PERFICIENT/digital

# TOP SIX
# DIGITAL MARKETING
## TRENDS FOR 2017

**PERSPECTIVES FROM OUR ADOBE LEADERSHIP TEAM**

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Digital marketing is perpetually evolving. Technology has changed the way we communicate, research, and engage with each other as well as the brands we patronize.

Who would have imagined twenty years ago that you could ask a question (or file a complaint) with an airline or service provider through a social media app on your phone? The bottom line is that the continuous evolution of digital channels has drastically shaped the customer experience and raised the bar for customer expectations.

To better understand trends in content marketing, the Internet of Things, personalization, augmented reality, and their collective impact on customer experience, we gathered several of Perficient Digital's subject matter experts who identified the top six trends to pay attention to in 2017.

# 89%
## OF EXECUTIVES BELIEVED THAT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE WOULD BE THE PRIMARY MODE OF COMPETITION IN 2016[1]

# TOP DIGITAL MARKETING
## TRENDS TO WATCH

1. **MEASURING CONTENT MARKETING PERFORMANCE** WILL SURPASS THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTENT MANAGEMENT

2. **THE UNION OF CONTENT AND COMMERCE** WILL REQUIRE DELIVERY OF ENGAGING EXPERIENCES AND SIMPLE TRANSACTIONS

3. **BRANDS MUST LEVERAGE DATA TO IMPROVE THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY** WITH PERSONALIZED EXPERIENCES

4. **MATURITY OF THE IoT WILL HAVE A FAR-REACHING IMPACT** ON MARKETING AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

5. **AUGMENTED REALITY** WILL AFFECT THE SALES OF PRODUCTS/SERVICES IN B2B AND B2C

6. **REAL-TIME PERSONALIZATION** IS NO LONGER AN ASPIRATIONAL GOAL

# MEASURING CONTENT MARKETING PERFORMANCE WILL SURPASS THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTENT MANAGEMENT

Content management has evolved from being an IT problem to a true business problem. As the volume of content increases and saturates the market, the leading platforms have turned their attention to content use – specifically its reusability – and gathering intelligence about the content.

Content saturation means your digital marketing platform needs to go beyond simply managing your content. With recent advancements in semantic text analysis and machine learning, there's an opportunity for digital marketing platforms to support automatic, intelligent content analysis. This will improve confidence that the content created will optimize SEO while delivering relevant content and ensuring appropriate tone of voice for your target audience.

"You can understand how content is performing after it's already published, but it comes down to **treatment versus diagnosis**," says Dan Klco, Adobe Digital Marketing Solution Lead, Perficient Digital. "If you're not vetting content and analyzing it ahead of time, then you're potentially losing out on the share of things that could be better."

We believe that in-depth content analysis is a rising trend and that it's crucial for your content management platform to provide data that enables strategic content creation and distribution.

MEASURING CONTENT PERFORMANCE IS

# A TOP CHALLENGE FOR
# B2B AND B2C MARKETERS

## 57%

### OF B2B MARKETERS

## VS.

## 50%

### OF B2C MARKETERS[2]

# THE UNION OF CONTENT AND COMMERCE WILL REQUIRE DELIVERY OF ENGAGING EXPERIENCES AND SIMPLE TRANSACTIONS

With all the interactive devices at our disposal combined with an increasing number of digital services like social media, content subscriptions, branded content, and eCommerce, buyers have never had so many options. Empowered consumers are demanding personalized and compelling eCommerce experiences that trigger inspiration, provide education, and hopefully result in a successful purchase.

The key to creating memorable experiences is relevant and timely content that delivers the right information or inspiration at just the right time. However, the marriage of content and commerce presents challenges to marketers.

Historically, integrating digital marketing platforms with eCommerce was linked to catalog management, and the primary challenge was merging "romance copy" – marketing descriptions and benefits – with product specifications and features.

We are observing trends where highly integrated commerce capabilities are delivered to digital marketing platforms by means of software as a service (SaaS) and/or strengthening partnerships among commerce and content vendors, translating into increased integration capabilities.

Avanish Gandhi, Perficient Digital's lead consultant for Adobe Experience Manager Mobile, says, "One of the more innovative marketing platform capabilities I've seen in recent years incorporates machine learning because of how it calculates and presents automated recommendations."

We will see tools expand the customer experience while making content management and distribution easier for marketers. We believe there will be a rise in recommendation engines – using machine-learning systems – to deliver product recommendations or targeted content based on users' browsing behavior.

# BRANDS MUST LEVERAGE DATA TO IMPROVE THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY WITH PERSONALIZED EXPERIENCES

Over the past few years, marketing is experiencing rapid change as evidenced by an increase in new communication channels, which has created a flood of new data. This trend has led to the explosion of tools available to help manage the customer experience across millions of personal devices, social, and physical touch points.

The value of creating and delivering personalized experiences allows you to better engage prospects and convert them to customers, and every digital touchpoint will be an opportunity for personalization. When customers feel that you know them as an individual, they will bring more lifetime value to your company through ongoing sales and brand advocacy.

"One growing trend we're seeing is that successful companies tend to pull digital experience outside of the organization and evaluate it independently," says Klco. "When you look at the experience and work to create a solution that's informed by the business – but not controlled by it – you'll get a different result."

We will see more brands willing to make the necessary organizational improvements to operate with a customer focused mentality by leveraging digital marketing platforms and all customer feedback (both positive and negative) to create truly personalized experiences.

# MATURITY OF THE IoT WILL HAVE A FAR-REACHING IMPACT ON MARKETING AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

From wearable devices to connected cars, appliances, and devices in our homes, the Internet of Things (IoT) is coming into its own, with Gartner estimating nearly 21 billion connected devices by 2020.[3]

The adoption of IoT and API-led connectivity will benefit businesses – and ultimately consumers. We have seen some adoption, but the explosion is yet to come.

With countless use cases for IoT and the proliferation of connected devices, all the data that's created presents a challenge to IT. Meanwhile, marketers face the challenge of maintaining a content stream for the wave of devices that are in development.
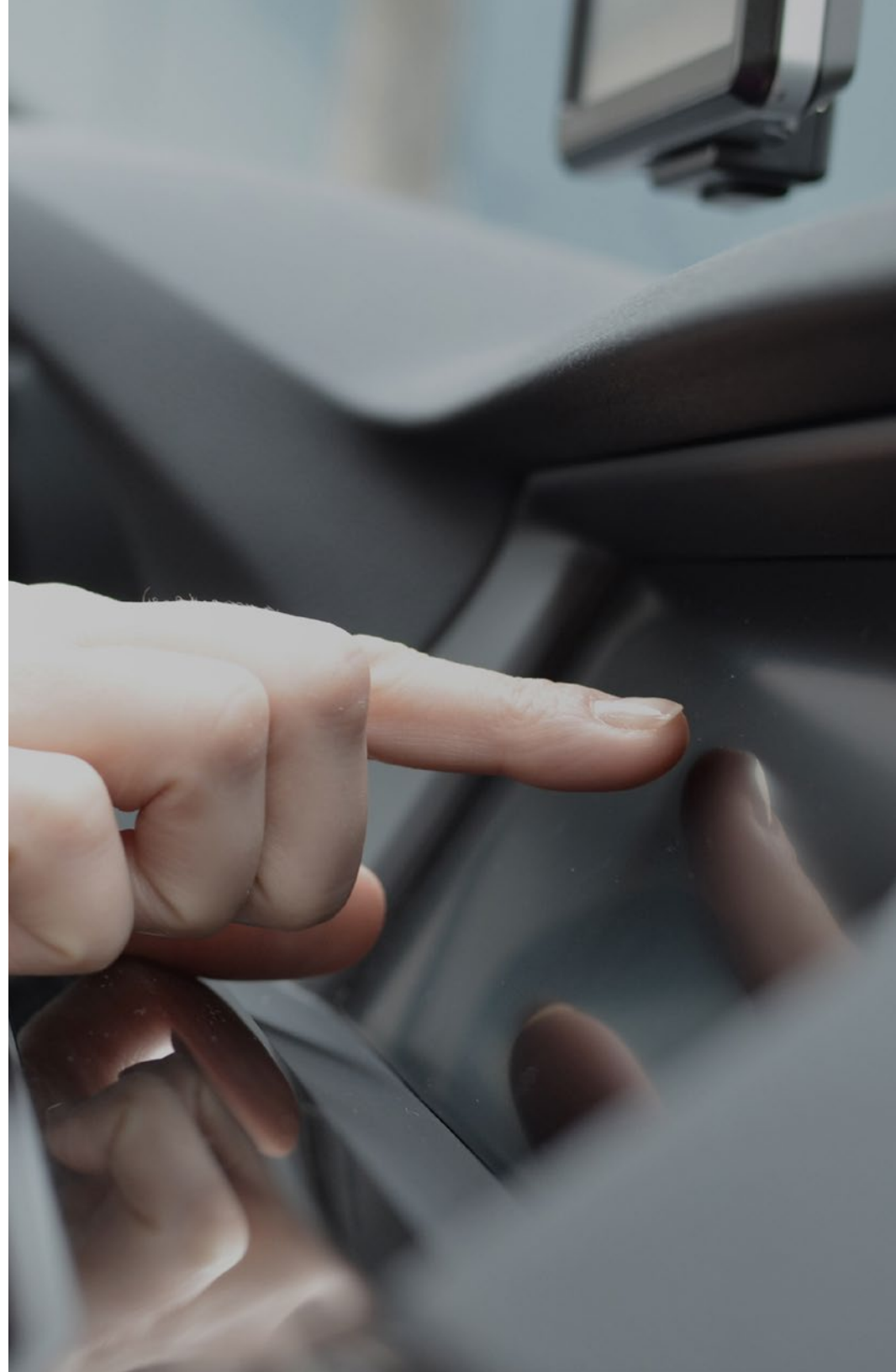
Additionally, marketers will need to adjust their promotional strategies, moving away from the "internet marketing mentality" of disruptive ads. With customer and user data generated by connected devices, marketers must use these insights to deliver targeted, precise, and relevant messages that are seamless in the device experience.

"Right now, most organizations are in a wait-and-see mode regarding the IoT," says Robert Sumner, Principal Consultant & Adobe Practice Director. "You're going to see some brands that are pushing the envelope and observe them capitalizing on this technology as a major marketing channel moving forward."

With the growth of connected devices, digital marketing platform capabilities will begin to support and address standards for communicating with users while also being mindful of manipulating sensitive user data to deliver personalized experiences.

# AUGMENTED REALITY
## WILL AFFECT THE SALES OF PRODUCTS/SERVICES IN B2B AND B2C

Augmented reality (AR) truly gained mainstream attention in 2016 with the release of Pokémon Go. However, our lives have been trending in this direction for the last few years.

WITH SMARTPHONES IN THE HANDS OF

# 72%
# OF U.S. ADULTS,
THERE ARE MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO PRESENT INFORMATION TO KEEP THEM INTERACTING WITH THE REAL WORLD.[4]

Simply stated, AR allows you to see virtual items or information while living in and looking at the real world around you. Innovative examples include apps that allow you to virtually furnish your house (IKEA catalogue), try on hairstyles, make-up, or clothes (ModiFace and Webcam Social Shopper), or put a funny spin on your selfies (Snapchat).[5]

"You can't deny the interest in augmented reality," says Klco. "Pokémon Go was successful because it was an experience that was universally applicable. Where I see challenges for companies that want to adopt AR is that they want to control the particular context of the experience."

We believe B2C enterprises will be the first ones to figure out how to capitalize on this trend for consumers, though B2B organizations may have some interesting applications that they can easily monetize. B2B will likely determine a use for augmented reality that helps solve technical or engineering problems in the field.

# REAL-TIME PERSONALIZATION IS NO LONGER AN ASPIRATIONAL GOAL

The top consumer brands are increasingly getting better at personalization – moving beyond basic recommendations to creating individually tailored experiences in real time or near-real time.

The types of personalization strategies run the gamut from simple, contextual personalization to more advanced journey-based personalization. A majority of companies are aiming towards providing contextual personalization in near-real time because it addresses masses of people coming to websites and is easier to achieve.

Marketing platforms offer capabilities for mastering segmented personalization and can advance it to the point of automated, real-time personalization. However, trying to achieve real-time personalization is cost-prohibitive from a number of angles including the software investment, having people with expertise to analyze the data, and creating a variety of content to support this level of personalization.

"The thing companies need to keep in mind about personalization is that it's not just a blanket that you throw on top of your existing marketing; it's about finding the opportunities to provide value to customers," says Klco.

# 94%

## OF COMPANIES REALIZE PERSONALIZATION IS CRITICAL
TO CURRENT AND FUTURE SUCCESS[6]

We will see more companies evaluating near-real time personalization and creating the agile infrastructure to respond. This requires your company to use data in the most intelligent way possible, gather the necessary insights, and have a solid understanding of consumers to be able to provide them value.

There's opportunity to make these trends a reality for your business in 2017 and build upon them in the future. Where do you begin?

**①** **Set your course:** Determine which opportunities make the most sense for your customers.

**②** **Start small:** Break down objectives into tactical projects.

**③** **One step at a time:** Work through those projects until the 'trend' is part of your business operations.

Partner with an experienced team like Perficient Digital to not only help you implement these opportunities, but also create a strategy to align people and processes to embrace them.

**Contact us today to learn more:**
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[1] Gartner, 2014
[2] B2C Content Marketing: 2016 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends – North America, Content Marketing Institute & Marketing Profs, 2015
[3] http://www.informationweek.com/mobile/mobile-devices/gartner-21-billion-iot-devices-to-invade-by-2020/d/d-id/1323081
[4] Augmented Reality Trends Marketers Should Watch," Convince and Convert, 2016.
[5] These 5 Industries Will Benefit From Augmented Reality," Tech.Co, 2015
[6] "The realities of personalization," Econsultancy, 2013

# ABOUT **THE CONTRIBUTORS**

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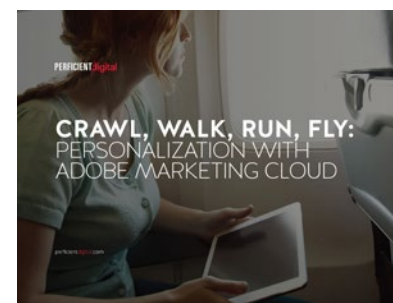LEAD, PERFICIENT DIGITAL

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## ADDITIONAL GUIDES



SOLVE THREE COMMON DIGITAL
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TIME TO UPGRADE
YOUR LEGACY DIGITAL
MARKETING PLATFORM

AN ADOBE MARKETING CLOUD PERSPECTIVE



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CRAWL, WALK, RUN, FLY:
PERSONALIZATION WITH
ADOBE MARKETING CLOUD

# PERFICIENT DIGITAL +
# **ADOBE**

Perficient Digital blends the strategic imagination of an agency with the deep technical acumen of Perficient's established consultancy to deliver exceptional customer experiences for the world's biggest brands.

With broad experience in digital marketing and deep technology expertise in Adobe Marketing Cloud, we support you by delivering end-to-end, integrated marketing platform solutions.

Our full-service offering is designed to tackle your ever-changing, ever-increasing business challenges. End-to-end is just the beginning.

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