

## Engage Your Customers by Delivering a Multi-Channel Brand Experience

*The multi-channel customer offers opportunities and imperatives for businesses to engage with them using more targeted strategies*

We believe shifts in customer behavior are driving the need for important changes in how routes-to-market for products and services are designed. Across different segments, customers continue to demand faster and better information, outpacing the speed of traditional marketing and sales planning cycles.

Companies hoping to grow profitably can no longer focus only on high-value customers, but must look to reach all potential buyers and meet their needs quickly and through cost-effective means.

Evaluation and purchasing patterns are now primarily multi-channel as buyers interact with a brand across multiple marketing and sales interfaces. The imperative is clear: businesses must coordinate their traditional channel-specific silos, processes, and functions to deliver an enhanced customer experience.

### Cross-channel Sales to Exceed \$1 Trillion

Although we have seen a large number of companies investing heavily to build channel capabilities over the past five years, many have ignored critical *cross-channel* needs, such as sales strategies, marketing insights, account servicing, and overall customer experience.

In the retail space alone, Forrester projects that US cross-channel sales will hit \$1.1 trillion by 2012. A significant percentage of these sales will be generated online by savvy Internet users who expect seamless delivery capability between on-line/off-line, and direct/indirect channels.

Additionally, in both the B2B and B2C marketplaces, channel partners and influencers beyond the brand owner are playing an even more significant role in spending decisions. As both businesses and consumers become more solution-oriented, they will depend more on channel partners for advice and for providing value-added services.

## Provide More Options, More Efficiently

Strong multi-channel planning and integration can drive leaner operations, reduced costs, and “channel-of-choice” options for customers. However, without a cohesive internal structure, companies will struggle to keep up—both with evolving consumer behavior and with an inevitable, rising cost base.

Companies that do not adequately enable sell-side channel partners risk missing out on significant dollars in potential revenues. In addition, they are likely surrendering control over pricing and operating margins due to increasingly sophisticated and powerful buyers.

To take advantage of the opportunities posed by these changes, companies must take the time to develop go-to-market strategies that maintain brand consistency across all channels.

## Start by Asking the Right Questions

A quick self-assessment across sales, servicing and marketing dimensions can provide indicators of whether it's time for a re-evaluation of current routes-to-market:

- If we invest in new products and/or go after new customers, what routes-to-market should we use?
- Do we have exposure due to the business practices of our channels and routes-to-market? Are our routes-to-market leaking revenue?
- How do we design a technology strategy that accommodates partners? How do we evaluate emerging technologies to develop a multi-year roadmap?
- How have new media such as social networking sites become influencer channels for our products and services?
- How should we integrate products, partners, and channel structures of acquired or merged competitors?
- What are the servicing implications for our customers? Are there interactions with us recognized across every channel?
- What does the incentive and compensation program look like across multiple routes-to-market? How do we encourage cross-channel collaboration and discourage channel conflict?

## How to Drive More Value

Our work with many of the world's largest companies in support of their efforts to enhance the “Multi-Channel Customer Experience,” has yielded some key lessons:

### Take a customer first point of view.

Design routes-to-market around customers. For each customer segment, identify preferred channels through which customers seek to learn about a product, evaluate it, buy it, and seek service and after-market support.

Assess what the top products are from your product portfolio for this customer segment.

Finally, determine preferred and alternate channels for each step of the evaluation and purchasing process and assess gaps with current channel capabilities.

### Recognize the role of marketing and sales-side business-partners in your route-to-market strategy.

The role of business partners in the marketing and sale of products will vary greatly from companies that sell exclusively through complex two- and three-tier distribution channels to companies that seek exclusively to market and sell direct.

Do not make partners an afterthought in your process, organizational, and technology plans. Understand what they are – critical voices in the

evaluation and buying decision process of your customers. Collaborate with targeted partners for your most highly valued customers.

### Define expectations of success for routes-to-market in quantitative terms.

Prioritize channel investments through careful balancing of value and cost/risk. Formulate strategic options for stakeholder input based on impact to the customer and impact to your business.

Look for areas of “critical mass,” where a set of capabilities can support multiple, cross-channel customer experiences.

Deliver a consistent “Brand Promise” for products and services across channels to fulfill customer expectations.

## Bottom-Line Benefits

- Increased sales through better route-to-market planning and integration
- Lowered costs associated with sales and marketing through better allocation of resources
- An improved customer experience driven by convenience, choice, control, and the ability to move seamlessly between channels
- An improved time-to-market by allowing you and your partners to prepare interaction channels to market, sell, and fulfill new products

## Getting It Done

Breakthrough performance requires a unique combination of innovative thinking and disciplined follow-through.

We work together with clients to help them in their efforts to significantly improve business performance – and to choose the right course of action, fusing together executable strategy, operations, and technology.

## Contacts

To learn more about how we can help you in your efforts to deal with the complexities of route-to-market planning and improvement, please contact:

Chris Abess, Principal  
Deloitte Consulting LLP  
San Francisco, CA  
Tel: 415.783.4121  
e-mail: cabess@deloitte.com

Mallika Govindan, Senior Manager  
Deloitte Consulting LLP  
New York, NY  
Tel: 212.618.4095  
e-mail: mgovindan@deloitte.com

Tom Rosato, Principal  
Deloitte Consulting LLP  
New York, NY  
Tel: 212.618.4664  
e-mail: trosato@deloitte.com

Robert F. Underwood,  
Senior Manager  
Deloitte Consulting LLP  
New York, NY  
Tel: 917.754.3900  
e-mail: robunderwood@deloitte.com

[www.deloitte.com/us](http://www.deloitte.com/us)

This publication contains general information only and is based on the experiences of and research of Deloitte Consulting LLP practitioners. Deloitte Consulting LLP is not, by means of this publication, rendering business, financial, investment, or other professional advice or services. This publication is not a substitute for such professional advice or services, nor should it be used as a basis for any decision or action that may affect your business. Before making any decision or taking any action that may affect your business, you should consult a qualified professional advisor. Deloitte Consulting LLP, its affiliates, and related entities shall not be responsible for any loss sustained by any person who relies on this publication.

### About Deloitte

Deloitte refers to one or more of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, a Swiss Verein, and its network of member firms, each of which is a legally separate and independent entity. Please see [www.deloitte.com/about](http://www.deloitte.com/about) for a detailed description of the legal structure of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu and its member firms. Please see [www.deloitte.com/us/about](http://www.deloitte.com/us/about) for a detailed description of the legal structure of Deloitte LLP and its subsidiaries.

Member of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu

Copyright © 2008 Deloitte Development LLC. All rights reserved.