

Consumer Products Engagement

The Global Consumer Products Engagement Report UK Edition

Mapping Customer
Engagement Maturity

SAP Emarsys

in association with

Deloitte.





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Executive Summary: The Engagement Era

Consumer products (CP) brands are under immense pressure: inflation driving up costs, supply chain disruptions, market saturation, and more. And perhaps the most intense pressure comes from consumer brand loyalty — or rather, the lack of it.

Based on our decades-long experience partnering with 1,500+ brands to provide personalised consumer experiences, we've found that consumers today expect more in exchange for their loyalty. For this reason, we sought to

explore how digital transformation is impacting the status quo of marketing, both for consumers and brands. What we found is that transformation is already underway:

Marketing has entered the *Engagement Era*.

In this era, brands differentiate themselves by creating a dialogue with consumers, taking an omnichannel approach across the entire customer lifecycle. For this type of engagement, a foundation of connected data across every touchpoint of a business — as well as the ability to understand and leverage that data — is essential to success.

How are CP brands navigating this new era? What are their priorities around enabling their data strategy, and what role does AI play? Which channels are brands relying on to connect with consumers? Are they going beyond traditional marketing (like TV ads) to engage on emerging platforms?

On the consumer side, how do consumers feel about brands? How are Gen Z shoppers impacting consumption?

These questions and more were the drivers behind this Global Consumer Products Engagement Report, which was conducted in association with Deloitte. This edition of the report pulls out insights specific to the UK. We hope the findings here will prove insightful for you as you work towards your engagement transformation.



Sara Richter
CMO, SAP Emarsys

Key Findings

UK Marketer Highlights

87% of all CP marketers believe they must adapt to change “faster than ever before.”

82% of all CP marketers believe they will need to “significantly transform” their organisation’s customer engagement approach in 2025.

83% of all CP marketers think AI will be essential for retaining existing customers.

Only 41% of all CP marketers have fully integrated their CX, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), and marketing technologies.

UK Consumer Highlights

63% of Gen Z say they don’t care about “brands” as long as a product meets their needs — more than any previous generation.

62% of consumers have switched to own-label alternatives because they are more affordable.

75% of consumers are put off by brands asking for data but not explaining how it will be used.

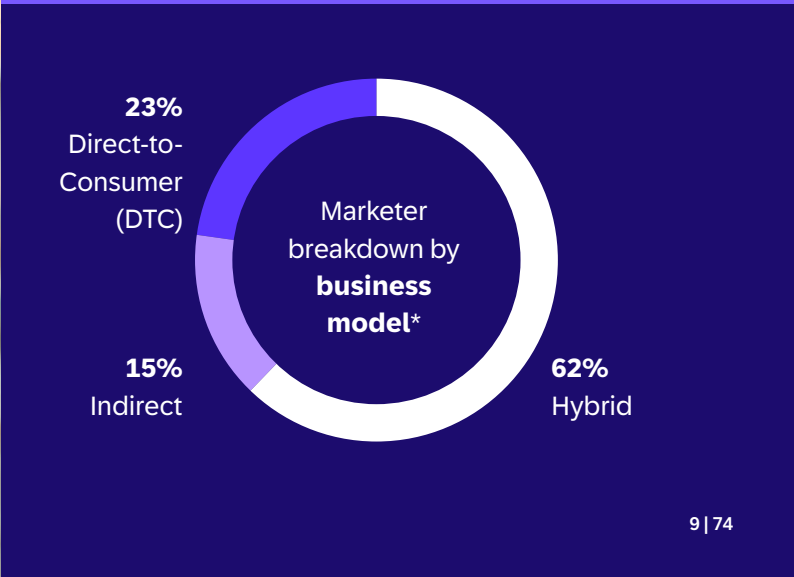
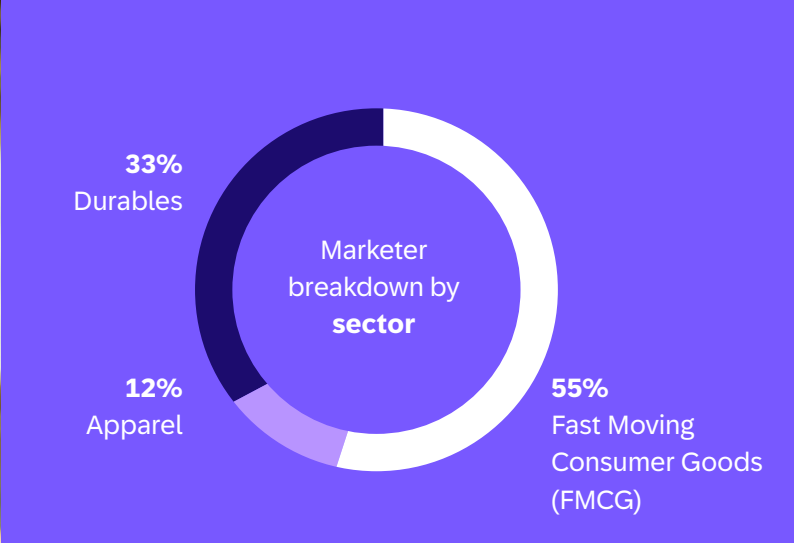
Only 15% of consumers indicated that they haven’t cut back on buying anything.

Methodology

This research was conducted by Opinium as part of a global research among a sample of 14,000 general respondents and 750 senior marketers across the United Kingdom (UK), US, Germany, Australia, UAE, Taiwan, and Brazil. Opinium abides by and employs members of the Market Research Society and follows the MRS code of conduct which is based on the ESOMAR principles. Opinium is also a member of the British Polling Council.

The consumer research was conducted among a sample of 2,000 general respondents across the UK. The data was collected between 20–28 February 2025.

The marketer research was conducted among a sample of 100 senior decision makers in the marketing teams of enterprise-level businesses with 500+ employees and with \$250m+ annual turnover across the UK. The data was collected between 3–24 February 2025.



Commentary from Deloitte

Consumer products brands face a paradox: customers expect more personalised experiences but are increasingly selective about how they engage. The Global Consumer Products Report decodes this complexity, offering vital insights for companies navigating the new rules of customer connection.

Among the various engagement trends, the dichotomy between marketer enthusiasm and consumer selectivity regarding AI stands out, representing both a challenge and opportunity for forward-thinking brands.

Our experience confirms this nuanced reality. We've seen substantial enthusiasm for AI-generated content, particularly in three key areas:

1. **Strategic personalisation where customers want it:** AI excels at creating tailored content across locales, segments, and product catalogues — precisely where consumers actually want personalisation rather than simulated interactions.
2. **Rapid content updates for market responsiveness:** The technology can enable swift adaptation to changing market dynamics, such as seasonal shifts and emerging trends.
3. **Faster delivery with human quality control:** While AI reduces time-to-market, thoughtful human guardrails remain critical for brand consistency and quality control.

This capability gap between AI's production capacity and traditional content creation represents a significant advantage for early adopters who balance automation with authentic brand voice. Forward-thinking organisations can establish frameworks that maximise AI's efficiency while maintaining the human-centred experiences consumers prefer.

By deploying AI where it adds value while respecting consumer preferences, brands can transform their engagement capabilities in an increasingly competitive marketplace.



Russell McLean
Principal, Deloitte Consulting LLP

The Maturity Index Score





CEM: The Maturity Index Score

Leveraging our 25 years of experience in orchestrating consumer engagement, we've developed a scoring system to analyse how advanced each respondent's engagement practices are. We scored each brand against our **Customer Engagement Maturity (CEM)*** matrix, which is based on the brand's ongoing investment in:



Connected
data strategy



Omnichannel
engagement



Use of
email marketing



Real-time
personalisation



AI and
automation
adoption



Customer
loyalty

***Customer Engagement Maturity (CEM) Levels:** Given the sample sizes, the figures for CEM in this report are indicative. High vs low CEM can be analysed robustly at a global level.

CP sectors with the highest CEM scores

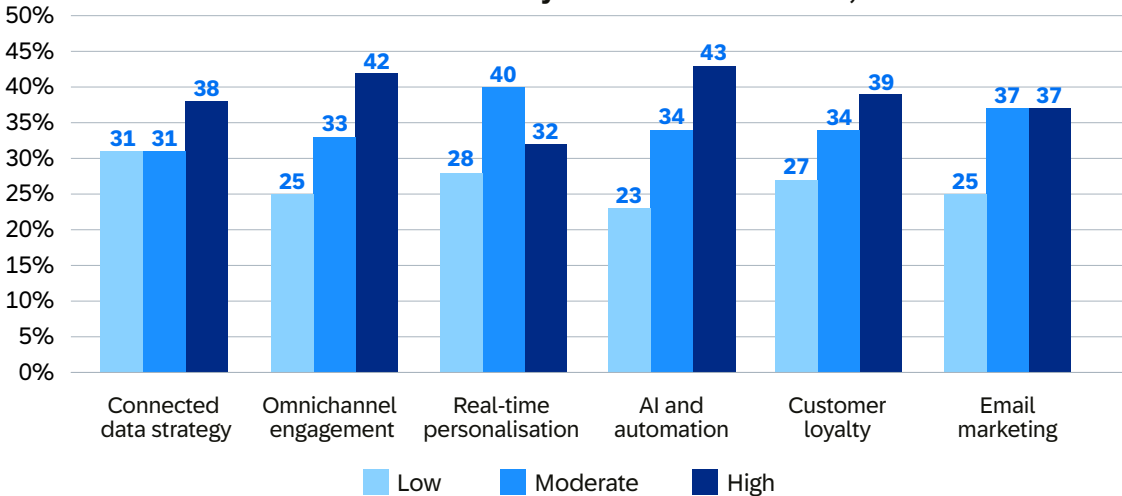
- 1. Consumer packaged goods (CPG)
- 2. Automotive
- 3. Wholesale

CP sectors with the lowest CEM scores

- 1. Manufacturing
- 2. Retail
- 3. Electronics

	Engagement Adoption	Engagement Capabilities
Low CEM Score	Minimal adoption of customer engagement technologies and strategies.	Customer data tends to be siloed, and marketers struggle to track and understand consumer behaviours. They lack real-time visibility and have limited access to advanced tools for AI and automation. Driving consumer loyalty is a major pain point.
Moderate CEM Score	Medium level of adoption of customer engagement technologies and strategies.	Brands have some insight into consumer data and offer basic personalisation, but cross-channel interactions may be disjointed from the consumer’s perspective. These brands often rely heavily on discounting to drive loyalty, struggling to develop deeper brand affinity.
High CEM Score	Advanced in their adoption of engagement technologies and strategies.	High maturity brands can rapidly adapt to changes in the market, and they use integrated data to understand their consumers and drive true brand loyalty. They leverage strategies and tools like AI to deliver personalised, omnichannel engagement in real time, at scale.

Customer Engagement — Features and Maturity in Consumer Products, UK



Trends for 2025



Consumer Products: Five Trends Defining 2025

The results of this research underscore the volatility of the CP market, not only in the UK but around the world. These trends are pushing brands and marketers away from using their traditional strategies like price hikes and increased ad spending. Continual price increases in the face of fierce competition for consumer loyalty becomes unsustainable, and the cost of digital advertising has only gone up.

Savvy CP marketers know that survival in this Era of Engagement means more drastic change is not only essential but in fact urgent.

In the following sections, we'll break down these five top trends that have become the driving forces for innovation, opening new opportunities for marketers to leap forward and raise their engagement maturity:

1

Consumers have become harder to engage... and retain

2

AI and the demand for personalisation-driven innovation

3

Consumer channels become more varied and volatile

4

Consumers push back on “dark data”

5

Gen Z shakes up consumer spending and saving

87%

of all CP marketers believe they must adapt to change “faster than ever before.”

63%

Nearly 2 out of 3 Gen Z say they don't care about “brands” as long as a product meets their needs — more than any previous generation.

Trend 1: Consumers have become harder to engage... and retain

Before brands can engage consumers with meaningful experiences, marketers first need to understand those consumers. What messages interest them? What channels are they using? When are they likely to engage? What are their spending habits?

That's a lot to ask of CP brands, especially considering the point of purchase is indirect.

86%

of all CP marketers say personalisation will be a key differentiator for consumer products in 2025.

67%

of all CP marketers believe consumer behaviour is becoming harder to predict.

67%

of all CP marketers say it's becoming harder for consumer products to engage meaningfully with customers.

From the consumer's perspective, managing the cost of living takes priority over their loyalty to a CP brand. Many premium products can potentially be replaced with own-label (private/store label) alternatives. With 64% of consumers switching to these store brands, marketers must adapt to the shift in loyalty, developing engagement strategies that will deepen brand affinity.

62%

More than half of consumers have switched to own-label alternative products because they are more affordable.

58%

More than half of consumers believe that if they buy directly from a product's website, it should cost less.

36%

Only about a third of consumers actively advocate for their favourite brands in public.

19%

of consumers will only read an email subject from brands before deleting, while 31% won't make it further than the first 1-2 sentences.

Areas where UK consumers are cutting back on spending

50%

Eating out or takeaway meals

30%

Subscriptions (e.g. streaming services, meal kits)

43%

Luxury and premium products

28%

Branded groceries (switching to own-label alternatives)

38%

Travel or holidays

22%

Fitness or wellness products (e.g. supplements, equipment)

38%

Big purchases (e.g. electronics, furniture)

35%

Non-essential items (e.g. beauty products, accessories)

18%

Eco-friendly or sustainable products (due to higher prices)



Ferrara.

“Our marketing teams are really looking to engage directly with consumers to provide them with content and campaigns, because we want happy brand fans.”



Dan Bartelsen,
Director of Information Technology Business
Partners for E-Commerce and Digital, Ferrara

Case Study

How Ferrara Sweetened Their Direct Consumer Engagement

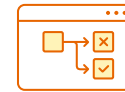
Ferrara is a leader in sweet snacking (including brands like NERDS, Jelly Belly, Trolli, SweeTARTS, and more), delighting customers with high-quality products and innovative creations.

Challenge:

Operating in a competitive market with volatile consumer channels and increasingly savvy consumers, Ferrara sought to create a modern omnichannel experience but was limited by legacy technologies. They needed a way to modernise their consumer engagement platforms and data management systems to effectively address evolving market demands and consumer preferences.

Solution:

By partnering with SAP and Deloitte and pivoting to a more data-informed and consumer-centric approach, Ferrara uncovered insights into their fan base, such as the fact that many enjoy Ferrara candies while gaming. Using their findings, the brand enhanced its consumer engagement strategies, resulting in better consumer retention and satisfaction. This also sets Ferrara in a position to easily scale and adapt to evolving consumer preferences and market conditions in the future.



Personalised Marketing

Utilising SAP Emarsys together with the SAP suite to effectively reveal hidden connections and deliver hyper-personalised experiences that not only engage consumers but convert them into true fans.



Unified Customer Profile

Deployed SAP Customer Identity and Access Management (CIAM) for B2C, SAP Customer Data Platform, and SAP Emarsys to create a unified and centralised customer profile across its scattered data bases.



Real-time Data Integration

Integrated consumer, retail, and supply chain insights using SAP HANA database and SAP Analytics for seamless data processing in real time.

The results

59%

increase
in contactable customers

20%

above industry average
open rates
for email campaigns

300%

fan growth
of Trolli brand

Trend 2

AI and the demand for personalisation-driven innovation


Artificial intelligence (AI) has been used in marketing for a long time now — SAP Emarsys introduced its first AI features more than a decade ago. However, in the past few years, AI has seen a meteoric rise in attention and widespread availability.

While marketers are enthusiastic about AI (80% believe AI will be essential for engaging new customers), consumers showed less keen interest, with only 8% indicating that they want brands to create more personal interactions with AI. This apparently low number could be a reflection of a lack of consumer awareness around the essential nature of AI for creating personalisation at scale.


The consumer appetite for personalised content was much greater, with 40% of consumer respondents wanting more personal deals and offers. To accomplish advanced personalisation at scale, marketers require the ability to predict and respond to consumer behaviour in real time while maximising their creative efficiency, which is why they're so keen on AI.

Marketers' views on AI


The increased awareness of AI, plus the proliferation of generative AI, means marketers have new tools on hand for developing campaigns and increasing their efficiency. Additionally, marketers are keenly aware that they may need to adapt rapidly as new data regulations come into effect in Europe (such as the EU AI Act) and around the world.



86% of all CP marketers say they are prepared to react quickly to new data regulations.




83% of all CP marketers think AI will be essential for retaining existing customers.




80% of all CP marketers believe AI will be essential for engaging new customers.

Consumers' views on AI


While nearly half of UK consumers perceive AI marketing as a tool that can get them desirable deals and offers, they don't perceive it as something that creates more personal interactions.



40% of consumers want more personal deals and offers.



36% of consumers want/value products or content created by AI (e.g. customised designs or tools).



8% want brands to create more personal interactions using AI.

Trend 3

Consumer channels become more varied and volatile

Supply chains haven't cornered the market on disruption — popular engagement channels can also be disrupted, sometimes drastically. We've recently seen the impact of disruptions to TikTok in the US market (and could still see more), and even here in the UK, 73% of CP marketers have been preparing for a possible TikTok ban.

Historically, CP brands have focused on traditional marketing (TV ads, print, radio, event sponsorships, etc.), and those channels will continue to be of value going forward. However, this research has revealed that there are other emerging channels beyond retail media that are impacting this industry.

Channels compete for limited audience attention, and consumers may change their preferences or adopt alternative social apps, as with Bluesky. The channel that a consumer

chooses for interaction may be different from the channel they use to research product information and make a purchasing decision (or even a repeat subscription).

New kinds of brand experiences are also disrupting the status quo. Shoppers are discovering options like immersive shopping via virtual reality, and they can replace an empty bottle of shampoo just by speaking aloud to their in-home voice assistant. Social media engagement has gone from being straightforward to trying to hit a moving target.

How are consumers using channels to increase savings?

52%

More than half of consumers have signed up to a loyalty card for consumer products to save on costs.

32%

1 in 3 customers are buying consumer products via repeat subscriptions to save on costs.

Are new and innovative shopping experiences driving engagement?

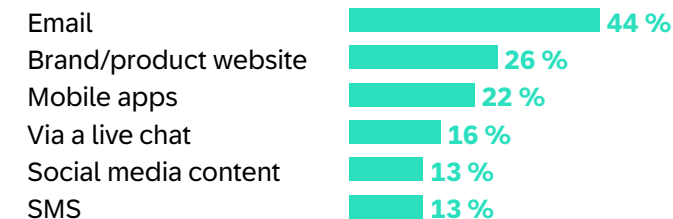
40%

of consumers value immersive shopping experiences (e.g. virtual reality or augmented reality).

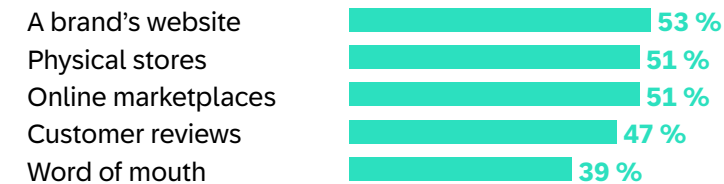
34%

1 in 3 consumers value marketing through voice assistants (e.g. Alexa or Google Assistant).

Which channels do consumers prefer for interacting with brands?



Which channels are consumers using to research new products?



Trend 4

Consumers push back on “dark data”

No consumer wants to share their personal data only for it to fall into a digital void, where it becomes what’s known as dark data. Dark data, in short, is data collected by marketers with no clear purpose or use, which is then also not used in a way that shows benefit to the consumer.

Not only is dark data an irritation for consumers, fostering doubt about their relationship with the brand, but it’s a waste of marketers’ resources. Marketers are essentially burning money on collecting and storing dark data — and this trend is especially concerning given the growing privacy regulations. As mentioned previously, 86% of all CP marketers say they are prepared to react quickly to new data regulations.

Having a data strategy that addresses dark data (gathering and storing only essential data) can help position marketers to address any regulations that may go into effect.

When customers share their data, they have a reasonable expectation of receiving value in exchange, and it’s up to marketers to deliver.

50%

Half of all CP marketers say their organisation suffers from “dark data” (data that is collected but not effectively used).

UK consumer expectations about data

84%

of consumers say it’s important that brands have a clear data privacy policy.

85%

of consumers are put off when brands ask for a lot of personal data.

75%

of consumers are put off by brands asking for data but not explaining how it will be used.

43%

of consumers feel they understand what they get in return for sharing their data with consumer brands.

43%

of consumers feel brands collect their data and don’t use it at all.

38%

of consumers think brands take too long to use their data in ways that benefit them.

Trend 5

Gen Z shakes up consumer spending and saving

It should come as no surprise that Gen Z, known as the first true digital natives, are accelerating digitisation at a rapid pace. Gen Zers are more engaged through mobile apps and influencers than any of the preceding generations.

The Engagement Era belongs to the upcoming generations more than any other, but each generation will have its own way of using digital channels. The ability to segment and personalise for the different generations will be critical for marketers who want to future-proof their engagement strategy.

Interestingly, **89%** of Gen Z respondents indicated that they've made spending cutbacks in some areas, more than any previous generation, while Boomers have been less aggressive, with **73%** saying they've made cutbacks in some area. Across all generations, only **15%** of consumers indicated that they haven't cut back on anything. The more consumers are looking to save, the greater the competition, and this is where personalised engagement will make a difference and help drive more purchasing decisions.





Browsing and Buying Habits in the UK	Gen Z Age 18-27	Millennials Age 28-43	Gen X Age 44-59	Boomer Age 60-78
Browse directly from a brand's app	43%	38%	33%	23%
Rely on influencer reviews or recommendations	32%	26%	11%	4%
Use social commerce platforms (e.g. Instagram Shop)	23%	28%	14%	4%
Browse a brand's website	44%	52%	53%	58%
Browse a physical store or shop	46%	41%	55%	60%
Use traditional customer reviews	44%	53%	47%	45%

UK Consumers' Likelihood to Cut Back on...	Gen Z Age 18-27	Millennials Age 28-43	Gen X Age 44-59	Boomer Age 60-78
Subscriptions (e.g. streaming services, meal kits)	38%	26%	30%	29%
Fitness or wellness products (e.g. supplements, equipment)	26%	23%	23%	21%
Eco-friendly or sustainable products	20%	19%	18%	19%
Eating out or takeaway meals	46%	43%	56%	54%
Big purchases (e.g. electronics, furniture)	34%	40%	40%	37%
Luxury or premium products	40%	45%	44%	41%
Travel or holidays	31%	43%	39%	37%
Branded groceries (switching to own-label alternatives)	26%	24%	32%	29%
Non-essential items (e.g. beauty products, accessories)	33%	31%	36%	38%

Engagement Priorities



Customer Engagement Priorities for 2025

In the face of the current trends and challenges across the UK, how are marketers preparing to respond? What are their plans for growing their business and addressing waning consumer loyalty? Are they seeking quick solutions for immediate wins or laying a foundation for long-term strategies and success? And how does this align with consumer expectations?

We found that 28% of consumers want brands to help them discover new products they'll love. For marketers to make this happen, they need to lean into predictive product recommendations based on first-party data. Engaging consumers with the right product at the right time will help marketers increase brand affinity and drive long-lasting loyalty.

Marketers and consumers both have loyalty on their minds: 37% of consumers want brands to introduce new loyalty schemes and rewards, making it one of their top

priorities, while more than half (52%) of all CP marketers indicate interest in improving customer loyalty and retention. As CP marketers look into automating more activities and campaigns (which 39% have indicated is a priority for them), it will be highly beneficial to examine the customer lifecycle and unlock automations that build loyalty.

The strategy for increasing customer engagement across existing channels (which 43% of marketers are prioritising) is clear, considering 40% of consumers are saying they want personalised deals and offers.

Top customer engagement priorities for all UK CP marketers

- 1. Improving customer loyalty and retention (52%)
- 2. Launching new channels for customer engagement (45%)
- 3. Increasing customer engagement across existing channels (43%)
- 4. Automating more activities and campaigns (39%)
- 5. Delivering new customer experiences (38%)

Top customer engagement priorities for UK consumers

- 1. Give me personalised deals and offers (40%)
- 2. Introduce new customer loyalty schemes and rewards (37%)
- 3. Help me discover products I didn't know I'd love (28%)
- 4. Provide more transparent communication about their products or values (19%)
- 5. Improve my experience on existing channels (e.g. website, mobile, social) (16%)

Our research revealed that marketers' priorities change across the spectrum of Customer Engagement Maturity (CEM) levels.



Low CEM Brands

Marketers for low CEM brands are prioritising their existing customer base, indicating that they're focusing on improving customer loyalty and retention (67%) and delivering new customer experiences (44%).

- **Focus:** Strengthening loyalty and delivering new experiences
- **Engagement strategies:** As low CEM brands establish their foothold and build a loyal following, it's important to set up a data strategy that's adaptable, scalable, and extends across the entire business. By laying a foundation for integrated data, marketers can gain insights into consumer behaviour and deliver more personalised content. Find new ways to connect in-store activity, retail media, and digital experiences, such as using QR codes leading to product information, offers, or loyalty programs.



Moderate CEM Brands

Marketers for moderate CEM brands have indicated that they're turning their attention to the way they use channels. They want to increase customer engagement across existing channels (51%) and launch new channels for customer engagement (47%) as their top priorities.

- **Focus:** Strengthening channel engagement
- **Engagement strategies:** Channel experiences cannot exist in siloes, because consumers will move fluidly from social media to web to store to mobile. An omnichannel marketing platform can help create a seamless channel experience and ensure that each interaction with the brand is frictionless. Brands should look for ways to create ongoing dialogue with consumers throughout the customer lifecycle.





High CEM Brands

Marketers for high CEM brands are focusing on automating more activities and campaigns (40%) and delivering new customer experiences (36%).

- **Focus:** Expanding automation and delivering new experiences
- **Engagement strategies:** Look into establishing brand affinity by building an ongoing dialogue throughout the customer lifecycle. Welcome sequences, loyalty programs, product reviews, warranty reminders – all of these can be automated. Keep innovating to increase engagement and retention. Find new ways to connect in-store activity to digital experiences, such as using QR codes leading to product information, offers, or loyalty programs.



DTC Brands*

Direct-to-consumer (DTC) marketers have indicated that improving customer retention (65%) and engaging new markets (43%) are their top priorities.

- **Focus:** Improving retention and expanding the audience
- **Engagement strategies:** Marketers should set up a data strategy that is adaptable, scalable, and extends across the entire business. Establish a foundation that will support a holistic view of consumer behaviour and omnichannel engagement across the customer lifecycle. DTC brands can also benefit from the point-of-sale engagement, such as in-store and digital loyalty rewards as well as Mobile Wallet offers, referral programs (using solutions such as Mention Me), and mobile app engagement.



Hybrid Selling Brands*

Marketers for hybrid brands (selling both direct and indirect) indicated that their top customer engagement priorities were launching new channels for customer engagement (48%) and automating more activities and campaigns (48%).

- **Focus:** Expanding channels and automation
- **Engagement strategies:** When adding new channels, brands need a solution in place for omnichannel marketing. Ensure there's an omnichannel marketing platform in place that allows new channels to be added quickly for maximum flexibility. Then be sure to incorporate the new channels into automations (e.g. welcome sequences, product reviews, warranty reminders, etc.) and work on building an ongoing dialogue throughout the customer lifecycle.

*Given the sample sizes, the figures for DTC, indirect, and hybrid in this report are indicative. This data can be analysed robustly at a global level.

The common factor: Data

Regardless of CEM maturity, consumer data is the common requirement for engagement and retention. More mature brands — ones that use advanced engagement strategies and leverage integrated data to engage consumers — will be in a stronger position to address their priorities and meet consumers expectations.



Engagement Channels



Top Channels Used to Drive Engagement

Consumers are using a wider range of channels for interaction and research, requiring brands to adapt their strategies. We sought to uncover how marketers are prioritising channel engagement... and how that stacks up against consumer behaviour.

Channels used by UK CP marketers to engage customers

- 1. E-commerce (67%)
- 2. Web (56%)
- 3. Social media content (47%)
- 4. Email (42%)
- 5. TV advertisements (38%)
- 6. Social media advertising (36%)
- 7. Conversational messaging (e.g. WhatsApp) (33%)
- 8. Digital advertising (27%)
- 9. Social media commerce (26%)
- 10. SMS (text messaging) (25%)
- 11. Live chat (e.g. via website, app) (25%)

Channels used by UK consumers to interact with brands in the last year

- 1. Email (40%)
- 2. Web (31%)
- 3. Mobile apps (26%)
- 4. Social media content (19%)
- 5. Social media advertising (19%)
- 6. TV advertisements (15%)
- 7. Live chat (15%)
- 8. Digital advertising (e.g. Google ads) (14%)

Consumers showed an especially high interest in email and web channels, while marketers were most interested in e-commerce, with web, social media content, and email following behind. Marketers should look closely into email and web and ensure that these channels are as personalised as possible for driving faster purchase decisions.

TV advertisements showed something of a divergence between marketers and consumers. While only 15% of consumers said they interacted with brands via TV ads in the last year, marketers indicated that 38% of CP marketers use TV ads to drive engagement.



JOHN FRIEDA®

“For lifecycle marketing, we wanted to provide personalised experiences for increased conversion rate, develop segmentation strategies for improved retention and conversion, implement automation triggers to nurture current and future customers, and educate our existing audience and identify customer needs for this new product line. ”



Lyla Holt,
Global Digital Marketing Manager,
Consumer Care bei John Frieda



Case-Study

How John Frieda Mastered the Art of Product Launches

The John Frieda brand was founded on the revolutionary idea of disrupting the haircare industry with salon-quality products tailored to specific hair concerns. John Frieda aims to empower its customers with transformational products to achieve their individual goals.

Challenge:

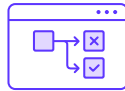
With a presence in 24 countries and over 88 products, the hair expert faced difficulties in effectively connecting with its customers in ways that drive sales. The marketing team needed the ability to identify their audience and increase conversion rates for new products.

Solution:

Partnering with personalisation and omnichannel marketing experts, SAP Emarsys and BlueWheel, John Frieda was able to develop and execute a comprehensive omnichannel launch strategy for the ULTRAfiller+ product in the US, across email, social media, paid social ads, web, and online and physical stores.



Segmentation and Targeting
Data analysis to identify key customer segments most likely to benefit from ULTRAfiller+.



Marketing Automations
Thorough audit of available assets to create personalised marketing automations that scaled across 24 countries.



Seamless Customer Journey
Optimised website and checkout process for a frictionless buyer experience.



Effective Email Strategy
Winning subject lines, engaging content, GIFs, surveys, and clear calls-to-action to drive open rates and increase awareness.

The results

#1

most popular product
in the John Frieda catalogue during the ramp-up campaign.

4x

conversion rate
compared with John Frieda's average CVR.

88%

of users purchased two or more products
during the ramp-up campaign.

Barriers to Engagement



The #1 Barrier to Engagement

CP marketers cited complexity within the marketing department as their biggest barrier to customer engagement (31%).

57%

Over half of all CP marketers say they can't access and use data in real time.

66%

2 out of 3 CP marketers say their organisation's data is too unstructured to use effectively.

Barriers to Customer Engagement in the UK

Marketers are highly motivated to drive measurable growth for CP brands. However, to increase their effectiveness and relevance in the Engagement Era, many will have to overcome common roadblocks that are holding them back.

Key barriers to customer engagement in the UK

1. Complexity within the marketing department (31%)
2. Growing complexity of the marketing landscape (30%)
3. Growing costs of advertising (26%)
4. Heavy reliance on IT (26%)
5. Lack of investment in engagement technologies (25%)

Accessing data and engagement technology

The first step to data-driven, personalised engagement is access to consumer data and engagement technology. A foundation of data that's integrated across the business, from back office to front office, gives marketers the insights they need to create compelling, relevant campaigns. But conversely, without that foundation, data becomes siloed, and understanding consumer behaviour becomes a complex and difficult task.

Leveraging data and engagement technology

To some degree or another, all marketers have a level of access to consumer data and martech solutions. Regardless of the level of sophistication, how well do marketers feel they're able to leverage that data and technology?

These findings seem to indicate that marketers are aware that they have room for improvement in terms of personalising the consumer experience. They've also identified that to make a real change, they need the ability to access data and leverage it to improve the consumer experience, whenever and wherever those consumers choose to engage. Building a strong foundation for consumer data, in which the data is integrated from front end to back end, can mean opportunities in a highly competitive market.

How effective are marketers at personalisation?

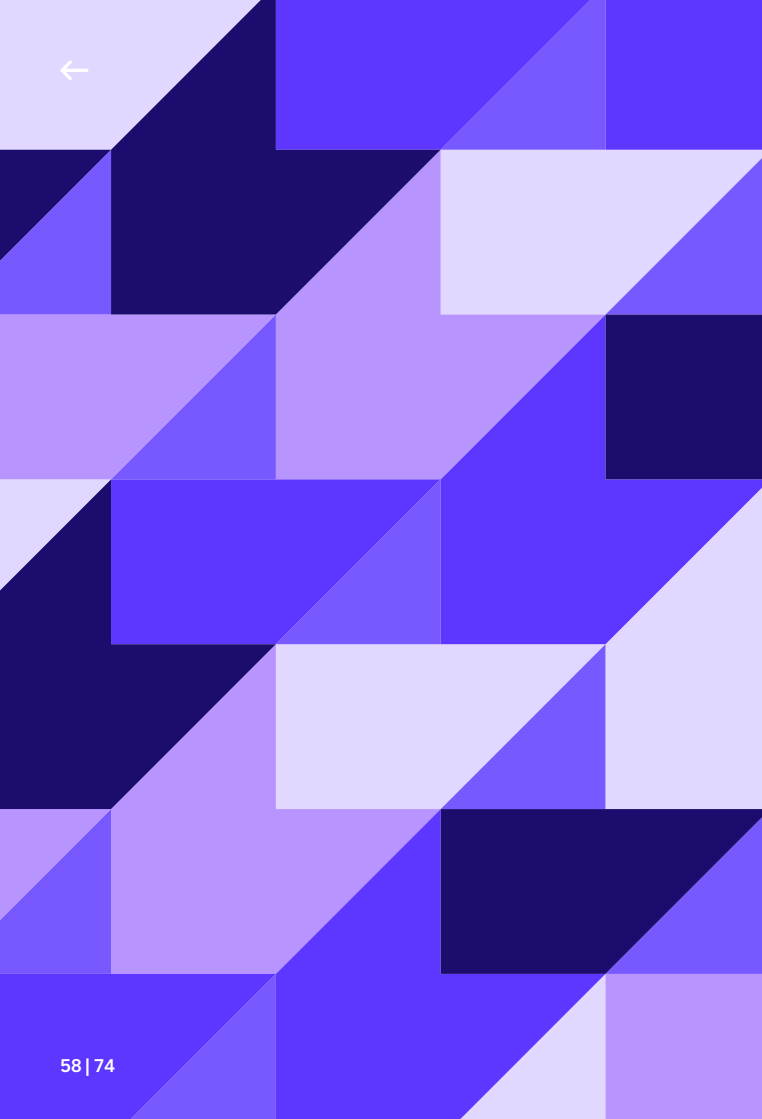
Only **44%** of all CP marketers feel they can effectively personalise their marketing content and campaigns, while less than half (**44%**) of consumers say their experience with CP brands feels personal.

Only **32%**

Only about a third of all CP marketers feel they can predict future consumer behaviours.

Only **33%**

Only a third of all CP marketers believe they can effectively segment and analyse audiences.



Barriers to Engagement: By Maturity Level

A barrier that may pose a significant obstacle to one brand may be effortlessly resolved by another. Additionally, as some challenges are resolved, new ones may take their place. As brands invest in integrated data and advanced engagement technology, marketers may resolve their issues with resourcing and data accessibility... and then they discover that the demand for IT support increases due to the complexity of the system.

What concerns do marketers face at brands of different levels of maturity?

	Greatest Barrier	Possible Root Issue
Low CEM Brands	Marketers for low CEM brands struggle most with complexity within the marketing department (e.g. disjointed approaches, silos) (33%) and lack of brand differentiation (28%).	These brands lack a solid data strategy and/or foundation for data to be connected across their business. These brands may also lack the consumer insights that would allow them personalise content and stand out from the competition.
Moderate CEM Brands	Marketers for moderate CEM brands indicated that the growing costs of advertising (32%) and lack of resources (30%) were their biggest barriers.	These brands perhaps have yet to fully embrace the omnichannel engagement that would maximise their owned channels and decrease their dependency on advertisers. They may also lack scalable, flexible, and/or AI-driven solutions that would allow them to maximise their limited resources.
High CEM Brands	Marketers for high CEM brands were more likely to cite the growing complexity of the marketing landscape (44%) and heavy reliance on IT (36%) as their greatest barriers.	These brands have fully embraced personalisation, automation, and omnichannel engagement but have yet to centralise these efforts within a single platform.

Investment Areas & Strategies



82%

of all CP marketers believe they will need to “significantly transform” their organisation’s customer engagement approach in 2025.

Key Investment Areas for Customer Engagement

CP marketers have identified priorities for engagement, and they’re keenly aware of the challenges they’re facing, but are they truly ready to take a bold leap into the Engagement Era? Our research indicates they are.

Marketers are well aware that any disjointed consumer engagement approaches and technologies require strategic improvements.

Many marketers have clear objectives to improve the overall integration of their data, laying a foundation for more personalised experiences. With marketers eager to make changes, the next most important question is, what investments are brands making to turn engagement goals into reality?

Top areas of investment in consumer engagement in 2025*

1. Connecting customer data (40%)
2. AI-powered customer engagement (38%)
3. Personalisation (37%)

* Percentage that ranked “high investment”

Current Data Strategy for UK CP Marketers		Goals
Only 46% share their customer engagement data with a dedicated ERP.	>	43% plan to improve this in future.
Only 45% have fully integrated their CX, ERP, and marketing approach.	>	47% plan to improve this in future.
Only 45% can currently tie their customer engagement data to their CX approach.	>	47% plan to improve this in future.
Only 41% have fully integrated their CX, ERP, and marketing technologies.	>	41% plan to improve this in the future.
Only 40% share their customer engagement data with a dedicated CRM.	>	45% plan to improve this in future.

86%

of all CP marketers believe personalisation will be a key differentiator in the year ahead.

61%

of consumers value highly personalised content.



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“At Molton Brown, our customers are our top priority, so the technology we use is critical to our success and operational efficiency. Our collaboration with SAP Emarsys has been exceptional from the start. It has empowered us to transform customer engagement by delivering seamless experiences across both digital and traditional channels, keeping our customers at the centre of our business.

“For example, in 2023, we launched refillable solutions as part of our Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategy. With the support of SAP Emarsys, we implemented loyalty programs, promotions, subscription channels, and more to bolster this initiative. The result was a game-changing **68% increase in customer value** compared to non-ESG customers. ”



Naresh Krishnamurthy,
Senior Manager of Business
Transformation, Molton Brown



Key Differentiators and Strategies

The CP industry is transitioning into an exciting phase where customer engagement is the dominant factor for driving brand differentiation and ultimately customer loyalty.

This report identifies key differentiators for businesses to effectively transform their digital engagement, embracing big data, advanced technologies, and new strategies to remain competitive, relevant, and meet the elevated expectations of current consumers:

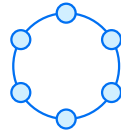


Connected Data

The ability to access and leverage consumer's data effectively is pivotal for understanding customer needs and behaviours. This empowers marketers to create personalised experiences and predict future consumer behaviours, enhancing engagement strategies.

Strategic Action:

Brands should lay the foundation for integrated data across their organisation, sharing customer engagement data with financial and operational processes and systems (e.g. ERPs).



Omnichannel Flexibility

Consumer interaction channels are rapidly changing and evolving. Take, for instance, the TikTok ban in the US or virtual reality becoming part of the customer journey.

Strategic Action:

Brands must be present on all channels that are relevant to their consumers to meet them where they are. This demands flexibility and preparation in the various engagement approaches. By building a strong foundation of integrated data, you can better identify the right channels to use to engage consumers, and you'll be in a position to experiment with new channels and conduct A/B testing for optimisation.



Advanced Personalisation

Personalisation is moving beyond basic product recommendations to the entire consumer journey.

Strategic Action:

Brands need the ability to leverage data for deep personalisation across all touchpoints to enhance consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Consumers are willing to exchange their data in return for value, so be sure to meet their expectations.



AI Integration

AI is positively revolutionising how brands interact and engage with consumers, while tackling repetitive tasks for marketers, leaving them time to be more creative. AI facilitates automation, real-time personalisation, and efficiency, enabling brands to deliver more relevant and engaging consumer experiences.

Strategic Action:

Brands should ensure they are fully integrating AI within marketing teams. This includes both investing in AI tools and driving adoption. Consider the use of GenAI to locate products faster as product portfolios grow, or generate high value segments with just a few prompts.

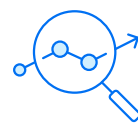


Scalable Growth

Preparing for the future means understanding current trends and predicting future ones, but also it means the ability to move up along the CEM score, increasing maturity stage by stage. As consumers (and particularly Gen Z) continue driving digital transformation, marketers must be ready for what comes next.

Strategic Action:

Marketers need technical solutions that are agile and adaptable to rapid changes in the market. Brands should focus on building a foundation that can scale with ease as they seek to enter new markets and drive loyalty.



Measurable Growth

The true goal of personalised engagement is to drive measurable growth for a brand, so marketers must be able to tie real value to their work.

Strategic Action:

Brands should ensure they have the means to tie campaigns and programs to marketing-generated sales. Having strategic dashboards built directly into a customer engagement platform grants visibility into key areas such as sales, channel growth, and segment analytics. Additionally, insight into the complete customer lifecycle helps marketers prioritise their time and effort for maximum value. Brands should also prioritise gaining access to real-time insights so they can take action at critical moments and drive purchase decisions.

Conclusion



Conclusion

Brands must adeptly navigate this ever-changing consumer terrain. As they seek out solutions to address current trends, shifting consumer behaviours, and other barriers to engagement, marketers have an opportunity to set their brand apart. This era is filled with opportunity and marketers are in a unique position to lead the way.

Embracing advanced technologies and strategies positions brands not only to meet but exceed the elevated expectations of modern consumers, ensuring continued relevance and success. By offering next-level interactive and personalised experiences, brands can secure their competitive edge and foster deeper emotional connections.

Are you ready to unleash the power of engagement?



Supercharge Your Consumer Products Omnichannel Customer Experience

[Read more](#)



Learn how Versuni Elevated its Consumer Engagement

[Learn more](#)

SAP Emarsys is the customer engagement solution for SAP Customer Experience, empowering businesses to deliver personalised, AI-driven, omnichannel experiences. Built for scalability and extensibility, SAP Customer Experience provides a suite of products across commerce, sales, service, marketing, and customer data, enabling businesses to exceed customer expectations with real-time, relevant engagement. From digitally native disruptors to global enterprises, SAP Emarsys helps bring out the best CX in every business by meeting customers where they are with the products, information, and experiences they need, exactly when and where they need them. For more information, visit www.emarsys.com