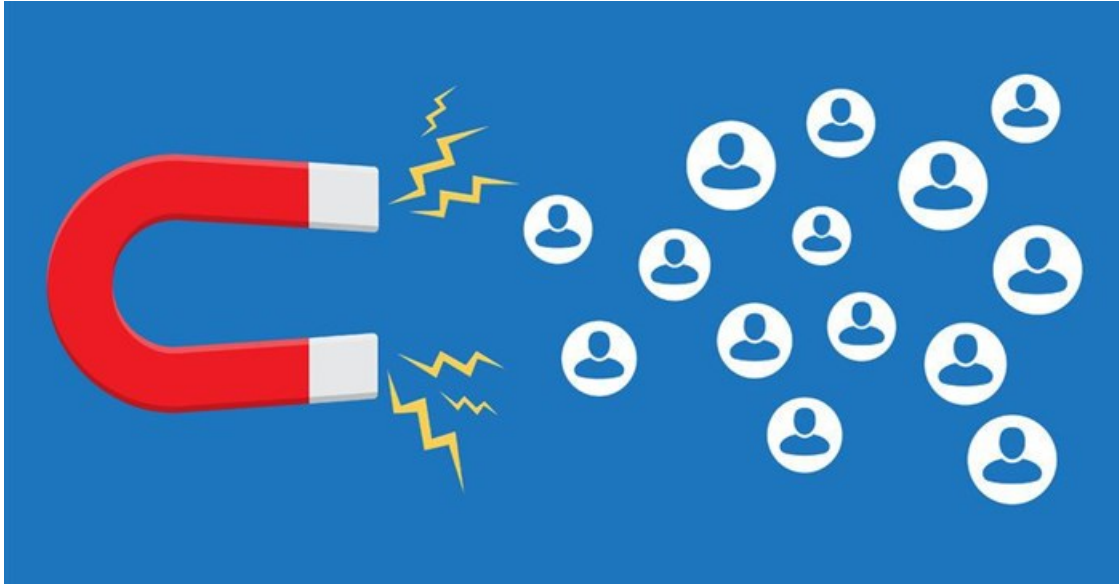


# Amazon, Starbucks, Apple and Google leaders in guiding customer journey

[New research](#) from the CMO Council indicates that 42% of chief marketing officers believe brands like Amazon, Google, Apple, Nike and Starbucks are getting customer experience right, looking at omnichannel engagement as a means to guide and inspire customers on a journey, and not just push them forward in a buying process.



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One issue plaguing many organisations is a sense that in the race to master data and harness the power of the marketing technology stack, the customer, and perhaps an understanding of human relationships has been lost. In fact, 41% of respondents admit that focusing on the relationship being built instead of the campaign being deployed, has been a key challenge. Nearly one-third admit that they sometimes forget that their “targets” are human beings.

## Back to the roots of relationship builders

According to the report, [Bringing a Human Voice to Customer Choice](#), doubts about organisational readiness to expand and advance the omnichannel experience through richer personalisation is surprisingly high with 42% of respondents indicating they are not prepared to leverage intelligence gathered across listening posts to deliver better customer experience. Not a single respondent (0.00% of the 152 senior marketing executive respondent pool) felt they were well prepared to integrate new experiences and new points of intelligence to improve brand engagement.

Liz Miller, SVP of marketing with the CMO Council noted:

“ Somewhere in our adoption of data, technology and process, the customer and the very real, human and fragile relationships that marketers have worked so hard to build have been lost, giving way to settling for assumptions about broad personas and an almost obsessive focus on campaign performance. ”

“What came to life most notably in this research was the absolute desire of marketers to go back to their roots of relationship builders, leveraging the “why” behind customer actions and intentions to build lasting dialogues with customers instead of just pushing accounts and targets down a pre-set campaign path.”

## Are we listening?

The 33-page report includes findings and analysis of data collected by an online survey from global senior marketing leaders in the second half of 2018. These individuals expressed frustration in their organisation's listening capabilities, doubts over readiness to respond to the customer's own voice and an overarching sense of disillusionment over data and the organisation's ability to leverage that insight to build a bond with a market of one.

"Developing the human experiences that customers are looking for can feel confusing for the data-and-technology-driven marketer of the 21st-century," noted Bant Breen of Harte Hanks. "In every point of connection, our customers leave small data clues behind that can enrich our current profiles and give brands the insights needed to craft the right combination of message, channel and timing. Customers will always tell us what they need. The real question is are we listening?"

Key insights and themes from the research include:

- Data is a dilemma. But "big data" isn't marketing's biggest challenge. It is actually the "small data" – the data used to describe the small, specific attributes delivered directly from the customer through, as an example, the Internet of Things. 36% of respondents believe that small data will be the greatest challenge for the organisation.
- We've lost the ability to be human, and we can't blame the machines. Some 41% admit that they are overly focused on driving campaigns, forgetting that they are building relationships. Nearly 30% admit they think of their customers in terms of targets, records and opportunities – interestingly an equal amount admits that they are also struggling to define and deliver returns from customer experience strategies.
- Going small could bring our humanity back. Marketers believe small data will help extract better signal from the noise (45%), reveal the "why" behind customer actions and behaviors (41 percent), help focus on the people behind the data to deliver more human interactions (35%) and aid in filling key gaps across the customer journey (35%).

Bant notes that to truly win the day, marketers must start by taking a step back to the fundamental question of revenue and intent. "Yes, we are talking about new technologies and even new concepts, but fundamentally the rule is still to generate revenue by getting the right message to the right person at the right time. So even in this age of technology, data and connectivity, we still must understand what our revenue goals are and then figure out which customers are most likely to drive that revenue and how we plan to measure and define success."

Included in the full report:

- Key findings and analysis from the editorial team at the CMO Council
- Detailed charts and graphs for 17 key questions posed to marketing leaders around the globe
- Expert commentary from Harte Hanks including key steps to achieving a more human, trust-filled relationship with today's customer

The full report (\$199) is available for download by clicking [here](#).

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