



Multi-Channel Adoption Strategies & Best Practices



COMMUNICATIONS ROAD MAP

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Top Strategies for Success in Multi-Channel Customer Communications

Many organizations offer electronic bills, statements and other paperless correspondence to their customers. But despite advances in online technology, and in the face of popular sentiment to “be green,” most continue to struggle to increase the adoption of multi-channel and paperless communications. The aim is to save money and improve customer service, but the key to success is getting customers to opt-in to the idea of going digital in the first place.

It’s a Multi-Channel World

Why should you make the move to multi-channel customer communications? Here’s why: Over 750 million users use Facebook every single day. Over 6,000 “tweets” are issued every second. And nearly 20% of all web traffic comes through mobile phone. Clearly, the days of communicating via plain old paper are over, so the question becomes: Are you ready to make the move to multi-channel?

Multiple Reasons for Multi-Channel

Companies that continue to use legacy printing and mailing to communicate with customers will find it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to keep up. According to recent studies, 72% of consumers want only to interact with a brand via social media channels. And findings indicate that 44% of email recipients made at least one purchase last year based on a promotional email. Since over half of American adults have a smartphone, and most check for messages even when they don’t notice their phone ringing, if you have been late to adopt multi-channel you have been missing out on a great deal of opportunity.

Consumers Expect Multi-Channel

These days, customers have come to expect a multi-channel experience. We want more choices and wider flexibility in terms of how we receive information and interact with a company. As a result, organizations that continue to be paper-bound are seen as behind the times, especially among millennial consumers. According to Edison Research, 66% of 18-24 year-olds are more loyal to companies they interact with through social media and online. Are you at risk of being left behind?

Multi-Channel Marketing Value

Multi-channel is more than simply as a delivery mechanism; it’s also a perfect match for personalized campaigns and marketing messages. Companies are finding great marketing value across multiple customer touch points (e.g., bills and statement as well as social media or online communications channels). Whereas cross-selling or up-selling was once a low-percentage proposition -- junk mail and “stuffers” return well below 1% -- multi-channel customers are 25 times more likely to engage in additional products and services. Is now the time to engage customers with multi-channel marketing?



Top Strategies for Multi-Channel Adoption

Are you still printing and mailing thousands of pages of customer correspondence every month despite having an electronic solution? Without a well-defined strategy to drive paperless adoption, you may find that you continue to struggle with managing the burden of paper-bound communications.

It's important to move to multi-channel customer communications. But how can you encourage your customers to move to digital alternatives? Here are some strategies and best practices you can use to increase adoption rates, improve communications, and maximize the value of your strategic efforts.

New Accounts

It makes sense to start your multi-channel initiative with all your new accounts. Since you're starting a new customer relationship, now is the time to set the expectation of a digital standard. Flag all new accounts and set the default in your system for only electronic communications. Remember, while you're encouraging customers to go digital, be sure to provide an option to go back to paper correspondence if they wish. In this case, you may want to consider charging a fee for the paper. You may also consider designing new products that minimize or eliminate fees by virtue of going digital.

Voluntary Opt-In

The gentlest approach for existing accounts is voluntary opt-in. But, asking customers to proactively choose paperless requires proactive marketing on your part. This strategy starts with a thoughtful effort to build awareness. Are your customers even aware they have an option to opt-out of paper in favor of a multi-channel alternative? What kind of incentives are they given to do so? Does the customer experience, both online and in person, encourage them to go multi-channel?

Make Enrollment Easy

It is important to make it easy for your customers to enroll in a paperless alternative. OMI provides cloud services for single sign-on and seamless integration to billing and transaction platforms. But best of all, it's a simple enrollment process, and easy for customers who want to go digital, to do so, with just one click. For organizations, managing enrollment through this automated feature has the added benefit of providing a quick and easy way to track the effectiveness of paperless initiatives.





Reverse Opt-In



Unlike the voluntary method, reverse opt-in is a hard line approach to raise electronic adoption. Turning off printed statements, bills, renewals, and notices at a pre-defined future date, for example, is an effective, but potentially risky strategy. It's important to work diligently to communicate to all your customers, well in advance, so they are aware of the pending change. It is also important to provide a way to opt back-in to receive printed communications, but you may want to consider charging a fee for the service.



Online Customers

Another approach that falls somewhere between voluntary and reverse opt-in is one that focuses on your current online customers. Since these customers are already comfortable with your online services and the online experience, turning off printed correspondence is a natural progression. It is easy to access their statements, bills, renewals, notices, letters and communications through the existing OMI cloud services through on-line customer facing portals. Again, you can always provide an option to opt back-in for paper if they wish.



Leading Best Practices for Multi-Channel Execution

Here are a few best practices to add into the mix to further your success.



Give-Aways and Discounts

Everyone is attracted to a give-away, and you may find giving customers a little something for their effort is a convenient and affordable way to entice them to go digital. Give-aways and other incentives have shown to increase electronic adoption. These enticements can include everything from inexpensive promotional items, to gift cards, or even a sweepstake for a new iPhone.



Raise Awareness

Often, customers who still receive printed correspondence are unaware they have an option to turn the paper off. It's important to keep proactively promoting your digital initiatives to keep your customers informed. The best way to raise that awareness is to use all the channels available including direct mail, web banners, social media, email and other touch points. Certainly, this should also include any printed correspondence, as well as, envelope backer ads, statement inserts, and so forth.



Preference Management

It's one thing to make paperless correspondence available and adopt multi-channel options, but it is quite another to manage the preferences of your customers. Make it difficult and both you and your customers suffer. Today's customers want to control the conversation and engage with your company on their own terms. This means using the touch points they prefer – mobile, social, email and even print – or any combination of these. Preference management capabilities are critical to tie all of the pieces together and manage them in a way that makes sense, is effective and keeps customers engaged and activated.



Promote Internally

Every time a customer interacts with your service representatives they should be encouraged to go digital, if they have not already done so. This requires a thoughtful and consistent effort to educate all internal staff, especially customer facing personnel, about why your paperless adoption campaign is important and valuable – to both your customers and your organization. Track your staff's progress and make the drive toward going digital a visible goal. For example, post a graph on progress, praise the results, and host an internal competition. Continue to encourage this internal promotion through rewards and recognitions that keep the paperless effort moving forward.



Sustainability

Many organizations find going paperless is a great way to “be green” and “save green” at the same time. Often, there is positive attention paid to organizations that are “going green”, and that resonates with members. Make your customers part of the experience by promoting the “green” aspects of your efforts and how they can help the paperless cause.



Know Your Demographics

More than 95% of all customer statements, bills, renewals and notices are read every month. Knowing who to target and how to communicate with them in your electronic initiatives gets you one step closer to your goals. Communicate through all accessible channels to understand and overcome hesitations in moving to paperless communications. The more you know the more you grow.