Your Evaluation Guide to Digital Marketing Platforms:
10 Must-Ask Questions

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10 Evaluation Questions You Must Ask Digital Marketing Vendors (Before You Buy)

The time has come for your marketing team to purchase a new digital marketing platform. Implementing marketing technology requires a great investment of time and resources and should be planned carefully to avoid any negative impact on your day-to-day business activities. **By asking the right questions to digital marketing vendors, you can accelerate the time-to-value and avoid buyer's remorse down the road.**

With the plethora of marketing technology vendors available, it's a challenge to find the best provider with the right solution for your company and your goals. **This guide will help you in your evaluation process by highlighting 10 key questions you must ask every marketing vendor.** For each question, we have identified the risk of not having the feature/function and the must-haves you should be looking for in a platform.

This guide is designed for companies that:

- have outgrown their current solution
- want to scale their marketing activities
- don't find value in their current solution
- want to consolidate many point solutions
- aren't GDPR compliant
- want to unify their customer data

1

# How does your platform enable cross-channel marketing campaigns?

Risk

Using a platform that focuses on only one or two marketing channels results in missed opportunities of reaching your customers in the variety of other channels they might be using. Also, be wary of platforms that originated from a single-channel point solution, as their additional channels might not be equally developed.

Must-have

Choose a platform that meets your cross-channel requirements through email, social, mobile, and web channels that were independently built. This allows you to market to highly-converting audience segments, personalize communications, and trigger automated messages in the right channel at the right time along their unique customer journey.

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How does your platform help me acquire new potential customers?
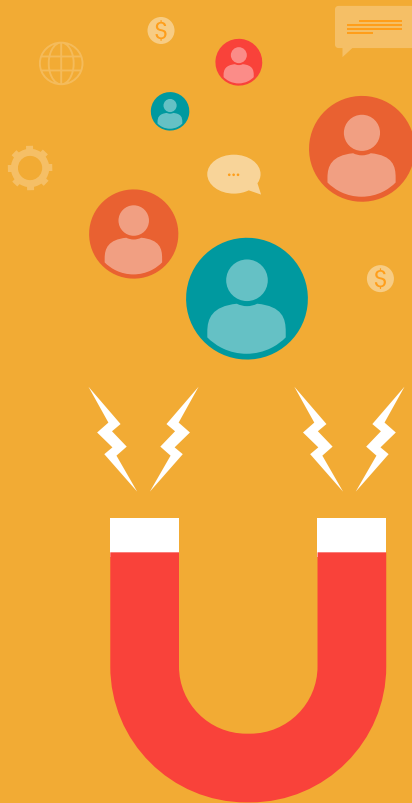
Risk

Certain platforms limit you to only engage with your known prospects. By not having acquisition marketing native to your engagement marketing tool, there is a high chance of delivering disjointed customer experiences between acquisition and retention.

Must-have

Choose a platform with an integrated data management platform (DMP), allowing you to collect in-depth first-party data pertaining to your prospects' behavior on your website or app. It will allow you to accurately target the audience segments that are most likely to convert, as well as bridge the gap between known and unknown prospects.

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# Can your platform converge all customer data in a unified place?

Risk

With the abundance of marketing tools and channels, your MarTech stack risks becoming the source of fragmented data, leading to fragmented marketing. These data silos prevent you from having a 360-degree view of your customers.

Must-have

Choose a cross-channel platform built upon a customer data platform (CDP) to allow you to centralize data collection, unify customer data from disparate sources into a single profile, and activate those segments in the right channels. You can draw on this first-, second-, and third-party customer data when planning and executing personalized marketing campaigns.

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Does your platform integrate with all my marketing tools?
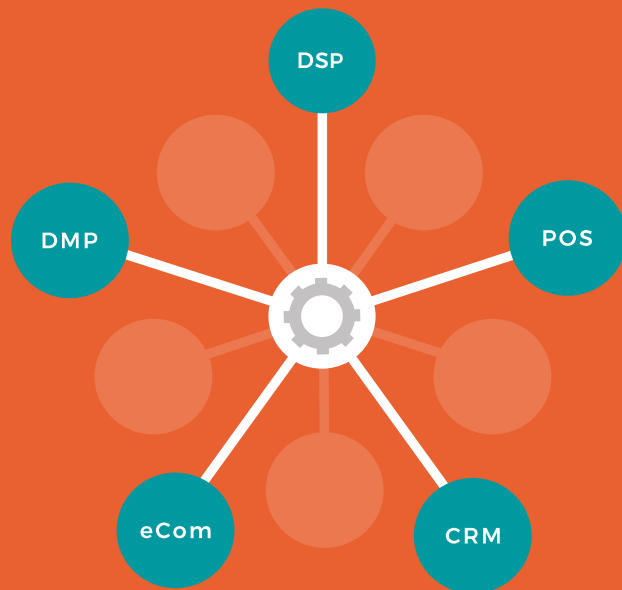
Risk

If you aren't pulling in all the most recent brand interactions, you will be sending out irrelevant and impersonal messages, resulting in a negative customer experience and an inconsistent customer journey.

Must-have

Choose a platform that is able to seamlessly integrate with your core marketing tools and systems, including your CRM, DSP, eCommerce, POS, CMS etc. With the ever-expanding list of recommended marketing tools, you need to have a flexible and open platform that can integrate with these systems. Ideally, the vendor even helps you set up the necessary integrations.

DSP

POS

DMP

eCom

CRM

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How user-friendly is your platform?

Risk

An unintuitive platform will negatively affect productivity and potentially force you to appoint an internal system admin or hire an expert to manage the software.

Must-have

Select an easy-to-use platform that your team can understand and is excited to put into action. The most user-friendly platforms also have the ability to create assets and templates to decrease campaign development time and increase the volume of marketing activities.

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How do I derive actionable insights from your platform?

Risk

If it is too difficult to turn the platform's raw data into useable information, you will have trouble optimizing marketing campaigns, discovering new customer insights, and creating customer value.

Must-have

Choose a platform that enables you to maximize your campaign outcomes through customizable dashboards and reports. These analytics tools should help you analyze cross-channel campaign results, draw conclusions, and execute on real-time information.

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Is your platform constantly innovating with new technologies?

Risk

You don't want a platform that stays stagnant. Marketing technology trends move fast, so you need a platform that can keep up. If a product vision and a frequent release cadence is not shared, you might get stuck with implementing "old school" marketing campaigns.

Must-have

Select a platform that deploys new features and channels, shares its roadmap, and releases updates, while also innovating with current marketing technologies. For instance, advancements in artificial intelligence and machine learning, when incorporated in the platform, will substantially improve your marketing execution and analytics.

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How long does it take for my company to implement your platform?

Risk

Purchasing a platform that you are not able to use for months or even years is a waste of resources. If your team is required to put in a lot of time to get everything up and running, it will take away from their regular job responsibilities.

Must-have

Choose a platform with a timely set up, as well as an onboarding program (and appointed specialist) to aid in the implementation and training of your team. Depending on the size of the organization and the condition of the data, the platform implementation could be as short as one to three months.

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# What does your customer success program look like?

Risk

Once the platform is implemented, you don't want to be left to your own devices. The platform may not live up to its full potential, diminishing its ROI, without proper guidance from the vendor.

Must-have

Select a platform with a personal touch, including a single point of contact (an account manager) who can help you maximize the platform's full capabilities, quickly resolve issues along the way, and make you self-sufficient - without additional charges. Depending on your business' needs, seek out a vendor that also offers digital marketing services to amplify your in-house capabilities.

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Is your platform scalable to the growth I will be experiencing?
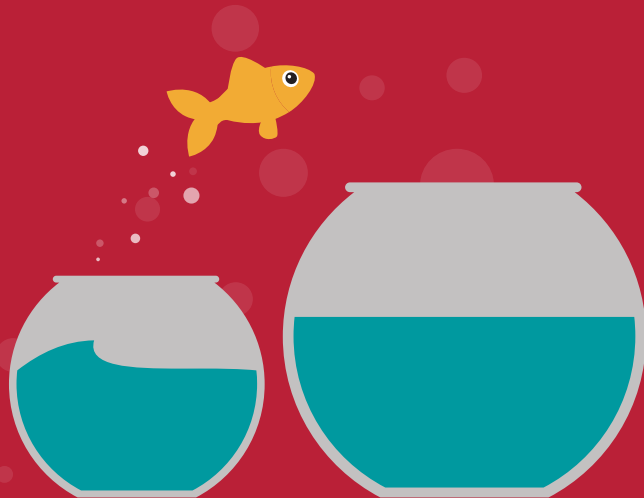
Risk

Some systems are specifically built for smaller businesses and less sophisticated marketers, so they are not able to scale with your growing business, limiting your marketing scope.
You will be forced to switch over to another platform when the time comes.

Must-have

Choose a platform that grows alongside your team and your brand, with high data processing power, advanced user access, cross-channel orchestration, predictive analytics, and other mature functionalities.

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Choosing the right platform

Choosing a digital marketing platform depends on what you specifically want to achieve with it and how it fits in with the rest of your MarTech stack.

At a minimum, the vendor you choose should make your marketing team's life easier and deliver ROI in the form of:

→ Increased team productivity

→ Improved campaign quality

→ Increased marketing activities

→ Reduced MarTech costs

→ Improved customer experience

→ Increased revenue

When you begin evaluating digital marketing vendors, take Mapp Digital into consideration. Our all-in-one solution, Mapp Cloud, checks all the must-have boxes, and then some. Reach out to **hello@mapp.com** today.

About Mapp Cloud

Mapp Cloud is an all-in-one platform that helps B2C brands run customer-centric marketing and act on real-time customer behavior. Mapp Cloud brings customer acquisition and customer engagement together in one simple platform infused with data intelligence.
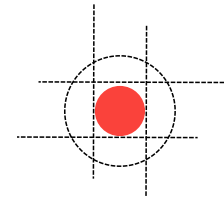
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AQUIRE

Hunt down and convert your ideal customer online with Mapp's data management platform (DMP).

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ENGAGE

Create campaigns that blow your customers' minds with Mapp's cross-channel execution engine.

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INTELLIGENCE

Be one step ahead of your customers with Mapp's customer data platform (CDP) and predictive insights.