Smarter Marketing Assessment

Assess how your organisation is performing in the five areas of smarter marketing and determine how you can improve

Geo Strategies

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How smart is your marketing strategy?

The relationship between brands and customers has fundamentally changed. New technology means that today's savvy customers are more empowered, connected and selective than ever before. They engage with brands in real-time through a huge range of different sources such as web, mobile, television and direct mail. With so many touch-points available and so much noise in the marketplace it has never been tougher to meet customer expectations.
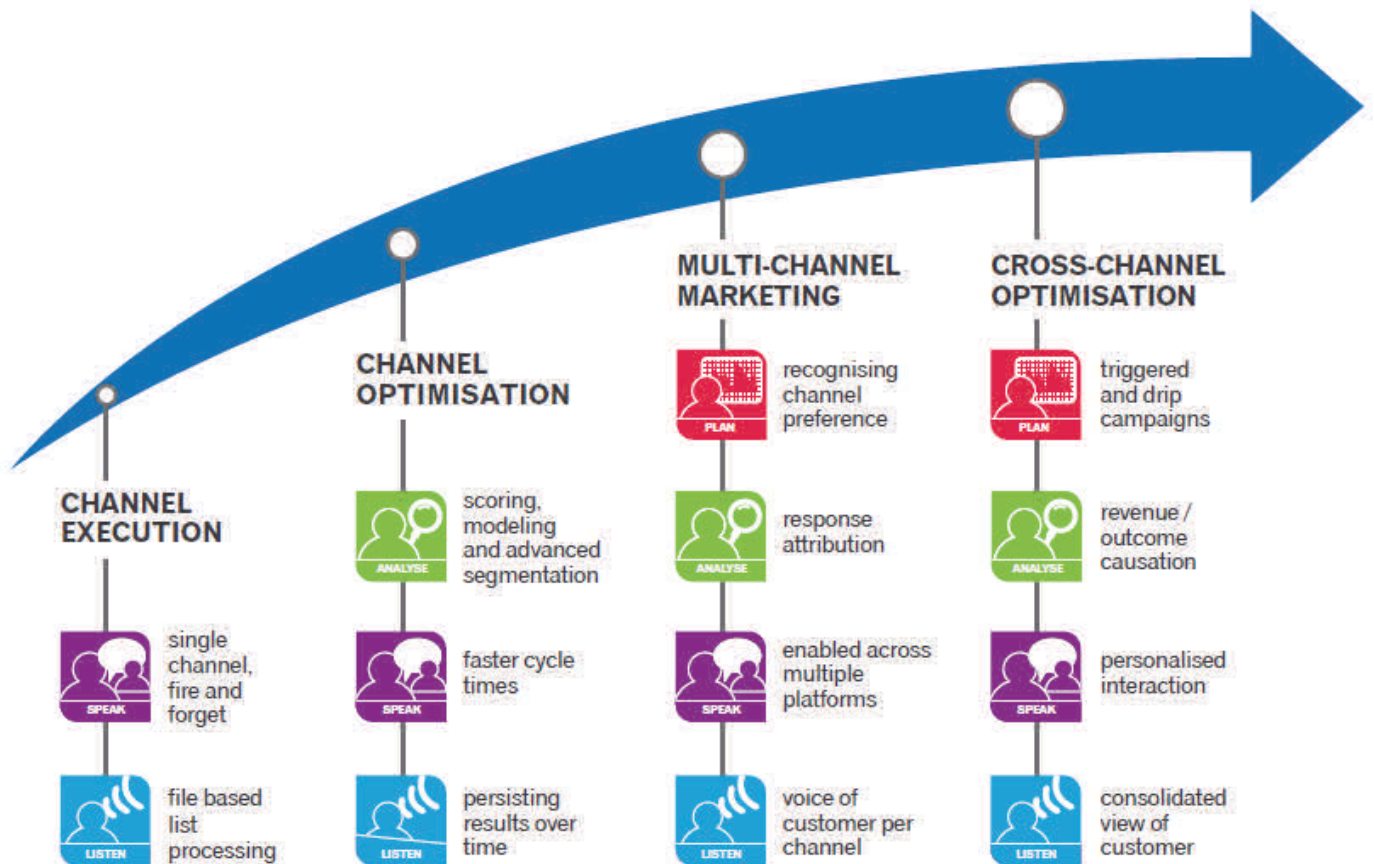
Our research also shows that 84% of customers would walk away from a company that doesn't link up, understand and respond to their engagements across channels.*

With customers firmly in control marketers must now ensure that communications are driven by customer behaviour, market insights and data-driven technology. In today's environment it is no longer acceptable to flood all channels in the hope of resonating with your target audience.

* Source: April 2012: Experian Marketing Services survey of 2,057 UK Citizens aged 18+.

The Marketing Sophistication Curve

The Marketing Sophistication Curve is designed to help clarify where a company is during its evolution to cross-channel marketing optimisation. It helps organisations understand how smart their marketing really is and where they need to develop.

CHANNEL EXECUTION
- single channel, fire and forget
- file based list processing

CHANNEL OPTIMISATION
- scoring, modeling and advanced segmentation
- faster cycle times
- persisting results over time

MULTI-CHANNEL MARKETING
- recognising channel preference
- response attribution
- enabled across multiple platforms
- voice of customer per channel

CROSS-CHANNEL OPTIMISATION
- triggered and drip campaigns
- revenue / outcome causation
- personalised interaction
- consolidated view of customer

It is important to note that fantastic marketing can occur at any level of the curve and there is no shame if you currently sit at Channel Execution. It merely aims to show you where you can begin to improve.

The five areas of smarter marketing

We have identified five key areas that contribute towards a smarter marketing strategy.

Customer understanding

We strongly believe that customers should be at the centre of everything you do. Without an in-depth understanding of your customers – the way they behave, how they interact with your brand and their path to purchase – you cannot even begin to put together a strategy that exceeds customer expectations.

Data management

The way you store information on customer behaviour, contact details and demographics is key to a smarter marketing strategy. After all, if you want to deliver timely communications that resonate with individuals you need to ensure that your data is accurate, segmented and easily integrated into your marketing platform.

Competitor monitoring

Staying on top of competitor activity and understanding your position in the marketplace is essential to success. A smarter marketer is aware of what competitors do well, keeps an eye on emerging trends and actively seeks new opportunities to improve marketing strategy.

Channel execution

Smarter marketers know that today's savvy customers have no interest in channels and may have little or no common pattern of brand engagement. Marketers can no longer focus on channel execution in isolation and must ensure that channels complement each other in order to deliver seamless communications that convey consistency and relevance at all times.

Analysis and evaluation

Analysis and evaluation are now an on-going part of the marketing communications cycle. As customers' behaviours change and adapt, smarter marketers ensure that their communications are flexible enough to continually change and adapt with them.

Taking the assessment

The following assessment will help you measure your company against the five areas of smarter marketing and determine your company's position on the Marketing Sophistication Curve.

The assessment is divided into the five areas and each area contains four questions, each with four possible answers. You simply need to circle the score most relevant to your current practices.

Once you have completed the assessment, add up your scores and follow the instructions in the results section of this document. Use the results to identify how to develop a smarter marketing strategy.

Part 1: customer understanding

1. How much customer information does your company store?

We just hold basic contact information such as names and addresses.	**1**
We enhance contact information with some demographic information that we use for segmentation.	**2**
We have detailed contact information that allows us to contact our customers across all channels. We also use third party demographics and segmentations.	**3**
Our customer data is all encompassing and is consistently updated by customer responses across all channels in real-time. We use third party demographics and segmentations to enhance our contact data.	**4**

2. What tools do you use for customer analytics and insight?

We use spreadsheets and pivot tables to analyse customer data.	**1**
We use simple cross-tab functionality within the campaign management software to gather some insight on our customers.	**2**
We use the profiling analytics and modelling tools within the campaign management software to undertake customer and marketing analysis.	**3**
We have a large team of dedicated analysts that use specialist, analytics software that interacts with our customer database to generate customer and marketing insight.	**4**

3. What level of segmentation supports your marketing strategy?

Marketing campaigns are delivered to a wide audience with the same message.	**1**
We create targeted audience segments on a campaign-by-campaign basis using manual business rules, spreadsheets and selections based on campaign analytics from previous campaigns.	**2**
We have customer segmentation in place and review these on a periodic basis. These form the core part of our targeting within our marketing campaigns.	**3**
We combine customer segmentation with real-time actions and behaviours across all channels to deliver highly targeted, personal communications to individual customers.	**4**

4. What methods do you currently use to retain existing customers?

We rely on our reputation to keep our customers coming back.	**1**
We have a dedicated customer services team who keep our customers loyal.	**2**
We have dedicated service/support teams and offer special rates/discounts to customers to keep them loyal.	**3**
We have a dedicated loyalty programme that delivers tailored offers and messages triggered by customer behaviour. We have also invested in third party tools that give us a more detailed view of customer actions and behaviours.	**4**

Part 2: data management

1. What processes do you have in place for improving and maintaining the quality of your customer data?

Internal processes are in place to check the quality of our customer data; we don't use any third party data or software to validate this.	**1**
Third party data quality software is used to validate and correct customer data on an ad-hoc basis.	**2**
Third party data quality software is used at the point-of-capture and also used on an on-going basis within our customer data management platforms.	**3**
Third party data quality software is used throughout the business, and processes are in place to check the quality, validity and deliverability of customer e-mail addresses and mobile numbers.	**4**

2. Do you have a single customer view (SCV) of your customers and prospects?

No, we have pieces of customer data in disparate platforms and can't join these up.	**1**
We have a central marketing database that has an SCV for marketing campaigns but this doesn't include data from other systems such as product and transactional information.	**2**
We have created an SCV using names and address, across different customer datasets including product data, transactional data, demographic data, etc.	**3**
We have an SCV across all of our offline and online data; we create match keys across names and addresses, e-mail addresses and mobile numbers to create the SCV.	**4**

3. How would you describe the depth of your customer data?

Limited access to customer data for marketing purposes – mainly just some e-mail addresses and a few bits of customer profile information.	**1**
A reasonable amount of customer data comprising of a combination of names and addresses &/or e-mail addresses &/or mobile numbers.	**2**
A large volume of customer, demographic, product and transaction related data (mainly offline).	**3**
A high volume of online and offline customer data which includes detailed contact information, demographics and behavioural data such as transaction history and channel responses.	**4**

4. How easy is it for you to load additional data into your current marketing platform?

New data feeds require internal IT and assistance from our current supplier, and a significant amount of advanced planning.	**1**
Ad-hoc data files can be loaded into the system by marketing with minimal assistance from IT, however the data can only be used for analysis purposes and limited testing.	**2**
Ad-hoc data files can be loading into the platform by marketing without the assistance of IT. IT assistance is required to make these data feeds fully integrated and automated.	**3**
Data feeds from external sources automatically update our database in real-time ensuring that all of our communications are completely up-to-date.	**4**

Part 3: competitor monitoring

1. How closely do you monitor competitor activity?

We don't monitor the way our competitors behave.	**1**
We carry out competitor analysis when we are putting our strategy together but we don't review it on an on-going basis.	**2**
We carry out competitor analysis when we are putting our strategy together and monitor competitor activity on an on-going basis, but we rarely act upon it.	**3**
We consistently monitor competitor activity through a set internal of processes and also use competitive analysis tools to stay up-to-date.	**4**

2. How do you stay up-to-date with industry trends?

We focus on our own activity and do not pay much attention to industry trends.	**1**
We occasionally look at trade websites, magazines and events to stay up-to-date.	**2**
We actively monitor trade websites, magazines, events and established industry reports to stay on top of industry trends. We also offer thought leadership and share best practice through these channels.	**3**
As well as attending and participating in trade events, websites and magazines we consistently engage with established trade bodies and research companies to understand the latest industry trends.	**4**

3. How do you benchmark your performance against your competition?

We focus on our own strategy and don't take much interest in competitor behaviour.	**1**
We keep an eye on competitor activity but use intuition to gauge how well we perform against them.	**2**
We actively monitor the performance of our competition and conduct research with our customers to find out how they interact with the competition.	**3**
We use competitive intelligence tools to analyse our performance against specific competitors. We also regularly work with market research agencies to understand how people interact with our competition.	**4**

4. How quickly do you respond to competitor threats?

We are slow to react to competitor activity and changes in the marketplace.	**1**
We implement changes based on competitor activity on an ad-hoc basis when we have time.	**2**
We carry out research before we commence marketing campaigns and plan our activity to address any threats and opportunities in advance.	**3**
We actively respond to competitor threats and are ready to adapt and change whenever necessary. Our people and resources are equipped to move swiftly.	**4**

Part 4: channel execution

1. What level of marketing automation do you currently have in place?

There is no automation in our marketing programmes or processes.	**1**
The transfer of data into our marketing platform is automated but marketing campaigns are created manually.	**2**
We automate some of our marketing campaigns/programmes but most of it is done manually.	**3**
Most of our marketing campaigns/programmes are automated and run to pre-defined schedules &/or react to triggers based on customer behaviour. These triggers are also interactive across different channels.	**4**

2. What channels do your currently use for your direct marketing campaigns?

We only use one or two channels such as direct mail and e-mail.	**1**
We use a combination of direct mail, e-mail and other channels but our data and activity work independently.	**2**
Our marketing campaigns work across most channels such as direct mail, e-mail, mobile, search and social media. The campaigns run from different platforms and we record results in one place, usually spreadsheets.	**3**
Our campaigns work across all online and offline channels and are fully integrated within one platform. We manage all of our data in one place and it is constantly updated in real-time based on customer behaviour across any channel.	**4**

3. How interactive are your existing marketing campaigns?

We have set up a small number of multi-stage programmes within a single marketing channel but do not have the tools to set these up across channels.	**1**
We have some key multi-stage customer programmes set up and these work across different channels, but we need help to undertake further analysis to create new customer journeys and welcome programmes.	**2**
We have a large number of automated multi-stage, cross channel marketing programmes set up that we manually update on a periodic basis as a result of marketing/customer analysis.	**3**
We have a fully automated solution that provides on-going automated analytics that optimises and refines the business rules within the multi-stage, cross-channel marketing programmes.	**4**

4. How integrated are your internal marketing and database functions?

Our teams mainly work independently but occasionally work together to carry out activity.	**1**
Our database and marketing teams work together on some projects but we have specialist teams that only interact occasionally.	**2**
We have separate teams for data, campaigns, search, e-mail and we interact when we need to in order to deliver projects. We all have independent databases which don't relate to each other.	**3**
We are a fully integrated team working together on consistent platforms and can easily see what we are all working on at any given time. We meet regularly to plan activity and are able to adapt and change in customer behaviour seamlessly.	**4**

Part 5: analysis and evaluation

1. How do you measure the success of your marketing campaigns?

We undertake campaign analysis on a project by project basis.	**1**
We analyse individual campaigns and then track performance and trends on a periodic basis.	**2**
We have automated analytics and reporting set up to provide up-to-date analysis, and this is continuously tracked against KPIs.	**3**
We have automated analytics and reporting that enables continuous measurement of customer engagement and marketing performance across all in-bound and out-bound channels, products and customer segments.	**4**

2. How do you share marketing performance across the business?

We extract data from the marketing platform and export it into spreadsheets in order to analyse and share across the business.	**1**
Our analysts generate reports and load them into an online reporting service that anyone across the business can access.	**2**
We have access to a reporting dashboard tool where reports are updated on a periodic basis, or we can refresh them and all of the business can access this dashboard.	**3**
We have access to online reporting tools and dashboards where we can update and refresh reports and analytics, and also create new reports to share with the business.	**4**

3. How well can you track and analyse marketing performance across channels?

We capture response data in some channels but do not have the tools or expertise to analyse performance.	**1**
We capture response data and analyse performance within individual channels and use the results to improve but have no cross-channel visibility.	**2**
We capture all channel response and event data and use optimisation tools to analyse this data. This is then applied to manage future marketing budget/spend effectively across the channels.	**3**
All customer activity is captured within our marketing platform and future activity is tailored in real-time to reflect their behaviour in real-time to ensure they are targeted with highly relevant and targeted communications.	**4**

4. How well can you demonstrate ROI to senior stakeholders

At the moment we struggle to demonstrate ROI.	**1**
We prove the ROI of our activity as-and-when requested by whatever means senior stakeholders demand.	**2**
We prove the ROI of our marketing activity on a regular basis (e.g. monthly, weekly, quarterly, annually) or when the senior stakeholders demand it via meetings/presentations.	**3**
We can easily prove the value of our activity by using accurate and up-to-date reporting that clearly demonstrates ROI. We can provide this detail whenever necessary or at scheduled meetings. Senior stakeholders can also access this information for themselves if necessary.	**4**

The results

Thank you for taking the time to complete our assessment. The next step is to see where your organisation fits on our Marketing Sophistication Curve and to determine how smart your marketing strategy is in each of the five areas.
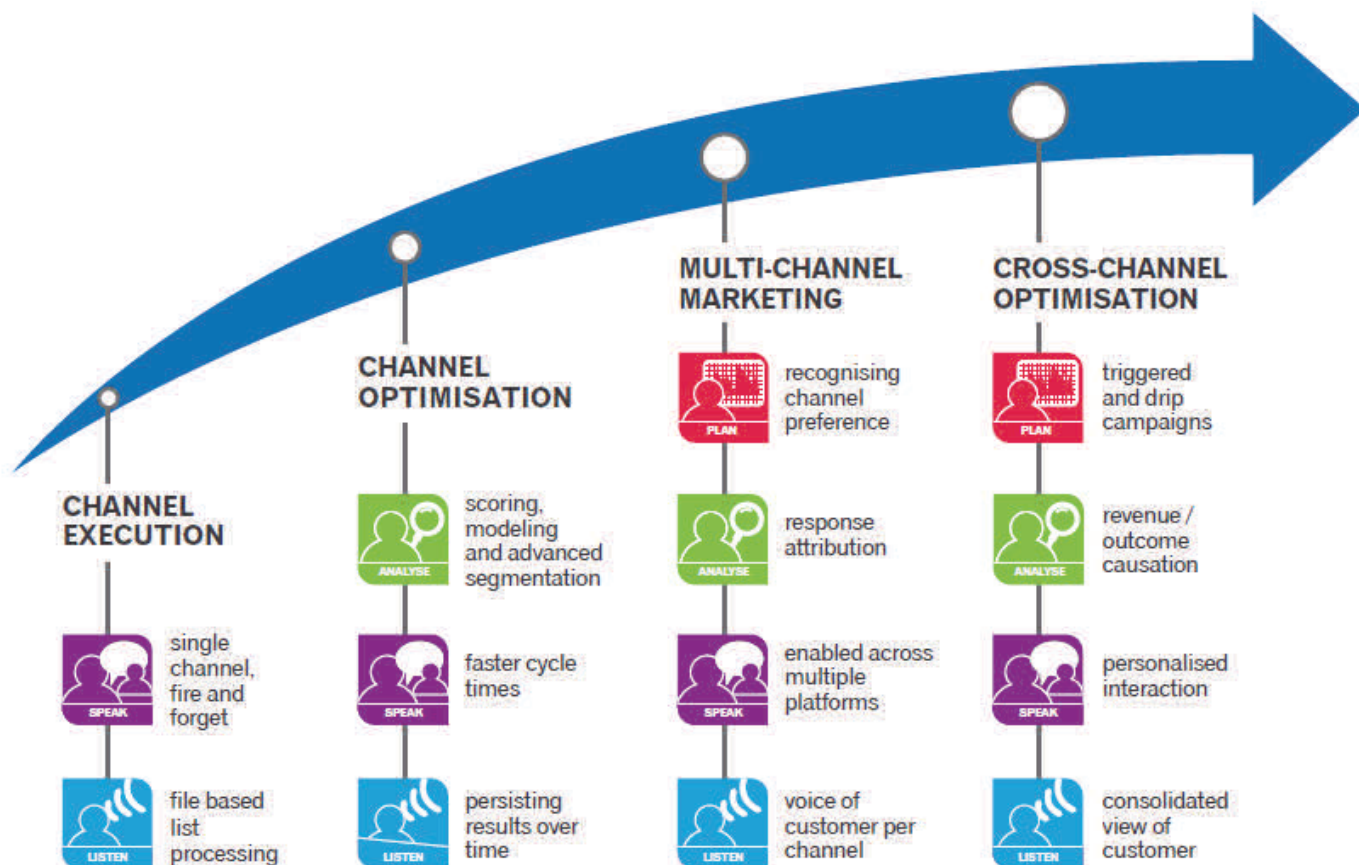
It will also help us put together tailored solutions that meet the specific needs of your business no matter how large or small. We can work with you to ensure you generate higher ROI, drive more value to your customers and ensure you maintain advantage in a competitive market.

Find out your score

The first step is to sum up your scores in each section of the assessment and determine your total score. The number alongside each answer equates to the value of points associated to it i.e. 1 = 1 point, 2 = 2 points etc.

Your total score in the assessment can range from 20 (lowest level of sophistication) to 80 (highest level of sophistication). So, if your company scores a 2 on each question the total score is 32 which means your company currently operates in the Channel Optimisation level (31-50).

As well as discovering your company's position on the Marketing Sophistication Curve, you can also determine the score in each of the five areas of smarter marketing. This will help you understand where your company operates well, and which areas can be improved. In each area of the assessment, the total points range from 4 (low) to 16 (high) so for example, a score of 4 in Data Management shows that this is an area that needs significant improvement.

CHANNEL EXECUTION
- single channel, fire and forget (SPEAK)
- file based list processing (LISTEN)

CHANNEL OPTIMISATION
- scoring, modeling and advanced segmentation (ANALYSE)
- faster cycle times (SPEAK)
- persisting results over time (LISTEN)

MULTI-CHANNEL MARKETING
- recognising channel preference (PLAN)
- response attribution (ANALYSE)
- enabled across multiple platforms (SPEAK)
- voice of customer per channel (LISTEN)

CROSS-CHANNEL OPTIMISATION
- triggered and drip campaigns (PLAN)
- revenue / outcome causation (ANALYSE)
- personalised interaction (SPEAK)
- consolidated view of customer (LISTEN)

What do the results mean?

So, you know where your organisation sits on the Marketing Sophistication Curve but what does this mean for your marketing strategy? Whether your score is what you expected or a complete surprise, be assured that we can give you practical recommendations that are specific to your business needs.

Level 1: channel execution

Organisations at the channel execution level are typically working hard to get the mail or e-mail delivered to their targets. Campaigns are effective by channel, but rarely do you see any co-ordination across channels. Often, companies in this stage have multiple databases depending on the channel that they are working with, and often struggle to define a single view of the customer across channels. These companies generally have multiple departments within the marketing organisation, and rarely share information across those groups.

Level 2: channel optimisation

Organisations in this stage of maturity are starting to employ more advanced techniques by channel, such as triggers or statistical models to increase response and ensure that each channel is optimised. In this stage, we often see a lot of campaign/programme automation, and organisations typically have a solid process for list selection and offer management.

Level 3: multi-channel marketing

In this stage, companies are starting to move to a single database for all customer contacts. Typically, marketers are working to co-ordinate offers and beginning to define business rules for cross-channel response attribution. The database is often integrated by multiple customer engagement platforms, and each channel has a clear voice for the customer. Finally, customer channel preferences are generally maintained and contact strategies and frequencies are supportive of customer desire.

Level 4: cross-channel optimisation

In this stage, there is a fine balance between demand generation campaigns (typically out-bound campaigns that generate awareness and interest) and demand-capture campaigns (those that react to customers at the moments of truth). Offers are often highly correlated across channels and are personalised based on the customer profile as well as the context of the interaction.

How we can help

This assessment guide serves as a starting point for you to determine where your company stands in to-day's complex marketing ecosystem. It will help you highlight the gaps in your existing marketing strategy and help up us determine fit-for-purpose solutions to help you make your marketing smarter.

It all begins with data. We allow you to interpret data and gain a true 360-degree view of customers that can be immediately made actionable for marketing initiatives across channels.

Our Cross-Channel Marketing Platform provides an intuitive interface and back-end capabilities for easy integration with any data source and empowers marketers to seamlessly execute timely and co-ordinated marketing interactions through single or multiple channels.

All communications are created and delivered directly from the platform, ensuring that response behaviour is immediately captured and accessible to drive even greater relevancy in subsequent interactions.

The Experian Cross-Channel Marketing Platform
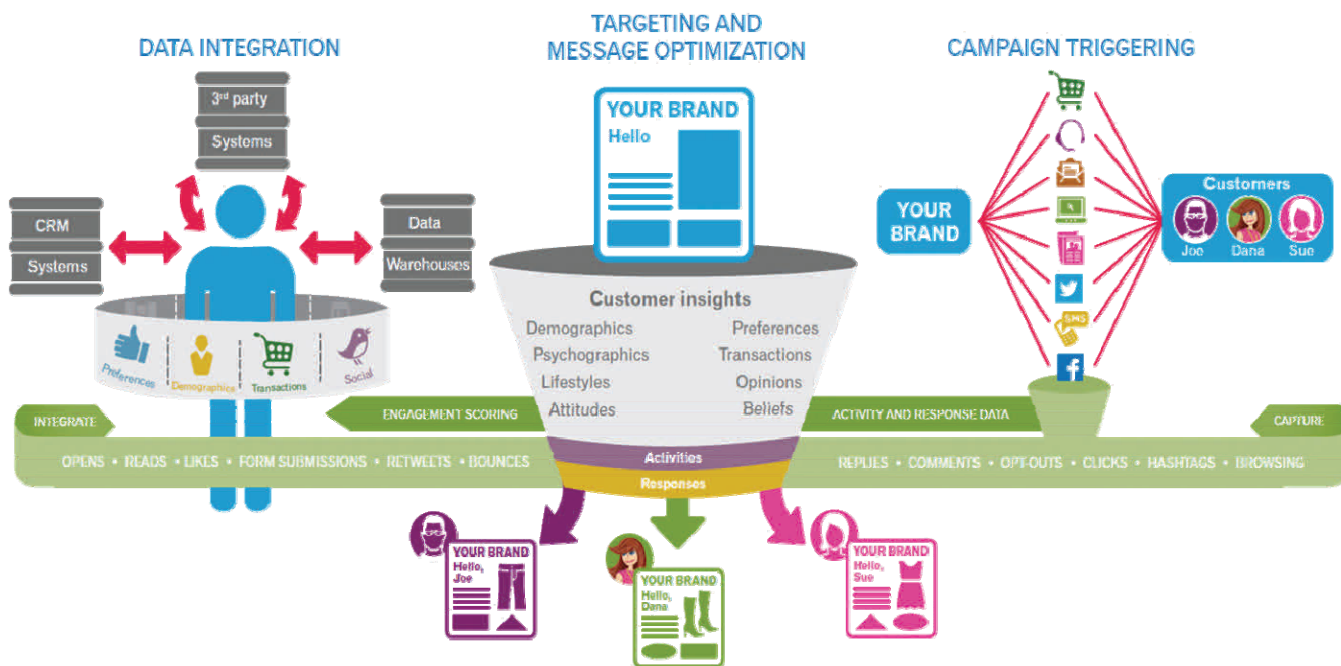
Contact us

Our tailored solutions are designed to help your organisation improve its marketing strategy no matter at which level of the curve you currently operate.

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