



The 5 Principles of

# **FAN ENGAGEMENT FOR SPORTS MARKETERS**

# INTRO

Every team has the same mission: to maximize their value. But in Marketo's view, your most valuable asset isn't your players, or your branding, or even your team—*it's your fans*. The most successful companies succeed because they excel during each stage of the customer lifecycle: in acquiring new fans, in growing their lifetime value, and in converting them into advocates.

But in today's digital world, fans are more empowered than ever. The internet gives them instant "information gratification"—they can access detailed specs, pricing, and reviews about goods and services, 24 hours a day, with a few flicks of their thumbs. Meanwhile, social media encourages them to share and compare, while mobile devices add a "whenever and wherever" dimension to every aspect of the experience.

All of which means that your fans are forming opinions and drawing conclusions *well before* they choose to interact with representatives from your team. Decision

making is no longer confined to your team's website.

That's why it's up to the marketer to become the steward of the customer journey and build a bond with fans wherever they are—whether that means engaging on social media, presenting a unified experience across devices, or personalizing content and communications.

All this is easier said than done, which is why we're introducing a strategy for you—a strategy called "engagement marketing."

So what is engagement marketing?

Let's start with what *it isn't*: engagement marketing isn't about serving your fans a particular product, or even serving them a particular experience. It isn't about one-off campaigns (no matter how compelling or involving), and it isn't about customer service (at least it isn't *just* about customer service).

Instead, **engagement marketing is about creating meaningful interactions with fans,**

**based on who they are and what they do, continuously over time. It's marketing that engages people towards a goal, wherever they are, and it's marketing that is backed by both creative vision and hard data. Finally, it's marketing that allows you to move quickly, shortening the time between idea and outcome, so that you can create more—and better targeted—programs.**

To do this, sports marketers can use an engagement marketing platform, which is a technology platform that's purpose-built to implement the engagement marketing principles. Engagement marketing platforms offer marketers the power and ease of software and tools tailored to help their marketing succeed at each stage of the customer lifecycle.

Interested? Keep reading. We'll walk you through the five elements of engagement marketing, and show how you can master this strategy.



# Engagement marketing is about **CONNECTING WITH FANS**

- **A**s individuals
- **B**ased on what they do
- **C**ontinuously over time
- **D**irected towards an outcome
- **E**verywhere they are



# Engaging Fans **AS INDIVIDUALS**

Most marketers are already personalizing their emails in simple ways—using the recipient's first name, for example. But an engagement marketing approach goes far beyond email. Today's fans demand hyper-relevant communications that speak to them as individuals, and at the end of the day, you're marketing to individuals.

So whether you're talking to a new fan, or a season ticket holder, you'll want to be well versed on your fan's individual preferences, history, relationship with your team, stage in the buying journey, and more. While persona-based marketing (which is extremely powerful on its own) defines and speaks to your "typical" fans, 1:1 marketing speaks to individuals, on their own terms



# Engaging Fans **AS INDIVIDUALS**

## WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

Take, for example, a marketer for a large outdoor stadium that hosts football games. When it comes to football fans, the company wants to convert individual ticket holders into season ticket-holders, and to convert current season ticket-holders into lifetime ticket holders. In other words, the company wants to understand their customers as individuals, and tailor their marketing accordingly.

That company could use an engagement marketing platform to learn all about their customers: which game tickets individuals have purchased which teams individuals “like” or follow on Facebook, each fan’s favorite players—all of that information could become the fodder for marketing that speaks directly to individual customers.

Next, that company could even identify specific indicators that a fan is likely to purchase season tickets, and then nudge that person closer to a sale—maybe an email with a special discount code? The more you know about your audience, the more likely you are to make the best offer at the right time.





# Engaging Fans **BASED ON WHAT THEY DO**

An engagement marketing approach bases communications on behaviors, not demographics. Demographics tell you what a fan might be interested in; behaviors tell you what she is *actually* interested in.

Rather than assuming that, because a fan fits a certain profile, she will be interested in a certain event or product, we can now target individuals based on how they actually behave. You can also use behaviors on one channel—say, an interaction on your team’s Facebook page— to inform marketing on another channel—such as the message that appears when that person visits your website.

To engage on this level, you need technology that can continually collect and compile rich data, and then target your buyers based on that data. To do so on a buyer’s individual terms, you need to know when she wants to be contacted, how she

wants to be contacted, and what she wants to be contacted about. An engagement marketing platform enables marketers to do this efficiently by making marketing assets—emails, landing pages, forms, segmentations, and workflows—easy to replicate and implement. This ability to fuse planning and execution allows marketers more flexibility than ever, which enables them to engage people quickly and personally, at scale.





# Engaging Fans **CONTINUOUSLY OVER TIME**

True engagement marketing is a continuous process. According to Forrester research, today's customers distrust and resent one off campaigns that interrupt or intercept them—which is why your marketing should feel like a natural continuation of a conversation with your customer. The more time that you devote to that conversation, the more you know about your customers, and the deeper your relationships can grow. We now have the opportunity to listen and respond to every fan at every stage of his customer journey, keeping him engaged and helping

to drive purchase decisions. Using intelligent nurture tracks, marketing messages should flow in a logical fashion, creating engaging, personalized conversations. It's not about individual messages, or even individual campaigns—every interaction asks for another interaction, and is part of a longer chain of events.

Continuous engagement also ensures that the initial purchase is only beginning of a fan's value. According to Bain & Company, repeat customers spend as much as 67%

more than new customers, and 49% of companies say they achieve a higher return-on-investment by focusing on engagement rather than acquisition. What's more, loyal customers are positioned to become advocates for your brand, helping you to create new business. That's why engaging with fans throughout their lifecycle isn't just about individual value—it's also about the value of their networks.



# Engaging Fans

## CONTINUOUSLY OVER TIME

### WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

Your fans change over time. Imagine a college student who goes to an occasional game with their friends. As they graduate, enter the workforce and have more disposable income, they may come to games more often, buy better seats, or even purchase season tickets. They might even think of the luxury suites of your stadium or arena as a site for a business event.

Using an engagement marketing strategy, your team can instigate and maintain continuous conversations, offering fans and

potential fans relevant messages and offers across channels. Over time, by listening and responding to your fan, and establishing an understanding of where they are and what they are looking for, you can help fans purchase more and increase their loyalty to your team.

Marketers who understand these changes are able to dramatically increase share of wallet and customer satisfaction over time.



# Engaging Fans

## **DIRECTED TOWARDS AN OUTCOME**

Once you've acquired a fan your new goal is to create a long-term relationship—ensuring that you get the most value out of your fans, and they get the most value out of your offerings.

Whenever you communicate with your fans, keep the customer journey in mind. Engagement marketing isn't about relationship building for its own sake—it's about relationship building toward a goal. At each phase of the customer's journey—from acquisition to advocacy—your goal is to move those fans into the next phase toward purchase or recommendation. To do so you need a clear understanding of that journey, a clear call-to-action in all of your marketing, and a way to tie each of your marketing activities to profit.

For example, you might design an infographic geared toward potential fans who aren't necessarily familiar with your sport. But your goal isn't just to create awareness with your graphic; your goal is to start building a relationship. Your call-to-

action, in this case, might be an invitation to view more of your content (which will eventually lead to fans sharing their information, like their email address, with you). If a new customer visits your website, your goal might be to guide them toward your events page. Established fans should be shown new offerings; long-time fans should be encouraged to become advocates for your brand. No matter where someone in the customer lifecycle, your goal should be to move him one step further along.

An engagement marketing platform empowers marketers to do just that—with its organization and process alignment, you can send the right communication to effectively push or nudge your customer at scale and with a measureable impact. With improved measurability, you can not only track the impact of your efforts on profit, but you'll see what is working and what is not, helping you optimize your marketing to more effectively engage buyers.

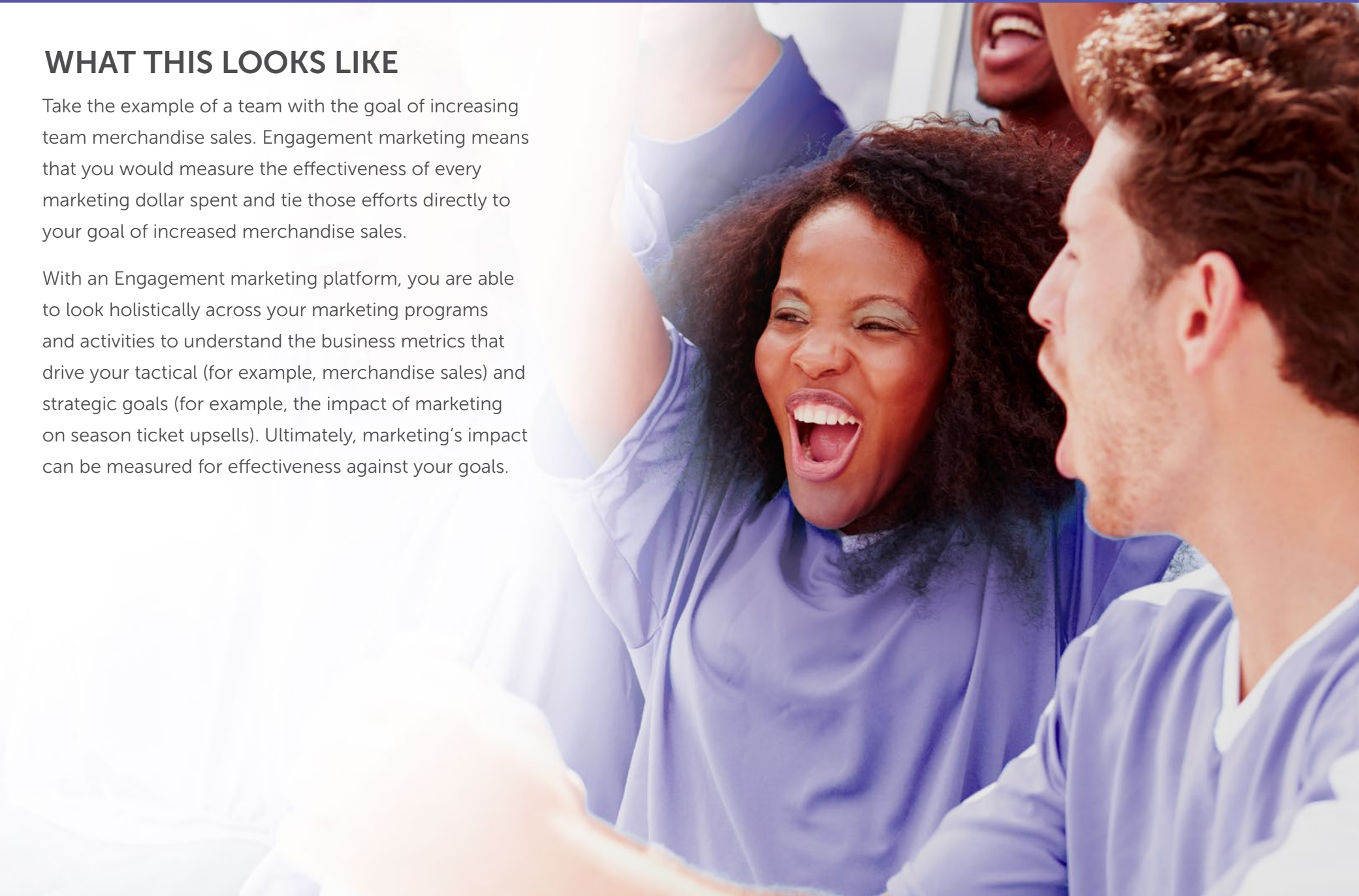


# Engaging Fans **DIRECTED TOWARDS AN OUTCOME**

## WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

Take the example of a team with the goal of increasing team merchandise sales. Engagement marketing means that you would measure the effectiveness of every marketing dollar spent and tie those efforts directly to your goal of increased merchandise sales.

With an Engagement marketing platform, you are able to look holistically across your marketing programs and activities to understand the business metrics that drive your tactical (for example, merchandise sales) and strategic goals (for example, the impact of marketing on season ticket upsells). Ultimately, marketing's impact can be measured for effectiveness against your goals.





# Engaging Fans **EVERYWHERE THEY ARE**

Today's fan is everywhere—online and offline. She moves seamlessly from one channel to the next, jumping from her email inbox, to her Facebook feed, to her favorite blog, to your website, then back to social media—all without losing momentum, and from whatever device is most handy at the moment. Marketing is no longer about being “multi-channel”; it's about being omni-channel. To meet your fans wherever they are, you need to deliver an integrated customer experience across every single platform.

That's why an engagement approach requires you to create a consistent experience for your fans—one that acknowledges the nuances of individual channels, yet still presents a unified message. But to make the shift from siloed communications, and to do it well, you need a platform specifically designed to drive engagement on your website, on tablets and smartphones, via email, through social networks, at in-person events, and beyond.

If you start a conversation with a fan on one channel, you should continue that conversation when she navigates to another. If, for example, she watches a video on your Facebook page, you wouldn't want to show her the same video on your mobile app. Likewise, if she engages positively with an email you sent on a particular topic, why not reference that topic in a display ad she's shown?





# Engaging Fans **EVERYWHERE THEY ARE**

## WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

Imagine you are looking to engage fans before, during and after an event. Typically a fan might buy tickets from you online, arrive at the event and leave. Then you market to them again with packages and offers, perhaps without awareness of what they bought or did previously.

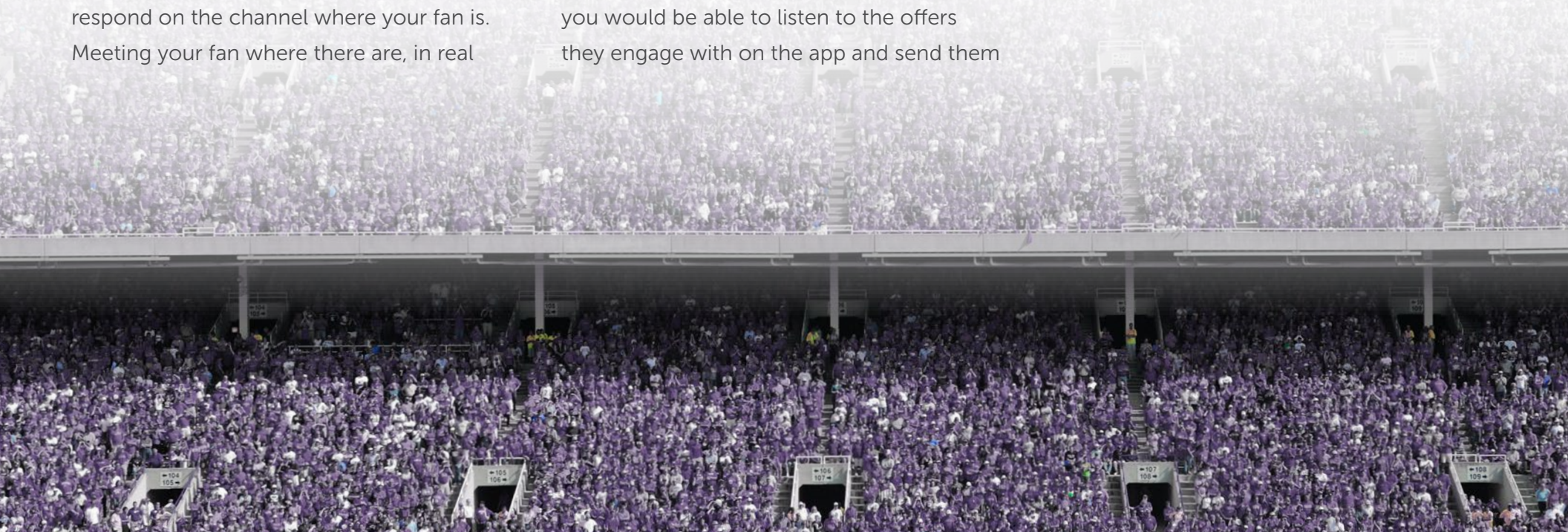
Using an engagement marketing platform, this experience transforms with the ability to listen to behavior across channels and respond on the channel where your fan is. Meeting your fan where they are, in real

time maintains the momentum of your brand and makes your marketing more timely, relevant and effective.

Let's take the previous example and put it in the context of an engagement marketing platform. If your fan buys tickets from you online, you can engage them over email prior to the event, encouraging them to download your mobile app for e-tickets and special offers. Once they arrive at the event, you would be able to listen to the offers they engage with on the app and send them

messages and offers based on their activity. It also allows you to follow-up with your fan after they leave the event with more, relevant offers, keeping them engaged with your team before, during and after the event.

Engagement marketing helps marketers make the shift from siloed channels to an integrated approach that follows each fan as they bounce across channels, always ready to present the most compelling message.





# ENGAGEMENT MARKETING TECHNOLOGIES

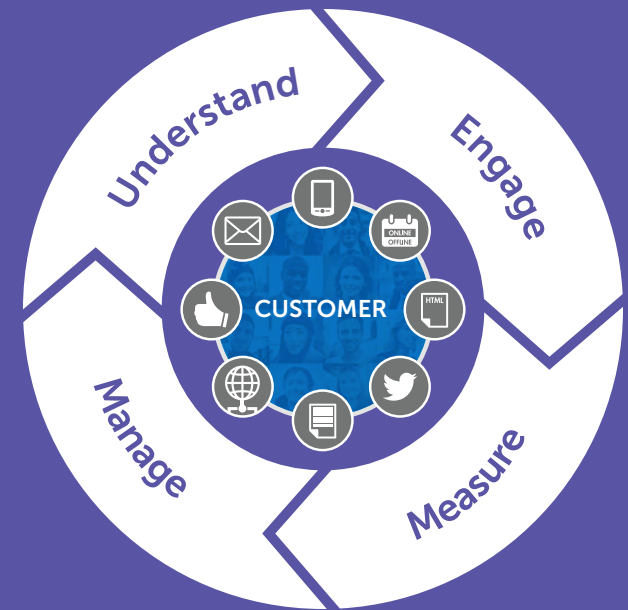
Now that we've covered the elements of engagement marketing, how can you put the principles into practice? The difference between success and failure is often choosing the right technology platform. Look for a platform that has been built, from the ground-up, to implement the engagement marketing principles.

Here's what your platform should deliver: A blend of power and ease. Your solution needs to provide a suite of software, tailored to help marketers succeed at each stage of the customer lifecycle. A unified experience. Rather than offering disparate solutions built separately for every kind of marketer, your solution should converge the best practices and sports marketers of every size. An open platform. Given that no single suite can meet all of marketing's needs, your solution should be an open platform, able to easily integrate with hundreds of other marketing solutions via modern API technologies. Innovation at rapid speeds.

Finally, your solution should deliver the innovation required at the rapid speed needed by marketing today to:

- **Understand fan behaviors, affinity, and context across channels in a single data repository**
- **Engage your fans in a highly personalized way, building broader, more meaningful relationships**
- **Send sales teams real-time alerts to follow up with the most important inquiries**
- **Measure and maximize impact of your marketing investments across channels**
- **Manage, coordinate, and plan marketing activities across teams**

To deliver on these elements, your engagement marketing technology needs to offer the core components listed on the following page.



# CONCLUSION

In the digital era, your fans are your most valuable asset, and only companies who successfully engage them throughout the customer lifecycle will succeed. And that means that teams must master an engagement marketing strategy—through a deep understanding of the five core principles, combined with the technologies needed to act upon them.





Marketo (NASDAQ: MKTO) provides the leading marketing software and solutions designed to help marketers master the art and science of digital marketing. Through a unique combination of innovation and expertise, Marketo is focused solely on helping marketers keep pace in an ever-changing digital world. Spanning today's digital, social, mobile and offline channels, Marketo's Engagement Marketing Platform powers a set of breakthrough applications to help marketers tackle all aspects of digital marketing from the planning and orchestration of marketing activities to the delivery of personalized interactions that can be optimized in real-time. Marketo's applications are known for their ease-of-use, and are complemented by the Marketing Nation®, a thriving network of more than 400 third-party solutions through our LaunchPoint® ecosystem and over 50,000 marketers who share and learn from each other to grow their collective marketing expertise. The result for modern marketers is unprecedented agility and superior results. Headquartered in San Mateo, CA with offices in Europe, Australia and Japan, Marketo serves as a strategic marketing partner to more than 3,750 large enterprises and fast-growing small companies across a wide variety of industries. For more information, visit [www.marketo.com](http://www.marketo.com).