

OMNICHANNEL
MARKETING

VS **MULTICHANNEL**
MARKETING:

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

SUMMARY

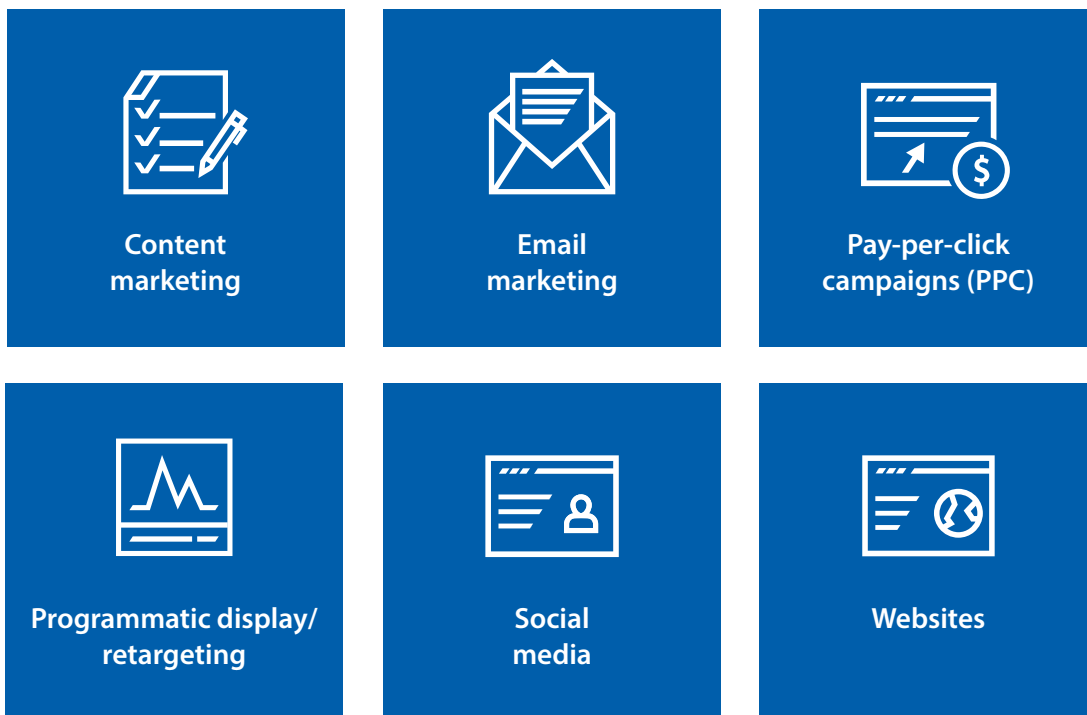
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In B2B and B2C marketing, marketers have a myriad of different marketing channels at their disposal to reach out to and interact with potential clients. Many strategies implement more than one channel at the same time, such as omnichannel marketing and multichannel marketing.

These methods are often confused with one another and whilst they are similar in principle, their differences in approach are important to distinguish. In this article, we will explore examples of both strategies and break down the key differences between the two.

What are Digital Marketing Channels?

Digital marketing channels refer to methods of communication with prospects and clients that take place in an online space. **They include but are not limited to:**



As B2B and B2C marketing continues to evolve, so does the list of digital marketing channels available to marketers for their outreach and campaigns.

Why is It Important to Implement a Multichannel Marketing Strategy?

Single-channel marketing campaigns are an outdated strategy. With an ever-greater variety of channels, potential clients are free to pick and choose which channels suit them and their needs the best. In this way, prospects have much greater control over the buying process than previously.

As a result, it has never been more important to publish multichannel marketing campaigns and reach prospects where they are.

What is Multichannel Marketing?

In essence, this is the implementation of multiple marketing channels aimed at separate audiences. However, what distinguishes multichannel marketing from other marketing channel strategies is the relationship between each channel.

In multichannel marketing, channels are segmented depending on their function and the nature of interactions with prospects. Despite representing the same brand, channels remain separate from one another.

This used to be in the interest of keeping online and offline channels separate in function and messaging. However, with the rise of digital marketing channels, this separation also applies to online marketing such as email and social media platforms.

As a result of channels working independently from one another, the same message is sent across multiple channels simultaneously during the buyer's journey, making it a **business-centric** strategy.

Cross Channel Marketing

To thoroughly break down both multichannel and omnichannel marketing, it is also important to examine cross channel marketing and what differentiates it from other strategies.

In short, cross channel marketing builds upon multichannel marketing by integrating channels with one another to deliver a smoother buyer experience. Rather than keeping each channel separated, they are complimentary. For example, signing up for an account on a website would be followed up with an email in a cross channel marketing strategy.

As a result, in cross channel marketing, each channel forms part of an integrated and smoother client experience, deployed in accordance with the buying stage of each prospect.

For this reason, cross channel marketing is often regarded as a natural progression of multichannel marketing and requires a much more in-depth understanding of target audiences.



Developing a detailed knowledge of target audience needs, preferences, and the channels they use the most, starts with first identifying key market segments.

For assistance in implementing segmentation to inform your marketing strategies, read our [Definitive Guide to B2B Market Segmentation](#) for a full breakdown of techniques and best practices. →



How to Implement Multichannel Marketing

What does it take to implement multichannel marketing successfully? Below are the five keys to developing a multichannel marketing strategy that delivers results:



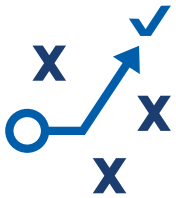
1. Determine your buyer persona:

The foundation of any multichannel marketing strategy is a clear understanding of its target audience backed up with data. Having a well-defined buyer persona specific to ideal buyers is essential for guiding campaign messaging and choosing the appropriate channels to prioritise.



2. Create targeted messaging and craft strong CTAs:

Once you have built your buyer personas, leverage your knowledge of their interests and needs to create evocative and impactful messaging. This can later be used to craft calls-to-action (CTAs) that encourage interaction.



3. Focus on key channels:

Multichannel marketing can be a costly process both in terms of budget and time. That is why it is imperative to prioritise the channels that are the most effective at connecting with your prospects. Keep what works and ditch the rest until a time when it is appropriate again.



4. Leverage your website as a channel hub:

As you implement different channels to appeal to your target audience, it is important not to neglect your website which is arguably the most important channel. As a hub that connects to all other channels, be sure to invest time and budget into fine-tuning and perfecting the structure and content of your website.



5. Implement an attribution model:

Without the correct attribution model, determining which department is responsible for generating leads and revenue can be confusing. Establish a model that can facilitate and inform important decisions regarding budgeting and distribution of resources.

Examples of multichannel marketing

To illustrate how multichannel marketing can be implemented successfully to boost a client's experience with a brand, here are three key examples of effective models in the market today and why they work.



Apple



A goliath of technology and streaming, the backbone of Apple is its unique style, messaging, and designs. Apple's retail model demonstrates how effectively the individual channels within a multichannel marketing strategy can work together in harmony. For instance, Apple understands that today's customer typically researches products in detail online to make comparisons with the top competitors before committing to a purchase.

Apple nurtures this interest by showcasing their range of merchandise in store for potential buyers to see and try each product in person. Customers can also book free appointments for product demos without the obligation of completing a purchase.

This allows for Apple to leverage their products to do most of the selling and is an example of how two channels can benefit each other whilst having separate functions.

Gatwick Airport

Gatwick Airport, located in the southeast of England, is the 9th busiest airport in Europe. As a result, to combat customers encountering issues before leaving for their journeys, Gatwick Airport implemented a multichannel marketing strategy to create a smoother travel experience.

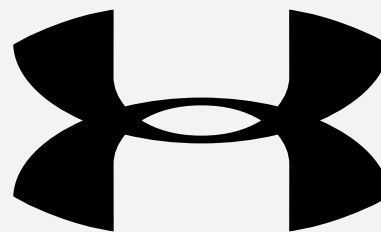
YOUR LONDON AIRPORT
Gatwick

In 2010, they created a 24-hour client support service through Twitter to answer common queries and improve communication with travellers. By placing QR codes at areas of the airport under construction with graphics and messaging they were also able to inform customers about the changes being made to improve the airport. Finally, the airport launched a location-based marketing service to encourage and collect direct feedback from visitors in review booths located across Gatwick.

The combination of these three channels, both digital and offline, is a prime example of how multichannel marketing can work in different ways to improve the client experience with open communication. The initiative generated over [100 positive media pieces](#).

Under Armour

Under Armour campaigns are famous for their powerful messaging. As part of a multichannel marketing strategy, Under Armour regularly leverages the reach and influence of celebrity endorsements across its social media platforms. This boosts their campaigns with credibility and access to celebrity audiences.



UNDER ARMOUR

In 2015, Under Armour secured its place in the fitness tracking space by acquiring the MyFitnessPal app as another channel to reach its audience. By providing their customers with a utility, Under Armour was able to quickly increase its digital footprint. The Under Armour app (or UA Shop) was also released, focused on delivering clients a personalised experience based on their lifestyles and goals.

These three digital marketing channels, whilst centred on different objectives (credibility, utility, and personalisation), are effective at improving the client journey and experience.

The power of personalisation is often most prevalent in account based marketing (ABM) strategies. Targeted at specific accounts rather than a broader audience, a successful ABM campaign can deliver higher conversion rates than its traditional counterparts.

Not sure where to begin? Read our [Definitive Guide to Account Based Marketing](#) for detailed introduction to the subject and a step-by-step guide to building your own ABM strategy. →



What is Omnichannel Marketing?

At a quick glance, multichannel and omnichannel marketing may seem one and the same. However, there are important distinctions between the two. The purpose of omnichannel marketing is to create a smooth and flawless experience for prospective clients as well as to establish a brand's presence across multiple online and offline channels.

What differentiates omnichannel from multichannel marketing is that messaging is informed by previous interactions. Transitions between channels are interconnected and seamless as buyers move through different offline and online channels.

Omnichannel marketing is **client-centric**, putting the buyer's journey at the centre of the strategy rather than purely on business needs. It builds upon cross channel marketing, taking into account the ubiquity of contemporary media and the need for interactivity to drive engagement.

The emphasis on creating a memorable client experience is far greater than that of multichannel marketing with all communication strategies working to engage audiences at the right time. This may even result in some channels foregoing the sending of messages to encourage a healthier, cordial relationship with prospects.

Channels in an omnichannel marketing strategy are linked and share data. This allows marketers to better understand prospects and help to build future strategies that address their needs and pain points better.

How to Implement Omnichannel Marketing

Developing and maintaining an omnichannel marketing strategy takes time and budget to avoid mistakes. Below are four key steps to creating an effective client-centric omnichannel marketing strategy:

1. Establish buyer personas:



Despite the differences in the end results, the development of both omnichannel and multichannel marketing should start the same, by focusing on the client. By researching and determining a buyer persona, strategies can be formed around behaviour and habits to map out a buyer journey that suits them.

2. Segment target audiences:



Collected data and buyer personas should be used to further segment audiences and guide content creation as well as the prioritisation of channels. This will also help to avoid prospects receiving materials they have no interest in.

3. Map out the buyer experience:



To create omnichannel marketing that prioritises the client, be sure to plan out the specific processes before purchases that are likely to occur for each audience segment. Understanding the journey each group of prospects is likely to take also helps to guide priority channels and the content to feature on each one.

4. Align teams:



Creating a seamless experience [requires sales and marketing teams to not only synchronize their goals](#) but more importantly, to share information. Siloed information can be harmful to any long-term marketing strategy and particularly omnichannel marketing, which requires unification.

Communication and synchronisation between sales and marketing teams is essential for driving and adapting strategies to match ever-changing trends and client needs.

Get started on your own optimisation by reading our article, [10 Best Practices for Sales and Marketing Alignment](#). →

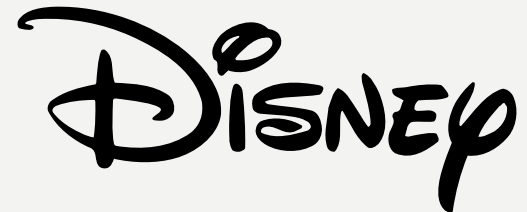


Examples of Omnichannel Marketing

Implementing an omnichannel marketing strategy can be a time-consuming process. However, the results and enhanced client experience is worth the substantial investment. Below are three examples of omnichannel strategies that work to facilitate the client journey and an improved experience.

Disney

Disney's exponential retail growth was kickstarted in 1989 by the opening of its first theme park. Now with a total of 12 parks open across the globe, Disney has developed a high-quality service. One way Disney streamlines the visitor experience at its parks is with its famous omnichannel strategy.



This starts with visitors booking their stays and tickets at a Disney Park on their website and continues with the My Disney Experience app. This app's multi-functionality allows for visitors to plan out their stay and the activities that they want to do in detail before they arrive and during their visit.

Users can see waiting times for attractions, book tickets, and reserve tables at restaurants. Finally, the visitor experience is enhanced with an offline channel that syncs with the app called MagicBand. This wristband has multiple uses including opening hotel doors, entering parks, and paying for food and drinks.

Disney's omnichannel strategy is a prime example of how complimentary channels focused on the client's needs can perfect the overall experience and make it memorable.

Netflix

With a global audience of approximately [209 million paid memberships](#) as of 2021, Netflix is under a lot of pressure to constantly innovate and differentiate its user experience from emerging competitors.



By leveraging its knowledge of common pain points to implement an omnichannel strategy, Netflix ensures a smooth uninterrupted experience for its clients by syncing playback across all devices. This allows viewers to move seamlessly between platforms and devices without losing time by having to find their place in the content they were consuming.

Netflix's playback system is a perfect example of an omnichannel strategy made up of individual channels that are informed by interaction to create an interconnected and fluid experience for customers.

Starbucks

Starbucks' omnichannel strategy focuses on enhancing the offline client experience with online digital marketing channels. Clients can use the Starbucks Mobile Rewards app to facilitate their in-store purchase by ordering in advance, paying with the app, and earning points that can be redeemed for free coffee.

This, in tandem with the ability to reload the Starbucks card via app or desktop, creates an omnichannel marketing strategy that improves the overall client experience.



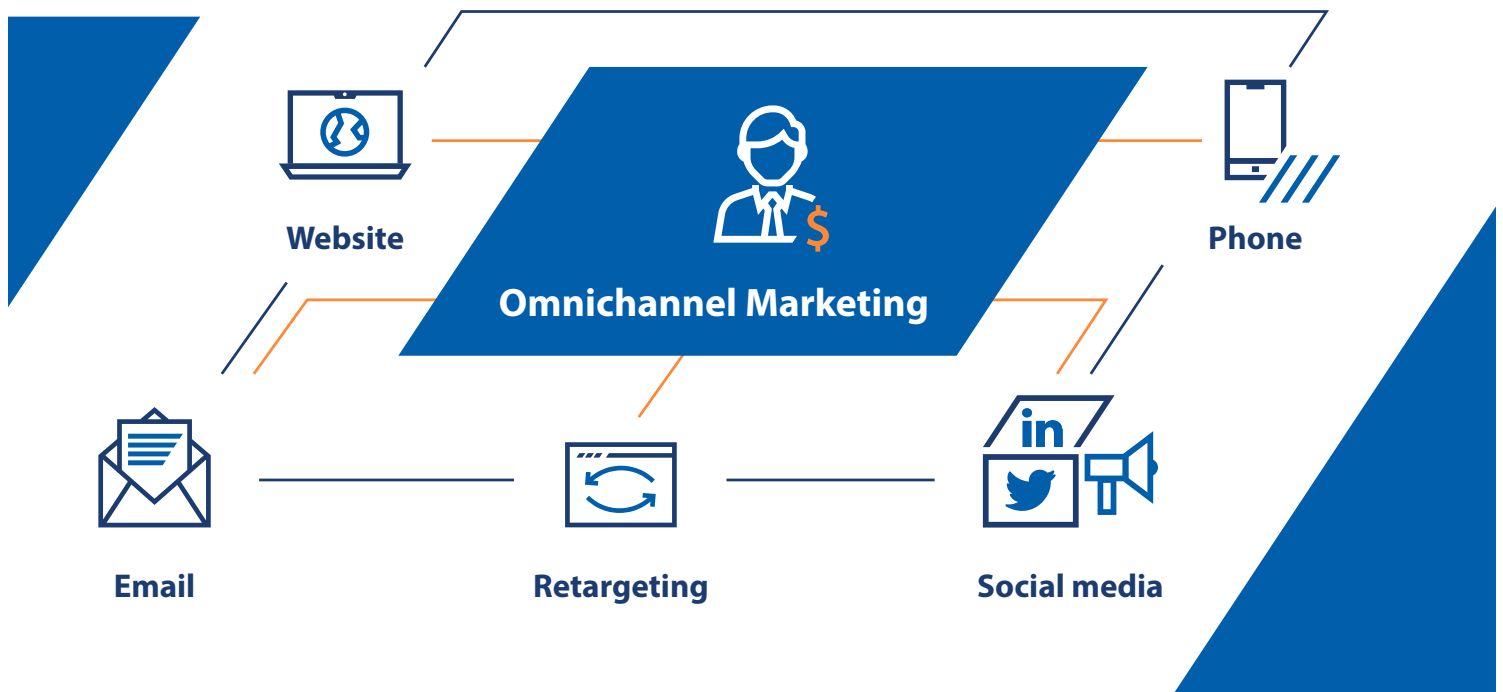
With the rise of digital marketing and expanse of options to choose from, determining which channels are the most appropriate for each strategy has become quite the challenge for marketers.

Read our breakdown; [10 Digital Marketing Channels for 2022 that Actually Work](#), for more detail on salient channels and strategies for your channel marketing. →



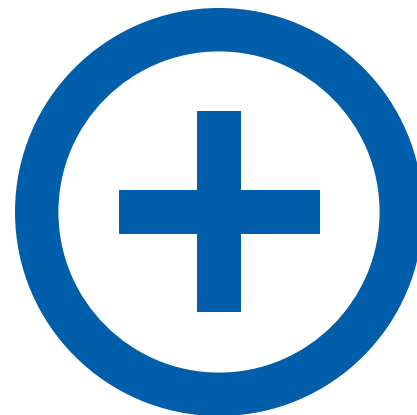
Multichannel marketing vs omnichannel marketing:

Now that we have explored what makes an effective multichannel and omnichannel marketing strategy, we will compare the two with their opposing advantages and disadvantages:



Multichannel marketing advantages

- **Boost Reach:** A brand can effectively increase its reach and grow its target audience with multichannel marketing. This identifies previously untapped markets and new opportunities.
- **Enhance Engagement:** By implementing strategies across multiple platforms, prospects have more opportunities to interact with companies, encouraging open communication between the prospect and brand.
- **Reach Prospects on Their Preferred Channel:** Multichannel marketing strategies allow prospects more choice. By tracking engagement, marketers are better able to reach them on their preferred channels at each stage of the buyer's journey as their needs change.



Multichannel marketing disadvantages

- **Siloed Data:** As each channel in multichannel marketing works in isolation, data from interactions across different channels tends to be siloed. This poses difficulties for informing targeted messaging and future strategies with findings.
- **Repetitive Messaging:** Timing can be a challenge for multichannel marketing with a high possibility of prospects receiving the same message at the same time on two separate channels. This can be off-putting for prospects and imply a lack of efficient personalisation.
- **Complex Logistics:** Implementing communication, advertising, distribution, and sales across several channels can result in complex logistics. Managing channels and creating campaigns for each channel's different demographics can be time-consuming.
- **Cannibalised Sales:** Due to the nature of multichannel marketing, it is possible for sales to become cannibalised. Clients may use certain channels purely for informational purposes and make the final purchase on another channel.



Omnichannel marketing advantages

- **Flexible choice:** Omnichannel strategies provide prospects with a variety of synchronised channels that allow them to choose how they want to start and progress their own personalised buyer experience. This choice also helps brands to employ adaptive strategies depending on their target audience.
- **Competitive advantage:** By streamlining the buyer experience with an omnichannel strategy, companies can distinguish themselves from the competition. The client-centric focus of omnichannel marketing is popular and can create a positive impression that increases brand awareness if implemented correctly.
- **Data transparency across all channels:** The accessibility of data between channels allows for messaging to be highly personalised in terms of content, frequency, and channel prioritisation. Feedback and analytics are also easier to collect and implement.
- **Encourages long-term relationships:** An omnichannel approach promotes longer relationships with prospects as the quality of the buyer experience is improved. The process is also more personalised and rewarding for prospects. This in turn encourages stronger relationships due to prospects feeling that their needs matter.

Omnichannel marketing disadvantages

- **Significant commitment and investment:** Omnichannel marketing strategies are time-consuming and expensive to set up. Unfinished or poorly optimised strategies can be costly and ineffective. As a result, omnichannel marketing requires a unified vision and alignment of teams to work.
- **Context-based issues:** The importance of context in omnichannel marketing presents a risk of failure for strategies. Messages need to be sent at the right frequency and to their specific audiences on the channels they are most active on. Errors can have costly consequences.
- **Software requirements:** Omnichannel marketing strategies require the right software to facilitate the creation of a smooth buying experience. This can be a time-intensive and expensive investment to ensure the integration of all the marketing channels into a singular process.

Much like omnichannel marketing and multichannel marketing strategies, another common misconception is the confusion between lead generation and demand generation.

Although both strategies share a certain degree of overlap, the two are clearly distinguishable from each other.

For more detail on the differences between them and in-depth analysis into each strategy, read our article, [Demand Generation Vs Lead Generation: A Breakdown of Both](#). →

Which is the best digital marketing strategy for you?

At the core of the differences between both strategies, is their focus. Omnichannel is centred on delivering a client-centric, unified experience across many channels that establishes relationships with prospects.

On the other hand, multichannel marketing focuses purely on relaying messaging across the maximum number of channels possible, with the aim of increasing engagement.

As both marketing channel approaches have their own benefits and drawbacks, the debate between which is the most effective is unlikely to end.

Therefore, the deciding factor of a decision between the two strategies should be the goals and objectives that you are trying to reach with your marketing. This combined with budget, technological, and time limitations will likely influence your final decision.

Our demand generation experts have built campaigns spanning across multiple channels to fuel thousands of custom sales funnels, aligned with the specific goals of our clients.

We can reach your audience where they are most active and create a seamless, personalised, and memorable experience that drives conversion.

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