

One-to-One Marketing and the Elusive Digital Experience Platform

Modern marketing and the marketing technology landscape is a complicated puzzle. Thousands of vendors and platforms claim to power your future marketing programs and what was once simply the art of crafty messaging has now become intensely personalized.

A big, generalized message might be memorable to many, but you risk leaving your actual customer feeling anonymous and uninspired.

One-to-one marketing should result in your customer or prospect feeling uniquely and perfectly spoken to in an intensely personalized way. That personalization is driven by customer data: buying history, browsing history, historical GPS location data, or even their interest in current affairs. At its most effective, personalized messaging is delivered in real time and in the context of the place and task at hand.

This white paper looks at the marketing technology industry's current shift from generalized mass-distribution messaging to the new one-to-one paradigm.

What's the opportunity for marketers?

We have arrived in an era of unprecedented amounts of data collection, and every company has the ability to both actively and passively collect data about its customers. Though increased

regulatory controls such as GDPR make data collection more restrictive, customers realize the value of sharing data when there's value in the return: rewards, connections, discounts.

As a marketer, your job has changed. In addition to crafting messaging, you must demonstrate the full end-to-end value chain to the customer and captivate her at every stage, keeping her engaged and building loyalty over the long haul. And now that so much of the customer journey is managed by marketing technology, you won't be able to escape the metrics which show if you are successful or not.

Opportunity lies in the possibility of using technology to personalize that end-to-end customer journey, in delivering relevant information to every person, anytime, anywhere. Increasingly, marketers need to design messaging for people communicating with chatbots, agents, sensors, and even products themselves -- making decisions in real time about what to deliver, and how.

So, how do you do it?



The Digital Experience Platform

The term “digital experience platform” (DXP) sounds like a panacea for marketers, an easy way out and one-stop shop for delivering the digital experience. Alas, it’s not so easy.

With over 8,000 technologies on the market claiming to facilitate digital marketing, it’s easy to be overwhelmed by the options. Should you choose an array of best-of-breed solutions, or a ‘suite’ of technologies from one vendor? It largely depends on what you’re trying to accomplish and what type of customer journey you wish to build. A retailer’s needs are vastly different to those of a consumer product company, for example, and those are again alien to a business-to-business services group.

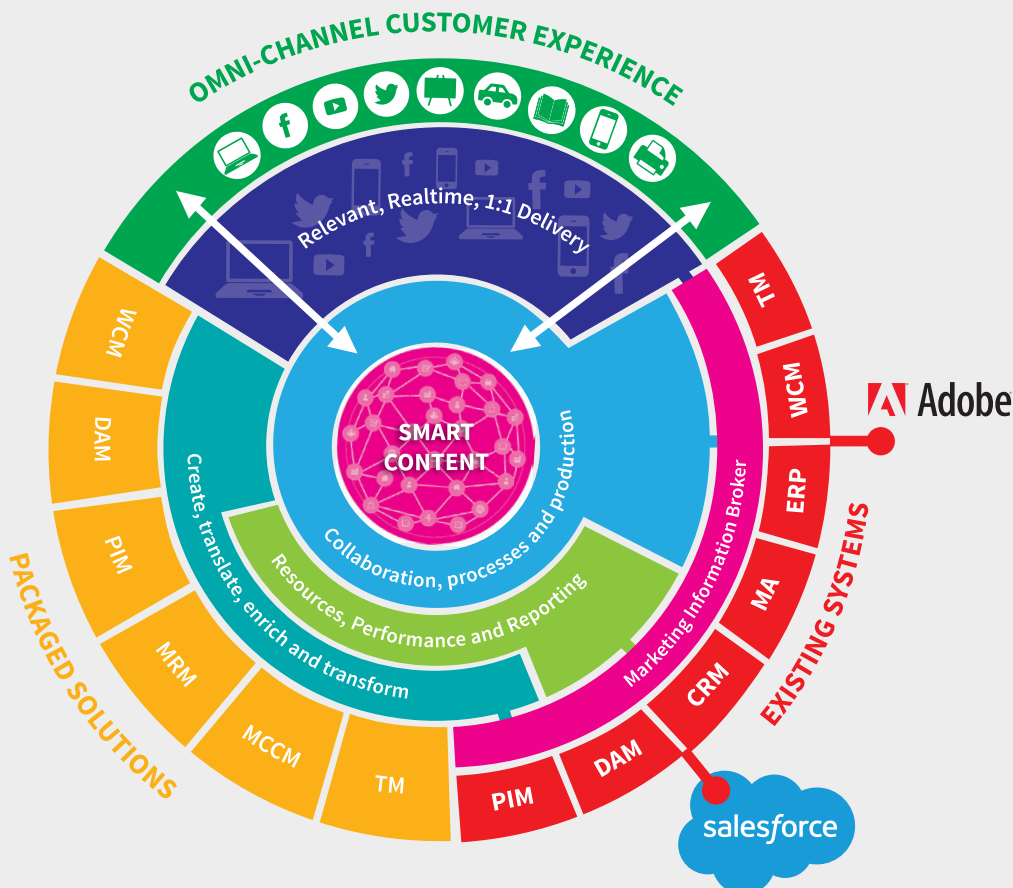
But make no mistake: money can’t buy a DXP. You have to build it with a well-selected set of back-end content tools, meticulously-crafted data sets coupled with smart decision-making layers on the front end. Yes, you can buy a lot of what you may need from censhare or a host of other vendors, but that doesn’t take away the need for crafty messaging and the data that enables smart software to target one-to-one.

The elements of a DXP

There are several fundamental pieces to the elusive DXP, which together should be thought of as an assemblage of technology, data, people, and process. Let’s look at each, piece by piece:

1) Clean and elegant data. Yes, this is more important than the choice of product! Without well-structured customer data, customer segmentation, and messaging mapped to those segments, software won’t be able to do the work required to deliver the right message to the right person at the right time.

censhare offers a particularly modern approach to data structuring, called entity modeling. An entity model captures and describes the relationships among interrelated topics in a specific domain of knowledge, so you can capture not only categories and metadata, but also how they relate to each other. This is vital for building a more rich and targeted customer experience: capturing the relationships among customers, product, and stage of the digital experience. Over time, machine learning as applied by censhare can help software make smarter targeting decisions.



2) DAM – Digital Asset Management. This element of the DXP is your single source of truth for images and media. Assets should be high resolution so they can be easily adapted, transformed or transcoded for various distribution channels. Metadata around your assets should be detailed and customer-centric, enabling downstream systems to marry asset variants to particular segments.

3) PIM – Product Information Management.

This structured database stores and manages your product data. While this term is most relevant for product companies and retailers, you can replace a PIM with whatever manages the details of what you present to the world. For a museum, it might be a Collections Management System. This data needs to be closely aligned with digital assets and customer data and brought together in targeted campaigns.

4) CRM – Customer Relationship Management.

The lifeblood of one-to-one marketing is customer data. The more you know and can capture about the customer, the better you can target messaging and craft the digital experience.

5) MRM – Marketing Resource Management. This software helps to manage marketing resources such as content, campaign plans, schedules, and budgets.

6) WCMS – Web Content Management System.

This is a key part of your presentation layer. The term ‘DXP’ was originally applied to this technology sector, but alone it’s far from being the whole picture. Key to varying the digital experience for different customer types and scenarios, censhare provides a ‘headless’ (back-end only) CMS with a rich API that allows you to run many web sites, apps, and mobile experiences on top of it.

7) Mobile Middleware. While sometimes your WCMS might help in the creation of mashup mobile applications (apps using multiple content sources), with personalized marketing you’ll find specialized mobile middleware that is ‘smarter’ than your CMS -- connecting in real time to customer data and delivering a tailored message to a mobile phone based on not just customer history, but also GPS location or other timely information.

8) MCCM – Multi-Channel Campaign Management.

As campaigns become more personalized and multi-channel, the complexity of adapting a message to specific channels requires technology that can adapt distribution of messaging and assets to a myriad of scenarios. The technology also needs an awareness of time and place, so that a targeted message might be delivered while someone is shopping in a particular store.

9) APIs for connectivity. The tools behind your one-to-one marketing engine will engage in a ceaseless exchange of data and you may need to plug in new tools at any given point. APIs act as brokers of information and you must orchestrate how they exchange the notes.

10) Governance. Again, technology alone doesn’t create a DXP, which is why we bookend this list of tools with data management and governance. A structured, executive-sponsored and disciplined approach to infrastructure management, software maintenance and program administration is as important as the software you choose.

How does all this make for better messaging?

In the future, you will find that customer data will be inextricably linked to all digital experiences you craft. Those with foresight have begun to apply the term Customer Data Platform as a corollary to the Digital Experience Platform -- one can scarcely exist without the other. The one to one digital experience cannot be rendered without customer data, and customer data is merely useless data without an experience platform to deliver the right message to the right customer at the right time.

An example of an initial step in this direction is censhare’s project with Endress+Hauser. In an analysis of their communications, Endress+Hauser established that the presentation of information on various websites, brochures and catalogues contained significant inconsistencies.



In a first step, all communications-relevant information (text, images) - was broken down into modules and restructured as information units. Next, the various information units were relinked with one another in contextually relevant ways. Finally, a wide range of options for classifying information components was established within the censhare system.

Though these are comparatively simple steps to take, their importance cannot be underestimated. In this case, they allowed Endress+Hauser to deploy content to website visitors in various contexts in very different ways, on an automated basis. This is only possible due to the data logic and assets' metadata. Endress+Hauser re-launched 38 websites in 22 languages while print, mobile applications and their other output formats are moving further towards personalized outputs.

Conclusions

We're building towards platforms which aggregate content into one contextualized layer, enabling delivery in the most targeted way possible. That context is based on an endless number of potential factors: it can be as broad as the city you may be in, or as specific as a beacon attached to a product.

But digital data, of course, has to match reality. We can't have customers reserving a product to try it on and then finding that it's out of stock. Crafting the ultimate one-to-one digital experience creates an even more intense imperative to keep inventory up to scratch, as well. This only increases the importance of system connectivity and APIs.

Customers must feel valued, or they will defect to the competition. This is why targeted, real-time marketing is of growing importance. Connecting with people in the places they already are (on their phone, in the stores where they shop) is substantially more powerful than sending out an impersonal, scattershot message and hoping they see the billboard. Capitalize on the potential of the technology which enables this future, or prepare to become obsolete.

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