



ARTICLE

# Marketing in a Distracted, Digital World: New Market Conditions Call for New Marketing Strategies

While the average U.S. home has 9.2 connected devices,<sup>1</sup> the average human attention span hovers at just eight seconds.<sup>2</sup> That's digital overload.

In today's world, digital use is so pervasive that it's no longer considered a unique media—it's a way of life. Virtually everyone has a smartphone, and most individuals and households have multiple smart devices including tablets, phones, and computers. This prevalence coupled with the rise of Big Data, digital marketing tools, and social media has given marketers the power to pinpoint specific audiences with advertising messages.

But while advertisers continue to pour money into digital media, consumers are so saturated that they've begun ignoring ads or actively avoiding them. The rise of ad fraud, where clicks are falsified to drive up cost per click (CPC) and bid rates, has resulted in 42 billion wasted advertising dollars in 2019.<sup>3</sup> People are also clicking less: clickthrough rates dropped to 2% in 2019 from 2.6% in late 2018.<sup>4</sup> To connect with consumers today, marketers need to rethink their strategy and focus on creating quality brand experiences, rather than on high-volume ad exposure. It's time to take a second look at your approach and put people first.

## Can We Have Your Attention?

People today are more distracted than ever, with multiple screens and devices being used at all-time high rates, often at the same time. Have you ever searched something on your phone or tablet while also working on a laptop or watching TV? Then you know what marketers are up against. Our attention spans have plummeted as a result of digital overload—consumers now have an average attention span of just eight seconds.<sup>2</sup> That means advertisers have a better chance of keeping a goldfish's attention than the average person's.

Cord-cutting is now also a digital trend. Cord-cutting began with people canceling subscription cable and opting to stream TV shows ad-free instead—think Netflix. More and more consumers are choosing to tune out advertising channels, including social media. Feeds have become so flooded with ads that people either ignore them or stop logging in completely. In 2019, a quarter of U.S. internet users were blocking advertising on their connected devices.<sup>5</sup> When you add it all up, it makes breaking through the clutter and being seen more than hard. It's close to impossible.



## Rocky Market, Rising Fraud

Advertising is still crucial to acquiring new customers, and new digital marketing tools have made it easier for advertisers to pinpoint and target specific audiences and segments. Digital spending continues to grow, but as buying becomes more and more automated it becomes less and less efficient. With the prevalence of automation tools and programmatic buying, ad fraud is a pervasive problem for the industry. By 2023, advertisers will have lost an estimated \$100 billion, as fraudsters improve techniques, using spoofing advertising networks to falsify ad clicks and displayed ads.<sup>6</sup>

## Too Many Tools

While the buying journey—the clicks, views, and touches between a person’s initial interest in a product and their actual purchase—is more complex than ever, consumers expect a unified, consistent experience wherever they are. The average internet user now spends 6 hours and 43 minutes online each day.<sup>7</sup> As they click, view, and act across multiple screens, devices, and channels, they expect to meet consistent messages. That’s why marketers need to take an omnichannel approach and deliver the same, strong message to users across touchpoints to tell your brand story.

If you’re using multiple tools to manage multiple channels, you may in effect be competing with yourself for the same customers, which results in “cannibalized” budgets and wasted money. Getting it right with effective cross-channel marketing not only boosts digital media spend efficiency and ROI, it also increases acquisition rates and customer lifetime value. Brands that stand for something, rather than just selling something, boost loyalty and win buy-in from potential customers.

## Understanding Intent

The missing link for many marketers is understanding customer intent. While some segments, audiences, and personas may fit the prospective buyer bill perfectly, targeting them at a time when they have no intention of buying is a waste of money. At the same time, tools that focus on demographic information alone can overlook consumers who don’t fit your profile but who are actually ready to buy.

Predictive analytics uses Big Data and machine learning to identify consumers with a high propensity to purchase, enabling marketers to target them at the right time and turn browsers into buyers. Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning can be used to analyze billions of clicks and differentiate between a browser and a buyer, even before the consumer makes their intentions known. AI-driven marketing tools can automate responses based on predicted intent, so if it looks like a consumer is likely to buy, marketers can present an offer or invite them to chat with a live agent trained to close the deal. If it looks like a shopper is going to abandon their cart, additional content or customized options can be delivered to prompt them to complete the purchase.

## Personal Is Powerful

At the same time, AI-driven technologies can take traditional demographics to a whole new level, identifying highly specific individualized aesthetics based on billions of previous interactions. By tailoring colors, copy, images, and other elements to give people creative they respond to, the brand experience becomes more meaningful and more effective.

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In a recent Forbes Insight survey, two in five executives, 40%, reported their customer personalization efforts have directly affected sales, basket size and profits in direct-to-consumer channels such as e-commerce.<sup>8</sup> No wonder that, according to that same study, 41% say their organizations currently view personalization as a high priority and 57% expected personalization to drive marketing budgets.<sup>8</sup>

### Quality Over Quantity

Gone are the days of assuming that more ads = more customers. So what's the new paradigm for acquisition? Smart marketers are abandoning the sales funnel concept and instead focusing on individual customer journeys, which can be complex but are also often predictable. To guide customers down the path from casual interest to completing a purchase, marketers need to evolve from a channel-centric view to a journey-based approach that cuts across channels and

focuses on creating quality experiences. This shift also allows marketers to minimize the impact of consumer saturation and ad fraud and build trust in their brand.

In 2020 and beyond, marketers will be facing a two-pronged challenge: learning to be better at leveraging customer data and use that data to deliver experiences that are relevant to consumers and their real-time context.<sup>11</sup>

### Marketing In-the-Moment: Madtech

The way forward is all about marketing in-the-moment based on individual intent. While a complex combination of factors drives a person's behavior at any given moment, it's possible to predict behavior by using the variables we can identify, including which device and site they're on, time of day, local weather, and recent purchases. With the right technology, marketers can anticipate consumer behavior based on the available data and past behavior and automate the best responses.

By combining traditional "adtech," which uses third-party data to enable audience segmentation at scale, and marketing automation or "martech," which focuses on rich profiling and one-to-one personalization, marketers can deliver dynamic brand experiences in-the-moment. "Madtech" offers a strategic way to cut through the noise, overcome consumer saturation, and make meaningful connections that will help you both acquire new customers and retarget existing customers.

In a world where digital is so ubiquitous that it's become a way of life, consumers are so saturated with digital ads that they often ignore or actively avoid them. With mobile device use at an all-time high and consumer attention spans at an all-time low, marketers need to shift their focus in order to break through the digital noise and be heard. Volume of ad exposure can no longer guarantee acquisition of new customers or increased conversion rates.

To merge adtech and martech and deliver marketing-in-the-moment, here's what you need:

1. Backend platform with Big Data processing
2. Access to first, second, and third-party data
3. Omnichannel orchestration and capabilities
4. Cross-channel and cross-device ID and recognition
5. Dynamic creative and automated optimization

Instead, it's time to focus on quality. The rise of AI and new marketing tools offers smart marketers a new approach: Combine an omnichannel platform with dynamic personalization at scale. Delivering the right message, to the right person, at the right time will enable marketers to create quality brand experiences, increase customer lifetime value, and acquire new customers more efficiently. Putting people first is the way of the future.

[Contact \[24\]7.ai](#) to learn more about AI-powered dynamic targeting.

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## Contact us

[www.247.ai](http://www.247.ai)

[info@247.ai](mailto:info@247.ai)

United States +1-855-692-9247

Canada +1-866-273-1195

United Kingdom +44 0 207 836 9203

Australia +61 2 90025780

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