



THE POWER OF INTEGRATION

*Why an orchestrated approach to
marketing is critical to your success*

INTRODUCTION

The way people discover, evaluate and purchase goods and services has changed profoundly. Businesses that do not recognize and adjust to this change risk being left behind.

Once upon a time, consumers took a relatively straightforward journey from awareness to consideration to purchase. Now, their path to purchase more closely resembles that of an airplane in flight, zipping between media sources both on and offline, seamlessly mixing entertainment with shopping, and engaging with businesses across more channels than ever. This poses a significant challenge for small- and medium-sized businesses (SMBs). How do they catch the attention of these aircrafts, particularly with limited resources?

To survive and thrive, SMBs need to take a hard look at their marketing approach. It's no longer just about developing clever ad creative. It's no longer just about executing an awareness campaign to get the phone ringing off the hook. It's about looking at the larger picture, truly understanding where consumers are and how to reach them, and delivering highly customized messages to the right person at the right time. If they miss consumers early in the purchase journey, or deliver the wrong message at the wrong time, potential buyers will make their final purchase elsewhere.

THE NEW RULES OF PURCHASE BEHAVIOR

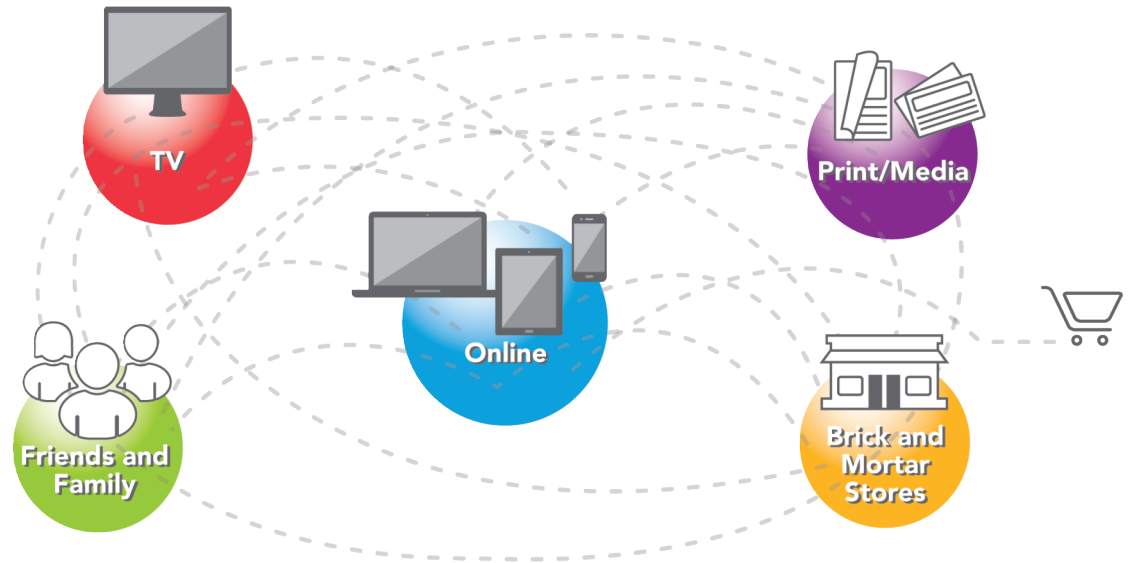
Once, shopping behavior was a predictable phenomenon. Consumers would become aware of a product or service through mass-market advertising, find out more from store visits and salespeople, and make their purchase. Marketers called this entering and exiting the "purchase funnel," and advertising programs were designed to influence people at various stages.

This worked well until the Internet came along. Today, shopping is infinitely more complex. Technology has wrested control of the buying process from businesses and placed it squarely in the hands of consumers. In fact, many consumers are pretty far along in the buying process before sellers are even aware that they're shopping. Consider this recent study conducted by Cisco®: it found that almost three out of every four conduct research online before making in-store purchasing decisions.

At the same time, communication channels continue to proliferate and change. For instance, in addition to simply powering up a traditional television, there are myriad ways TV audiences can consume their favorite shows — cable, Netflix, Apple TV — to name a few. And as more options become available, audiences will continue to embrace the platform that best suits their individual needs. Consider this: the top-rated show in 1953 captured 67.3% of households, while the top show of 2013 only captured 12.8%. This seismic media shift means less one-size-fits-all communications, and more tailor-made marketing approaches.

Yesterday's linear journey now more closely resembles an airline flight map with unlimited connections. Consumers move fluidly — from shopping to research to discovery — across an ever-increasing number of channels before making a purchase.

The power of integration



GOOGLE'S "ZERO MOMENT OF TRUTH"

Google has its own term for describing the new way in which consumers arrive at purchase decisions. They call it the Zero Moment of Truth, or ZMOT. It's the moment when consumers discover a product or service and purchase it — the time they go online to research and discuss what they want or need, and decide whether to make a purchase.

Today, reaching consumers in the research phase — early in their buyer journey — is extremely important for advertisers. Information about products, services or places of business must be available at this early stage. If it is not, businesses will be lost to brands that have adopted a new strategy — using multiple channels to effectively find and be found by shoppers. Google describes this challenge as the need to "show up in the right place and at the right time."

ACCORDING TO GOOGLE:

70%

of Americans now say they look at product reviews before making a purchase

79%

of consumers say they use a smartphone to help with shopping

83%

of moms say they do online research after seeing TV commercials for products that interest them

Another study by Google and Ipsos

across nine markets found the most popular methods for searching for information offline is by talking to someone, seeing and trying the product in-store or at an event, and through print ads (in newspapers or magazines)

BIG IMPLICATIONS FOR SMALL- AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES

A recent study has showed that consumers' new, more complex purchase path poses a difficult challenge for SMBs. While most have a clear goal — reporting growth as their top priority — determining the right marketing strategy for achieving it is less clear-cut. Consumers are operating out of a new playbook, but too many businesses are still using the old one.

According to the research, marketing-related goals high on the list of SMB concerns include:

- > Uncertainty about how to smartly invest advertising dollars and calculate return on investment (ROI) – 65%
- > Attracting new customers/clients – 62%
- > Distinguishing themselves from competitors – 61%
- > Crafting an effective overall marketing strategy – 53%
- > Establishing a community/local presence – 53%

Although SMBs find these tasks “important,” they give themselves low grades in terms of how they are performing. The bottom line is that most SMBs do not believe their current approach to marketing is delivering optimal results. To grow, SMBs will need to embrace marketing strategies that are compatible with new consumer purchasing behaviors.

INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION — MORE THAN MATCHING LUGGAGE

You've likely heard the term, “integrated marketing communication” — but what does it mean?

Imagine seeing a print advertisement that leads you to an online search, which leads you to a Facebook page or a product review, that leads you back to a search for a store location that leads to... you get the idea. In such an environment, communications must work together to influence action.

Smart marketers are not simply matching luggage, they are establishing presence, accessibility and finding out how the varied communications in their program can work best together. A recent article by the integrated marketing and digital business consultancy i-SCOOP sums it up nicely: “The key reason why integrated marketing and a connected approach matters is...the customer experience and what customers want from us. They are channel-agnostic and expect brands to deliver upon their promises online, in-store, on social, on the website, when calling support, etc.”

In essence, the reason integrated marketing communication is an essential response to today's consumer-controlled purchase process is that it:

- 1** addresses the SMBs need to have a presence in multiple places at once so that it can be naturally accessible to customers
- 2** enables SMBs to deliver each communication “touch” with a coordinated mutually reinforcing message that achieves greater impact
- 3** can be implemented cost-effectively and optimized for even better performance over time

The power of integration

An integrated marketing communication approach is not only imperative for SMB success — it's also very achievable. By developing a better understanding of your customers — how, when and what channels they prefer to use in their purchase paths — you can appear natural and in the right place/right time with your advertising. In reality, what you are actually orchestrating is a highly strategic series of “check-ins” that are carefully helping them along on their journey. The result? A marketing program that yields a higher return on investment.

INTEGRATION THROUGH A LOCAL LENS

The insights needed to craft an effective integrated marketing program — especially those relating to customers — take time and expertise to gather. For larger, enterprise-scale businesses, this challenge is typically addressed by involving external experts, such as marketing agencies, research companies and consultants. For SMBs, on the other hand, the costs associated with these resources may put them out of reach. Plus, many SMBs have a strong local focus. External experts — depending on their location — may not sufficiently understand challenges that are unique to geographic markets.

It is possible for SMBs to find expert integrated marketing support at the local level. The key is to vet potential partners carefully and select one that has a few essential qualities:



A proven track record of building effective integrated marketing campaigns — especially in industry-specific applications



A deep understanding of both geo-targeted and locally focused media channels — especially digital ones



Local representation (“feet on the street”) with strong ties to the community and demonstrated understanding of local issues

In some ways, all business is local. This can be forgotten by business owners as the changes in the buyer journey lead them to invest money in “flavor of the month” approaches (e.g., search marketing one week, social media the next, etc.). While these practices promise short-term gains, they are not strategies that will succeed over the long term in the face of new challenges this paper has presented. Integrated marketing communication, applied locally, is the best way for SMBs to achieve growth going forward.

WANTED: A NEW KIND OF PARTNER

As a leading local media company, **California Media Group** delivers value to SMBs like yours on a daily basis. We understand the evolving customer journey and how they use the latest technology. We have a sophisticated approach to integrated marketing communication that will enable your brand to be naturally accessible to your customers and prospects at important inflection points.

Why does **California Media Group** make a good partner?



MORE THAN JUST MEDIA

Whether you need search marketing, targeted emails, a better social media presence or display ads, we can help you choose the right mix to build your brand and reach your goals.

MORE THAN JUST MARKETING

We use the latest research, apply industry best practices and analyze data to make sure your media and marketing investments are working hard and working together.

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Our goal is to partner with you to find unique solutions for your business. That means helping you send the right message, to the right customers, at the right time — not just throwing money at the latest trend.

In short, **California Media Group** is a marketing partner that works with SMBs in a variety of industries — from retail and healthcare to real estate and automotive — to help them navigate their customers' increasingly complex journeys. We use a proven, best-practice-based process to ensure their marketing program works as hard as it possibly can in a collaborative, ongoing way that delivers tangible business results.

Customers are in control of the journey as never before, but they are also in search of information to assist them on this journey. While they are prone to taking sharp turns on their flight path, comparing prices or checking what other people are saying, they are also receptive to guidance from air traffic controllers — marketers — along the way.

With the investment in marketing programs even small businesses make today, the stakes are too high to approach this challenge alone or with a traditional mindset. Luckily, you don't have to. Find out how partnering with **California Media Group** can make all the difference.

¹ "Cisco Study Illustrates How Immersive, In-Store Shopping Experiences 'Catch' and 'Keep' Tech-Savvy Consumers," Market Wired, Jan. 16, 2012

² "ZMOT Handbook: Ways to Win Shoppers at the Zero Moment of Truth," Google, 2012