5 Requirements of a

Modern Martech Stack

Introduction

For most companies, marketing technology now accounts for 26% of total marketing budget[1], making it one of the significant expenses a business carries. And this makes sense considering the volume of data that businesses have to deal with in order to navigate digital marketing in 2020: 90 percent of the data on the internet has been created since 2016[2], meaning that technology you use to execute and analyze your marketing across the customer lifecycle — your martech stack — has a much bigger job now than it did even five years ago.

But when is the last time you took a hard look at every solution in your martech stack and determined how it is — or isn't — contributing to your marketing goals? Too many businesses come up with a budget breakdown without truly understanding how each tool impacts critical business activities from the perspective of driving efficiency and ROI. Do you know the answers to key questions about the utility of each solution in your stack?
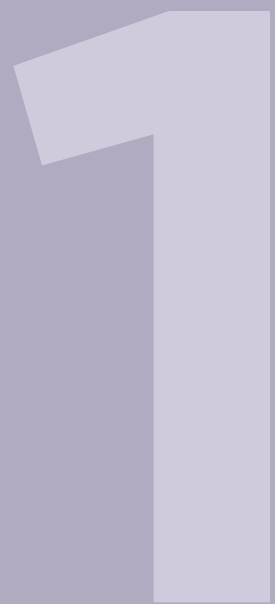
If you find yourself in need of a martech review to make sure your stack is ready for today's realities — and ideally, tomorrow's too — use these five guidelines as a starting point.

For most companies, marketing technology now accounts for 26% of total marketing budget.

1. https://www.gartner.com/en/marketing/research/cmo-spend-survey-2019-2020
2. https://blog.microfocus.com/how-much-data-is-created-on-the-internet-each-day/

Make sure your stack starts with strategy.

1

There are more than 7,040 martech solutions currently on the market[3], broken down into six main categories:

1 **Advertising & Promotion**
2 **Content & Experience**
3 **Social & Relationships**
4 **Commerce & Sales**
5 **Data**
6 **Management**

It helps to be familiar with this list of functions, but building a martech stack that works for your organization and truly serves your business objectives isn't a paint-by-numbers proposition. Don't start by selecting one tool for each of those categories simply because you think you should.

Instead, make sure your organization has identified your key marketing objectives — and researched exactly how you believe software and online tools can help — before you approach that list of 7,000+ marketing solutions. Starting with strategic objectives in mind is the only way to stay focused and ensure that your martech stack will help you drive results that are meaningful to your business.

3. https://chiefmartec.com/2018/04/marketing-technology-landscape-supergraphic-2018/

"Technology is a means to an end: Figure out what the end is," says Vikas Jain, Head of Strategic Alliances at Google.[4] "Once you define what it is you want customers to get from your products, then you work backwards to figure out how to get there."

For example, if your audience primarily interacts with your small business on Facebook and Yelp, maybe social and review management tools are most important to you. You likely don't need an expensive solution for managing large amounts of customer data. Whatever your answers, they should inform which tools you test and select.

Define your own marketing goals — don't risk letting your software define them for you. Here are a few key questions to ask as you build (or re-evaluate) your martech stack.
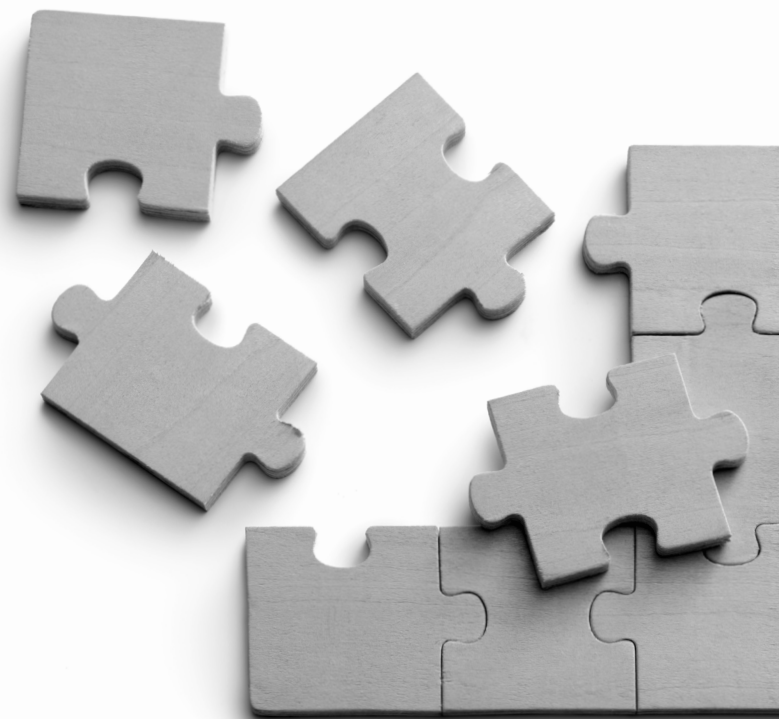
Consider:

1 Do we need to increase customer acquisition? Retention? Response? What are our CRM goals?

2 On which channels can our audience be found?

3 What is the best approach to reach our audience on these channels?

4 How is our existing marketing strategy doing this, and how well is it performing?

5 How might marketing technology assist with this?

"Technology is a means to an end: Figure out what the end is."

Vikas Jain
Head of Strategic Alliances, Google

4. https://www.lytics.com/blog/building-a-martech-super-stack-tips-from-the-industrys-leading-tech-companies

Create a stack that is flexible and connected to other tech, so you're not working with siloed tools.

2

The idea of marketing to "channels" rather than to customers is outdated. Your customers are the same people whether they're conducting research about your brand on mobile, seeing your ad on desktop, or clicking for directions to your store on Google Maps. You need to reach and engage them across touchpoints throughout their journey.

Your marketing strategy should be about reaching customers at their key moments of intent[5], wherever they're engaging with your brand. You'll want to make sure the tools you put in your martech stack can do the same.

Your marketing strategy should be about reaching customers at their key moments of intent.

5. https://www.yext.com/blog/2019/05/what-is-intent-marketing-and-why-does-it-matter/
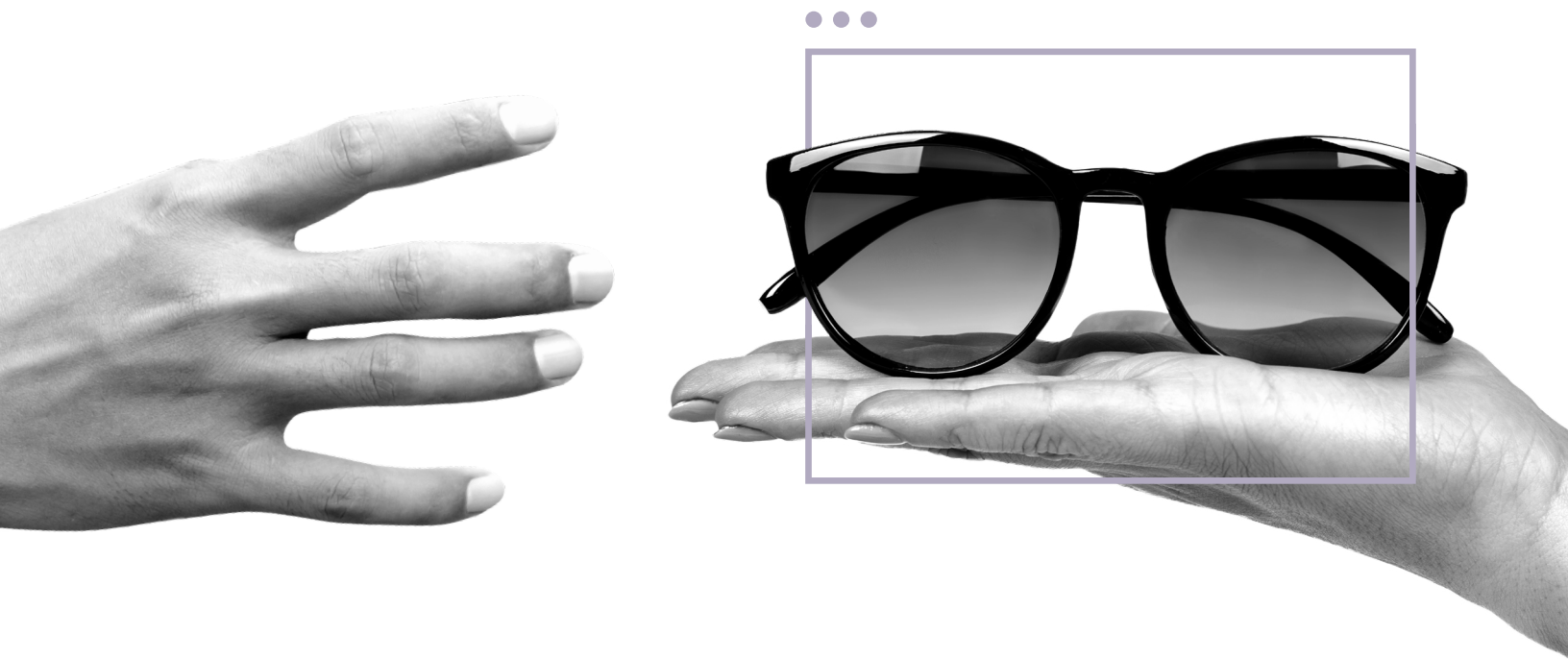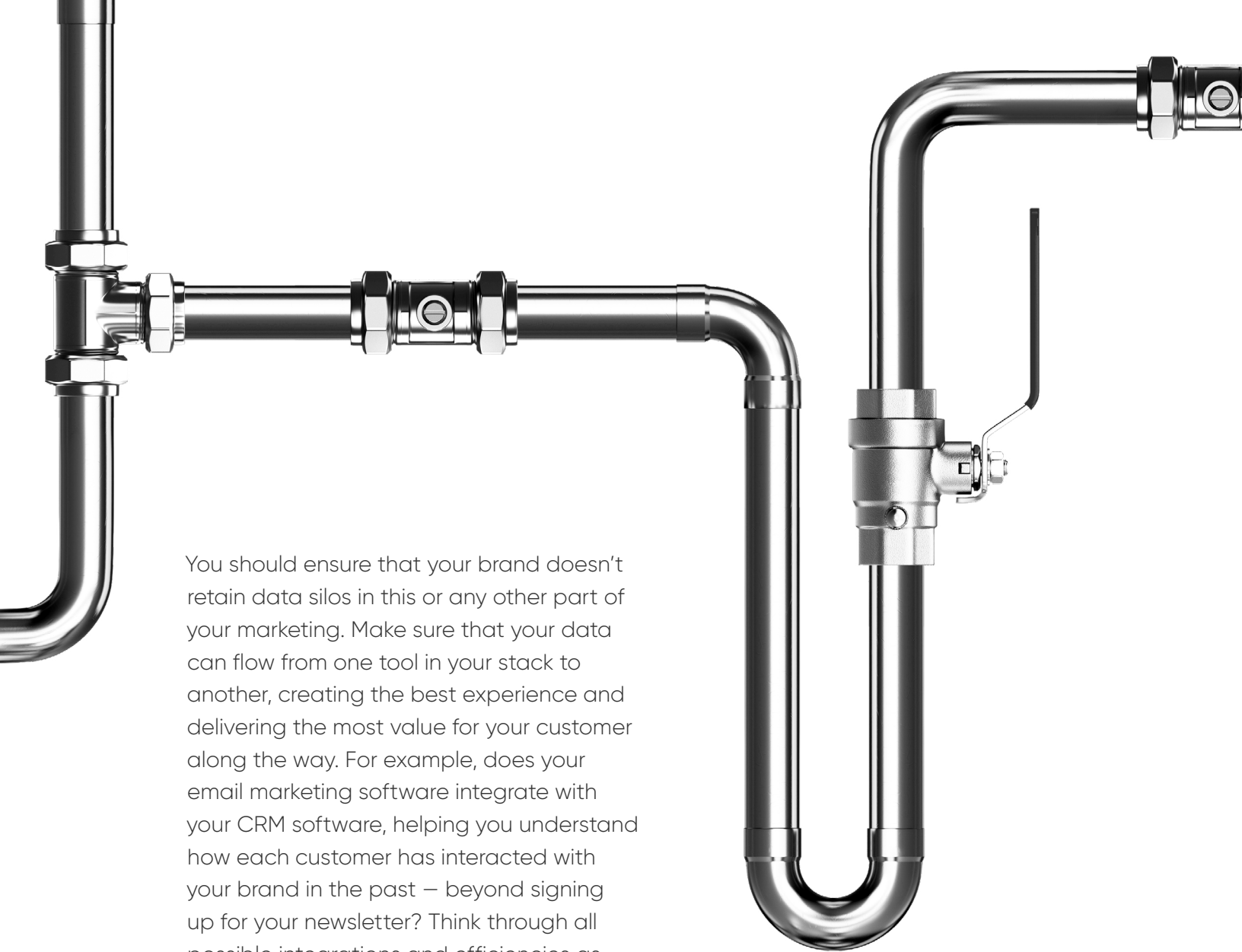
You should ensure that your brand doesn't retain data silos in this or any other part of your marketing. Make sure that your data can flow from one tool in your stack to another, creating the best experience and delivering the most value for your customer along the way. For example, does your email marketing software integrate with your CRM software, helping you understand how each customer has interacted with your brand in the past — beyond signing up for your newsletter? Think through all possible integrations and efficiencies as you evaluate your stack.

"The modern customer journey is dynamic and multifaceted, and 50% of all customer interactions happen during a multi-event, multichannel journey," according to MarTech Advisor.[6] "Because of this, a primary martech mistake is retaining data silos in your technology and strategy. Data silos prevent you from gaining complete visibility into the customer journey, which you need to effectively engage customers."

6. https://www.martechadvisor.com/articles/customer-experience-2/7-biggest-martech-mistakes-to-avoid/

Evaluate your stack's efficiency. How can you do more with less?

3

As an extension of the previous point, the first way to maximize efficiency is to use tools that integrate with one another. Identify what is currently working well, and what isn't: Compiling a list of your current challenges can help you see both holes and redundancies.

From there, start at the bottom of the pyramid: Which one or two main tools is the rest of your stack built upon? Typically, that's your customer data platform (CDP) and/or your content management system (CMS).

These tools generally "need to be at the center of your martech stack, using which you can integrate all other Software as a Service (SaaS) tools," according to MarTech Advisor.[7] "This way, your stack can help you collect, analyze and organize data seamlessly. By integrating the right tools, it will also help you make better sense of your data and to segment users according to their stage in the buying journey, their purchasing power and more."

Is your baseline tool as efficient as it should be?

Is your baseline tool as efficient as it should be? Ask yourself how well your existing solution is working for you and if you see opportunities for improvement that you can ask about or incorporate into your next RFP.

The next key to efficiency? Embracing automation where you can.

7. https://www.martechadvisor.com/articles/
    martech-skills/simplify-your-martech-stack-
    simplify-your-life/

Embrace automation in your stack, but make sure it allows for personalization.

4

When it comes to maximizing output
with a limited number of tools — and a
limited number of employees operating
them — marketing automation is always
a topic of conversation. It's for good
reason: Automation plays an important
role in strategy, helping you streamline your
processes and deliver a consistent customer
experience at scale. But the key is to make
sure that it allows for personalization.

You *can* improve your customer
experience with better personalization
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"81 percent of consumers say they want brands to better understand them and when the right time is to approach them or to leave them alone."

Michael Brenner

CEO, Marketing Insider Group

"In a multi-channel marketing world, you'll need a solid automation platform — and the ability to use it well — to navigate hyper personalization and to deliver what customers want across the board," Michael Brenner writes for Marketing Insider Group.[8] "81 percent of consumers say they want brands to better understand them and when the right time is to approach them or to leave them alone." Marketing automation can help you deliver on this kind of customer understanding when dealing with large amounts of data.

Not sure where to start with marketing automation that still allows you to craft personalized customer communications and deliver a tailored experience? Check out this list of tools.

8. https://marketinginsidergroup.com/content-marketing/what-tools-should-be-in-my-martech-stack/

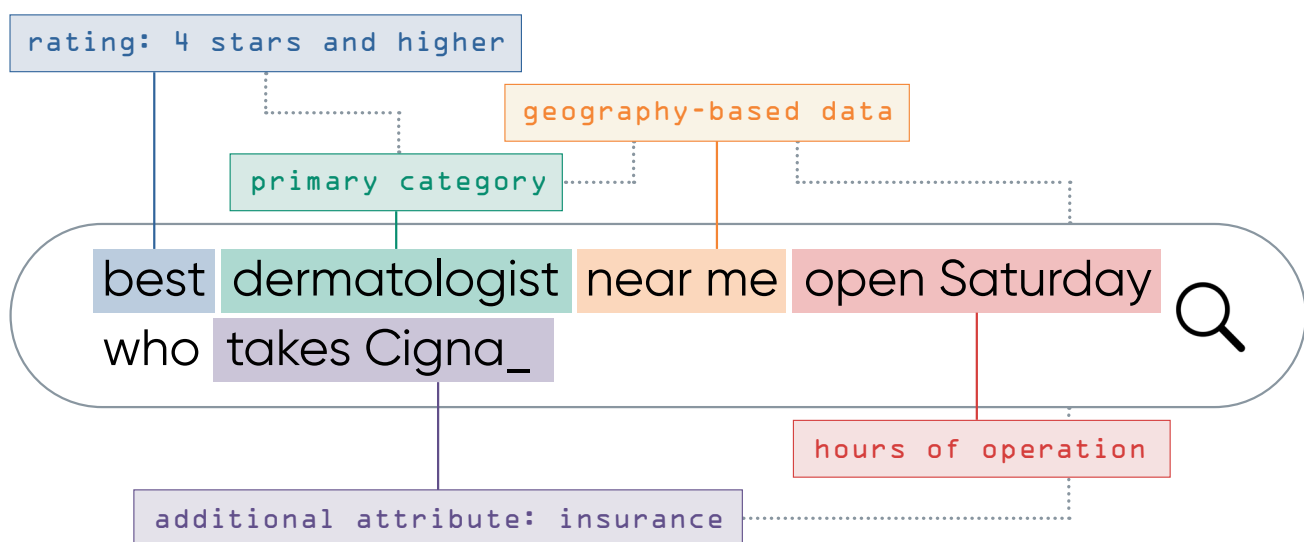# Make sure your stack accounts for search.

5

Questions about building a martech stack often focus on engaging customers through email, social media, and other platforms, and how to make those interactions flow smoothly, like we discussed above. But too many brands are missing one key element in their marketing stack: search experience. Sometimes, brands are failing to think about search at all beyond buying keywords.

Think about it: How do your customers find answers to their questions throughout the purchase journey? Where do they turn for information? Search. 71% of consumers begin their journey with a search engine, and 90% of customers report that they use search at *every single stage* of their customer lifecycle.[9]

To understand the complex questions people are asking and deliver an experience that exceeds their expectations, you need technology at the center of your marketing stack that's *semantic*, that understands language, and that can answer consumers' questions across the digital ecosystem. That's where **search experience solutions** come in.

If you aren't managing your search experience as a foundational part of your marketing strategy, you're missing one of the biggest ways customers today discover and engage with your brand. Don't leave a major hole in your martech stack — make sure your search experience is a priority.

Now that you understand these five essentials for building your martech stack, learn more about industry-specific martech categories in our vertical guide below.
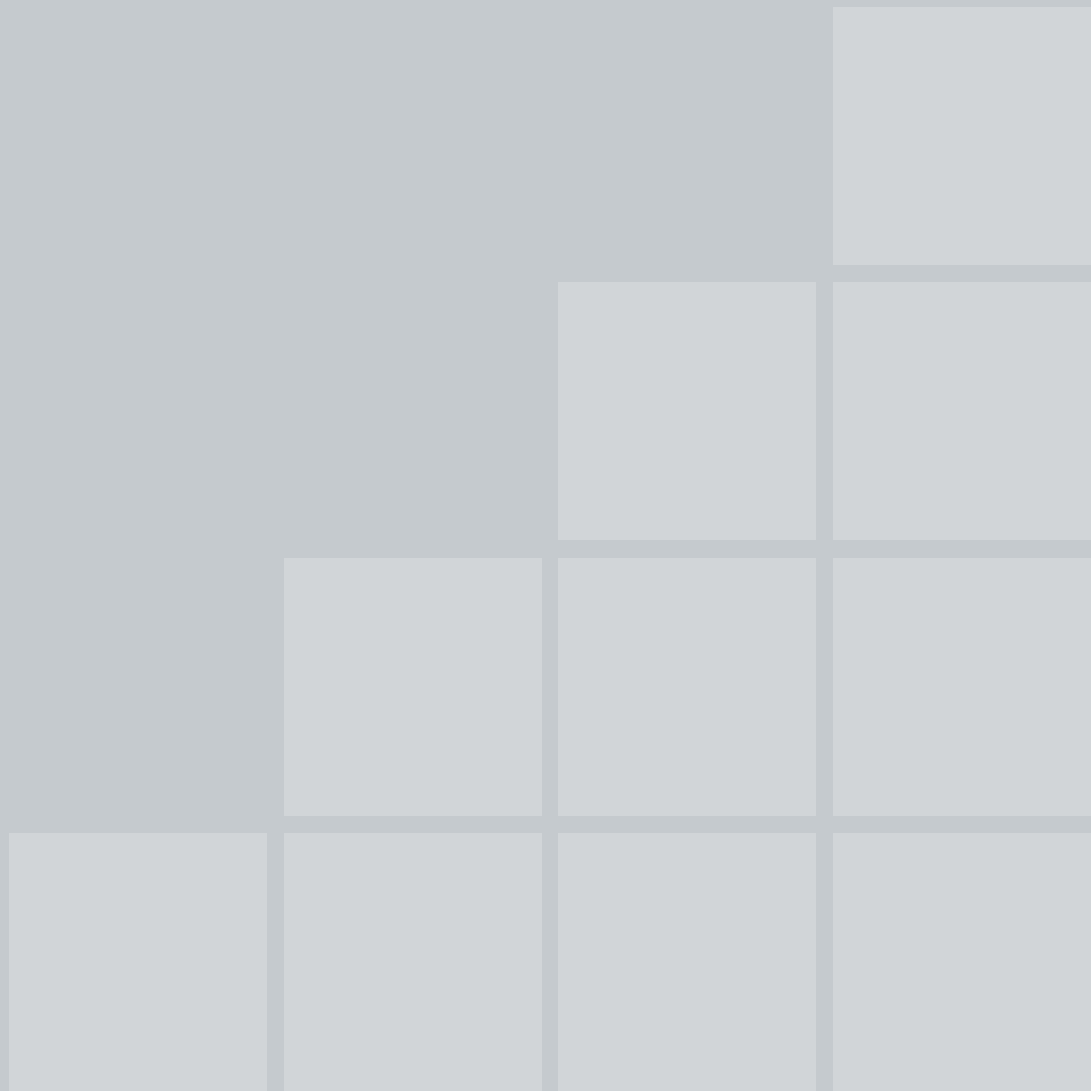
9. https://www.catalystdigital.com/wp-content/uploads/
   WhySearchPlusSocialEqualsSuccess-Catalyst.pdf

Vertical Guide

Building out your martech stack by industry

In these pages, discover how to identify the marketing tools you need by vertical, including unique business priorities and tips for choosing vertical-specific solutions.
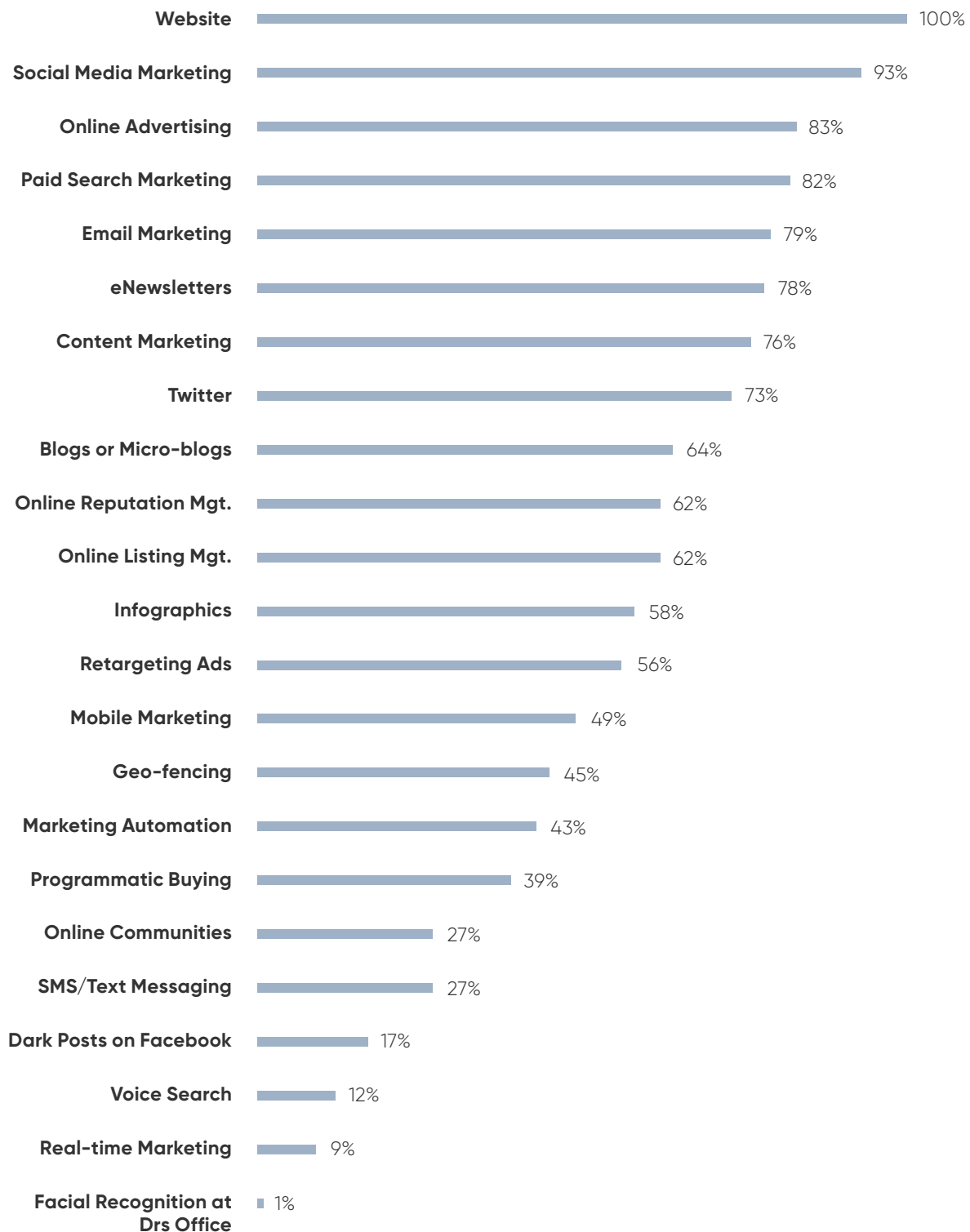
Healthcare

Online/Digital Marketing Currently Used at Hospital System

Category	Percentage
Website	100%
Social Media Marketing	93%
Online Advertising	83%
Paid Search Marketing	82%
Email Marketing	79%
eNewsletters	78%
Content Marketing	76%
Twitter	73%
Blogs or Micro-blogs	64%
Online Reputation Mgt.	62%
Online Listing Mgt.	62%
Infographics	58%
Retargeting Ads	56%
Mobile Marketing	49%
Geo-fencing	45%
Marketing Automation	43%
Programmatic Buying	39%
Online Communities	27%
SMS/Text Messaging	27%
Dark Posts on Facebook	17%
Voice Search	12%
Real-time Marketing	9%
Facial Recognition at Drs Office	1%

Greystone's State of Digital Marketing Report, 2020

Here are the business priorities that your healthcare organization should account for in your martech stack — and why they matter:

Email Marketing & CRM

You need to ensure that your patients can be marketed to throughout the patient journey. For example, if they express a concern about allergies, you need to make sure that they can be nurtured through the process of driving to an allergist appointment later in time.

Social Media Management

A lot of people are saying things about healthcare providers online via these social channels. Effective management enables healthcare marketing teams to monitor and manage what is being said, as well as to provide posts about announcements, health tips, and more.

Website (CMS)

Healthcare organizations need to manage the public-facing digital presence of their health system. You need to make sure that the patient can find the right resources on your website: find a provider or location, check urgent care wait times, et cetera.

Website Analytics (Google Analytics & Others)

Focus on how your patients are searching for health information: What is most important in the digital journey? Also look at ways to start tracking conversions going forward.

Provider Data Management

Providers are a health system's "inventory." You need a platform to manage this data to ensure that your patients can find the right providers at the right time — and that your marketing team can manage the providers who are accepting patients and incoming/ outgoing from the health system.

Call Center

The majority of patients still call before scheduling an appointment. They also call looking for more information or to ask questions before and after appointments. Organizations need a call center — and supporting technology — to ensure they are able to answer patient questions and schedule appointments directly.

Electronic Health Records

You need an effective way to house patient and provider information for billing purposes.

Patient Experience & Third-party Review Management

Health systems need to monitor feedback via patient-direct surveys (first-party) and what people are saying on the internet (third-party) to ensure they can deliver a quality patient experience and improve it over time.

Paid Media

Effectively managing digital campaigns (search, display, and more) is critical for both patient acquisition and branding.

Online Appointment Scheduling (EPIC MyChart, DocASAP, InQuicker)

This allows your organization to drive patient acquisition through online means.

Call Tracking (DialogTech, Invoca)

This helps your organization to drive patient acquisition through call.

Credentialing (Verity, Morrisey, MD Staff)

Make sure you have a way to manage provider onboarding to your health system and verify new doctors entering the system — their DEA numbers, state licensure, et cetera. The data from credentialing usually flows up to the CMS to show up on provider pages on the website once the doctor is approved to see patients and bill insurance.

Ideally, all of these solutions should be integrated with one another.

"Organizations tend to buy technology to solve a problem — rather than to identify the problem and see if technology they already have can fix it," says Carrie Liken, Head of Healthcare at Yext. "They also don't ask the right questions about whether the technology they are buying is actually able to connect to other technologies via API. The biggest thing I always talk about? Make sure you are buying an open platform."

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Carrie Liken
Head of Industry, Healthcare, Yext
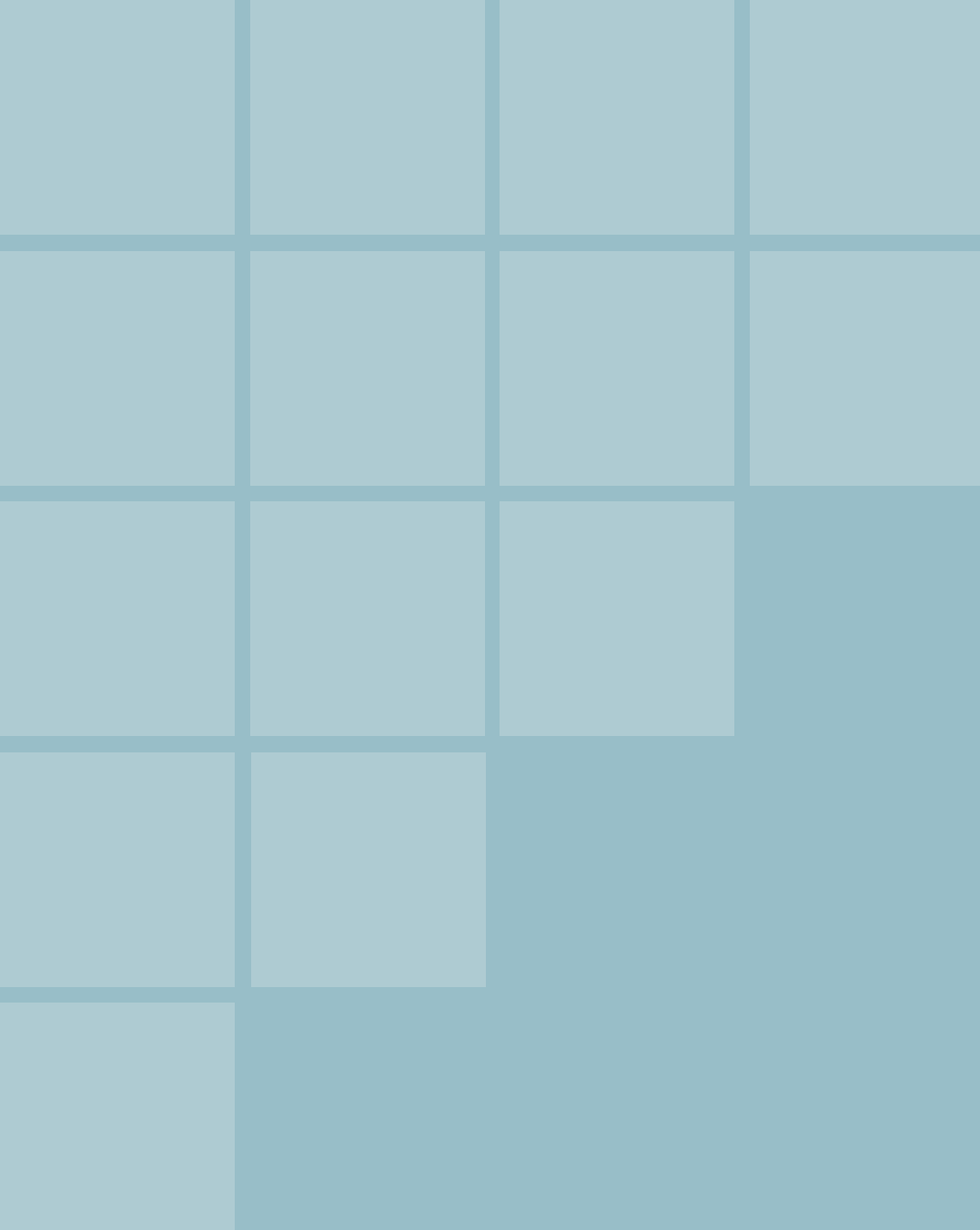
Food Services

Here are the business priorities that your food services brand should account for in your martech stack — and why they matter:

CRM/Email/Personalization

This is the year of personalization and mapping the customer within the restaurant industry. There are more restaurants, more competition, than there are people to keep them in business within the U.S. Restaurants are fighting for repeat guests and loyal members, and they know customers want unique experiences within their web, app and ordering platforms — as well as coupons and incentives that keep them coming back.

Segmentation and reviewing data based on segmentation is key. CRM systems integrate into POS systems to fully map the customer's order history, order frequency, and even time of day.

Off Premise- Online Ordering/Delivery/ Catering Platforms

Consumers now expect the option to order online and either get their food delivered or have it ready for pickup at the restaurant. Online orders are typically a larger average order value, and customers order more frequently because of ease of use/targeted marketing to get them back into the platforms.

As a result, restaurants are also investing in their own platforms to compete with the delivery aggregators (Uber Eats, Doordash, Grubhub) who take commissions of 15-30% of the order. The greatest value of an online ordering platform to your restaurant is that they capture first party customer information. They own the customer mapping and can re-target via their CRM platform, so this is an important area of focus in your martech stack.

Social Listening (Including Reviews)

Reviews and social are more significant than ever for the restaurant industry. They not only impact overall customer sentiment but have a major impact on search. Reviews have historically been more prominent for full service restaurants, but with Google's investment in the review space, partial service restaurants (i.e. QSR and Fast Casual restaurants) have more reviews than any other industry. No matter what type of restaurant you run, monitoring and responding to reviews is critical.

Website/CMS

Restaurants are redesigning and re-building their digital experiences to support the other top themes. They want to drive digital orders and transactions, and they recognize the need to own the customer.

As brands reinvent themselves, website and web platforms are often the first to get the facelift. But beyond the design elements, your restaurant brand should be eager to provide a personalized experience per customer based on order history, habits, birthdays or even family makeup. Make sure the tools in your stack empower your brand to deliver this kind of personalization.

Paid Online Media (Adwords, Social Buys)

Investments in paid social, Adwords, and even Yelp ads are still top of mind for restaurant operators. Effectively managing digital campaigns (search, display, and more) is critical for both customer acquisition and branding.

These solutions should be integrated with one another as much as possible.

"The restaurant industry can be full of followers, and they'll adopt tech based on what they think the thought leaders are doing or where the industry is headed," says Lee Zucker, head of industry, food services & hospitality at Yext. "Too often, marketers will make decisions without thinking about the broader picture of their customer journey."

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Lee Zucker
Head of Industry, Food Services & Hospitality, Yext

Here's what they need to be thinking instead:

1 What is your current strategy to funnel traffic into your preferred experience? That could be in store, an online order, a catering order, et cetera.

2 Where are your customers beginning their journey? How often are they actually thinking about you? How do you get them to think about you more? When they're not thinking about you, what are you doing to get them to consider you as an option?

How often do you show up in the search results when consumers search for unbranded terms relevant to your brand (i.e. a search for one of your menu items or the cuisine that your brand serves)?

3 When a customer finds you, or is thinking about you, how many steps or clicks does it take for a consumer to discover your brand on a map, app, or directory before they land in your ordering experience?

4 What do you need a customer to do to get them to be a "known" customer?
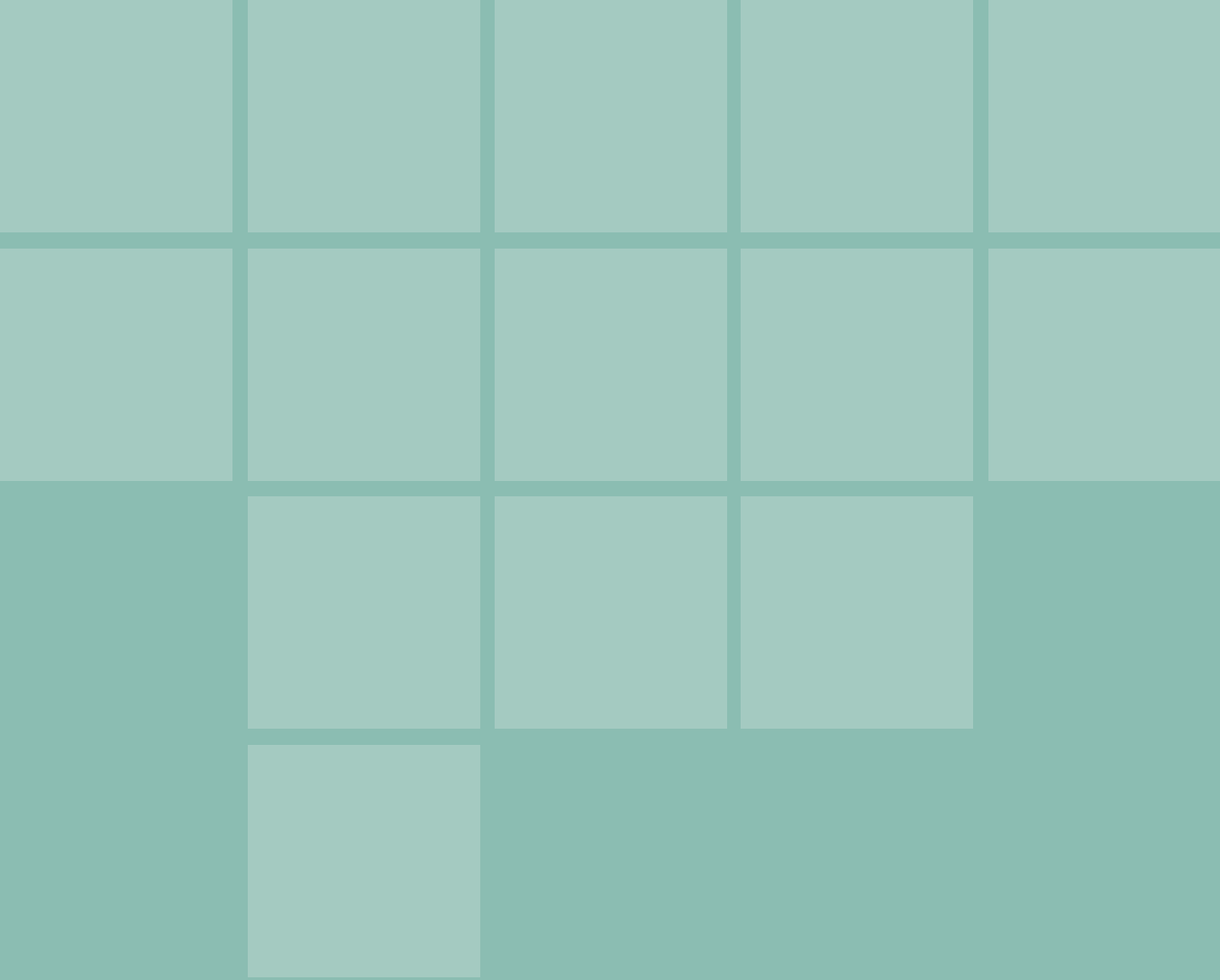
Financial Services and Insurance

Here are the business priorities that your financial services brand should account for in your martech stack — and why they matter:

CMS (ex. Adobe, Sitecore, Acquia, Wordpress)

68% of clients recently polled in a Yext financial services webinar stated content strategies were the most important method to meet client acquisition goals. Financial services and insurance brands need to differentiate on the value they can deliver through their website, so investment in your CMS is of critical importance.

CRM (Salesforce, Microsoft Dynamics)

Beyond the rates you offer, your brand can stand apart by increasing your response rate to client asks and delivering more value.

Marketing Automation (Hubspot, Salesforce Marketing Cloud, Adobe Campaign)

A top priority in financial services today? Automating emails and basing them on key predictors (e.g. attending a financial planning webinar, becoming a new client, et cetera.)

Call Centers/Call Tracking (Diatech, Invoca)

These tools can help you improve the handoff between digital channels and the call center, as well as to improve attribution modeling.

68% of clients recently stated content strategies were the most important method to meet client acquisition goals.

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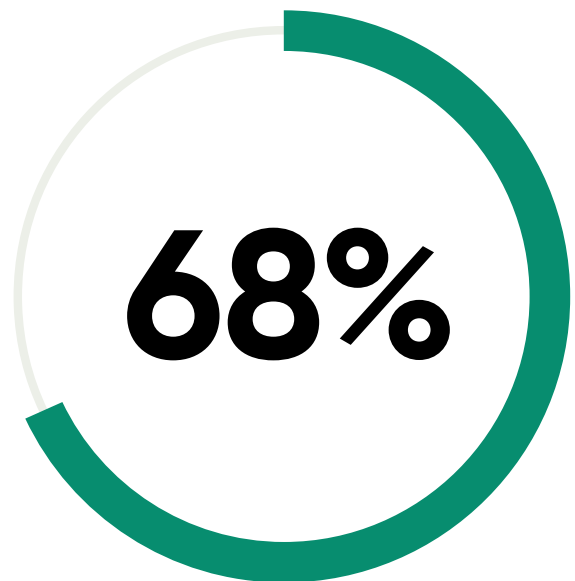
Paid Media

Brands are looking to improve acquisition while reducing spending. Effectively managing digital campaigns (search, display, and more) is key to making this happen.

Core Banking, Mortgage, Wealth, or Insurance Platforms

Make sure you look for a platform that can help you:

- Improve the application process
- Improve lead to booking
- Promote self–service

These solutions should be integrated with one another as much as possible.

"Clients historically have purchased software across business units, but now it's about fewer systems that integrate together," says Shane Closser, head of industry, financial services at Yext. "Systems are becoming more intelligent to personalize experiences and automate interactions. Financial services organizations are taking steps in the right direction, organizing around the customer journey instead of departmental silos."

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Shane Closser
Head of Industry, Financial Services, Yext

VERTICAL GUIDE

Retail

Here are the business priorities that your retail brand should account for in your martech stack — and why they matter:

CMS

The centerpiece of your brand's web experience is your CMS. The modern CMS must be optimized for easy on-site search and navigation, as well as for the rapid proliferation of consumers interacting with web content through organic search first.

eCommerce retailers in particular should build a CMS that optimizes product content to two main paths to purchase: on-site search/browse, as well as product-related queries across both paid and organic search.

CRM

CRM in retail is evolving. It used to be that the CRM was mainly used for capturing email addresses for mass emails, but now it's the backbone of all customer experience initiatives, capturing purchasing data, loyalty program information, customer preferences, personalization efforts, and much more — making it a major priority for your organization.

Merchandising/POS

If your CRM system is the backbone of the systems powering your customer experience, your merchandising system and POS is the backbone of your product experience. POS systems have come a long way from being simple cash registers, and can now inform inventory management, accounting, and marketing strategies. This is a crowded space with offerings for both small and large enterprises alike. This is the core of your business, and switching POS systems after the fact can be a daunting task, so make sure your POS system is built to grow and change with your business and can integrate with a variety of other internal systems.

CX

CX is defined as the practice of designing and reacting to customer interactions to meet or exceed their expectations, leading to greater customer satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy. Think of your CX like a system that interacts very closely with CRM data and unifies disparate systems to make that CRM data actionable.

The large CX challenge facing retailers today is to connect and optimize their systems to achieve a customer journey across touchpoints. The omnichannel CX experience is extremely important, as well as bringing online experience offline to retail locations.

Savvy retailers understand that optimizing for customer lifetime value rather than the individual transaction is a path to more sustainable growth and profits over the long term. 75% of Retail and eCommerce firms plan to increase their CX spend from last year.[10]

10. https://www.gartner.com/en/documents/3969791/
use-customer-data-management-technologies-to-
deliver-bet

Social Media Automation

According to eMarketer, more than half of Retail Marketing teams said that they were planning on spending more on social advertising in 2020 than they did in 2019. Social has been, and remains, a crucial piece of your marketing stack.[11] Social media is also a crucial part of brand marketing, as well as the customer service experience.

Email Marketing

Email marketing remains a critical communication channel for retailers. A recent eMarketer study found that 62% of customers prefer to receive communications from retailers via email, higher than any other channel.[12] Your brand should strive for a personalized email communications program, while being mindful of optimizing both frequency and customer privacy regulations.

Loyalty Programs

Loyalty programs continue to play a key role in driving repeat sales across verticals. It is always cheaper to sell to an existing customer than a net new one, so the customer journey should be thought of not as a funnel, but as a flywheel.

Search Analytics Platform

Retail marketers have often thought of search as a "bottom of the funnel" channel (i.e. "bags near me"), but we are seeing search evolve to be a crucial top and mid-funnel channel as well (i.e. "what are the best bags for spring 2020?"). It's crucial to have a platform that can help you understand and strategize both your paid and organic search strategies.

Customer Support and Returns Processing

The overall number of returns, and customer expectations around return policies, has risen. Why does this matter? Returns shape consumers' perceptions of a retailer. A poorly executed returns policy can result in lost sales and lost customers, so make sure you make this a priority in your stack.

Amazon's focus on customer centricity — and, by extension, accepting returns — has helped fuel its growth into the largest ecommerce platform.[13] Don't underestimate the power of this category, as it could be the deciding factor in choosing between two different suppliers.

11. https://content-na1.emarketer.com/more-retailers-are-investing-in-social-advertising

12. https://content-na1.emarketer.com/deals-drive-greater-engagement-on-shoppers-favorite-brand-communication-channel-email

13. https://www.businessinsider.com/kohls-amazon-partnership-fuels-growth-2019-4

YE
XT
™

The ultimate source for official answers about a business online should be the business itself. However, when consumers ask questions on company websites, too often they are left in the dark with wrong answers. Yext (NYSE: YEXT), the Search Experience Cloud, solves this problem by organizing a business's facts so it can provide official answers to consumer questions — wherever people search. Starting with the company website, then extending across search engines and voice assistants, businesses around the world, like Taco Bell, Marriott, and Jaguar Land Rover—as well as organizations like the U.S. State Department—trust Yext to radically improve the search experience on their websites and across the entire search ecosystem.

Yext's mission is to help businesses and organizations around the world deliver official answers everywhere people search. Yext has been named a Best Place to Work by Fortune and Great Place to Work®, as well as a Best Workplace for Women. Yext is headquartered in New York City with offices in Amsterdam, Berlin, Chicago, Dallas, Geneva, London, Miami, Milan, Paris, San Francisco, Shanghai, Tokyo, and the Washington, D.C. area—and work-from-home offices all around the world.

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