

Multi-channel marketing and how it works

The typical person uses more than four devices to consume information and entertainment. All these devices are connected to the internet. As a business owner, it's key to understand the implications of this "shared" access to information, as it influences how marketing campaigns will be structured in the future. Being present on just one channel is not enough anymore.

In order to keep sales up, a multi-channel marketing strategy can be helpful.

Let's do a quick recap of what multi-channel marketing is, and how it works. We will also show some of the benefits of multi-channel marketing, and how you can use it to improve your business.



What multi-channel marketing is

Multi-channel marketing is another word for using multiple channels to reach your customers. It used to be known as cross-channel marketing too, and it's a great tool to make it very easy for your customers to get what they desire, no matter which medium they spend their time on. In a world where companies compete for people's attention, being present on as many channels as possible is really important.

Typically multi-channel marketing includes one or more of the following mediums:

- Retail stores
- Paid advertising
- Websites
- Direct outreach via email
- Social Media

Why is multi-channel marketing so important

Multi-channel marketing is important because, depending on your niche, your potential customers could be present on any of the above mentioned channels, so your marketing efforts need to include as many channels as possible. You want to be where your prospective customers are. There are studies that show that top-tier customers tend to employ multiple channels and also that multi-channel customers are usually spending 3-4x more on products and services than single-level customers.

https://www.sas.com/en_us/insights/marketing/multichannel-marketing.html

Benefits of multi-channel marketing

Some of the benefits of multi-level marketing include comfortability of the users with the point of contact: if they can use whatever medium they feel comfortable with, this naturally increases the chances of them converting. You can also leverage the power of data collection as you have more touching points of prospective customers with your business. An example would be quizzes, questionnaires, etc. presented on different websites and social media sites. This makes it easy to understand if a marketing campaign works to reach and engage with a certain target audience or not. As you also manage the way your brand looks across different mediums, you make sure that the brand image is consistent, keeping your reputation consistent as well.

As our brains work in a way that makes them differentiate between information that we keep memorized and information that we discard, most marketing messages are quickly forgotten. You can circumvent this by being present on as many channels as possible. This can also lead to nice synergies: if a push message is being ignored by a customer for too long, multi-channel marketing can be used to simply use another channel to send the message again without annoying the user by coming across as spam.

Challenges when doing multi-channel marketing

There are a few things to keep in mind when starting with multi-channel marketing

Finding the right message for your targets

It's not enough to just deliver and find the right message to the right audience. You also have to make sure that the recipients are actually paying attention, and are willing to act.

Time-consuming and complex

As you cannot expect your audience to switch mediums and channels on short notice, you need to spend considerable amounts of time and budget to develop and optimize the campaigns used in multi-channel marketing. While also maintaining the trust of the customer.

Use analytics tools

This is especially important if you want to A/B test different campaigns and their effect on conversion and sales. If you neglect this, you will never know which campaigns worked out to be efficient and effective.

How to do multi-channel marketing right

Now that we have pointed out some pitfalls of multi-channel marketing, let's dive into some details on how to get the most out of multi-channel marketing. Three points are very important to keep in mind:

1. Find the right multi-channel marketing platform

Modern customers can usually interact with your product or brand in many different ways, and this can involve multiple touch points. A good platform needs to give you ways of handling these details. Most important here are processes and technology that is supported. Typical things to look for are campaign management capabilities, a great analytics section, execution and response attribution.

2. Make sure to keep the view of the customer fixed across all channels

In order to know the value of the customer, you need to always be mindful about his view and how he behaves across any given channel. That's why you should make an effort in collecting and centralizing data, as well as trying to manage it. You also need to make your advertisements and target groups reflect this.

3. Create a user experience that is consistent across channels too

If you want to differentiate your business from others, user experience is key. It needs to be high quality and, also very important, consistent. Having some channels with below average user experience can drastically damage your multi-channel marketing efforts.

4. Don't just execute many channels - integrate them

Only if you start to make all channels work together and improve, you can start to really get the benefits from the above three points. Studies and case studies have found integrated to work very effectively in a world where users continually switch channels and mediums and are used to consistent user experiences.

The Bottom Line

Multi-channel marketing is a very effective way to target a modern audience on as many touch points as possible. There are certain challenges connected to it such as being time consumptive and high maintenance. But the benefits clearly outweigh the downsides. One of the very key things to remember is to manage all the channels in a coordinated way using the same framework if possible. Having a single framework to manage campaigns can be beneficial if you need to execute and schedule meetings and evaluate customers. Tools like lead management frameworks can also effectively be used to assure that the messaging customer is done in a coordinated way. When done right, multi-channel marketing can yield very good results.