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Digital



Turning data into your growth engine.

Automate, personalize and elevate every experience, at scale.

January 2021

To be a leader in the experience economy, your brand must master customer data and decisioning—the foundation of scalable, personal experience.

06 TREND 1 **BRINGING IT IN-HOUSE**

Experience-led, customer-centered organizations should reduce reliance on outside vendors and agencies to manage customer data. That's what leaders are doing by bringing customer data as well as data management and decisioning capabilities in-house.

08 TREND 2 **CONNECTED BY CUSTOMER**

Your ability to translate customer data into value depends, increasingly, on creating connected experiences across every brand touch point. That means breaking down silos that fragment data, decisioning and operations.

10 TREND 3 **BUILT FOR CHANGE**

Given the speed at which these shifts are taking place and the complexity of what's involved, organizations will need to adopt more agile methods, methods with a focus on connected capabilities, real-time decisioning and insight-driven action.

12 TREND 4 **CUSTOMER-LED PRIVACY**

A new era of consumer privacy is upon us. Smart brands are rebuilding their approach to privacy from the ground up, with a focus on putting customers in control—and turning privacy into a valuable new touch point.

14 TREND 5 **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AT EVERY TOUCH**

None of what you do matters if it can't scale. Meeting your growth ambitions depends on your ability to improve and connect automation across the customer journey.

17 CONCLUSION **MAPPING THE PATH FORWARD**

By addressing these challenges and opportunities in the sequence that makes sense for your organization, it's now possible to personalize customer experiences—and grow—like never before.



INTRODUCTION

The lightbulb moment for data-driven decisioning.

Websites that remember you. Light switches that listen to you. Music players that anticipate your mood. Maps that predict your quickest route.

Smart, automated technologies that once seemed impossibly futuristic have now become so commonplace it is easy to forget how meaningfully they have changed our experience of the world—and how thoroughly they have changed our expectations of everything else in the world.

Why shouldn't everything remember you, listen to you, anticipate your needs and get you there faster?

Each day, brands are answering those questions via new business models, services and tools that orchestrate more personal, more human experiences at scale. In a world of price and feature commoditization, experience has become the primary differentiator and driver of growth for brands.

The focus on emotionally resonant *and* contextually relevant experiences has only expanded since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced businesses across industries to self-disrupt in order to meet evolving market conditions, new regulations and emerging customer expectations.

In this complex and fast-moving environment, trust is paramount. It's the primary ingredient in building customer loyalty—which helps you grow revenues and reduce churn. At a time when businesses are increasingly focused on customer loyalty and retention,² trust has become more important than ever. (See “The elements of trust,” page 5.)

Building trust among millions of customers depends on your ability to automate smart decisions at scale, in real time, and based on personalized data—all while respecting privacy through transparent policies and enhanced customer choice. By mastering those capabilities, you're able to show customers that you know them best, listen to them most intently and serve them most intuitively. You're able to orchestrate consistent, connected, relevant experiences. You're able to treat people as real, unique, individual people.

Yet even as data and automated decisioning have become more critical to business differentiation and growth, many brands struggle with foundational issues:

- Too much data from too many sources
- Complexity, redundancy, conflicts and disconnection between technologies

- No universal definition of customer identity
- Inability to understand the customer's wants and needs
- Disconnects along the customer journey
- Slow, inefficient, manual, disconnected decisioning processes
- Lack of transparency from vendors and marketing / media agency partners
- Uncertainty about what technologies to buy, rent or build
- Silos that fragment experiences and hinder insights across the journey

In our work with clients across industries, we've identified five underlying trends that are leading experience-focused brands toward better data and decisioning mastery. By adopting and mastering these approaches, your brand can effectively flip the switch on experience—and map a route to accelerated, sustainable growth.

89% of CMOs now expect to compete mostly on the basis of customer experience.¹

THE ELEMENTS OF TRUST.

Trust is an emotion that tends to feel intuitive and fluid. Yet that feeling has a number of specific dimensions—any one of which can cement or destroy trust between you and a friend, you and your employer, you and a brand.

Deloitte Digital research³ has found that for many consumers, the most important signal that inspires trust in a brand is *reliability*—that is, whether a brand consistently and dependably delivers on promises made. *Capability*—whether a company can create quality products, services or experiences—is the most important dimension for employees. *Humanity*—empathy and kindness toward people, and treating everyone fairly—is universally important across demographics and industries. *Transparency*—openly sharing information, motives and choices in straightforward and plain language—can play a particularly important role in trust when mistakes happen.

Reliability, capability, humanity and transparency: The ways that you collect, connect and act upon data can have a direct impact on all four of these dimensions of trust—and on your ability to preserve and deepen customer relationships. For example, customers who recognize transparency in your actions are 2.8 times more likely to continue purchasing from your brand after a data breach has occurred.⁴

TREND 1

Bringing it in-house.

We've come a long way since personalization meant adding a customer's first name to an email greeting. Nowadays, thanks to dynamic experience engines and data-driven marketing platforms, it's possible to orchestrate end-to-end, omnichannel, personalized experience journeys with your brand—delivering the right message in the right moment and the right context at each step along the way.

Managing all this starts with managing your customer data. In fact, the kind of in-the-moment relevance that customers now expect can't be orchestrated without a unified and comprehensive data foundation that you control—no matter what other technology or human capabilities you apply. **First-party customer data is now the most valuable and vital asset for brands to compete on experience.** And core assets should never be outsourced.

Yet too often, data provided by and about a brand's own customers is scattered across external—and sometimes inaccessible—agency partner and vendor platforms, as well as across tools managed by various, disconnected departments or teams within the enterprise. According to research we commissioned from Forrester Consulting in late 2020, half of surveyed data management decision-makers had experienced or expected to experience challenges with integrating data across systems; and only one in three companies had omnichannel campaign history and used it very effectively.⁵

To solve this issue, brands focused on delivering personalized experiences are actively working to bring first-party customer data—and the skills required to manage it—in-house.

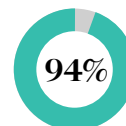
To enable their in-house teams, brands are building custom data management tools to complement commercially available technologies and platforms—and consolidating vendors and systems to help reduce complexity and build connectivity. Among companies we've identified as customer data management leaders, in response to the changing needs of customers 88% are actively reducing the number of vendors that manage their data—up from 80% in 2019.⁷

Given the acceleration of these trends, it won't be long before owning data and managing it in-house are table stakes for experience-led companies. Assuming your goal is to achieve decisive competitive advantage, it's important to aim beyond management toward mastery.

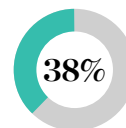
Standing in your way? Complexity. In-housing data management isn't an overnight process, nor a simple fix. Legacy issues like years of technology debt can prevent bold, rapid moves. Yet those moves are exactly what's needed in the face of rising customer expectations, new regulations and the burgeoning volume of data available to brands today.

To address this paradox both in the near and long term, many brands are balancing in-housing efforts with initiatives that evolve their ecosystem of external partners and technologies—with a focus on greater control, flexibility, collaboration and scalability. Rather than simply seeking cost reductions and efficiency, they're consolidating and *reimagining vendor relationships in ways that demand (and reward) shared accountability, continuous evolution, knowledge transfer and innovation.*

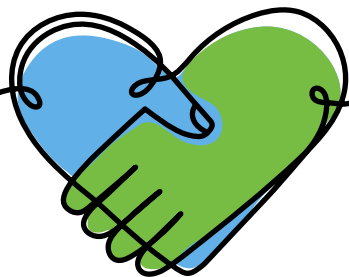
When taking this approach, the important thing is to have a clear vision of where you're going. That's why it's important to create and execute a comprehensive, enterprisewide customer data strategy that maps out the ultimate goals and key performance indicators, needed capabilities and technologies, and nearer-term opportunities that impact the route to owning your customer data.



94% of brands are actively building the skills required to manage more customer data in-house.



38% anticipate utilizing in-house teams for most data management by 2022.⁶



HOW IT CONNECTS

The value of owning and mastering first-party customer data has grown as brands grapple with an increasingly complex regulatory environment and changes to device and browser capabilities that together limit the ways that consumer data can be collected, stored, connected and used. (See related section, "Customer-led privacy," page 12.)

Brands seeking to connect and personalize experiences by customer cannot do so when customer data itself is fragmented across platforms and external partners. (See trend 2, "Connected by customer," page 8.)



TREND 2

Connected by customer.

The most effective customer experiences aren't just one-off moments in time. They're connected to the past. They're relevant in the moment. And they anticipate future customer needs. Seventy-five percent of surveyed customers said they expect brands to know their purchase history, and half (52%) like for companies to know how satisfied they are with the product.⁸

To understand why that kind of connectedness is so important to customer experiences, think about how we choose personal friends. Acquaintances who make us do all the work of remembering our last interactions, or who suddenly start acting differently as we get to know them, never progress past acquaintances to become friends—much less “good friends.”

When brands treat us inconsistently or incoherently, we're just as likely to disengage and find a different brand.

But fragmented experiences are hard to avoid when your teams and technologies are siloed by channel or by engagement phase, and when your customer base is both enormous and diverse. Each customer is the same person from the moment of first awareness to the moment of purchase and beyond. Each is the same person whether they're looking at a social media app or calling your customer service number. Your brand should be equally consistent.

Coherent experiences *for customers* aren't possible without connected data *about*

customers. That means consolidating data in ways that let you automatically add, edit and remove data as you get to know your customer better.

Today's customer data platforms are designed to serve exactly that purpose. A CDP puts control of first-person customer data in your hands, all in one centralized system—helping you to make decisions and create experiences across all touch points in connected ways that are otherwise hard if not impossible to achieve at scale.

Well implemented, a CDP enables you to close the feedback loop with customers, by acting on what you know at the same time that you expand what you know. All that knowledge is put to work helping customers feel valued, heard and served in a more personal, dynamic and reliable way.

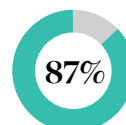
Plenty of brands are recognizing the importance of a unified platform for customer data. Already, 73% of companies are implementing CDPs to enable customer experience use cases, and 61% say that a CDP will be critical to their personalization efforts going forward.⁹

But the single view of the customer that's enabled by a CDP and connected decisioning tools and algorithms can only take you so far. Connected consumer experiences also require connected brand operations. Sales, commerce, marketing, advertising, customer care all contribute to the overall customer experience. They

should all function as one in the eyes of the customer. A CDP serves as the technological cornerstone of that connected experience; but the way that you organize your people and processes plays an equally important role.

Getting there means developing fluency and collaboration beyond your marketing organization. Experience leaders are doing just that, with 66% saying IT is now involved in customer experience data management—up from 54% in 2019.¹⁰ Other internal groups including sales, service and product development also have important roles to play.

Your enterprisewide customer data strategy should help identify what's required to accelerate your success and break down the silos that slow your progress. The changes that are necessary in order to truly connect your organization around the customer's needs may be significant and disruptive in the near term. But they're also increasingly necessary in order to build relationships with customers—real, unique, individual people—that last for the long term.



87% of experience leaders say customers expect omnichannel personalization, and ...




... **90%** say customers increasingly expect relevant, personalized information.¹¹



IN THE REAL WORLD

A global manufacturer of computers and peripherals sought to build a scalable, real-time personalized marketing engine, but was hamstrung by data fragmentation across platforms. We helped the company start with a proof of concept that built on data sets that the organization had not previously used to increase email click-through rates.

What started as a three-month engagement has since expanded to build additional models based on response rates for specific content offers, and to build out the organization's machine learning architecture.

An aerial photograph of a paved path with numerous large, hand-painted green arrows pointing in various directions. Several people are walking along the path, their shadows cast long and dark. A large, semi-circular teal overlay covers the top right portion of the image, containing white text.

Customer data and
decisioning should be
organized by who the
customer is—not by which
team in your organization
is engaging with them.

TREND 3

Built for change.

As the COVID-19 pandemic swept across communities and impacted markets in early 2020, many organizations found their business strategy and marketing quickly fell out of sync. Messaging needed to be updated. Marketing key performance indicators (KPIs) designed to track conversion of leads didn't account for new sales or service delivery models. Media plans crafted months earlier suddenly targeted the wrong people or the wrong moments to drive the desired action.

The whiplash was enough to leave even the most-nimble marketer feeling dizzy. Many leaders soon found that old models, tools and partner relationships were not built to accommodate the need for real-time reporting, modeling, segmentation and orchestration. But with revenues down and cost of sales rising, there was no time to pause existing efforts and invest in fundamental transformation.

What was needed—and what remains urgent today—is the ability for marketers to course-correct in the moment. What was needed, in a word, was agility.

Agility has been a buzzword across the business world for years. But now it has become a true mandate for marketers. Faced not only with marketplace change but also with the constant barrage of competitive pressures, rising consumer expectations and shifting regulations, forward-thinking marketers are reimagining what they do and adding a focus on building fast, smart adaptability into everything they do.

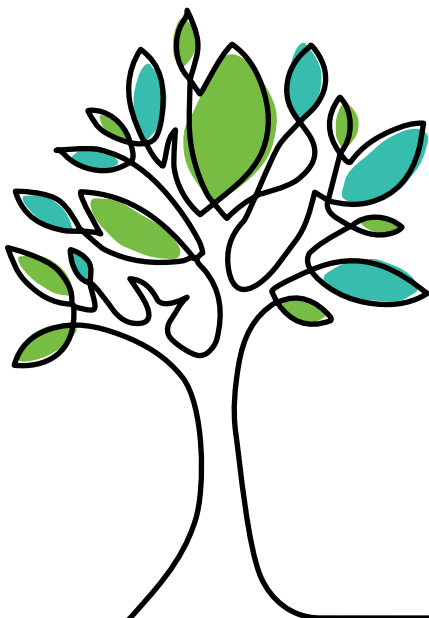
For brands struggling to achieve greater agility, the so-called DevOps model familiar to technology leaders can help: By connecting development, testing and operations through integrated, interdependent teams on collaborative platforms, IT organizations have accelerated the path to deployment, adoption and impact for a wide spectrum of digital projects.

Your marketing technology core can be similarly evolved—powering and improving existing campaigns as you rapidly and iteratively test, adopt and control new capabilities, connections and approaches.

Data and decisioning mastery are critical to agility. Having a well-implemented, unified

customer data platform will allow you to identify new customer microsegments as they coalesce, glean real-time insights into the most effective ways to engage those audiences, and adapt your campaigns and actions on the fly. By managing your data in serverless or low-maintenance solutions with low- or no-code technologies, you set the stage for even greater flexibility in the future. And advanced AI tools enable you to model lifetime value, propensity, churn, next best message and more—in the moment, based on the most current data.

To get there, CMOs will need to collaborate with CIOs and/or CTOs to connect and leverage talent and tools across the enterprise. Done right, the impact of these efforts can be expansive—stretching beyond marketing into helping you evolve the products you sell, the services you provide, the policies you set, the prices you charge, and more. In that sense, customer data and automated decisioning can create a kind of two-way mirror for your brand—helping you reflect the customer's immediate context and needs while generating insights that lead to greater value and connection.



WHY IT MATTERS FOR GROWTH

Especially in times of change, being adaptable to customer needs has tangible business value. As COVID-19 transformed lives and markets in 2020, 58% of global consumers we surveyed were able to name a brand that pivoted its offerings quickly in response to the pandemic. And among those respondents, 82% said that the new, more relevant offerings had increased their desire to do more business with the brand.¹²



TREND 4

Customer-led privacy.

It seems like every month, new regulations and limitations on customer data, privacy and consent are moving the goal posts for brands. Europe's General Data Privacy Regulation, the California Consumer Privacy Act—and, more recently, the California Privacy Rights Act—have set high bars for consumer notice, control and consent regarding personal data collection, as well as significant data management requirements for brands. These changes reflect a groundswell of preference from consumers for greater transparency and control over how their personal data is collected and used.

Adding to that, leading browser and technology developers continue to institute changes such as the sunset of third-party cookies, which further impact the ways that marketers can reach and message to consumers. Third-party cookies have been a foundational tool in digital marketing effectiveness for a generation. According to one study, consumer profiles built using techniques such as third-party cookie tracking provided an average 123% improvement in audience identification when combined with optimization software.¹³ Those results helped build a sizeable market: US advertisers spent nearly

\$12 billion in 2019 alone on the acquisition of third-party audience data and on solutions to manage, process and analyze this data.¹⁴

In this evolving environment, it is vital to recognize the opportunities—and the dangers. Beyond the fine print in new regulations, **there is increasing reputational risk—not to mention financial risk—for any brand that chooses to ignore customer preferences or circumvent privacy laws.** In fact, a single trust-related event can erode the market capitalization of a company by 20%–56% in as little as three months.¹⁵

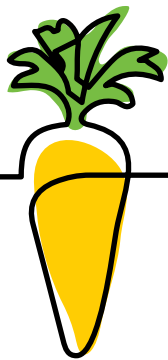
That means that, instead of working to find “the next third-party cookie,” your organization should focus on putting consumer needs and preferences first, and building (or rebuilding) trust by literally putting customers in control of how you collect and handle their data.

To do that, a next-generation privacy interface is key. We recommend an approach that gives the customer fine-grained control and informed consent regarding the collection, storage, use, sharing, sale and transfer of their data.

As you build that system, it's important to determine what data should be stored and used. There is risk in collecting and storing data that has no value to your business. Data privacy and compliance also need clear ownership and centralized management, with governance across the whole customer relationship.

Ultimately, this is about much more than improving your browser cookie disclosures. It's about building a privacy center that is easy to find and navigate, is secure, and is *valuable to the customer*. It means providing up-to-date transparency about your data practices; giving the customer the right to explicitly opt in (and to painlessly opt out); offering self-service tools for data access and control—including consent revocation and data deletion; and baking in capabilities that allow you to adapt based on future regulatory and marketplace changes.

It's about recognizing the foundational importance of transparency and trust in your relationships with customers (see “The elements of trust,” page 5), and turning privacy into an opportunity to enhance that trust.



WHY IT MATTERS FOR GROWTH

Of customers who highly trust a brand, 88% have bought again from that brand and 62% buy almost exclusively from that brand for the category.¹⁷ And even when that trust doesn't lead directly to purchases, it can help you build a stronger foundation for personalizing experiences. As noted in Harvard Business Review, “Companies that are transparent about the information they gather, give customers control of their personal data, and offer fair value in return for it will be trusted and will earn ongoing and even expanded access.”¹⁸

91% of
leaders say
data privacy is a
top concern of
customers.¹⁶



TREND 5

Emotional intelligence at every touch.

Imagine being able to hire a trusted, responsive, empathetic specialist to stand at the ready for every one of your customers, big-dollar buyer or less, frequent or occasional, no matter the channel of engagement. Today, thanks to the convergence of artificial intelligence, machine learning, automation and always-on communication channels, you can provide exactly those kinds of experiences for every customer—without hiring an additional customer service agent.

It is now possible, in other words, to become an emotionally intelligent enterprise—and to do so at a scale that was impossible until recently. This is the “it factor” that makes brands feel more like people—fostering a sense of humanity and greater trust. (See “The elements of trust,” page 5.)

Connected, automated decisioning

is what lets you do that. It's what makes it possible to listen attentively, respect boundaries, anticipate needs and orchestrate experiences based on how the customer views and wishes to engage with you in the moment.

The key, here again, is *connected*. That means running hundreds if not thousands of algorithms simultaneously in context of each other to coordinate decisioning in real time, at an individual level, across channels, at scale. The single-customer view that your customer data platform provides (see trend 2, page 8) will have little value if the decisions you make from that data aren't also personalized and connected in context with one another.

Connected decisioning is what helps you make sure that the banner ad that you show a customer isn't promoting a product that the same customer just purchased on your website. It's what helps you recognize

when the person phoning your call center is the same one who abandoned a chatbot session on your social channel moments ago—so you don't need to ask the same questions that they just answered, and you can anticipate their needs in the moment.

It's about finding dynamic ways to turn the data you've collected into experiences that fit the moment, context and audience. As a result, customers who were once considered (and treated as) lookalikes can increasingly be engaged as unique individuals, with greater relevance than ever before.

Customers already expect this kind of treatment—and will abandon brands that fall short. Two out of three surveyed customers said they expect their favorite brands to send them personalized offers based on their loyalty.²⁰ And nearly half (47%) would abandon a brand that delivers poor, impersonal or frustrating experiences.²¹ Without connected decisioning, the experiences you orchestrate are more likely to feel

impersonal and out-of-the-blue rather than personalized and out-of-this-world.

CMOs today largely underestimate the integration, scale and speed that is required in order to achieve connected decisioning at scale. But they also underestimate the opportunity. Our research shows that customers who have developed an emotional bond with a brand are more likely to have made a purchase from the brand within the past six months. They are less likely to be lured away by a cheaper deal. They are more willing to forgive mistakes—even multiple times. And four out of five say they're willing to go out of their way to promote a long-time favorite brand.²²


Evangelism, forgiveness, more purchases—that's a potent recipe for sustained loyalty and sustainable growth.

By becoming an emotionally intelligent enterprise, you can build the kind of lasting, valuable customer relationships that money can't buy. And you can drive the kind of growth that competitors can't touch.

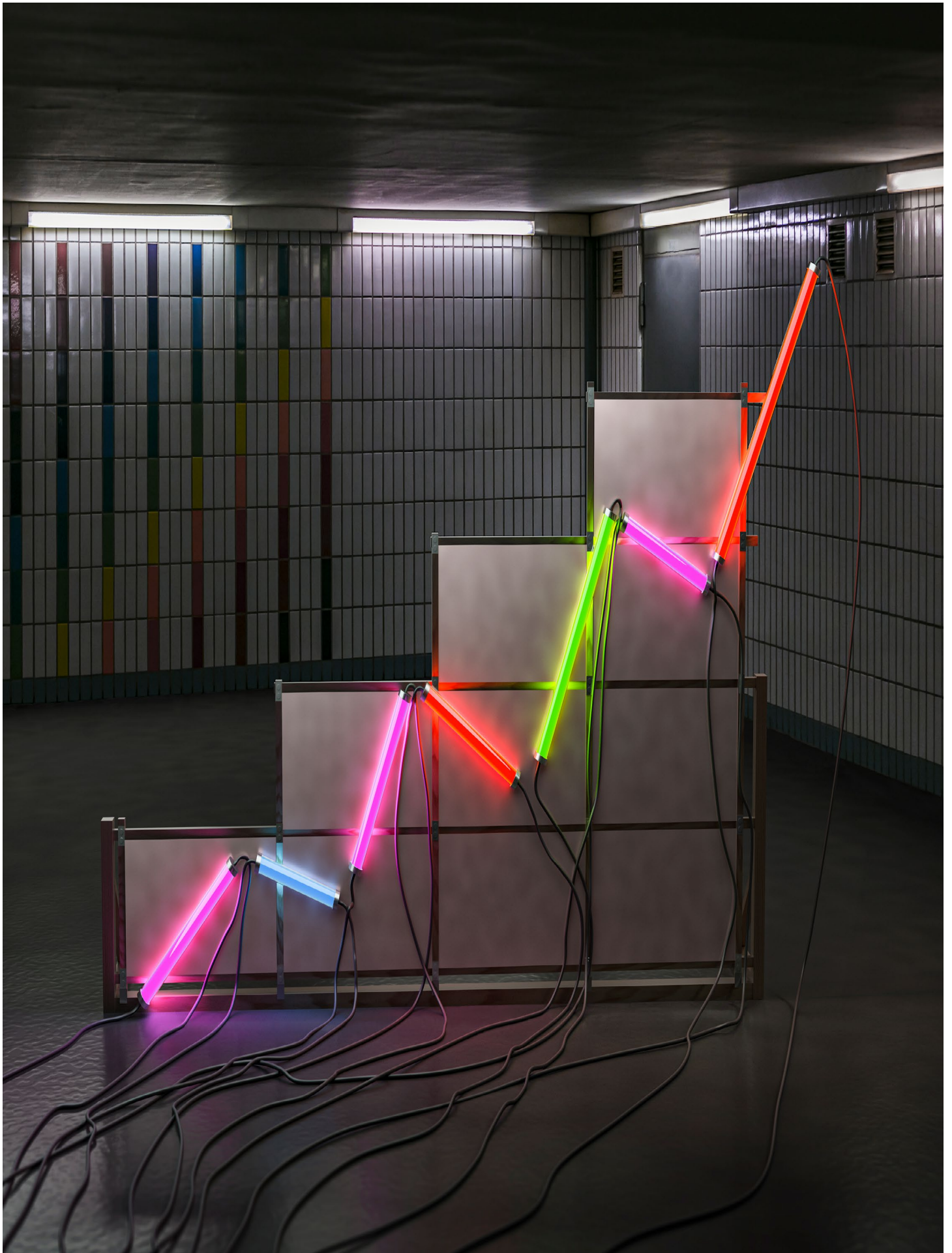


IN THE REAL WORLD

A professional sports team looked to boost single-game ticket sales. We leveraged the team's customer database and applied machine learning to identify people with a propensity to purchase and then targeted them with various offers. By testing and tuning engagement, we helped boost results by 54%.

A close-up photograph of a woman with a shaved head, smiling broadly with her eyes closed. She is wearing a light-colored, textured sweater. The background is blurred, showing green foliage and what appears to be an outdoor setting. A large, semi-circular graphic overlay in teal and yellow is positioned in the upper right corner, containing text.

93% of customer data management decision-makers are implementing more automation in order to meet the changing needs of customers—up from 82% in 2019.¹⁹



CONCLUSION:

Elevate experiences, and grow.

Thanks to the rapid evolution of artificial intelligence and machine learning, data management tools and omnichannel engagement platforms, ***it is now possible for brands to remember you, listen to you, anticipate your needs and get you there faster.***

How do you make that happen for your customers? Through a unified, connected core of customer data—managed and activated by your own people and technology. Through a customer-centered, responsive approach to privacy and operations. And through automated, personalized, intuitive, in-the-moment decisions that orchestrate and elevate every customer experience at every touch point with your brand.

Across industries, innovative leaders are activating these capabilities—and vaulting past their competition along the way.

The specific path for every organization is different. You'll need to bring to bear the right talent, technology, strategy and operational processes—in sync. The complexity of these initiatives pose a challenge, and the challenge is growing. In 2020, fewer data management decision-makers said they were able to conduct real-time analysis on customers and activate that analysis than in 2019.²³

Given the speed of market and technology change, today's business leaders don't have the luxury of time to make a difference.

To begin the journey, we recommend zeroing in on the most high-impact changes you can make in the near term. That may mean identifying a single marketing challenge with a limited audience in a single channel, and then aligning around a testing process and reporting framework. Once you've seen positive results, you can begin layering in additional markets and channels. That will ultimately lead to activating additional use cases, sources of data and ongoing support and refinement.

In the beginning, much of what you do will likely lean on existing tools, talent and partnerships. But all along the way it's important to balance current capabilities and relationships with your end goals—and making strategic decisions that advance you along the path.

Initially you may find that you need to forge or expand relationships in order to leverage talent, tools, perspectives or techniques that your organization currently lacks. Longer term, it's important to develop a strategy and plan for bringing key capabilities in data management, decisioning automation and creative execution in-house. Many companies already are moving this direction.

Thirty-eight percent of customer data management decision-makers say they anticipate mostly using in-house teams for data management in the next two years, with an additional 30% planning to take a hybrid approach involving both third parties and in-house resources.

The good news is, nothing puts success on repeat like automation. As your people offload repetitive and manual tasks and as you layer in the complex intelligence and decisions made possible through connected machine learning, your organization can increasingly focus resources on higher value opportunities and complex challenges.

As a result, you'll be able to continually elevate customer experiences. You'll deepen customer trust and loyalty. And you'll grow. Automatically.





MAPPING THE PATH FORWARD

There is no single, “right” path to becoming a data-driven, emotionally intelligent enterprise. But there are important questions that every brand will need to answer along its journey. Start by asking yourself:

- 1 Do I have a single view of our customer that is accessible to the entire organization?
- 2 Have we embedded automated decisioning across touch points?
- 3 Are we measuring customer experiences both actively (e.g., through surveys) and passively (e.g., through behavior)?
- 4 How can we integrate sales, marketing and service data with core and operational data to drive profitable growth?
- 5 How can we better use data to generate intelligent insights that increase brand affinity for both *employees* and *customers* alike, across all experience platforms?
- 6 How can we integrate teams across customer touch points—including marketing, sales, commerce and service—in ways that produce more coherent experiences for customers?
- 7 Do we have processes and communication structures in place that ensure current business strategy is reflected in marketing KPIs?



ADDITIONAL READING: DATA AND DECISIONING MASTERY.



2021 Global Marketing Trends.

Find your focus.

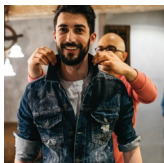
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Better together.

Improving human experience with AI.

[View here](#)



From tracking to trust.

Stronger bonds of loyalty and trust begin by giving consumers more control over the data you collect and how it is used.

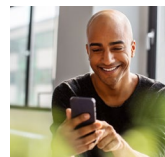
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The ABCs of Customer Data in Marketing.

Making sense of today's customer data systems and platforms.

[View here](#)



From “nothing but a number” to “you’ve got my number.”

Guiding principles to help realize the potential in your customer data.

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Toward a more human brand.

Turbulent times bring an opportunity to create more genuine and valuable bonds with customers.

[View here](#)



GET IN TOUCH

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