

# THE EVOLUTION OF CUSTOMER JOURNEY MANAGEMENT, **FOR MARKETING AND BEYOND**



## Acknowledgements

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In the process of developing this paper on customer journey management, Winterberry Group spoke to senior industry experts from both the US and Europe. These experts represented companies involved in all aspects of customer journey management, ranging from global data and technology companies, digital transformation agencies, and end user clients. To complement these interviews, WG ran an online survey of senior brand marketers and marketing decision-makers in April 2021 across the US and UK.

The objective of this paper is to facilitate better understanding of this rapidly changing market, currently being driven by a mixture of technological innovation, promotional and purchase channel transformation, and cross-channel data quality. The market challenge remains for brands to continue to better understand and serve their customers, when and where they are along the customer journey.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>06</b>	<b>Executive Summary</b>
<b>07</b>	<b>Keeping Up With Customers Is Increasingly Difficult</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Enter Customer Journey Management</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>The Components Of Customer Journey Management</b>
24	About Our Sponsors
27	Methodology
29	About Winterberry Group

# TABLES AND CHARTS

- 9**     *The evolution of customer journey management - Table 1*
- 13**    *How organizations manage customer data - Figure 1*
- 14**    *How organizations manage customer journeys - Figure 2*
- 15**    *The biggest challenges in expanding capabilities to measure marketing effectiveness across the customer journey - Figure 3*
- 16**    *Customer journey use case examples - Table 2*
- 17**    *How organizations focus customer journey management delivery - Figure 4*
- 18**    *The customer journey management maturity curve - Figure 5*
- 22**    *How customer journey management capabilities differ by maturity - Table 3*
- 23**    *How organizational attributes differ by maturity - Figure 6*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

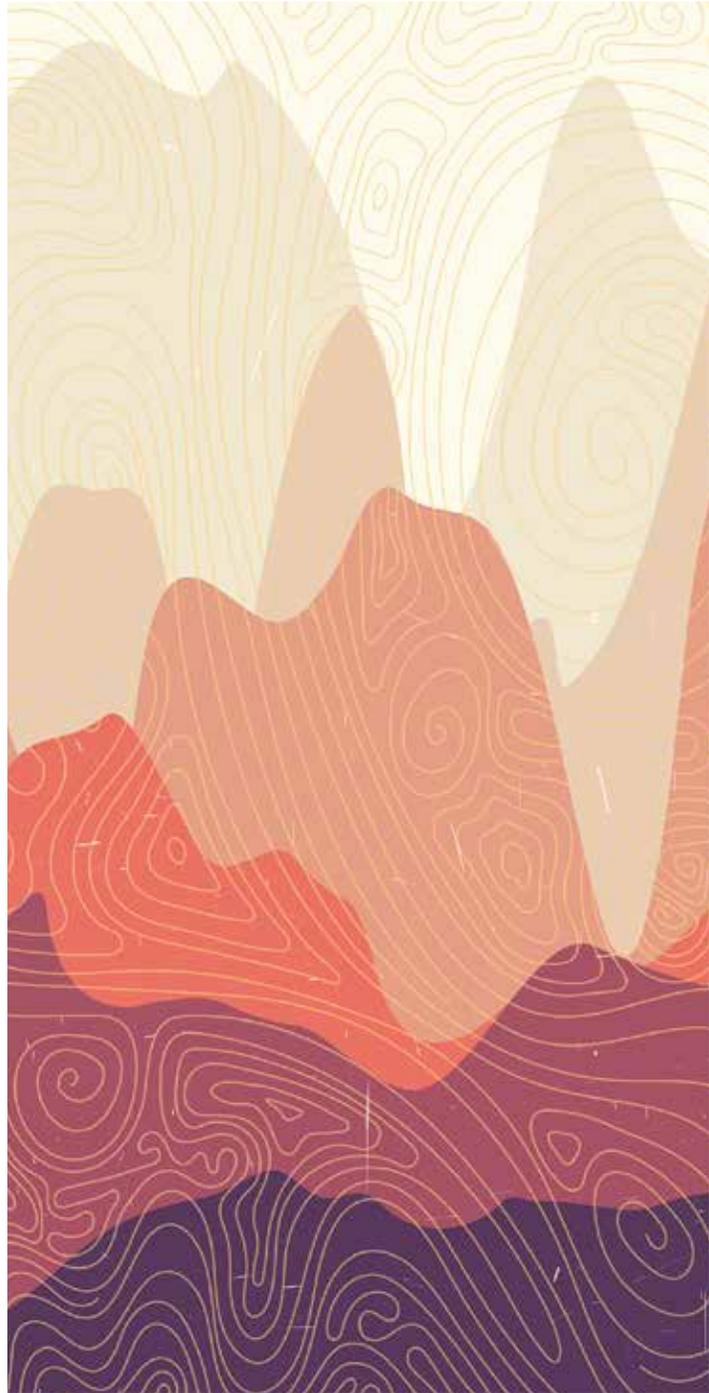
Few brands are built to effectively engage with consumers on the consumer's terms. Instead, they are built around products, lines-of-business, and organized by divisions and functions.

Meanwhile, each of these groups wants to interact with the customer on their own - and not the customer's - terms. The result for customers is that interactions with the brand can feel disjointed and dissatisfying. While many brands have hired chief customer officers or built customer experience departments, it's rare to find a brand that understands the journeys a customer takes when interacting with the brand; understands the customer need during any given interaction; and has the resources and capability to solve those needs as quickly and efficiently as possible. It is this problem that customer journey management seeks to solve.

Winterberry Group defines customer journey management as “a strategic approach to understanding an individual's need in the moment, in order to meet that need as early as possible, and in the most convenient manner for the individual.” Customer journey management requires organizational alignment underpinned by strategy, objectives, and process. This must be supported by data, technology, and analytics to understand the need, as well as decisioning, orchestration, and omnichannel engagement to deliver the appropriate experience.

This research set out to understand the prevalence and maturity of customer journey management across organizations in the US and UK. We examined the approaches companies take to customer data management, journey analytics, decisioning and orchestration, engagement and personalization, and measurement. We found the majority of firms are struggling to progress due to barriers ranging from a lack of senior buy-in to a lack of skills and resources, and from a lack of budget to an absence of technology or a dependence on legacy technology. Meanwhile, a majority of organizations still have a campaign — rather than customer-oriented — approach: of the companies we surveyed for this research, 58% of respondents say that their approach to customer journey management is focused on the campaign level, versus only 17% indicate that they focus on holistic customer journeys.

Based on our survey research as well as conversations with practitioners and industry experts, we classified respondents into five levels of maturity — Conscious Avoiders, Early Experimenters, Fledgling Practitioners, Pace Setters, and Organizationally Optimized. This research explains the maturity levels, examines the implications, and provides guidance for companies that wish to develop their approach to customer journey management and progress along the maturity curve.



**KEEPING UP  
WITH CUSTOMERS  
IS INCREASINGLY  
DIFFICULT**

If you want to travel a long distance in our modern era, you have no shortage of choices - drive, fly, take a train, bus, or ferry. And, even once you decide the mode of transport, you have yet more choices - if using third party transport, you can choose between providers, departure and arrival cities, and the time of day that you leave or arrive. If you're driving yourself, you can plan different routes, maybe to favor speed, aesthetics, layover cities, or even to base your route on the ability to charge your electric vehicle en route.

In the same way, a customer or prospect seeking information, service resolution, or to purchase a product has no shortage of channels and points of interaction with which to discover, engage, or select a product or service. As a result, depending on their industry sector and the nature of their business, a brand can interact with a single customer in scores of different ways - in each circumstance solving different needs, interacting across different channels and media, and presenting different services or information to meet the customer's needs.

“ Technology isn't the barrier; people are. It will require a cultural change within an organization to adopt technology. A lot of organizations find it hard to restructure internally before they can make use of different technologies. ”

- Global Agency Nordic - EVP

That's much easier said than done. Brands must capture the signals that indicate a customer need and, in that moment, juggle thousands of potential decisions to determine the best way to solve the need and deliver a positive outcome and experience for the customer or prospect. With the right organizational alignment, processes, and technologies, it's a herculean task. Without them - at the scale and pace of today's empowered, entitled, and digital customer - it's impossible.

The challenge for most brands is that they aren't built around the customer. They are organized by product or business unit, and their internal functions - such as marketing, sales, and service - operate



“

Customers interact with brands through multiple channels, so customer journey management is about how you orchestrate between those channels, knowing how consumers would want to be treated.

”

– Global Agency EMEA – SVP

independently with different people, processes, technology, systems, and metrics. To compound the problem, communications teams are often organized by channel, medium, or by company-oriented distinctions such as digital and offline or inbound and outbound. These teams work diligently to improve the customer experience within their domain, but with little appreciation for the customer’s overall experience or visibility across the brand. For the customer, that can feel like they are showing up to the bus station with an airline ticket bound for the wrong destination.

Over the past several decades, firms have invested resources to make it easier for

customers to buy from them, adding 1) new promotional channels - such as from catalogs to email and TV to display ads; 2) new purchase channels - such as from stores to 800 numbers and from websites to social commerce; or 3) new purchase models - such as from mail order to credit card and from online payments to pay-over-time. This has made the customer journey more complex and more difficult for the brand to coordinate how they engage.

In more recent years, brands have turned their attention to trying to understand their customers - attempting to map the customer journey, analyze the customer lifecycle, and orchestrate their interactions.

TABLE 1 – THE EVOLUTION OF CUSTOMER JOURNEY MANAGEMENT

Pre-Digital Era	Digital Era	Omnichannel Era
Physical locations including stores and branches	Addition of channels such as 800 numbers and websites	Addition of transactional capabilities embedded within email, apps, advanced TV, and social media
Marketing through traditional media including TV, radio, print, and direct mail	Addition of channels including online catalog, online display, and email	Explosion of channels including search, social, in-app and mobile, and advanced TV
Service through in-person and phone-based interaction	Encouragement of self-service via web-based FAQs, help sites, and online videos	Addition of AI and ML capabilities and bots, heavy reliance on IVR routing in attempts to limit interaction time
Simplistic journeys with limited steps between awareness, purchase, and service	Cross-channel nature of journeys makes connecting the stages of customer interaction more challenging	Fluidity of interaction across channels and devices emphasizes the need for omnichannel customer journey management
Limited need for customer journey management – one-to-one relationships and interactions ensured quality and efficiency of engagement	Manual processes begin to be replaced with campaign management platforms – more promotional than facilitating an enhanced customer journey	Customer journey analytics/management and decision management tools being deployed to understand journeys and optimize interactions based on intelligence

**ENTER  
CUSTOMER  
JOURNEY  
MANAGEMENT**

To manage this process, brands are increasingly turning to customer journey management. And, while it means different things within almost every organization, our research shows that the term is in use in more than three quarters (77%) of organizations across North America and the UK.

**We define customer journey management as:**

A strategic approach to understanding an individual's need in the moment, in order to meet that need as early as possible, and in the most convenient manner for the individual.

It requires organizational alignment underpinned by strategy, objectives, and process. This must be supported by data, technology, and analytics to understand the need, and decisioning, orchestration, and omnichannel engagement to deliver the appropriate experience.

“ Customer journey management isn't only a technology solution but includes business and strategy changes. ”

– Global Data and Technology Company EMEA – VP

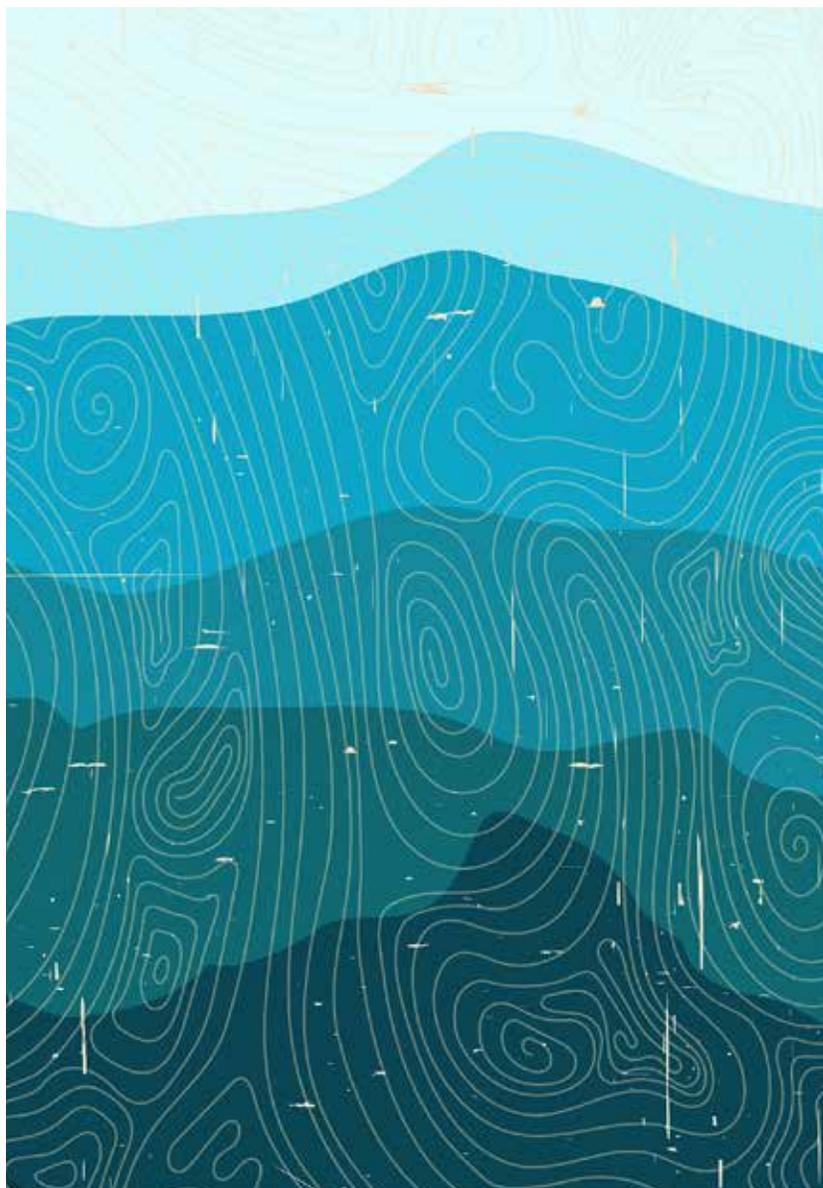
Each aspect of this definition is important, and it is the totality that defines the sophistication of customer journey management within brands.

**Consider:**

- A strategic approach - customer journey management requires commitment from the top and throughout the organization, and a planned and coordinated approach.
- Understanding customer needs - to manage a customer journey requires insight into understanding the customer and why they are likely to be engaged.
- Meeting the need as early and convenient as possible for the individual - consumers don't care about the level of effort to coordinate the systems, processes, or policies to meet their needs with little to no friction.

“ Customer journey management is thinking about a customer's interaction with a brand as not a single point in time but over time - days and years. Customer Experience is the manifestation of customer journey. Customer journey is the plumbing that supports those experiences. ”

– North America Digital Transformation Agency – SVP



# THE COMPONENTS OF CUSTOMER JOURNEY MANAGEMENT

Customer journey management comprises five key capabilities, and often leverages and combines these capabilities from across the organization, including:

- Customer data management
- Journey analytics
- Decisioning and orchestration
- Engagement and personalization
- Measurement and reporting

## CUSTOMER DATA MANAGEMENT

Effectively understanding the customer journey starts with understanding the customer. This includes data about the customer (that may include name, age, and interests), their behavior (such as previous interactions with the company’s call center or website), transactional history (including purchase and returns), campaign interaction data (such as the types of content they engage with and in which channel), and any modeled data (such as their price sensitivity, customer segment or lifetime value). In most firms, these types of data sit in disparate databases scattered throughout the organization, managed by different teams.

Customer data management requires an organization to integrate and standardize the relevant data, resolve customer identity to merge data into customer profiles, and to surface this information so that it can inform how the brand or an employee acts at the moment of interaction with a customer. Effectively resolving customer identity requires practitioners to leverage an identity graph to combine all first party and third party data in order to fully enhance the

company’s understanding of customer behavior, transaction, and campaign history. However, in a survey of practitioners conducted for this paper, nearly half of the respondents (49%) indicated that they still manage customer data in individual applications, while a further 21% plan to add this capability. To deal with today’s consumers, having data scattered across individual applications is a recipe for disaster.

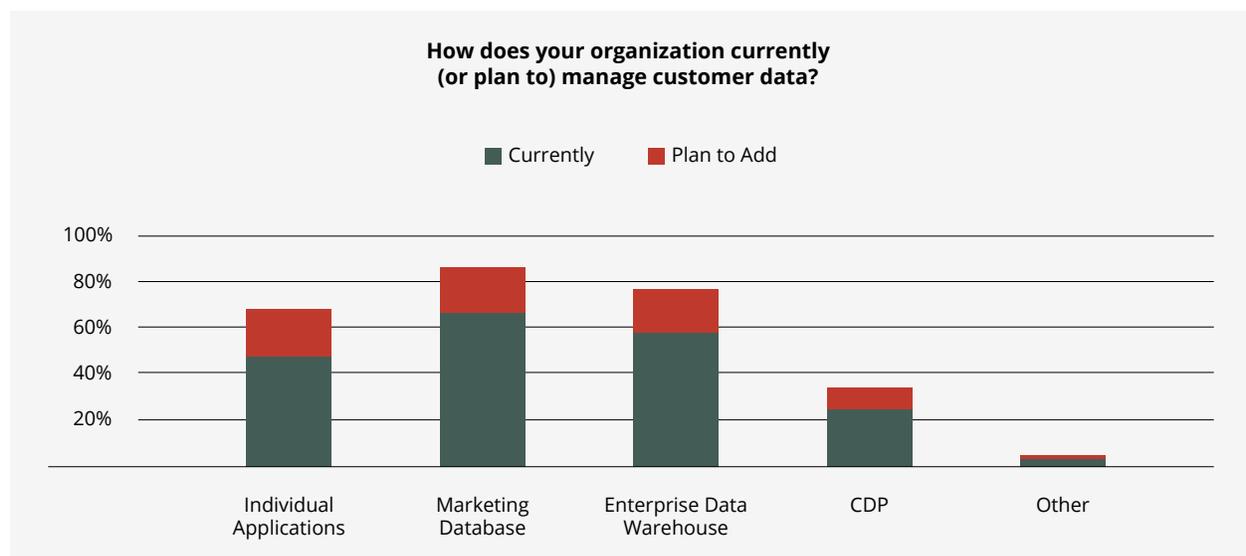
Although many firms leverage a marketing database or enterprise data warehouse, a Customer Data Platform (CDP) is the most effective way to support real-time customer segmentation and to make data accessible to other technologies for activation - critical capabilities for organizations looking to effectively understand and engage customers based on where they are in their journey. Our research, however, found that respondents are twice as likely to use individual applications to manage data than a CDP, and twice as many respondents plan to add more individual application capabilities than those that plan to add a CDP. While this

may seem concerning, it demonstrates the maturity of the customer journey landscape, with organizations focusing more on the end application than the unification of data that we define as critical for a mature customer journey management organization.

“ Once you start to hydrate your first party data you can trigger events, linking to locations (e.g., the ability to tell where your customer is on the first floor of a mall) and website activities (e.g., the shopping basket – giving customers a timed message about their abandoned carts). ”

– Global Agency North America – SVP

FIGURE 1 – HOW ORGANIZATIONS MANAGE CUSTOMER DATA



## JOURNEY ANALYTICS

Journey analytics allows firms to understand the actions a customer has taken in the past and predict the actions that they, and similar customers and prospects, are likely to take in the future. It begins with observing past behaviors and outcomes of prospects and customers. Applying predictive and prescriptive analytics along with machine learning enables organizations to identify patterns. Customer-facing teams apply the identified patterns and develop programs that they deploy when a customer or prospect is identified as following a particular path (such as researching a product, or when going

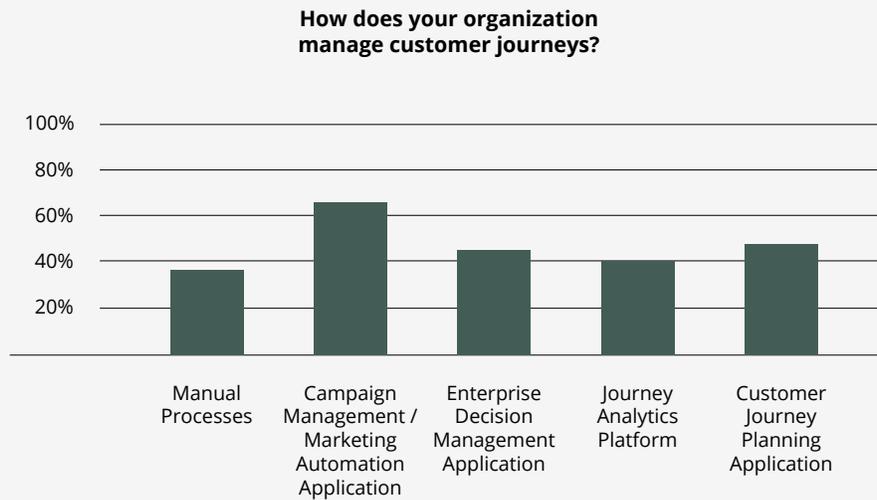
through the onboarding process), leveraging journey analytics feedback to optimize performance.

Analyzing and managing journeys at scale requires automation. Encouragingly, 41% of respondents say their organization uses a journey analytics platform and 48% use a customer journey planning application. Yet, our research shows that 37% of respondents still use at least some manual processes to manage customer journeys. And, the most commonly used tool is a campaign management or marketing automation solution, discussed in the next section.

“ [Analytics, machine learning and orchestration] are intrinsic to having the right conversations. Most important is behavior data—there are so many micro-decisions you can make as a marketer before machine learning comes in. ”

– Global Agency EMEA – EVP

FIGURE 2 – HOW ORGANIZATIONS MANAGE CUSTOMER JOURNEYS



## DECISIONING AND ORCHESTRATION

Decisioning solutions enable firms to determine the next-best action based on the available customer insights and in light of defined business objectives. This includes determining the right content, offer, or channel with which to engage. Orchestration solutions help bring these decisions to light - activating decisions at the moment of engagement. In advanced organizations, decisioning engines are deployed to determine the who, what, where and how of communications based on a customer journey, and

orchestration engines power a seamless, omnichannel experience for the customer by ensuring a personalized response across all interaction points based on the customer’s need and the stage of their journey.

Forty-six percent of survey respondents say they use an enterprise decision management application to manage customer journeys, while 66% use a campaign management or marketing automation application. In combination

with an analytics platform or journey planning application, decision management and orchestration applications are incredibly powerful at recognizing a customer or prospect’s point in their journey and their corresponding need. Without journey tools, decision and orchestration are typically deployed more as segmentation, targeting and/or testing tools, often negatively impacting the customer experience by failing to consider the customer’s need and broader journey.

## ENGAGEMENT AND PERSONALIZATION

The range of applications and platforms to communicate with customers function both as opportunities to recognize a customer and their omnichannel journey, as well as an opportunity to engage the customer across channels and solve their needs in the moment. Engagement is a combination of batch, trigger, and real-time messaging across channels, including both outbound (such as email, sms/mobile push, display, or Advanced TV) and inbound channels and

capabilities (such as websites, apps, and call centers).

Personalizing messages that solve the customer's need, with the right content, delivered in the right way, at the right time is incredibly difficult. While 74% of survey respondents say their organization leverages personalization for their customer journey programs, fewer than one in five (17%) believe these programs to be significantly more effective than those of their peers.

## MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING

Measuring and reporting the efficacy of customer journey management programs is similarly complex. Given the range of touchpoints and the duration of a journey, holistic measurement and reporting is challenging. Add in the complexities of the physical or digital nature of interaction — especially for considered purchases or larger items such as in the electrical goods or automotive sectors — and successful measurement and reporting is frequently a well judged mixture of art and science.

Winterberry Group believes that measuring and reporting on the success of customer journey management requires a shift from traditional campaign measurement to longitudinal measurement across touchpoints. This

requires leveraging a combination of direct metrics, derived from the traditions of data-driven marketing, and modeled approaches, such as multi-touch attribution and marketing mix modeling.

Survey respondents point to a broad range of challenges that their organization faces in measuring and reporting on marketing effectiveness across the customer journey. Surprisingly, budget was not the biggest challenge. Instead the human factor - having enough people with the right skills - followed by technology - whether lacking the technology altogether or trying to leverage legacy systems - were cited as barriers. Organizational buy-in and lack of processes weren't far behind as challenges.

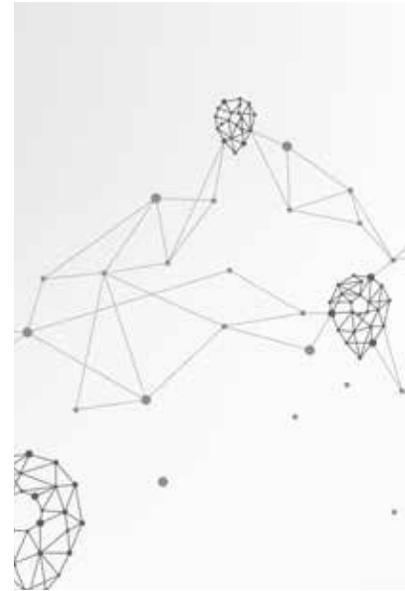
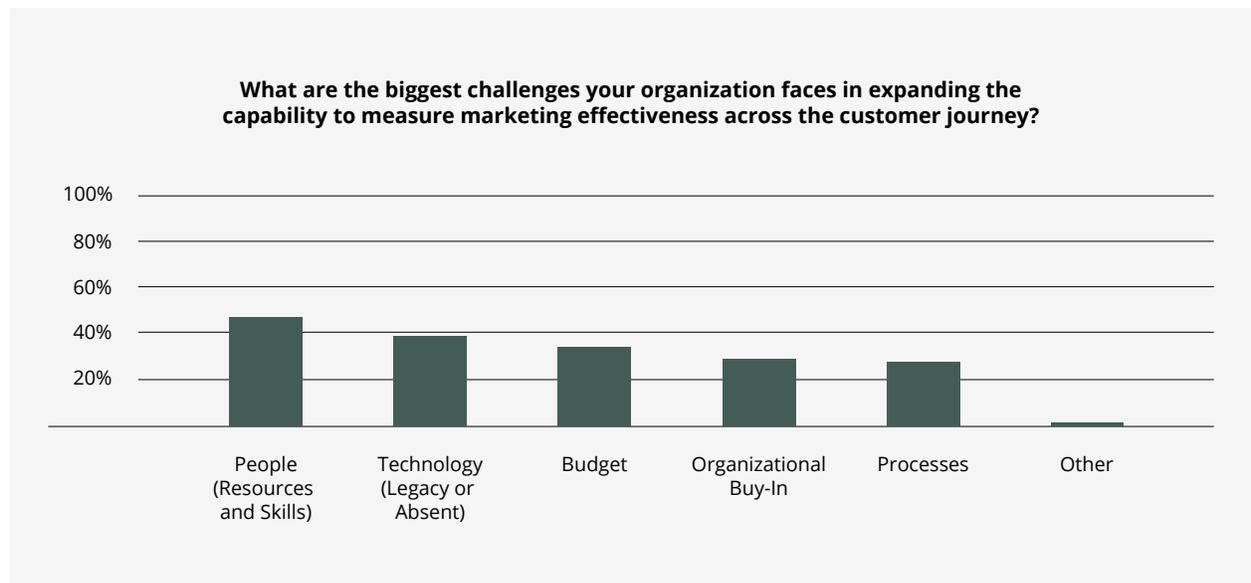


FIGURE 3 - THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN EXPANDING CAPABILITIES TO MEASURE MARKETING EFFECTIVENESS ACROSS THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY



## USE CASES

Since we find only a small number of businesses that operate in the mature segment of the customer journey management arena, it is not surprising that truly sophisticated use cases are rare.

However, the maturation in use cases revolves around the evolution of customer journey management from transactional use cases to those that fulfil an aspect of brand promise, which is always harder to implement and harder to measure. The progress of use tends to start with single, tangible, transactional use cases, frequently with limited data points and grow with confidence.

“ Two years ago, use cases were acquisition, retention or loyalty related. Now they are purpose driven and esoteric and less tangible. For example, a financial services client evolved from retention to ‘how do we help people understand money?’ ”

– Global Consultancy  
– Practice Lead

“ We fulfill many basic use cases such as cart, web and form abandonment as well as loyalty and real-time messaging. These are rudimentary compared to what’s being shared in the industry [as ideal or future-state use cases]. ”

– North America Digital Transformation Agency  
– Practice Lead

TABLE 2 - CUSTOMER JOURNEY USE CASE EXAMPLES

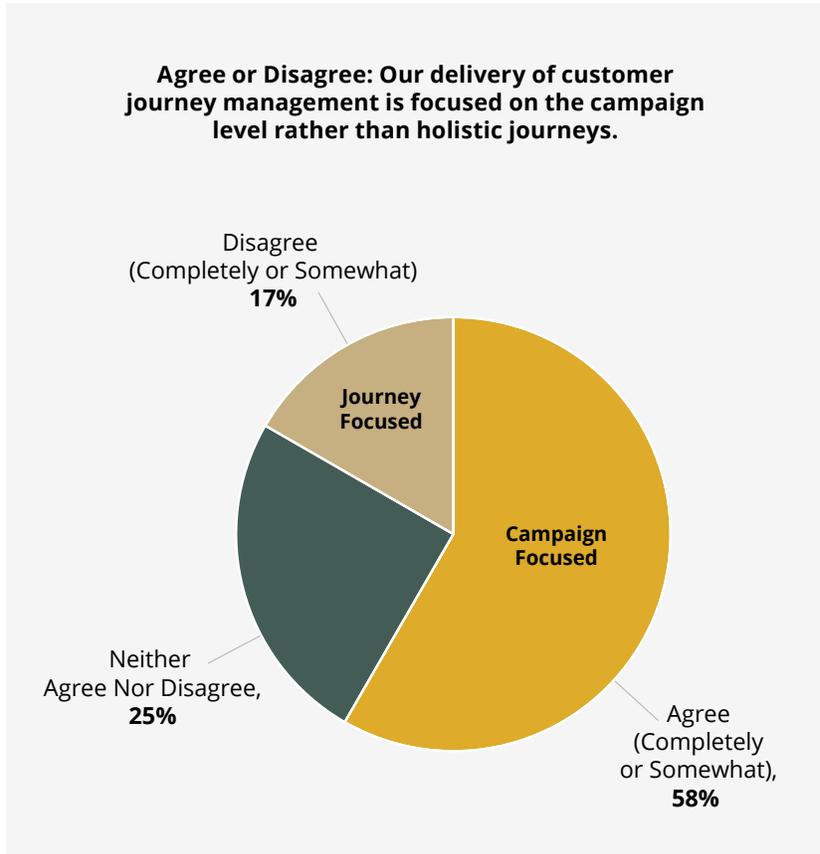
<b>Basic communications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The application of single channel solutions, based on a narrow snapshot of the customer and the journey</li> <li>■ Most often are trigger-based messaging such as cart and form abandonment</li> </ul>
<b>Omnichannel communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensure relevant communications independent of channel and based on understanding of the customer and their engagement with the brand</li> <li>■ Maintain customer conversations by capturing engagement and behavior data; brands are looking to evolve beyond communications to conversations</li> </ul>
<b>Optimization of prospect journey</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identifying the next-best channel and content as it relates to acquiring new customers, based on the historical behavior of prospects that have converted</li> </ul>
<b>Optimization and orchestration of customer experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identify how and where to improve the customer journey to ensure seamless personalized experiences including engagement, retention, and loyalty</li> </ul>
<b>Optimization of abandoned journeys</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ability to identify where and why the journey has broken down</li> <li>■ Leverage journeys including channels and content in order to reduce abandonment</li> </ul>
<b>Personalization of Customer Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Personalizing the customer service experience by leveraging insight and interactions from where the customer is in their journey to understand and respond to their needs</li> </ul>

## THE STATE OF MATURITY IN ORGANIZATIONS

Not every company needs exceptional customer journey management. Depending on a company's strategy and the nature of their customer interactions, good may be good enough. But, without a focused, cross-functional approach and without planning and investment in the right people, process, and technology, even good customer journey management is hard to achieve. Maturity requires discipline - including cross functional collaboration, an aligned vision, and a holistic approach to enterprise systems, organizational processes, customer interactions and future ambitions.

Very few firms have customer journey management completely nailed (and those that are furthest along are their own toughest critics). As a simple indication of the differences in maturity between organizations, we found that 58% of respondents say that their approach to customer journey management is focused on the campaign level, while only 17% indicate that they focus on holistic customer journeys. While it's important to measure and seek to optimize campaigns, there's a huge difference between managing engagement across a campaign and recognizing a customer's current state and need, knowing where they are in their journey, and satisfying that need as quickly and conveniently as possible for the customer.

FIGURE 4 - HOW ORGANIZATIONS FOCUS CUSTOMER JOURNEY MANAGEMENT DELIVERY

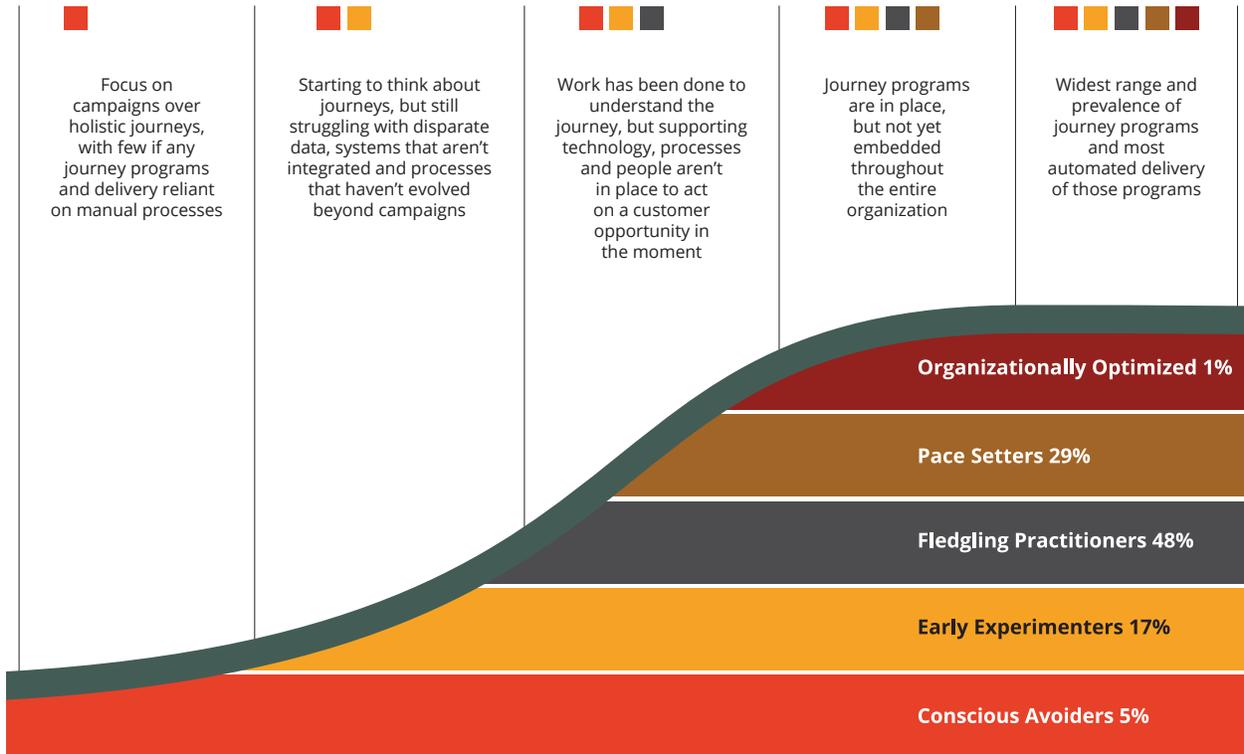


Based on our survey research as well as conversations with practitioners and industry experts, we classified respondents into five levels of maturity, namely:

- **Conscious Avoiders**
- **Early Experimenters**
- **Fledgling Practitioners**
- **Pace Setters**
- **Organizationally Optimized**

Our research shows very few organizations achieve the highest level of maturity, with the vast majority operating at the level of Fledgling Practitioners. We provide a detailed example of each level below and outline a fictitious example of how this might manifest within an organization.

**FIGURE 5 - THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY MANAGEMENT MATURITY CURVE**



**CONSCIOUS AVOIDERS** - These firms devote little time or attention to their customers' journeys. In some cases, relationships may be transactional or disconnected, but in others, these are simply firms that have no mandate to enhance their customers' experience, and have therefore made no investment in a customer journey management process. These organizations:

- Focus on campaigns vs. holistic journeys, with few if any journey programs and an approach to delivery reliant on manual processes
- Lack (and don't plan to invest in) key customer journey management capabilities and technology
- Rely on individual applications and leave management of key processes dispersed across the organization
- Lack clear ownership or a consistent view of the customer
- Do not understand customer journeys let alone where a customer is within a journey

**Example:** Consider a value-based retailer, where low price is the key attraction for customers. In these firms, there is little incentive to understand the customer or the journey that the customer takes in engaging with the organization. The relationship is purely transactional, and that is reflected in "batch-and-blast" outbound communications in which every person in the company's database receives the same email on the same day with the same offers.

**EARLY EXPERIMENTERS** - To be fair, they're trying, but are often just getting started and the result is a disjointed experience for the customer. The good news is that these firms recognize the need to improve. Unfortunately, they are often limited by resources, investment, or a lack of organizational buy-in. To move through this phase as quickly as possible, companies should adopt a test-and-learn approach and seek early and frequent wins to bring other functions, departments, and teams on board. These organizations:

- Have begun to think about journeys, but still struggle with disparate data, systems that aren't integrated and processes that haven't evolved beyond the campaign level
- Are developing some customer

journey management capabilities but lack a foundation of clear customer ownership or a consistent view of the customer

- Are not yet capturing signals and have not integrated channels
- Still manage data across individual applications dispersed across the organization, and use campaign management applications rather than customer journey tools

**Example:** Imagine a non-profit organization which interacts with different stakeholders ranging from donors and sponsors, beneficiaries, and event attendees to board members. Although stakeholders might fit into more than one role, information about each group sits in different databases, meaning certain individuals receive communication from different internal groups and suffer from a disjointed experience. Even though these organizations want to develop a better experience, internal teams are already wearing multiple hats, nobody owns the customer experience as a discipline, and there is limited budget or bandwidth to focus on the issue.

**FLEDGLING PRACTITIONERS** - These organizations understand the value of customer journey management and are investing to get there. Often though, these firms feel like they are in a "two steps forward, one step back" scenario. For example, they might have invested time and resources to understand the various customer journeys, but they can't yet identify where the client is on that journey at any given moment. Or they may have the capability to capture signals, but can't yet tie them to action. However, if they can muscle through the hurdles, they are well-positioned to demonstrate early success and sell

the concept internally to bring others on board. These organizations:

- Have made some effort to understand the customer journey, but supporting technology, processes and people aren't in place to act, in the moment, on a customer opportunity
- Capture signals but haven't yet integrated channels, resulting in less return from efforts like personalization
- Are developing more consistent data, customer view, and management of journeys across the organization

**Example:** Consider a hotel chain that has mapped the customer journey and segmented their customers into leisure and business travelers, and understands the activities that different personas enjoy when visiting their property. Although they might be able to identify the interests of a browser to their website, they can't tie that information to a recognized customer and therefore provide generic content based on browsing behavior rather than targeted content that matches the customer's broader interests in the context of their current session.

**PACE SETTERS** - These organizations have seen some success - maybe within a single business unit, or across a narrow set of use cases. They have overcome some of the early barriers and won over others in their organization, and are on a clear trajectory to successful enterprise-wide customer journey optimization. Many are still held back waiting for organizational and technical changes or other investments to reach fruition. However, they have a clear line of sight to success and know the KPIs that matter. They simply have a distance to go before they become operational and embedded. These organizations:



- Have journey programs in place, but not yet embedded throughout the entire organization
- Are beginning to leverage machine learning and intending to invest more, but it's not yet an established or automated practice
- Intend to continue investing to improve customer journey management capabilities and technology
- Leverage customer journeys, although not in a broad, systemic manner
- Frequently use customer journey planning and analytics tools to support their efforts

**Example:** Picture an automotive company that has successfully mapped their customer journeys and has a clear understanding of when specific customers are likely to trade in for a new model. They may also understand each customer's motivations when it comes to safety, performance, or fuel efficiency. They know when and how to communicate with which messages and images to be most relevant to the customer based on their journey and their interests and needs. Unfortunately, though, the parts and service group communicates independently, as does the finance group. For the customer, the well-orchestrated and highly personalized communication from the sales group is undermined by the rest of the organization — in the customer's eyes, these aren't separate

organizations and their experience suffers because of the lack of cohesion and absence of an holistic approach.

**ORGANIZATIONALLY OPTIMIZED** - These companies are iterating programs at pace. They have realized the vision and made the investments but recognize that the job is never finished. In fact, we found survey respondents at this most mature level to be some of the harshest self-critics — a clear case of knowing what they don't know as they continue to evolve. While these firms demonstrate the most systemic understanding and use of customer journeys, continual improvement is the defining attribute of organizations operating at the highest level. These organizations:

- Have the widest range and prevalence of journey programs and most automated delivery of those programs
- Are highly focused on and continuing to invest in customer journey management capabilities and technology
- Leverage both machine learning and personalization effectively
- Demonstrate a holistic (vs. campaign-level) focus including where a customer is in their journey
- Deploy centralized management of key processes with clear ownership

- Embody a desire to continually improve, particularly as it relates to omnichannel orchestration and data management

**Example:** Imagine a multi-product financial services institution that has a complete view of its customers. It understands that while an individual might not be paying off their credit card each month, they are saving money in high-yield and retirement accounts. The company knows how much the customer is spending on their mortgage and on their children's education. And, because it has a holistic view of the customer, it can service the customer better. It can recognize what the customer needs and identify additional opportunities to deliver value, communicating in a coordinated manner across the lines of business, regardless of when or how the interaction is initiated, or by whom.

“ Customer journey management is a lot more about how your organization is going to change utilizing data, technology and strategy—with net results measured by customer success. ”

– Global Data and Technology Company EMEA – VP

## WHAT'S HOLDING COMPANIES BACK?

When asked about the biggest challenges that their organizations face to expand their customer journey management capabilities, respondents pointed to familiar woes — lack of budget and organizational buy-in, not enough people or an absence of the right skills, a lack of the right technologies, and an absence of the required processes to be successful. We examined these challenges to determine which were most prevalent across the customer journey management capabilities, and found:

- **Data management:** Respondents pointed to a lack of budget (49%), people-related challenges - lack of resources or skills (43%), and technology issues (40%) as the biggest challenges to achieving

a 360 customer view.

- **Journey analytics:** Legacy or absent technology (43%), people-related challenges (42%), and the lack of organizational buy-in were cited as the biggest challenges respondents face in their ability to organize and segment their customers.
- **Decisioning and orchestration:** The most commonly cited barrier to orchestrating omnichannel experiences was the absence of the right technology (47%), significantly higher than those that cited the lack of budget and process (both 29%) and lack of organizational buy-in (27%). We also asked about barriers to the use of machine learning and the most cited challenge was the

absence of the right technology (51%), lack of budget (40%), and lack of people or skills (38%).

- **Personalization and engagement:** Technology (41%) was again the most cited challenge to personalizing offers and content at speed. However, it was closely followed by people challenges (37%) as well as the lack of budget (31%), processes (30%) and organizational buy-in (29%).
- **Measurement:** The lack of people resources or skills (47%) was the most cited challenge relating to measuring marketing effectiveness across the customer journey, followed by the absence of the right technology (39%) and lack of budget (35%).

## HOW TO PROGRESS

**HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR MATURITY** – It’s great to know where you stand in comparison to some sort of industry benchmarks, but it’s even better to know what to prioritize to enable you to move up.

### **Conscious Avoiders to Early Experimenters**

The key to moving out of the starting blocks is to define where improvements in the customer journey can deliver a financial return, and over what timescale that return needs to be measured. The most obvious is having a team or function that is responsible for understanding the customer, customer journey, and customer data and building and testing activities that leverage this data in a measurable way to drive personalization based on data and analysis. Data is most likely still fragmented with some latency, but the key to moving away from the lowest rung is to own, plan, action and measure.

### **Early Experimenters to Fledgling Practitioners**

This step change is characterized by a greater mastery of data across the enterprise, either via a data warehouse or a customer data platform. These solutions will almost certainly not encompass the whole breadth of data but they act as tools that enable inbound and outbound data signals to sit in the same environment and drive multiple campaigns that constitute some limited or partial customer journey mapping and measuring.

“

The successful organizations tend to have centralized teams across marketing and technology. They have a top-down mandate to do things better—it’s a cultural thing more than anything else. They have more agile teams internally that are able to take on ideas and run with them.

”

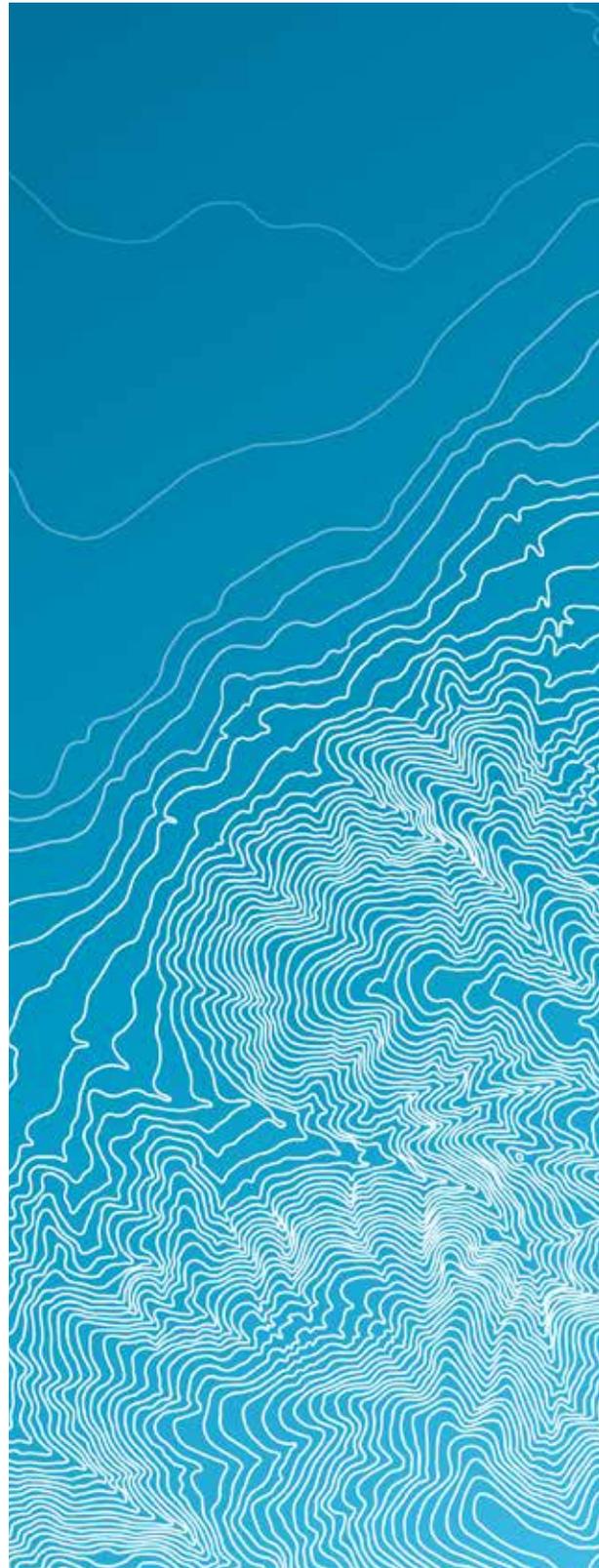
– Global Agency EMEA – SVP

### **Fledgling Practitioners to Pace Setters**

To make this migration, advances and investment in comprehensive real-time data need to be made, along with complementary investments in “lights out” analytics driven by machine learning. These investments will enable a good view of the customer journey across channels and touchpoints, a measured understanding of the friction points, and the ability to observe in one channel and action in another, under many circumstances in real time. This step is perhaps the hardest, because the easy single-channel or non-real time multi-channel journey points have all been resolved, and the easily measured outcomes delivered. However, at this stage of maturity there are some parts of the organization or journey that aren’t harmonized.

### **Pace Setters to Organizationally Optimized**

The change here is in the breadth of the data, the comprehensiveness of the customer journey and the depth of ambition. It is also characterized by a constant desire to improve in every aspect and across every touch point. Ownership of journey knowledge and actions is centralized, with all parts of the organization aware of the benefits of this cohesion.



## A COORDINATED RESPONSE DELIVERS ORGANIZATION-WIDE BENEFITS

Not surprisingly, we find that the prevalence and use of the components of journey management differ across maturity levels:

**TABLE 3 - HOW CUSTOMER JOURNEY MANAGEMENT CAPABILITIES DIFFER BY MATURITY**

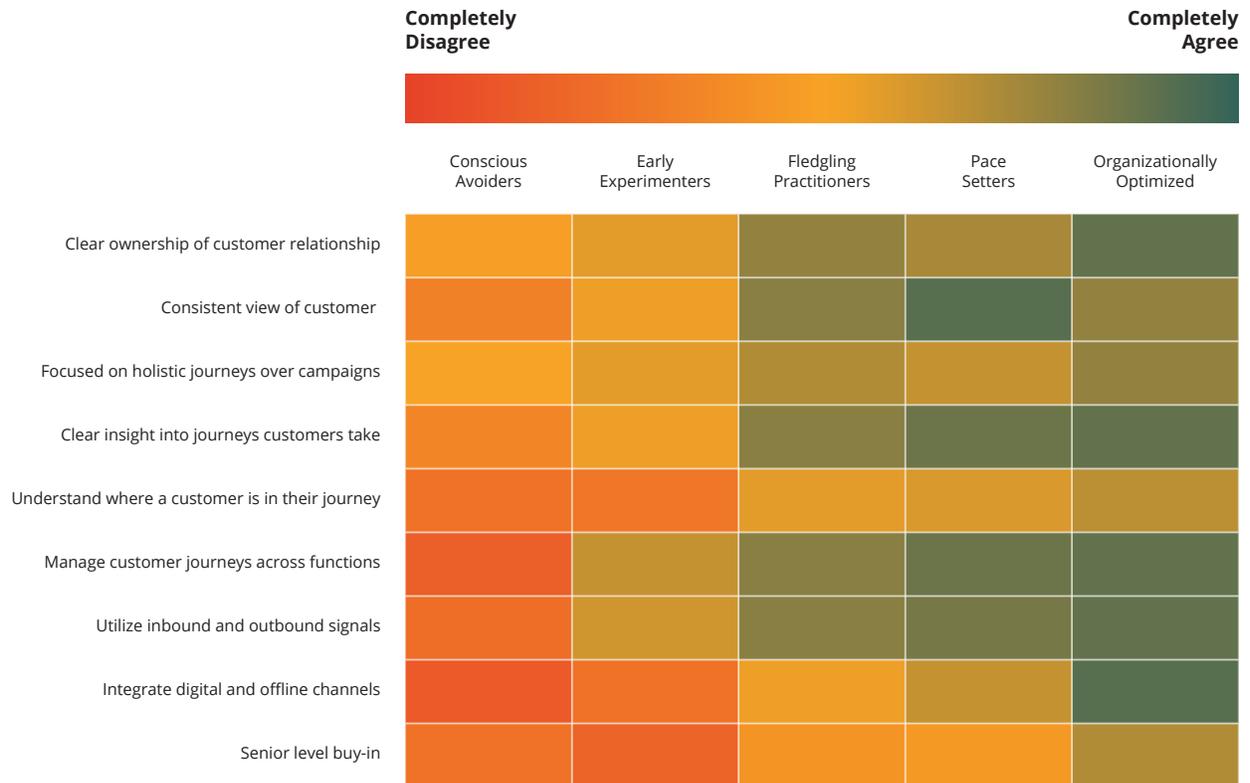
	Conscious Avoiders	Early Experimenters	Fledgling Practitioners	Pace Setters	Organizationally Optimized
<b>Data management</b>	Rely on individual applications and fragmented data management	Beginning to invest in capability but still struggle with disparate systems and management	Starting to leverage identity solutions to develop a centralized view of customer; beginning to invest in technology to support	Combining third party identity graphs with first party data to develop a centralized view and understanding of customer and customer journey; use EDW or CDP to support	Develop proprietary first party graph while leveraging third party data to enhance understanding of customer data, behavior, transaction and campaign histories and modeled data; use CDP to support
<b>Journey analytics</b>	Rely on manual processes; limited technology to support	Some evolution of process and utilization of campaign management platforms	Beginning to invest in fit-for-purpose technology but still spread across campaign management platforms	Have invested in journey planning or analytics platforms to better understand customer journeys and where a customer is in a journey	Maximize value of journey planning or analytics platforms to understand customer journeys and where a customer is in a journey
<b>Decisioning &amp; orchestration</b>	Rely on manual processes; limited technology to support	Some evolution of process but not yet utilizing enterprise decision management tools	Beginning to invest in fit-for-purpose technology but still spread across campaign management platforms	Have invested in enterprise decision management tools and beginning to personalize based on the customer's need and stage of their journey	Maximize value of enterprise decision management tools, delivering a seamless omnichannel experience for the customer
<b>Engagement &amp; personalization</b>	Not utilizing or investing in customer engagement and/or personalization	Have begun investing in customer engagement, leveraging personalization and starting to see value accordingly	Utilizing personalization to drive customer engagement but not yet maximizing potential value	Utilizing personalization to drive customer engagement but not yet maximizing potential value	Personalization to drive customer engagement and loyalty a core capability and continued focus for investment
<b>Measurement and Reporting</b>	Basic, fragmented reporting	Have begun to integrate measurement and reporting	Measuring and reporting across	Measuring and reporting across	Holistic measurement and reporting

When we examined the structure and processes of organizations, we found those at the higher end of maturity tend to have a more holistic, cross-functional approach to customer journey management, with structured support and clearer, more actionable insights. It also highlights where even the most advanced organizations continue to struggle — most notably with senior level buy-in and understanding where a customer is in their journey at any given moment.

“ Generally, we need to get marketers away from batch and blast mindset, emailing their entire database. We are a long way off from maturity. ”

– North America Digital Transformation Agency  
– Practice Lead

FIGURE 6 - HOW ORGANIZATIONAL ATTRIBUTES DIFFER BY MATURITY



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For more information, visit [Microsoft.com](https://Microsoft.com)



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For more information, visit [Sinch.com](https://Sinch.com)

# METHODOLOGY

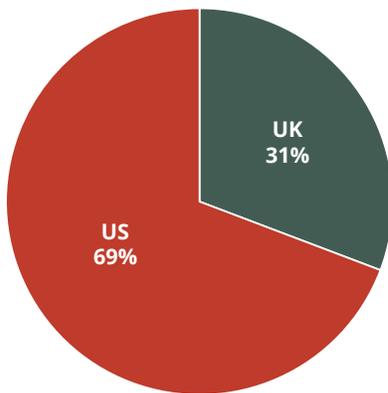
## METHODOLOGY

The insights in this report were validated by extensive industry research, including a Brand Marketer survey of 156 experienced brand marketers and marketing decision-makers involved in customer experience, CRM, digital experience and/or marketing automation in April 2021, as well as off-the-record interviews

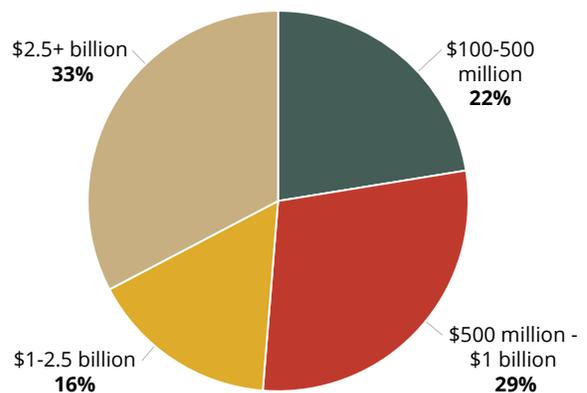
with some of the industry's top thinkers in the marketing sector.

We are indebted to the industry experts who provided their opinions and perspective on customer journey management, conducted between March and April 2021.

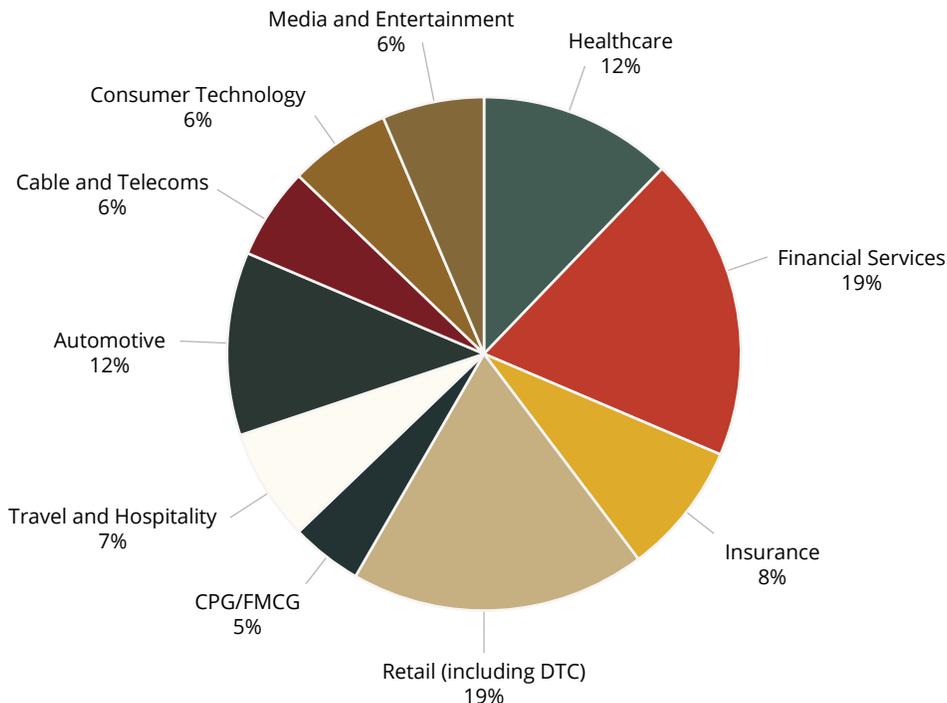
**Survey Participants, By Location  
(% of Participants)**



**Survey Participants, By Company Revenue USD  
(% of Participants)**



**Survey Participants, By Industry  
(% of Participants)**



# ABOUT WINTERBERRY

## About Winterberry Group

A specialized management consultancy that offers more than two decades of experience and deep expertise in the intersecting disciplines of advertising, marketing, data, technology and commerce.

Winterberry Group helps brands, publishers, marketing service providers, technology developers and information companies—plus the financial investors who support these organizations—understand emerging opportunities, create actionable strategies and grow their value and global impact.

## Winterberry Group Services

### **Growth Strategy**

Help clients assess core competencies, understand the impact of market dynamics and build actionable, comprehensive strategies that consider a range of “buy, build and partner” opportunities

### **Digital Transformation**

Guide brands and marketing practices through business process planning efforts aimed at helping them achieve lasting competitive advantage—by transforming how they leverage data, technology and digital media

### **Mergers & Acquisitions**

Support investors and operators in their efforts to leverage M&A as a tool for building lasting shareholder value—helping both buyers and sellers better understand addressable market opportunities and dynamics

### **Market Intelligence**

Leverage our independent research platform to help clients and partners achieve clear thought leadership concerning issues of importance to the marketing community

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