

In this Article

- Data silos and the omnichannel experience
Getting the data house in order
Segmentation and personalization
That problem of 'culture'
Next Steps
Dig Deeper



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Comparison cards for Informatica vs IBM, Microsoft vs IBM, Informatica vs Oracle, and SAP vs ADAM.

Segmentation and personalization

For some companies, the effort to get closer to the "omnichannel mandate" is only partly a story about bringing technology sophistication to bear.

At WGBH, a public media station that creates local and national programming, customer data silos were hobbling the company's efforts to communicate effectively with donors.

"We had a marketing automation system where we were capturing data on our website and through email, but we couldn't marry that with membership data in a meaningful way," said Teri Lamitie, director of digital marketing products and services at WGBH.

Quote box: We had a marketing automation system ... but we couldn't marry that with membership data in a meaningful way. Teri Lamitie, Director of Digital Marketing Products and Services, WGBH.

Using RedPoint Global's data management software, WGBH became able to discern behavior among its donors and prospects, and target communications based on audience behavior.

"We couldn't take a person's action with a piece of direct mail and have that trigger our next email communication," Lamitie said. Today, for example, the marketing team can contact a donor who hasn't responded to direct mail after three weeks and tailor communication with that donor based on his behavior -- and then create a customer journey map, or template of expected customer behavior -- to map how to communicate with that customer.

Connecting the dots between customer preferences and communications has become critical to efficiency. Before RedPoint, WGBH was able to send out roughly 200 marketing campaigns. That number has quadrupled -- with no additional headcount being added to the marketing department.

"It means less time spent physically having to do something and more time spent planning strategically what is the right communication and what is the right time for a donor to get it," Lamitie said.

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That problem of 'culture'

Lamitie said that, ultimately, effectively bridging data silos in the service of customer experience is about making a cultural shift within an enterprise. It's about recognizing that intra-departmental communication and coordination become critical to enabling the technology.

Discussion box: How is your company making steps toward providing customers with an omnichannel experience? What challenges exist? 0 Responses. Join the Discussion.

In the past, WGBH's digital marketing and membership teams, which handle the direct mail campaigns for donors, could operate more independently, but now they need to work in lockstep and plan campaigns together.

"If you're going to bring in omnichannel, it's not just the tools," Lamitie said. "It's really the culture of the organization that allows you to make this happen. It's a lot of work across teams. We have to now work together in a different way. We have to collaborate earlier."

Lamitie said that enterprise cultural barriers exist, even with overwhelming executive support for these initiatives. Experts say, though, that executive-level recognition that data integration is a business, not an IT problem, is a critical step in eliminating the isolationist culture that entrenches data silos.

"Reconciling customer records has gone from an IT problem and has risen to a business-critical problem," Sim said. "Everybody recognizes that ... address[ing] the customer's needs [are] essential. It has moved from a data issue to a critical business focus."

Quote box: Multichannel is a promise, but you can't deliver on the promise until you solve for the challenges of accumulating ... all the data streams you have access to. Stuart Sim, Director, West Monroe Partners.

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