

Title A: Multichannel vs. Omnichannel Marketing - Demystified

Subtitle: Understanding the difference could be the missing piece of your marketing strategy

Title B: A Brief Overview of Multichannel vs. Omnichannel Marketing

Subtitle: Why the difference between the two matters for CPGs

Title C: The Difference Between Multichannel vs. Omnichannel Marketing

Subtitle: Is one better than the other for CPGs?



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Are you using a multichannel or an omnichannel approach to your marketing?

Do you know? Or are you as confused as many other CPGs who struggle to differentiate between the two?

Multichannel and omnichannel have been blips on the digital marketer's radar for the past few years. Yet surprisingly, many companies continue to use these two terms interchangeably when crafting their marketing strategies.

It's no surprise, really. Digital marketing buzzwords change about as often and quickly as technology itself. Many companies find themselves unable to master one concept before another one comes to take its place.

The difference between multichannel and omnichannel is too important for CPGs to ignore, especially since these years-old topics are still highly relevant today.

Take a look at what defines multi-channel versus omni-channel marketing, and discover why it can affect the entire marketing strategy for CPGs:

### **A Brief Look at Multichannel vs. Omnichannel**

Do you market to your audience across a variety of outlets or channels? If so, consider yourself part of the multichannel marketing crowd.

Multichannel marketing means you're using multiple touchpoints to market your products to your audience. These touchpoints include:

- Social Media
- Your Website
- Email Campaigns
- Digital or In-store Advertisements

Omnichannel marketing, on the other hand, takes multichannel marketing to a higher level by integrating each channel into a single user experience. By connecting each of your channels, you're better positioned to provide a fluid, seamless experience rather than dividing your user's interactions with you.

### **Characteristics of Multichannel vs. Omnichannel Marketing**

There are a few telltale characteristics that can help you determine where your own marketing strategy aligns:

Multichannel Marketing	Omnichannel Marketing
Focuses on spreading the brand’s message as quickly as possible	Focuses on meeting customers’ needs on every channel
Experience is based on the channel	Consistent experience regardless of channel
Tactical approach	Strategic approach
Helps brands connect the dots regarding their customers	Helps customers connect the dots regarding a brand
Not always optimized based on device, such as smartphones, tablets, and desktop PCs	Device type is taken into account when crafting an omnichannel strategy

This isn’t to say that having a multichannel marketing focus is a bad thing, nor is it necessarily wrong. With short attention spans running rampant, and the sheer abundance of ways to market yourself, you need to be wherever your customers are.

Think about it this way: if your focus is on omnichannel marketing, you’re fully engaged in multichannel by default.

The reverse, however, isn’t always true—you *can* opt for a multichannel approach without the extra effort of omnichannel marketing.

But *should* you?

**The Increasing Necessity for an Omnichannel Experience**

Multichannel marketing evolved as a means for consumers to engage with a brand in the way they preferred. It was often wrongly assumed that each person would choose a channel and make it their “preferred” method. Channels were often siloed as a result. With marketers striving to improve

engagement or experience on each individual channel, these outlets typically became disconnected from each other.

But, as [Dynatrace's Erwan Paccard](#) notes, customers are now using multiple digital touchpoints to make a single purchase. "...A typical journey might be search the Web on my smartphone while commuting, add items to my basket, investigate findings on my laptop when home in the evening, visit stores to review items and search for coupons and compare prices on the mobile while in the store."

There's strong evidence to suggest that an omnichannel approach can prove more profitable for companies, even for CPGs whose products aren't purchased online. Aberdeen's Omer Minkara reveals in his [Omni-Channel Customer Care](#) research that companies who have well-defined omnichannel management saw a 91% increase, year-over-year, in customer retention, compared to companies that aren't strategizing and managing omnichannel practices. In addition, these companies also achieved a 3.4% increase in customer lifetime value, compared to the latter group that saw a 0.7% decrease year-over-year.

A [2014 study from Sociomantic Labs](#) found that nearly half of all adults use more than one device when shopping online. In addition, the majority of young consumers own a smartphone and/or tablet, which makes them likely to use multiple devices when making a purchase.

According to their findings, up to 83% of smartphone or tablet owners use their device to research products or browse a retailer's website. Sociomantic stated that because of the highly personal nature of these devices, personalized experiences are simply expected.

Simply put, your buyers are in the omnichannel environment, whether they realize it or not. Customers are heading to stores more informed and intent about what they're purchasing. They're engaging with your digital brand before they ever see your products in person. Your best chance to attract their attention is no longer in the store aisle, but on the personal devices they trust to meet their needs.

"Consumers are using multiple devices and screen sizes and retailers need to be thinking more broadly and creatively than they have in the past," stated Sociomantic's Brian Ferrario. "Each device is different, just like each consumer. It's not about audiences anymore. People have come to expect marketing to be

personalized, immediate, relevant, consistent, engaging and rewarding. This is especially true on mobile devices, which are the most personal technology to date.”

### **Bottom Line: Does Multichannel or Omnichannel Matter More to CPGs?**



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CPGs who see their sole success via in-store purchases might feel like omnichannel is irrelevant. After all, consumers can't purchase your product online, nor can you control the brick-and-mortar experience once they arrive in-store.

But these truths don't mean that omnichannel isn't essential for in-person purchases. Omnichannel marketing can be effective in driving in-store sales when every message from every channel directs the shopper to a straight, simple path for conversion.

It's important to note that omnichannel marketing can prove effective for CPGs even if a buyer's purchasing channels are limited. But, as eClerx's Scott Houchin notes, "It's really attaching a definition or a headline to something that world-class brands have been doing for some time."

In the end, it doesn't matter whether you're claiming to use multi-channel or omni-channel, as long as you're using it with the intent to develop an experience your customers will connect with and appreciate.

## **SOURCES OF RESEARCH**

List of all links used to complete research for this article:

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