



Omnichannel Business Strategy:

How to Create a Seamless Customer Experience



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Introduction

Modern-day consumers have more power than ever. Their expectations have changed drastically over the last decade, and they expect information at their fingertips, regardless of the communication channel they use. As a result, the traditional single-channel approach is no longer enough and will not give businesses a deep understanding of their customers or help them reach their revenue targets.

Businesses must take a holistic view of customers to have a competitive edge and meet rising expectations. All the core customer communication channels form a singular, continuous customer journey. As a result, companies should consider all interactions as part of a single experience rather than creating separate mobile, website, and social media experiences. This is where a solid omnichannel strategy comes in.



With an effective omnichannel business strategy, brands can take every touchpoint into account, review, and optimize their message across different communication channels to make customer interaction seamless, garner more sales, and increase brand loyalty.





What Is An Omnichannel Experience?

An omnichannel experience happens when a brand markets, sells, and supports prospects and customers across multiple channels, treating each interaction or touchpoint as part of a single, frictionless customer experience. Modern-day consumers expect personalization and consistency, whether they are browsing for products from a company they have been loyal to for decades or exploring what a new business offers. To provide customers with the experiences they want, marketing, sales, and customer service strategies must align. Omnichannel communications offer the framework for that to happen.



Why Is Omnichannel Becoming So Important?

Do consumers notice the difference a consistent experience across channels can make? Omnichannel marketing statistics indicate that consumers don't just notice but also respond to and expect such experiences. A search on Google Trends shows that the term "omnichannel" has grown increasingly popular in the last five years.



One study conducted by Think With Google found that omnichannel strategies led to an **80%** higher rate of incremental store visits. Similarly, **Aspect Software** found that businesses that employ omnichannel marketing strategies retain 91% more customers year-over-year than those that don't.

According to **Zendesk**, 87% of customers believe brands need to put more effort into providing a seamless experience, and 64% of customers expect real-time assistance regardless of the customer service channels they use. Yet, despite the demand for omnichannel experiences, more than 50% of businesses lack any omnichannel strategy. Companies that don't adapt quickly run the risk of getting left behind.





The Importance Of Embracing Omnichannel

An omnichannel approach to customer experience has become an essential investment for businesses looking to maintain a solid brand reputation and increase incremental sales. It is more important than ever for companies to communicate the same messages across all the channels their customers choose to use. When done right, an effective omnichannel strategy provides a resolution-focused, personalized experience to every customer, regardless of how they connect with a business.

Of consumers cited, 73% say customer experience is a critical factor influencing their purchasing decisions, and one in three consumers would drop a brand after a single bad experience. Clearly, the customer experience is the number one driver of brand loyalty.

Offering a top-notch customer experience is vital to a business's success, and more companies need to embrace an omnichannel strategy that focuses on customer service enhancement. The present generation of market-driven consumers expects it. A real-time omnichannel engagement model can be the critical differentiator between whether a customer chooses one brand over a competitor and whether they stick with that brand for their next purchase decision.





The Foundation Of An Omnichannel Approach

A well-thought-out omnichannel strategy enables brands to connect across all customer touchpoints and offers seamless customer experiences across all channels and devices. While there is no single formula for creating an omnichannel strategy, the most successful adopters share some key factors.

A "Customer First" Mindset

Today's digital consumers are more connected and empowered than ever before. With just a few simple keystrokes, they can affect a brand's reputation, so businesses must focus on improving and maintaining the customer experience. Those that keep the customer at the forefront of their strategy will achieve higher satisfaction ratings and overall brand loyalty.

A Holistic Customer View

The second characteristic of a successful omnichannel approach is the 360-degree customer view. To simplify, this is an aggregated and holistic representation of each customer based on the information held by a business. By understanding its customers' past behaviors, a brand can engage with them more effectively by creating tailored, personalized messages, now and into the future. Building customer profiles allows brands to unify data and create customized omnichannel experiences.

Companies can create customer profiles based on their consumers' actual geographic and demographic information, purchase behaviors, and buying history. By gathering all the customer insights into one source, a brand can gain a holistic view of its customers. There can be no omnichannel experience without a deep understanding of the customer and their preferences. Building a holistic view of customers is a one-way ticket toward building a stronger relationship between customers and brands.

Consistency Across Channels

Customer communication channels need to be interconnected and not built in silos. Through an omnichannel approach, businesses can ensure their customers have a seamless experience and receive consistent messages across multiple channels. For example, if a customer visits the company's website or private messaging channel, ideally, they would have the same experience. In addition, a consistent brand image is vital to building and maintaining a customer's trust.





How An Omnichannel Strategy Benefits Businesses

According to a report published by Salesforce in 2019, 67% of customers use multiple channels to complete a single transaction. Today, if businesses aren't offering a unified multichannel engagement model, they provide a substandard experience to their customers. An omnichannel strategy is non-negotiable for many customers, and as many as 40% of customers say they won't do business with brands if they can't use their preferred communication channels.

Through an omnichannel communications model, both customers and businesses win by providing potential and existing customers with seamless, integrated experiences. Here are a few advantages of implementing an omnichannel business strategy.

Builds Customer Loyalty

Creating a customer experience that delights through omnichannel marketing helps businesses earn customer trust and builds loyalty. Customers today appreciate and demand a good experience, and they don't mind paying more for it.

By improving customer engagement across multiple channels, delivering personalized messages, and effectively streamlining communications, businesses can keep customers coming back for more.

Improves Brand Visibility

The online shopping experience has drastically changed in recent years. Two decades ago, consumers used a maximum of one or two touchpoints to make a purchase decision. Now it is common to have more than four.

Investing in an omnichannel strategy makes it possible for a business to share its brand message consistently across all communication channels. In addition, creating a seamless experience across platforms gives a brand more visibility and allows consumers to interact with a brand whenever and however they prefer, which can also help a business establish a strong connection with its consumers and drive more sales.

Improves Buyer Experience

A recent survey found that around 71 percent of customers want a consistent experience across all communication channels when they interact with brands. However, less than a quarter of them receive it during their buyer's journey. A typical buyer journey entails numerous interactions with a business, ranging from the initial brand awareness stage to eventually making a purchase and becoming a loyal customer.

Businesses can capture the attention of these potential customers and showcase their commitment to customer service by optimizing their use of the different marketing channels during the buyer's journey and ensuring that their consumers receive a consistent user experience.

Increases Customer Engagement

Omnichannel marketing allows businesses to build their presence across various channels and connect with their audience wherever they might be. Today's consumers are more tech-savvy than ever before, and they prefer to utilize multiple channels. Therefore, businesses that plan to implement Omnichannel marketing need to clearly understand their customers' behavior across various channels. Only then will they be able to design content for different purposes and tailor their messages to yield the best results.

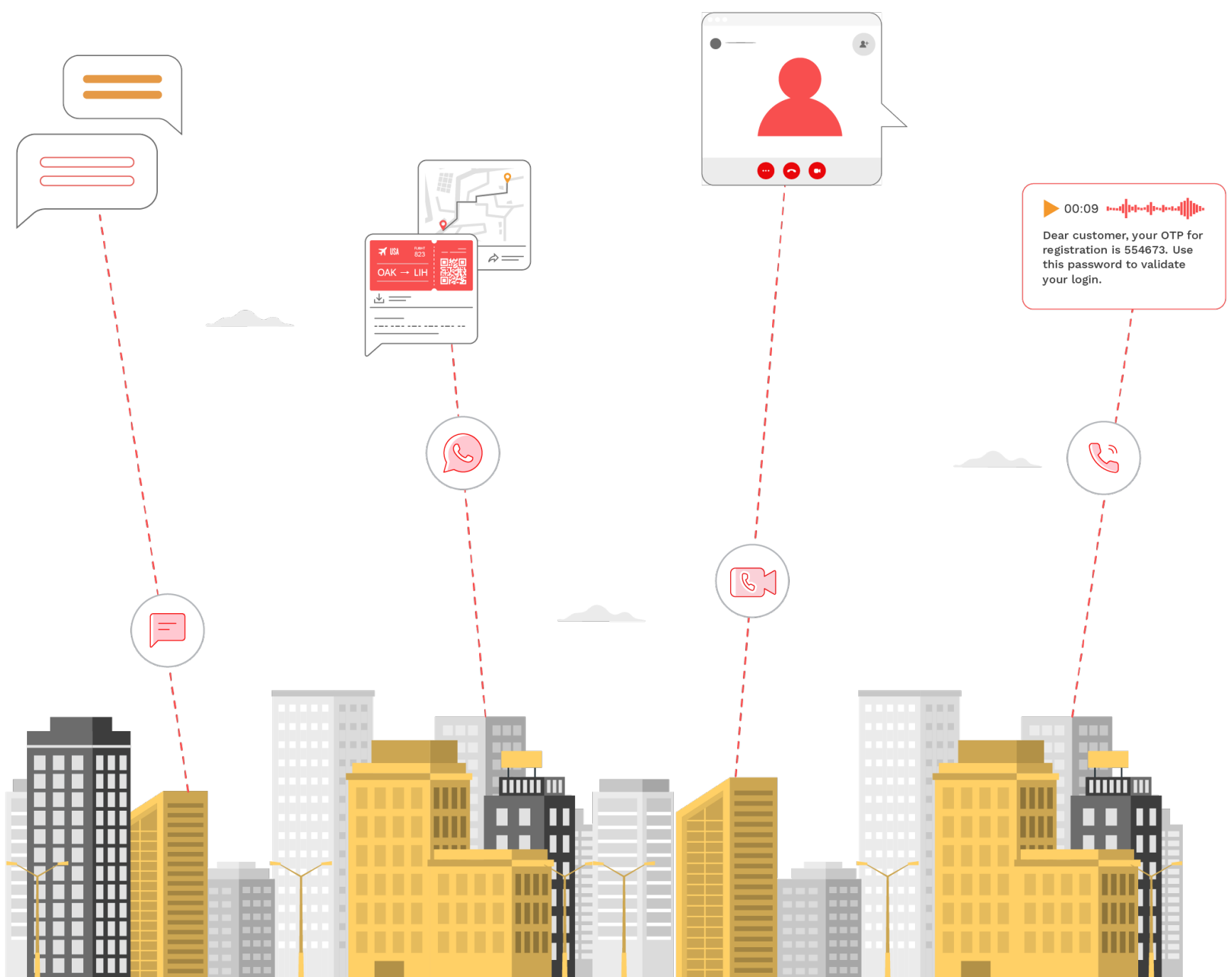
Increases Sales and Revenue Growth

All the benefits of an omnichannel marketing strategy put together can drive one primary goal - sales. Industry experts believe that adopting an omnichannel approach encourages consumers to make repeated purchases. According to the Marketing Automation report published by Omnisend, businesses that used three or more channels earned a **287%** higher purchase rate than those using a single-channel campaign.

Beyond the boost of sales, an omnichannel marketing strategy has shown to have a significant impact on businesses' overall revenue. According to the Aberdeen Group, organizations with a solid omnichannel marketing process see a 9.5% year-over-year increase in their annual revenue compared to companies that do not have an omnichannel strategy.

Improves Collaboration Across Teams

The data insights obtained from omnichannel marketing campaigns can help companies improve their cross-team collaboration in many ways. Let's take a look at the sales and support alignment as an example. Understanding how a consumer interacts with a company across touchpoints can help sales teams improve their sales strategy and pitch the most relevant products to the consumer. Similarly, tracking a customer's previous interactions across channels can help the customer service team solve customer complaints more effectively.



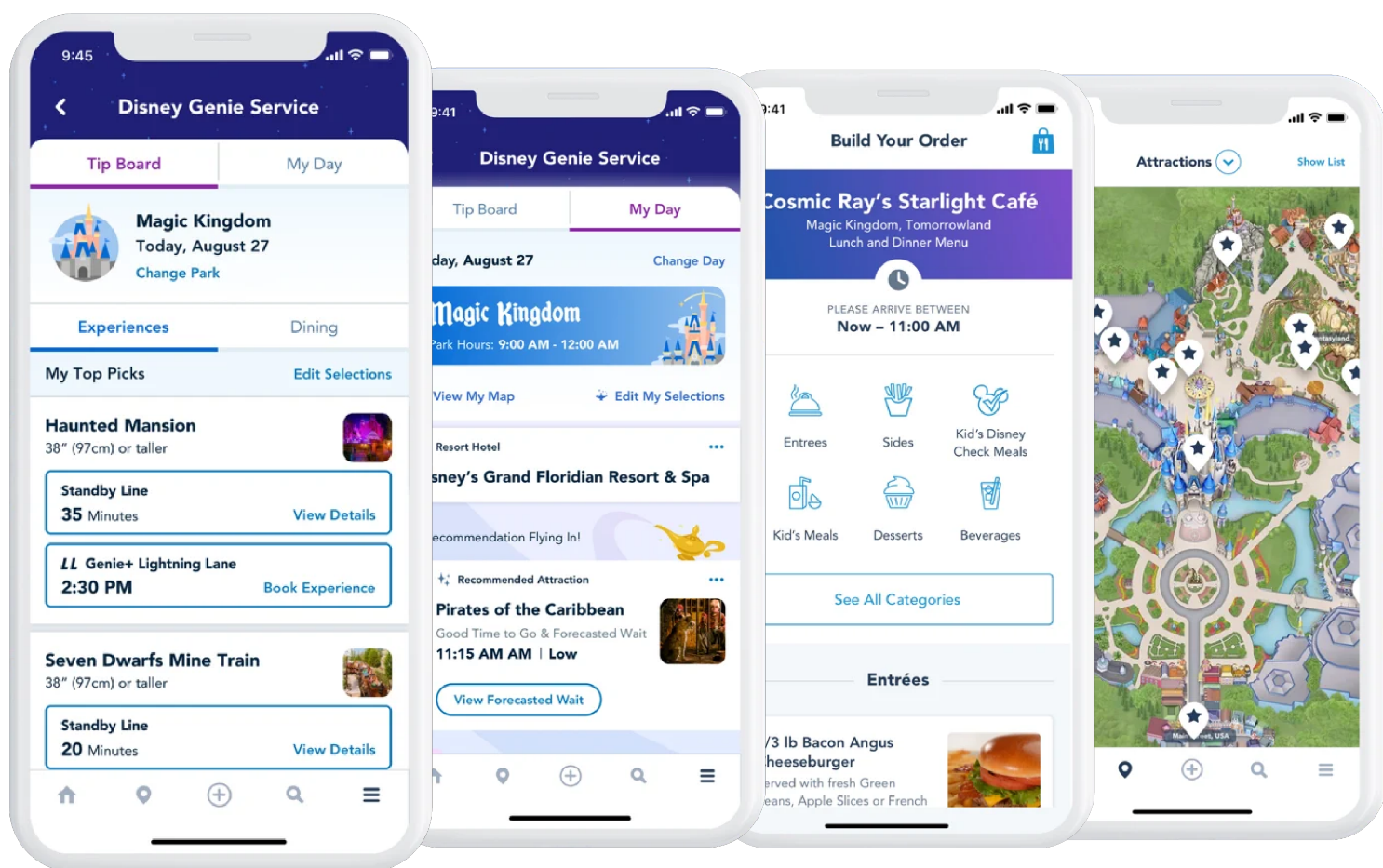


Companies That Provide Omnichannel Experiences

Omnichannel marketing caters to the needs of personalized experience-seeking consumers. Mass messaging is a thing of the past. "Omnichannel marketing" isn't just a buzzword anymore. It has transcended the "trend" phase to become an essential strategy for implementing the next phase of emerging technologies like web 3.0.

Companies need to adopt an omnichannel strategy to gain the attention of new customers and strengthen existing relationships. The following are prime examples from six brands across different verticals that deliver exceptional omnichannel experiences, and they highlight the benefits of implementing an omnichannel strategy successfully.z

Disney



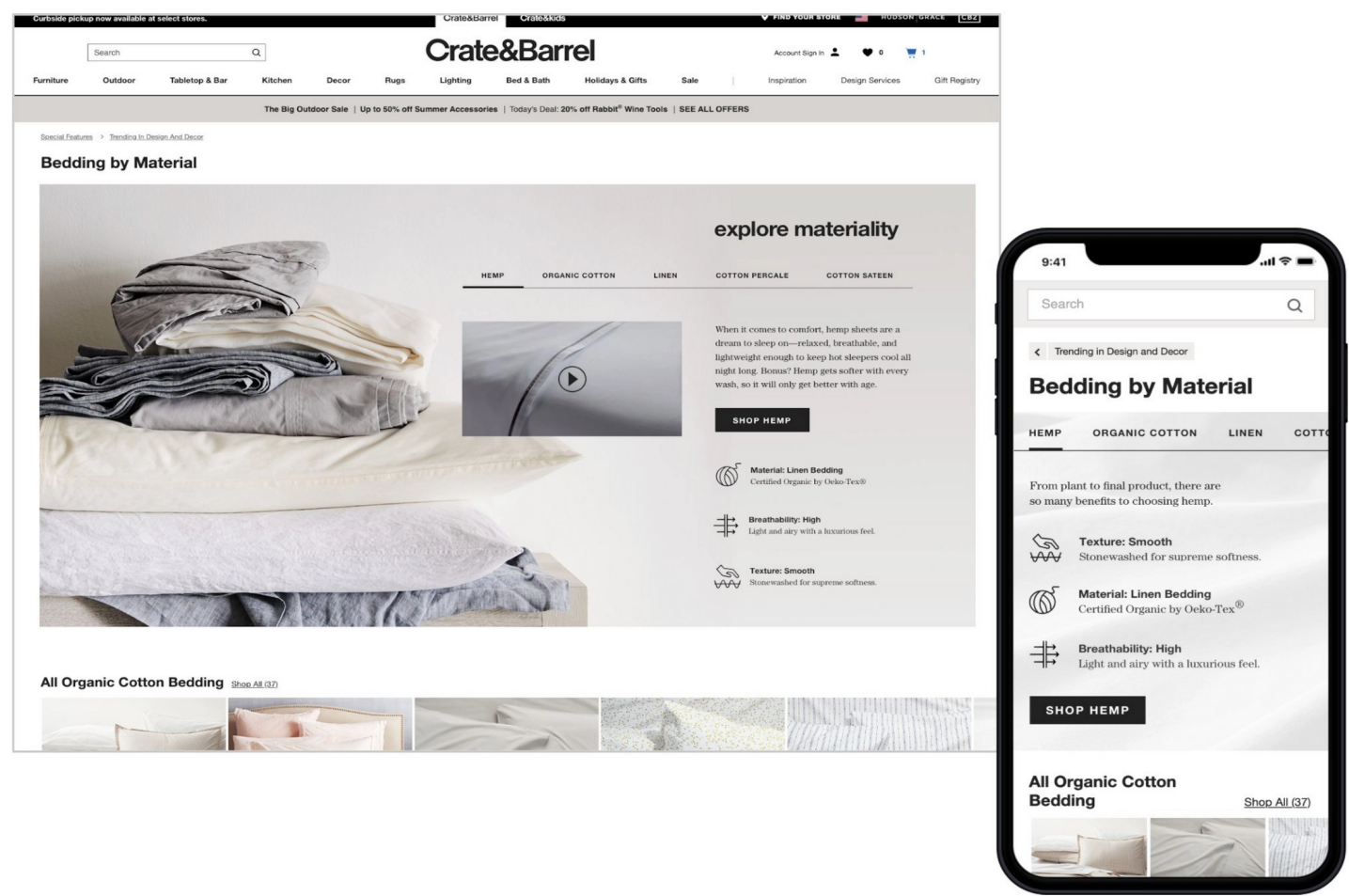
Disney is a global brand that makes it easy for users to feel a connection, and the Disney experience is all in the details. Every part of their website is highly optimized and is mobile responsive. For example, after guests book their Disney World resort visit, they can plan every aspect of their trip through the My Disney Experience app. This app lets visitors locate and check the estimated wait times for attractions they bookmarked in their experience tool.



Taking it a step further, Disney recently introduced the Magic Band program. Magic Band, a colorful wristband, is an all-in-one device that effortlessly connects users to all the vacation choices they made with My Disney Experience.

Disney World visitors can enter the parks, connect to their Disney PhotoPass account, check in to FastPass lanes, unlock their hotel rooms, and charge purchases made in the park via their Magic Band. Bands link to a My Disney Experience account, which parkgoers can access on the mobile app.

Crate & Barrel



Crate & Barrel is an international home decor store that sells home essentials like modern furniture, small kitchen appliances, and dinnerware. While the brand has been successful for years, it has been doing exceedingly well by enhancing its customer experience and increasing brand loyalty.

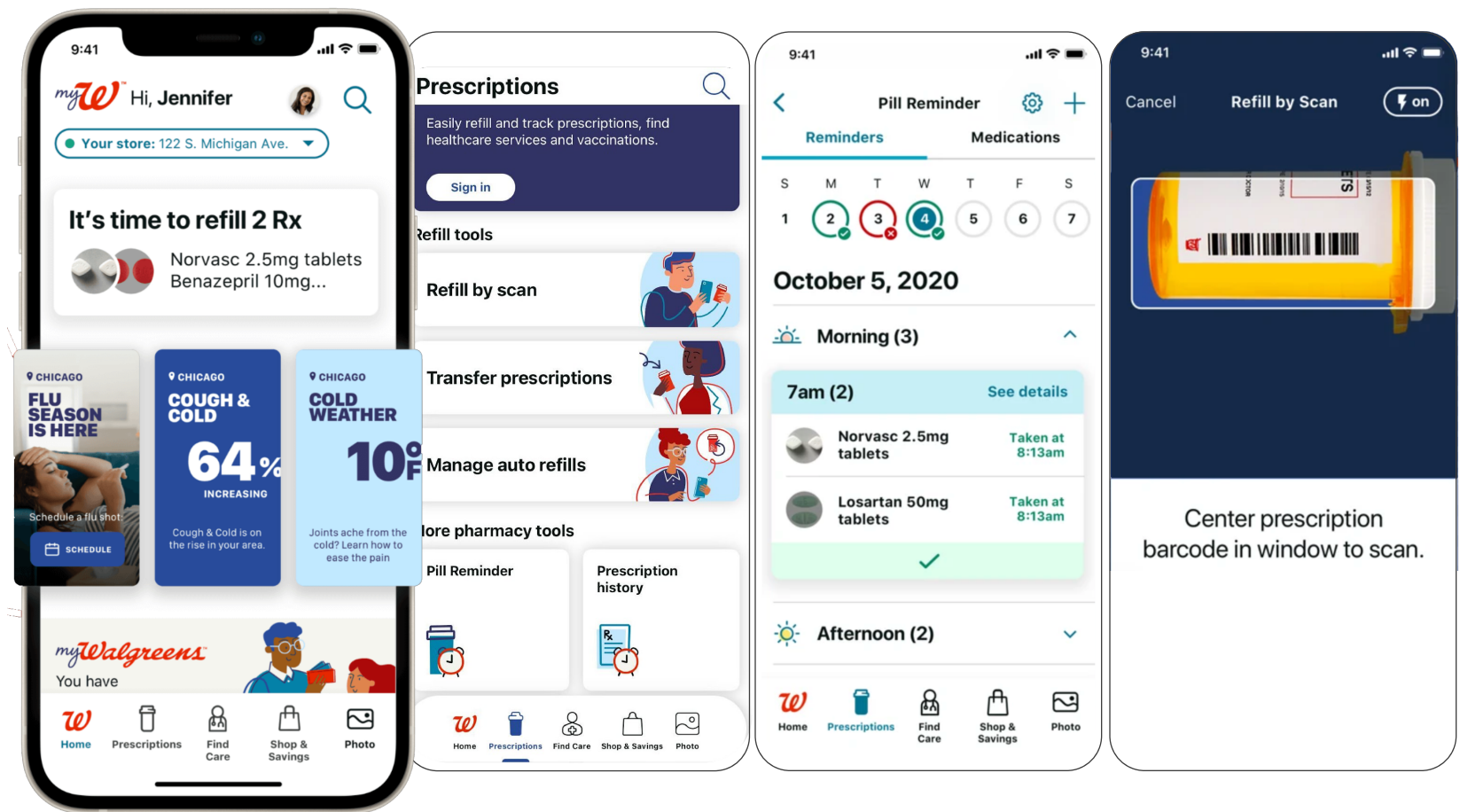
Through its user experience tests, Crate & Barrel found that many consumers toggle between several devices before making purchases. As a result, they implemented an omnichannel approach to capitalize on this consumer behavior.

Whenever consumers log into their account, the app saves their data from product browsing history and shopping preferences, enabling the users to access their favorite products across multiple devices. This new feature allows consumers to continue from where they left off in the shopping process.



Implementing an omnichannel customer experience strategy also helped Crate & Barrel increase its revenue by 10%. In addition, Crate & Barrel also introduced their 3D Room Designer feature, allowing consumers to place any Crate & Barrel item virtually within their home before purchasing, which in turn increases long-term buyer satisfaction.

Walgreens

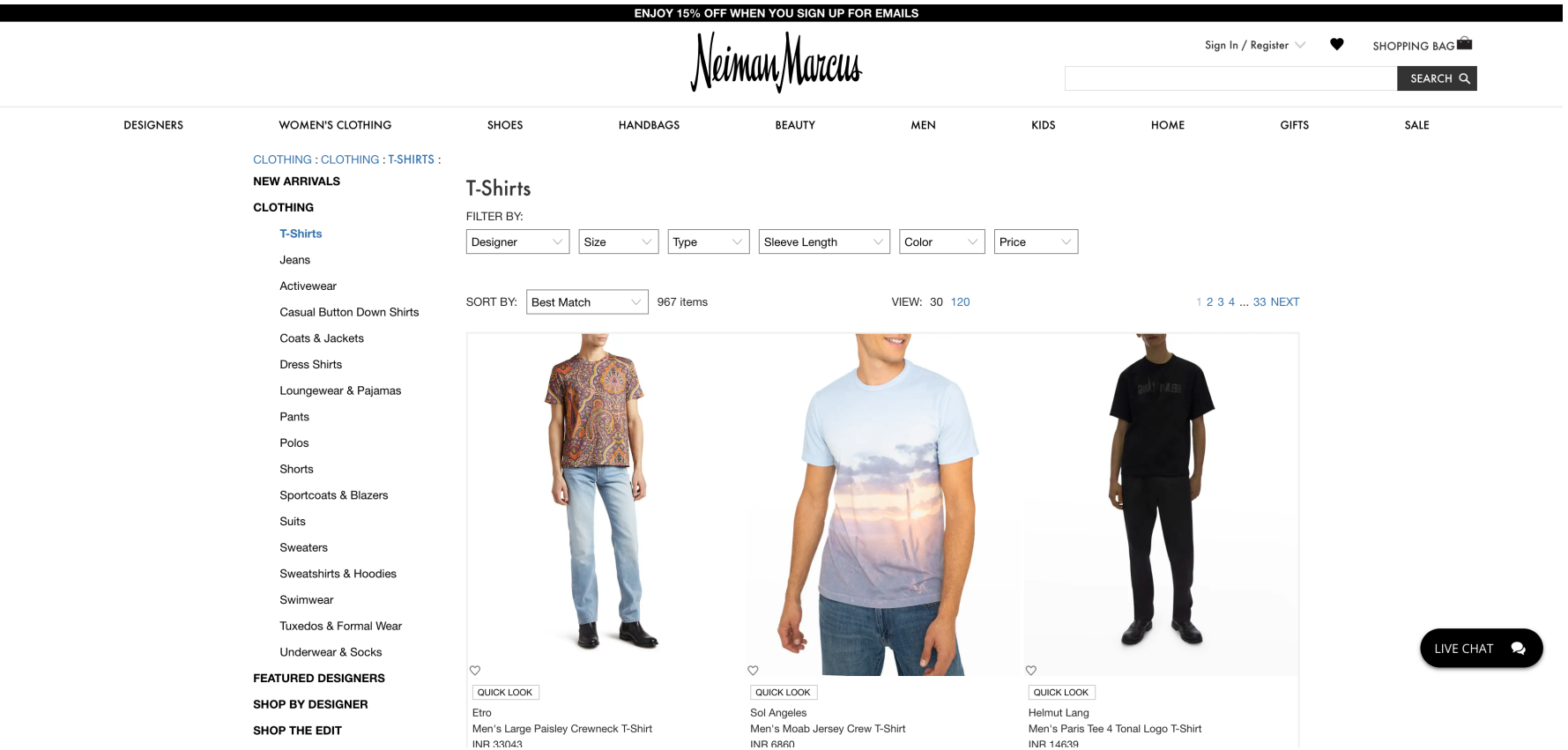


In e-commerce, one exceptional omnichannel example is the digital pharmaceutical experience that Walgreens built. The brand realized that many of its customers were shopping and accessing their store and products on mobile devices.

To provide more convenience, Walgreens launched a mobile app that lets customers refill prescriptions by scanning the barcode on their medication with their smartphone camera. Additionally, customers can access their prescription history, change their pick-up location, and schedule convenient pick-up times.

Neiman Marcus

Neiman Marcus, a luxury department store, uses technological innovation to connect online and offline platforms. The brand, known for its exceptional service, strongly believes in personalization and strives to deliver a seamless experience at every touchpoint. In addition, they ensure that their digital channels operate more effectively as more information about their consumers becomes available.



For example, they track and record the sizes and styles of products that customers usually search. Over time, their software recommends products based on customers' main criteria in past searches. For instance, if a customer is looking for a T-Shirt, they can filter their search by designer, size, color, and price. The software will remember the customer's settings and suggest similar items in the future.

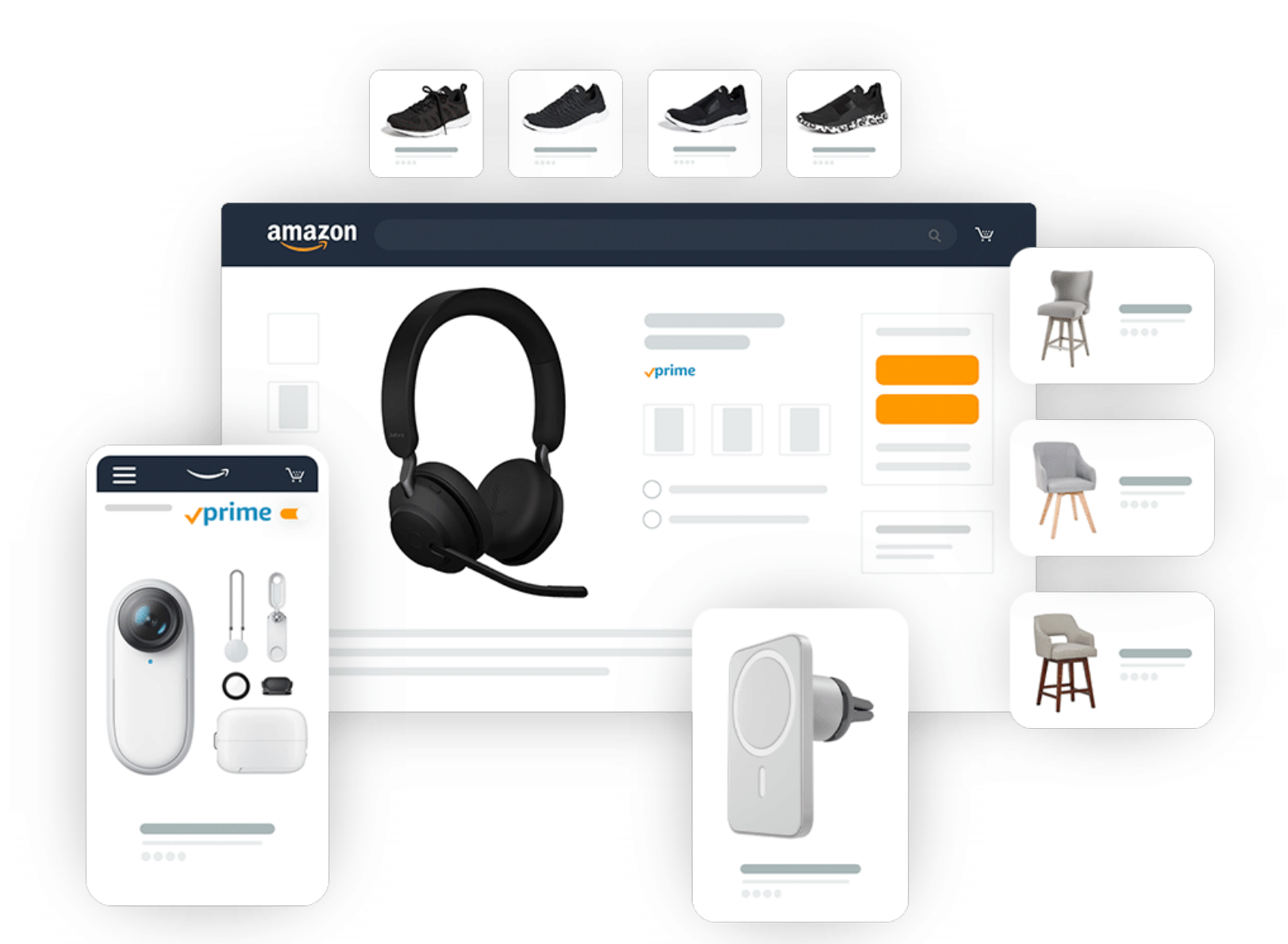
Additionally, geolocation targeting ensures that the right people receive its promotions. For instance, consumers who have expressed interest in a product can get notifications when that product becomes available or goes on sale in a nearby store.

The store also has a "Memory Mirror" that lets consumers record 360-degree videos of themselves as they try on clothes. They can then view the videos on their mobile app later and purchase the items online.



Amazon

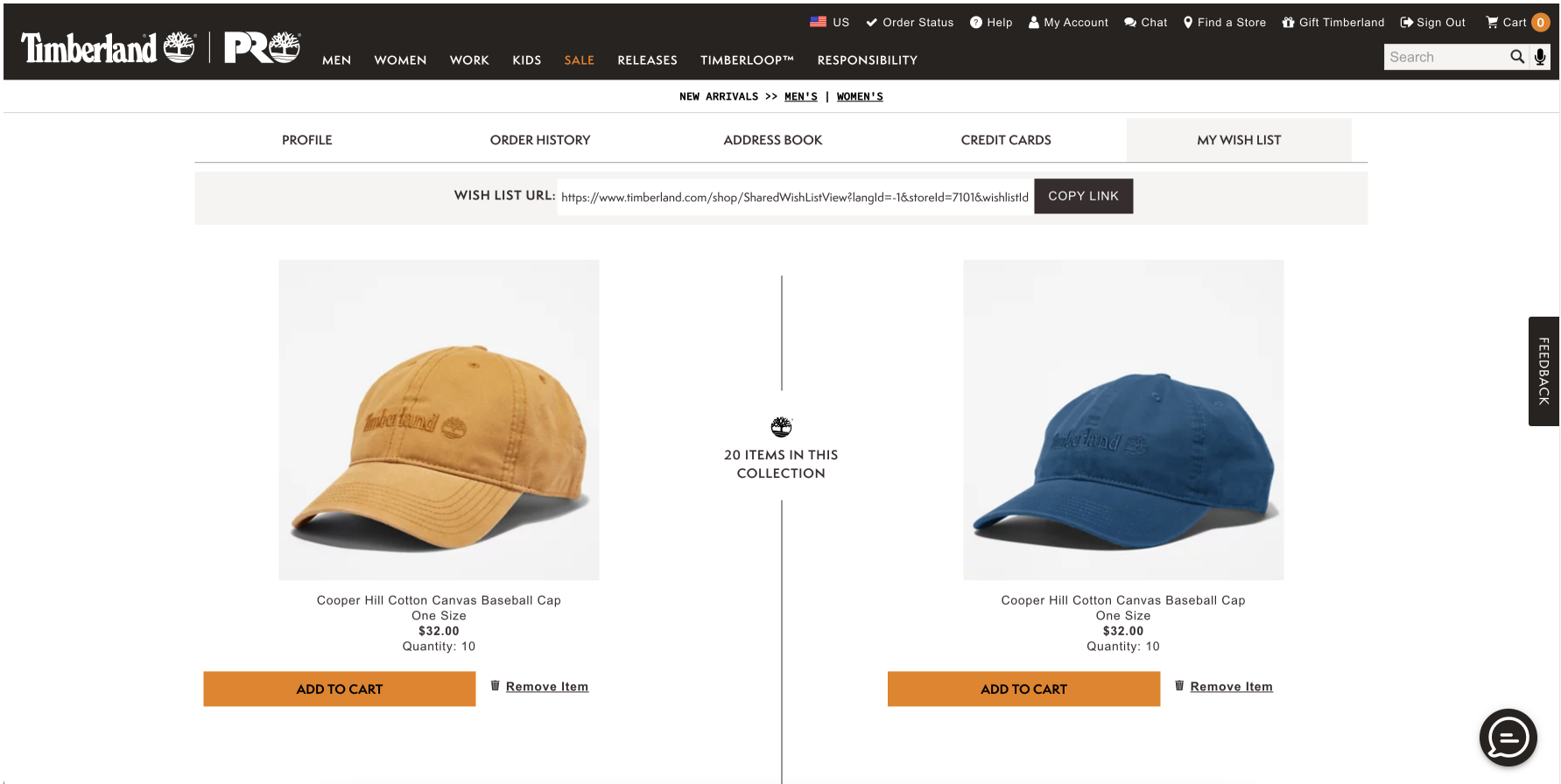
The Amazon customer experience is the same regardless of how you access its stores. Whether you shop on Amazon's website, mobile app, using Alexa, on a smartwatch, or even in-store, you'll see the same branding and process. This approach applies across Amazon's global stores to the greatest extent possible.



When you purchase an eBook from an Amazon store, you can choose the Kindle or other device to which Amazon will upload your selection, and no matter how you make your purchase, you can arrange for physical items to be delivered or even pick them up in-store or at an Amazon locker.

Timberland

The Timberland Company combines brick-and-mortar customer service with near-field communication technology, which transfers data by tapping a mobile device against a proprietary chip. Timberland uses mobile tablets in stores to display product information and current deals or offers to enhance its retail purchasing. By empowering its customers to control their shopping journey, Timberland minimizes the time customers spend waiting for clerks to explain product features when the store is crowded. Their digitally connected stores also allow customers to create wishlists without signing in or registering. Then, when shoppers finish adding items to their wishlists, they can send the list directly to their email and place their order online when they get home.



Through omnichannel marketing, Timberland also gains valuable customer insights from in-store and online activities, which they can use for remarketing their products later. For example, customers who send their wishlist to their email before leaving the store are more likely to complete their purchase when they get home. Additionally, that email serves as a friendly, non-intrusive reminder to help brands close sales in the last stage of the customer journey.



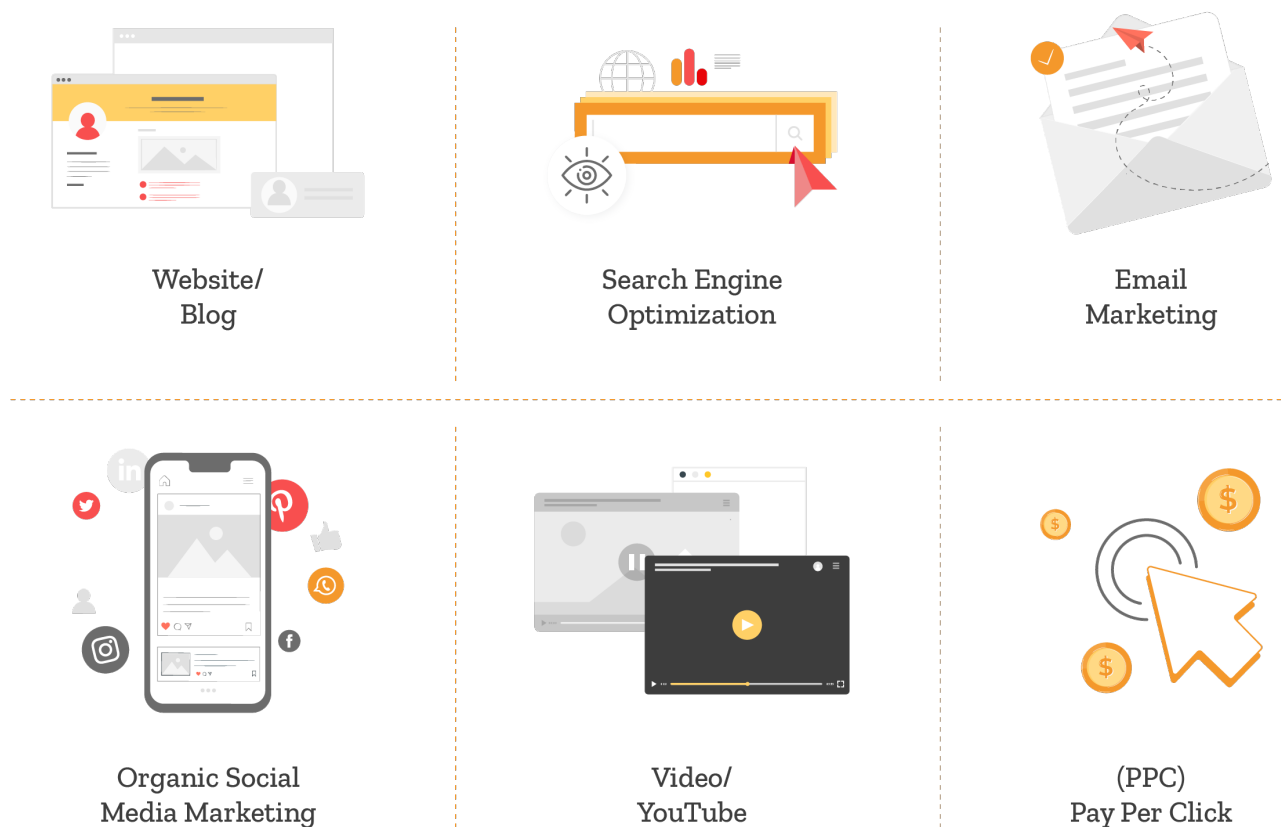
Steps For Building An Omnichannel Strategy

To overcome the many challenges associated with siloed channel marketing strategies, more and more businesses are turning to omnichannel initiatives. However, the most challenging part is overcoming legacy systems and workflows that many companies have used for decades.

Successfully integrating an effective omnichannel model across the business requires vision, the right technology, and tenacity. Establishing more robust processes requires staff and partners to break down processes that are not functioning optimally. Below is an outline of the fundamental steps for building an omnichannel marketing strategy.

1. Identify the Platforms Your Customers Use

The first step in building a comprehensive omnichannel strategy is identifying the platforms, channels, and devices existing customers utilize daily. Next, understanding how customers interact with these channels, their preferences, experiences, and pain points is paramount.



Understanding an existing customer base eliminates the guesswork associated with omnichannel implementation. Tools like Google Analytics and Hotjar can collect existing data. These customer behavior analytics point to multichannel funnels as the key to attracting customers, and this information can act as a baseline to start designing and refining an omnichannel strategy by focusing on the most crucial touchpoints.



2. Build a Buyer Persona

While it's essential to understand your existing customers, it is also necessary to consider future growth, and a crucial step is to identify your prospective clients first to make your omnichannel marketing strategy more effective before embarking on a blanket outreach campaign. A detailed customer profile will help you achieve this.

Typical characteristics of a buyer persona include:

- Demographics
- Buying habits
- Preferred mode of communication
- Additional preferences

The minutest details, such as their purchase frequency, payment type, traffic source, channel, device, and more, will help understand the customer journey and create more meaningful, personalized experiences. While making the target audience profile granular, don't overlook real and tangible potential among other possible buyers. If necessary, create several buyer profiles based on multiple variables to create a diverse and inclusive group of personas.



To begin creating buyer personas, invite both the sales and marketing teams together to brainstorm and have them put themselves in the customer's shoes to better understand what they need. Then, as a general rule, imagine both online and offline clients with the highest lifetime value and list all the characteristics they have in common.

3. Segment Your Audience

Once there is a complete understanding of the target audience, they can be categorized into groups. This stage is critically important when offering multiple products or services since 74% of customers get frustrated when receiving irrelevant content. Correctly segmenting customers creates a frictionless experience and personalizes marketing, sales, and services.

Most CRM and marketing automation solutions today support rule-based segmentation based on personas. Typically, businesses segment their customers by gender, geography, previous purchase or interest, customer loyalty, or previous engagement level. It is also possible to customize existing personas and add other attributes to expand on them. Setting up event and behavior-based triggers have never been easier with segmentation and automation.

4. Map Out Your Customers' Journey

Having laid the groundwork for guiding users to the appropriate funnel based on their preferences, next is mapping the customer journey from start to finish. First, identify the critical touchpoints in the multichannel journey, whether on or offline, and find ways to streamline and improve them. Be mindful that the omnichannel approach includes multiple journeys in a single campaign, so connecting them all in real-time will be crucial to avoid any gaps or awkward encounters.



Consider a specific persona beginning with the awareness phase and work through the process until the final stage. What issues does the customer have to deal with? How can this journey be improved? What value does each touchpoint add? Note these observations and find ways to improve them.

5. Assign Channel and Device Priorities

Remember that all channels are not created equal when implementing an omnichannel strategy. Since omnichannel encompasses voice, text messages, email, and push notifications, effective implementation requires businesses to prioritize the channels and devices their customers prefer. In addition, investing in prime avenues that increase engagement and user experience will keep customers happy and increase profitability. For instance, when noticing loyal customers prefer marketing emails or push notifications, trying to connect with them via text messages will only waste your time, money, and resources. Plus, doing so will likely attract negative feedback or loss of engagement.

Establishing a solid presence on all channels, both on and offline, is critical to reaching customers. Employing social listening or marketing analytics techniques helps further refine what works and what doesn't. Conducting surveys or requesting feedback to determine what users prefer can also provide valuable insights into customer preferences. Lastly, assign priorities to channels and devices based on findings.

6. Ensure Seamless Integration of All Channels

With a refined shortlist of preferred channels and devices, it is now time to tie them together in a cohesive manner. Connecting all touchpoints is often the most challenging part of adopting an omnichannel strategy. Start by tracking customers across channels and mapping each to the other channels. Employing the right technologies will facilitate this process and help overcome challenges.



The integration of various channels forms the backbone of the omnichannel strategy, and failure to execute this phase properly will undo the best-laid plans. Whether your customers visit your store online, in person, or purchase over a mobile app, ensuring that the user experience remains consistent is paramount to omnichannel success.

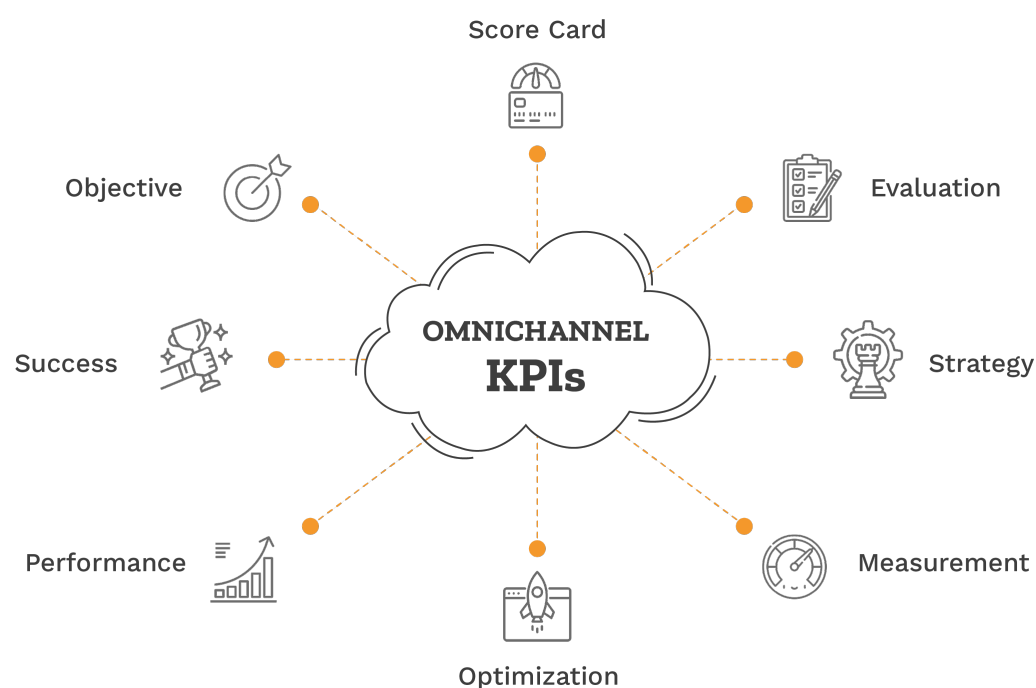
7. Enhance Customer Service

A brand can lose as much as 50% of its customer base with poor service, and customer support is a pivotal component of any successful omnichannel strategy. Unfortunately, it is easy to overlook when focusing on implementing sales and marketing activities. The seamless integration of cross-channel customer support is as critical to omnichannel success as integrating communication channels. The user experience must remain seamless, regardless of the platform through which customers reach out.



8. Evaluate Your Performance

When creating an omnichannel strategy, it is crucial to determine the KPIs that will account for the strategy's success, but analyzing and comparing the results of several communication channels can be challenging. As a result, additional tools to help analyze all the cross-channel data may be necessary. Still, the investment in analytic tools will more than pay for themselves as they provide vital information to help guide important decisions on improving omnichannel capabilities and customer satisfaction.



Remember, measuring efficacy isn't enough, however. Omnichannel strategies need to be agile and on a path of continuous growth and development. Respond to issues as they arise and implement innovative solutions to overcome them and prevent future instances to increase the likelihood of success.



Final Thoughts

An economy that was once product-centric has evolved into one that is more relationship-centric. Today's consumers are more informed, have shorter attention spans, and have non-linear purchase patterns. As a result, today's marketing can no longer be linear either; it must orchestrate all channels perfectly around each customer's journey and unique preferences.

It isn't enough to offer a smooth mobile experience or a personalized desktop experience. Instead, brands must adopt a holistic approach and create an omnichannel experience that includes chat, SMS, Video, Whatsapp and more. Compared to a single-channel ecosystem, omnichannel marketing has the potential to sustainably increase customer spending, reduce time to market, enhance customer retention, and raise employee productivity.

Using an omnichannel approach that enables brands to gain more customer insights to deliver personalized messages for synchronized campaigns across many mediums will be increasingly important in the years ahead. With an effective strategy in place, businesses can provide the experiences their customers and prospects want, which keeps them coming back.

To be sure, organizations that get the omnichannel strategy right will stay ahead of their competitors. The earlier a business applies a customer-centric and journey-focused approach to its omnichannel strategy, the sooner it will reap the benefits. Succeeding in omnichannel marketing no longer needs to be a seemingly unachievable aspiration. By focusing resources on the omnichannel journeys that people truly value, businesses can provide personalized attention and improve customer service in the moments that matter most.

