



2020 Digital Trends

Deep Dive: Putting the Customer in Context

Putting the Customer in Context

Responding To Individual Customer Needs

The ability to respond in real time and in context to people's needs across often chaotic customer journeys goes to the heart of CX management. Slowly but surely, larger companies have recognised the need to reorganise themselves around the customer, with cross-functional teams and integrated technology helping to break down the silos that prevent a joined-up and seamless approach to customer engagement.

The larger the organisation, the deeper the complexities caused by a diverse range of customers, and sometimes myriad products and services. Combined with an ever-growing number of touchpoints, the permutations for every customer journey can be almost infinite.

How Virgin Holidays put customer journeys at the heart of CX

Virgin Holidays is a great example of a brand that has reorganised its marketing function around customer journeys as part of its digital transformation journey and efforts to transform the customer experience.

According to Saul Lopes, until recently the company's Customer Lifecycle Lead¹: *"For us it's really important to be true to the Virgin brand, which is all about giving good experiences to our customers. It's not an option to just do nothing, and if we don't do so, our competitors will just go ahead."*

The company has reaped the benefits of an omnichannel programme focused on email, direct mail, SMS and outbound calls. After migrating their transactional email from their reservation engine into a unified campaign management platform, the brand was able to create more personalised communications in the tone of voice customers associated with the Virgin brand, boosting email engagement rates by up to 10%, upsells by 11% and customer self-service by 7%.



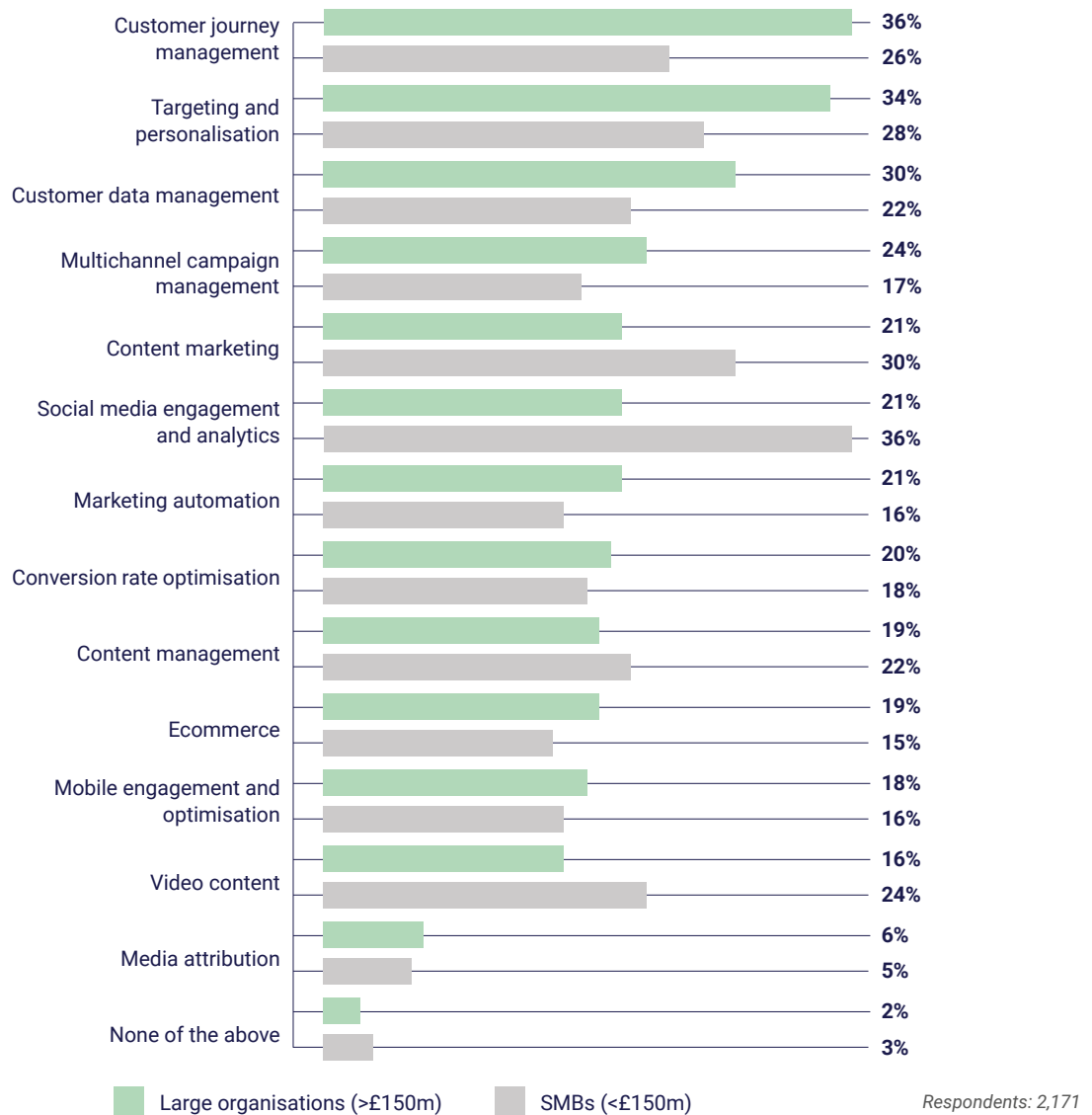
During the company's peak sale campaign, the company saw an uplift of 20%, boosting web traffic by 85% and appointments in-store by 156% year on year.

"The achievement I'm probably most proud of is with my team," added Lopes. *"Every single member of my team was in charge of a customer journey they had to deliver... We changed from a marketing function to an experience function within the team."*

Virgin Holidays is not alone in prioritising customer journeys. It is encouraging to see from this research (Figure 1) that customer journey management (36%) is ranked by larger organisations as the top digital-related priority for the next 12 months, ahead of targeting and personalisation (34%) in second place, and customer data management (30%) in third. It is clear that the main focus for larger organisations is around mastery of customer data.

¹ <https://www.adobe.com/uk/marketing/campaign/customer-journey.html#customer-video>

Figure 1: Which of the following have you started to incorporate into your business?



The growing need for unified customer profiles

The challenge for businesses is that whether we are in consumer mode or acting as B2B customers we expect relevant experiences even when the brand we are dealing with doesn't know exactly who we are, or even our interests or needs at a particular moment.

If a brand is to succeed in the experience economy, there is an increasingly fundamental requirement for unified and actionable customer profiles that can ingest and join up data from a range of touchpoints that can straddle both offline and digital worlds, and the realms of both adtech and martech.

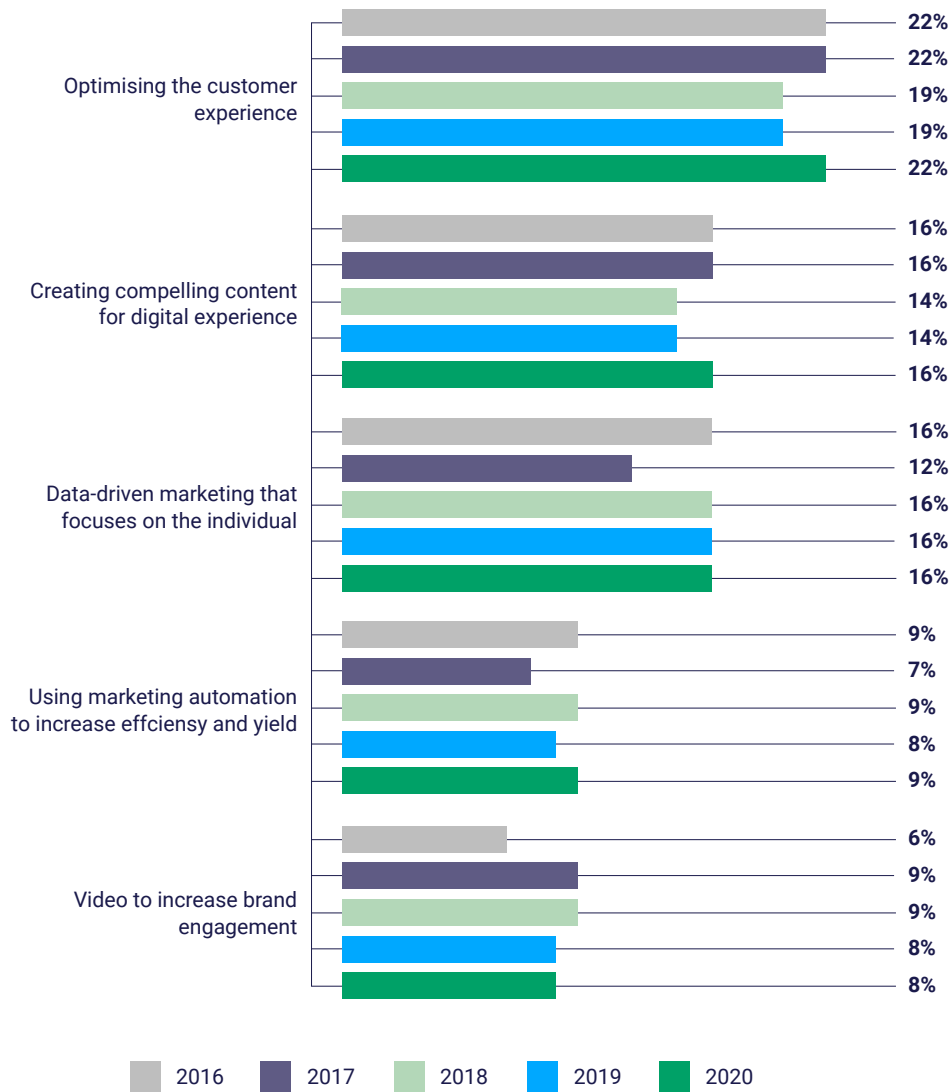
Research carried out by London Research for Adobe in 2019 found that²:

- Only 30% of companies agreed their technology platforms enabled them to stitch together known and anonymous data to activate real-time customer profiles across channels throughout the customer journey.
- Just over a third of organisations (35%) agreed that their digital analytics platforms allowed them to aggregate and ingest online and offline data.
- A similar proportion (33%) said that they had an open technology platform that enables a seamless flow of behavioural, transactional and operational customer data in real time.

If companies are to realise the continued potential of optimising the customer experience, seen as the top-ranked opportunity for the fifth year in succession (*Figure 2*), then an ability to tame customer-related data is crucial.

² <https://www.adobe.com/uk/offer/data-trends-2019.html>

Figure 2: Which one area is the single most exciting opportunity for your organisation in 2020? (top five options)



The yin and yang of CX

It may seem paradoxical at first that CX leaders are less likely than their mainstream peers to regard customer experience optimisation as their most exciting opportunity for 2020 (Figure 3). But actually it makes a lot of sense. Many of these companies are more likely to regard CX programmes as ‘business as usual’ and therefore are becoming enthused by more specific areas of technology innovation that can help them drive better CX at an overall level such as the utilisation of AI and the Internet of Things.

These two areas can be viewed as the yin and yang of customer experience, encapsulating both the analytical and creative capabilities that are required for modern-day marketing and customer experience activities. Without great content, companies will struggle to get the levels of engagement they require even if they are masters of data-driven marketing. And without effective personalisation and targeting, compelling content on its own won’t be enough for companies to provide great customer experiences in context for individuals at scale.

Figure 3: Which one area is the single most exciting opportunity for your organisation in 2020?

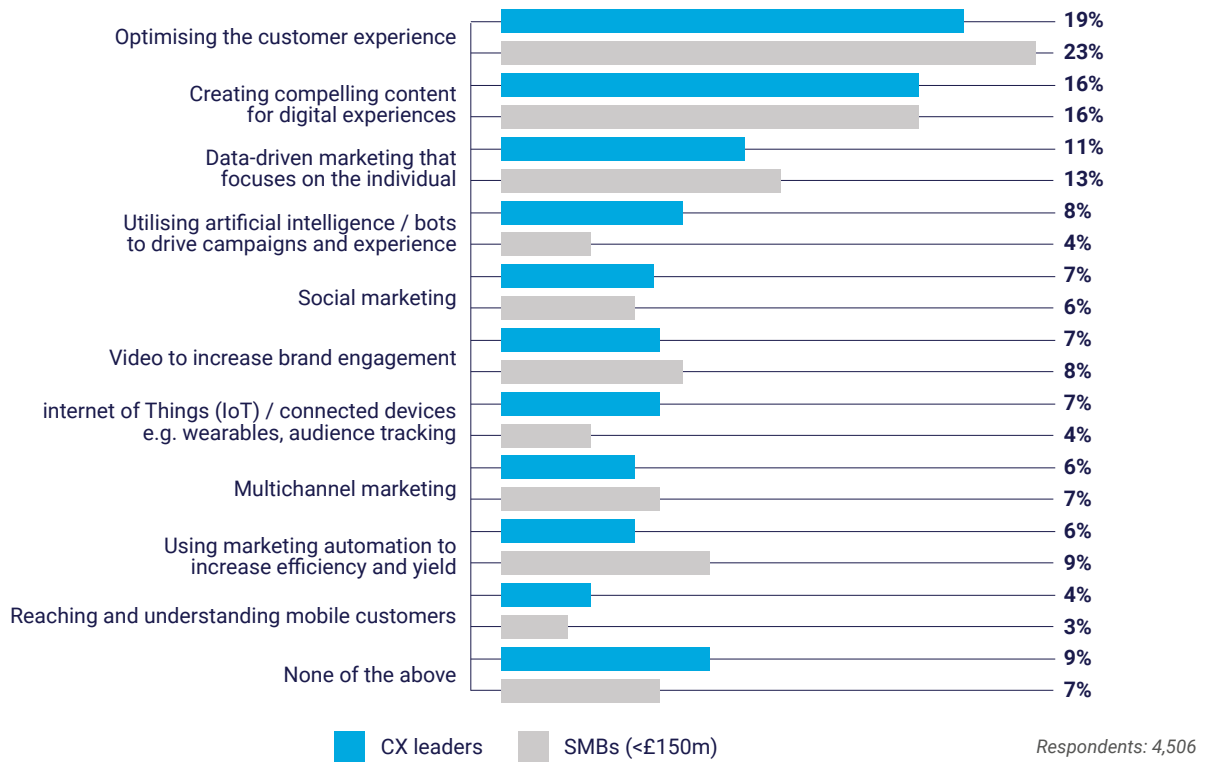
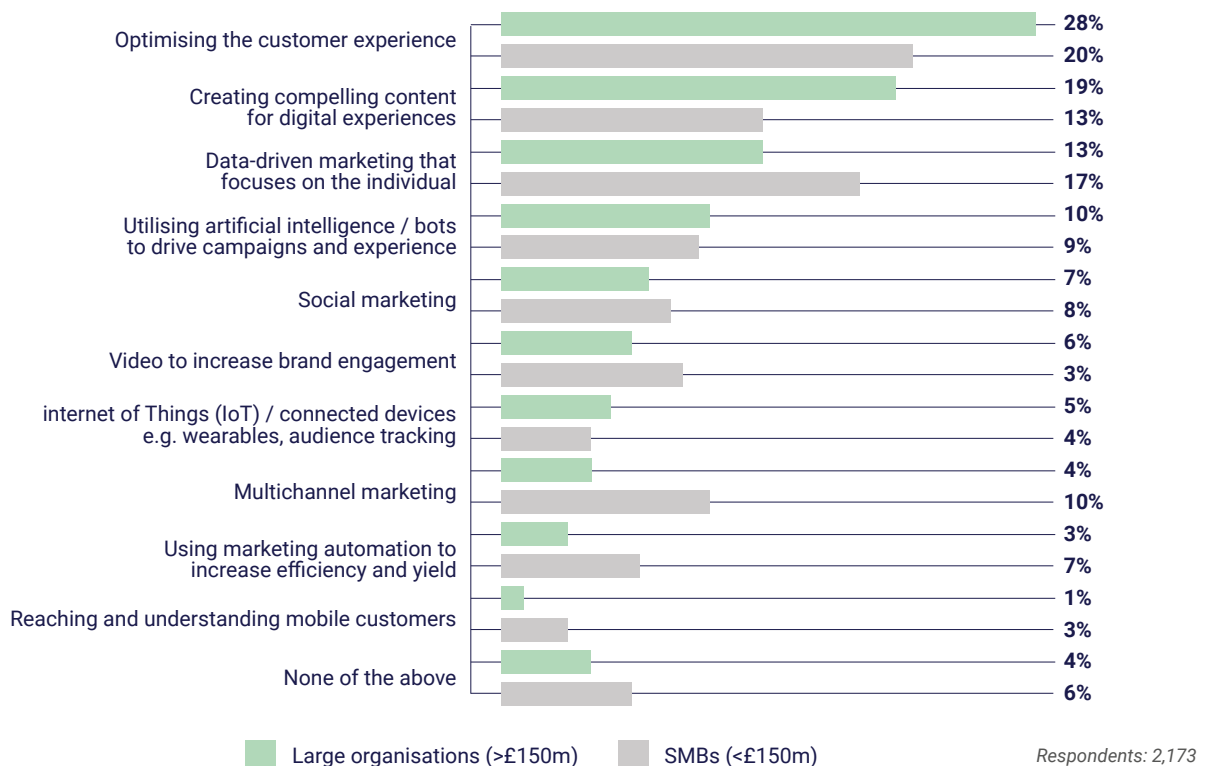


Figure 4 shows the pecking order of opportunities through the lens of company size. Larger organisations over-index for customer experience optimisation and data-driven marketing, but under-index for compelling content for digital experiences. There is a danger that larger companies focus too much on hiring left-brain, analytical thinkers, and neglect more right-brained marketing and creative talent to create content and experiences that will truly sing.

Correspondingly for smaller organisations, there is a danger that they are prioritising too much creative thinking at the expense of the data capabilities that are becoming increasingly vital for success.

Figure 4: Which one area is the single most exciting opportunity for your organisation in 2020?



Methodology

Digital Trends 10th Edition is based on an online survey fielded to select Adobe and Econsultancy lists in the fourth quarter of 2019.

The survey closed on November 8th having collected 12,740 qualified responses.

Demographic profiles

- Sixty percent of all respondents (7,531) are client-side marketers. The remaining sample is made up of consultants, executives at agencies and marketing technology/services vendors.
- Eighty-two percent of client-side responses were at the manager level or above.
- As defined by target market, the sample is almost evenly split between B2B (34%), B2C (32%) and those addressing both markets equally (34%).
- Organisational revenues run the gamut from SMBs (31% have revenues under £50M) to larger organisations (26% have revenues between £50 and £1 billion) and the world's largest organisations (15% have revenues over £1 billion).
- The sample is global, with EMEA providing the largest share of respondents (46%), followed by North America (38%) and the Asia-Pacific region at 10%. The survey was translated into French, German, Chinese and Japanese.
- Every business sector is represented, with concentrations in Technology (11%), Media (8%), Financial Services (8%) and Manufacturing (8%).



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