



THE IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRATING DATA, INSIGHTS AND ADVICE.



Ben Dickens, December 12, 2016

This week we've enlisted the help of some friends, Virtual Logistics, to give us the lowdown on why integrating data is so important.

As a full service digital agency we're acutely conscious of the battle taking place at the moment and integrating data is the key to staying on top. Digital focused marketers are waking up to the realisation that cut-through can be achieved by a better understanding of the emotional needs of consumers coupled to the behavioural data gathered from multiple, often disparate sources. The winners will be those brands who can take these data sources and combine them together into an integrated, meaningful, view to sit alongside the emotional insight that will drive the creative, the idea.

Get this right and strike the balance between mind and heart and you'll be in the minority and that's where the real revenue is.

In this week's post we're looking at the data side of that equation. Supported by our friends at VL to help us discuss integrating data and its importance in the marketing ecosystem.

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST

Email Address *

First Name *

Last Name *

SUBSCRIBE

* indicates required



Follow us



VL have been helping businesses function more efficiently and effectively since 1994 through data integration services.

In this insight piece we will cover:

- Why you should be integrating data?
- Why a data integration strategy matters?
- Data is the key to connected marketing?
- Why a skilled partner is important?
- Where are we heading?



“The model can't hold': Publishers face content studio growing pains - Digiday

<https://t.co/9zgyHwBRbi>
<https://t.co/92V5SaWnLq>”



The age of omni-channel commerce has hit business with a bang. Just a few years ago in North America, Cyber Monday was the new shopping holiday that mirrored Black Friday; this year, customers shopped online more than they did in-store. This isn't a new story: consumers are both browsing and shopping across multiple channels (sometimes at the same time), and intercepting these users at the right time on the right channel with the right message has become a complex problem businesses and marketers are trying to solve.

What is new is how businesses are approaching this disconnect between how consumers browse and shop and how brands have set up their omni-channel customer experiences. Many approach the problem of omni-channel as an afterthought, adopting integration products and DIY programmers to fill immediate needs, only to have these decisions create larger problems down the road. Others approach this problem as an opportunity for competitive advantage.

The fact of the matter is that your business' success is predicated on your customers' experiences with your brand. And that experience is centred on how your business treats, manages, and automates your data. Consumers expect consistent experiences in all channels, and retailers and marketers must adopt new strategies and technologies like data integration as a service that make this possible.

Who is VL?

Since our start in 1994, VL has been focused on helping businesses function more efficiently and effectively. We do this through providing high quality data integration services as a partner in your business' ongoing growth.

Our cloud-based omni-channel integration service VL OMNI is designed using VL's central point of truth data integration methodology. VL OMNI will ensure that your business' integration stays scalable and responsive with how your business changes and grows over time.

The basics

According to this joint report by Accenture & Forrester Research, many retailers are in a false state of omni-channel comfort. Many turn to data integration products or DIY coding to fill gaps where possible, but if your business is scaling or is already at a certain size these short-term solutions can end up doing far more harm than good. The reality is that consumer expectations are evolving much quicker than many businesses can keep up — especially when employing quick-fixes — ultimately putting brands dangerously behind.

Simply put, the quality of your business' data integration strategy directly impacts the customer experience you'll be able to provide at any and every touchpoint.



Why should you be integrating data?

With multiplying channels, your business now has potentially infinite touch points where you can collect data from your customers. Without integrating these channels, your business is creating islands of technology: applications where no data leaves and no external data is added from other applications.

To a business, this siloed approach is like watching a movie in 2D with one eye closed: you'll understand some of the basic plot but you're likely to miss the big picture. Integrating your applications and automating your data flows is moving into fully-immersed 3D Virtual Reality. And once you see that bigger, complete picture, you'll wonder why you ever tried to understand your customers with only a partially complete picture.

Strategy is the key.

Your data integration strategy matters. Each comes with its own approach, systems, and processes for translating and automating your corporate data.

For small businesses just starting out with limited orders, integrating 'to a piece of paper' or manually moving data from application to application may be a good fit (a word of warning: these methods are rife with human error). But once your

business starts to grow, you'll need to move into automated solutions. A good intermediary step are plug-and-play integrations, many of which are bolted on to applications your business may already use. But even these products have their limits: once your business really takes off, you'll need a highly skilled data integration service providing partner like VL.

Data as the basis for connected marketing.

If you truly want to understand your audience, your marketing team's applications should be integrated together in order to compile the clearest picture of your audience. Summarized in new research done by the Data & Marketing Association (DMA) and the Winterberry Group:



“Better aggregation of data and deeper integration of marketing technologies are increasingly seen as principal solutions to marketers’ challenges in advancing effective omnichannel campaigns.” – Omni-Channel Shoppers: An Emerging Retail Reality

The most sophisticated businesses and marketers are gearing their strategies around conversion on any and all channels, catering to how consumers shop and expect to be treated. Without integrated data that is updated in real-time, it is near impossible to provide contextual, timely, and relevant information to your consumer base that may influence their decision to click and buy.

Why it's important to work with a skilled partner?

“If you think it's expensive to hire a professional, wait until you hire an amateur.” – Internet Unknown

As the premium data integration solutions and services provider, VL has the privilege of seeing what happens to businesses that approach data integration not as a priority but instead as an afterthought. And it can be summed up in a single word: chaos. Plenty of applications, DIY programmers, and other solutions are happy to take your money and leave you with an incomplete or dysfunctional data integration. Others will let you set up a rat's nest of ad-hoc integration products, which are usually courteous enough to fail at crucial moments (like when you have 10 000 orders queued up to be shipped to a big retailer). Having a skilled integration partner like VL on your side means that you have 100% support from a team of data integration experts.

Where next?

Data integration and automation is moving out of the realm of competitive advantage and into set expectation for both consumers and supply chain partners. Many applications your business may already use come with basic one-to-one integrations to popular applications, so there is very little reason to be moving data manually or trying to custom code a work-around internally. And if you require more complex integrations, seek out a trusted integration expert partner like VL.

For more information, check out the following resources:



[Omni-Channel Shoppers: An Emerging Retail Reality \(Think With Google\)](#)



[A Look Inside Two Amazing Businesses: A Case Study Ebook on Data Integration, Back-End Technology Selection and Customer Experience](#)

[3 Common Ecommerce Integration Issues & Solutions: A Whitepaper on What Custom Data Integration Could Be Doing to Benefit Your Business](#)

[How Millennials are Revolutionizing Omni-Channel Retail, Forcing Businesses To Change \(Video\)](#)

DVO prioritise all aspects of integrated communications, a structured data strategy is the building block on which all effective omni-channel marketing is built.

Contact us here if you'd like to talk about how you can drive success, underpinned by data, from your marketing.

AGENCY AND
MARKETING
TERMINOLOGY
(OR HOW TO
GET 20 POINTS

CONTENT
STRATEGY,
START TO
FINISH.

WHAT IS LEAN
FULL SERVICE?

IN BULLS**T BINGO)

We marketers love inventing new marketing terminology, sometimes using the same term for a multitude of meanings. Our handy guide helps you know what's what. There's a lot of interchangeable marketing terminology so this week I've collated some of the most popular into a handy little explainer. These are some of the most popular you'll hear at work, in the...

This week we take on content strategy in all it's glory. Always-on social content strategy is a core discipline that is squarely on both brand and agency agendas, and rightly so in our humble opinion. But most of the content marketing conversation we see focuses on the tactical delivery and technology surrounding content, so we thought we'd put forward how...

This week we're talking about lean full service and why it's the perfect agency set-up for our modern connected world. I've blogged a lot recently about integrated, multi-channel and content marketing. All integral parts of DVO but it struck me that we should be talking more about lean full service. As a full service digital agency it's central to our...



SOME OF OUR WORK



HOME | WORK | ABOUT | BLOG | CONTACT US | SERVICES
| PRIVACY | LEGAL | SITE MAP



© 2017 DVO Agency Ltd. All rights reserved.
Interchange Triangle, Chalk Farm Rd, London, NW1 8AB

T: +44(0)20 3771 2461 E: iminterested@dvoagency.co.uk
W: www.dvoagency.co.uk

