



BE CLOSER TO YOUR CUSTOMERS THAN YOU'VE EVER BEEN.

ELIMINATE SILOS, SUPPORT CUSTOMERS WITH ONE VOICE, AND OFFER UNIQUE CX.

An interview with Andreas Heiz, Director of Customer Intelligence Solutions, SAS EMEA.

What will make a customer remember their experience with your brand? During the good times, it's likely to be the three factors that consumers say encourage loyalty: low cost products, special discounts, and instant availability of goods.¹ During hard times, it is more likely to be brands showing compassion and offering critical support. In both cases, what matters most is a perfect understanding of each consumer, what they are going through and the ability to anticipate their needs.

This is something brands will struggle to deliver without bringing marketers, e-commerce and digital teams together – but how can they achieve this unification? And how can a customer data platform deliver a 360-degree view of each customer and enable marketers to interact with them in a timely way?

These are questions we asked Andreas Heiz. He is head of the team at SAS EMEA who are responsible for customer experience analytics.

Andreas, why is it so difficult for so many firms to show customers that they truly know them?

Delivering a unified, highly orchestrated customer experience where customers feel their needs are perfectly understood, sounds easy enough. Yet for many organizations, particularly those conceived before the algorithm era, it is not.

Why so? It's down to silos of the operational, attitudinal and data variety. Typically, organizations have many customer facing processes from sales to service, engineering to marketing, all of whom impact the customer experience to a greater or lesser extent.

Even when we confine this discussion to marketing alone we can see that there are still various silos at work. Operationally, there is often a team in charge of email marketing, one looking at digital platforms, another responsible for customer acquisition, an e-commerce group and a host of others besides.

Each of these groups is likely to have their own business objectives, KPIs, budget, customer contact plan, offers and messaging, all of which can create a tribal feel; where each team feels some degree of ownership over the customer experience creating attitudinal silos.

Data holds the key to customer intimacy, so what challenges should organizations look out for?

Data is indeed the key – but just with these two factors at play, we can see a fragmented customer experience forming. Layer on top the fact that most of these groups work with different sets of data, collected in different ways, from a variety of sources and tailored to their particular marketing and customer experience needs – data silos – and it's very easy to see how disjointed messaging, offers and recommendations reach customers. Furthermore, what happens with incoming intelligence about customers' preferences, needs, wants and behavior? How is this collated and apportioned across operational silos? Wouldn't it be better to store this in a centralized repository on which analytics can be performed? An actionable customer data platform, so to speak. That way, all these groups can have the most accurate, up-to-date information.

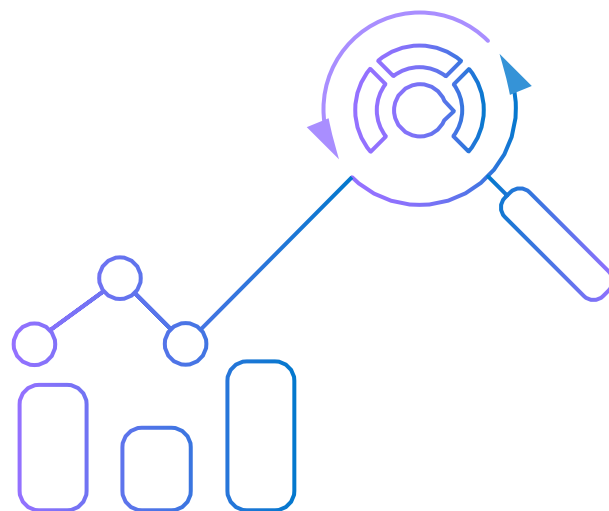
Combined, these attitudinal, operational and data silos conspire to undermine the ideal of a unified customer experience – at least from a marketing standpoint. Even more so for those organizations that are not digital natives and who have struggled to unify marketing activities as they have evolved to embrace digital channels.

So what impact does the increasing shift to digital channels have on customer experience?

Now, more than ever, digital is on the rise as screen time amongst consumers goes stratospheric. Therefore, reliance on digital for a competitive CX is crucial – and it cannot be fragmented. It must be seamlessly 'joined up', which is driving interest in robust, scalable cross-channel marketing solutions that can handle high volumes of activity and sustain decisioning momentum in order to keep people engaged and online.

Alongside this, marketers require greater oversight. They need to know what is working, what isn't, and have the ability to make changes quickly in order to reduce unnecessary costs and make the most of budgets. By being able to learn which digital programmes work, and which are adding little value, marketers can assimilate consumer behavior now and build a knowledge base that they can adapt as future demand changes.

This increased reliance on digital is yet another reason why these fractures must be mended and silos unified. If marketing organizations are not reorganized they will struggle to deliver unity in the customer experience. This is an organizational and cultural issue, but there are also technological solutions that can support greater efficiencies and a more streamlined customer experience, something that can become a huge headache for organizations communicating multiple brands to every customer.

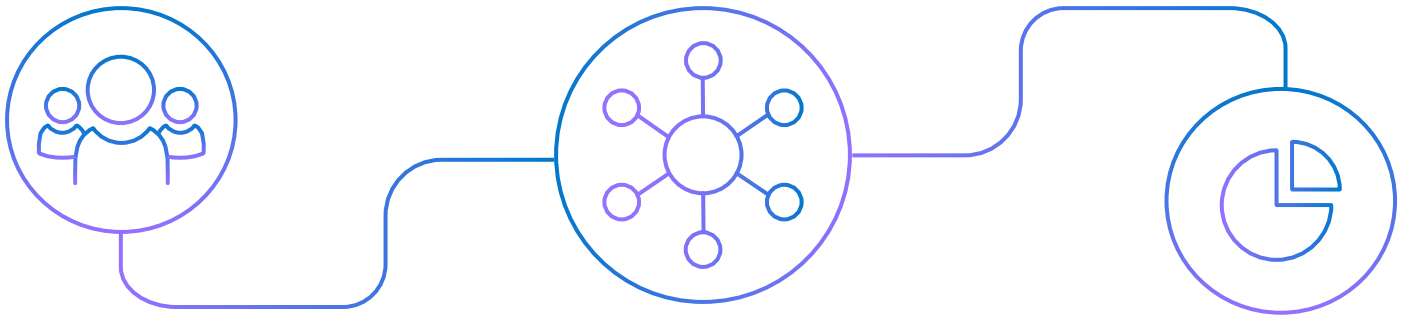


What role can technology play?

A Cross-Channel Campaign Management (CCCM) solution will help you achieve two things that are essential here. They will help your organization move to a more modern, fluid customer experience, where instead of scheduling highly prescriptive campaigns you can create dynamic, contextually rich moments-based campaigns that really demonstrate an understanding of each customer. We would suggest that you look out for those that provide customer data management and cross-channel orchestration, because this will allow marketing teams to access the same data (and analytically derived insights if the CCCM also includes analytics tools). A CCCM with cross-channel orchestration will also help encourage teams to work together, understand and plan campaigns.

Getting value from tech investments is more important than ever, so how would you recommend organizations optimize the value of CCCM?

Well, firstly, it's important to note that while technology can have a powerful impact on transforming customer experience, it usually only accounts for 30% of any transformation project. Therefore, it will be essential that you work with a vendor who can help ensure that your business objectives are embedded into your marketing activities. By unifying objectives, you'll find your teams naturally work together to achieve shared goals. When this change is underpinned by enabling technology, such as a leading CCCM solution, the practicalities of customer experience marketing are made more efficient and effective too.



How can SAS help in this respect?

SAS works with its customers to help them find out what their strategic objectives should and could be for customer experience, then consults on marketing use cases and supports customers to make the necessary changes - for example, unifying silos. Insurance group, ERGO, had multiple brands all running campaigns to the same consumers without marketing teams collaborating. Not only was this inefficient, it was creating a confusing experience for customers.

Can you talk about the success you've had with your customers?

Sure. A great example is ERGO. Before implementing SAS, ERGO found it difficult to integrate enterprise-wide sales and marketing strategies; campaigns and customer programs were separate entities at its Hamburg-Mannheimer, Victoria, DVK and DAS insurance companies. To make matters more complex, its lines of business had not been integrated, so it was impossible to create marketing campaigns or communications specific to individual customers. This siloed situation could have carried on for years because the business was orientated around the types of insurance policy it wanted to sell, not around customer needs.

However, with our CCCM solution - a leading product in the Forrester Wave™ Cross-Channel Campaign Management Q3 2019 - and customer experience experts to help, we centralized the CRM system and put in place an analytics solution that can calculate a customer's affinity for a specific product or service, as well as the best communication channel through which ERGO can best reach that customer. This way the firm's marketers can always identify the perfect product for each and every customer and make the next best offer.

How would you encapsulate the benefits of Cross-Channel Campaign Management?

Think about the potential a CCCM solution can have, not just from an operational marketing perspective, but from a cultural and customer experience perspective. We believe this technology is a powerful unifying factor in delivering what every organization and every customer wants, the end of silos and the beginning of a new era in dynamic, seamless customer experience.

Read more stories about how we're transforming customer experience marketing across all business sectors in our free eBook, available now at sas.com/360ci

