



5 **disruptive** questions
every marketing executive
needs to ask

Technology has turned the marketing power dynamic on its head. Today's customers chart their often-winding paths to purchase by engaging through a variety of devices and channels of their choosing — and they've come to expect the progression to be a seamless one.

Here are five questions marketing leaders need to ask themselves to assess whether they're prepared for the digital disruptions changing marketing today and in the future.

How can we keep customers when **brand loyalty** is losing ground to “the next new thing”?

Brand loyalty may not be dead, but it's in critical condition. Our culture places more value on things that are new and exciting. With an arsenal of digital devices and touchpoints at their fingertips, consumers have a variety of brands at their disposal and are in control of all interactions. Their evolving shopping behaviors have introduced new touchpoints to the once-linear purchase journey. With every new touchpoint, one of your competitors enters the consideration pool and has the opportunity to attract your customer base with the allure of something new.

Shoppers more than doubled the number of information sources they used to research purchases between 2010 and 2013.¹ That represents twice as many opportunities to engage with that customer during the purchase journey.

Marketers need to be able to understand intent and leverage data to understand the path to purchase and how to deliver the right message at the right moment, whether that's on an iPad at home, a smartphone in the car or a desktop at the office.

1. DMN3, "7 Changing Buying Behaviors You Must Address," December 23, 2015.

2. Forbes, "The Death of Brand Loyalty: Cultural Shifts Mean It's Gone Forever," July 25, 2016.

The erosion of consumer loyalty among the most esteemed brands represents a changed philosophy of buying. The standard for brand switching is **no longer the failure of a brand to perform**, but rather its inability to seem like an entirely new and interesting option at every single purchase cycle.

— **KATHLEEN KUSEK**
FORBES²

How can emerging technologies help us stay active and relevant in the **new customer-driven buying journey?**

The customer-driven purchase path leaves a trail of data in its wake as consumers navigate through search, social media, blogs, news outlets and brand sites. Marketers can leverage this path both by injecting themselves into new journey touchpoints and by mining data to understand which tactics and campaigns consumers respond favorably to.

Bots are just one new tactic designed to meet customers where they are with convenient answers. The best ones may vary, but the point is that you need to help ensure that you're present wherever your customers are. You need to be participating in relevant conversations and cultivating ongoing relationships to better serve more relevant information.

3. Flurry, "On Their Tenth Anniversary, Mobile Apps Start Eating Their Own," January 12, 2017.
4. Digiday, "WTF is WeChat? A guide for brands and publishers," April 8, 2016.

394%

Time spent in social and messaging apps **grew by 394%** in 2016.³

697 MILLION

WeChat has **697 million monthly active users** who enjoy its unique privacy, mobile payment and content marketing capabilities.⁴

How can data help us **understand customers** on a deeper, more personal level?

Channels are no longer acting as information silos, and treating them as such is a grave mistake for marketers. Connecting and integrating data from multiple channels is the best way to see a more complete picture of your customers — who they are, how they shop and why they buy. Businesses today need to prioritize a seamless, personalized, cross-channel customer experience in which different marketing channels support and flow into each other.

Marketers are looking to leverage more data about customers so they can target the right users and present them with personalized messages and offers. Organizations that want to communicate with customers in this real-time fashion — such as the 43% of customers researching products while they're in a store⁵ — will need to learn how to leverage customer intent. Intent signals gathered from search, web behavior, engagement with bots and the like, allow marketers to provide the personalized communication today's customers have now come to expect.

⁵ Wordstream, "8 Super-Fascinating Digital Marketing Stats Revealed at SMX East," January 11, 2016.

⁶ Evergage, "Consumers Want Personalization: Stats Roundup," October 31, 2016.

⁷ McKinsey & Company, "How retailers can keep up with consumers," October 2013.

15%

Gartner predicts that by 2020, smart personalization engines used to recognize customer intent will **enable digital businesses to increase profits by up to 15%.**⁶

35%

of Amazon's revenue is generated by its recommendations.⁷

Are there foundational ways we can and should be **preparing to embrace disruption?**

Many organizations are eliminating CMOs and introducing Customer Experience Officers in their stead. Under these new titles, marketing leaders are carving out a larger ownership role in the organization's customer experience at every touchpoint, including, but not limited to, the marketing arena. Words are powerful, and this semantic shift demonstrates the level of importance the C-suite attributes to the role customer experience plays in the bottom line.

That's not the only place where blurring the lines is proving to be profitable. Talk of greater collaboration between sales and marketing has been brewing for years, but we're beginning to see it come to fruition as the two departments continue to identify more common ground.

At the same time, the expanding ability to gather and analyze data is helping marketing mature from a softer art to a harder science that can be built on, analyzed by and attributed with real data. As the marketing function begins to make more technology-based decisions, it will continue to acquire larger shares of the organizational budget. In addition, CMOs and CTOs will need to become stronger allies and drive their teams forward by working more closely together. This shift makes marketers more accountable and, in turn, is earning them a more significant seat at the boardroom table.

67%

of companies say they prioritize **cross-channel integration** of marketing activities,

BUT ONLY 30%

are facilitating integrated marketing using **cross-functional** teams.⁸

1/3

In a pair of studies surveying enterprise decision-makers across seven industry verticals, Frost & Sullivan found that **collaboration accounted for more than one-third** of successes and failures.⁹

8. Marketing Land, "Digital Marketing Integration: The Impact of Cross-Channel and Content," June 2, 2015.

9. Frost & Sullivan, "Frost & Sullivan Unveils Groundbreaking ROI Tool That Guarantees Better Business Performance," December 8, 2015.

What should we look for in a marketing partner to help us keep pace with **new trends and innovations**?

The company you keep on the path through digital transformation can determine your success. Look for a partner who will help you navigate wisely and draw from the best innovations along the way. To select a true partner rather than a vendor, look for partners that have open platforms that allow you and others to participate. Find one that's open to providing insights within its platform, or one that will allow you to bring in your own data, for an enhanced ability to optimize campaigns. Look for a company that can share insights with you that only they can provide, and that are most relevant to your business.

Ideally, your partners should bring a breadth of assets to the table to help you through the digital transformation — cloud products, productivity products and devices that work well together to allow your business to evolve with the innovations that will help you thrive wherever the digital transformation leads you. There's no need to go "all in" with a single partner; select a diverse group of those with the best insights and solutions to help steer your company successfully through the changes to come.

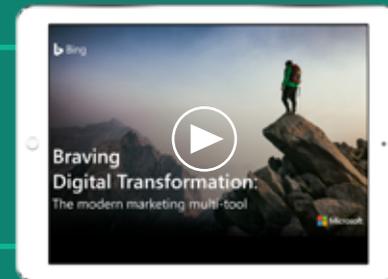
44%

In a global survey of managers and executives conducted by MIT Sloan Management Review and Deloitte, just **44%** say their organizations are **adequately preparing** for the **digital disruptions to come**.¹⁰

¹⁰. Talking New Media, "Study examines digital disruption in business, a problem publishers should be all too familiar with," July 26, 2016.

By answering these questions, you can assess how prepared your organization is to thrive in the age of digital disruption and determine the next steps to take in your transformation journey. **Learn how** other successful marketers are adapting and embracing these emerging technologies by downloading our eBook or audiobook:

**“Braving Digital Transformation:
The modern marketing multi-tool.”**





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