



A JOURNEY-CENTRIC APPROACH TO MARKETING ANALYTICS

INNOVATION-DRIVEN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION



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Today's customer journeys are complex and multi-channel. High performing businesses deliver a consistent high-quality experiences across each customer's journey. Advanced analytics and machine learning help marketers deliver these experiences by taking the best next action at each customer touchpoint.

TODAY'S NON-LINEAR CUSTOMER JOURNEY

With the explosion of communications channels, there are a virtual uncountable number of paths a prospect can take to become a customer. For marketers, this presents an enormous challenge to fully understand the journey a customer takes from awareness to retention. What's more, every customer is different and will take their own custom path. By gaining an understanding of the full end-to-end customer lifecycle, marketers can create personalized messaging, identify the right media channels, and serve the needs of the customer faster.

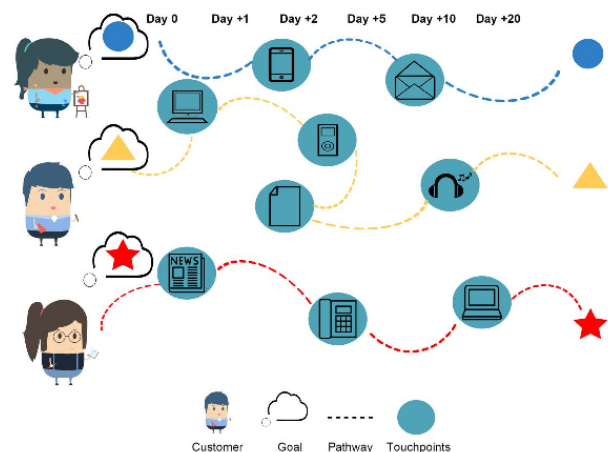
Often times when reviewing business KPIs or sales pipelines, marketers are asked what the lead source was or how the opportunity came to the company. What makes this difficult is rarely there is one "single moment of truth" when a customer decides they are going to purchase. Depending on the size of the purchase, chances are the purchase decision was a combination of email communications, website visits, peer reviews, advertisements, white paper downloads, form completions, etc. - the list goes on and on. Identifying the exact moment that caused a person to convert is almost impossible for many types of businesses. Instead, as marketers, we have to analyze the holistic journey and all the steps that were taken to get to the final result: a purchase.

Historically, the customer experience was a linear journey, with sales and marketing moving the prospect along with each interaction. The idea was simple; by gaining their awareness and interest through mass marketing, sales could push them along in the evaluation stage and ultimately make a decision to purchase.



However, in today's multi-channel world, the journey isn't quite so linear. Of course some of the original principles of gaining customer awareness and assisting with the evaluation process still exist, but now it's much more complex. Today's customer takes their own journey based on how they like to shop, consume information, and urgency of purchase. With marketing messages coming from every direction and the customer in full control, we must rethink the way we approach marketing.

A 2014 [McKinsey & Company study](#) highlights this phenomenon and makes the call to action. They report finding substantial satisfaction, revenue and cost benefits in switching to focus on end-to-end customer journeys. "Maximizing satisfaction with customer journeys has the potential not only to increase customer satisfaction by 20%, but also to lift revenue by up to 15%, while lowering the cost of serving customers by as much as 20%."



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A FOCUS ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Marketers are accustomed to envisioning their customers as personas. These descriptions of representative members of key customer segments bring the customer to life. “Will is a millennial who does almost everything online,” and “Wendy is in her 50’s, thinks she is tech-savvy but still prefers to see a bank teller to deposit checks.” These personas are the ideal starting point for creating customer journey maps, illustrating typical customer interactions with your company. Will’s journey to sign up for a new credit card would start with a digital ad and progress through several online interactions, while Wendy might be prompted by an insert in her bank statement and visit her local branch to apply. Our challenge in increasing customer satisfaction is to understand these journeys and find ways to improve the whole customer journey from beginning to end. For more on journey maps, be sure to check out our white paper on [Personas to Pixels](#).

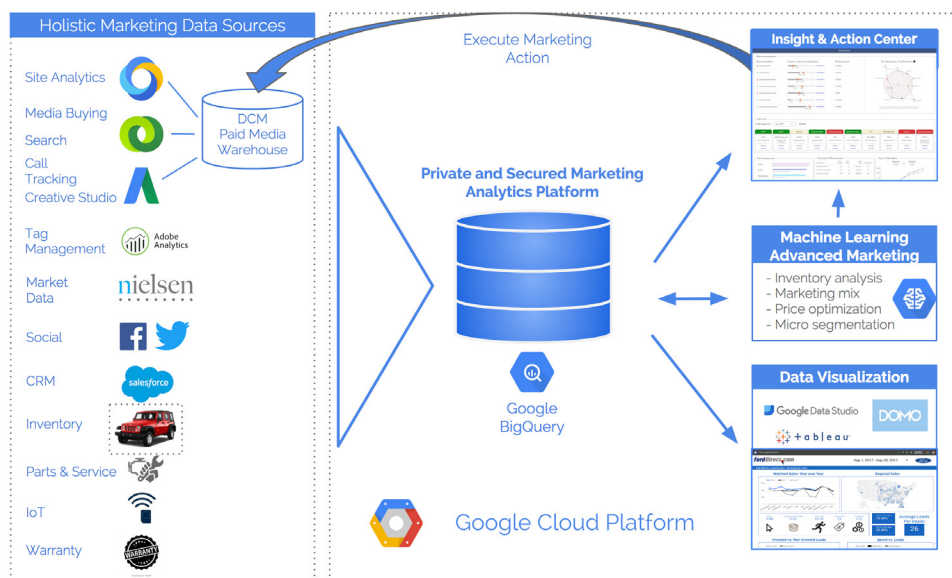
With journey maps in hand, marketers use data analytics to find opportunities to enhance the customer experience. We can improve their journeys by anticipating their needs at the contact center, linking them directly to the best content on the website or proactively recommending the best product for them. We can use what we know about the customer and their journey to this touch point to personalize the experience and set them on the best path to continue their journey. These points of contact are also an opportunity to introduce complementary products and services. To do this well, every interaction should be designed around the “best next action” for that customer. Based on everything we know about this customer during this interaction at this moment in time, what should the company do next?

START WITH A MODERN DATA PLATFORM

One of the greatest challenges in understanding the customer journey is gaining a 360-degree view into the customers attitudes, behavior, and interests online and offline as well as their interactions with an individual brand. A modern data platform can make this a reality by providing a single location to collect and correlate all sources of customer data and get it ready to be analyzed.

First, you need to analyze the customer and marketing data available (both internal to the organization and external). Some sources to consider include website analytics, Twitter, purchasing history, inventory, and search marketing data (among many other sources). It’s important to do an audit of all the silos the organization is storing data in and determine which datasets are important in creating a holistic view of the customer. Second, traditional data management environments don’t effectively support collecting, cleaning, storing and combining the diverse data sources required. As a result, analysts and data scientists spend 80% of time dedicated to infrastructure; programming, maintenance, monitoring, handling scale, and performance tuning, when they should be spending 80% of their time developing insights. A modern data platform addresses this inefficiency to drive better business outcomes.

To store and combine the data, Maven Wave recommends using Google [BigQuery](#), because you can eliminate the time-consuming work of provisioning infrastructure and reduce downtime with a serverless infrastructure that handles all ongoing maintenance. Additionally, BigQuery is integrated with Google Analytics 360, Adwords, and DoubleClick. That means you can have this data automatically imported to BigQuery and use the data to gain better insight into your customer’s activities in real-time. This makes it easy to track every single activity of millions of users and execute in-depth, ad-hoc analysis in seconds.



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You can gain additional customer insight by combining multiple data sources and performing advanced statistical analysis. Link Google media data with website registration forms, shopping carts, inquiry forms, or any other customer interactions to easily correlate those transactions with customer website behavior. Taking this a step further, you can even identify new customers who have certain quantitative similarities to your current customers.

With customer and marketing data being collected from all corners of the organization, it must be correlated, cleansed, and standardized before you can do anything with it. Google provides best-in-class tools, like [Cloud Dataflow](#) and [Cloud Pub/Sub](#), to simplify and speed-up the process of transforming your raw data into clean data that you derive actionable insights from and keeping your marketing data warehouse in sync with your enterprise applications and data.

INTERGATE ANALYTICS INTO YOUR JOURNEYS



The data platform provides the basis for understanding and improving the performance of customer journeys. Three activities form the core of the approach to managing customer journeys to deliver desired business results:

- **Journey Understanding:** Use analytics and knowledge of the customer to create data-driven maps of current state journeys. Cross-channel behavior and insights will clarify customer segments and journeys. By understanding the customer segments that follow each journey and quantifying the outcomes, you should be able to identify the journeys that deliver the most value to the business. It's likely a relatively small number of journeys contribute most of your value. These should be the priority for optimization.
- **Journey Optimization:** Develop and test hypotheses for improving the customer's journey, measuring the results in terms of the desired outcome for the journey. For example, did the customer buy? Did customer satisfaction increase? These hypotheses and tests may be centered on individual interaction points, like the contact center or the website, but they should be informed by everything we know about the customer at that stage and measured against journey outcomes. Sophisticated analytics and machine learning models deliver the power to predict customer behavior. Marketers can use this to dynamically determine the best next action for each customer at each point of contact. As mentioned previously, Maven Wave recommends Google BigQuery to house and query your data. This provides the basis for journey analytics using [Google Data Studio](#) and developing deeper insights and journey optimization using [Cloud Machine Learning Engine](#).
- **Journey Orchestration:** Bring the results of optimization to your customer's journeys by integrating the analytics and data science into your customer-facing applications. Machine learning models can use a complete understanding of a customer's journey and context in real-time to find the best next action at each touch point. These actions could be routing the customer to specific web content, offering different product packages, or changing a digital marketing approach. In each instance, the integrated predictive models will lead to better journey outcomes for you and your customers.

Improving the customer journeys is a journey in and of itself. There is much to gain from starting slowly. Start by leveraging current datasets and analytical approaches to develop a basic understanding of your customer journeys but viewed through the lens of journey outcomes. Pivoting to a journey-centric approach can't happen overnight but the rewards can be substantial: improved marketing performance, better business results, and satisfied customers.

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