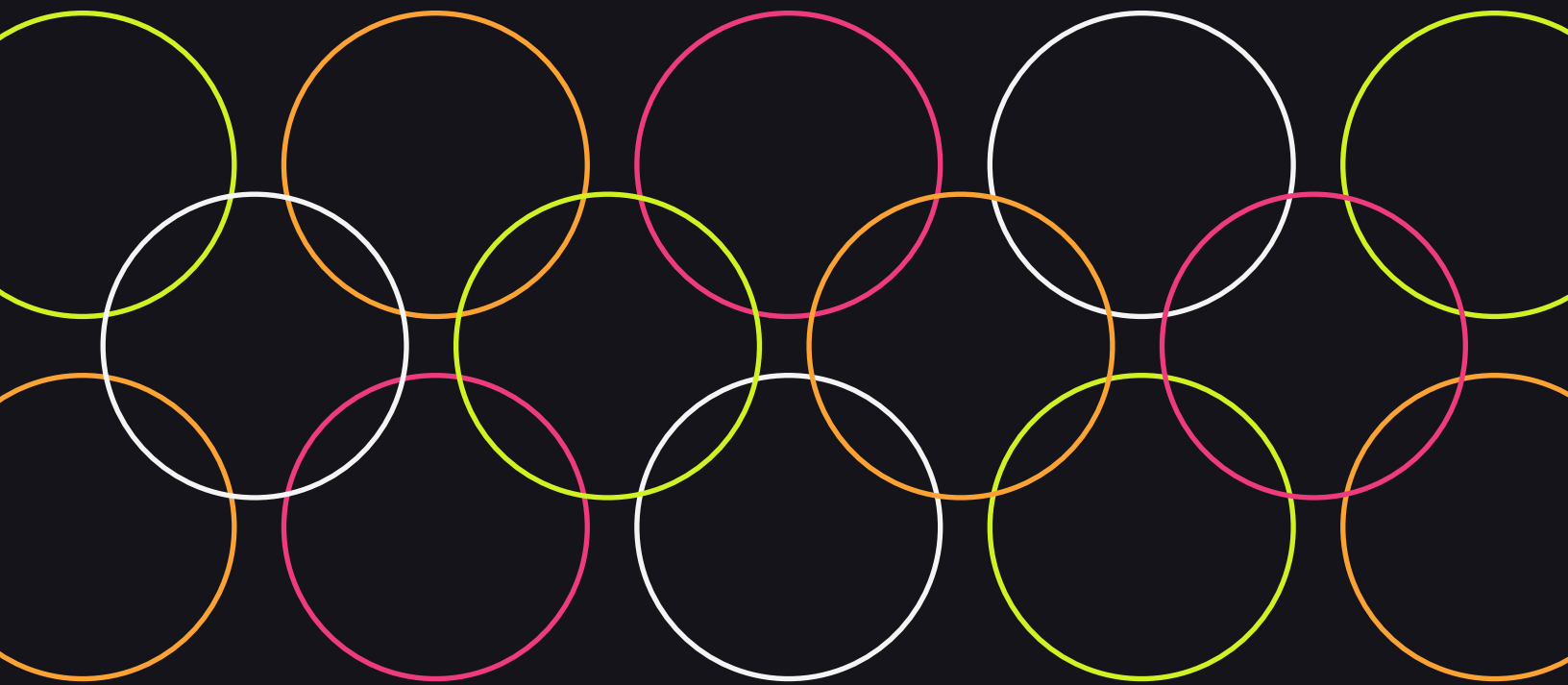




Omnichannel Commerce Guide

Sell everywhere your customers buy



Last updated

08/12/20



As you start to understand how people are being driven to your stores, the next thing you have to do is get an idea of what your target market is and what they look like. [You can] get a greater sense of the person who's using your brand and using your products.... As they touch different channels, you learn more about them and their habits.

Francisco Rivas

Leader of Google's Retail Sales Team

Contents

The omnichannel experience	4
Follow your customers	5
The omnichannel opportunity	6
What is omnichannel retail	6
Mapping the customer journey	8
Where to find your target market	8
Identifying top conversion paths	10
Segment and prioritize	12
Omnichannel success stories	15
Dissecting strategy: Betsey Johnson	15
Omnichannel marketing	18
Start with micro-tailored messaging	18
Don't ask for the sale	19
Enable commerce everywhere	20
Omnichannel marketing success story: Perry Ellis	22
Omnichannel attribution	25
Selecting an attribution model	25
Marketing attribution gaps	28
Attribution snapshot: Rebecca Minkoff	31
Fulfilling omnichannel commerce	32
Full-service third-party logistics solutions	32
Product information management	33
Inventory management system	34
Mobile first	37
Customer service solutions	38
Your omnichannel checklist	40

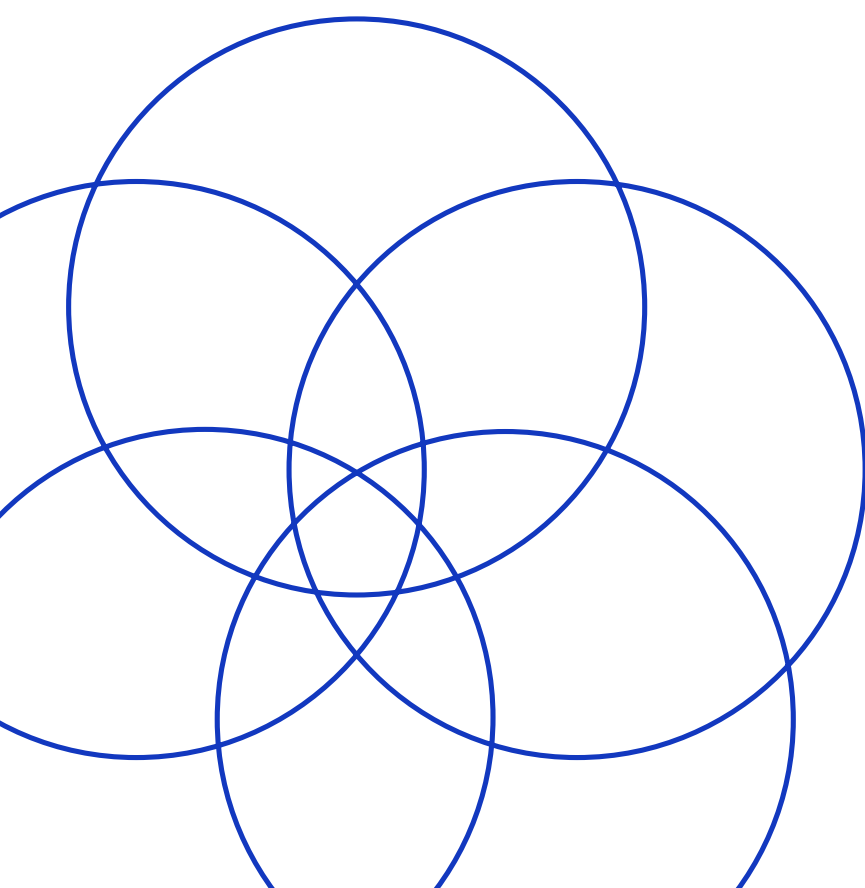
The omnichannel experience

2020 has been pulled forward to the present. The global pandemic accelerated nearly a decade of ecommerce evolution in just a few months. While the world is once again open for business, it's anything but business as usual.

In a matter of days during the height of the pandemic, legacy consumer packaged goods (CPG) companies began selling online for the first time. From direct-to-consumer (DTC) product bundles to curbside pickup, an omnichannel approach allowed these companies to continue selling despite lockdowns, travel bans, and forced retail closures.

The omnichannel experience is more than giving consumers many places to buy: The true power of omnichannel is realized when channels work together in harmony to immerse consumers in a highly personalized experience that also respects the stage of the buying cycle the consumer is in.

The omnichannel experience should feel so seamless that the consumer can skip from one channel to another without realizing their movement down your sales funnel.



Follow your customers

The global pandemic magnified the fact that shoppers prefer omnichannel shopping. They'll use as many as a [dozen channels](#) or devices before making a purchase decision, and those touchpoints involve [hopping between the digital and physical worlds](#). What they expect and need from you varies widely by channel, depending on which stage of the journey they're in.

For example, [Staples](#), a leading office supplies retailer, merged the digital and physical worlds at the height of the pandemic by offering [contactless curbside pickup](#) for most items. If a customer is making an online purchase, they can have their order fulfilled at a nearby location. They'll also see an estimate of when the order will be ready for pickup:

< Continue Shopping Sign In

staples

ACCOUNT | **2. SHIPPING** | 3. PAYMENT | 4. CONFIRMATION

Shipping < Back to cart

How would you like to receive your order?

Deliver to Address: Please select an address

First Name: John | Last Name: B

Address: 5 Fultz

Apartment, suite, etc. (Optional):

City*:

Province* | Postal code*:

Phone*:

Company Name (Optional):

ORDER SUMMARY

SUBTOTAL (1 items)	\$15.99
Shipping	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$15.99

ENTER COUPON CODE

PROCEED TO PAYMENT

Pickup In-Store: Ready in 2 hours

During the pandemic the trend toward “buy online, pick up in store,” also known as curbside pickup, [increased 62%](#). Offering omnichannel shopping and fulfillment can drive sales long after the coronavirus fades as customers become accustomed to picking up orders they once might have paid to ship.

The omnichannel opportunity

Heinz [launched new DTC channels](#) in just days to serve vulnerable populations unable to shop in stores during the pandemic. This is one way the world's most successful brands position themselves against competitors and peers—by putting customers at the center and launching new channels to reach them. This is the heart of omnichannel retail, and it was on full display at the height of the pandemic as retail-only brands began selling online for the first time.

Executing a successful omnichannel strategy requires accurately mapping the customer journey, delivering a personalized experience at each stage, and empowering the consumer to buy from you wherever they are. Historically, the lifetime value of customers who purchase from brands across channels is [30% higher](#) than those who don't.

Omnichannel selling offers some added incentives:

- Brands that sell online through marketplaces, mobile, social media, and in physical locations generate [190% more revenue](#) than merchants who only sell through a single channel
- More than [50% of global ecommerce sales](#) were made via online marketplaces in 2019
- Research reveals omnichannel shoppers [spend 15% more per purchase](#) than those who shop on one channel

Only brands with the right plan and execution reap these rewards, but the majority of brands haven't [prioritized omnichannel commerce](#). Some lack a strategic plan, while others blame a [lack of resources](#).

This is your opportunity: The customer expects a seamless buying experience across channels. Brands that deliver will take market share, earn loyalty, and scale faster.

What is omnichannel retailing?

Omnichannel retailing is a fully integrated approach to commerce that provides shoppers a unified experience across all channels or touchpoints:

- Ecommerce marketplaces
- Mobile websites and apps
- Social marketing, retargeting, and sales
- Messaging and SMS
- Deeply personalized email marketing

Omnichannel retailing doesn't need you to be everywhere—just everywhere your customers are. It involves integrating each touchpoint to offer customers exactly what they need, when they need it, on any device.

Back to Heinz, which launched its first DTC initiative in just seven days. The CPG giant's new channel will continue to run alongside its traditional retail presence in grocery stores. Not only did the company's new digital channel make food available to vulnerable populations and essential workers, but [Heinz to Home](#) also provided customer insights that will drive future innovation across channels.



The channels available for omnichannel retailing have broadened significantly in recent years. For instance, Pinterest now offers [product pins](#), which let consumers buy items without ever leaving the site; [Instagram](#) supports shopping through stories and posts; and [Facebook Messenger](#) has added payments for its U.S. customers. In the future, voice, or [vcommerce](#), is expected to become a major commerce channel.

The lesson is that commerce is rapidly becoming channel agnostic, which gives customers the choice of where to purchase. It becomes the brand's job to optimize their experience on the most relevant sales channels, based on customer shopping behavior.

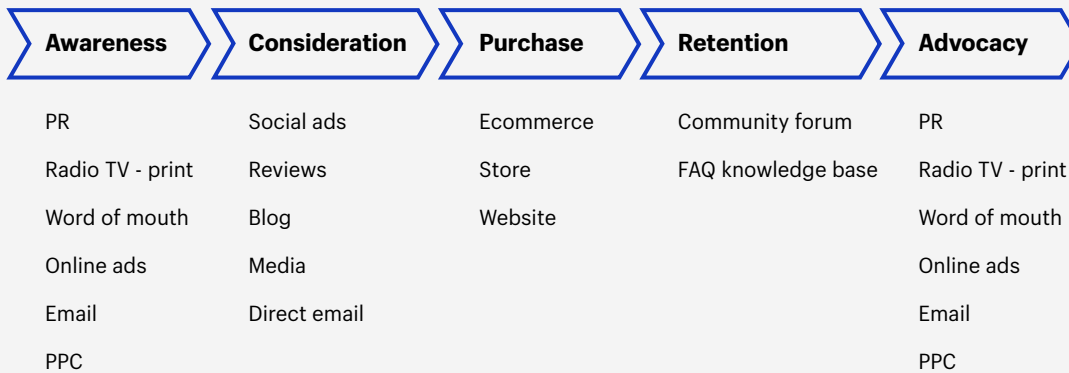
Mapping the customer journey

Identifying how customers find out about your brand, consider it in their purchase decision, choose to buy, and ultimately become repeat customers is the foundation for a strong omnichannel strategy. Here we outline the tools necessary to map the customer lifecycle, which will position you to better target consumers at each stage of the cycle.

Where to find your target market

Up to [73% of shoppers](#) use multiple channels, taking an increasingly [non-linear path to purchase](#). Whether it's [offline to online](#), vice versa, or a mix of the two, [channel hopping](#) is now the new norm.

Here's how customer behavior looks in the context of a traditional marketing funnel:



Information sourced from GetCRM

Notice that the purchase decision is influenced long before a shopper becomes a customer, so it's crucial to be present in pre-purchase channels like online ads and consumer review sites.

As you start to understand how customers are being driven to your store, whether that be online or in store, you can use these insights to get an idea of who your target market is and what they are like,” says Francisco Rivas, Google’s Head of Industry, Retail.



Your traditional advertising tactics are an assumption. Now that digital runs across more and more of a customer’s omnichannel journey, you can use tools such as Google Analytics to get a greater sense of your customer and how they behave. As they touch different channels, you learn more about them and their habits. These insights will allow you to better attract, connect, and convert customers in the future. Take what you know about your customers and how they are interacting with your brand and products, and turn that into action.

Francisco Rivas

Leader of Google's Retail Sales Team

Building brand awareness, educating consumers so they consider your brand, and persuading consumers to purchase and become long-term customers are stages of the customer funnel with different goals. Each stage calls for specific messaging on each channel.

A sample customer journey might look like this:

1. Shoppers discover new products through social and display ads
2. They start with generic product, category, or local searches to compare options
3. When they've narrowed their list, they do brand-related searches and seek reviews or referrals from friends
4. They sign up for emails from the brand they're evaluating to access discounts and promotions
5. Finally, they make their purchase directly through an ecommerce site, app, or retail store

The majority of the buying decision happens before a consumer lands on your site or discovers your brand, and they will interact with multiple touchpoints. It's the "[zero moment of truth](#)," a reference to the timeframe when someone researches a product before deciding to buy.

Identifying top conversion paths

Identifying where the acquired customers come from prior to landing on your site is crucial. Use the "Top Conversion Paths" report in Google Analytics to map your customer's pre-purchase journey. The report shows each [unique conversion path](#), or the touchpoints within the buyer's journey, that led to the conversion.

MCF Channel Grouping Path	Conversions	Conversion Value
1. Organic Search → Direct	189,895 (6.34%)	\$45,365.00
2. Social (Facebook) × 2	148,341 (4.96%)	\$33,195.00
3. Direct × 3	73,710 (2.46%)	\$11,700.00
4. Paid Search → Organic Search	70,170 (2.34%)	\$15,940.00
5. Paid Social (Instagram) × 2	62,364 (2.08%)	\$35,680.00
6. Organic Search → Direct × 2	60,749 (2.03%)	\$14,500.00
7. Paid Social (Facebook) → Referral	59,100 (1.97%)	\$12,345.00
8. Organic Search → Referral	52,679 (1.76%)	\$15,475.00
9. Direct × 4	47,133 (1.57%)	\$5,400.00
10. Direct → Organic Search	45,586 (1.52%)	\$8,395.00

You can see how channels interact along your conversion paths. This report illustrates the [sequences of channel interactions](#) that led to conversions, as well as the number of conversions from each path and the value of those conversions.

Example

A user had the following path: Channel A -> B -> C [Conversion 1] -> D -> E [Conversion 2].

The *Top Conversion Paths* report would show the full path prior to each conversion:

- ABC (Conversion 1)
- ABCDE (Conversion 2)

Image from [Google](#)

Look through your list of paths for repeated patterns that might help you market more effectively across channels.

Segment and prioritize

Identify the conversion paths that produce the most valuable customers, and focus on the profitable paths to increase the quality of your customer base. You can go even deeper by segmenting customers from your most profitable paths based on their lifetime value (CLV).

Here's how. Create buyer segments based on the number of purchases existing customers have made, and match them to the appropriate customer lifecycle stage. Naturally, the CLV increases with the number of purchases made. For instance, buyer segments might include new signups (pre-purchase), one timers (1x purchase), repeats (2x), and loyals (+3x).

Match these segments with one of three stages in the customer lifecycle: active, at risk, or churned. [Segments](#), a customer segmentation and analytics platform, creates a lifecycle grid illustrating where each buyer segment is in the lifecycle:

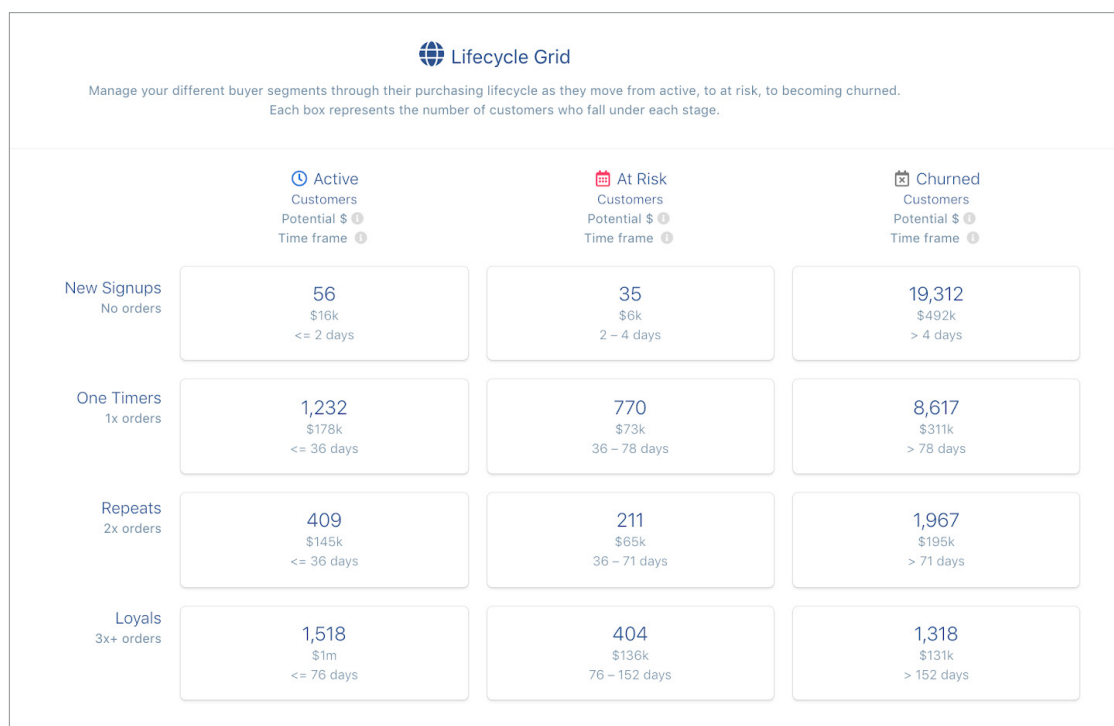


Image from [Segments](#)

When a segment moves from left to right—from active, to at risk, to churned—conversion rate risk increases because movement across the grid indicates more time passing since a buyer segment's last purchase. According to Segments founder and CEO John Chao, you can quantify the conversion rate risk by understanding the conversion rate at each stage:

- Active (50% of conversions happen here)
- At risk (30–35% of conversions)
- Churned (10% of conversions)

Your conversion rates by lifecycle stage might differ. The conversion rates above are based on purchase timing charts developed for a variety of brands on Shopify. Mapping your own customer journey can yield purchase timing charts by segment like this:

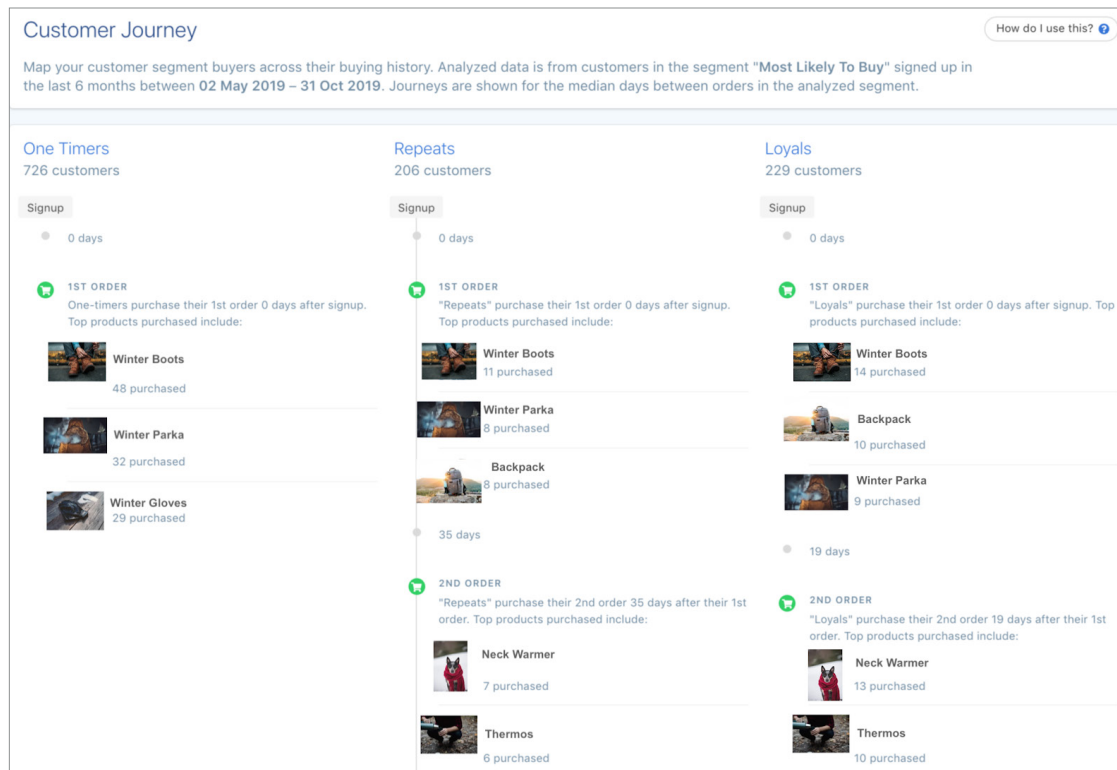


Image from [Segments](#)

Lifecycle grids allow you to prioritize channels and the part of the funnel that delivers the greatest return on investment (ROI) for your brand. You might find one channel (e.g. email) is better at preventing loyal customers from churning. Or that remarketing on social channels accelerates the time to a customer's third purchase. Since the CLV profiles of each segment differ, you can personalize your marketing approach and prioritize efforts by taking into account context and urgency.

These objectives are easier to achieve for Shopify Plus brands, which can add the [Attribution Connector](#) to more easily map the customer journey. It provides graphs, charts, and analysis similar to Google Analytics, and pulls in cost data from your advertising channels, then compares that cost with individual customer activity.

URL PARAMS	VISITORS	CONVERSIONS	RATE
google	7609	76.17	1.00%
adroll	6690	69.66	1.04%
facebook	4647	48.22	1.04%
bing	3405	40.82	1.20%
perfectaudience	3452	32.13	0.93%

For more granularity, drill down to the in-depth customer view to see the exact path each individual customer took before buying. This shows you how much each customer is worth. And Attribution Connector will even show you the multiple devices, phones, and apps a customer used throughout their journey.

Mike Bolton

IDENTIFIER: 9260
 REVENUE: \$938.12
 PHONE: 415-905-2887

VISITS EVENTS
2 31

JANUARY 6, 2015 ↓

VIEWED: /?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=... 2:34 PM
 REFERRER: <https://www.facebook.com/>

VIEWED: /11223344/checkouts/1234/thank_you 2:36 PM
 REFERRER: <https://checkout.shopify.com/11223344/c...>

ORDER COMPLETED 2:36 PM
 REVENUE: \$211.68

Understanding this data will help you identify the most important touchpoints for your business.

Omnichannel success stories

Betsey Johnson

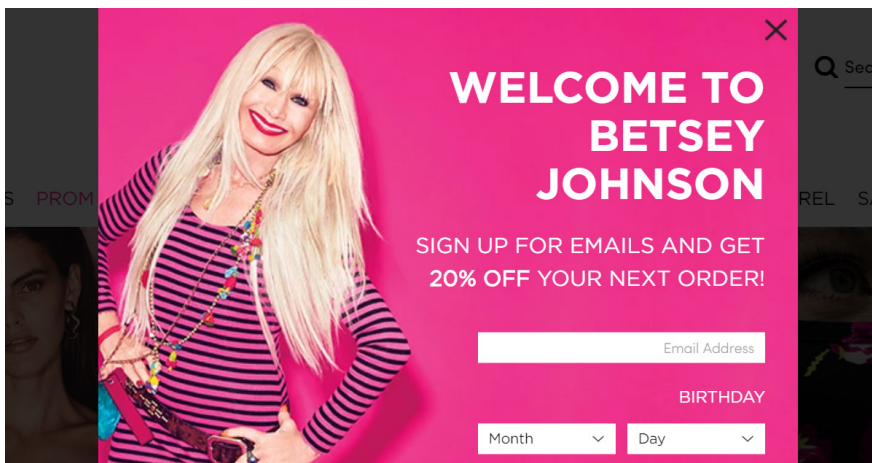
[Betsey Johnson](#), the self-proclaimed over-the-top New York fashion designer, epitomizes an immersive omnichannel experience. The brand bridges the digital and physical worlds and allows customers to buy wherever they are.

Johnson's 1.2 million fans on Facebook and Instagram are treated to high-quality lifestyle and product photography like this:

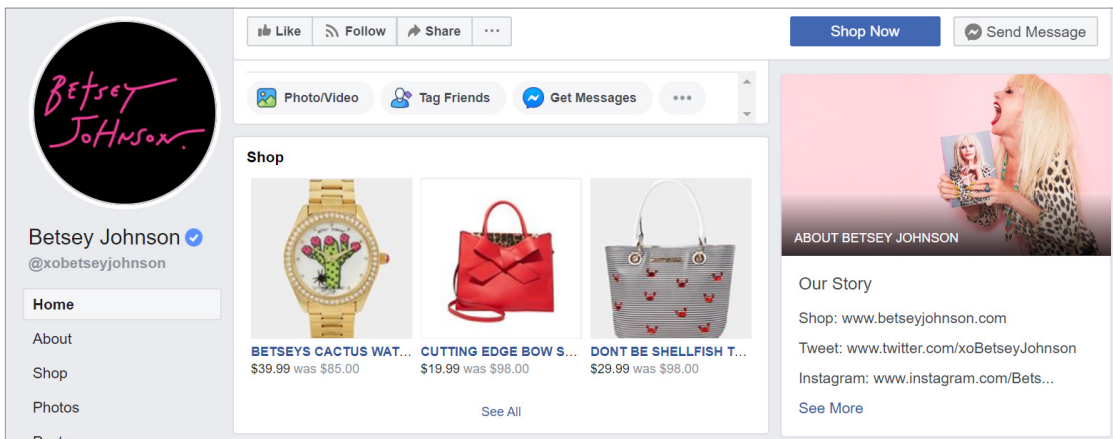


Omnichannel success stories

From social channels, interested shoppers can click through to visit the company's online store, which immediately offers incentives to opt in to email marketing:



Opting in gives permission to receive marketing emails and enables purchases across channels. For example, consumers can purchase via Facebook:



Or marketing messages can drive traffic to Johnson's online store to shop new arrivals:



Betsey Johnson is one of a family of brands owned by shoe and fashion accessory company [Steve Madden](#), which also sells through retail stores. Customers can be targeted across multiple channels to experience Betsey Johnson products in person at retailers like [Macy's](#), which offers curbside pickup for online orders:



To drive engagement across channels and increase conversions, Johnson invites customers to show off with user-generated content (UGC):



The UGC, including reviews, is used by [84% of consumers](#) to make purchasing decisions and can be found on its online store, Facebook, and Instagram. After engaging with UGC, the customer can make a purchase decision natively on each of those channels.

Omnichannel marketing

The omnichannel marketer understands that the aim of one campaign should blend smoothly into the next. Each touchpoint works together to deliver a cohesive, tailored experience:

- Abandoned carts lead to email coupon codes
- Retargeting ads remind prospects of those discounts
- Completed orders result in cross-sells and even financing options for other products

Start with micro-tailored messaging

Treating customers differently is the hallmark of omnichannel marketing. For new visitors, the omnichannel marketer can start by subtly acknowledging where the visitor came from. The strategy here is to discern customer intent from their traffic source.

For instance, if a new user came from Pinterest, you can acknowledge this with a special coupon for Pinterest visitors:

THANKS FOR COMING OVER FROM PINTEREST!

01 Days 10 Hours 21 Minutes 09 Seconds

\$175 OFFER

\$100 OFF THE MATTRESS + A FREE PILLOW* (\$75 VALUE)

USE PIN175

*Offer includes a free standard pillow with mattress purchase

made in the USA

It's a welcome and relevant personal touch that builds on the micro-conversion the visitor has already taken—clicking on your link from Pinterest—and moves them toward the macro-conversion of becoming a buyer.

Don't ask for the sale

At least not immediately. Instead, ask new visitors for their email by offering an irresistible incentive. Experiment with overlays that are triggered when a new visitor comes to your site. Consider gamifying the overlay and making your offer valuable to new users:

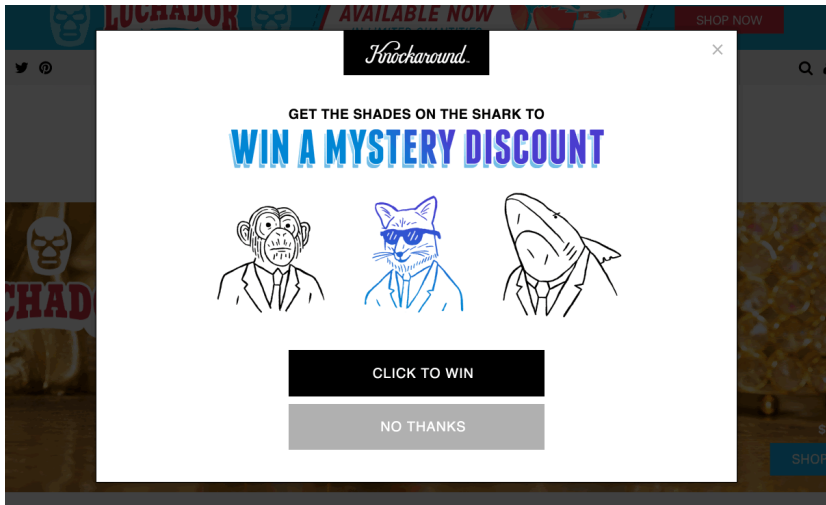
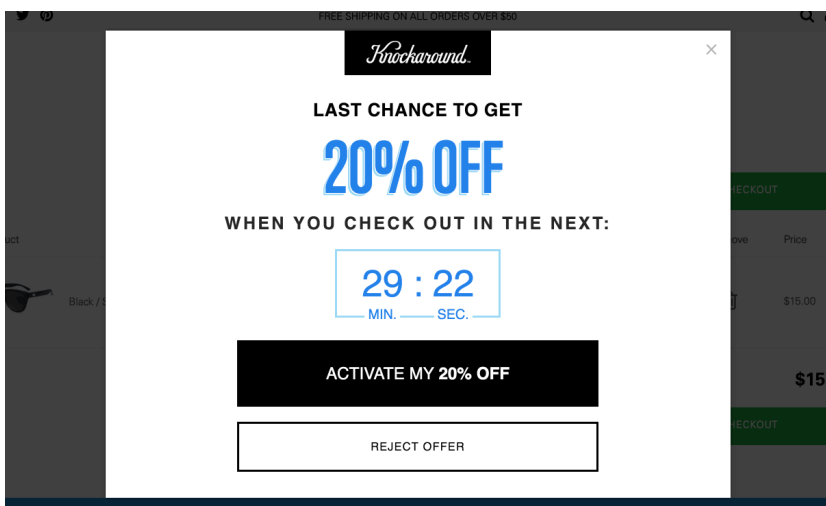


Image from [Knockaround](#)

Not only does collecting emails reduce the amount of anonymous traffic your site receives, it positions you better to send future email communications. Email also opens a new marketing channel that often [converts better](#), reduces customer acquisition costs (CAC), and yields a better ROI.

Remember, we're uniquely targeting people at different stages of the funnel. Suppose the new visitor declines your initial invitation to provide their email but stays on your site and adds an item to their cart. If that visitor looks like they're ready to bounce without completing the checkout process, you can increase the incentive and add urgency with a countdown clock:



Getting email addresses should be one of the omnichannel marketer's top conversion goals because email can be a great place to test and better understand someone's complete user journey across your website.

Understand that this strategy is used to inform the marketing attribution work outlined later in this guide. The attribution gap plugs we'll discuss will help identify consumers across channels. Asking for email addresses serves two purposes:

- It helps identify anonymous users not identified by other means
- For previously identified users, email opens a new lower cost marketing channel

Enable commerce everywhere

In an omnichannel environment, the world is truly [your storefront](#) — a world of screens, devices, and touchpoints your target market is using. The omnichannel marketer sees each touchpoint as a potential point of sale. Besides delivering the right message at the right time, the omnichannel marketer advocates internally to make each touchpoint shoppable.

With Shopify, [you can extend your storefront across countless channels](#), including:

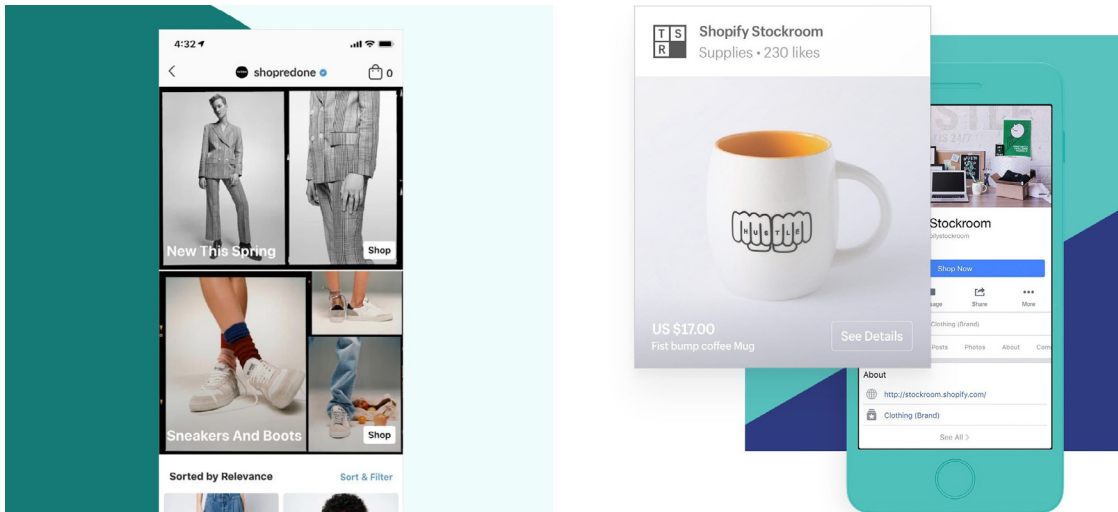
- **Social channels:** Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest
- **Messaging channels:** Messenger, Shopify chat, and Apple Business Chat
- **Marketplaces:** Amazon, eBay, Rakuten Ichiba, and Walmart
- **Offline:** Retail locations

And you can [connect your Shopify store](#) to marketing [apps](#) like:

- **Free/paid advertising:** Google Shopping, Microsoft advertising, Snapchat ads, and more
- **Email marketing:** Klaviyo, Seguno, Omnisend, and Shopify Email

If someone adds a product to their cart from your website, it needs to be in their mobile app's cart too. If they land on Facebook, they need to be shown suggested products based on that previous product viewing.

With Shopify, you can [integrate your store directly into Facebook](#) and Instagram, allowing fans and followers to check out natively. Easily add and customize product collections in your Shopify admin to showcase on your Facebook Shops for free. Plus, you can customize the look of your Facebook Shops storefronts to tell your brand's story and connect with your audience.



You can use a similar strategy on Pinterest with [buyable pins](#), giving you another touchpoint that connects back to your online store. Similarly, Facebook recently added a [click to Messenger](#) feature within Instagram stories, “so businesses can grab some of the attention in stories and then continue the conversation.” If you use pop-up stores or have a retail location, you can market and sell online to offline with a robust point-of-sale [\(POS\) system](#).

With these deep, symbiotic connections between channels, you could run promotion campaigns within multiple social media channels, drive traffic to your site, and have users explore how others use your product through Pinterest then check out directly from there.

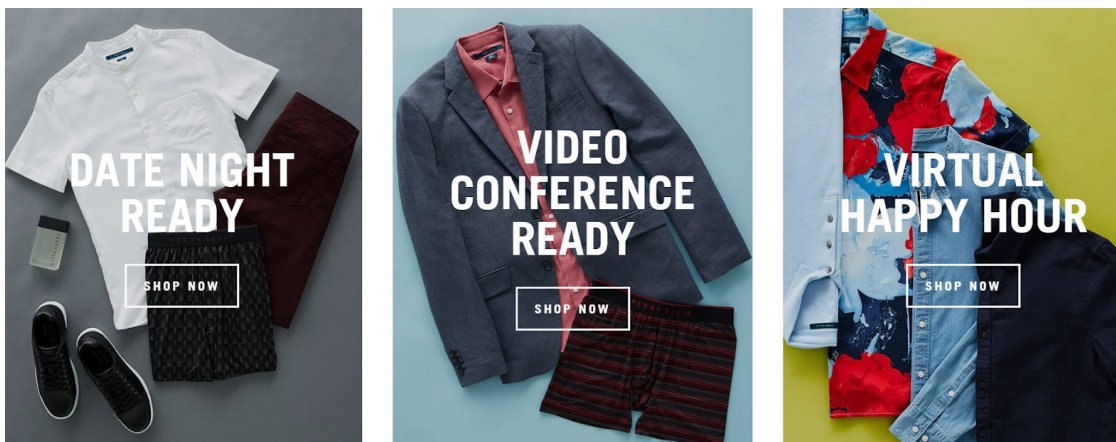
Pattern your omnichannel strategy after Disney, which offers an immersive customer experience across its mobile app, website, and theme parks.

Omnichannel marketing success story: Perry Ellis

Founded in 1978, iconic designer fashion brand [Perry Ellis](#) provides customers with seamless experiences regardless of where they shop or which device they use. Even though the brand is in its fifth decade, Perry Ellis is a glowing example of what's possible when brands use technology to connect the online and offline worlds.

To bolster its omnichannel approach, Perry Ellis recently launched its [online DTC initiative](#). It's part of a broader, holistic approach that merges the digital and physical worlds. Specifically, Perry Ellis uses digital channels to promote its branded retail outlets, third-party retail partners, and vice versa.

The brand's online DTC storefront illustrates the potential for real-time merchandising and marketing opportunities in a post-COVID-19 world. Keying off the work-from-home trend, Perry Ellis flexed its online storefront to offer clothing designed for virtual environments. Notice the [video conference clothing collections](#) that include suit coats, collared shirts, and stylish shorts that won't be seen on video:



It's a digital and mobile-first mindset that lays a foundation for engagement and commerce across channels. To promote loyalty, the [Perry's Perks](#) rewards program offers members exclusive early access to new arrivals and sales and allows them to earn points that are redeemable for discounts on future purchases.

These purchases can happen anywhere. While online customers can check out with free shipping, the DTC offering is crucial in [establishing a relationship](#) with the customer that can drive sales in retail locations.

The company recently launched its [Life Ready](#) app, which helps men put together outfits through interactive in-store touchscreens. Piloted at Dillard's, the app is designed to enhance the in-store experience by building outfits around occasions like date nights or weddings. Instead of a single piece, shoppers using the app often purchase an entire outfit, increasing the average order value (AOV).

In a recent three-month period, Perry Ellis observed a [10–12% sales lift](#) through its in-store touchscreen experience versus stores without touchscreens.



Image from [elo](#)

The app is also yielding valuable data. It's notoriously difficult for wholesalers to get customer insights from retail partners. But because the app is integrated with Google Analytics, it reveals the most popular occasions that customers struggle to dress for, the most commonly viewed pieces, and purchases by geography.

This insight can help Perry Ellis feature the right products and outfits in window displays at implied retail locations:

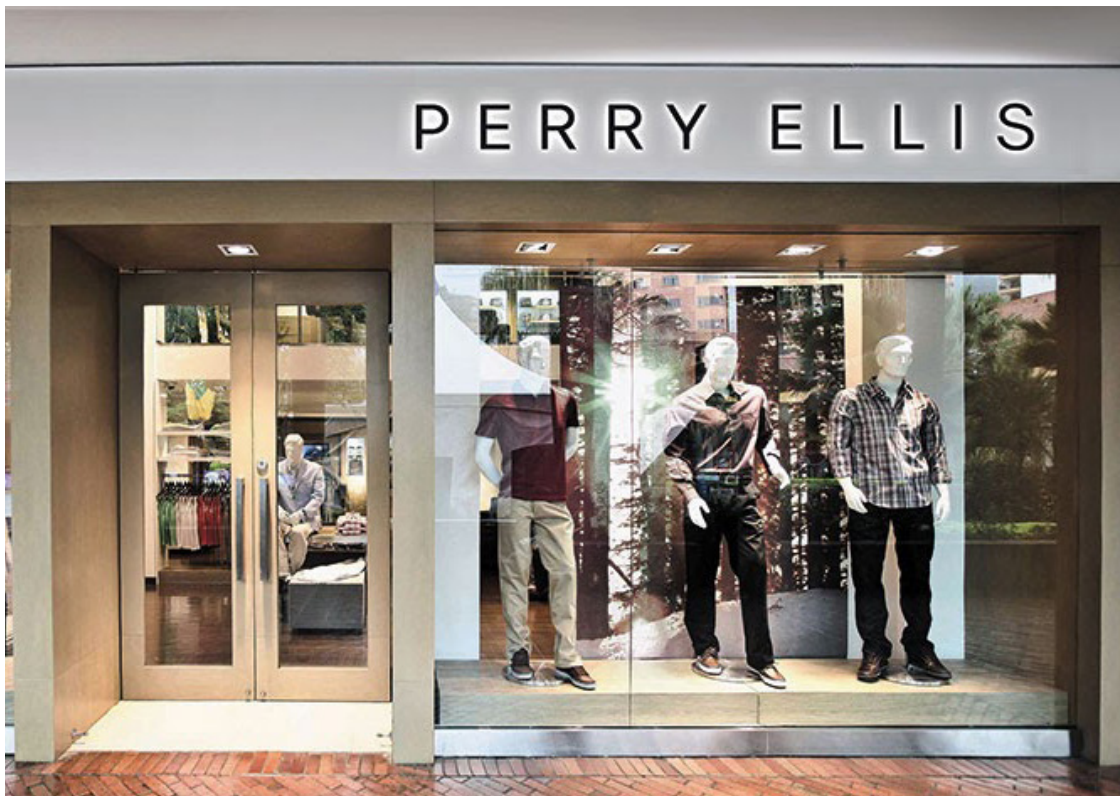


Image from [Perry Ellis](#)

It can also help Perry Ellis better personalize its digital marketing efforts.

For example, a shopper who doesn't purchase an outfit he examined on a touchscreen might receive an email encouraging him to purchase online or add the outfit to their wishlist for friends and family and friends to view. Perry Ellis expects to scale the Life Ready app and touchscreens to other retail partners and to incorporate additional SKUS.

Perry Ellis is well positioned to use the data it generates in retail stores to cross-pollinate its digital channels and further improve its email marketing. [Triggered emails](#) are sent to different customer segments based on browsing history, abandoned carts, and artificial intelligence (AI) — generated cross-sell recommendations. These emails can steer consumers to online and offline channels like the company's branded retail stores.

Omnichannel attribution

Succeeding in omnichannel commerce means giving credit where credit is due. Identifying the influence particular channels have on a sale in another channel is crucial in determining the right marketing mix and budgeting strategy. Doing this means selecting the right attribution model for your business.

Selecting an attribution model

An attribution model is the [rule, or set of rules](#), that determines how credit for sales and conversions is assigned to touchpoints in conversion paths.

Your store's Google Analytics defaults to what is called last-click attribution, meaning the model gives 100% credit for a sale to the last channel taken by the visitor before the conversion. This means that any direct traffic is ignored and [credit is given](#) only to the other acquisition channels like pay per click, referrals, organic search, or paid search.

But last-click attribution is just one of the models available to you.

Selecting the right model is vital for determining the relative value of the marketing channels based on conversions and ROI. The model you select greatly determines the outcome of the analysis and the value of each channel.

Eight attribution models

Here are eight attribution models, plus an example so you can see how different models give credit differently. This helps you choose the best model for your business.

Last interaction

The last interaction model gives full attribution credit to the visitor's last interaction before conversion. All other activities of the visitor on your website are dismissed.

Last non-direct click

This is the default model of Google Analytics. It gives full attribution credit to the channel that precedes conversion unless that channel is direct. The general idea is to eliminate the unknowable “direct” from the equation.

Last Google Ads click

Full conversion credit goes to the visitor’s last Google Ads click. This model is used to estimate the efficiency of individual ad campaigns and can be easily set up.

First click

First click gives full attribution credit to the first click interaction. This model’s intention is to reveal channels that help establish brand awareness.

Linear

The linear interaction model gives equal credit to each channel. This model is not that useful because it gives all channels the same amount of credit, regardless of their actual contribution.

Time decay

The time decay model gives most credit to the most recent interaction channel, but still allows for earlier click to play a role. This is one of the most realistic default models.

Position based

The position-based model gives interaction credit according to a channel’s position in the funnel. It is possible to customize the amount of credit given to each position.

Custom

A custom model can be adjusted manually according to the needs of the analyst. It’s the best way to come up with a realistic model for conversion attribution, but requires extensive knowledge of the website’s business model.

Attribution modeling example

A customer finds your site by clicking one of your Google Ads ads. She returns one week later by clicking over from a social network. That same day, she comes back a third time via one of your email campaigns, and a few hours later, she returns again directly and makes a purchase.



In the **Last Interaction** attribution model, the last touchpoint—in this case, the *Direct channel*—would receive 100% of the credit for the sale.



In the **Last Non-Direct Click** attribution model, all direct traffic is ignored, and 100% of the credit for the sale goes to the last channel that the customer clicked through from before converting—in this case, the *Email channel*.



In the **Last Google Ads Click** attribution model, the last Google Ads click—in this case, the first and only click to the *Paid Search* channel—would receive 100% of the credit for the sale.



In the **First Interaction** attribution model, the first touchpoint—in this case, the *Paid Search* channel—would receive 100% of the credit for the sale.



In the **Linear** attribution model, each touchpoint in the conversion path—in this case the *Paid Search*, *Social Network*, *Email*, and *Direct* channels—would share equal credit (25% each) for the sale.



In the **Time Decay** attribution model, the touchpoints closest in time to the sale or conversion get most of the credit. In this particular sale, the *Direct* and *Email* channels would receive the most credit because the customer interacted with them within a few hours of conversion. The *Social Network* channel would receive less credit than either the *Direct* or *Email* channels. Since the *Paid Search* interaction occurred one week earlier, this channel would receive significantly less credit.



In the **Position Based** attribution model, 40% credit is assigned to each the first and last interaction, and the remaining 20% credit is distributed evenly to the middle interactions. In this example, the *Paid Search* and *Direct* channels would each receive 40% credit, while the *Social Network* and *Email* channels would each receive 10% credit.

Image from [Google](#)

The right model for your brand will largely depend on your business model.

Best first option

The time-decay model, according to [industry practitioners](#), is your best first choice. This model best replicates how traffic converts for a broad number of sites. It offers the ability to adjust the half life of the decay, meaning you can adapt the model to your brand's business cycle.

Most sophisticated option

The custom model offers more precise attribution. It allows you to define your own [proportion of attributions](#) to each step in the conversion path. While this model has the potential to offer superior results, it requires detailed knowledge of your brand's processes and marketing strategy to accurately define conversion path attributions.

Marketing attribution gaps

The inherent shortcoming in these models and analytics tools is identifying the conversion path for direct traffic. Direct visitors leave very little information about how they got to your website or how they found it. Direct visitors show up in two ways:

1. **Online** when someone clicks a link in a desktop app, secure website, document (.pdf, .docx, etc.), or direct messaging app (Skype, Viber, etc.)
2. **Offline** when someone types the URL of your website in their browser as the result of traditional advertising like television, print, or non-linked promotions like Instagram

The common denominator is sourcelessness. Direct visitors leave no information about how they got to your website or how they found it. To measure and optimize the efficiency of your marketing channels, you have to fill in those gaps.

Plug these gaps by enabling Google Analytics to show the channel that brought this traffic:

Tracking online directs

Urchin Tracking Module (UTM) parameters were devised to supplement the default mechanism used by Google Analytics.

UTM parameters work by creating a unique “tag” you can add to any URL that contains tracking information about the channel, like source, medium, name, and content. Creating a UTM parameter—either by using Google’s own [campaign URL builder](#) or another provider—is a must for any channel that will not be recognized by the default Google Analytics setting.

The screenshot shows the Google Analytics Campaign URL Builder interface. At the top, it says "Google Analytics | Demos & Tools". The main heading is "Campaign URL Builder". Below this, a paragraph explains that the tool allows adding campaign parameters to URLs for tracking Custom Campaigns in Google Analytics. A section titled "Enter the website URL and campaign information" contains a form with the following fields:

- * Website URL**: A text input field with a tooltip that says "The full website URL (e.g. `https://www.example.com`)".
- * Campaign Source**: A text input field with a tooltip that says "The referrer: (e.g. `google`, `newsletter`)".
- * Campaign Medium**: A text input field with a tooltip that says "Marketing medium: (e.g. `cpc`, `banner`, `email`)".
- * Campaign Name**: A text input field with a tooltip that says "Product, promo code, or slogan (e.g. `spring_sale`)".
- Campaign Term**: A text input field with a tooltip that says "Identify the paid keywords".
- Campaign Content**: A text input field with a tooltip that says "Use to differentiate ads".

This method is most commonly used to identify and track email campaigns because many visitors will open their email from a client, which—if it lacks an identifying parameter—will be classified as direct.

But UTM parameters aren't limited to email. They can be used to identify and track any digital source from social campaigns, messaging apps, PDFs, offsite branded content, and even your own internal linking.

Of course, if all your marketing efforts were confined to the online space, you'd have no problem tracking, attributing, and analyzing results.

Tracking offline directs

Offline traffic visiting your site poses some challenges. You often don't know who these offline visitors are, and UTMs can't track where they've come from. There are no digital footprints indicating which call to action or offsite display ad they clicked.

But it is possible to coax offline traffic into leaving a breadcrumb trail. Here are five ways to identify offline traffic to plug attribution gaps:

1. Provide a specific link in commercial content

For every offline campaign, create and promote a specific landing page. This isn't just smart from a marketing standpoint so that the offline campaign leads directly to relevant onsite content; it also lets you track the performance of offline campaigns. For longer URLs, use QR codes so prospects won't have to manually type them in. You can create QR codes using the [Shopify QR generator](#).

2. Provide an easily identifiable and trackable incentive

Providing a coupon code to prospects in print ads or [influencer marketing campaigns](#) lets you track and attribute each visit to that specific channel. Just be sure those codes are unique to each ad.

3. Use pre-purchase or post-purchase surveys

Attributing acquisitions and conversions is also possible (though less accurate) by using [surveys](#). With this data, you can estimate through representative samples how many customers discovered you from offline channels. You can do this with apps like [Enquire](#), [Grapevine](#) or [ReConvert](#).

4. Correlate by time or campaign duration

By correlating traffic with the times an ad is aired—and isolating that influx from the regular direct traffic your website receives—you can quickly attribute spikes and conversions.

5. In-store displays

Numerous brands are now adopting an [omnichannel approach to retail](#). This includes in-store features like tablets located near cash registers where customers can fill out a survey, check catalogs, and explore inventory. All those actions can be tracked and assigned appropriate parameters.

Attribution snapshot: Rebecca Minkoff

Leading fashion brand [Rebecca Minkoff](#) has developed “connected stores” to make the online-to-offline commerce experience seamless. Using data-driven touchpoints like smart fitting rooms, customers can:

- Try clothes on in store
- Use their smartphones to add items to their virtual cart
- Find sizes and colors not available in stores
- Purchase through physical and digital channels



Omnichannel attribution

One way the brand connects customer identities offline and online is by inviting smart store shoppers to sign up for text message alerts, which links their phone number to their online profile (usually enabled by email). The brand also uses its POS solution to link smart store customers with online identities, which means the brand can track these users back to its retail stores.

The data collected within its smart stores is connected to additional customer devices and touchpoints, like the website. This new technology helped Minkoff increase sales by [six to seven times](#) within the first five months of launching.

Fulfilling omnichannel commerce

Omnichannel commerce means you're managing inventory not only from online and retail stores, but also from social channels. This poses new challenges for managing inventory and fulfillment—for which you need the right tech stack. Centralizing your back-end operations can prevent margin erosion, inventory shortages, and costly logistics issues.

Full-service third-party logistics solutions

Full-service third-party logistics (3PLs) help ecommerce brands become more efficient during and after crises. The COVID-19 crisis has made clear the importance of having real-time, multi-location [inventory visibility](#). Knowing how much stock you have, and where, is a key component of improving operational efficiency, as well as shipping inventory from the location closest to the customer to cut shipping costs.

Full-service providers like the [Shopify Fulfillment Network](#) give brands an end-to-end solution that gets orders to customers easily and quickly. With a vast network of strategically located fulfillment centers nationwide, full-service 3PLs ensure you have the right merchandise at the right location, so orders ship faster and cheaper.

Full-service 3PLs like Shopify Fulfillment Network offer:

- **Inventory intelligence:** Shopify recommends where inventory should be stored to be close to customers.
- **Brand the fulfillment experience:** Decide how fast orders are delivered and stand out with marketing inserts. Packaging is included with the pick rate, or you can supply your own branded packaging.
- **Easy integration:** No technical integration required. Shopify will help set up the Shopify Fulfillment app for you. Most 3PLs require extensive integrations and ongoing maintenance.
- **Same-day fulfillment:** Orders received by [4pm EST](#) are shipped the same day.

With full-service 3PLs like Shopify Fulfillment Network, world-class fulfillment that was once reserved for only the largest and richest companies in the world is now accessible and affordable for every high-volume brand.

Product information management

Product information management (PIM) systems manage your master catalog of products. A PIM takes product data from every location and centralizes it in one place.

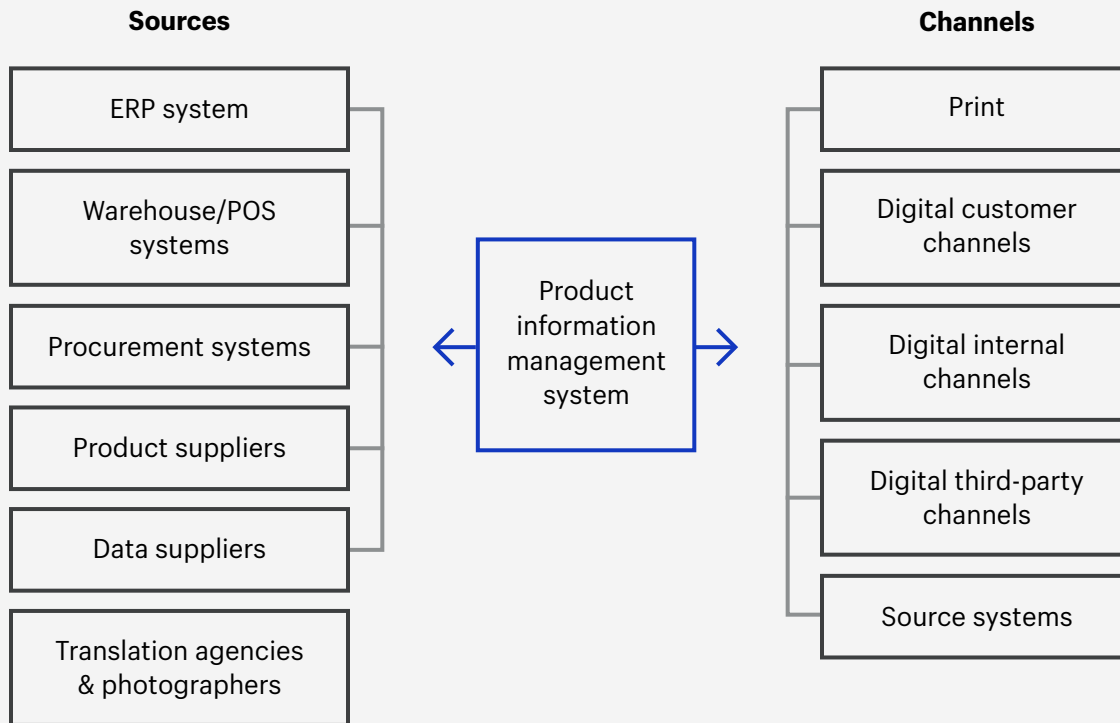


Image from [Abraham Jorji](#)

From the PIM's interface, you can edit and manage all your product information at once: item numbers, references, catalogs, SKU data, images and videos, translations, localizations, and documentation.

Many companies consider a PIM when they have thousands of products to manage, but even stores with a limited number of products might invest in a PIM system.

Despite a seemingly limited product count, they might have a high set of variables and customizations. PIMs can save you time and money by:

- Reducing manual data entry
- Reducing labor costs and better allocating talent
- Reducing product returns through improved fulfillment

A PIM can also help you adjust your strategy in real time. If a competitor slashes prices and you believe it's necessary to match, you can do so instantly across channels with the click of a button.

Inventory management system

Rather than managing inventory with a spreadsheet, an inventory management system (IMS) equips you to manage inventory with real-time updating and inventory counts. This helps you have the right inventory in the right place at the right time, which is crucial to executing your strategy across channels.

Many IMSs manage orders as well. If yours doesn't, consider integrating an IMS with an [order management system](#).



Image from [Shopify Plus](#)

IMs also allow you to consolidate your sales channels, inventory locations, and currencies so you can manage every product, order, and customer in one place, or have a [single source of truth](#) to help you make smarter decisions. Here are just some of the benefits:

- Offer real-time visibility into inventory counts and locations
- Synchronize inventory counts across multiple locations
- Automatically update inventory counts with every sale
- Reduce costly out of stocks, dead stock, and preventable returns
- Track your [inventory turnover ratio](#) to assess the health of your business
- Create rule-based order routing to fulfill from the warehouse closest to the consumer
- Accurately forecast demand and replenish inventory more efficiently

Your IMS must integrate with your POS system to optimize your online-to-offline strategy. It must also integrate seamlessly with your warehouse management system or your fulfillment and logistics partners. Integrated tech stacks can help you become operationally efficient across channels and deliver a world-class customer experience.

“For ecommerce businesses, the products sold represent a crucial investment alongside operating cash and employees,” says Nicholas Daniel-Richards, Founder of Shopify Plus Certified App [ShipHero](#). “Not having a fundamental understanding of how much inventory you have, how much you’ve sold, and what’s selling and not selling can undermine the business’s ability to operate and grow.”

Your inventory is affected by many processes, should be: people, and supply chains, so your IMS is only as good as the data that goes in and out.

Every IMS should have:

- 1. Accurate inventory counts:** For “on hand” (what’s physically present), allocated (what’s been sold and not shipped yet), available (what’s available for sale), on order (how many are on order and have yet to be received into your warehouse)
- 2. Immediate cross-channel syncing:** If you sell a product on your Shopify store, the new inventory quantity you have available should be reflected across every sales channel connected to your system
- 3. Low-stock notifications:** Know when products have reached a replenishment threshold so you can order more
- 4. Location management:** Products need to be organized for fast put-away, fast picking, and organized cycle counting

5. **Barcoding:** With every location and product being verified with a barcode, mispicks are typically reduced to 0.5% of all products picked for orders
6. **Cycle counting:** A sampling technique that lets you see how accurately your inventory records match up with what you actually have in stock on the shelves, without having to do an entire stocktake
7. **Purchase order:** Create orders and receive quantities
8. **Reporting:** Simple reports such as current inventory levels and value, cost of goods, stale inventory implied, and inventory change logs

What can fail, even with an IMS

- Nobody is perfect, and there's a lot of pressure on warehouse employees to move fast and get orders out the door. Manually updating inventory numbers in spreadsheets or standalone systems will be inaccurate.
- Manual processes will not reflect reasons why inventory changed, at least not accurately. When you're trying to figure out what happened, you will have little to go on.
- Lack of ongoing verification. Even the most sophisticated IMS will not 100% accurately depict inventory. Products can be misplaced, damaged, or even stolen, which is why warehouses need to count inventory regularly. Your IMS should have a cycle count feature, and you should be checking inventory counts per SKU at least twice per year.

Once you have accurate inventory data, you will have a much better understanding of what's selling, and what's not, which will help you forecast which products to purchase to continue growing sales.

Mobile first

By 2021, analysts estimate [53.9% of all ecommerce](#) sales will happen on mobile devices. Since consumers switch back and forth between devices on their path to purchase, optimizing the mobile experience is crucial—and it goes beyond a responsive site.

Seconds matter. Research indicates [53% of consumers](#) will abandon a site that takes longer than three seconds to load. Research suggests mobile [bounce rates](#) are [10–20% higher](#) than desktop. Even responsive sites that take a few extra seconds to load can cause shoppers to leave your site before it ever loads. Investing in customer acquisition is a waste when shoppers don't stick around to browse your products. You'll know this is a problem if you see your mobile traffic increasing and your conversion rate declining.

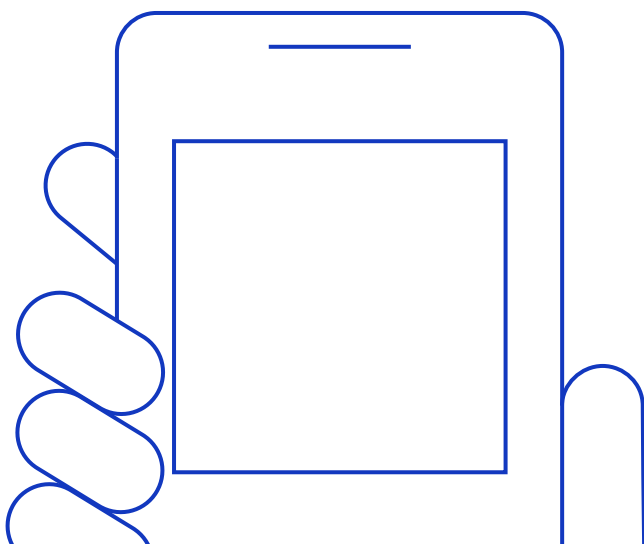
Some brands opt for a [progressive web app](#) (PWA), which can live on a user's home screen and loads instantly, regardless of whether the user is online. PWAs are often part of a [headless commerce](#) strategy, which allows teams to work on the front and back ends simultaneously to further improve mobile performance.

Combining a PWA with an [accelerated mobile page](#) (AMP) is even better, according to [mobile-first practitioners](#). An AMP is a mobile-first, [stripped-down HTML](#) copy of a web page that loads instantly. AMPs are the foundation of Google's mobile-first index, which prioritizes mobile optimization in search results.

[This combination](#) can yield better search results, more top-of-funnel traffic, and better online conversion rates. Optimizing for mobile in these ways [results in the following](#):

- a 29% increase in click-through rates from search platforms
- a 105% increase in landing page conversions
- a 19% increase in ecommerce checkout AOV

Speed is king. That's the message from brands that rely on mobile traffic for sales. In fact, U.K. apparel brand George.com suggests that [improving mobile](#) load speed by one second can increase revenue by as much as 5%.



Customer service solutions

Delivering a unified customer experience simultaneously across channels means [integrating](#) text, social, email, and instant messaging. Seamless integration allows the customer to switch between multiple channels without any degradation in the quality of service. Connecting each touchpoint, and being able to manage each from one dashboard, positions brands to support customers more quickly and efficiently.

Measuring results is vital to improving omnichannel customer service. While the key performance indicators for growing your business will vary, consider [measuring performance](#) by:

- Speed of response
- Speed of resolution
- Friendliness of representative
- Customer referrals
- [Post-interaction](#) activity

Although customer expectations used to vary by channel, the majority now expect [real-time service](#) regardless of channel. Customers [spend more money](#) and make repeat purchases with brands that deliver exemplary customer service, which increases CLV and reduces CAC.

[Unified communications](#) start with your customer relationship management platform. But customer service-only platforms can fill in any gaps that exist during and after a sale. In addition to social media, consider the following tactics when determining where and how to speak to your customers:



Self-serve

Make it easy for customers to answer their own questions or [solve their own problems](#). Answer the most common customer service questions in easy-to-find FAQ pages. Use content marketing to educate consumers, especially if you sell complex products or products susceptible to high return rates.



SMS

Sending text messages to customers can expedite issue resolution. Research indicates [98% of text messages](#) are opened, significantly higher than email. Text messages are also often read within [three minutes](#) of being sent. Besides resolving issues, SMS can also be used to remind customers of new products releases, offer promotions, execute win-back campaigns, or prevent churn.



Live chat

Offering live chat can resolve customer issues or convert shoppers. Research indicates [79% of consumers](#) say they prefer live chat because they don't have to wait on hold to get their questions answered immediately. Your self-service resources should handle simple and common issues or questions. Live chat with a human is best for more complex customer interactions. It also allows brands the opportunity to use customer data to personalize chat engagements based on past purchase behavior.



Chat bots

AI-powered chatbots often [pair conversational data](#) with customer profiles to answer questions without human help. With enough data, bots can be trained to handle more sophisticated queries. Many of today's solutions are only proficient with simple, repetitive questions. If you sell relatively expensive items, and not very often, customers might want to speak to a real person. But chatbots are great for high-volume merchants that potentially need to service [hundreds of users](#) simultaneously.



Mobile

Despite the rising prevalence of mobile devices in omnichannel commerce, many brands aren't approaching customer service with a mobile-first mindset. Research indicates [90% of consumers](#) say their mobile customer service experiences are negative. What they see on their display is often incorrect or too difficult to navigate. Some of the world's [most successful businesses](#) are being rewarded for making it easy for mobile customers to schedule appointments, move money, and shop online. Ensure your success by making the mobile customer service experience a priority.

Your omnichannel checklist

Executing seamlessly across channels demands a narrow focus on the customer. Time spent building your tech stack or maintaining systems makes you less customer centric. Succeeding in an omnichannel world requires a technological foundation that frees you to focus only on what matters: building an immersive unified experience wherever your customer is.

Your commerce platform should reduce the complexity associated with an omnichannel strategy. The system you choose will connect workflows, integrate with third-party solutions, and offer robust automation tools designed to help you scale faster across channels.

Make sure the technology underpinning your business includes:



One-click channel integration

No technical barriers to entry should exist once you determine that you want to sell natively on today's most popular marketplaces or social media platforms. One-click channel integration allows you to focus on growing that channel rather than the development work behind it. Likewise, it should be just as easy to disable a channel if data shows it isn't generating the desired ROI.



Cross-channel automation

Streamline your operations by automating workflows to save time and reduce the manual work necessary to manage multiple channels. With natively embedded commerce [automation tools](#), you can put much of your omnichannel merchandising, customer experience, and fraud prevention work on autopilot.



Synchronized product information and inventory

Your platform should automatically sync [product information](#) like price, description, and images with SKU counts to update your brand's product data and inventory levels are accurate and updated in real time across channels. Without auto-sync functionality, the task of manually adjusting SKU counts across multiple channels will overwhelm and distract you from higher growth tasks.



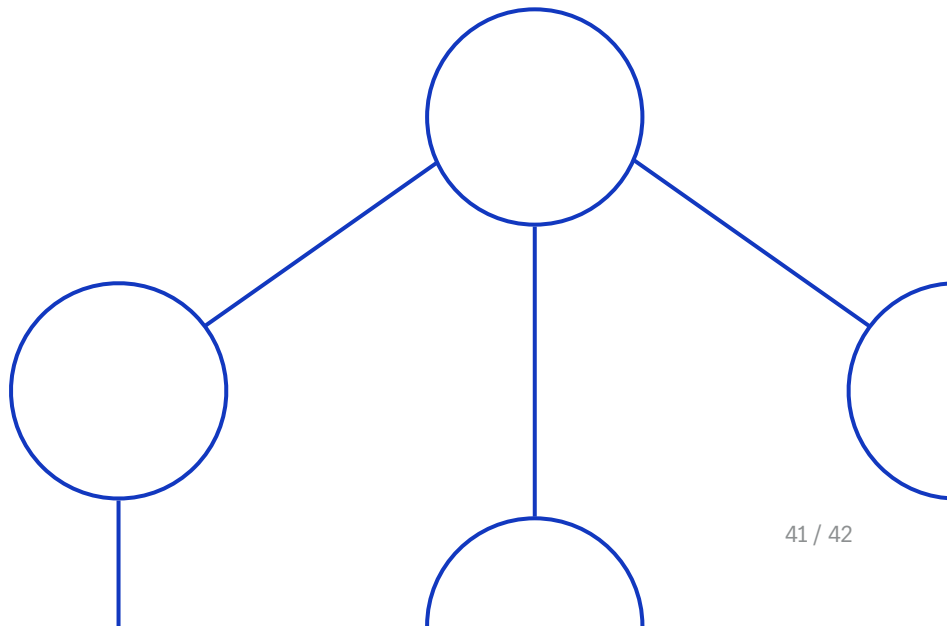
End-to-end integration

Your platform must integrate with both the [sales and supply](#) sides of your business. Without software that easily integrates with third-party solutions, your ability to monitor data in real time and make smarter inventory, pricing, and fulfillment decisions across channels can be compromised. Likewise, brands without a [centralized reporting](#) hub will find it difficult to efficiently manage their businesses across channels.



Multi-channel payment gateways and POS

Bridging the billion-dollar [online-to-offline divide](#) demands a robust POS system that connects pop-up or brick-and-mortar sales with your online sales by channels in a centralized reporting hub. Omnichannel shipping methods like curbside pickup, local delivery, and “buy in store, ship to home” must be integrated to connect the physical and digital experiences. Your solution should also integrate with a variety of payment gateways or offer a custom payments solution so customers can pay the way they want.



Want to know more?

Talk to one of our omnichannel experts about your plans to sell everywhere.

Contact us

Want to know more?