

WHITEPAPER

# Digital Meets Physical: Do Your Customer Experiences Deliver?



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The events of the past two years have accelerated omni-channel living and digital brand engagement, spreading deeply into markets no one expected. Surprising as it is that people buy furniture for their entire house online, they are also buying the house, sight unseen. They embrace subscriptions, enjoying buying without the shopping. Customers expect the physical and digital experiences to merge seamlessly, augmenting the in-store and online steps in their journeys.

“I think what we’re seeing now aren’t new trends, but rather trends that existed before the pandemic and are accelerating...The challenge is not identifying these trends... The real challenge is what you do about it: having the speed and agility to be one step ahead of the competition and to delight consumers,” [Blas Maquiver](#), president of global emerging markets at Mars Wrigley, during an interview with McKinsey & Company.

As marketers, how do we get out in front of these burgeoning expectations? How do we enable journeys that next year’s customers will love?

# A Look at How Technology is Already Impacting Customer Interactions

We're seeing technology penetrate experiences all around us in our daily lives that makes us wonder "why didn't someone think of this sooner?"— such as personalized menu boards at the drive through and grocery carts that handle the checkout. Physical experiences are increasingly digital, with A/R virtual models strutting the styles, and mirrors that make recommendations. Digital experiences are increasingly physical, with 3D, live streaming, and simulation.

Technology has made great strides in recent years, and it might be time to run and catch up with it. Here's how some of the leaders are using technology and customer focused design to improve their customer journeys.

## Retail Today: Digital Becomes More Physical

A premier sports brand encourages customers to reserve shoes online for store try-on. Customers can be sure the shoes will be there for them, stashed in a locker that their phone unlocks. When they've made their choice, customers just walk out the door with their selection.

Customers of a multinational cosmetics company can shop the products featured during live streaming with skincare experts, hosted on the company's website. And they appreciate the opportunity to learn, engaging for an average of 17 minutes and converting at 30%.

A Spanish apparel retailer brings digital excitement to stores via AR displays. Visitors to stores hold up their phones to view models apparently strutting the fashions right in front of them. As the models move, shoppers see the styling and drape of the clothes, making it easier to decide which are worth trying on. Online shoppers can enjoy the same miniature catwalk by scanning the packaging.

Pampering the clientele starts with apps that connect a shopper's smartphone with the store. One French luxury fashion house's staff can greet a shopper by name and lead her to a changing room that contains items from her wishlist. The AR-equipped mirrors in the changing room offer recommendations for styling and accessorizing the clothing being tried on.



# Where Are Journeys Going?

And those are just some innovative things happening today. Imagine what else you might be able to do as technology continues to penetrate experiences all around us. Removing barriers like checkout lines and making it possible to experience a product you can't yet touch, giving customers more information in the store — these are trends that customers expect and leaders are delivering.

What do customers hope for from their experiences? Here are some ideas of journeys that will be possible in the near future:

## Customer Journey: Filling the Pantry

Why is a grocery list never satisfied? Well, at least I'm not doomed to a marathon of pushing a cart down every aisle in the store: I ordered online. It took 5 seconds, because most items are ones I subscribe to every week, and the app is connected to my virtual assistant.

Curbside groceries are refrigerated so I don't have to schedule exact pickup. When I collect the big order, I will zip into the store and grab the 4 items. One of those is an item I rarely buy, so I'm thrilled that the mobile app has a navigator function that will guide me right to it.

I'll scan the items and pay with my app, no walking to the other end of the store to stand in line. I love that the app chimes when I'm walking past an item I sometimes buy that is a real deal today. Online ordering, curbside pickup and no checkout lines have changed my life. My grocery runs take about 10 minutes, instead of an hour.

## Customer Journey: Store Has All I Want

I hate trekking to the store only to discover that my size is not in stock, or not in the colors I want. I need to get outfitted for a wilderness hike, so I go online and order socks, base layers, 2 likely jackets, and 5 pairs of hiking boots. Getting the right fit can be difficult! I arrive at the store and unlock my order with my phone. Everything I want to try on is right there, no wandering around the store. While I'm trying on the jackets, the mirror recommends an all-weather hat. Great idea! And here's a sales associate holding the hat! After trying all the shoes I put my choices in my shopping tote and walk out the door, automatically paying for just those items.

## Customer Journey: Lunch on the Road

I'm stressing on errands in an unfamiliar part of town, and it's lunch time. I'm hoping getting a bite won't be a hassle, so I reach for my phone. And there's a text telling me that my favorite chain's new chicken sandwich will be ready when I get there, at a restaurant 5 minutes away. All I have to do is tap and then drive, using the directions provided. Wow.

The drive-thru line stretches around the store, but a text tells me I'm in the wrong line! I pull up to the pick-up window and grab my food. In less time than I would take to find a restaurant, I've got my lunch in hand. I love this place.



# How Can We Adapt to Deliver the Journeys Customers Want?

## Marketing Innovation and Evolution Already In Process

Adobe surveyed marketing professionals and leaders across industries to learn how marketers are adapting to be able to deliver the ideal customer journeys and found profound change already underway. One hospitality company described their efforts to evolve the customer journey like this: "Our ideal customer journey is to feel the unique warmth of our hospitality experience. It must be painless and streamlined. This industry is about enjoyment and we need to have the easiest process for that to happen."

To make the customer journey more painless and streamlined, organizations aren't just adding new technology, they're adapting their structure and skillsets as well. Here are some things they are doing to adapt:

### 1. Investing in unifying customer profiles with real-time data and insights

In order for marketers to provide seamless, personalized customer journeys they must first seek to know customers as individuals, so they can then engage customers in their timeframe. A unified profile is the foundation that makes building the ideal journey possible. It's not enough to account for interests or preferences, the profile must fuse data from all possible sources, including mobile app, transactions, and responses to marketing campaigns. On top of that, it must actively listen for any behavioral data in real time, so the journey can always stay contextually relevant for the individual.

“ Marketers need to be much more capable to perform advanced data analysis and to be able to understand the intricacies of tracking, data protection and reporting/ visualization.”

**Head of Lead Generation at Home Security Company**

“ The direction is toward omnichannel cohesion so the org shifts together based on unified data.”

**Director of Revenue Marketing at GPU Manufacturer**

“ I see more data scientists and analytical competencies around AI.”

**Head of Global Customer Service at medical technology company**

In addition to investing in the right technology, companies are investing in organizational shifts to make this possible.



## 2. Evolving their marketing organizations & eliminating technology silos:

Our survey found that legacy marketing technology and the siloes that have sprung up around them over the years are one of the biggest roadblocks to providing a seamless customer journey. In a related manner, organizational siloes also prevent customer journeys from being as smooth as possible. A customer-focused organizational design makes it possible to keep content, messages, and offers consistent and contextually relevant throughout the journey.

“ We are planning rapid hiring of new roles, especially people cross trained in multiple marketing channels and disciplines.”

**Digital Manager** at Global Athletic Apparel Company

“ Teams will be consolidated to a single org and leader. Email Marketing will be more integrated in omnichannel marketing touchpoints.”

**Global Head** of User Experience at Tech Company

“ Some companies are changing those roles making them much more data driven so they can create new cross channel strategies. But most companies don't know how important it is to get a 360 experience in the marketing department.”

**Digital Marketing Manager** at South American Retailer

## 3. Focus on building relationships across the buyer lifecycle.

Another major challenge for marketers is knowing which channel is going to be most effective. Instead, let the customer dictate how, where, and when they engage with your brand. With new tools at marketers' disposal, such as location-aware mobile engagement, the customer carries the key to our relationship in their pocket. Now no matter if we're engaging in person, on a mobile device, or on some other channel, our focus is always on building a relationship with the customer by providing finely-targeted personalized interactions.

“ We want to provide a seamless customer journey across different channels with a focus on digital, our most important point of sale, and a personalized experience based on their interest and preference.”

**Digital Customer Experience Director** at global athletics retailer

“ Our vision is a seamless omnichannel customer experience, bringing together the best of offline and online.”

**Head of Marketing** at British perfume brand

“ The ideal customer journey is highly personalized based on loyalty members status, prior purchase category, indicated interests and preferences. The new customer journey is simple and easy, no barriers to purchase, and ease of delivery, returns, order and account management. Top tier customers are rewarded for their loyalty.”

**Loyalty & Retention Marketing Manager** at fitness apparel company

# Adobe Can Help

## Technologies You Need to Make it Happen

Most companies, and very likely yours, haven't brought their customer journeys up to customer expectations. According to the report [Customer Journey Management: Meet Customers When and Where They Are](#) from Adobe & The Winterberry Group, only 17% of companies describe themselves as "journey-focused". Most marketers are focused on campaigns rather than enabling individual personalized journeys. But marketer beware, 65-70% of Gen X and Millennials will walk away from brands if their experience is not contextually relevant or personalized, according to a study from [Econsultancy](#). Consumers get frustrated when brands do things like send too many emails or push irrelevant products that don't match their interests.

Enter Adobe. With Adobe Journey Optimizer, brands get the data, content, intelligence, and orchestration that makes personalized real-time journeys possible, including:

Adobe can help ensure that your shoppers, buyers, or guests have a seamless experience throughout the customer journey, whether it's they're buying online, in person, or anywhere in between.



**Real-Time Profile & Insights:** Create the foundation for a more complete customer journey with a complete customer view that "listens" for real-time events and customer actions.



**Email & Mobile Engagement:** Design and deliver personalized messages for email, push, in-app, or SMS messages with a drag-and-drop interface & easy-to-edit templates.



**Omnichannel Orchestration:** Design and orchestrate real-time journeys for individuals as well as planned campaigns for larger audiences all from a single application.



**Personalized Content & Offers** – Keep content and offers consistent across the customer lifecycle, regardless of channel, with a centralized location for offers and for marketing assets.



**Intelligent Decisioning** - Apply intelligence & gain predictive insights throughout the customer journey to automate decisions, optimize the journey, and personalize each customer's next-best offer.



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