of sale (POS), account portals, apps and more. From there, the integrated stack takes this customer data and funnels it to key systems for continued customer engagement across sales, service and support, and marketing automation.

With this data, internal departments and functions can leverage it to ensure lead nurture or retargeting campaigns can be activated; case tickets for support are informed so customer service can resolve issues more efficiently and painlessly; and business development teams can better manage an opportunity as they work with customers through the funnel.

49% of affluent US investors say they're willing to try new things, perhaps signaling increased openness to integrating digital and physical experiences. – Forrester, 2021



Three key customer expectations and demands of a connected experience:

01 Friction-free interactions

As customers traverse through your brand's multitude of channels and touchpoints, it should feel like a continuous conversation from one interaction to the next — guiding them seamlessly along conversion pathways.

02 Contextual engagements

Context not only adds an additional layer of meaning and understanding across interactions, but also helps chain these interactions together to paint a clear picture of customer intent.

03 Anticipatory solutions

Piggybacking off the power of context, the trove of data collected from connected experiences powers the ability to assess individual customer needs and make predictions for them, anticipating their needs in real time.

With businesses interacting with their customers in numerous, diverse ways, digital customer experiences are becoming more critical to a company's success than ever before. Connected experiences leverage data from automated processes and self-learning software to build meaningful relationships with customers across channels. Connected experiences are consumable, adaptable, and can enable customers to achieve their objectives anywhere, anytime, and in a personalized and efficient way.

– IBM - Ushering in the Era of Connected Experiences (2017)

By continuously building towards a connected experience for your customers, your brand will reap the benefits of having longer-lasting customer relationships. Ones that lead to higher customer lifetime value (CLV).

At Horizontal, we are an Experience-Forward digital consultancy. That means we put people at the absolute center of everything we do. This human-centric philosophy is where all brands should start as they embark on realizing omni-channel personalization. Afterall, the root of personalization is personal, which is how brands should make each touchpoint along the entirety of the journey feel.

Making an end-to-end experience feel personal is a matter of evaluating journeys through the lens of a relationship. Agnostic of whether the relationship is between a brand and customer, family member or friend, or romantic in nature, all relationships should have the following key pillars of reciprocity and be grounded on experiences that:

Understand and recognize you

- Truly discovering and learning about individual preferences, interests and passions

Anticipate your needs

- By knowing you to better anticipate your wants and needs, how you’ll feel and what will make you happy

Grow with you

- Healthy relationships require work to be maintained – and they’re a journey, not a destination. Over time, people change. This not only needs to be acknowledged, but also fully embraced, to continually evolve with you (so the first two pillars of understanding and anticipating needs do not become neglected).

Surpass your expectations

- Never stop looking for moments to delight, remembering it’s both the big things AND the little things that count. Ultimately, it’s about not taking anything for granted. No one likes falling into the trap of sweatpants mode within a relationship – where you’re just going through the motions and checking the box. That’s when things get stale and loyalty begins to erode.

The sensibilities of building and maintaining healthy and fulfilling relationships are the same principles that should be applied to all the plans and programs you create in order to realize omni-channel personalization for your customers.

Assessing Personalization Readiness





Winning in the experience economy

Progression of maturity into omni-channel personalization

The modern world of brand engagement

In today's modern world of brand engagement and digital experiences, customers have short fuses and little patience for broken journeys.

A recent study by McKinsey found that 71% of consumers expect companies to deliver personalized interactions. And 76% get frustrated when this doesn't happen. In fact, the study revealed that companies grow at a much faster pace than their competitors that are lagging in personalized experiences for their customers.

This approach to a holistic, omni-channel personalization strategy is also a driver of long-term growth.

Omni-channel personalization has shown 90% higher customer retention rates than a single channel. Hence, this strategy is core to long-term business viability. (Business Insider)

Marketers who invest in Advanced Personalization efforts can realize upward of \$20 in return for every dollar invested. (The Relevancy Group, Liveclicker)

On an individual level, McKinsey's study outlined the top self-identified aspects of personalization a brand can offer. The top responses have been categorized into the following:

- Meet me where I am (e.g., make it easy to navigate in-store and online brand experiences)
- Know my tastes (e.g., offer product/service recommendations)
- Offer something just for me (e.g., personally address communications)
- Check in with me (e.g., send triggers based on my behaviors)

Companies that excel at personalization generate **40%** more revenue from those activities than average players.

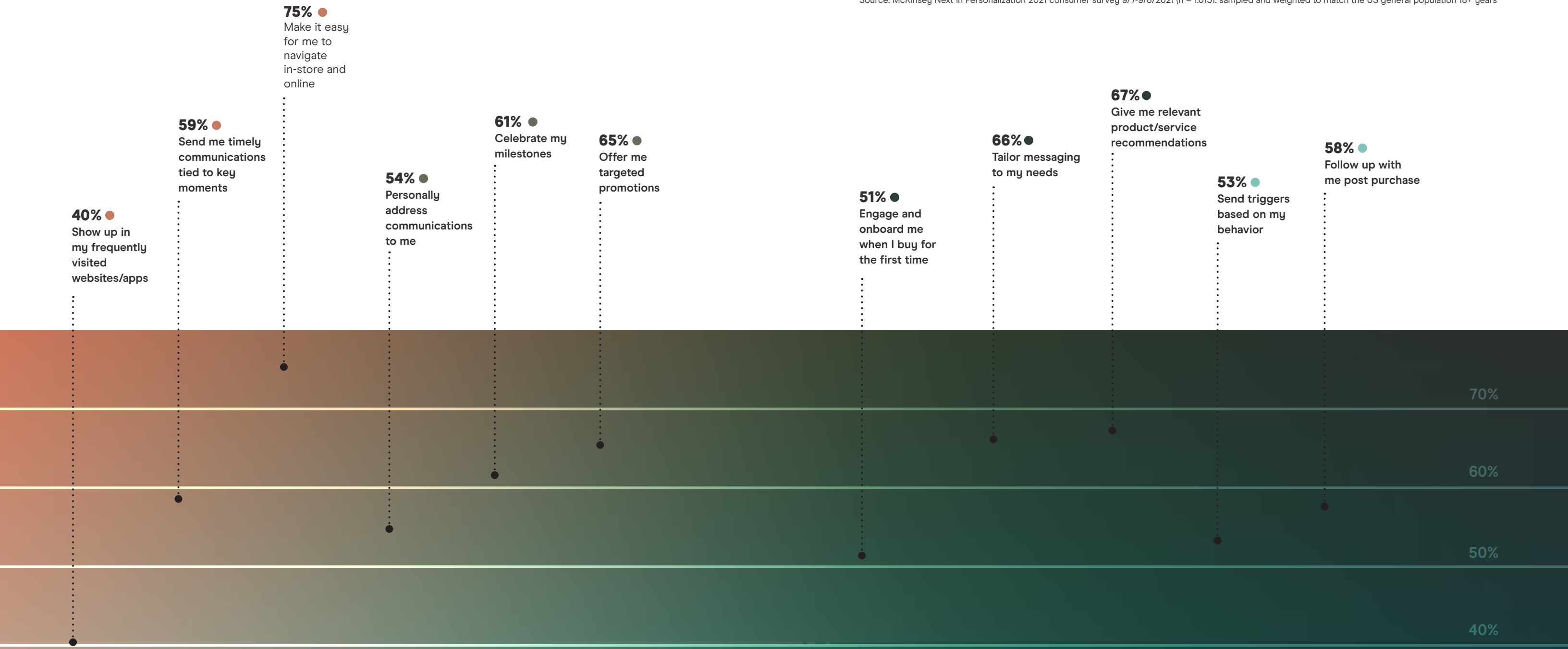
– McKinsey

Consumers expect brands to demonstrate they know them on a personal level.

Importance of personalization actions for consumers purchasing for the % of respondents*

● Meet me where I am ● Know my tastes ● Offer something just for me ● Check in with me

*Question: "We would like to know how each of these aspects influences your decision to buy from a brand/business for the first time. For that brand/business, please indicate how important each of the following aspects is." Possible answers: "not at all important", "somewhat important", "important", "very important", "extremely important." Numbers shown indicate respondents who selected "important", "very important", and "extremely important"
Source: McKinsey Next in Personalization 2021 consumer survey 9/7-9/8/2021 (n = 1.0131, sampled and weighted to match the US general population 18+ years)



Personalization directly influences buying behavior across the customer life cycle.

This all adds up to McKinsey's findings: across U.S. industries, those that level up to be in the top-quartile performance in personalization would generate over \$1 trillion in value. The more a brand can master leveraging customer intelligence and data points to garner greater customer knowledge and intimacy, the greater the ROI.

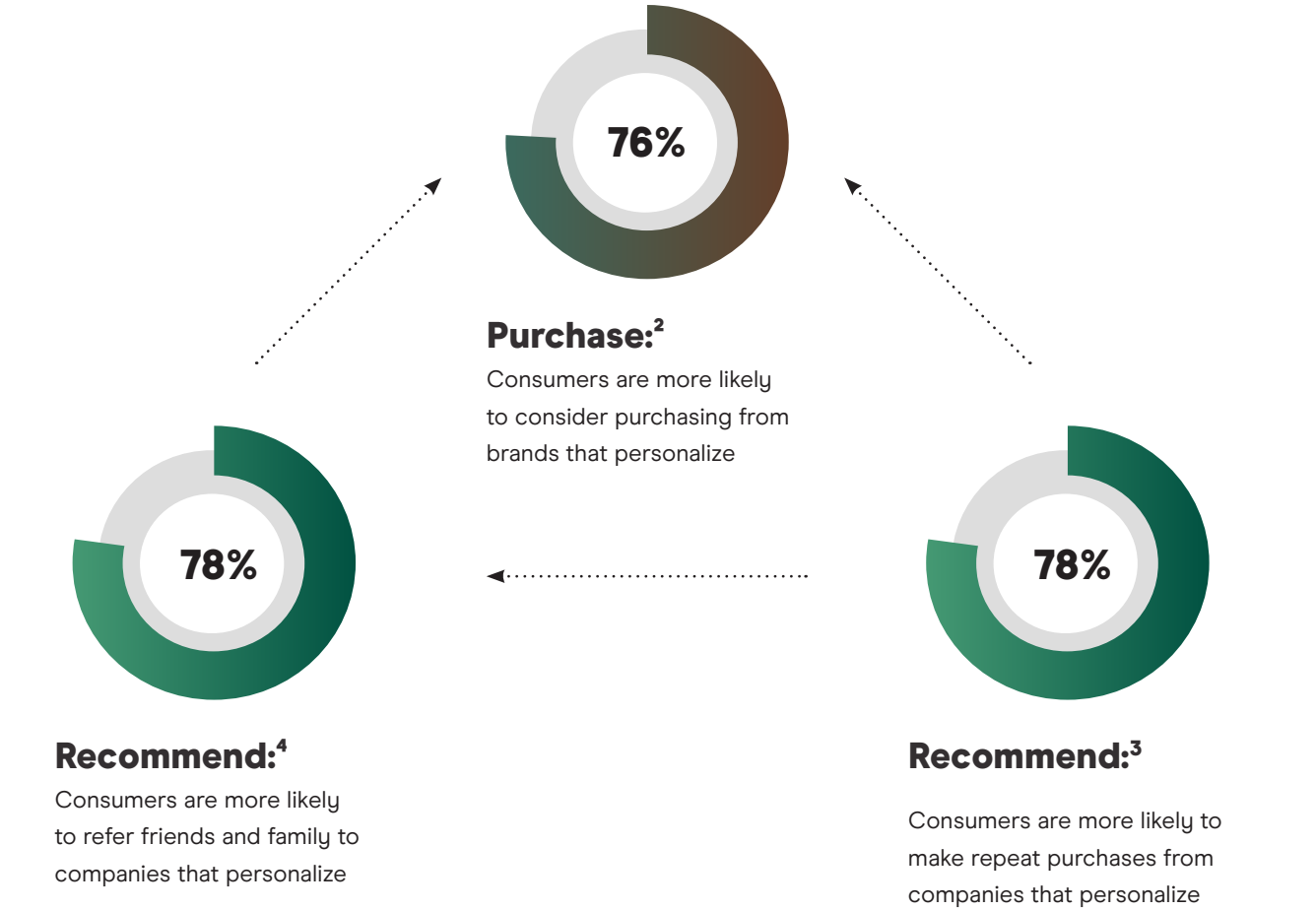


Key considerations for informing your omni-channel approach:

- Channel consistency:** Customers want their interactions handled effectively, regardless of the channel they choose.
- Service continuity:** Customers want their service interactions to be consistent and continuous, even if they switch channels midstream, or start, stop and restart a request.
- Customer recognition:** Customers expect service reps to have easy access to basic information about them, but also want adequate security around their accounts.
- Relationship history:** Customers expect service reps to recognize them, know their current relationship (purchases, etc.), and acknowledge past interactions, length of relationship and loyalty.

— Gartner

Likelihood to purchase, recommend, and repurchase depending on personalization, % of respondents¹



¹ Question: "Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below when it comes to personalized communications and products/services from brands/businesses:
² Purchase: "I am more likely to consider buying from brands/businesses that engage with me in a personalized and tailored way."
³ Repurchase: "I am more likely to repurchase from brands/businesses that offer personalized communications and products/services."
⁴ Recommend: "I am more likely to recommend brands/businesses to my friends and family that offer personalized communications and products/services."
Possible answers: "strongly disagree", "disagree", "somewhat disagree", "somewhat agree", "agree", "strongly agree." Numbers shown indicate respondents who selected "somewhat agree", "agree", and "strongly agree."
Source: McKinsey Next in Personalization 2021 consumer survey 9/7-9/8/2021 (n = 1,013), sampled and weighted to match the US general population 18+ years

Benefits of creating deeper connections

The table below illustrates how companies like Uber and Lyft disrupted the traditional taxi model by creating a more seamless and connected experience between the brand and the customer.

Connection	Status quo cab	“Connected cab”
Passenger to vehicle	Flagging, dispatcher, taxi stand	Passenger to vehicle
Payment	Cash, credit card	Automated in-app purchase
Vehicle to vehicle	Dispatcher, two-way radio	GPS tracking, fleet management system
Improvements		• More convenient ordering • No wasted time for payment • Better routing

Source: Connected Strategy – Harvard Business Review Press

For digitally native companies that forge a data-backed, direct-to-consumer model, personalization isn’t just how they market, it’s how they operate.

– McKinsey



Challenges and barriers

Don't let “analysis paralysis”
prevent progress

Producing a fully personalized, omni-channel experience is complicated

Things that conceivably stand in the way of getting started on a brand’s first foray into operationalizing a personalized, omni-channel model include:

Siloed data sources

Data siloes can be the “wrench in the cogs” that slow the maturity of omni-channel personalization. Many enterprise organizations have myriad data sitting in different places and repositories, where departments and team members don’t have access to it (or don’t even know it exists).

Data points from everything like ABM sales, lead and customer data in a customer relationship management (CRM); purchase and transactional data in an order management system (OMS) or point-of-sale (POS); web behavior and online analytics in a digital experience platform (DXP) or business intelligence (BI) solution; or case management tickets in a service solution — all of which are important aspects of intelligence on the customer that can help inform end-to-end customer journeys. But if all this data lives in disparate systems, the best you’re offering your customers is a multi-channel experience — and making them work to traverse your brand by being the “dot connector” of the experience you’re creating. And if you’re making your customer do all that work, they likely won’t be a customer for much longer.

Data silos within an organization can create significant problems, and not just for marketers. Teams cannot get a complete view of the customer due to lack of transparency and data accessibility. When they do get the data, it is usually a labor-intensive process to stitch it altogether and often conflicts with other data sources, eroding trust in the data itself.

Incomplete or inaccurate data impedes reporting and the ability to measure ROI.

With no single source of truth on the customer, while data privacy compliance is elusive.

Disconnected systems

When key pieces of the marketing and business process systems are not integrated, moments of engagement and customer interactions aren’t fully maximized, and capabilities to reduce customer journey friction are still an outage, causing brands to feel hamstrung.

For instance, if a service solution isn’t connected to a web form from the online portal, customer service representatives (CSRs) cannot effectively anticipate customer needs (or worse, customer complaints). And if you recall, anticipating needs is a core tenet in building lasting relationships.

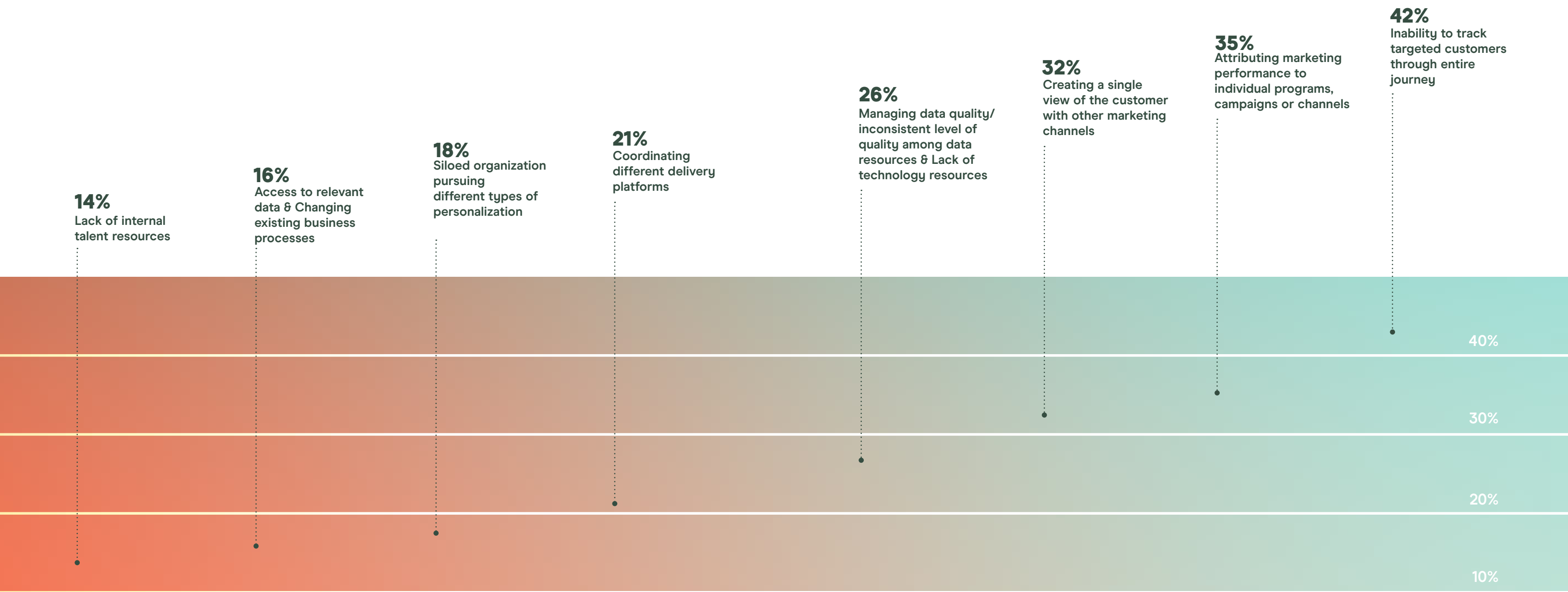
Assumption of large cost-prohibitive technology investments

Many brands have held the belief that they need to do a complete overhaul of their tech stack in order to realize a fully connected, omni-channel operational model for their organization. An overhaul on paper is a very large CapEx upfront investment, along with the lengthy duration of time, to complete the full implementation. And because of the amount of time to put a top-to-bottom stack in place, there’s worry around seeing very minimal immediate or short-term return.

This belief has held companies back from getting started, leaving them in a state of stagnation. And if your brand is standing still, then you’re already falling behind.

A Gartner survey revealed that **63%** of marketers struggle with personalization technology.

While the challenges mentioned on the previous page can be speed bumps to a fully connected and seamless omni-channel experience, they are not roadblocks. The biggest takeaway brands should remember, is to just start somewhere. Many organizations fall into the trap of assuming that all conditions must be perfect in order to begin omni-channel personalization. That they need to have all their data clean and de-duped, or have each of their systems fully integrated with each other, in order to initiate personalization tactics. This whitepaper, however, illustrates where brands can crawl-walk-run and then fully scale into omni-channel personalization.



COMPANIES NEED TO COMMIT TO TRYING SOMETHING.

Embrace a test-and-learn mentality with omni-channel personalization. And never forget, don't let perfect be the enemy of great.

The good news is, from a technology standpoint, that brands don't have to be handcuffed by these ill-conceived notions anymore. Platforms and solutions have evolved to allow organizations to deliver capabilities over time that build upon each other. Progressively building towards a data-threaded customer journey of continuity and cohesiveness. These software-as-a-service (SaaS)-based packaged business unit capabilities (PBCs) are giving organizations the option to have systems sit and work alongside existing solutions, which can more easily be installed for faster time to market and return on investment.

Additionally, the maturity of customer data platforms (CDPs) in particular, have empowered brands with the ability to aggregate massive amounts of customer data safely and securely, while also activating on a 1:1 individual customer basis at scale. The remaining chapters of this whitepaper explore in-depth the technology platforms offered with Sitecore and Salesforce working in unison, for brands to consider as a part of their martech stack.

Personalization is not a customer experience bandage

As you go about your strategy, it's important to stay mindful of the person who's on the other side of the screen, service call interaction or in-person moment. Adopt a beginner's mindset and think about the problems that personalization can assist with — like wayfinding, surfacing content or redirecting a user at key moments.

You may discover that you have bigger problems that a personalization solution alone can't handle all by itself. If you find yourself in that situation, and if you take nothing else away from this whitepaper, it's this point: good personalization will not fix a disconnected customer experience. Personalization can improve your customer experience, but it's the seasoning, not the substance. So make sure you're on fairly solid ground by fixing any glaring customer experience (CX) and service design problems before beginning your personalization.

Personalization is not a bandage to help address the absence of a solid CX foundation; personalization is ultimately a stand-alone marketing tool and tactical strategy that is meant to enhance CX and content strategies, not replace or fix them.



Transparency and trust

Humanize data to complete the circle of trust between your brand and customers

When a customer's experiences with a brand are truly connected, there is a sense of familiarity and ultimately trust that strengthens the **relationship between the brand and the customer**

Connected experiences are possible when there is a common source of truth about the customer that informs all interactions across multiple touchpoints. Only then can each experience build upon the previous one to create a continuous dialogue and remove friction from forward progress on customer goals. The stronger relationships that are created by connected experiences lead to greater possibilities and improved business outcomes.

However, as much as the advancement of technology has improved consumers' lives for the better, we're all still human — and as humans we sometimes have trust issues. In this case, the trust issues lie in how technology is being used underneath the surface of digital habits and behaviors in our daily lives.

A survey of 2,000 U.S. adults conducted by KPMG reported the following:

- **40%** of consumers surveyed don't trust companies to use their data ethically
- **47%** of respondents said they're concerned about the possibility of their data being hacked
- **51%** were worried about their data being sold
- **78%** expressed fears about the amount of data being collected
- **86%** of respondents said they feel a growing concern about data privacy

These consumer concerns have led to the introduction and passing of various laws and legislation in recent years. From General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA), an increasing number of policies are being implemented to drive a higher level of compliance and accountability for companies to be more transparent — while also allowing consumers to have more control over tracking technology.

GDPR Compliance — EU law and data protection ensure users have the right to

- Be forgotten
- Data portability
- Data rectification
- Object to data processing
- Object to identity profiling

CCPA ensures consumers within California have the right to

- Know about personal information a business collects about them, including how it is used and shared
- Delete personal information collected from them (with some exceptions)
- Opt-out of the sale of their personal information
- Non-discrimination for exercising their CCPA rights



Regulations continue to be a major talk track

While regulations continue to be a major talk track, big tech companies are already taking their own initiative and making changes to align with consumer demand of data tracking. In 2023, Google Chrome will stop using third-party cookies on their web browser.

“Subject to our engagement with the United Kingdom’s Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and in line with the commitments we have offered, Chrome could then phase out third-party (tracking) cookies over a three-month period, starting in mid-2023 and ending in late 2023.”
– Google

Similarly, as a part of Apple’s 14.5 iOS release, it launched a new privacy feature called App Tracking Transparency — effectively allowing users, when prompted, to opt-in or out of having apps track usage and activity.

“If you say no to tracking, the app will no longer be able to use Apple’s IDFA identifier to share data about your activity with data brokers and other third parties for ad-targeting purposes. It also means the app can no longer use other identifiers (like hashed email addresses) to track you, although it may be more challenging for Apple to actually enforce that part of the policy.”
– TechCrunch

Never forget that customers are people. And people are human. Humanizing the data you have at your disposal will help galvanize the omni-channel experience – grounding it in authentic moments of personalization. A solid technology platform and sound business plan are important, but customers should play the central role when developing the strategy informing personalized experiences. They can be a critical determinant as to which data a company can collect.

So, collect more first-party data (data that you collect directly from customers and thereby own); this will be a much bigger priority for brands. These are things like identity data (name, email), transactional data (purchase history, loyalty status) and user-defined data (content and communication preferences). How a business secures and utilizes key customer data can require a customer’s permission like capturing cookies, opting into email automation, text messages, or any other offsite communication. As regulations continue to tighten and evolve to keep the customer’s data safe, individual allowances from the customer will likely do the same. Proving your business is trustworthy with this type of information will be key for future evolution in this space.

This makes brand trust another key piece of the puzzle. A customer’s level of trust in a business can directly impact how much communication and two-way engagement they opt into. Building up a customer’s trust can take time and be earned by providing a seamless, reliable experience — both digitally and in-person.

Simple details of a customer’s experience can drive brand trust, and it’s not a one size fits all. Some customers are motivated by speed and convenience, while others are dazzled by low pricing. But everyone wants a positive customer experience to ensure they come back. As each successful encounter with a customer is collected, your tech stack should be able to analyze and derive insights to determine what is needed for the next successful encounter with that customer.

It’s easy for brands and marketers to forget the human side of all the work they do; getting sucked into the vortex of the day-to-day project aspects, data, spreadsheets and timelines.

As a digital practitioner, put yourself in your customers’ shoes. Think about how you’d want your information to be kept private. And when a customer decides to give permission and voluntarily shares their data, make sure to honor that and use it in ways to make the customer experience more personal and fulfilling. It’s imperative that your organization think about how to humanize data. This is where you lay the foundation of trust with your customers.

With this foundation of trust, along with showing how you’ll elevate the experience a customer has while using their data, customers will be more apt to share it with you — in an equal exchange of value.



Set the foundation

Strategy and planning will set you on the right path to progressing towards a fully connected and personalized customer experience

Focus on progressively graduating from mass marketing for customer segments to **omni-channel 1:1 individual, personalized experiences at scale**

How a brand personalizes omni-channel experiences should be based on customer engagement, to both accomplish a task and fulfil a need, while simultaneously achieving business goals.

Begin by asking key questions:

- What drives your business?
- What are the key touchpoints (digital and in real life) that drive conversion?
- What puts your “high-value customer” in an audience category?
- How can you drive more business through them (high-value customer)?
- How can you elevate other customers to increase business impact?
- How connected or end-to-end is the experience you’re creating for your customers?
- Where does your current data reside and what level of access do different teams and departments have to it?
- How often do you connect with your customer?
- What kind of intel and data do you receive on your customers’ needs?
- How does this intel and data flow from the customer to your organization?
- What do you learn each time a customer engages with you?



For example, one business may implement a location-based personalization strategy to drive impact to the brick-and-mortar storefront, while another looks to provide their customers with a carousel of “Favorites” or “Buy Again” offerings — digitally increasing sales. Both tactics could be beneficial to the same business but utilized for specific customer segments based on how they interact with the brand. Aligning goals and strategy ahead of any implementation will ultimately lead to better measured results for your business.

Personalization should also exist throughout the entirety of the customer journey. Understanding how each key customer segment navigates your brand — from offline to online to human-to-human interactions — creating opportunities for ways to personalize and keeping customers engaged in the funnel. A simplistic example of this is alerting customers when they have abandoned their cart.

The elevated experience provided to the customer through personalization rules and use cases itself could be the driver of additional visits or purchases, ultimately building retention and loyalty for the business. Staying vigilant when it comes to regular reporting to ensure learnings from customers are being utilized for similar audiences drives future business impact.

10-step planning program for omni-channel personalization

- 01** Define your key customer audience segments and personas
- 02** Aggregate customer data in a centralized repository
- 03** Identify the channels your customers frequently engage and prioritize them
- 04** Create the ideal omni-channel customer journey
- 05** Map the content and functionality needed to create impactful customer touchpoints
- 06** Evaluate which capabilities* exist within your organization to enable a seamless customer journey
- 07** Assess your CX technology stack and formulate a vision for the architecture
- 08** Determine the highest-value, highest-impact customer use cases
- 09** Measure performance and embrace a test-and-learn culture
- 10** Apply the new capabilities and personalization activation tactics to the enterprise via system and business process automation

01

Define your key customer audience segments and personas

Derive insights on their motivations, drivers, wants and needs to apply them to the customer experience you're designing

Align business offerings (product, service, etc.) with fulfilling their needs

If your organization has the means, it's ideal to conduct research (qualitative and quantitative) to fully understand the core attributes that make up the DNA of your brand's customer base. Once you identify general patterns across your customers, you can cluster them in ways to inform persona and segment development. This will set you up for creating basic personalization rules – like geolocation, product/service category affinity, etc. From there, with a centralized source of customer data and unified individual profiles created, you can employ more advanced personalization tactics on a 1:1 level – like recommending auto subscription if you know frequency of repeat purchases or personalized recommendations, based on a combination of self-reported preferences, past purchases and digital footprint behaviors.

Personas build empathy

Personas are intended to reflect relevant insights gathered through our primary research to guide and inform design decisions. A persona is a representation of a type of customer or user. They answer the question, “Who are we designing for?” Personas also help the organization to align on strategy and identify goals that need to be met to provide a best-in-class experience for specific user groups. Personas allow brands to create rules to target customers with the right content at the right time. Personas are ever-evolving and should be reviewed periodically.

Audience segments create clusters of customers to help drive scale and repeatable frameworks for personalization

A high-level audience segment matrix will help illustrate the types of people who will visit your various brand touchpoints and channels (e.g., website, ecommerce), along with their unique needs, goals, objectives and functional content opportunities that align with them. The audience segment matrix can be used to inform things like website-level content strategy and email campaign targeting programs.

02

Aggregate customer data in a centralized repository

Examine what customer data currently exists and where it resides

Begin unifying this data to build individualized customer 360 profiles

When departments within a business aren't on the same page, they often share inconsistent stories, insights and data about their value in customers' lives. This creates a muddled brand message and experience that leads to customer confusion and even worse, apathy. When departments aren't aligned and customer data isn't unified, it creates duplicate work and rampant replication of customer information.

Creating a seamless, end-to-end, personalized, connected customer experience, with friction-free interactions that leverage contextual engagement and provide anticipatory solutions, requires unifying customer data from each of your channels into a holistic record of customer data and intel.

Find all the places in your organization where you are capturing customer data. It could be contact info, purchase history, preference or engagement data, and customer service and loyalty data. Once you find the data, you can ingest it into a centralized source like a customer data platform (CDP). Then map the data into a structured data model. You want your data organized in a way that makes it easy for various teams to find and organize.

Next, you want to create profiles. This allows you to get a unified view of your customer across data sources. Again, the rise of data solutions like a CDP can help expedite the process, de-duping multiple records of the same customer while also serving as the "golden record" and source-of-truth about your customers.

Example of customer data points that entail defining a 360-degree view of the customer.



Identify the channels your customers frequently engage and prioritize them

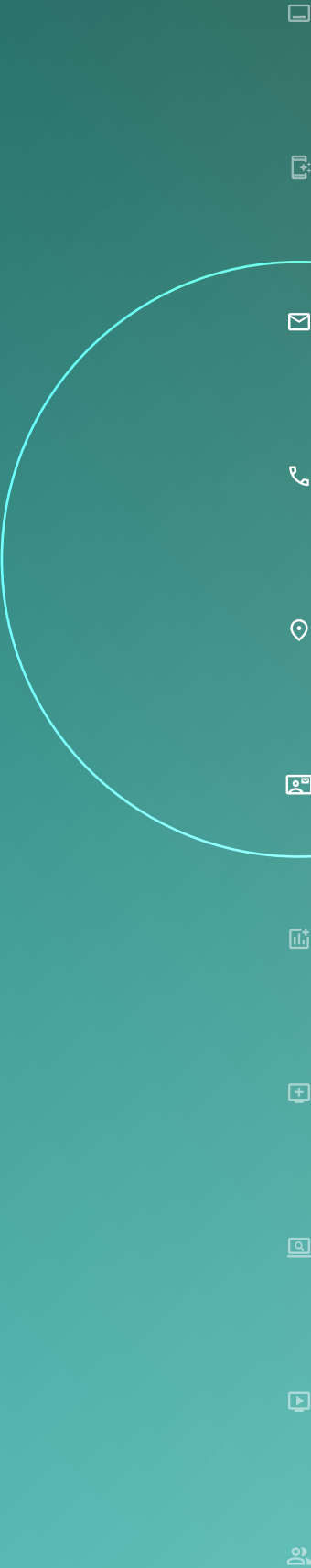
Identify which channels your organization needs to introduce or enhance to meet them where they’re at

Assess which customer data points are being captured at each touchpoint within each channel

Creating an omni-channel marketing strategy does not mean employing every channel that’s available. Instead, it means meeting your customers where they are — so you should only invest in the channels your customers use related to your brand’s offering. In some cases, pending the category or vertical you’re in, leveraging Twitter or WhatsApp as a means to drive awareness may not be a sound spend of media, if only a very small percentage of your customer base uses it.

Be intentional with the channels you curate and ensure they align with the personas and audience segments identified that drive your business. This will determine which channels are best for your omni-channel campaign.

As you establish success, eventually explore experimenting with new and emerging platforms, but be sure to constantly evaluate results to see if it’s worth continuing to invest.



That leads to key conversions along the purchase pathway(s)

The map should consist of:

Scenarios – the context and sequence of events in which a user/customer must achieve a goal (e.g., a user wants to buy a ticket on the phone), from first actions (recognition of a problem) to last actions (e.g., subscription renewal)

Touchpoints – what customers do while interacting and how they do it.

Channels – where they perform actions (e.g., Facebook).

Thoughts and feelings -what the customer thinks and feels at each touchpoint

— Interaction Design Foundation

Frugal saver
48 years old
\$89,000, household income
Membership length: 11 years
Typically makes financial decisions with someone else

Scenario:
Looking for advice and products related to how to save for her kids' education and retirement.

Target product:
IRA and investments

Needs from financial institution:

- Options for paying for school that she can easily share with her spouse
- Ability to easily make a mortgage payment
- Competitive online banking tools and resources

Top three decisions-making resources

- Educational materials from financial institution(s)
- Customer reviews/testimonials
- Friends and/or family

Tasks & Activities

Touchpoints

```

graph LR
    subgraph Touchpoints
        direction LR
        T1[Website] --- T2[Mobile app] --- T3[Email] --- T4[Phone] --- T5[Branch location] --- T6[Mail] --- T7[Advertising] --- T8[Other FI site(s)] --- T9[Search engine] --- T10[YouTube] --- T11[Personal interaction]
    end

    subgraph Tasks_Activities
        direction LR
        A1[Researches saving and investment options from financial institutions] --- A2[Searches online for information on projected tuition costs, payment options, etc.] --- A3[Uses education and online calculators to get initial ideas for account options and budget needs] --- A4[Asks friends and family for advice] --- A5[Requests appointment with a financial advisor through the online form] --- A6[Receives a phone call to schedule appointment – based on the phone interview a financial advisor is determined to be the best choice (instead of special services)] --- A7[Meets with financial advisor and opens an IRA] --- A8[Signs up for online investment account site] --- A9[Reviews account to track progress] --- A10[Periodic communication with advisor followed by account updates as needed]
    end

    A1 --- T1
    A2 --- T2
    A3 --- T2
    A4 --- T4
    A5 --- T5
    A6 --- T6
    A7 --- T7
    A8 --- T8
    A9 --- T9
    A10 --- T11
            
```

	Awareness	Consideration	Purchase & Onboarding	Maintain & Get support
Questions	- Will I have enough money to retire someday? - What options are available to pay for education? - What are the implications for each options? (E.g. financial aid, student loans, early college credit in high school, education savings accounts, other investments, etc.)	- Did I start too late? - What is the best retirement savings vehicle for me? - How does the time it takes to graduate impact what I need to save? - What happens to the money I save if they don't go to college? - What will it cost me if I get a financial professional to help with my questions?	- Should I be saving more? - How do I access the money if needed for an emergency? Are there any restrictions? - How do I know if I'm on track? - Can I transfer money from savings/CD to one another? - What if I pass away – who gets this money before it's needed/used?	- Do I need to reevaluate my risk tolerance? - Are my savings earning enough interest? - How can I continue to add to my accounts? - Do my investments need to be rebalanced?
Challenges	- News of rising tuition and kids getting buried in student loan debt creates anxiety about making the right decisions. - Difficult to choose if she needs to decide between saving for education or retirement.	- Unsure how to evaluate risk preferences, when they can retire and how much they'll need - Product options are in several different locations – both physically and digitally – the products are unfamiliar and it's challenging to compare and review on her own.	Concerned that saving money may affect any social assistance they might receive	
Opportunities	- Explain financial processes and products with easy to understand language - Use our profile data to target members going to school, with jobs, etc., to discuss saving for education - Discuss top 2-3 colleges they have in mind to help evaluate costs and savings solutions*	- Provide a consolidated location(s) to access educational and investment information with comparison tools - Help members know what to expect if they schedule an appointment with an advisor	Provide calculators to forecast how much they'll have after "x" time period	- Send ongoing tips on how to maximize savings - Follow up with member to see how things are going*

Website
Mobile app
Email
Phone
Branch location
Mail
Advertising
Other FI site(s)
Search engine
YouTube
Personal interaction

*These items may be more operational changes and harder to address with content strategy or personalization. Included primarily for context and future consideration.

Map the content and functionality needed to create impactful customer touchpoints

Ensure this is done within each channel that aids customers in achieving “task-driven” goals (to do business with your brand) throughout the entirety of the journey

When determining a content strategy, deploy it in a multifaceted approach to maximize effectiveness; that includes content requirements both from a customer and industry perspective. Typically, this starts with a category/vertical/industry review, current content audit and gap analysis. The goal of this is threefold:

1. Ensure content across the entire journey is aligned with the most recent trends and vernacular within the business/industry your brand resides.
2. Understand what content currently exists — is it still relevant and how is it being used by your customers? Is the content enabling customers through the journey (noted above)? In some cases, you may have the right content, but that content could be optimized in terms of form factor, based on evolutions in user behavior and how the personas you developed prefer to digest content (e.g., downloadable PDF vs. video).
3. Once it's been determined what content is still relevant, your brand can then use this to identify aspects of your content where gaps exist. From here, a gap analysis will shed light on what content is missing that will need to be produced to support your customers.

A facet of connected experiences is knowing how to expertly meld relevant content with customer utility to achieve their task with your brand. This is where a team of experience planners, user experience (UX) strategists and designers can really help bring everything together.

Armed with a sound content strategy and detailed plan of execution, the experience of how the content is digested at each moment and touchpoint throughout the journey is critical. It's the moments that matter which will guide users into becoming lifelong customers. Be it content on your brand's website that supports product or service research and discovery — to buy flows on a commerce site — to self-service customer support portals, it's crucial that your brand is perceived as useful, and that everything your brand produces as a part of the experience works for the customer. The customer should not have to work for your brand in order to do business with you. Whether it's repeating the same information they entered into a web form to a live CSR or finding difficulty in completing a transaction on your app — ensure you're establishing the right experience at each interaction to make it feel seamless and easy. Continue to revisit these interactions periodically, optimizing based on changing market landscapes or consumer behavior to help your brand stay relevant.

A perfect example of how brands have to quickly adapt to changing consumer behaviors (by leveraging new content and CX functionality), is through the greater emergence (and now prevalence) of BOPIS (buy online pick-up in-store). A survey conducted by Digital Commerce 360 of the top 500 retailers, found that prior to the pandemic only ~6.9% of retailers with physical stores were offering BOPIS, whereas post-pandemic that quickly and drastically increased to ~43.7%.

Adding this service required retailers to understand the customer journey from the point of digital shopping to physically picking up product. All of which required designing and building new functionality + content, both for the end-customer and employees to optimize the moment of purchase engagement to product fulfillment.

Evaluate which capabilities* exist within your organization to enable a seamless customer journey

From there, identify and prioritize capability gaps that progressively build towards a holistic, personalized, omni-channel customer experience

Create the road map for capability building

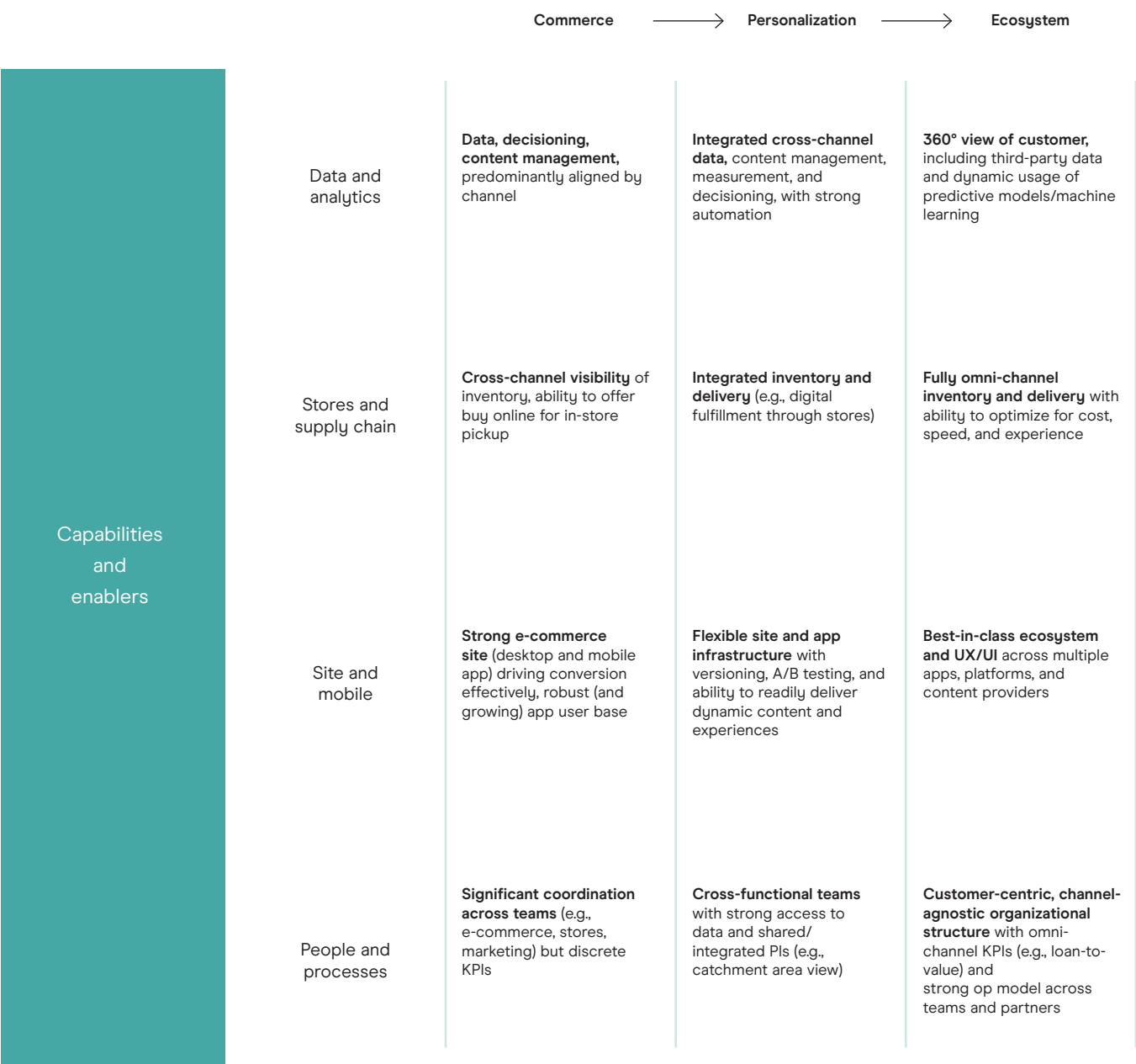
*NOTE: Capabilities could be everything from business processes, resourcing, team member skillset and training, technology enablement, etc.

McKinsey published the below model indicating core foundational, organizational capabilities that retailers need to enable an end-to-end, omni-channel customer experience.

From an end-user perspective, these capabilities allow customers to:

- Discover, explore and research your brand’s product and service offerings across different form factors and mediums
- Engage in various channels of communications – chat, call, video, in-person consultations, etc.
- Look up brand locations, hours and available appointment schedules
- Use self-serviceability tools (member portals, account and profile management, etc.)
- Connect directly with CSRs who are armed with customer information to aid in quickly resolving issues

Each omni-channel business model requires distinct foundational capabilities.



Source: McKinsey

Assess your CX technology stack and formulate a vision for the architecture

Identify what technologies currently exist and their capabilities

Prioritize tech gaps needed to progressively build towards a fully integrated omni-channel tech stack

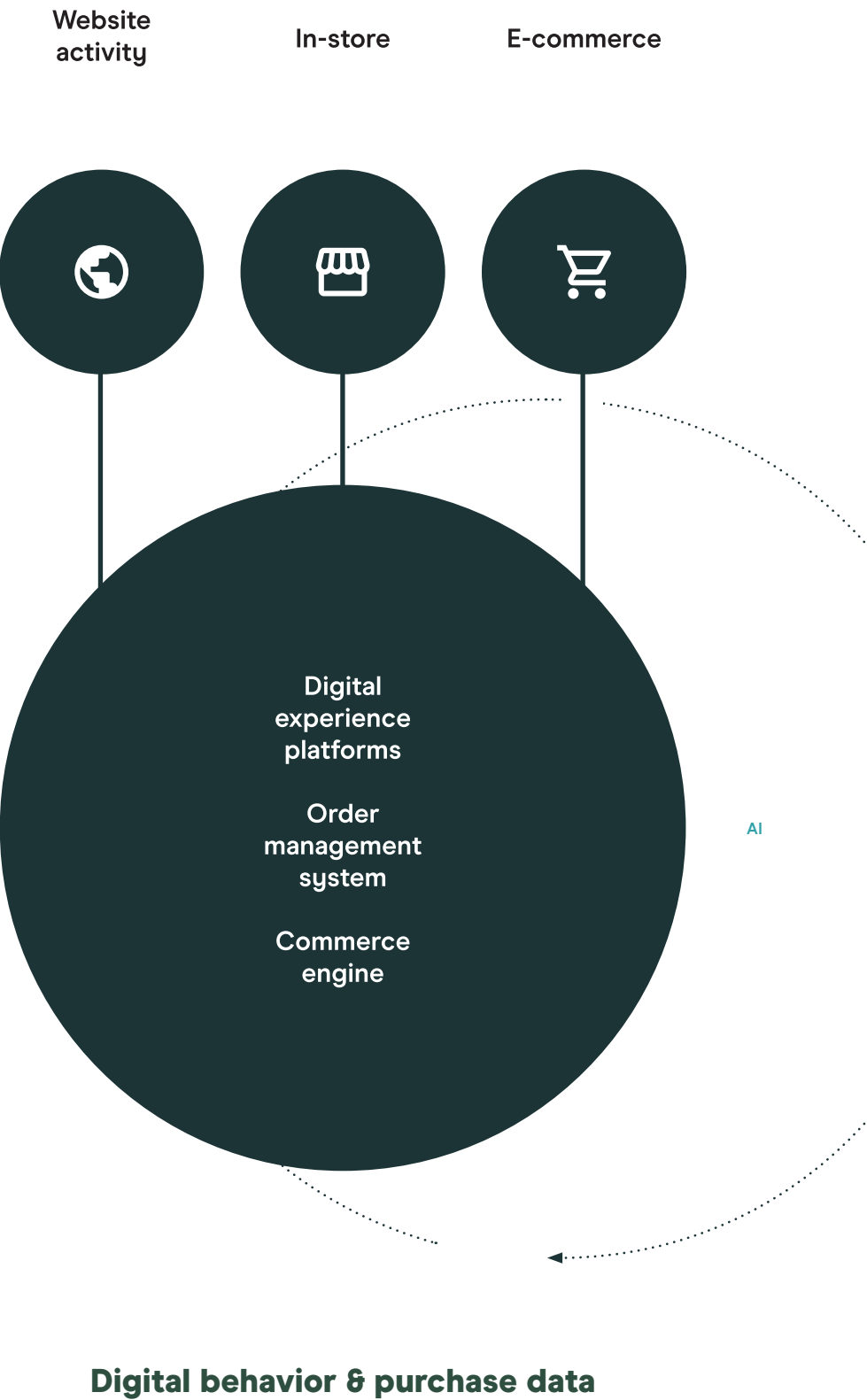
A sound CX tech stack can serve as a strong foundation upon which your organization can deliver the friction-free, contextual and anticipatory moments that lead to long-lasting relationships. It all comes down to identifying and employing critical technology platforms that marry back-of-house operations with the experiences your customers engage with daily. Start with identifying the applications in your technology ecosystem that are either slowing you down or unable to keep up with modern digital experience delivery. These applications could include legacy monolithic CMS (content management systems) to critical business application interfaces, or the legacy database system. The idea is not to replace these with new systems but to make them future ready.

Consider these recommendations:

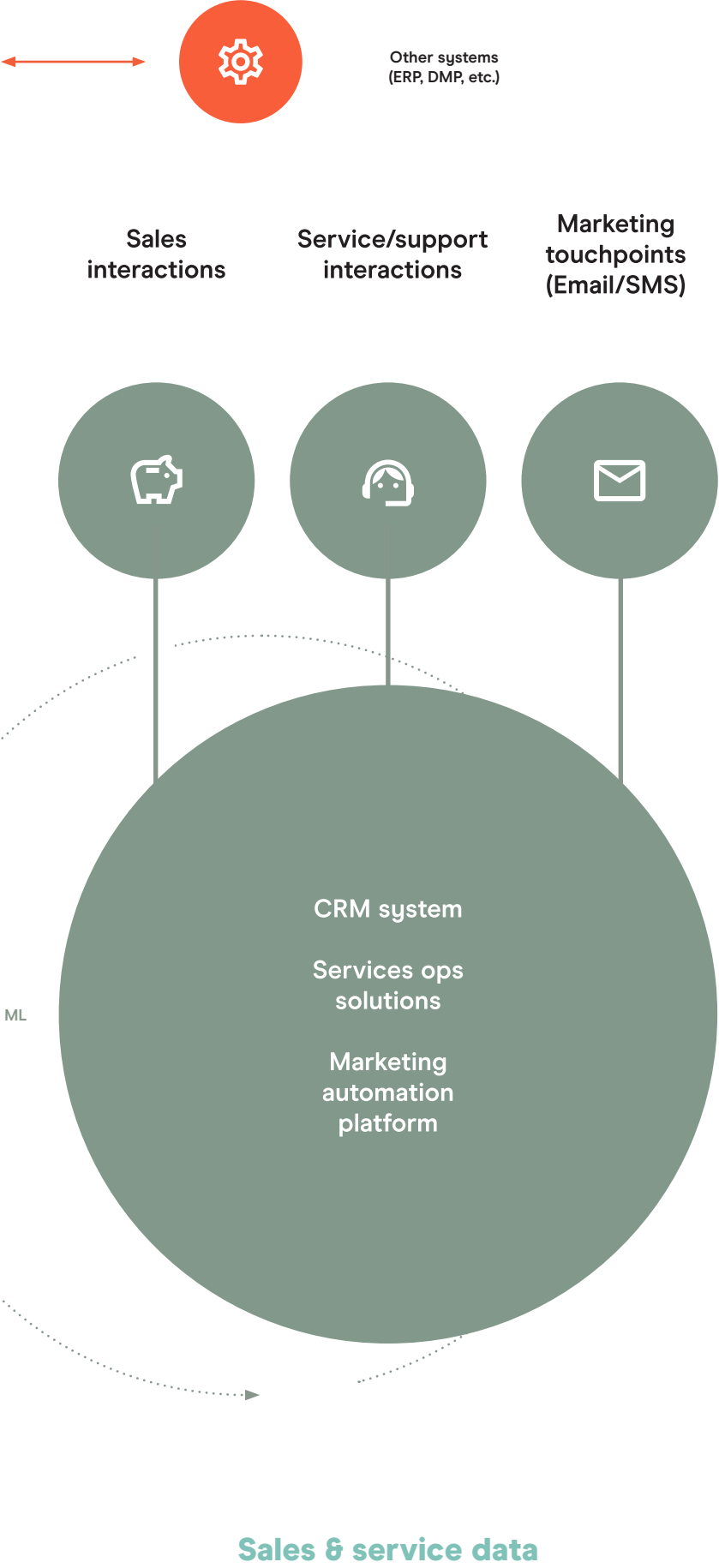
- Simplify the high availability requirements by adopting a content delivery network (CDN) solution
- Increase your speed of delivery by introducing DevOps with Continuous Integration and Continuous Delivery pipelines to stay ahead of your competitors
- Leverage headless delivery models for content and functionality
 - Responsive digital interactions that automatically adjust for different screen sizes and viewports
 - Scale publishing of content seamlessly across desktop, apps, in-store POS, etc., through solutions purpose-built for content delivery and distribution
- Invest in architectural modernization of applications by using cloud-native solutions that are scalable, resilient and reliable
- Optimize the delivery costs by switching to headless Jamstack technologies (e.g., Next.js) that require a fractional infrastructure footprint compared to traditional experience delivery models
- As a bonus, these skills are transferable from one product to another if they expose a rich API (application programming interface) for content consumption
- Introduce SaaS products into your marchitecture that allow you to integrate with your existing business applications
 - The move to SaaS will free you from performing continual upgrades while minimizing technical debts — thus reducing your TCO (total cost of ownership) of enterprise technologies
- Introduce API management to reduce efforts on building and maintaining critical systems integrations
 - Automate repetitive and time-consuming workflows by connecting older legacy to newer systems through low-code, drag-and-drop tools (e.g., Microsoft Power Automate, Salesforce MuleSoft®).
- Design an orchestration workflow that allows a centralized system to store customer data (i.e., single source of truth). A CDP should be an area of focus to establish this capability.
- An enterprise-wide customer identity and access management platform should be deployed to allow seamless stitching of customer data points into CDP.

Once you have the customer data unified and accessible, you can now segment, personalize and experiment to deliver the next best experience to them across any channel.

A high-level view of a data-enabled, integrated tech stack to activate personalized, omni-channel connected customer experiences




Personalization
Customer Data
Platform
Omni-channel
orchestration



Determine the highest-value, highest-impact customer use cases

Start with a curated, select few (do not boil the ocean)
Pending your organization’s maturity of omni-channel orchestration and personalization activation, begin with one or two channels
Plan to build gradually from there

Once the organization is aligned on business goals and expected outcomes; it’s time to focus on identifying some use cases that you can tie them back to.

Start with the primary purpose of the use case and what it’s aiming to do.

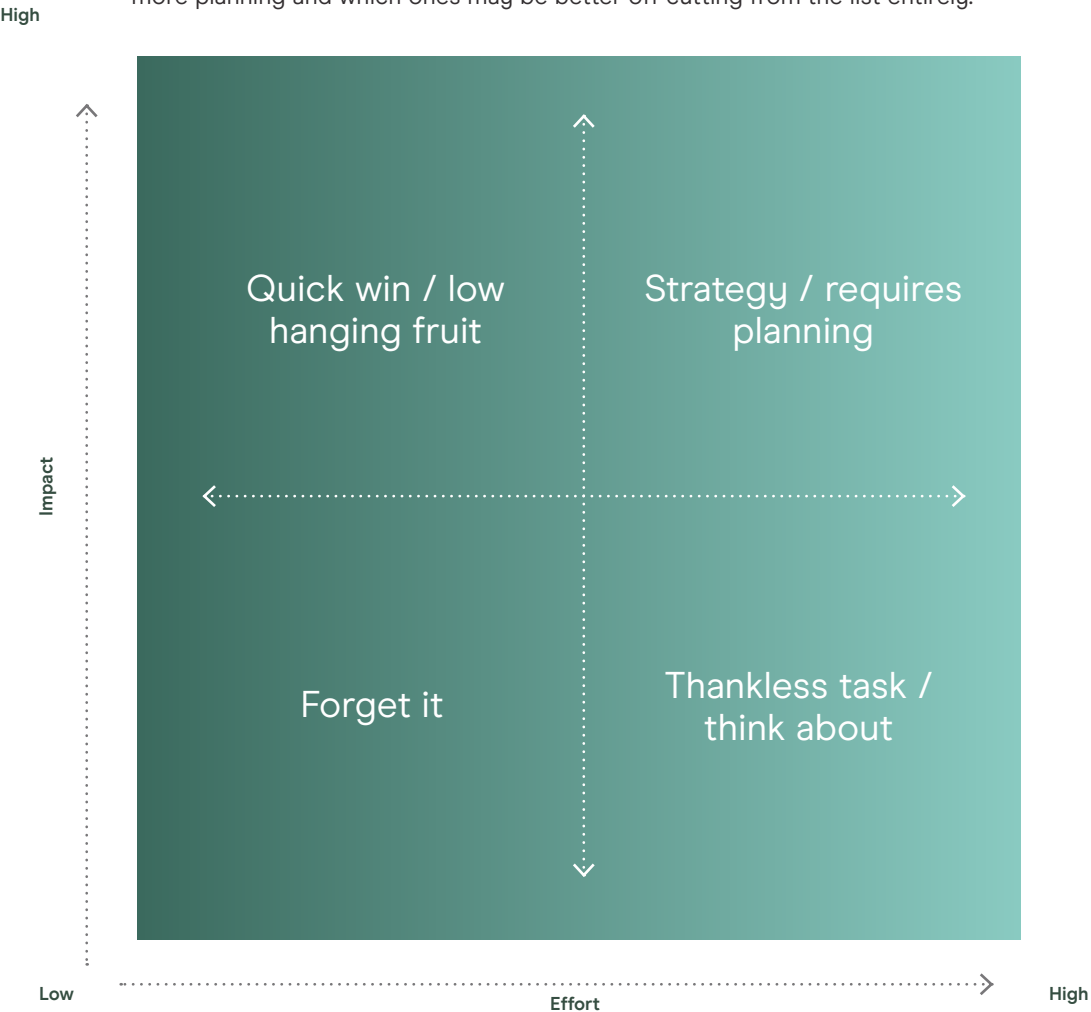
- Tie it to one of your business objectives
- Identify any specific audiences or personas for whom this would apply to — it’s okay for these to be general
- Have a basic sense of the rules of how, where and when you’d like this use case to apply
- Content strategy can be great if you’re ready for it, including a call to action to keep your campaigns measurable
- Lastly, make sure you have a way of tying this measurement to one of your KPIs

Following are two examples:

B2B eCommerce Example

	B2B eCommerce Example	B2C eCommerce Example
Goal	Increase lead conversion rate	Increase share of wallet/ cross-sell
Use Case	Recommended next best article for return visitors	Insert Product Carousel on Product Detail Page with items frequently bundled with product in focus
Audience	Financial Services	PDP Visitors
Rules	User has visited a primary product page, and is on the homepage	User is in global test cohort
Content	Homepage hero changes to recommend Gartner research findings	Einstein Recipe-powered product carousel
KPIs	Click / Demo Request / Trial	Click / Add to Cart / Purchase

With a set of use cases, it may be worth putting them through an impact vs. effort prioritization exercise to determine which ones to do first, which ones may require more planning and which ones may be better off cutting from the list entirely.



Measure performance and embrace a test-and-learn culture

From the use cases, determine what’s working and meeting expected KPIs and conversions

Optimize where needed (e.g., content, functionality, tech enablement)

As noted in the previous section with the use case examples, drill down into specific KPIs. Things like tracking digital journeys from single-channel to multiple-channel touchpoints a consumer may engage with. For example, leveraging event/click tracking from a customer opening an email, clicking through to the website/e-comm destination and ultimately conversion. Conversions being things like lead capture or add-to-cart/purchase.

This is one example of how you can measure omni-channel performance throughout a digital journey. As your organization further matures in omni-channel transformation, you can then create more sophisticated attribution models that track performance for how customers are engaging throughout their omni-channel journey.

Awareness Terms

Cost-per-impression (CPM)	Typically used in measuring how many thousands of users view your advertising or marketing.
	Primarily used in advertising media selection and marketing, related to web traffic, and online advertising. One great example is Google Ads.
Click-through-rate (CTR)	Used to gauge how well your keywords and ads, and free listings, are performing. CTR is the number of clicks that your ad or email receives divided by the number of times your ad or email is shown/delivered: clicks ÷ impressions = CTR.
Social media engagement	A measure of how people interact with your social media accounts and content. The term can cover a broad range of actions across all social platforms. For example, engagement might include Likes and Favorites, Comments, DMs, Replies.
Site traffic (volume)	Refers to web users who visit a website. Web traffic is measured in visits, sometimes called “sessions,” and is a common way to measure an online business’s effectiveness at attracting an audience.
Pageviews and average time-on-site (or pageview hit, page tracking hit)	An instance of a page being loaded (or reloaded) in a browser. Pageviews is a metric defined as the total number of pages viewed. Average time-on-site is the average duration of time a user spends viewing your website. A high bounce rate means a low average time spent on site; that is, users are not staying long enough to take the desired action for achieving your business goals.

Conversions Terms

Conversion rate	—————	The number of visitors to a website who complete a desired goal (a conversion) out of the total number of visitors.
Average order value (AOV)	—————	An ecommerce metric that measures the average total of every order placed with a merchant over a defined period of time.
Cost per acquisition (CPA)	—————	A marketing metric that measures the aggregate cost to acquire one paying customer on a campaign or channel level.
Lead conversion rate (form completion)	—————	The ratio of the number of leads to the total number of visitors. It measures the effectiveness of your ability to convert visitors to your website into leads.
Add-to-cart conversion rate	—————	The percentage of visitors who add at least one item to their cart in a given session. In order to calculate add-to-cart conversion rate, take the total number of sessions where someone adds an item to the cart and divide it by the total number of sessions.

Loyalty Terms

Customer lifetime value	—————	The total worth to a business of a customer over the whole period of their relationship. It's an important metric as it costs less to keep existing customers than it does to acquire new ones.
Churn rate (or attrition rate)	—————	The rate at which customers stop doing business with a company over a given period of time. Churn may also apply to the number of subscribers who cancel or don't renew a subscription. The higher the churn rate, the more customers who stop buying from your business.

Advocacy Terms

Ratings and reviews	—————	Allow customers to share their experience on your brand's product or service and give it an overall star rating. Customers rely on this content to make more informed purchase decisions.
Net-promoter score (NPS)	—————	A metric used in customer experience programs, NPS measures the loyalty of customers to a company. NPS scores are measured with a single-question survey and reported with a number from the range -100 to +100, a higher score is desirable.

Apply the new capabilities and personalization activation tactics to the enterprise via system and business process automation

This is where you begin leveraging omni-channel personalization at scale

Through the culmination of developing your strategy, understanding your organization's key audience segments and their journeys, implementing a martech road map and customer data unification approach, you can begin chipping away at realizing full end-to-end connected customer experiences.

To reiterate, this does not mean you should tackle this all-at-once. The prioritized use cases should be your starting point in improving key customer moments. At the same time, progressively work on sequencing enterprise initiatives on the technology and data integration road map that further set the foundation for launching new omni-channel features and personalization capabilities for continued advancement and scale.





Catalyst for success

Define and address use cases that meet customer needs and deliver on business outcomes

Defining use cases

is particularly crucial in the highly regulated and often complicated journey within the Financial Services sector

Customer and client loyalty can erode if they find it difficult to engage with a financial services institution at any point in the journey. Thus, ensuring when customers go from discovery and research, to product/service consideration and purchase to post-purchase support – it all has to be seamless and cohesive. Across touchpoints, channels and devices.

- Starting when you’ve targeted a potential new prospect with an SEM listing and/or social ad (via demographic and geographic audience attributes)
- That then drives them to the website experience to learn more about the product or service offering (e.g., mortgage rates, associated fees)
- To finding an agent, advisor or branch location
- That then the advisor or branch front-office rep knows who they are, what product or financial service they’re interested upon arrival
- To automating post-consultation messages
 - for follow-up management and status of investment

Organizations that operate in the financial service sector such as insurance, investment/wealth planning or banking categories are rife with numerous use cases that organizations need to account for.

Banking Institution and Credit Union Use Case Examples

Customer On-boarding	– Lead: Lead generation and nurturing; customer qualification and segmentation and offers and journeys – Prospect: Leads and referral outreach – Account setup and management: Profile and preferences; and risk and compliance
Deposit and Lending	– Consent and application ownership – Documentation and compliance – Underwrite and approve – Book and fund
Renew and Grow	– Account renewal and services – Product and service cross-sell – Lifecycle milestone advisory of financial products/services
Customer Service and Contact Center	– Alert and notify of account issues (e.g., security, transaction fraud) – Inquiries and transactions – Complaint and feedback (issue ticketing) resolution – Research and investigations (case management) – Regulate and commoditize

Wealth Management Use Case Examples

- Advisor On-boarding

- Advisor recruitment/M&A
 - Advisor onboarding
 - Practice management and retention
 - Advisor education

- Lead and Prospect Management

- Client profile and needs identification (service offering/ product mapping)
 - Opportunity/Lead management
 - Segmentation and campaign management
 - Referral management

- Client On-boarding

- Documentation
 - Compliance and contract execution

- Customer/Client Loyalty

- Renew, cross and upsell
 - Account dashboards

Insurance Carrier Use Case Examples

- Underwriting

- Sales: Policy selling and customer management
 - Quotes: Submission intake, underwriting, quoting and contracting
 - Service: Policy servicing, billing and payments
- Direct Insurance

- Marketing: Campaign management, customer journeys, content management/distribution, contact and lead management
 - Sales: Customer management and sales analysis
 - Quotes: Quoting and contracting, agent rep scripting
 - Service: Inquiry management, policy servicing, billing and payments; and cross-/upsell

The above only scratches the surface of all the potential use cases a financial institution brand should consider. Again, the key here is to prioritize the use cases to address the ones that have business impacts to help move the needle in the right direction. Start with a select few and build on from there.

Following are **case studies** of how Horizontal Digital supported our financial services and banking institution clients in leveraging omni-channel personalization to drive greater customer engagement and business outcomes.

First Tech Federal (Credit Union)

Redesigning the digital banking portal for digital natives

- Situation

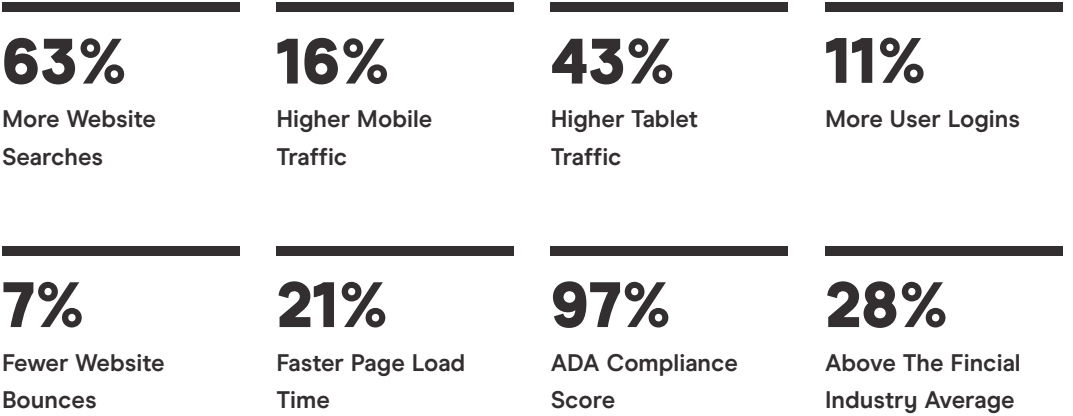
First Tech's customers are digital natives with jam-packed schedules, so when it comes to banking and borrowing, we needed to deliver something simple, smart and convenient. Our UX designers and Sitecore developers put their heads together to completely overhaul First Tech's digital environment, including:
 - Updating First Tech's touchscreen navigation on mobile and tablet
 - Designing each page with a cohesive visual identity
 - Outfitting the search bar with predictive AI technology
 - Upgrading geo-targeting on First Tech's location pages
 - Meeting ADA compliance guidelines across colors, fonts, images and layout
- Problem

First Tech needed a fully redesigned website that offered the modern design and flawless functionality their users and customers were looking for. However, we helped them think even bigger — rebuilding First Tech's digital experiences from top to bottom to drive engagement and ROI.
- Solution

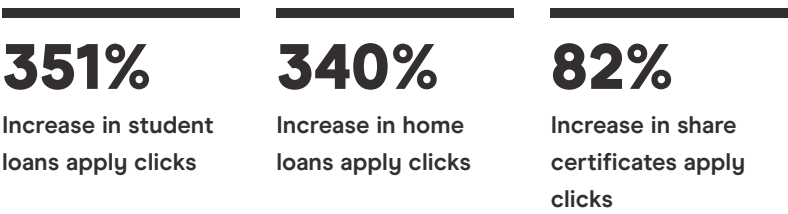
Our team leveraged Sitecore to assemble 400+ pages that seamlessly displayed on any device or screen size. To enhance navigation, we hard-coded touchscreen components, installed search filters powered by machine learning, and fused the credit union's location pages with several geo-location APIs to help customers pinpoint their nearest branch. Under the hood, we upgraded First Tech's website to Sitecore 9.3 to help the credit union get more out of their Sitecore DXP investment. This platform not only delivers faster page load times, but its simple drag also-and-drop functionality empowers First Tech business managers to easily tell meaningful stories across every touchpoint.

First Tech Federal (Credit Union)

Following their website launch, First Tech has seen an avalanche of customer engagement:



Additionally, the increased customer engagement directly led to increased conversion of key product lines on the website:



Horizontal took our web design to the next level. We’ve already seen big improvements in ADA Accessibility and SEO – helping us attract and accommodate more members.

– Sean Wolverton, Digital Experience Center, Sr. Manager, First Tech

ENBD (Emirates National Bank of Dubai)

Personalized loyalty to build the bridge between banks and their customers

– Situation	ENBD is the largest consumer bank in the Middle East and one of the most recognized brands in the region. In an “overbanked” market like the UAE, they already control 25% of the consumer credit card market and a substantial portion of the debit card market, but in order to further expand that footprint, ENBD needed to create a new digital experience that no other bank could offer.
– Problem	To expand market share, ENBD identified an opportunity to leverage their existing loyalty program to increase customer engagement and satisfaction. Unfortunately, the existing reward-based incentive program only offered discounts; and with the absence of a sophisticated real-time data, customers weren’t always getting offers when and where they wanted them. Additionally, cardholders weren’t necessarily aware of what benefits/discounts were available to them based on their card type.
– Solution	To empower customers to live life to their fullest through personalized loyalty rewards, in partnership with Horizontal Digital, the ENBD MORE app was born – a mobile rewards program app that offers its credit card holders exclusive access to thousands of hyper-personalized retail, entertainment and travel offers. The intuitive MORE app “learns” the preferences and interests of each individual from food and restaurant type to budget and location, so the customer gets the offer that best suits their tastes. It also does this for other types of leisure preferences, matching shopping deals, flights, hotels and ticket offers to customers. Horizontal achieved this deep level of personalization by harnessing the powerful personalization capabilities of Sitecore to create an app that assimilates existing information on the preferences customers select when downloading the app, their in-app behaviors and their geo-location, to put the right deal in front of the right customer at the right time. To keep things fresh and engaging every time a customer opens the app, the user interface (UI) shows a new list of personalized deals interspersed with lists related to customer preferences. App users can also enable automated notifications on MORE so they’re the first to know when a new deal or offer drops. Building a commerce-as-a-service solution has provided a path to address a gap by offering a simple commerce experience for almost any purchase the customer wants to make. It is revolutionary in the way the bank can build better relationships with its customers and this is evidenced with increased time on app, return visits and downloads, and ultimately happy customers.



Crawl, walk, run... and ultimately scale

Into a fully connected,
personalized, omni-channel
customer experience

At a macro-view, the levels of omni-channel personalization maturity can be broken down by the following:

Crawl

One-to-Many
Basic Data/ Single Channel
Customer experiences little to no variation of content online.

Walk

One-to-Some
Multiple Channels
Experiences across multiple channels, not necessarily integrated. Rules determine next interaction.

Run

One-to-Fewer (1:1)
Behavioral Pattern Analysis
Personalization has a variation across channel. personas, etc. Some are integrated to messaging. Offers aligned to segments.

A recent article published by Forbes outlined “the new wave of financial services pioneers have borrowed the lessons and design principles from customer-centric industries such as retail. They have shifted from a transactional mindset to one where fulfilling expectation is half the challenge, the other aim being to anticipate future needs.”

At Horizontal, we help financial institutions and organizations not only keep pace but also stay on the edge of market and consumer trends by delivering on the promise of building connected customer experiences. But we know it’s not easy.

The COVID-19 crisis and recent market conditions have created seismic shifts in the consumer sentiment and confidence in the global economy. Challenges prevalent prior to the pandemic have been accentuated, causing drastic changes in the financial services and retail banking landscape and best practices.

Additionally, the competitive set continues to grow with Fintech startups, major retailers and tech companies – Amazon, Apple and Google – offering their own credit card and digital payment solutions. In the insurance sector, pricing pressures driven by fee transparency and lower cost options are slowing growth for mature organizations, while increasing operational efficiencies remains a struggle.

However, staying true to a progressive approach to transformation and providing a better customer experience will solidify your organization for sustained growth.

Phase 1: Crawl

The construct of this model assumes that your organization has at least one channel fairly well established in terms of basic personalization. With that in mind, the crawl phase in this whitepaper focuses on having two channels connected, setting the stage for achieving the highest levels of holistic omni-channel personalization maturity.

This phase should be viewed as your MVP – a foundational starting point with a focus on implementing rule-based personalization for priority audiences. To gain some initial traction and quick wins, one solid place to start is with your organization’s main website and email marketing programs. For financial institutions, this is the digital destination where customers can complete tasks like completing a bill pay, managing funds, seeing past records and transactions, or contacting an agent or advisor. From there then tying it to the marketing automation solution for personalized and relevant communications for things such as bill pay automated reminders, account notifications, etc.

To generate momentum, start with rudimentary aspects of rules-based personalization on your website. For instance, applying geo-based rules to identify a user’s general location via their IP and surface/ display branch locations and/or advisor addresses within a 10-mile radius. Or if they are an anonymous user, and it can be determined that they’re a first-time visitor (through website cookies session tracking), set a rule to display a “hero” placement promotion encouraging the user to either sign in or create an account by filling out a form with key profile data points (name, email address, account or policy number, etc.).

Once an email address is provided proactively by a customer, it can be passed to a marketing automation solution for segment-based campaign communications and/or specific task-based support messaging.

This creates an integration between the digital experience platform (DXP) that governs the website, with behavioral tracking, along with passing first-party data to a marketing automation solution to activate for post website visit engagement.

To further capitalize on the momentum of going beyond two channels, consider having a real-time interaction management (RTIM) solution be a tool for orchestrating personalization across channels like Salesforce’s Marketing Cloud Personalization platform.

FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES, THIS WHITEPAPER OUTLINES ONE WAY TO APPROACH GROWING YOUR ORGANIZATION’S MATURITY. THIS IS OBVIOUSLY ONLY AN EXAMPLE, BUT IT SHOULD GIVE YOU A SENSE OF HOW TO APPLY A STEPPED OR PHASED GROWING CURVE TO YOUR SPECIFIC BUSINESS AND CUSTOMER NUANCES.

In this case, three solutions that could serve as key technology enablers:

DXP: Sitecore XM Cloud	– With Sitecore’s continued innovation and maturity of a composable DXP, and in preparation for modernizing the organization’s tech stack, implementing Sitecore XM Cloud as the core pillar for digital experience management is a good consideration for setting the stage to “future-proof” your digital marketing architecture. This approach lays a foundation for your organization to take advantage of best-of-breed specialized packaged business capabilities (PBCs).
Marketing automation: Salesforce Marketing Cloud	– Marketing automation is software that assists marketers with customer segmentation, customer data management and campaign management. It provides marketers with the ability to offer real-time, targeted, data-driven campaigns (email, SMS, etc.) along with enhanced efficiency and productivity. Salesforce’s Marketing Cloud enables personalized email campaigns and customer journeys to aid in inspiring action/conversion and customer loyalty.
RTIM: Salesforce Marketing Cloud Personalization	– Salesforce’s Marketing Cloud Personalization is a real-time personalization and interaction management solution. The solution gives organizations (especially marketers) the ability to promote relevant content, products and services to their customers (patients and members) and prospects across channels like web, email and mobile in real time with offers specifically tailored and targeted for them — based on harnessing user data (behavioral insights) to surface next-best-action recommendations.

Phase 2: Walk

In the walk phase, further build upon what was established in the crawl phase (e.g., website + marketing automation). With the integration between these two channels, now is the opportunity to incorporate two or three more channels.

From here, you could consider extending into mass media advertising campaigns like SEM (Paid Search) and paid social, along with the mobile app (given the prevalent and ubiquitous use of smartphones). Adding these channel touchpoints will further thread customer and client engagement; from top funnel awareness to proactive wealth management for life’s major milestones – like family planning, higher education costs, retirement and estate planning.

This is where having the adtech behind campaigns tracking prospect, current customer and client engagement, with SEM or paid social, can then be connected to the brand website. Tying campaign attribution for driving traffic to these key digital touchpoints. And with the integration between the website and the mobile app, organizations can see where users are going to get information or complete a task in managing their finances. Understanding how each touchpoint can complement each other. For example, the website could be personalized to automatically display the preferred/most frequented branch or advisor office location when scheduling appointments; where the app can then support them in providing turn-by-turn directions to arrive at the desired location.

One core pillar of the technology stack to add or enhance a core system to aid in supporting clients and customers is a service solution, like Salesforce’s Financial Services Cloud. This system is purpose-built and designed with complex financial institutions and organizations in mind – a solution for connecting, storing and maintaining finance-specific customer and PII data. All of this information is accessed securely from a single console across the organization. And a cloud-based solution like Salesforce Financial Services Cloud can synch up with ATM software, trading platforms, payment networks, financial advisor/planner solutions, policy management software (PMS), claims management software (CMS) and underwriting software; becoming an integral part of the cloud system and integrated tech stack.

To aid in app development, Salesforce has a software delivery platform that enables developer teams to quickly build experiences that deliver customer-centered innovation by synching with CRM data. With Heroku Postgres, using Heroku Connect to incorporate complex processing with native Salesforce business workflows, financial organizations can integrate with and enrich Salesforce data at scale to drive better, more informed member and patient journeys.

And as your organization begins to proliferate in more channels, this is the phase to consider implementing a foundational integration layer (such as Salesforce MuleSoft) – setting up your tech stack for faster go-to-market integrations as you introduce new systems to enable connected customer experiences with new channels.

CRM Software: Salesforce Financial Services Cloud	- Financial Services Cloud provides an integrated platform that can be tailored to any financial services organization's high-touch relationship model. - Including wealth management, insurance and banking-specific businesses/organizations. - With a unique Client Data Model at the center of Financial Services Cloud, firms have access to all the information needed to strengthen every client engagement opportunity. Strategic partnerships with best-in-class industry leaders make it easy to deliver superior service with portfolio rebalancing, custodian data services, and asset aggregation across every account.
App-based Software Build and Delivery: Heroku	Heroku is a platform-as-a-service (PaaS) based on a managed container system, with integrated data services and a powerful ecosystem, for deploying and running modern apps. The Heroku developer experience is an app-centric approach for software delivery, integrated with today's most popular developer tools and workflows.
Middleware Integration Layer Solution: Salesforce MuleSoft	MuleSoft unifies data to deliver a single view of the customer, automate business processes and build connected experiences. By using a modern API-led approach, each integration across systems and platforms becomes a reusable framework. Which then creates processes that enable organizations to accelerate IT delivery, increase organizational agility and deliver innovation at scale.

Phase 3: Run

Once you've established success in phases one and two – where the connection between mass-media ad campaigns, public-facing digital destinations (e.g., website), marketing automation and app experiences are solidified – you can now close the full loop by integrating in-person branch location, agent and/or advisor office interactions, and authenticated account-based portals.

Specifically, when a customer or client goes into a physical location for an in-person consultation, utilizing all intelligence and data collected on that customer up until the point of arrival will help ensure that on-site administrative and support staff are ready to provide the right assistance. This includes activation of pre-visit steps to confirm current account, policy ownership/eligibility, or product or fund interest prior to arrival.

And knowing managing personal finances never ends, a truly connected experience will then take it all the way through to enabling customers to take a hands-on, proactive engagement in maintaining wealth and accounts. In this phase, consider implementing a customer data platform (CDP), such as Salesforce CDP to aggregate all data from finances to digital engagement to complete a full 360-degree view of the customer, client or policyholder. This can aid support teams and administrative staff to actively communicate status, risks or other recommendations to ensure successful financial outcomes – such as staying on a monthly budget, bill pay reminders, account gains/losses, etc.

With a CDP in place, in concert with an RTIM and a financial cloud-based CRM, organizations can drive automated and highly individualized, connected journeys – from channel to channel and touchpoint to touchpoint. All seamlessly integrated with an enterprise middle layer to tie key systems and platforms together.

For added measure, consider designing and implementing a preference center that allows customers to actively participate in their personalized experiences with your organization. This is a solution that lets customers tell you exactly where, when and how they'd like to receive notifications and messages from your organization as a part of their financial plans.

CDP:
Sitecore CDP

- First and foremost, Sitecore CDP is an end-to-end customer data platform. It seamlessly aggregates and unifies data from multiple sources, enabling brands to build individual customer 360 profiles safely and securely.
- The other core feature offered within the solution is Sitecore Personalize. This aspect of the platform combines this rich customer data with robust segmentation and decisioning capabilities to drive personalized engagement at every moment, guiding customers to the next best action along the conversion pathway. It does so by combining and assessing known profile data, along with past interactions – whether it be from previous channels and touchpoints, purchases or even customer support – to then surface relevant, 1:1 personalized messaging and engagement activation.

Real-time CRM:
Salesforce Genie

- To further amplify a CDP, Salesforce recently launched Genie to integrate data in real time from every step in the customer experience into a unified customer profile record.
- Effectively, this means holistic customer records are continuously updating (within milliseconds) with new data from any of their touchpoints – including marketing engagement (emails, advertising, etc.), transactions (purchase, form-fills, etc.), behavioral (site visits and clicks), and sales and service interactions (with CSRs, agents or call centers).
- Not only does Genie pair well within Salesforce Customer 360 suite of clouds, feature road maps are in place to continue its maturity to seamlessly integrate with other third-party systems via connectors.
- For example, Salesforce and Snowflake (a database technology platform) created a zero-copy data sharing innovation between Salesforce CDP and Snowflake to improve data synch methods. With Genie, this can be done in real time to reference data in another system (like Snowflake) to enrich and activate against unified customer profiles.

Preference Center:
No-code preference center (NCPC)

- Horizontal's NCPC product allows marketers to easily capture curated experiences that put customers in control of the communications they receive. With clicks, not code, marketers can quickly build on-brand preference centers for better segmentation and personalization. All while staying compliant with GDPR, CASL and CAN-SPAM regulations.

Salesforce
and Sitecore
as enablers:
**Implement
technology to
leverage data
and systems in
the right way
to realize the
road map**

Sitecore and Salesforce are leading the way in **end-to-end connected experience technology**

Of course, simply adopting technologies alone won't drive world-class relationships with your customers. But it is the foundation to delivering the friction-free, contextual and anticipatory moments upon which these relationships are based. It comes down to identifying and employing critical technology platforms that marry back-of-house operations with the experiences your customers engage with daily.

The good news is Sitecore and Salesforce have made the expensive and time-consuming trial-and-error period of finding the right mix of technology obsolete with their complementary suite of integrated digital experience, support and service, and marketing tools, all powered by customer data and analytics.

The hard truth is that there's a business in every category that will redefine customer expectations by not only meeting their needs in the moment, but by anticipating them. And if it's not your business that's setting this bar, it's your competition. Of course, one of the most critical ingredients in the customer experience mix is identifying and using the right tools. We believe that a thoughtful meld and integration between Sitecore and Salesforce's technology offerings will give businesses every edge they need to seize a leadership position in providing exceptional customer engagements.

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Summary

Think big, start small

Today's great brand experiences lead to **lasting relationships**

This sensibility is why we believe in our Experience-Forward philosophy of putting people at the center of everything you do. And amazing experiences must be connected at every touchpoint, channel and moment of engagement. Connected experiences need to be a core tenet of organizational alignment: one that galvanizes teams and departments to lock arms with the common goal of realizing exceptional experiences for your core audience(s). This is why data is so critical. Having a complete understanding of your customers, via a 360-degree view of each and every one of them through the capabilities of Salesforce's breadth of technologies, can set your organization up for long-term success and market longevity.

Once armed with a holistic understanding of your audiences, marketers, digital teams and care support teams, you can then humanize the entire process throughout the continuum of care. Whether that's onboarding new members to their health insurance plan, educating them on prioritizing preventive health management or driving compliance for better outcomes.

But often, the struggle of achieving fully operational, omni-channel personalization is out of reach due to data silos, disparate systems and cross-department dysfunction. Salesforce Health Cloud, Marketing Cloud Personalization and CDP, paired with Sitecore XM Cloud and a sound customer patient and member journey strategy, can help brands come to a full understanding of their patients and what drives them — while creating immersive 1:1 personalized omni-channel experiences at scale.

Is your organization rallied behind the importance of omni-channel personalization? If so, you're already winning half the battle. The other half is having the right systems in place, fully integrated within your technology stack and a partner to enable it. At Horizontal Digital, we see the Salesforce suite of clouds and Sitecore DXP as a viable set of solutions worth considering. To help guide you on the path in bringing connected experiences to life for your patients and members, our passionate team of thinkers and doers, strategists and technologists, experience planners and designers are ready to help you realize your ambition of crafting healthcare experiences people love.

About **Horizontal**

An Experience-Forward digital consultancy on a crusade to create truly connected customer experiences.

Since 2004, Horizontal Digital has helped clients across the world unlock greater possibilities through experience-forward digital marketing and best-of-breed technology.

Our founding partners — Sabin Ephrem and Chris Staley — started the company based on a disagreement. Sabin, an enterprise IT consulting veteran, complained that marketers lacked the know-how to bring their creative ideas to life. Chris, with a long history at global marketing agencies, countered that technologists neither understood nor cared about the end users and customers.

Rather than let it go, they decided to join forces and formed Horizontal to help clients stay ahead of the curve by bringing technical and creative disciplines together with a laser-like focus on the customer experience.

From the early days of developing websites to understanding the power of context-centered mobile experiences, we've established a reputation for using technology in service of people, not the other way around. And in concert, we've accelerated our knowledge of

pinpointing customer needs and motivations through data-driven insights and strategies — including AI implementation to help businesses think and respond to customers in real time.

As an Experience-Forward digital consultancy, we put our clients' customers at the absolute center of everything we do – designing with empathy and building frictionless, contextually engaging and anticipatory experiences.

By harnessing the power of Salesforce, we apply our deep, cross-cloud knowledge of the product suite to activate seamless customer engagements that translate into greater insights and opportunities. With global Salesforce practitioners rooted in decades of digital legacy, we implement best-in-class digital solutions fueled by strategic marketing programs and powered by analytics and AI.

We know the key to successful Salesforce investments goes beyond technical functionalities — it's about understanding business challenges, defining success metrics, marrying user experiences with technical capabilities, and driving actionable insights to optimize results. This enables us to deliver Salesforce implementations for the world's most recognized Fortune 500 companies.

