



# The foundation for success.

Maximising customer experiences.

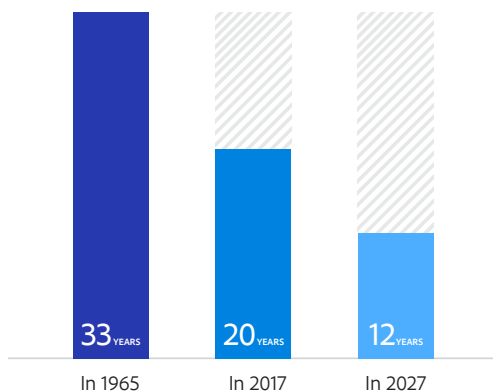


# Start with a blueprint

**M**ore than ever, customers expect holistic, personalised, relevant experiences, and brands that aren't engineered to keep pace with this transformation are collapsing. In fact, the average lifespan of S&P 500 companies dropped from 33 years in 1965 to just 20 years in 2017, and is expected to drop to 12 years by 2027, according to Innosight.

Conversely, companies that are developing strategies and technology foundations based on transforming customer experiences are winning. Digitally based super-brands like Uber, Lyft, Airbnb and Amazon have created new industries by providing breakthrough customer experiences.

**The average lifespan of  
S&P 500 companies**



Each of these brands would not be successful today without having the most solid, modern, experience-based foundation:



At a foundational level, if Airbnb had not built in the ability to pull in content from people all over the world, with only a basic level of security and scalability, would their business model still work?



If Uber could not use real-time data with a consolidated platform to personalise its service to its users' preferences and location and to instantly scale on a peak demand time like Friday night at 9 p.m. versus Monday at 3 a.m., would their model be as successful?



If Amazon did not have the analytics to look through millions of products and interactions to make personalised, relevant recommendations, would their customers be able to find what they are looking for in all that content and keep coming back to them again and again?

From relatively new apps like DoorDash and Stitch Fix that reengineer entire markets to established companies like Google, Netflix and Apple, organisations building on a revolutionary foundation for how they go to market are succeeding because of their focus on customer experiences. The same foundation is available to you.


# Enterprises built for today's customers are clearly different

**T**oday, marketing has moved beyond a toolset based on incremental updates to existing technology and processes and a series of legacy systems jerry-rigged together with the digital equivalent of duct tape. For one thing, the emergence and supremacy of customer experiences have changed everything. According to the Adobe 2020 *Digital Trends* report, the companies that lead in customer service are three times more likely to have significantly exceeded their 2019 business goals than companies that don't focus on customer experience.

With the explosion of channels and an increased emphasis on personalisation and real-time engagement, you're now potentially talking about hundreds or thousands of different customer experiences that need to be created, managed and delivered to reach all your core segments and buyer personas. And each of these experiences needs to be differentiated, relevant and compelling.

The customer experience mandate requires a comprehensive digital foundation, which is an integrated system that offers increased scalability, flexibility and seamless delivery. And for a digital foundation to perform at the highest level, it needs to be able to build in experiences based on information from a growing list of customer touchpoints.





*For enterprises to succeed in the future and thrive in the age of digital transformation, they will need to make changes to their marketing approach.*

At a minimum, marketers today need a toolset that can recognise individuals as they move across devices. Next, they need to understand consumers at a granular level. If someone has a prior relationship as a customer or shopper with a given brand or product, then the context of that relationship should be understood and reflected in any channel or on any device. Additionally, all these touchpoints and interactions need to be bulletproof secure and flip-a-switch scalable to reach new audiences and markets.

# Customer expectations and their impact on digital marketing

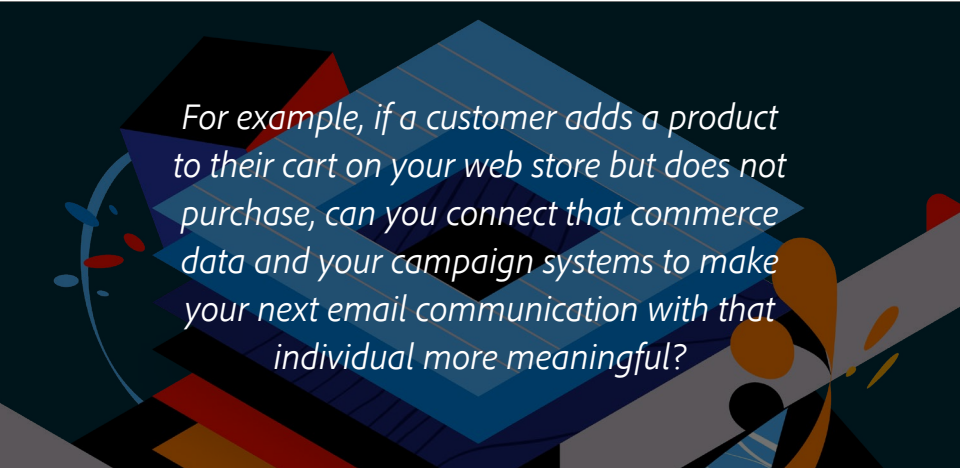
It's an increasingly mobile world. People need the ability to complete any task in any location or, at the very least, to start a process or journey in one location or on one device and seamlessly complete it on another. If they start shopping for a product on their laptop at work during lunch, they want to be able to pick up a tablet at home that evening and finish the transaction. This is the rule, not the exception.

People want an experience to be both relevant and personal. If they view some content — like a product comparison or white paper — subsequent emails, mobile notifications and web pages should know that and pick up the conversation where they left off, adding value to the customer experience.

According to PWC, "73 percent of all people point to customer experience as an important factor in their purchasing decisions. Yet only 49 percent of U.S. consumers say companies provide a good customer experience today."



If a consumer has indicated a clear affinity for some element of your brand or product in one channel, that information should be extended to and used as a building block for the next.



*For example, if a customer adds a product to their cart on your web store but does not purchase, can you connect that commerce data and your campaign systems to make your next email communication with that individual more meaningful?*

Or if a customer's account is overdrawn or their shipping or flight is delayed, how can you use this time-sensitive information to improve the customer experience?

In short, people expect the option to board a plane, call a car service, order a meal, enter a stadium, check into a hotel, see a concert, buy a vehicle, take an underground train and much more on their own terms and all through the technology embedded in their phone, watch, smart speaker or any other device they choose.



# Customer experience is built on a new foundation

**T**here's no way around it. The creation and delivery of relevant digital experiences is complicated. When it comes to personalisation, more than one in four marketers cite technology as a major hurdle.

Clearly, organisations need to make investments at the foundational level to overcome such a significant bottleneck. Marketing teams today need a foundation based on a new set of requirements, including the following:



**It should be built on a single, easy-to-use, unified platform.**

Having the right design and user interface — from the ground up — with integration among the core tools, workflows and data sets.



**It should have the extensibility to tap into existing and future enterprise systems for customer data** to augment and enhance the customer experience. And it should feature integration among all the components necessary to manage and optimise experiences (testing, analytics, personalisation, audience management and so on), which is best accomplished with a cloud-native system that keeps all the tools connected and up to date.





**It should provide the highest level of security** to every channel, every employee and every customer within that single platform design, while fulfilling all relevant industry and government standards and protocols, as well as operating within data privacy laws.



**It should be fully scalable on a cloud-based infrastructure** to ensure it's always up to date and to take advantage of on-demand resources to meet capacity requirements.

This “experience-based” foundation is probably different from the tools your organisation has developed over the last 10 years. In this article, we'll show you why you need to evolve and how you can emulate the success of leaders like Kao, Telegraph Media Group and Philips. They're delivering outstanding experiences because they've adopted best practices enabled by advances in cloud computing and streamlined modern marketing processes. And so can you.

# Advantages of a unified foundation

	Marketing via disparate tools-based infrastructure	Experience-based digital foundation
Experience and campaign creation and optimisation	Analytics, targeting, segmentation and content are managed on a channel-by-channel basis hindering analysis and optimisation of the customer journey.	Common layers for integrating campaigns, data, segments and targeting provide rapid experience development across channels and a deep understanding of campaign performance.
Experience security management	Security protocol, testing, compliance and management evolves on a project-by-project basis. Variable standards create vulnerability.	Centralised management drives compliance to all best-in-class industry and government standards, yielding a broad and deep security framework.
Experience extension, integrations and standardisation	New data sets and system integrations are scoped and managed on a one-off basis requiring significant lead time for new capability development.	A flexible and extensible software architecture supports integrations, new data and expanded capabilities. It offers easy scalability as needs grow.
Experience management, delivery and deployment model	Experiences are managed on a channel, brand, campaign or project-by-project basis. Infrastructure to support the end-to-end customer journey is managed through a mix of in-house, partners, vendors and service providers.	A cloud-native architecture streamlines experience development and improves time to market. Hardware and software architecture designed to test, scope, maintain and deploy is managed by best-in-class experience management teams. AI and ML support rapid experience delivery.

# Experiences and campaigns need something in common

Seventy-three percent of customers say experience is key to influencing brand loyalty, according to PWC. It's a priority to build a foundation that integrates the core components of experience creation and delivery. Those include personalisation and analytics plus content, asset and audience management.



Rather than spending an exorbitant amount of time configuring multiple-channel and device-specific experience delivery systems, you can set up a common, easy-to-use, unified foundation that acts as a central hub. Here are a few examples of organisations that are benefiting from having a common layer for experience creation and delivery across all channels:

**Kao** The [Kao Corporation](#) wanted to meet the demands of increasing traffic on their 250 global websites. They're able to do this by adopting a mobile-first design philosophy and improving content management across all devices using an integrated CMS and DAM platform. They saw **20 percent faster updates** with mobile website support and **improved flexibility and localisation**.



telegraphmediagroup

[Telegraph Media Group](#) understands that newsgroups need to adapt by embracing digital innovation. To stay competitive and remain connected to their millions of users, they developed modern, clean and fast websites to quickly deliver relevant experiences to readers. This resulted in **tripled daily acquisitions for registrations**, leading to **higher revenue and better customer experiences**.

**PHILIPS**

[Philips](#) cut costs by **90 percent** when they developed a data-driven marketing culture and brought in a digital marketing platform to seamlessly test, measure and **deliver personalised content across global sites**.

## A centralised layer for content and campaign management

By integrating the processes and libraries used to assemble and deliver campaigns for websites, mobile (including both web and apps) and email, you can ensure the consistency and quality of the experience. The goal is to allow the assets, messaging and offers attached to one marketing campaign to be easily repurposed, delivered and optimised as the customer engages with the brand across channels or devices. Centralising this layer removes redundancy, resulting in cost savings from reduced workflow, quicker production cycles and reduced time to market. Think "design once, use multiple times" while personalising your message for each channel and audience.

# A common layer for audiences and personalisation

You need a way to assemble content differently for different individuals and customer journeys. For example, if your web page doesn't change its content to reflect a search engine query or an action in your mobile app, you're missing an opportunity to improve the experience through personalisation. Done well, personalisation can decrease the number of steps the customer needs to complete their given journey by offering more relevant information at each stage.

Delivering personalised experiences at scale also requires audience management, which facilitates the creation of comprehensive customer profiles. Companies look to multiple sources of data to create that comprehensive view.

As all sophisticated marketers know, a company's most powerful data asset is its first-party data. First-party data is the foundation for how companies understand their customers. As such, it's the core building block for personalisation. These details should be accessible as a common layer in a centralised location and then grouped based on similar attributes.

When first-party data can't provide all the necessary information about consumers at every point of their journey, second-party data — data exchanged between partners or through a formal information exchange — can fill some gaps.

Next, second-party data — data exchanged between partners or through a formal information exchange — can fill some gaps in the customer journey and allow you to identify more individuals across devices.



Most people today use multiple devices daily. In a typical day, someone might use a smartphone, a tablet, a desktop computer, a laptop, a wearable health device and an RFID-enabled identity card at work, each generating its own data stream indicating preferences and behaviours.

The final data set to consider is third-party data. Third-party data providers have a breadth of information about consumers, including behaviour- and intent-based data gathered from external websites as well as data aggregators.

Imagine this scenario: Sam is in the process of buying a computer monitor with Acme, an e-commerce merchant. She browses different monitor models using the Acme app on her tablet. Later that day, she decides on a monitor and purchases one on her laptop via the Acme website. Currently, most brands would continue to serve Sam ads for monitors. By stitching together data sources, Acme recognises Sam's tablet search for a monitor and laptop purchase as being from the same individual. So they immediately stop advertising monitors to Sam and start giving her offers for other office items, like a keyboard or mouse.

This is the heart of offering personalised experiences: powerful first-party data, augmented with relevant information from second parties and then further enhanced with third-party data from the open market. Each data source looks at customer behaviour from a different angle, and combined offers a holistic picture of the customer. It can yield additional benefits downstream, including enhanced abilities to find new customers based on the behaviour of current users.

With a real-time customer data platform (CDP), you can bring all your data together to activate your marketing instantly.

# A common analytics layer pre-engineered into every channel

Customers leave a fingerprint on each screen and channel they visit. If you're actively listening, you can ensure that you assemble the right content and target it based on the rules for each channel, campaign and audience. But this requires a centralised approach to analytics, one that can understand behaviour on mobile devices, within an app or on a website and connect that to a given individual — whether they're authenticated or anonymous.

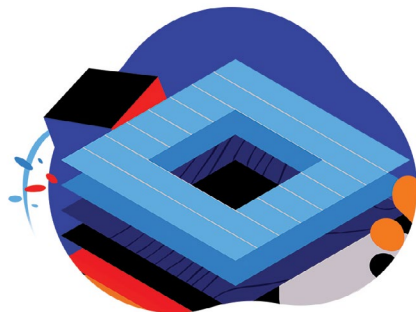
The payoff from this common layer comes in the form of advanced analytics, including attribution modelling. Attribution modelling combines data from interactions with content, offers and campaigns across multiple channels and yields specific recommendations on where to place credit for the success of a given campaign or offer. Armed with these details, marketers have a scorecard to revise and test improvements to the customer experience. Attribution modeling is so important that by 2023, 75 percent of marketers will use multitouch attribution, according to IDC.



And this common layer of analytics goes still deeper. It allows you to get a step ahead of your customers with predictive analytics. By looking at all the available data across channels for statistically significant relationships and behaviours, you can automate the process of determining the best options for the next best offer, experience or even potential future campaigns. And some companies can now do it in real time.

# Security for every layer, process, touchpoint and data

**T**hink about the number of different systems you need to manage, authenticate and integrate to process the content and customer information necessary for delivering personalised experiences. Add to that number the rising tide of future systems and touchpoints to support the growth of mobile and the Internet of Things.



At a minimum, today you have to manage email, e-commerce, social media, billing, shipping, content servers, DAM and CRM. Additionally, the presentation layer of experiences based on that data generates gigabytes of information about consumers and uses terabytes of content to build these experiences. Keeping all this data secure is a daunting challenge. Daily examples are being added to the diverse list of companies whose foundations are cracking under this pressure.

Your customer information, permissions and preferences are gold, but only if you don't violate customer trust. GDPR and good business ethics require you communicate how you use and secure customer data. The fact is that as your customers interact with more devices and channels, you develop even deeper customer profiles to serve those extended experiences. To support that growth, you need a centralised process and protocols for



managing customer preferences including cookies, channel preferences and permissions — such as phone, email or app push notifications.

The key to securing that data is to build an omnichannel foundation where all touchpoints, channels and campaigns can share the same centralised customer profiles — with a common security, authentication and personalisation layer on top of that.

Not only do you need to implement an efficient process for each and every customer touchpoint, you also need to ensure that your enterprise can meet all the relevant security and compliance standards, such as FedRAMP, SOC 2, HIPAA, GLBA and ISO 27001, as well as new laws regulating customer privacy. However, this compliance is a journey, not a destination. Standards and requirements are continually changing, and staying on top of them can tax your resources — especially if you have multiple vendors and disparate solutions trying to come together to deliver the customer experience.

Building a secure digital foundation using only internal resources, however, is getting harder and harder. Fortunately, service providers exist today who host and manage the entire continuum of tools and infrastructure for experience management and delivery. According to a special report by SolarWinds and the 2112 Group, “97 percent of surveyed partners reported some form of revenue-generating IT service offering.”

Managed services offerings that take an omnichannel approach are not only built with pre-engineered security at the foundational level, they can ensure that as security needs evolve, so does your system.

# An experience management and delivery solution that scales in real time

Any organisation, retailer, educator, manufacturer or government entity needs to be able to respond to growth and potentially huge spikes in traffic. Various reasons such as seasonal marketing campaigns during the holidays or the Super Bowl, any type of limited-time offer or expansion due to a merger or acquisition require you to scale sometimes literally overnight.



*The requirements for the technical environment for delivering experiences are very deep and continually evolving.*

*As such, organisations are increasingly embracing cloud-based models.*

At its most fundamental level, competing in the digital economy requires rapid growth and expansion of servers, software deployment, integration and technical expertise. Leveraging hosting and managed services as the foundational layer in the cloud instantly makes available all the digital, technical and physical resources for scaling experience delivery. The question here is one of time to market and time to respond to market conditions.

There's no instant "scale" switch built into the wall in the non-experience-based foundation.

The requirements for the technical environment for delivering experiences are very deep and continually evolving. As such, organisations are increasingly embracing cloud-based models. Advantages of a cloud-based model include the agility to quickly create and deploy campaigns or brand sites without stopping to plan and consider additions to IT staff and on-premises infrastructure. Building up on-premises infrastructure and expertise to support these strategies just isn't time- and cost-effective.

By choosing a cloud-native foundation, you potentially gain many end-to-end benefits:



**Cloud agility:** A cloud-native foundation is always current and always secure, with patches deployed as they're available.



**Fluid experiences:** It's a single source of content that allows for easy adaptation for any channel.



**Marketer and developer velocity:** It streamlines work processes so developers, marketers and creatives can work together easier.



**Experience optimisation:** With the help of AI and machine learning, it allows you to deliver optimal experiences at scale.

# Steps to building the experience-based foundation

**C**learly, there's room for improvement with foundations based on the incremental adoption of disparate digital marketing toolsets. But if this describes your current foundation, how can you move forward while keeping the lights on? Consider these steps as you move toward a more experience-based foundation:

## 01

### **Prioritise the capabilities that position you for growth**

Unless you're a start-up, chances are you don't have the option to swap out all your current tools for a new foundation in one move. Because of scarce IT resources and hiring or budgetary considerations, you may need to outsource various components of your digital foundation to best support your strategy. You can start by prioritising where to invest in the capability layers from the experience-based foundation.

Here are a few examples of marketing challenges and how they might influence your prioritisation efforts.



#### **Maintaining a consistent experience across multiple**

**channels:** A global airline offered an incredible in-flight experience with huge first-class suites, complete with a bed and shower. But while the airline pampered their passengers at

35,000 feet, there was no option for online check in via mobile device. Without a unified foundation the airline couldn't offer the same level of service across all channels — digital and offline. This airline needs to raise the bar to create a holistic experience that cuts across the whole customer lifecycle by prioritising investments in a common capability layer for web and mobile experience delivery.



**Creating personalised experiences at scale:** A large financial institution with a diverse customer base struggled to personalise content to each audience. Decisions around content and offers were manual and customer data sets were offline and difficult to access. Through a cloud automation initiative, they enabled a process to bring in branch data with call-centre data and online data each night. Now they can automate personalisation. When a customer comes back to their site, they use automation to rate the next best offer for you. If you were inquiring about a credit card, they'll show you one you are eligible for rather than have you fill in a form for a card you may or may not be eligible for. This institution saw hundreds of percentage lift in click-through rate compared to the previous off-line and manual approach, demonstrating the successful prioritisation of the personalisation layer.



**Supporting globalisation:** The key driver for digital transformation must go beyond just survival. Companies must set a goal for growth. Entering new markets requires content, translations and messaging for different languages, cultures and behaviours. As an example of globalisation, Uber's toolset and development path included an almost seamless country-to-country rolling launch. Potentially, you may need the tools to provide your organisation an efficient global reach, whether

your customer is in San Francisco or Zimbabwe. Prioritising a centralised layer for content and asset management enables you to rapidly scale and deploy new channels and new experience delivery models anywhere, anytime.

Keep in mind that a true digital foundation — one with the majority of the design features we've documented here — will enable an agile response to **all** these opportunities.

## 02

### **Work with IT to find common ground**

You should come to an agreement across your organisation on the common ground for a win-win scenario to build out the digital foundation. Everyone in your organisation may see the big picture, but it's a larger problem than any single department can solve. Today, it's a necessity — not just an option — to maintain your competitive advantage through your digital foundation. So you have to get everyone on the same page to do it, build common ground between IT and marketing, and provide a prioritised plan that can meet everyone's needs.

## 03

### **Create a prioritised plan for customer experiences and research solutions**

Furthermore, you should determine what experiences you want to strengthen for your customer journey in both the short term and the long term, and what capabilities you need to achieve those strengthened

experiences. Discuss the need to push more customer data to mobile. Figure out what levels of security you may need. Think about which mundane, automatable tasks like hardware and software maintenance you can dedicate resources to.

## **The blueprint is redefined and your future depends on it**

Brands that are thriving in this environment were not built on a foundation of disparate tools that evolved incrementally. Today's digital disruptors have built their foundations at the base level to manage and deliver experiences across channels and devices and to scale to thousands and millions of experiences daily. These organisations invested in infrastructures built on a blueprint designed to personalise each interaction, make it impactful and ensure it's bulletproof (and hackerproof) secure.

If you want to be like these leaders today — and not just survive the digital transformation wave but thrive by riding on top of it — your organisation has to fully embrace the complex needs of its digital experienced-based foundation.

The choice is yours. Now.

# Adobe can help

**A**dobe Experience Manager is a cloud-native platform that manages both digital assets and content. When working in tandem with other solutions, including Adobe Target, Adobe Sensei and Adobe Analytics, Experience Manager lets you create consistent, personalised experiences optimised for each customer, then automate delivery of those experiences.

Learn how an Adobe digital foundation can support your business.

[Get details](#)



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