

# The complete guide to omnichannel marketing automation for ecommerce



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# The problem with marketing today

Customers of today hate marketing, but it's everywhere. With **42.7%** of customers using adblockers, the message to marketers is loud and clear: we don't want ads.

This is a problem for ecommerce, as digital marketing is a huge part of getting customers to discover your brand.

But advertising isn't the real problem. The issue is when consumers are bombarded with irrelevant messages that mean nothing to them.



**When a customer sees a message or advertisement that's relevant, it doesn't even register as marketing. Consumers want personalization, and they're willing to pay more for it.**

When a customer receives a message that isn't relevant to their personal wants and needs, it's that much easier to ignore that message.

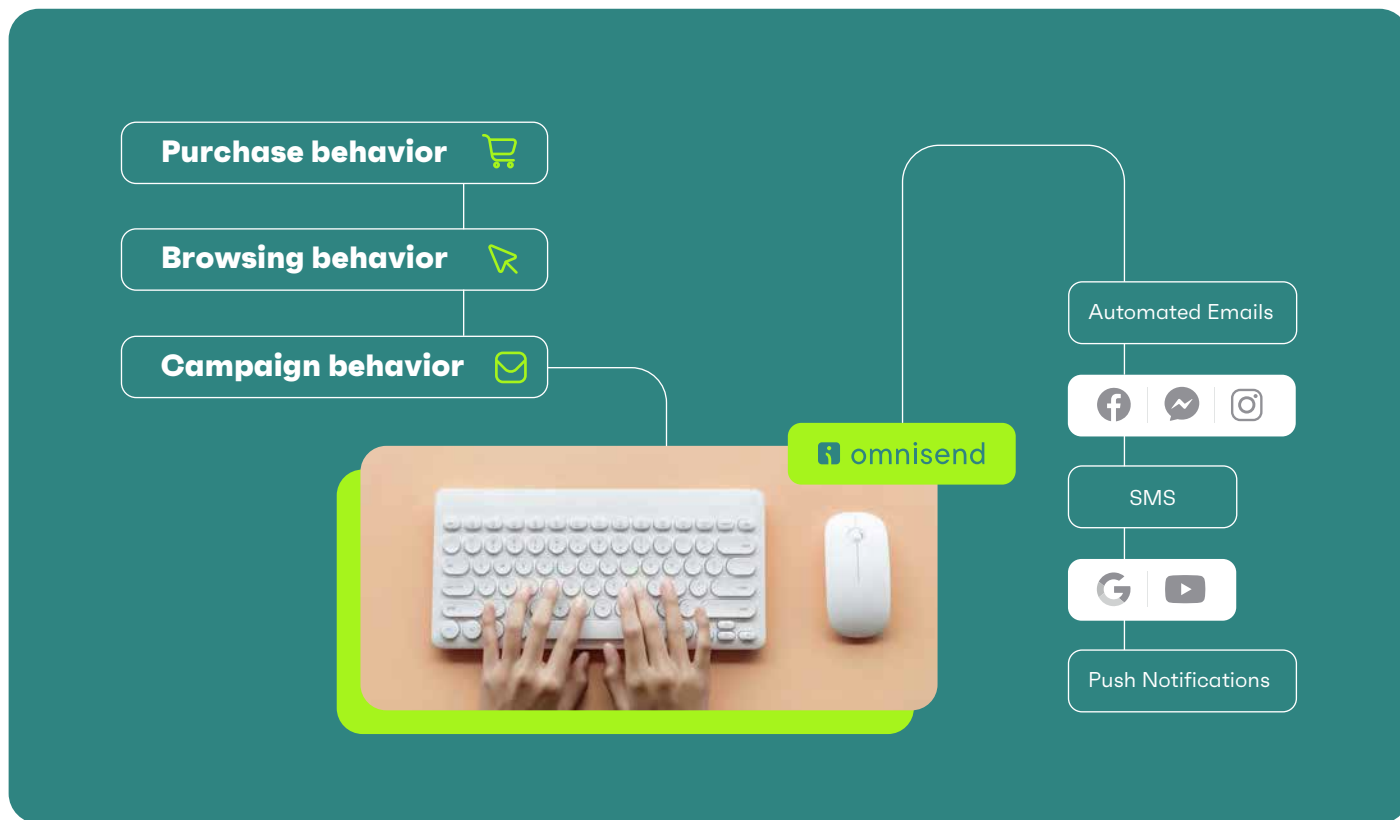
We as marketers need to rise to this challenge. We need to make marketing relevant. We need to provide a better overall customer experience by personalizing each and every step of the customer journey.

Omnichannel marketing responds to that crucial need by creating better personalization across all channels in a seamless experience.

In this whitepaper, we're going to dive deeper into omnichannel marketing for online retailers, explain a few key concepts, showcase a few practical examples, and lay out exactly how to implement your own omnichannel marketing strategy.



# What is omnichannel marketing?



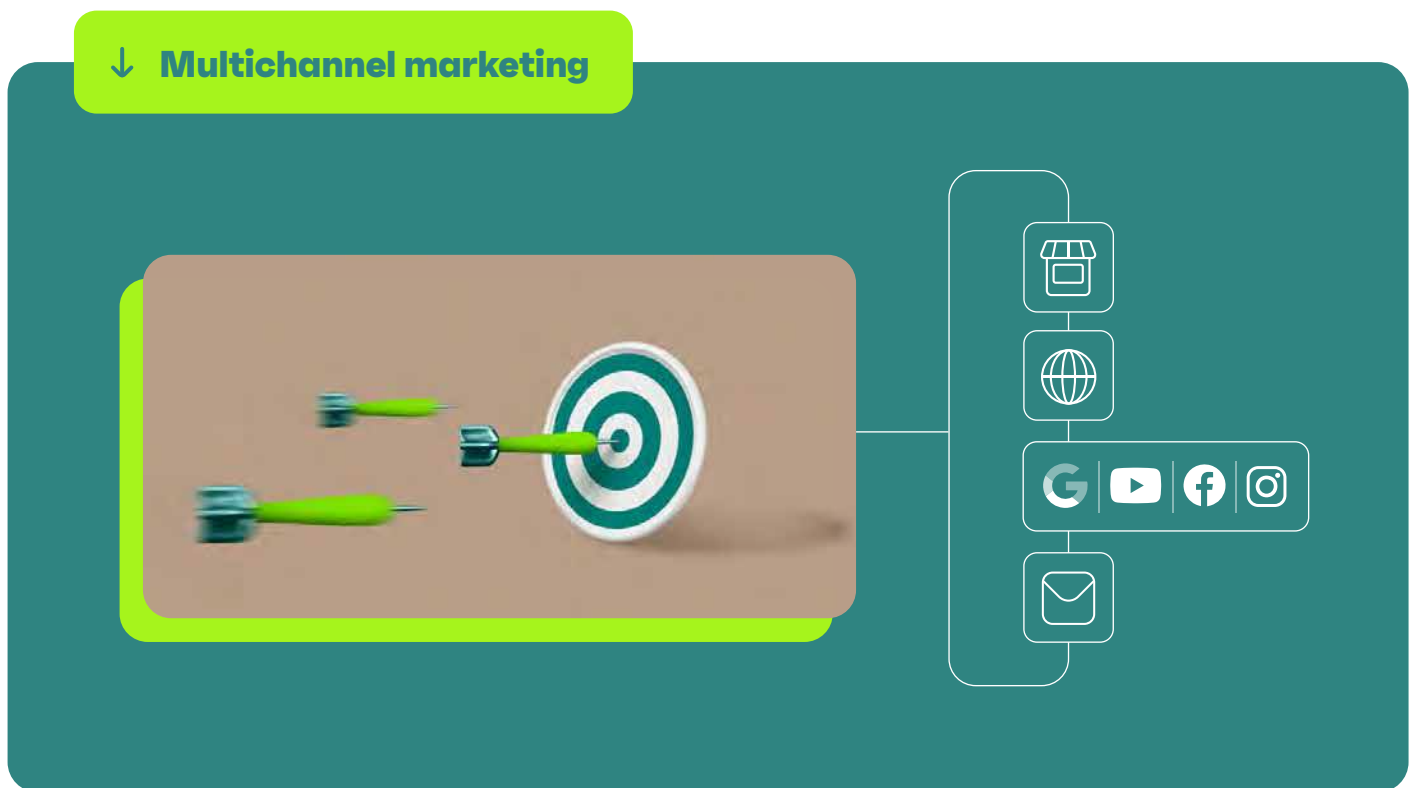
Omnichannel marketing uses customer data to provide a seamless experience for all customers on all channels, at each stage of their buying journey.

Today, customers experience on average 6-7 touchpoints with an online brand before they purchase. Omnichannel marketing ensures that each of those touchpoints is a wheel moving the customer in the same direction.

The idea is that a customer has a relevant, personalized experience no matter what channel they use to engage with your brand. Omnichannel marketing does this by leveraging a central point of customer data and adapting your channels with the message that is the most appropriate for that customer at that time.

# Multichannel vs omnichannel marketing: key differences

When considering the differences between multichannel and omnichannel marketing, it's useful to think about what the core of the strategy is.



Multichannel marketing places the brand at the center of the strategy. The brand reaches out across as many channels as it can maintain at once, attempting to reach all of their customers with the same message.

While a multichannel strategy can feel very productive, it's largely obsolete. With this approach, the exact same message is used on all channels, which ultimately means it will only be relevant to a small number of prospects.

Today, we have a better solution.

## ↓ Omnichannel marketing



Whereas multichannel marketing puts the brand at the center, omnichannel marketing puts the customer, and the data surrounding that customer, at the center of the strategy. Each of the utilized channels adapts to the customer's behavior to create a personalized and seamless experience.

This means that the message is always relevant, which improves the ROI of each channel used for customer engagement.



### **Reasons to adopt an omnichannel marketing strategy**

- Seamless channel integration
- Unified customer experience
- More control over channels
- Improved ROI
- Increased brand awareness
- More loyal customers

# What is the impact of omnichannel marketing automation?

It might seem like common sense that by sending more relevant messages across multiple channels, ROI is going to improve. However, there's also data to support that statement.

We studied how our marketers used omnichannel marketing in their automation workflows and found that those who used three or more channels earned 494% more engagement and purchases than single-channel campaigns.

While this is already a significant achievement, we took a closer look and found that customers who had an omnichannel experience spent at least 13% or more on average.

The impact that an omnichannel experience has on a customer is remarkable. When customers receive consistently relevant messages across channels, they reward the brand with a higher spend.

They also reward the brand in loyalty: these marketers experienced 90% higher customer retention than the brands using single-channel campaigns.



**494%**

more engagement and purchases earned on campaigns using three or more channels in an automation workflow

**13%**

higher spend when customers experience an omnichannel journey

**90%**

higher customer retention compared to single channel campaigns



# How does omnichannel marketing automation work?

For omnichannel marketing to be the most effective, it needs to be automated. This may sound counterintuitive to a customer-centric strategy but, as you'll see in this section, it's crucial to creating a better customer experience.

Until quite recently, marketing automation was limited to email automation. Today we can go so much further.

By adding other channels into your automation workflows, you can create an immersive customer experience, where the channels play off each other.

In this section, we'll examine how you can use omnichannel marketing automation at each stage of the customer journey.





# How to use omnichannel automation throughout the customer journey



Could you imagine trying to tailor messages to each customer on each channel manually? You would get absolutely nothing else done.

That's just not practical. When we think of automation, we think of robotic messages that have no personalization to them. However, automation technology has come to a point where we can send hyper targeted and personalized messages to our customers.

The key is segmentation. By breaking down your customers into different groups you can write messages that will be the most relevant to them at different stages of their customer journey. This journey typically falls into 5 main stages: **visitors**, **subscriber**, **shopper**, **customer** and **repeat customer**



# #1 visitor

Less than 3% of website visits end in conversion. While that might seem bleak, there are ways to help move the customer to the next phase of their customer journey.

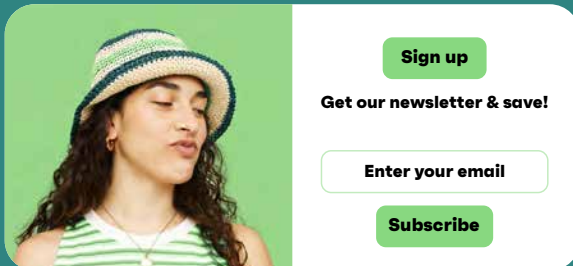
By automating a few different features of your site, you can capture the customer's information and create a better experience. The main way to do this is with sign up forms: basic sign up forms, exit-intent or time-based popups, animated sign up forms, and landing pages.

Don't forget, the information you ask for makes a difference. Asking for details like a first name and birthday leads to better personalization, an email address is standard, and a phone number lets you send SMS campaigns.

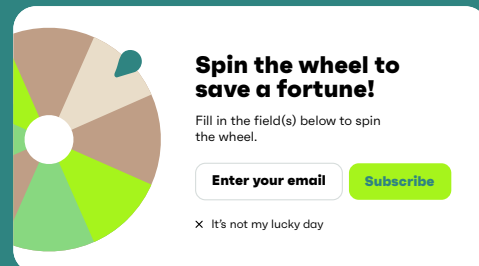
Offering a great incentive, like a discount or free shipping, helps drive sign up rates. This works particularly well in helping you determine how interested the customer is.

If a customer hasn't signed up, you can always use Google and Facebook retargeting ads to remind them of your products and draw them back in.

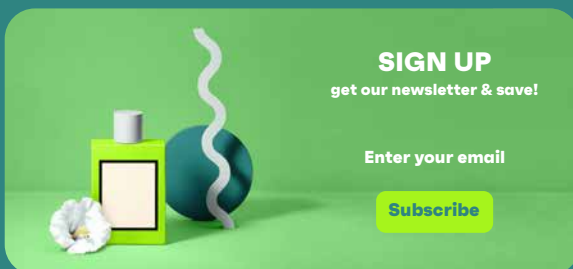
## ☆ Best working sign up forms



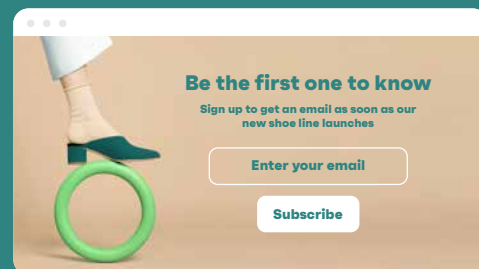
Signup box **1.3%**



Wheel of fortune **10%**



Popup **3%**



Landing page **23%**



## #2 subscriber

When a customer signs up, depending on the information you collected, you can begin sending campaigns across a variety of channels as part of your welcome series automation.

### Email

74.4% of customers expect a welcome email when they subscribe to a website. These messages are particularly effective: averaging a 42.21% open rate.

### SMS

If you've collected a phone number, it's possible to send the discount or free shipping code directly to their phones. Combine this with a welcome email by following up the SMS with an email showing relevant products.

### Push notifications

If your customer has opted in for push notifications, you can send their discount code this way and follow up via email.

### Retargeting ads

Keep your customer interested if they're not engaging with email, SMS, and push notifications.

A great welcome series usually contains three or more messages, regardless of the channels involved. Using omnichannel automation, you can create a segment for customers who have signed up but never purchased and tailor your communication around this stage of the customer journey.



# #3 shopper

Remember that each touchpoint a customer has with your brand moves them closer to conversion. Every time they see your brand name or one of your products, they become more familiar and think more about purchasing.

## Browse abandonment

In the shopping phase, a customer might revisit your site during your welcome messages or via your retargeting ads. They might browse for a bit, but ultimately leave without purchasing. If they do so, automation can enter them into a browse abandonment segment.

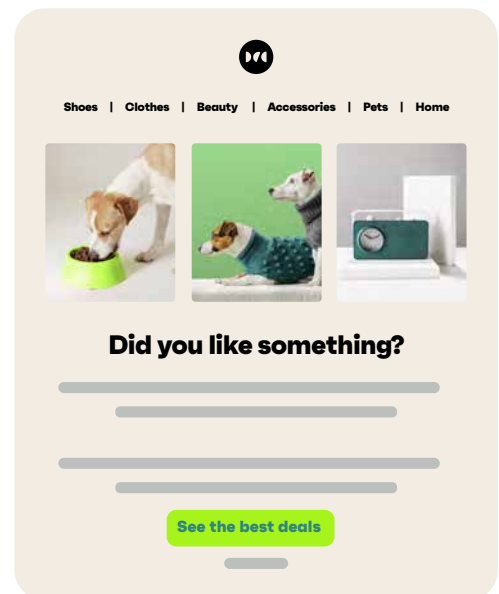
You can automate your messages with product recommendations based on the categories your customers browsed:

### Email

Email is good for browse abandonment as it's a softer approach. The last thing you want to do is to bombard the customer with promotional messages from all channels.

Add some reviews from other customers, as the social proof will help build trust in your brand.

From here, follow up with recommendations from this category in Google and Facebook retargeting ads.



## Cart abandonment

If your customer adds products to their cart but doesn't complete the purchase, you can go a little further in your omnichannel automation. These customers would be added to a separate segment with more aggressive messages. Keep in mind that more aggressive doesn't mean overly promotional in this case.

You can set up an automation sequence to target cart abandonment. While many think about this in terms of email automation, it's possible to do more.

### Messenger / SMS / push notifications

If a customer has opted in, send an abandoned cart reminder with a tone of urgency and support an hour after the customer has left your site.

### Email

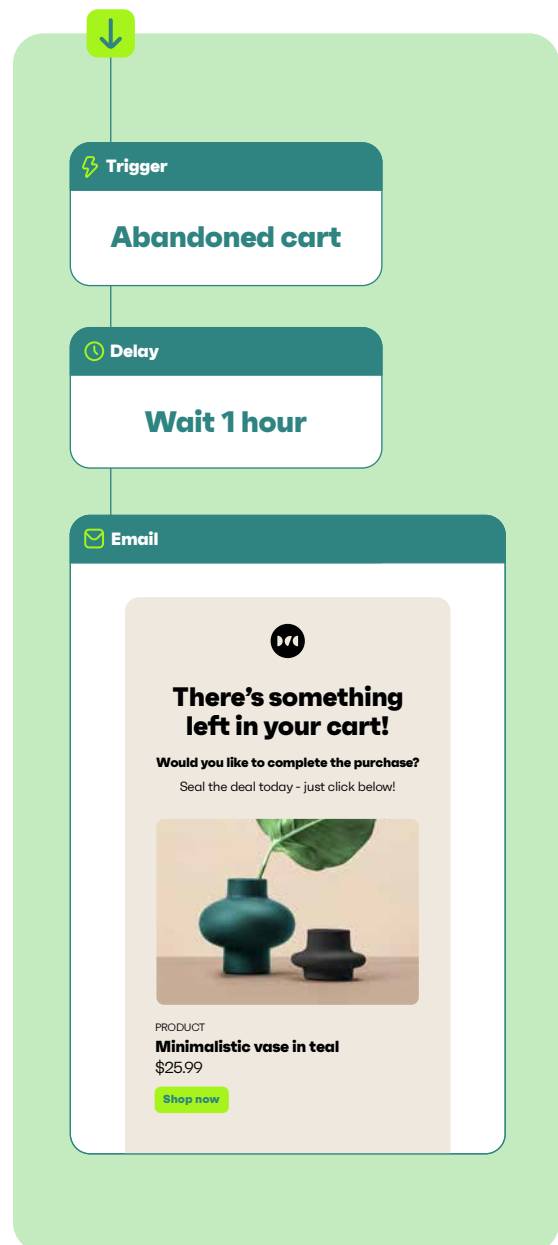
Using a supportive tone, send a reminder email 12 hours later.

### SMS

Send a discount code for the product or offer free shipping to draw the customer back in.

If the customer still doesn't come back to complete the purchase, you can set up a 1 week delay and use retargeting ads for that particular product.

This kind of sequence is effective in bringing customers back to complete the purchase.



# #4 customer

When the customer finally completes a purchase, your job is far from over. There are a few kinds of messages you'll need to automate at this point.

The best practice is to let the customer choose how they receive updates on their order and shipping. Some customers may prefer email, others may prefer SMS, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, push notifications, etc.

Regardless of the channel, always include a link back to your store or their account so they can view the update in detail.

## Order confirmation & shipping notifications

Using the channel your customer has chosen for the initial update, send an immediate update that their order has been received. As mentioned, always include a link back to your store and follow up with an email that details the whole order.



## #5 repeat customer

No one loves you more than your repeat customers. And there's no one you should love more either. Most online businesses count 40% of their income from repeat buyers, so you should use your omnichannel automation to keep them engaged.

After the product has been received and all is well, you have opportunities to bring that customer back in several different ways.

### Order follow up

After the products have reached your customer, wait about a week or so and send a message asking for a review.

#### Email

Start with an email that requests a review. Show how others have reviewed the products and provide an easy link directly to the review section.

#### SMS

If a customer hasn't responded to the email, follow up a week later with an SMS offering some kind of incentive to review the product. You can also use Facebook Messenger to ask for a Facebook review, for example.



## Cross selling

### Email

In emails following the feedback automation, you can always recommend products that would pair nicely with what your customer recently purchased. You can even offer an incentive in your confirmation emails to this effect. If you have a loyalty or rewards program in place, this is a great opportunity to show your customer how many points they have earned, and what it could get them on the recommended product. You can also follow up with an SMS or push notification for points and rewards updates.

### Reactivation

If your customer hasn't purchased again after a long time, a reactivation series can be automatically triggered. You can use email, SMS, push notifications, or any other channel the customer has opted into. If nothing else, it re-engages the customer: reactivation emails average a 40% open rate.

Regardless, your next goal from here is moving them back into the customer phase where they begin browsing your store, showing their intent to purchase.





# How to create your own omnichannel marketing strategy


While automation is a critical aspect to omnichannel, it's only one part. In order to create an effective omnichannel strategy, you have to gather a bit of data. This process boils down to five main steps you'll need to take.

Cart abandoned 🚫

Email

**Hi Jessie! Come back & take a 2nd look**

We thought you might like to complete this purchase?



PRODUCT  
**Scented soy wax candle**  
\$10.00

[Shop now](#)

Purchased!

SMS:

Hi Jessie, your order at Lunar store is about to expire! Come back and take a 2nd look?  
[osend.me/lc/bscpc](https://osend.me/lc/bscpc)  
Reply STOP to opt-out.



# #1 centralize your customer data

When creating your omnichannel marketing strategy, it's important to break down the walls that separate your teams. It's easy for each team to have their own goals to accomplish, but an omnichannel strategy means it's time to work together.

Start by centralizing your customer data so each team can access it. It's easy to assume only marketing requires it, but that's not accurate. Everything you know about your typical customer needs to be in one place and easily accessible to each team.

From marketing, to sales, to merchandising, to customer support, it's important that each department knows exactly where a customer is in their purchase journey.

For example, marketing needs to know what message to send. Customer support needs to know which products the customer has browsed before they ask a question about the product. This helps each member of your staff understand how the customer moves through their journey.

By centralizing your data into one place, you help each person who might interact with the customer create a better customer experience. Even those who don't interact with the customer directly can benefit from knowing more about who your target shopper is.

Remember, omnichannel marketing is customer-centric. Putting the customer at the center of your strategy will only help you improve your business operations from beginning to end.

And a seamless customer experience starts with a unified front from the members of your ecommerce team.



## #2 examine your customer experience under a microscope

The next thing you should do is walk a mile in your customer's shoes. This means you need to perform a company-wide audit on your customer experience. It's easy to boil that down to user experience or the interaction that a user has on your site. While that's a huge piece of the puzzle for ecommerce stores, customer experience goes even further.

### Discovery

Don't start from your site. Start before the customer discovers you. Are you easily findable on Google? What ways does the customer have to stumble upon your brand? Interact with the different channels where your brand is present and see if they're cohesive.

### User experience

Navigate your own site. How fast and fluid is it? Look for potential friction you can remove. Check your payment systems, do they instill confidence and trust? Bring in outside help and ask them for impressions on your site. Ask them to navigate it and narrate what they're doing and why they're doing it.

### Checkout

Abandon your own navigation or cart. Do you have cart abandonment messages in place? How do they look? Do you have any popups in place? Are they displaying to the right people at the right time?

### Post-sale experience

Many marketers forget this part. Think about how long shipping took. Did you receive shipping notifications and order confirmation? How was your unboxing experience? Did you include something to make the customer feel special and bring them back to your site? Did you have any kind of customer feedback message? Place a support ticket with your team and measure how long it takes for a response.

By measuring each aspect of your customer journey, you can see exactly what the customer sees when engaging with your brand, identifying and removing any friction to create a better experience.



## #3 gather critical customer feedback

While many consider customer feedback difficult to obtain, there are more opportunities than you might think.

Most focus on just the post-sale feedback. While this is very useful to you, without an incentive most customers are only going to give feedback in the case of a very negative or very positive experience. Any experience that falls in between the extremes is likely to go unreported.

But there are other ways you can get feedback at several points in the customer journey:

- Ask your customers how they feel about a product on social media prior to launch
- Offer a survey on your site's UX to get a better idea of how they view your store
- Ask for feedback following every customer success interaction you might have
- Incentivize the post-purchase review with a discount, free shipping, or a giveaway

Of course, measuring engagement through each of these points can also give you some interesting data if you don't get a response.

A great way to increase the chances of a response is to offer a low-commitment way to give feedback. It takes a lot of effort to type out a review unless we feel very passionately about it.

For example, let customers simply click in order to respond. A simple thumbs up vs thumbs down button could do the trick. Alternatively you can measure your Net Promoter Score this way, asking customers if they would recommend your brand to someone else and rate that likelihood on a scale of 1-10.

This form of low-commitment feedback isn't detailed data, but it can help you make critical decisions on different aspects of your customer experience.

It can also help you personalize the message you send to your customers based on the feedback they've offered.

Please rate your experience of the recent purchase



Good!



Bad...



## #4 segment and target your messages

The data that you gather on your customers is vital for this next step. Segmenting your customers into smaller groups helps you target your messages in a more detailed way.

There are different ways you can segment your subscribers:

### Profile data and demographics

This method of segmentation answers the “who” part of the customer:

- Age
- Gender
- Location
- Income / career
- Marital / family status

These kinds of demographic categories help with the first layer of segmentation. After all, you wouldn't send the same message to a repeat customer and someone who has found your store for the first time.

### Campaign engagement

The second layer of segmentation is based on how a customer interacts with your brand:

- Campaigns that were last clicked
- High engagement customers vs low engagement
- At risk of churning / inactive

These are just a few examples, but there is a lot of potential here. For example, it might be interesting to follow up with a segment that clicked the last promotion you had with another sale you've got going on.



## Customer behavior

Perhaps the most interesting way to segment is based on shopping behavior:

- Cart abandonment
- Bounced customers
- Browse abandonment
- Product recommendation
- Cross selling for recent buyers

You can segment based on just about any behavior a customer might have on your store. However, what really makes these segments interesting is layering them for more exact targeting.

For example, you can target a woman aged 35-45, who clicked on your last product launch announcement and browsed that new line with product recommendations that are sure to interest her. By layering these segments your messages are always relevant.



## #5 measure your success, and evolve

To determine success, we end where we began when creating the strategy: gathering data.

But this time you're gathering data based on the omnichannel tests and operations you've put into place. Your channels will be adapting to your customer with each interaction, so you need to keep updating the data you have on your customers in turn.

This includes A/B testing each element of your campaigns. The point isn't to find the absolute best visual or copy, but to find what your customers best respond to.

That data is going to vary depending on your segment and the customers' reactions in that segment. For example, it wouldn't make sense to send the same tone of message to a loyal customer as you would a customer about to churn. By keeping these messages pertinent and updating this data constantly, you can lengthen your customer lifetime and improve your retention rates.

Gathering this data on a regular basis is part of keeping your messages cohesive for your customers, and creating the ultimate omnichannel experience.



# Key takeaways

When creating your omnichannel marketing strategy, you might run into roadblocks along the way.

However, this strategy is proven to yield results and it's important to stay the course. Here are the biggest takeaways to help you in that journey:

- Omnichannel is customer-centric. By placing the customer at the center of your operations, you can create a seamless experience.
- Omnichannel marketing can improve ROI, customer retention rate, and increase average customer spend.
- Omnichannel automation can be used at each step of the customer journey.
- Automation isn't just for email. Automate your messages to increase your efficiency and add other channels into your automation workflows for an omnichannel experience.
- Centralize your customer data and keep each member of your team in the loop with your strategy.
- Perform regular audits of your customer experience to truly understand your customer.
- Regularly ask for feedback at multiple points of the customer journey.
- Layer your segmentation for more precise targeting so your message is always relevant to your customer.
- Measure your results systematically to keep your data up-to-date and improve your processes.





# Marketing, the way it should be

Omnisend is a powerful marketing automation platform that empowers marketers to improve ROI, increase sales, and improve customer relationships.

We help you stay connected to your customers, no matter what channel they use. Omnisend's marketing automation allows you to integrate email, SMS and push into the same workflow, saving you time while keeping your customers engaged.

Trusted by **100,000+** ecommerce brands



**Ease of Use**  
Marketing Automations  
Average: 8.6



