

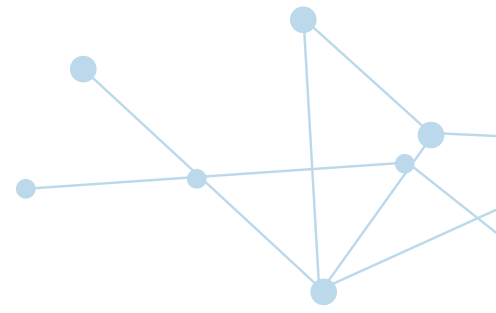


ORACLE

# Turning the Customer Journey Inside Out

Why brands need to realign themselves with today's digital audience

# Achieve innovation through collaboration



Brands increasingly find themselves playing catch-up. Over the past decade, they've watched as digital and mobile technologies completely transformed how customers engage with them, and today innovations including Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Virtual Reality (VR) are further blurring the boundaries between "human" and digital interaction.

The difficulty for brands is to adapt to change and embrace new digital channels while still delivering personalized customer experiences. This is where many have fallen short, even as they embrace new technologies.

Our previous report, [Can Virtual Experiences Replace Reality](#), revealed that while a majority of brands plan to invest in AI and VR by 2020, most are ill-prepared to actually deliver on the promise of these innovations because they don't have the connected systems or strategies in place to deliver relevant experiences based on current customer data.

Meanwhile, online access to a virtually limitless bank of competitor content and third-party research has empowered customers to wrestle control of the buying journey away from brands. Our survey found that 40% of sales organizations are seeing customers do more research on their own before making a purchase.

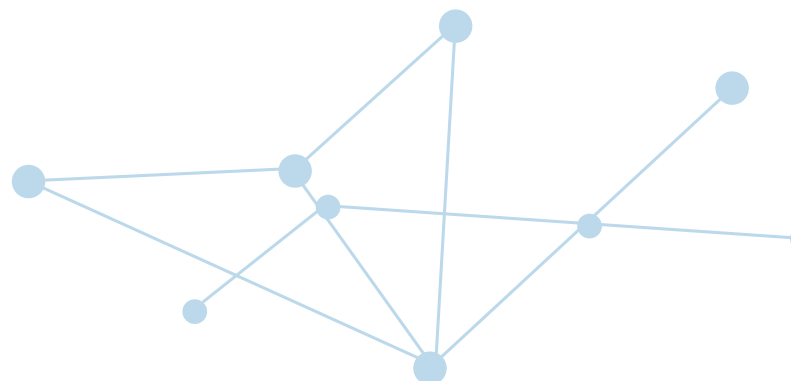
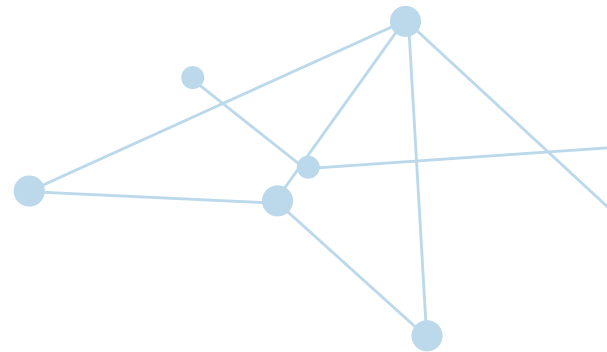
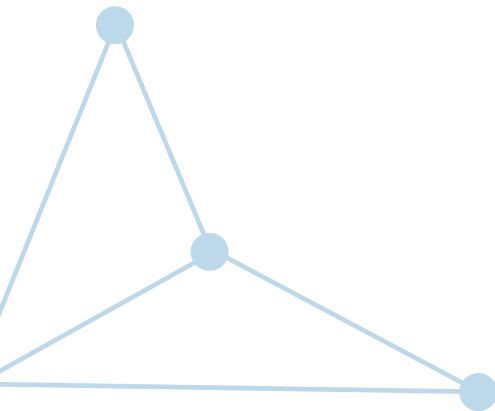
This gives sales teams even less time to influence buyer behavior and requires marketers to craft campaigns that are more in-tune with the needs of sales. Similarly, service teams are expected to be aware of each customer's history with the brand so they can resolve issues quickly and conveniently. In short, the boundaries between customer-facing teams are no longer clear-cut and will continue to fade away as the sales organizations continue their digital transformation.

Brands have never had to work harder to get relevant messages in front of the right people at the opportune moment. This requires them to be more adaptable and nimble, which is where technologies like AI and predictive analytics show their true value, but sales organizations need to transform themselves from the inside out to get the most from these innovations.

In this report, we explore how marketing, sales, and service teams can make better use of data and collaborate more closely to align themselves with the new customer journey. We also highlight how predictive analysis of customer data helps brands become more adaptable and strategic in the way they engage with their audience. Finally, we explain why brands must move away from outdated metrics and measure themselves against outcomes that reflect the way people actually engage with digital channels.



**“Brands have never had to work harder to get relevant messages in front of the right people at the opportune moment”**



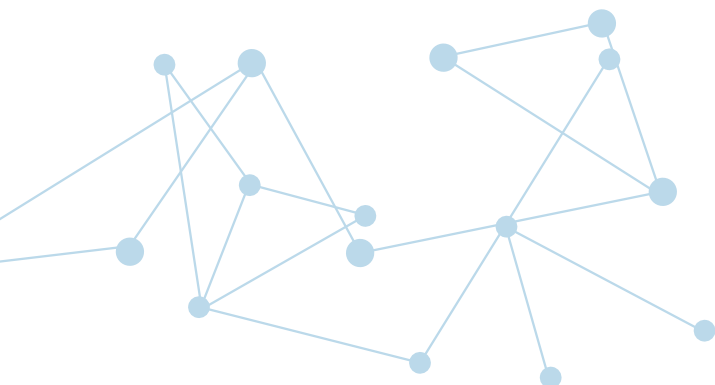
# Keeping pace with innovation

Brands are racing to outdo each other by using new technologies to engage their audience. From [Jaguar Land Rover](#) building VR into the showroom experience to [Pizza Hut](#) allowing customers to make orders via a chatbot, companies have made it clear they are ready to experiment.

**“Almost half of brands admit new digital channels and smartphones have caused the single greatest change in how customers engage with them”**

However, many companies are still catching up to the mobile revolution of the past several years. Almost half of brands admit new digital channels and smartphones have caused the single greatest change in how customers engage with them, but delivering relevant and seamless experiences through these platforms in a seamless way continues to be a challenge.

This is down to a persistent lack of alignment between marketing, sales and service teams that is now being accentuated by our digital shopping habits. In addition to the need for greater collaboration between teams, brands also need to foster closer alignment in the way teams use customer data, technology platforms, and the growing range of channels favoured by their audience.



A company's website, digital marketing content and digital channels represent just a fraction of the information resource available to customers. Forty percent of the brands say people now do more research on their own before making a purchase, and 35% say customers prefer to make a purchase or manage service issues without ever speaking to an associate.

The impact of this change has been transformative. In the B2B space, sales teams have to meet increasingly ambitious targets while getting less face-time with customers (if any). Meanwhile, marketing content is being held to a higher standard of transparency and relevance by customers who have been empowered by access to competitor messaging and independent reviews.

## Which of the following statements do you agree with?

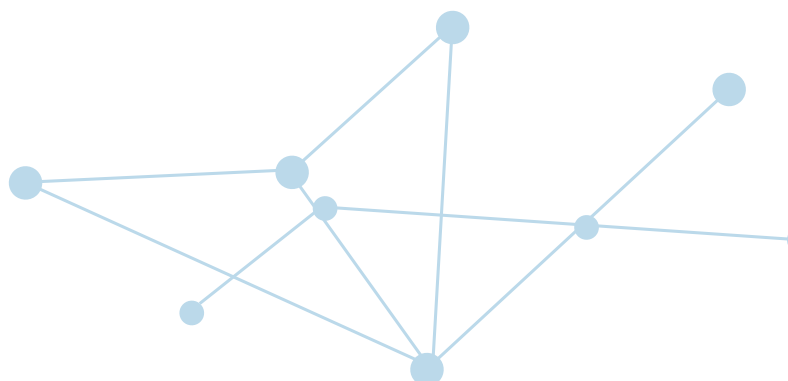
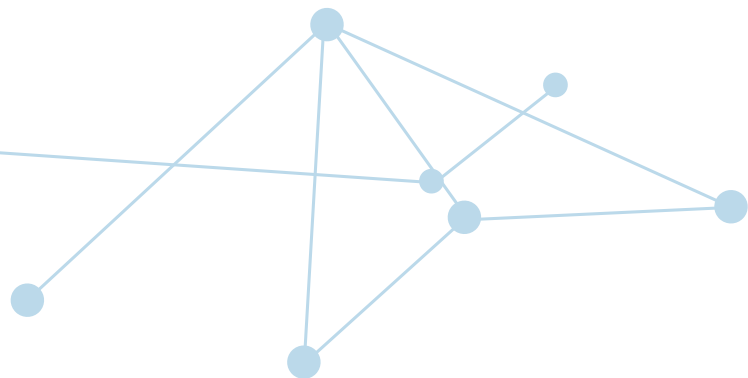
|                                                                                                                         | TOTAL | UK  | France | Netherlands | South Africa |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----|--------|-------------|--------------|
| Base: All Respondents                                                                                                   | 800   | 200 | 200    | 200         | 200          |
| Digital and mobile technologies have caused the greatest change in how our customers/prospects interact with us         | 48%   | 54% | 41%    | 46%         | 50%          |
| Our customers/prospects increasingly want to interact with us over social media                                         | 46%   | 52% | 37%    | 44%         | 50%          |
| Speed and a frictionless experience are top priorities for our customers                                                | 44%   | 48% | 36%    | 41%         | 50%          |
| We are able to spot new trends in customer behaviour before our competitors                                             | 43%   | 50% | 31%    | 41%         | 51%          |
| Our customers/prospects do more research on their own before making a purchase                                          | 40%   | 55% | 30%    | 33%         | 43%          |
| Word of mouth has become more crucial to our success in the age of social media                                         | 40%   | 46% | 35%    | 37%         | 41%          |
| Delivering digital self-service for customers is one of our top priorities                                              | 39%   | 44% | 29%    | 38%         | 46%          |
| Our customers/prospects prefer to complete a purchase or resolve an issue without speaking to an associate, if possible | 35%   | 43% | 30%    | 30%         | 34%          |
| Our sales teams spend less time speaking with customers/prospects before a purchase is made than they did in the past   | 34%   | 33% | 36%    | 30%         | 38%          |
| Our customers/prospects are less inclined to come see products in person before purchasing them                         | 30%   | 32% | 26%    | 28%         | 34%          |

For their part, consumer-facing brands need to bring their marketing, sales and service teams together as a cohesive whole that delivers excellent customer experiences across online, mobile, and social channels, and via new service platforms like chatbots.

Not only do customer interactions have to be relevant and seamless, they also have to be worthy of an informed customer-base. Brands often only have a first impression to win prospects over before they move on to a competitor.

Unless marketing, sales and service teams focus on the common goal of serving a digital audience through personalized experiences they will have little hope of engaging customers, much less influencing their behaviour.

**“Not only do customer interactions have to be relevant and seamless, they also have to be worthy of an informed customer-base”**



# It starts with a collaborative culture

Sales and marketing teams know that a digital transformation requires them to work more closely together, and this starts with a cultural change. Nearly one-third of brands admit their corporate culture stands in the way of marketing, sales and service teams aligning priorities.

There are of course operational and technological barriers to address. For instance, 33% of companies admit their technologies limit the ability for sales and marketing to collaborate. Similarly, customer-facing teams need to align on their approach to data and building customer profiles if they are to deliver the smooth experiences buyers come to expect.

However, unless there is a directive from the top down and an investment aligning the business there will be limited buy-in from sales and marketing teams to embrace change.

## What steps can brands take to bridge the sales-marketing divide?

### 1. Build a core team

A small team made up of just a few representatives from marketing, sales and service will ensure all views are represented while making the transformation process smoother and more efficient.

### 2. Align departmental goals

Common definitions of success ensure that marketing, sales and service are working towards a common outcome. Crucially, brands should set measurable goals with a concrete timeline. It's not enough to simply say everyone should focus on converting more leads.

### 3. Work with a consistent view of data

People still receive emails imploring them to buy products that they've already purchased from the same company. From a customer's perspective, there is no excuse for this type of communication breakdown between marketing, sales and service teams.

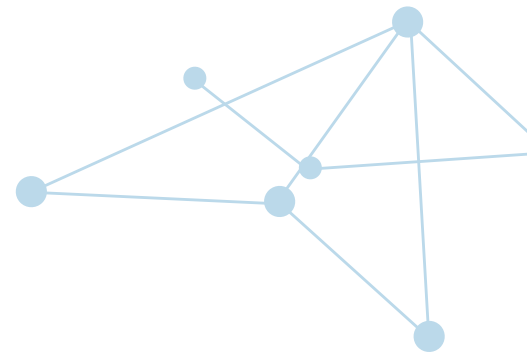
### 4. Get everyone on one integrated platform

Integrated tools, be they CRM or marketing automation technologies, are the best way to ensure marketing, sales and service teams all have a single, consistent view of customers.

### 5. Assemble, Analyze, Adjust

Brands ultimately want to track campaign performance from lead to purchase so they can accurately measure ROI. It's equally important that they learn from experience and use any new insights to shape future marketing and sales strategies. The key to standing out in a crowded market is to constantly refine one's approach.

# Embrace individuality through technology



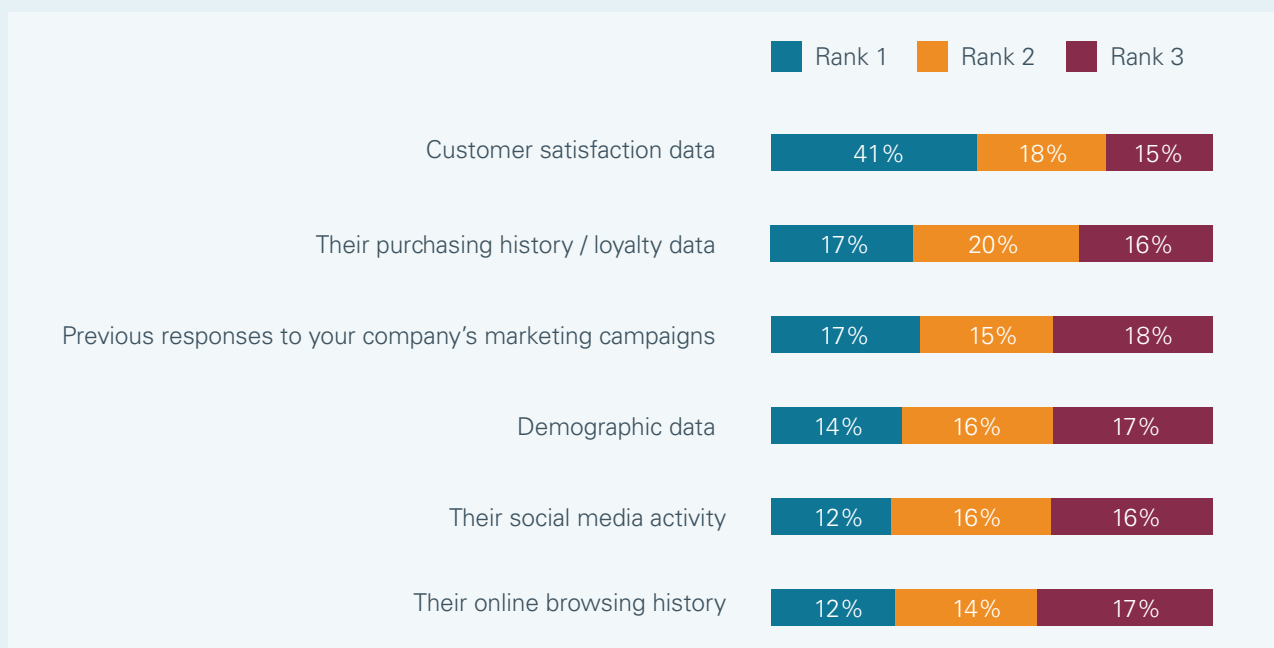
With marketing, sales and service teams united in their approach, they also need the technologies and analytics capabilities to align on their execution.

This requires an open exchange of data between teams, and between customer touchpoints. Whether they're viewing an advert, engaging with a community manager on social or trying to resolve a service issue, customers expect brands to know their history and preferences. This also holds true for automated platforms like chatbots, which must draw on customer profiles to deliver a relevant service.

To achieve this fluidity of information, marketing, sales and service teams need a single view of data, which in turn requires them to work off the same integrated platform. With this, any updates made to a customer profile by one team are reflected across the business. Importantly, AI-enabled services that are fed directly by customer data will have access to accurate information.

A free flow of data is crucial, but so is making sure marketing, sales and service teams have access to the right information to build robust customer profiles. The figure below lists the most common data sources brands currently use when building a profile:

## Most important data sources for brands when building customer profiles



Tellingly, although brands say customer satisfaction data is most important in helping them build customer profiles, it is also the data source they most struggle to include in their analyses (see table above).

Access to more information has been a boon for marketers and sales teams, but combining

this data to inform their strategies and align them with customer buying habits remains difficult. Thirty-five percent of brands admit their technology systems cannot fully support their analytics needs and 32% struggle to centralize data from sales, marketing and service with customer data.

## Which of the following statements do you agree with?

|                                                                                                            | TOTAL | UK  | France | Netherlands | South Africa |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----|--------|-------------|--------------|
| Base: All Respondents                                                                                      | 800   | 200 | 200    | 200         | 200          |
| We compete with a growing number of more agile businesses                                                  | 49%   | 46% | 48%    | 43%         | 60%          |
| We look to successful start-ups in our field to inform our own customer experience strategies              | 42%   | 44% | 42%    | 32%         | 48%          |
| Innovation in our company is limited by outdated sales/marketing technology systems                        | 35%   | 36% | 34%    | 33%         | 36%          |
| Innovation in our company is limited by a traditional mind-set                                             | 35%   | 30% | 36%    | 37%         | 36%          |
| We are behind our competitors when it comes to delivering exceptional customer experience                  | 40%   | 55% | 30%    | 33%         | 30%          |
| We do not have the collaboration tools in place for sales and marketing teams to work together effectively | 31%   | 26% | 32%    | 28%         | 40%          |



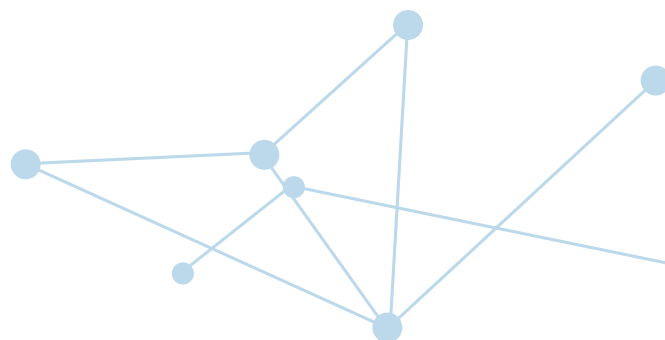
A unified platform will also help sales organisations bring structure and context to all the data they manage so they can deliver genuinely personalized experiences to each customer. CRM data, information on peoples' mobile purchasing journey, insights on how

market trends affect sales – all these data sources are mined in different formats and quantified in different ways (if at all), and unless brands can analyze them together as a cohesive whole they will be working off an incomplete picture of their customers.

## How **Panasonic Business** brought marketing and sales together through data

Panasonic Business was leading the market for ruggedized laptops and tablets for B2B users, but reached a point where limited visibility between marketing and sales teams was slowing down its lead conversion. Equally, old-school reporting processes were making it hard for sales managers to measure performance.

**Moving to a SaaS cloud platform with Oracle** allowed Panasonic Business' sales and marketing team to work more closely together and gain a complete view of the customer throughout the buying journey. The system also ensures marketing leads are passed to sales more quickly so they have a better chance of closing deals, and gives sales leaders a more complete view of how teams are performing.



# Setting outcomes that make a difference

The overlap between marketing and sales will only grow as marketers are increasingly tasked with generating revenue. In the UK, for instance, marketing budgets rose for the [17th time in as many quarters](#) in early 2017, despite a rising tide of uncertainty among businesses in all sectors.

To make good on the boardroom's investment, marketers need to rethink their traditional metrics and outcomes. Insular KPIs such as impressions do little to change customer behaviour. Similarly, a high engagement rate for a campaign is of minimal value if it doesn't drive conversions.

Luke Williams, head of Customer Experience (CX) at Qualtrics, recently noted in Harvard Business Review that one of the main reasons CX programs fail is that [brands take their tracking metrics at face value](#). A rising score is interpreted as an improvement even if it doesn't necessarily contribute to the company's intended outcome.

Some metrics are also susceptible to variation, making context as important as the numbers themselves. For instance, email open rates for a travel company will be lower during the summer when more customers are on holiday, and this reality needs to be factored into how marketing teams measure their success.

The most successful brands set value-based metrics that reflect the way people interact with digital channels. They are brands like [T-Mobile Netherlands](#), who made customer happiness one of its core KPIs, and Aviva, who managed to embed engaging customer experiences directly in its digital channels.

The way companies approach metrics is expanding even further as they employ new technologies and approaches to engage customers. This requires brands to pursue outcomes that promote innovation, in addition to financial and behavioural KPIs. These might include the development of "X" quality new ideas per quarter, the roll-out of at least one of these, and a set of desired outcomes for these more experimental projects.

## How Aviva became a CX superhero

Insurance giant, Aviva, didn't want to nudge discrete metrics. Instead, it focused on delighting customers with a gamified digital experience on its own channels

[Aviva's Save Smarter website](#) invites users to answer a set of questions based on the Myers Briggs psychological model so they can find out what kind of spender they are. Each prospect is then assigned a 'superhero' persona – for instance the 'Dark Striver', who wants to stay on top of bills but is occasionally tempted to

buy extras they can't afford – and given tips to better manage their finances before being directed to relevant products.

By building its entire experience with the aim of boosting customer engagement, Aviva has found a way to captivate its audience and made a strong case for putting outcomes above narrow metrics to make a real impact.

# Fantastic results and how to find them

An outcome-based approach to crafting campaigns is the key to influencing customers, but marketing and sales still need to prove the impact of their activities in the boardroom.

Forty-six percent of brands believe their sales and marketing teams are able to measure engagement with their campaigns and qualify success. That said, their approach deserves closer scrutiny as success continues to mean different things to sales and marketing leaders.

As customers take more of the buying journey into their own hands and use more digital channels to do their research, it becomes increasingly difficult for brands to accurately measure campaign success or attribute this to any particular person or team. Additionally, sales and marketing teams are left blinded by science as they try to link conversions to each digital asset downloaded, email opened and webinar attended.

The danger is that data can be cut and analyzed to serve the purposes of whoever is doing the measurement. Brands need to ensure all teams

are working off a single, consistent version of the truth if they want to accurately trace a customer's path down the funnel.

A consistent approach to data also stops departments from stepping on each other's toes, and will help ensure they work collectively towards metrics that are both valuable and tangible.



## How PSA became a customer-centric business

PSA group, the leading car manufacture behind Peugeot, DS and Citroën, wanted to make the transition from its website to its showrooms to its service centres as seamless and convenient as possible for customers. This required its marketing, sales and service teams to have the latest view of each customer's needs and history with the brand.

Using Oracle CX Cloud, the company was able to **deliver 360-degree experiences** to its customers in 18 countries. The integrated platform gives PSA's employees a single, consistent customer view and allows them to address peoples' individual needs on their preferred channel. Crucially, PSA has reduced its customer response times by half and boosted its own productivity 75%.

# Divided we fall

Brands have been espousing the need to eliminate the silos that divide their sales, marketing and service teams for over a decade, but our research found that they have done little to act.

Forty percent of brands say changes in customer behaviour have made alignment between sales and marketing teams more important than ever, and 44% admit lead conversion is more successful when these functions are aligned.

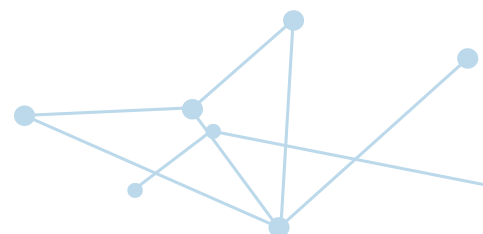
Despite agreeing on the need for change, sales and marketing teams continue to work separately and pursue their own objectives. Nearly 40% of brands admit their sales and marketing and service teams build customer profiles independently of each other, and more than one third say each team works completely independently.

## Which of the following statements do you agree with?



Brands need to be as joined up on the inside as they appear to customers on the outside. It will take multiple building blocks to achieve this, including a cultural commitment to innovation in the boardroom, a consistent approach to customer data, and a joined up approach to managing digital channels.

This is admittedly no small task – 30% of brands say it would require a major organizational restructure – but if left alone the structural and technological divisions between teams will only become wider.



# A little less conversation, a little more action

Buyers have no patience for the divisions between sales, marketing and service, nor do they have any reason to care about each team's accountability to the business. Regardless of how innovative the medium, they simply want brands to offer them the products and services they want, at the right time and via the right channel.

**“Even the most cutting-edge virtual or automated experiences will fall flat if brands just view them as another way to push out generic content”**

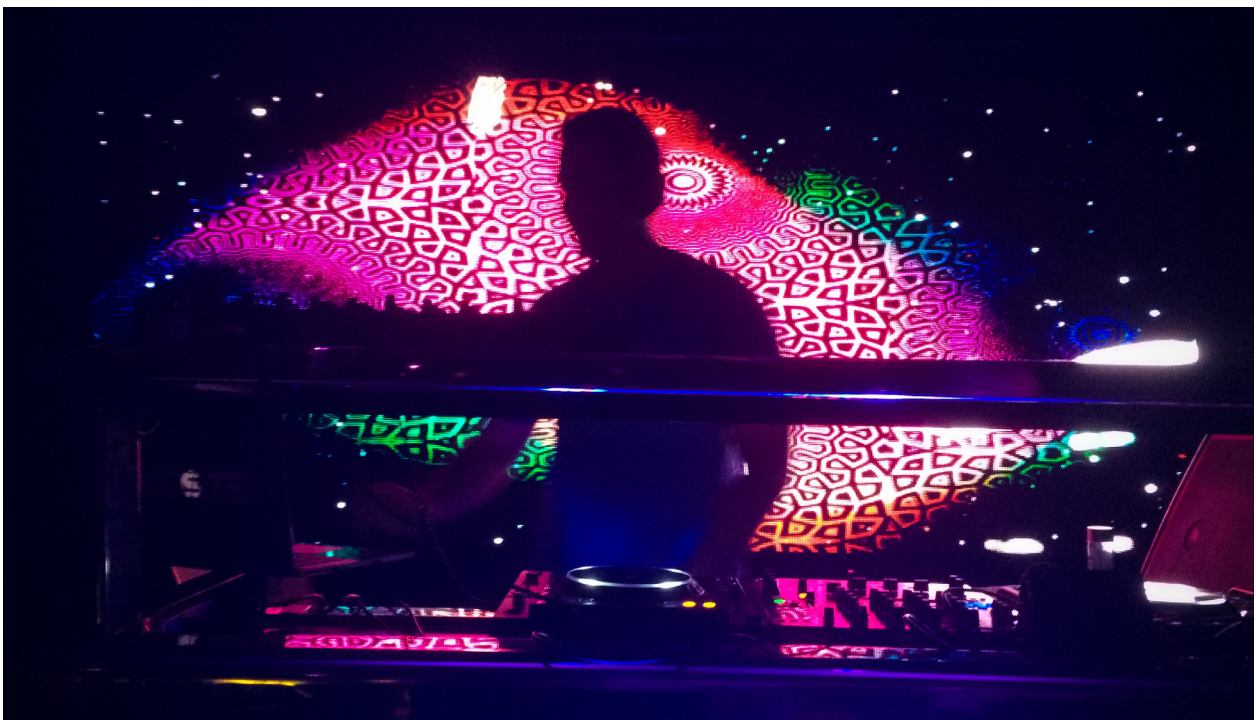
*- Daryn Mason, Oracle CX Evangelist*

Aligning the business in this way may require major organizational changes, but integrated

platforms built on cloud-based systems give brands the flexibility to undergo transformation at their own pace. They allow sales, marketing and service teams to easily try out new tactics, monitor their performance and continue refining their approach based on how customers respond.

This is the way marketing and sales are headed. Relationships between businesses and customers will be built on a constant feedback loop that ensures campaigns and sales activities are constantly tailored to their audience.

Brands today have both the drive and technologies they need to bridge the divides that have kept them at arm's length from customers. The time has now come to turn years of words into action and ensure that innovative services and advances like VR and AI are used to their full potential.



## About the research

Oracle partnered with Coleman Parkes to survey 800 CMOs, CSOs, senior marketers, and senior sales executives across France, the Netherlands, South Africa and the UK. Respondents were also evenly split between three industries: Manufacturing and High-Technology, Online Retail, and Telecommunications.

## About Oracle

Oracle offers a comprehensive and fully integrated stack of cloud applications and platform services. For more information about Oracle (NYSE:ORCL), visit [www.oracle.com](http://www.oracle.com).

Find out more about how Oracle is transforming CX for its customers [here](#).

Find out about Oracle's CX Solutions [here](#).

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