

# Mastering omni-channel to future proof your brand

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It seems that consumer-buying habits are changing – people are now using multiple devices and touchpoints to come to a final purchasing decision. According to a survey by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), [86% of global respondents and 65% of US-based respondents currently shop across at least two channels](#), while 25% of global respondents and 21% of US respondents are using four or five channels to shop. So for brands and marketers, understanding this change in behaviour and building upon it is absolutely crucial.

With any number of platforms at their disposal, consumers can choose when, where and how they want to interact with brands. So the considerable challenge that brands face is ensuring that they are putting out the right information, in the right place, at the right time on the right channel, to even stand a chance of holding the consumer's attention.

So this is where omni-channel comes in. The phrase 'omni-channel' has been bandied about a lot of late and is often used in the wrong context, with one common misconception being that omni-channel offers customers complete consistency. Rather than trying to duplicate all content from one platform to another, however, an omni-channel approach is user-centric and focuses on providing the customer with valuable content that is synchronised but not replicated from one touchpoint to the next.

Omni-channel should help to strengthen the relationship between consumer and brand. It is about ensuring the brand speaks with one voice regardless of where the conversation is taking place and offers the customer a seamless and personalised purchasing experience across all of the channels available.

And when it comes to omni-channel, personalisation really is key – so much so it can actually [increase conversion rates by as much as 70%](#). Reorienting the focus towards the customer and creating content that really resonates with them will in turn result in a much more enjoyable and meaningful experience. However, one of the biggest challenges brands face when it comes to offering personalised content across multiple channels is aggregating all the data collected to gain a single view of the customer.

In order to really master personalisation brands must organise customer data in a structured and systematic way. Marketers would be wise using first-party data to help create a unique

profile of each customer. Also allowing site visitors to self-identify via registration and login is vitally important in gaining an accurate depiction of the customer with all their unique preferences and quirks.

We have recently been working with Nottingham Forest Football Club to help it become one of the first Championship clubs in the world to offer fans a full service omni-channel retail experience. For Nottingham Forest's omni-channel strategy we wanted to build on the fans' existing loyalty with the club and develop an integrated service that marries up the whole customer experience – ensuring every touchpoint, from the in-store megastore to the mobile site to the desktop site – are all completely streamlined.

To do this we collected in-depth data about each customer and their individual buying habits and used it to overhaul the online store using Magento Enterprise software, to offer cutting edge features and point of sale functions. We also consolidated the benefits of the physical store with the online shop so customers are now able to benefit from a completely synchronised shopping experience throughout.

There is at present a distinct lack of understanding about the subject of omni-channel – so far only a handful of brands have really managed to utilise its potential. However to really compete for customers' attention, brands must work to offer greater personalisation and an enhanced and consistent shopping experience across all devices and touchpoints.