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# 7 Key Marketing Trends for 2015 and Tactics for Succeeding in the New Year

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## TREND #1: Stored payments change the way people shop as reducing friction becomes a priority.

Dave Walters, Product Strategist, Silverpop

Mobile email and website interaction has risen steadily in recent years, but the increased smartphone usage has created a challenge for marketers, since the majority of conversions have continued to take place on desktop/laptop computers or tablets.

For example, smartphones drove 28.5 percent of all online traffic on Cyber Monday 2014 compared to tablets at 12.5 percent. But when it came to sales, the figures shifted: Tablets drove 12.9 percent of all online sales, edging out smartphones, which accounted for 9.1 percent.<sup>5</sup>

The emergence of stored payments, particularly Apple Pay, is poised to change that in 2015 and beyond. In the next 18 months, instead of primary email calls-to-action routing to a website where customers can complete their purchase, they'll increasingly link to an app. Within the app, customers will simply need to push their thumb to the screen, at which point payment will instantly transfer from the credit card on file to the retailer.

The difference between forcing customers to key in their 16-digit credit card number on a small screen — often while on the move — versus simply requiring them to enter an email address

and/or click a button or two, could have massive implications on where and when sales occur.

Take cart abandonment emails, for example. Instead of worrying that the “buy now” button in the mail links to a mobile-friendly website page, marketers will be thinking more about how that payment option is baked into their application and commerce engines. In other words, the days of sending someone from a mobile-optimized email to a desktop/tablet website, where most transactions happen today, could be numbered as much of that commerce moves directly into the app.

For marketers, this means the entire buying cycle will need to be even more aggressively compressed. You'll need to understand how to deliver the right value and the right message to drive that conversion right when customers are interacting with you on their smartphone.

In 2015, keep an eye on Apple Pay and other stored payment options as they develop, and look for new ways to reduce the friction in the mobile buying process. With consumers increasingly interested in these payment alternatives, there will likely be opportunities to drive a ton of revenue through this channel.

### Key tactics for removing mobile buying friction in 2015:

- **Ask new subscribers for payment information:** Add an email message to your onboarding program asking new customers to register accounts and/or payment information.
- **Give purchasers a one-click alternative:** Provide payment options such as Paypal that only require customers to enter a login name and password instead of typing in card numbers, expiration dates and security codes each time (this also reduces security risks).
- **Remind and remarket:** Even as smartphone payment options become streamlined, some customers will prefer to complete the transaction via desktop or tablet, so continue to offer reminders and send remarketing messages to those who have browsed key content on a smartphone without converting.

## TREND #2: Mobile apps 2.0 shift the way companies market to on-the-go customers.

Dave Walters, Product Strategist, Silverpop

Many businesses have looked at mobile apps as a necessary evil, something they can contract out to a third party, check off their mobile marketing checklist, and then forget about as they return to their regularly scheduled marketing plan. Little wonder, then, that 20 percent of apps are used only once, and about 60 percent are opened less than 10 times.<sup>6</sup>

With recent technological advancements in geofences and beacon capabilities, though, smart marketers have begun awakening to the data implications of having an integrated, well-thought-out app. In 2015, look for more leading businesses to seek out new ways to create mobile apps with a stronger customer value proposition than “find the nearest store location.”

In this mobile app 2.0 world, companies will be asking themselves how they could benefit from building a more robust mobile app, while also delivering more value to customers. The answers, especially for retailers with brick-and-mortar locations, include:

- **Gain a new data source:** What actions are contacts taking in my mobile app? Where are my customers right now? And how often do they come to my store? Apps can be rich sources of data that, with the right

integrations, can enhance your knowledge of individual customers.

- **Send push notifications:** Using mobile touch-points, such as personalized push notifications, can increase conversion rates by 8.5 percent.<sup>7</sup> Used strategically, these notifications can help you deliver timely, relevant information or offers linked to a customer’s location and behaviors.
- **Get access to a new inbox:** The mobile app inbox delivers an all-new destination for marketers to reach – one that sports a new set of benefits. Beyond the fact that permission for sending is typically contained in your terms and conditions of usage (and doesn’t provide a traditional email-like opt-out function), in-app inboxes allow marketers to send time-constrained offers and single-use promotional codes to specific users in a true one-to-one manner. Yet because permission is different, marketers need to show restraint in using this new channel.

By taking the time in 2015 to build and update apps to offer content and value that entices customers to download and repeatedly interact with them, as well as accept push notifications, marketers can tap into a whole new way of more strongly engaging their customers.

### Key tactics for improving mobile app engagement in 2015:

**1) Create a drive-to-app plan:** Just because you build it, doesn’t mean they’ll come. So, send contacts a “download our mobile app” email invitation and add a similar message to your onboarding program for new email subscribers. Remember to emphasize what’s in it for the customer.

**2) Repurpose content with a twist:** The idea of creating all-new content for a mobile app might seem daunting. Instead, mine your existing channels for content that you could repurpose for your app, then tweak it to take advantage of an app’s unique capabilities while being mindful of mobile context.

**3) De-silo your app:** Feed all those app behaviors you’re capturing into a central marketing database, where you can use them to trigger personalized content and interactions across your emails, website, call centers and more.



**Mobile Apps 2.0: What Marketers Need to Know**  
View the video >>>

## TREND #3: Emails become skeletal frameworks for delivering relevant, timely content based on database values.

Ellen Valentine, Product Strategist, Silverpop

In 2015, more digital marketers will transition to becoming strong data-based email marketers. Specifically, savvy marketers will increasingly use data to customize what images and text are used in emails.

Of course, using dynamic content has been an email best practice for years. But the difference now is that more sophisticated marketing platforms and integrations are enabling leading practitioners to personalize a larger portion of their emails by leveraging all kinds of real-time, implicit and explicit data from internal systems and external feeds.

In a world in which emails become skeletal frameworks, the way marketers think about and create these messages will shift. Email marketers will first set up the basic design framework of the email, which will include things like the header, footer and content areas. Then, they'll build dynamic rules for virtually all of the content areas in the email. Three, four, five or even more text or image alternatives will be "filled out" based on the database values at send or open time.

Shifting to data-driven email frameworks will help allow marketers to increase the relevance of their messages, which in turn can improve overall success metrics.

Examples of what can be done when you take this approach to your customer and prospect communications include the following:

- Populate first offer based on the latest inventory levels
- Display different images based on the gender of the recipient
- Let the weather forecast in a recipient's location determine which products or offers are displayed
- Insert the picture and name of the rep assigned to the recipient's account with an offer for an on-site analysis
- Use different text for someone that watched 10 minutes of a video compared to someone who watched to the end
- Display different text based on the recipient's title or role

The increased use of mobile and advances in location marketing have opened up even more opportunities for adding relevance, such as delivering content based on whether someone crossed a geofence or how they interacted with your mobile app.

### Key tactics for making your emails more relevant in 2015:

- **Expand your data sources:** If you're not capturing interactions with contacts across all relevant touch points, you'll be limited in how you can personalize content. Take the necessary steps to expand the data you're capturing and make sure you're feeding behaviors into a centralized database that can tie each individual to these cross-channel interactions.
- **Combine rules:** Take those behaviors you're capturing and associate them with other information, such as which of your products contacts are already using, when they last called the support desk, etc. Then design rule-based communications such as, "If someone watched this video and is already a qualified sales opportunity and in XYZ industry, serve this content."
- **Make incremental changes:** Moving straight from one piece of dynamic content per email to four or five might seem daunting. Instead, aim to add one per quarter, and by year's end you'll have made a huge leap in relevance.

## TREND #4: The customer journey moves to center stage in digital marketing.

Ellen Valentine, Product Strategist, Silverpop

For many old-school marketing traditionalists, digital marketing technology is still primarily used for generic push emails focused on products, offers and company news.

Some mainstream marketers are a little more sophisticated, using marketing automation to schedule their emails out over time, run drip nurture projects, or replicate campaigns for new events or product launches.

Unfortunately, these approaches aren't enough to provide the customized content and interactions today's buyers demand. In 2015, expect more marketers to follow the lead of top-performing companies in realizing that superior marketing is all about delivering personalized, behavior-driven content that helps contacts along their customer journey.

Whether a contact is conducting early research, evaluating and comparing providers and selecting a solution, or experiencing a product or service after the sale, digital marketing can enhance the customer experience at each of these stages.

Several ingredients are necessary to support an approach focused on the customer journey:

- **Web Tracking:** Allows you to understand where individual site visitors have been, what

buttons they have clicked, and what PDFs and videos they have consumed

- **Single Identity:** Helps ensure that each person's customer journey is consistent and updated across all devices and channels by tying cross-channel, cross-device behaviors to an individual
- **Integrated CMS:** Enables you to move beyond a generic website experience since your content management system can pull in everything you know about a visitor from other interactions

Once you have the key ingredients in place, you can begin to implement a newly architected resource center. The resource center becomes center stage in this new customer-centric approach. Instead of just putting all your content in a self-service resource center, you build out smart, automated email nurture programs and customized web pages that provide a guided path to the right content at the right time based on an individual's persona and buyer journey stage.

Marketers that take the time to invest in buyer persona development, customer journey mapping, and next-generation digital resource

centers based on implicitly derived profiles and buyer stages will lead their peers in 2015.

### Tactics for moving the customer journey center stage:

- **Improve Your Email Magnet:** Without a strong offer to help drive email opt-ins, contacts remain anonymous and tailored marketing approaches remain difficult. So, get creative in your email magnet offers and move beyond simply offering a discount or a newsletter subscription.
- **Implement Implicit Profiling:** Assign database values for a buyer persona based on what pages contacts are visiting, what content they're consuming and what buttons they're pushing. By capturing data implicitly, you can assign prospects to specific customer journeys even if they haven't yet explicitly shared information.
- **Provide a unique website experience for every visitor:** Build dynamic content rules within your website that customize what a visitor sees based on the persona and buyer stage values stored in your digital marketing platform and available via your CMS integration.

## TREND #5: Content becomes the secret weapon for breaking through the clutter.

Loren McDonald, Vice President of Industry Relations, Silverpop

In recent years, “content marketing” — developing and delivering content designed to enhance all phases of the buyer journey — has been one of the hottest topics in B2B circles. On the B2C side, though, the “content is king” mantra has remained somewhat ignored — but that’s starting to change.

Here’s why: Many companies are increasing the volume of email they send to contacts. And a lot of marketers are starting to wake up to the fact that amidst all this inbox clutter, continuing to push discounts, free shipping and new products like they always have has the potential to reach a point of diminishing returns — if it hasn’t already.

One solution to this challenge is to add more value to the relationship by giving subscribers a compelling reason to open and interact with the emails you send. In 2015, many leading marketers will expand their email program beyond the traditional promotional message stream in the following two ways:

**1) Incorporating more triggered emails into the mix:** These automated messages, driven by a contact’s behaviors or demographics, can run the gamut from browse abandonment reminders to “happy birthday” messages to

product recommendation emails. Regardless of the trigger, they’re inherently relevant since they’re based on an attribute or behavior specific to the recipient.

**2) Sending more “white space” emails:** These messages, so named because they provide some breathing room between your promotional emails, contain fun, educational and/or humorous content that’s intended to inform and entertain. Though not overtly sales-y, they can deepen and widen your bonds with customers, ultimately driving more revenue.

The beauty of both of these email types is that they can actually enable you to send more messages overall because they break up the more generic promotional message flow with compelling, relevant content. As a result, they have the potential to increase engagement with the messages that follow.

The challenge, of course, is that you’ll need to come up with the content for these messages — not an easy task given most marketers’ workload. The good news, though, is that if you look across all your online and offline channels, you probably already have a lot of the assets you need to launch these campaigns.

### Key tactics for shifting content to the forefront in 2015:

- **Think about your brand:** Many marketers are so focused on the day-to-day stuff, they never sit back to look at what differentiates them, why people buy from and prefer them, and what assets they already have that reflect these attributes.
- **Do a content audit:** Think about how your customers interact with you, from the first time they hear about your company to the moment they make a purchase — and beyond. What content do you already have that you could use to connect more strongly at these different moments, and what do you lack?
- **Refresh content you haven’t changed for a year or more:** To help ensure your content doesn’t grow stale or dated, schedule review sessions on your workflow calendar in which you look for messages that need upgraded copy, fresh images or updated design.

## TREND #6: Marketers place a greater emphasis on the post-purchase experience.

Loren McDonald, Vice President of Industry Relations, Silverpop

For many marketers, the focus is on growing lists and nudging new contacts toward making a first purchase. These priorities aren't going away, but the third leg of the customer lifecycle experience — repeat purchases and brand loyalty — is poised to take a leap up in importance in 2015.

Several key factors are pushing forward-thinking marketers to reconsider how much emphasis they put on the crucial post-purchase time frame when the real relationship with a brand begins:

**1) Lower database growth:** With increased competition from Amazon, specialty sites, flash sales and more, many retailers are netting fewer new contacts. As a result, there's a heightened awareness that companies must focus on providing a superior customer experience and actively managing a customer's purchase journey — or risk losing a first-time customer for life.

**2) Technological advancements:** The prevalence of marketing automation systems that make post-purchase programs simpler to create has made them more inviting to add to the marketing mix. In addition, with more marketing databases being integrated with ecommerce systems, it's become easier for retailers to cross-sell and upsell to customers in near-real time based on purchase behaviors.

**3) Tighter margins:** With free shipping and discounts becoming standard, especially during the holidays, managing margins has never been more critical. Improving the post-purchase experience through content and education rather than forcing customers to phone a call center or unnecessarily return products can increase satisfaction, margins and revenue.

As customer satisfaction has taken on increased emphasis, retailers have begun capturing more survey and Web experience data. Automated, post-purchase support emails and targeted messages based on survey and behavioral data offer a timely, relevant way to enhance the relationship right off the bat.

Of course, there are tons of other post-purchase email options to choose from — cross-sell, upsell, product review request, bounceback, replenishment reminder messages and more. If you want to take your marketing up a notch in 2015, take some time to map out potential purchase-related communications, build out the business rules that would trigger these messages, and start transforming a customer's first purchase into a springboard for receiving relationship-building emails from you.

### Key tactics for enhancing the post-purchase experience in 2015:

- **Pull in dynamic content:** Whether you're sending a first-purchase welcome email, a "purchase anniversary" message or a win-back email, you can drive engagement by setting up rules that further personalize these emails by pulling in content based on other behaviors, interests and demographic data.
- **Set up a "Best Customer" program:** Surprise and delight your most loyal customers by setting up a program that identifies qualified contacts, triggers an email when a customer reaches a certain threshold, and serves up a sincere and appreciative email message with a reward your customers will value.
- **Make it a series:** In today's busy world, buyers may need more than one nudge to move them to action. So, look for situations where you might move from a single one-off post-purchase message to a series based on engagement/lack of engagement or purchase/lack of purchase.



Using Post-Purchase Support Emails to Improve the Customer Experience

View the video >>>

## TREND # 7: Marketing departments evolve to better enable cross-channel execution, integrated data flow and measurement.

Bryan Brown, Vice President of Product Development, Silverpop

More than 80 percent of consumers today are using social, local and mobile technologies to do some combination of browsing, researching and buying products.<sup>8</sup> Yet 73 percent of companies rate their multichannel customer experience as “OK,” “Poor” or “Very Poor.”<sup>9</sup>

Despite the need to deliver a seamless omnichannel customer experience, many of today’s marketing departments remain poorly positioned to do so. Often, for example, customer data across email, mobile, web, social and other channels is siloed. Making matter worse, in many cases the marketing personnel in charge of these channels are equally siloed from one another. As a result, companies lack the cross-channel customer insights they need to deliver relevant, timely, personalized content.

This marketing fragmentation extends to the different tools and products teams are using. Since the marketing function isn’t connected in terms of data, technology or communication, companies continue doing channel-by-channel marketing despite the fact that the modern-day customer journey demands they do otherwise.

This is starting to change, though. Market pressure from customers is beginning to drive companies to look for better ways to perform

multichannel marketing campaigns that create a superior overall experience for the customer. As marketers shift to creating more automated programs driven by customer behaviors as opposed to product-driven, calendar-based campaigns, the need to integrate data and technologies from multiple sources and work across groups within the department is growing.

In 2015, then, expect new technologies to emerge that bring collaboration and workflow to agile marketing to solve the disconnect between siloed technology and marketing teams. These will replace the cumbersome, complex marketing resource management (MRM) solutions of the past, which provided workflow and resource management capabilities but weren’t connected to the automated execution and real-time messaging systems.

Instead of having an MRM platform and a digital marketing platform that don’t communicate, future marketing teams will use tools to manage themselves and their work around the customer experience, rather than leaving the customer journey as an afterthought.

Imagine a virtual whiteboard in the cloud where people could talk about, interact with and improve their marketing efforts on the fly. Important data from different systems housed in one place, giving

marketers the ability to plan, design and execute multichannel campaigns. That’s the future of marketing.

### Key tactics for improving your marketing department in 2015:

- **Shift your hiring:** You’ll need a combination of right-brain and left-brain types to thrive in a new marketing landscape in which not only is creativity key, but also the ability to think strategically and map out sophisticated automated programs that respond to your contacts’ behaviors and anticipate their needs.
- **Think multichannel personalization:** Some marketers have made the shift to delivering individualized emails, but are still serving up the same generic content on their website, within their mobile app, via SMS and/or on social. Think about how you could start providing more personal connections between your brand and your customers on every channel.
- **Reach across the aisle:** Your customers may not think about having an “omnichannel” experience with your business, but chances are high they’ll notice if the way you interact with them lacks contextual understanding of who and where they are. So, start aligning your teams around the overall customer experience.



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Reading Silverpop's  
"7 Key Marketing Trends  
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Succeeding in the New Year"

## Conclusion

As we move into 2015, the next big evolution in marketing remains unclear. What you can count on, though, is that the buyer journey will continue to change – and with it, the way businesses market to their customers and prospects.

To maximize your chances at success in the year ahead, review the seven trends discussed in this white paper and consider how you might best address them. Some of them may not apply directly to your business, but the recurring theme that connects them — a laser-focused commitment to improving the customer experience — applies across industries and verticals.

The next hot topic in marketing is anyone's guess: a new mobile gizmo, a previously unheard of social network, a breakthrough in predictive analytics — take your pick. But by carefully mapping the customer journey and searching for new and better ways to improve the experience at every touch point, you'll be well-positioned to succeed in 2015 and beyond, no matter what surprises emerge.

### Footnotes

- 1-IBM, "Great expectations: consumers are asking for tomorrow, today," Jan. 2014
- 2-Silverpop, "Are You a Best Friend Brand," June 2014

- 3-IBM, "Stepping up to the challenge: CMO Insights from the Global C-suite Study," March 2014
- 4-IBM, "CIO Insights from the Global C-Suite Study," March 2014
- 5-IBM, "Cyber Monday Report 2013," Dec. 2013
- 6-Dave Hoch, Localytics, "App Retention Improves – Apps Used Only Once Declines to 20%," June 11, 2014
- 7-Aberdeen Group, "Secrets to Better Engage the Mobile Consumer: The Role of Push Notifications," Aug. 2014
- 8-IBM, "Greater expectations: Consumers are asking for tomorrow – today," March 2014
- 9-IBM, "Delivering a seamless experience across every channel," Nov. 2013

Silverpop, an IBM Company, is a cloud-based digital marketing provider that offers email marketing and lead management solutions. Silverpop Engage uses customer data and individual behaviors, collected from a variety of sources, to inform and drive personalized interactions in real time. By providing deep, behavior-based customer insights and an intuitive engagement engine, Silverpop reduces the complexity of omni-channel marketing and enables exceptional experiences for customers across the entire buyer journey. As part of IBM's ExperienceOne integrated portfolio, Silverpop will help convert prospects into loyal customers through more relevant one-to-one interactions. Silverpop is trusted by more than 5,000 brands around the globe. For more information visit [silverpop.com](http://silverpop.com).

