CONDUCTING THE CROSS-CHANNEL SYMPHONY.

How to create harmonious, personalized experiences everywhere your customers go.

2016

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For everyone who grew up with Disney movies, the song "When You Wish Upon A Star" triggers an immediate emotional response. The strings, brass, woodwinds, and percussion come together and stir memories and longings. Today, the multibillion dollar Disney brand harnesses a new kind of orchestration to win customers' hearts—and it's something that all of us as marketers can learn from.

With a hyperfocus on start-to-finish personalization, Disney woos customers along every step of their Magic Kingdom journeys. It starts as you might imagine, with branded display ads and retargeting campaigns across every channel, ensuring that interested families book their vacations. But that's just the beginning.

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>
> **GARY LABEN**
> Global Chief Data Officer
> Wunderman

Once customers purchase a vacation package, they can customize their entire trip online or on their phones—from where they'll dine to which attractions they'll visit. When they get to the park and put on their MagicBands, the cheerful, high-tech wristbands automatically access all the plans and vacation choices they've made. From there, a tap of the wrist unlocks everything they've been dreaming about and more—from automatic check-ins at preselected FastPast locations to warm, personal greetings at restaurants where they've made reservations. Other special surprises await as they make their way through the park, whether it's the power to make a Tiki bird dance with the flick of a wrist or a personal hello from Snow White herself.

Collecting and combining real-time data about where guests are and what they're doing at the resort, Disney anticipates their visitors' desires while they're on vacation and knows exactly what emotional chords to strike to get them to come back the following year. More and more, customers expect this type of cross-channel virtuosity from their preferred brands—and you'll be challenged to deliver it in the very near future, if you're not doing so already.

Personalization is music to audiences' ears.

71%
of marketers believe that the proliferation of customer touchpoints has led to increased customer expectations for personalized, relevant experiences across channels.

79%
believe that customer personalization is very important to achieving their top marketing and customer experience goals, such as increasing customer satisfaction, building customer loyalty, and acquiring new customers.[1]
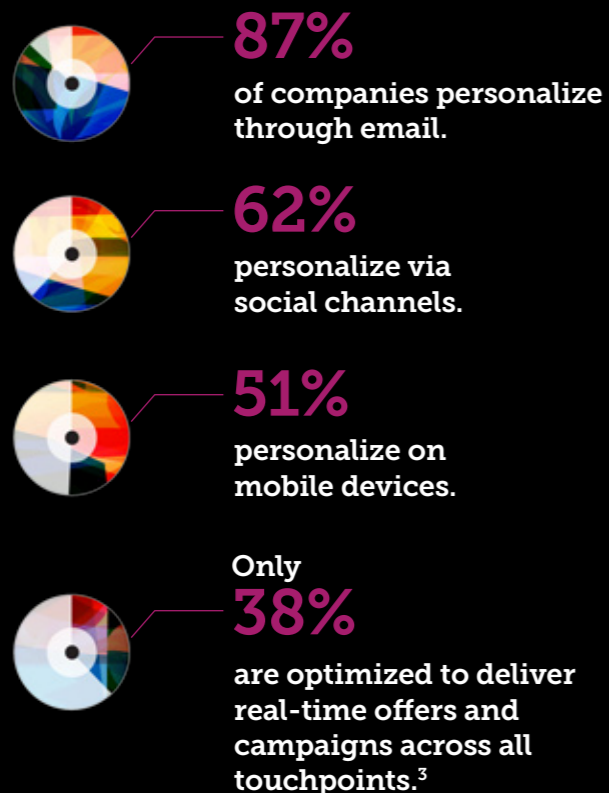
"Cross-channel marketing is a symphony," says Gary Laben, global chief data officer at Wunderman, a global advertising agency based in New York City. "There used to be a bunch of interesting tunes playing all around us, but we didn't even know who was in the band. Now, the most visionary brands are able to put it all together."[2]

Rise above the cacophony of
DEVICES AND CHANNELS.

There's no doubt that the ability to create authentic, personalized experiences across channels gives marketers a distinct competitive advantage—but it's not always easy to orchestrate them. While many marketers have mastered single-channel personalization, most still struggle to consistently personalize and contextualize experiences across multiple channels and devices.

Many instruments, few orchestras.

87%
of companies personalize through email.

62%
personalize via social channels.

51%
personalize on mobile devices.

Only
38%
are optimized to deliver real-time offers and campaigns across all touchpoints.[3]
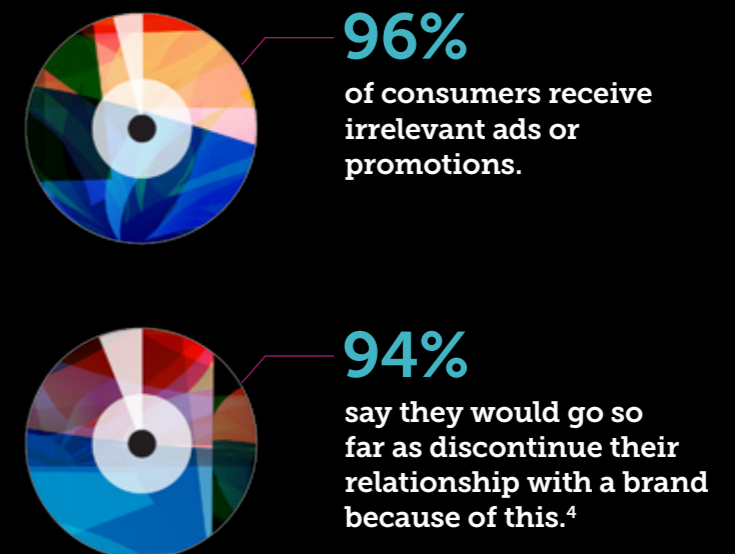
Although the promise of cross-channel personalization is great, the obstacles to delivering these experiences are many—even for sophisticated digital marketers. The challenges start with the way most companies are set up. Because internal teams aren't connected to one another, experiences are often executed and measured in isolation.

"Organizations aren't designed for the new cross-channel world order," Laben says. "So a terrible experience with the operations department isn't connected to a great experience with the sales department at the other end. In fact, these departments don't even know that the other experience exists."[5]

What's more, many companies lack a centralized place to create, manage, and orchestrate experiences, which means data from critical channels like display and web can't be integrated with other valuable data sources, like CRM systems, call center logs, or product return records. Because of this, the picture of the customer often remains woefully incomplete, making it difficult to target the right customer with the right message.

Even when campaigns are personalized across channels, marketers often struggle to predict when customers will experience them—which makes it nearly impossible to deliver true omnichannel experiences that anticipate what customers want, in the moment they want it, wherever they are.

In fact, in a recent PwC survey, less than half of firms said they use real-time customer interaction and contextual data for personalization.[6] Like a radio station you can't quite tune in to, this lack of contextualization means that otherwise harmonious experiences are periodically interrupted by static, discord, and even silence.

96%
of consumers receive irrelevant ads or promotions.

94%
say they would go so far as discontinue their relationship with a brand because of this.[4]

Make BEAUTIFUL music with your customers.

Brands that master cross-channel personalization now will have the power to create consistent customer experiences and foster deeper "experience loyalty" for many years to come. "Younger generations are no longer 'brand loyal,'" explains Andy Jacobs, managing director at PwC. "Instead, they're experience loyal. They're going to choose the experiences that are consistently personalized to their needs and desires, and that make them feel valued and important."[7]

It's your job to overcome the barriers to cross-channel personalization and create the kinds of memorable experiences that keep customers coming back for more. The good news—and the secret that most marketers don't yet know—is that orchestrating contextual and personal experiences across channels is easier today than it has ever been before, and you don't need a Disney-sized budget to do it. The trick is to get your organizational structure, data, content, and technology all playing the same tune, at the same time.

Here's how you can bring it all together—and become a cross-channel personalization maestro.

Get your internal teams tuned up.

Your teams must learn to play together in order to make beautiful music everywhere customers go. This often means rethinking your organization's structure—and recalibrating it so experiences can be synchronized across every possible channel and touchpoint your customers come in contact with, whether online, in-store, or on the go. To make all these experiences consistent and complementary, start by ensuring that your online and in-store marketing teams, product team, merchandising team, customer service team, and IT department all work closely together.[8]

Think, for instance, about any major airline brand. A typical organization structure for most airlines includes many departments responsible for different types of passenger experiences. Online travel booking may be handled by the web marketing team. Passenger check-in may be managed by the operations department. Vacation packages may be offered through the sales team. And while all these departments may see themselves as distinct from

one another, passengers see them as one in the same. Rather than thinking about the experiences they're having with different departments, they think about the experience they're having with the airline itself—whether they're thrilled by an unexpected upgrade to first class or frustrated with a lost luggage hassle at baggage claim.

Organizations with mature, cross-channel personalization programs think like their customers, not like their org charts. This starts by bringing disparate and unlikely departments together, so that they can begin to synchronize all their online and real-world experiences. By recognizing that *every* encounter customers have with their brand is an experience that can build loyalty, they find surprising new opportunities to consistently and continuously delight audiences. This might mean taking the unexpected upgrade experience a step further by offering a passenger her favorite drink the moment she takes her seat. Or it might be a way to soften the blow of lost luggage with an in-app notification that alerts the passenger of the issue before he even gets to baggage claim and then automatically routes the luggage to his hotel.

Rebuilding brands from the ground up.

At global ad agency Wunderman, helping clients develop personalized, cross-channel experiences has meant going beyond typical ad agency engagements to actually help brands redesign their departments. By removing the barriers that divide internal teams, Wunderman helps clients take the first essential step from single-channel personalization to cross-channel experiences. "We didn't think we'd ever be in a situation where we'd be providing organization structure consulting, but it makes sense when we're trying to deliver personalized marketing across every channel," says Gary Laben, global chief data officer at Wunderman. "If you're going to deliver a sports car to someone who rides a horse, they better know the rules of the road."[9]

As you begin thinking more deeply about how different customers experience your brand, instead of how your organization sets itself up to market to them, you'll want to reconsider your strategic planning practices, too. "Brands need to throw out how they thought they were going to do their marketing and start letting the consumer drive the marketing schedule," Laben says.[10] For instance, while most organizations' budgets and tactics are set up in a longitudinal, chronological way, based on events or products they want to promote, they should really be designed the other way around—based on their customers' unique needs and interests.

Military financial services provider USAA has put this into practice by focusing its strategic planning on customers' life events, such as getting married, relocating to another state, or having a baby, rather than transactional objectives like purchasing auto insurance. To better understand customers' emotional responses to these real-life moments, USAA conducts qualitative and quantitative analysis on its customer data to uncover opportunities to either relieve stress or deepen empathy. With customer journey mapping exercises, USAA breaks those life events into expected emotional responses, so they can be there for customers at every step of their journeys.[11]

Emphasize harmony with integrated data.

"Brands have been in the personalization business long before the advent of computers," says Jacobs. "We called it 'concierge service.'" The difference in the old days of personalization, of course, was that every preference, need, and desire was recorded and remembered manually. These days, data-fueled technology does the remembering—you just have to learn how to harness it. "Now more than ever, we're in the data business," Jacobs says.[12]

This hyperfocus on data presents challenges as well as opportunities. In fact, marketers' biggest struggles with personalization are all related to data. Sometimes, there's not enough information to even create a personal experience. Other times, inaccurate data leads to personalization misfires or outright failures. And even when all the right customer data is there, it's often not synthesized into insight quickly enough—so there's no way to act on customer needs.[13]

The solution is to put all the data in the same place, so you can get a single view of each customer. This includes bringing together every bit of data that customers leave behind as they interact with your brand, including online sources like web, mobile, and social as well as offline sources like in-store, event, or call center data.

By aggregating all these fragments and snapshots in one place, instead of leaving them scattered about in many places, you'll be able to develop a more complete picture of your customers. With this single customer view, you'll be able to uncover new insights that enable you to speak directly to customers, serve their unique needs, and even anticipate their desires.

How to create a single customer view.

1. **Track every customer interaction** from both online and offline channels, including emails they've clicked on, web forms they've filled out, purchases they've made at retail stores, and calls they've made to customer service.

2. **Gather additional information** about your customers' preferences and behaviors, such as the types of items they've purchased and the comments they've made on Facebook, so you can understand their deeper needs, wants, and motivations.

3. **Compile all this information** into a master marketing profile, which gives you a single place to view data about your customers and prospects.

Financial institution UBS has become a master at this, harnessing combined audience data to continually improve and personalize customer interactions. They started, like many organizations, with a single-channel approach to personalization on the web, which enabled them to automatically serve up the right loans, credit cards, and wealth management services to the right customers. But they didn't stop there. They also consolidated data from several email marketing systems used by different internal teams and agencies worldwide—all with varying reporting and analysis systems—which allowed them to gain a deeper understanding of customer needs and preferences.

"We're working toward having an integrated view of our users across all web, mobile, and even offline interactions to be sure that our offers are coordinated and consistent," says Manuel Niess, head of digital channels at UBS. "In this way, we can begin to more fully own our email strategy and offer more personalized content across the customer journey."[14]

You can do it, too. Once you've got your data together in a single place, the next step is to use it to take action at the individual customer level. To do so, you'll need ways to instantly identify differences between customers, including their unique behaviors and attributes. This requires a deep dive into the data to analyze audience segments and understand what's truly important to what audiences—and at what step in their journeys.

Capabilities like audience clustering make it possible to quickly uncover these insights, even when there are a massive number of variables, so you can determine what data will be most useful to your personalization efforts.

Clustering is segmentation on steroids. By using algorithms to effortlessly analyze large volumes of customer data, audience clustering helps marketers define highly refined segments based on multiple complex variables, taking into account demographic data, location, past and real-time behavior, and more.[15]

Keep in mind that all these variables have different levels of importance at different times. With audience clustering, you can automatically and objectively weight variables based on individual customer behaviors, so you can see deviations within broad audience segments and create valuable subsegments that you may not have even thought to look for. This makes it possible to create personalized, cross-channel experiences that are truly individualized for distinct groups of customers—and then deliver them in real time.

Compose your cross-channel masterpiece.

Once you've created a single customer view, it's easier to personalize content across channels. After all, successful content marketing doesn't come only from brainstorming sessions, hunches, or inherited habits. Marketers must gather quantitative and qualitative data to plan for content that customers will find and value.

Prioritizing your content plan is critical to your marketing success because today's empowered and digitally connected customers engage less with traditional advertising messages. They're more interested in useful and valuable content that can improve their lives, help them make decisions, and get more value from their purchases.

Smart content marketers understand that content adds different kinds of value to their customers at specific stages. Here are a few best practices on how to offer valuable content to serve customers along their journeys.
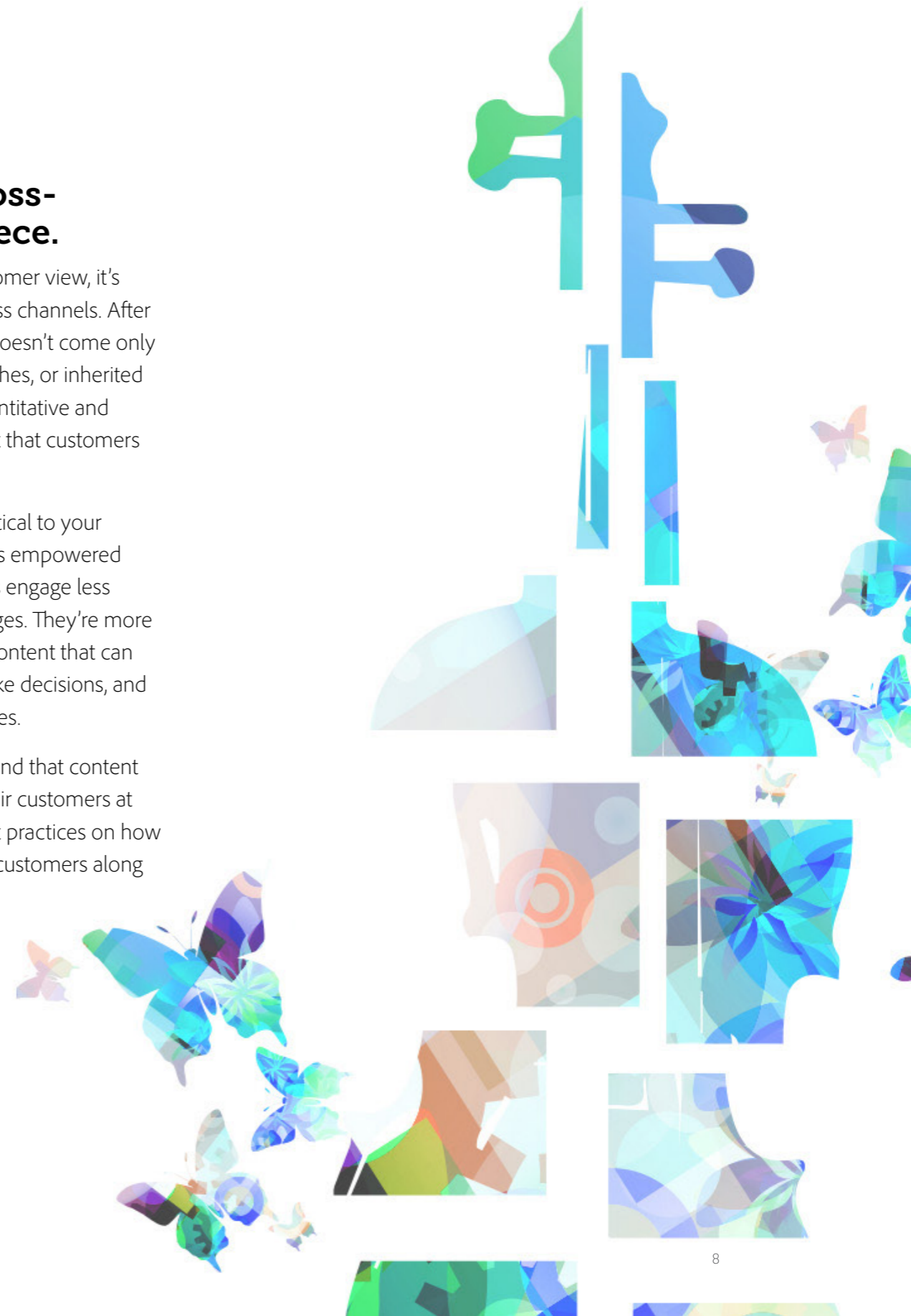
To attract prospective customers and reengage existing customers with discovery content, consider the following:

- **Understand how your customers use your content.** What keeps your audience returning to your content channels? Learning why they visit and what they enjoy will keep them interested and connected with your brand. For example, H&M keeps its audience segments interested with a mix of brand news, clothing options, and trending events within its social channels.[16]

- **Develop credible and valuable storytelling.** Effective content marketers, before producing any piece of content, always ask a "value" question: What type of content will customers find relevant or valuable at this very specific interaction point? The customer value focus directly informs production budgets and scope. "In the worst-case scenarios before, a client with a $50 million media budget would set aside $2 million to [develop] story-driven content. Now the entire budget has a story-driven foundation," says Scott Donation, former global chief content officer at Universal McCann.[17]

- **Keep a steady pace of fresh and valued content creation.** Savvy content marketers know they need to have an editorial and production plan to keep their content fresh and appealing, especially when it comes to discovery content. "It's all about having lots of relevant content with integrity that people want," says Cara Gray, manager of digital marketing analytics and SEO at Reliant Energy.[18]

From the moment a prospect discovers a product or brand to the point of purchase, empowered customers seek out more sources of information and consume more content from brands. When producing exploratory content, marketers should focus on:

- **Improving the signal-to-noise ratio with content personalization.** At this stage, content brands track customer behavior and deliver content recommendations in tune with customers' interests and observed intent. Tracking tools can help you track customers' content consumption patterns on your websites and social sites and enable you to deliver content that links up with their observed topics of interest.

- **Boost content relevancy with smart retargeting.** Smart content marketers understand that data about customer behaviors and profiles can boost the relevancy and value of a specific piece of content. Retargeting solutions allows you to combine your first-party data with third-party data from around the Internet to deliver optimized, content-based messages to each audience.

- **Invite customers to submit reviews, case studies, and other user-generated content.** Progressive content marketers recruit happy customers to produce relevant content on their behalf. For B2B brands, case study content is among the top three most commonly consumed content types. In the consumer and online retail segments, software tools automate the process of encouraging customers to leave relevant reviews at the point of purchase. Rubbermaid reported a five percent incremental increase in conversion for readers of reviews compared to prospects who did not read them.
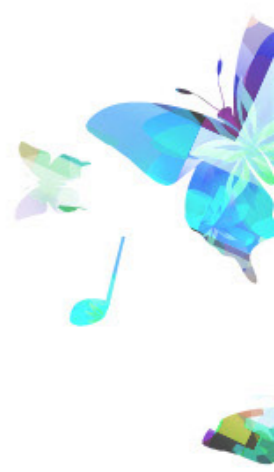
Existing customers have already clearly expressed interest in your brand, so now you can increase loyalty by focusing on these customer preferences:

- **Help customers understand how to extend the value of their relationship with your brand.** Even the most straightforward products benefit from inventive and helpful content that inspires customers, such as the crowd-sourced recipes on General Mills Tablespoon and Kraft Foods Kraftrecipes.com. For complicated offerings, the value of this kind of content can increase radically. For example, Patagonia set up a site for customers to share stories about their older garments, in particular how the brand supports upkeep of these garments. These stories maintain a positive impression of the brand and serve as valuable earned media content.

- **Offer customers exclusive updates on your products.** Customers often have a stake in the future of a brand and want to know where the product and design are going. In completing a content audit for a car manufacturer, Meredith Xcelerated Marketing found that the client had neglected to maintain communication with customers after they bought a car. Tesla Motors, a disruptive brand, is leaping on this opportunity by creating unique online and in-store experiences. Part of this strategy is updating its followers on product innovation and improvements through a Facebook community and a blog.

According to the Forrester Predictions 2016 report, the final barrier to making and delivering experiences like this "now rests with the internal systems and processes that companies must revamp before they can routinely offer the right outcome to the right person within the customer's full context."[19] Your customers continue to adopt connected technologies and devices at an exponential rate, and it's up to you to keep pace.

Keep in mind that your cross-channel symphony has no meaning unless audiences actually hear it. That's why it's so important that you reach them in the moments when they're most receptive to your messages. But personalizing with moment-to-moment agility, including creating content variations for different audiences and channels, is nearly impossible to do manually. Automation makes it easy, transforming a once-vexing process into a precise, branded assembly line.

For instance, if you've developed multiple content variations for one of your audience segments and you're struggling to choose which one to display, you can let data-powered algorithms automate the personalization decisions. You can even set them to self-learn over time, so campaigns become more targeted with every customer interaction. "Automation alleviates internal turf wars and the very human temptation to solve the problem by just throwing everything everyone wants up on a website carousel," says Drew Burns, senior product marketing manager at Adobe.[20]

Instead, you know the right audience, you know they're seeing it, and you can measure the experience and refine it as you go. With the technology to make personalization processes more efficient and marketing decisions more intelligent, you'll be able to deliver relevant messages in real time, so you never miss the opportunity to make a connection with your customers.

LISTEN to your audience.

Once you've played your cross-channel symphony, it's time to find out what your audiences thought of it—so you can continually make the music more resonant.

This requires understanding customer interactions across all channels and devices, so you can see how activities on the web caused offline conversions, or vice versa. By performing a true cross-channel analysis, you can connect the dots across all touchpoints and identify new opportunities to delight your customers every step of the way.

One way to do this is with algorithmic attribution, which enables you to determine the complete sequence of events that leads a customer toward a purchase. By measuring the precise impact of each marketing touch along a customer's journey to conversion, you can continually fine-tune your content, improve and deepen your personalization, and avoid overspending on less effective channels and tactics.

You can dive deeper into each individual marketing touch to see specifically what worked within each interaction—and what didn't. Start by looking at obvious performance metrics, such as response rates, campaign lift, or return on marketing investment. Then take a closer look at engagement metrics, such as how long customers spend viewing content and how often they return to it.

But don't stop there. "Customer-obsessed marketing emphasizes the impact on the customer—lifetime value, wallet share, or advocacy," says Forrester analyst Rusty Warner.[21] To find this lifetime value, zoom your measurement lens out again, so you can see beyond single transactions to understand the overall experience that each customer is having—from what they think of your brand to whether they're advocating for you. Keep in mind that one poor experience can cause a ripple effect, leading to an overall negative brand perception. So the measurement of each interaction must be tied to the measurement of the overall customer experience and loyalty. To accomplish this, identify analytics technologies that help you make the leap from measuring campaign performance to understanding end-to-end customer experiences.
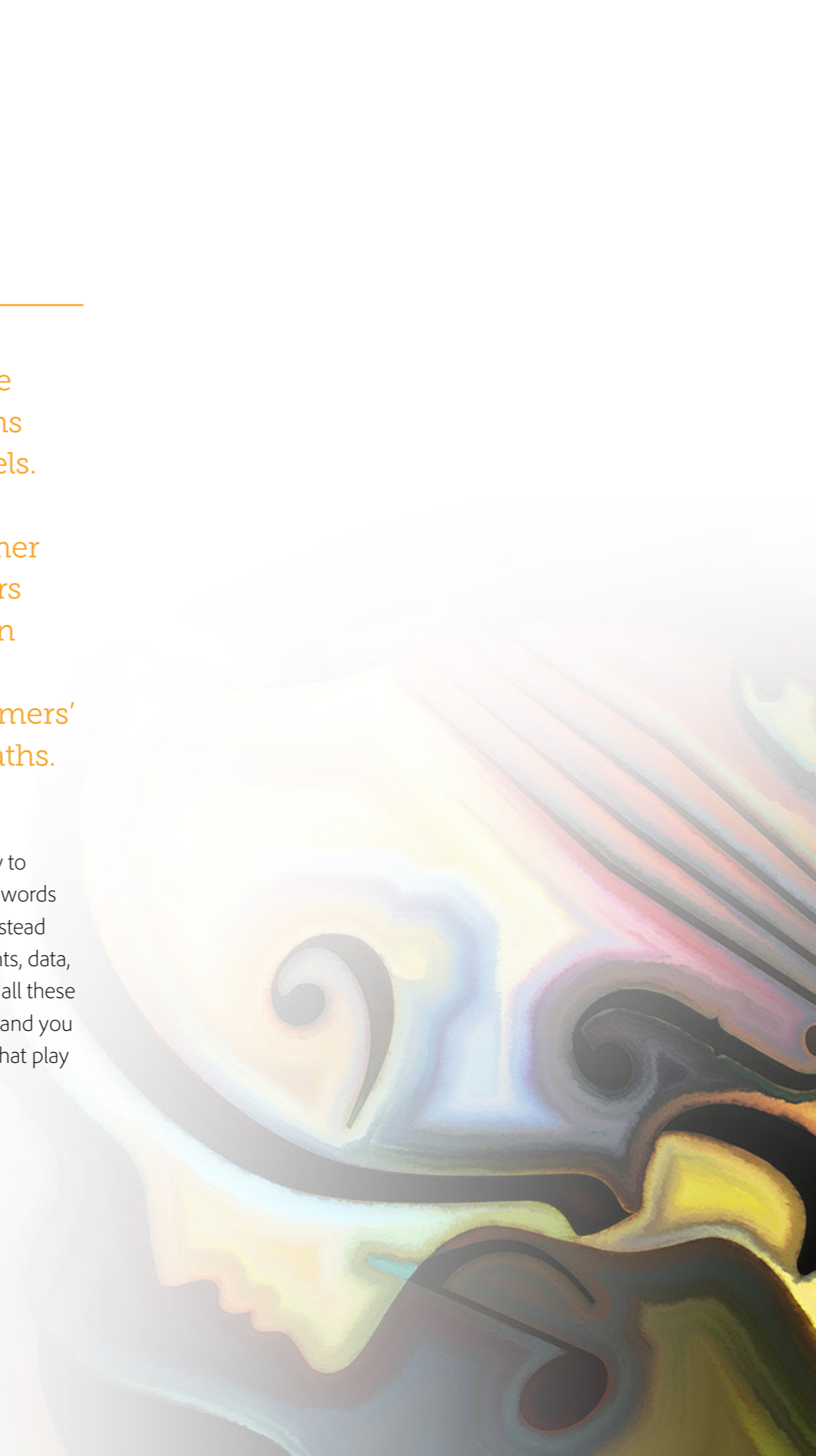
Test across channels.

To test your cross-channel, personalized experiences, you must be able to conduct A/B and multivariate tests for individual campaigns in addition to collecting and analyzing data across all your channels. Multichannel testing makes this possible. Use it to tie together an array of digital experiences and test them across the whole customer journey. For example, you may want to look at how your customers move from display ads to your web and mobile channels, and even how their behaviors differ from mobile websites to mobile apps. Multichannel testing enables this deep examination of your customers' complex digital actions—allowing you to test whole conversion paths.

Let the symphony play on.

In a world where washing machines can notify us when we're out of detergent, refrigerators can buy milk the moment we run out, and doctors can know our entire medical histories the moment they walk into an exam room, real-time, cross-channel personalization is a marketing imperative. The brands that win in this new world order will go even further, continually raising the bar on personalization and delivering magical experiences that anticipate audience desires and deepen customer loyalty.

To bring your own cross-channel symphony to future audiences everywhere, think beyond words like *interaction* and *engagement* and think instead about the interconnectedness of departments, data, experiences, technologies, and people. Link all these together, with your customers at the center, and you can deliver truly unique brand experiences that play like music to your customers' ears.

ADOBE can help.

With the cross-channel marketing capabilities in Adobe Marketing Cloud, you can deliver consistent, personalized experiences everywhere customers go. Integrate the following Adobe solutions to connect individually with millions of customers:

Adobe Campaign: Map customer journeys and automate, personalize, and execute campaigns across online and offline channels.

Adobe Experience Manager: Manage, access, and share content from a single place for consistent messaging in your cross-channel campaigns.

Adobe Target: Improve campaign conversion and create more contextual content by testing before you deliver.

Adobe Media Optimizer: Tie one-to-one campaign management to programmatic ad management to broaden the view of the customer and retarget on search or display channels.

Adobe Analytics: Measure the effectiveness of campaigns across multiple touchpoints from anonymous to authenticated customer.

To learn more about how you can personalize, automate, and deliver cross-channel campaigns, visit www.adobe.com/marketing-cloud/cross-channel-marketing.html.

Adobe Marketing Cloud is the most comprehensive and integrated marketing solution available, enabling marketers to measure, personalize, and optimize marketing campaigns and digital experiences for optimal marketing performance. With its complete set of solutions, including Adobe Analytics, Adobe Target, Adobe Social, Adobe Experience Manager, Adobe Media Optimizer, Adobe Primetime, Adobe Audience Manager and Adobe Campaign, as well as real-time dashboards and a collaborative interface, marketers are able to combine data, insights and digital content to deliver the optimal brand experience to their customers. And it gives you everything you need to get deep insight into your customers, build personalized and unified customer experiences and manage your content and assets.

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