

A cross-media view of the customer is the key to marketing success

By [Sally Rothman](#), issued by [GfK – An NIQ Company](#)

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Think about your customer, walking into work with a smartphone in one hand and a briefcase in the other. He or she may be wearing a pair of jeans from a brick-and-mortar store, purchased on account using a store club card, and a jacket acquired on special after seeing a TV ad for a winter sale.



In the briefcase, you may find a laptop bought online, and lunch from a supermarket, where the customer has a loyalty card. As this simple example shows, today's consumer interacts with brands and their products and services across multiple channels, media and touchpoints every day.

At each of these points, the consumer leaves traces in the digital world for marketers to analyse. To get an accurate understanding of the customer journey, brands must therefore seek to get a single view of their behaviour across different channels and media as they move from discovery to purchase.

Of course, not all customers are the same. As is the case in many emerging markets, South Africa has a high proportion of single device use compared to Europe or North America. Many more people rely just on a smartphone and mobile data because fast fibre is less prevalent and because they have leapfrogged PCs to adopt mobile devices.

Marketers thus need insights that support their campaigns and programmes for different audiences, enabling them to determine the most relevant touchpoints to use to reach each segment, understand their media consumption and usage of digital devices, and optimise the marketing strategy and media mix.

A coherent customer view

GfK's research across multiple markets confirms that customers interact with brands' paid, owned and earned content across a combination of smartphones, tablets, PCs, television, brick-and-mortar stores, and other channels during a

purchase journey. It is only by integrating data and insights across all these channels that we can understand consumer behaviour in a manner that enables us to get the most from marketing investments.

However, many brands still run isolated marketing campaigns and structures where audiences are defined by the departments where they belong. They observe consumers from different angles and perspectives in isolation — customers can be instore shoppers, website visitors, part of a media-planning target group, prospects that need to be converted into shoppers, or members of a loyalty programme.

Consumers, however, don't care about channels or touchpoints or digital KPIs. They only care about their experience — which they expect to be great and consistent across all points where they interact with brands. To deliver that sort of customer experience and to make marketing investments stretch further, brands need to overcome their data and organisational silos.

Breaking down silos with “scaled one-to-one impact”

Even if we are not able to predict the consumer's behaviour, we can try to understand it. To do so, we need data and we need science. In the past media measurement was about reach and incremental reach across media channels. It was important to prove that the advertising had the desired reach within the desired target group with a certain frequency.

Further, it was important to understand how different media channels complemented each other with regard to the campaign delivery and what the most efficient combination is. Then the industry moved to measuring the impact of advertising — i.e. how it changed attitudes toward brands and how it drove product sales and thereby proving the return on investment of advertising. Today we are moving into the next stage, which we call “scaled one-to-one impact”.

Visualising cross-media consumer behaviour

Rather than planning advertising campaigns, we are orchestrating consumer journeys across channels and the advertising delivery becomes more consumer-centric. We can again target each and every consumer to reach one-to-one impact, but this time at scale — “scaled one-to-one impact”.

Integrating data from all sources in one platform allows us to connect the dots between marketing siloes and gain a true picture of our consumers. By opening these silos and integrating data from different sources we can achieve that all important single customer view.

Successful media planning relies on strategic insights derived from this integrated data to better understand market differences, ensuring your message gets through using the right channels and devices. This information can help you maximise reach across different devices and also provide insight into adapting creative treatments.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sally Rothman is Director Retail Shopper & Consumer Panel at GfK South Africa. Sally's enquiring mind has inspired a 35-year career in market research, during which time she has developed expertise across a range of research methodologies and product groups. As a director at GfK, she played a key role in setting up the 3,000-household shopper panel as well as custom panel services that deliver a single, holistic source of shopper information. Sally has a passion for helping companies use data to drive the growth of their businesses and has deep expertise in the FMCG sector.

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