

# The Rise of The Connected Marketer

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Marketing in the age of the  
connected individual.

A woman with dark hair tied back is shown from the side, looking down at a tablet computer she is holding. The background is a blurred brick wall. The entire image has a purple tint.

We now live in the age of the connected individual. How should marketers respond? What has changed and what remains the same?

In many ways nothing has changed; the fundamental task for marketers is to understand the needs of their target audience and find a way to meet those needs in a mutually valuable way. But the needs and expectations of those connected individuals has changed.

The Connected Marketer approach offers a way to understand connected individuals, to enable them, to make their lives easier and ultimately to serve them.

The underlying principle of being a Connected Marketer is to **create value with those individuals, not from them.**



The proliferation of connected devices, their falling cost and the ubiquitous connectivity they give us, means that we have the ability to be constantly connected. That constant connection has led to us living in a state of connectedness. That connectedness has caused an enabled an irrevocable change in our behaviour.

The combination of those factors has changed the nature of the relationship between brands and individuals. They are putting the individual in control

### **The question is, how do marketers react to those changes?**

The Connected Marketer approach, recognises those changes and provides a framework for marketers that pulls together:

- Four human dimensions
- Seven layers of connectivity
- Four key tasks

At the heart of The Connected Marketer approach is a simple idea that is based in the foundations of what all marketing should do.

## The Connected Marketer creates, develops and maintains a brand that understands and **meets the needs of the connected individual.**

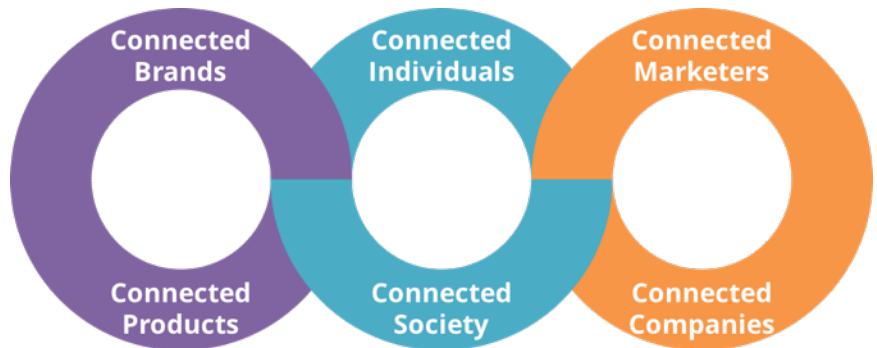
‘The Rise of the Connected Marketer’ explains why the approach is needed, how it works, who is doing it well and what you need to do to apply the thinking to your own business. It explains how Starbucks sells more coffee by letting people jump queues, how Rapha sells more cycling clothing by inspiring riders to suffer and how Walgreens sells more prescription drugs by getting individuals to share intimate data about themselves.


The first step for marketers may simply be to accept that everything and everyone is connected now. If we live in the age of connected individuals within a connected society, then companies will have to match that connectivity, creating connected brands and connected products.

When connected individuals become shoppers and consumers they don't separate their brand experience by channel or interaction. They build a view based on every interaction, past, current, and expected.

The distinction between physical and digital engagement only matters to the marketer. For individuals, their brand experience is based on every interaction, at any time, forever.

Individuals do not make a conscious decision to switch between channels, they choose whichever one suits them in the moment. Sometimes that may be a combination of physical and digital at the same time or in quick sequence. This hints at the challenge and the opportunity for brands to form better connections with individuals





This is crucial because of course a brand is not just a physical product and even more to the point, everyone has their own individual brand experience. It is based on every interaction with a brand, both physical and digital.

The great advertising agency leader, David Ogilvy once described a brand as being the sum of all the intangibles that surround it. But that was said in a pre-digital age. Digital is both tangible and intangible. Today a brand is a product of the total sum of experiences; physical, digital, sensorial and emotional. When those experiences are merged and synchronised they create a stronger brand. When they are aimed at solving needs and wants, they create a stronger brand and bond.

When the brand experiences recognise me as a connected individual and don't try to treat me like a connected consumer or shopper, then they have a greater chance of being relevant.

The connected marketer will be one who understands that the complete view of their brand is **a combination of all the physical, digital, sensory and emotional experiences**, enjoyed (or suffered) by the people they serve.

## Who is The Connected Marketer?

It may help to think of The Connected Marketer as being a 21st Century version of Renaissance man. In the 15th century the renaissance movement was led by polymaths; people who wanted to learn and experiment with no boundaries. Leonardo Da Vinci was the embodiment of the movement switching between arts and sciences covering everything from painting to design to architecture to engineering and more. Disciplines that would previously been thought of as the world of domain experts only. People in the Renaissance movement did not want to be bound by the rules of what went before and saw the value in learning and combining many different skills. Their approach was eclectic and lead by curiosity. It eventually led Europe out of the “Dark Ages”.

The Renaissance Man may well be the best analogy for The Connected Marketer as it will certainly take a blend of art and science to succeed in the future. It could be argued that blend already exists with brands and agencies, but it is almost certainly siloed if it does. Marketers are pushed towards specialisation early in their careers, but The Connected Marketer must take a more enlightened approach. Creatives will need to understand the possibilities of marketing technology. Planners will need to understand the needs of individuals and so on.

The Connected Marketer is someone who sees the total picture, is not bound to any channel or technology. Their focus is on solving the needs of the connected individual through combining physical, digital and sensorial experiences to create an emotional connection to their brand.

But that is at the individual marketer level; what does that mean for the corporate marketing body as a whole?

Da Vinci operated in an extraordinary time in Italy during the Renaissance and it should be remembered that someone had to bring all those talented individuals together and fund all that experimentation and creativity. Much of the money came from the Medici family who were farsighted enough to bring together disparate talents and savvy enough to believe that they could benefit commercially from the innovation.

In his [book](#) of the same name, Frans Johansson describes 'The Medici Effect' as the deliberate act of generating ideas at the intersection of multiple skills and talents. And this is where The Connected Marketer should sit up and pay attention. Innovation often comes from external unusual sources. Building connected brand experiences will require innovation, thinking differently and the deliberate act of exposing yourself and your brand to external ideas that find new ways to meet the needs of connected individuals.



If a marketer has to learn many new skills, be aware of many more capabilities, then it would be easy to fall into the trap of thinking that it is impossible to keep pace with all of the change in the world. That there are more tools and technologies to understand and master than ever. Marketers are urged to reach more people, in a more personalised way, faster, with greater accountability and of course less budget.

It is true that consumer behaviour has been radically changed by digital technologies and the connected individual is now in charge of the relationship between them and brands.

The reason many marketers feel overwhelmed by these changes is because they have forgotten the basics of marketing. They have become obsessed with tactics and don't spend enough time on strategy. They forget the basics. We forget that we are supposed to understand what people need and want and give it to them in a way that means we both win.

The role of marketing has not changed. **The fundamentals of marketing have not changed.** But the tools and the capabilities required have.

The Connected Marketer approach provides a framework that guides the use of those tools and capabilities.

# The Connected Marketer Framework

Manage The Four  
Human Dimensions

**4**

HUMAN  
DIMENSIONS

Master Seven  
Layers Of  
Connectivity

**7**

LAYERS OF  
CONNECTIVITY

Adopt Four Key  
Tasks

**4**

KEY TASKS



4

HUMAN  
DIMENSIONS

Physical  
Digital  
Sensorial  
Emotional

Your brand is a collection of experiences. The connected marketer tries to create merged and synchronised experiences that meet your needs.

What counts is how well those experiences join up.

Where we can, we combine physical, digital and sensorial experiences. When these work well they can create an emotional reaction or even better an emotional bond to our brand.

The emotional connections are of course highly desirable because they are most likely to lead to brand advocacy. When people really love the collected experiences they have, that's when they are most likely to become positive advocates on your behalf. Conversely a failure to join up the experiences or deliver them in a consistent manner can lead to brand detractors being just as vocal as their opposite numbers.

This holds true for physical and digital businesses. British Airways for example has a reputation for delivering a fantastic in-flight experience, but BA also needs to deliver an equally good online and mobile booking service. Amazon is the global leader in e-commerce, but if their delivery service was terrible then the online excellence would count for nothing.

We should always start by considering our capability to orchestrate merged brand experiences. Can we actually deliver something equally good in person as the experience we have online and vice versa? Does our customer service app experience align with the in store experience and so on? We can all name brands where one part of the experience is completely out of sync with the rest and it is often this element that stands out the most for us.



The brands that truly understand the connected individual go further. They merge physical and digital experiences with sensorial ones and use the combination of those to create emotional experiences and connections.

The Starbucks 'Pay & Go' functionality is perhaps the best example of a brand that has created something that really understands the connected individual. Pay & Go allows you to order your coffee through the Starbucks app while traveling to the store and walk straight to the end of the counter to pick it up from the barista. No standing in line. No looking for change or waiting for the card reader to validate your PIN number. In and out. All enabled through your mobile phone.

The service now accounts for 5% of Starbucks total revenue and not surprisingly is most popular at Starbucks busiest stores at the busiest time of day. It sounds obvious now, but doesn't everything simple and successful after the fact.

It brings together a mobile (digital) experience with a physical one in the store. Not only that, it leads to a sensorial experience as you can smell and taste the coffee. It's a personalised experience as the barista calls your name. A mobile payment experience and loyalty play as everything is enabled through the app. People surely love the fact that they can get their coffee, their way, exactly when they want it, with the minimum of fuss, so Starbucks creates an emotional experience also.

And if that was not enough, the whole thing is built on the idea of reducing friction in the lives of their customers and solving a problem: people hate to wait in queues. Starbucks has recognised a need and fulfilled it by combing multiple levels of brand experience.

How many of their customers using the service are thinking about price? Are even conscious of switching between the digital and physical experiences? Or is there just a single Starbucks brand experience?

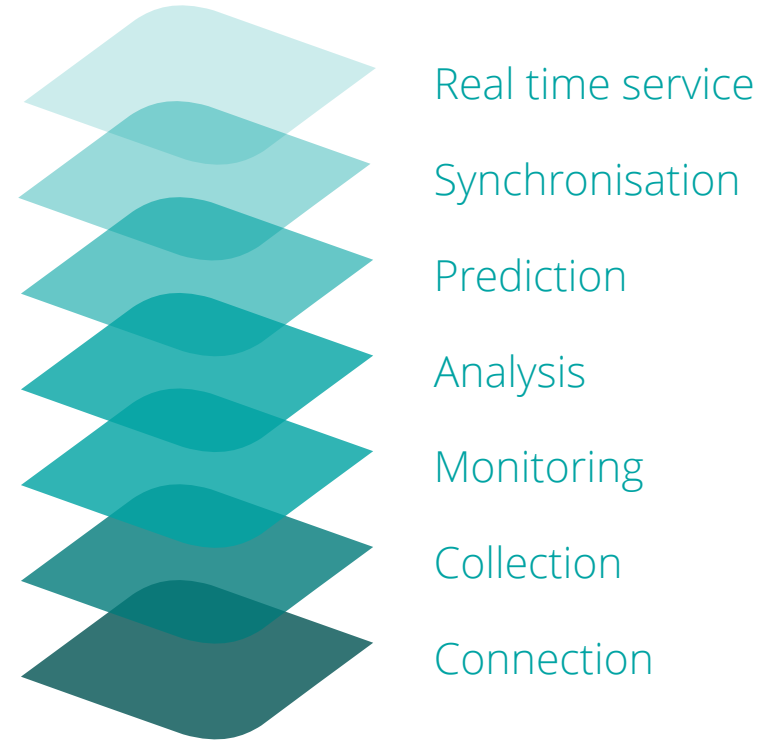


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LAYERS OF  
CONNECTIVITY

Connection  
Collection  
Monitoring  
Analysis  
Prediction  
Synchronisation  
Real time service

- **Connection** – is about connecting to the world around the brand. It requires learning to bridge the physical and digital gaps and drop silos, harnessing and synchronizing new systems and services, mapping devices at an individual level, embrace APIs
- **Collection**– collect and secure (all kinds of) data from all the connections and build data as a service.
- **Monitoring** – Apply machine learning and artificial intelligence and have the ability to look for pre-configured behavioural triggers within the data in order to enable and service individuals at the micro-moments that matter.
- **Analysis** – Big data modelling to begin to understand the individuals you service and uncover insight that will enable you to support the higher orders of service.
- **Prediction** –develop the ability to anticipate an individual's implicit or explicit needs, wants, desires and preferences and fulfil them at the moments that matter.
- **Synchronized** – serve the individual in a world where there are no boundaries, where the physical and digital are one and the same and the sensorial and emotional are attributes of your brand experience that are consciously choreographed and managed.
- **Real time service** – developing the capacity to be of service to the individual, in real-time, at scale, and on the individuals terms.





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KEY  
PRINCIPLES

Understand the Individual  
Connect, Engage, Influence & Enable  
Reduce Friction  
Be of Service



## Building an Understanding

Being a Connected Marketer™ starts with a marketer understanding the individuals they consider to be their target audience. This is basic marketing: asking and listening. The Connected Marketer™ seeks to understand those individuals, their likes and dislikes, their plans, their challenges and more, in order to work out what they can do to help them.

This starts with research and data mining to generate insight into who the individual is and what they want. Having access to data, both that generated by the brand and that obtained through third parties, becomes essential, as do the skills of data science (collecting, analysing, appending, refining, storing, using, updating etc.).

Once the target individuals can be identified, then listening through both social media and research brings further understanding. Understanding consumer behaviour and behavioural economics will be essential skills for the connected marketer.

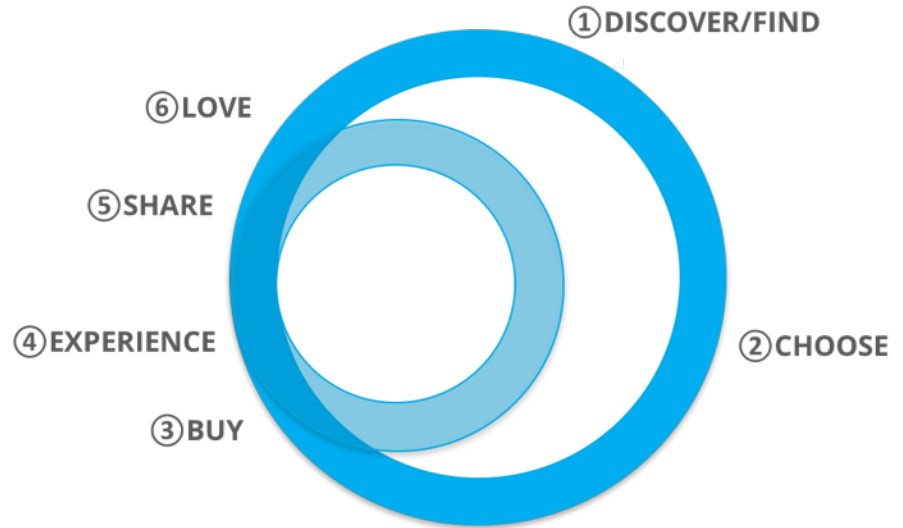
Always-on customer experience management based on social listening and sentiment analysis will ensure that the connected marketer is constantly refining their message, product and services to drive connections, influence and engagement.

All of the insight gained can be used to inform journey and experience mapping. Journey Maps depict all of the experiences a consumer has with a brand, and the emotional responses they provoke, mapped against the brand touch points and the processes behind them.

## Connecting, Engaging, Influencing & Enabling

The connected brand's presence will need to mirror the needs of the connected individual at each stage of their path to purchase. Consumers don't move from awareness through consideration, trial, purchase, loyalty and advocacy. There is no linear customer journey any more (if there ever was one) and so the Connected Marketer™ must be prepared to connect through any channel, at any time and at any place that the customer chooses.

The brand experience must be consistent at every point in the journey because consumers will connect and disconnect at will. Connections with consumers will be broken when brands fail to deliver a consistent experience. This means brands must encourage the consumer to engage by providing the right content and message to meet their need. Without the correct engagement the Connected Marketer cannot hope to influence the consumer.



Source: Adapted from McKinsey

Individuals want and expect greater levels of personalisation in their products, services and engagement with brands. The ability to deliver a personalised experience – and to scale that globally - will require greater understanding and use of technology and, in particular, the automation of many marketing tasks. Being able to manage the marketing technology in order to deliver that personalised experience on a global scale will become one of the greatest challenges for the Connected Marketer™.

Achieving real personalisation at scale will also force Connected Marketers™ to shift from basic demographic segmentation to using personas and, eventually, to using individual profiles. The Connected Marketer™ uses all the tools and techniques available to maintain a connection with individual consumers in a contextually relevant way that provides two-way value.

The Connected Marketer™ is both omni-channel and channel-agnostic, recognising that it is the individual who chooses which channel to engage through. Connected individuals are choosing both digital and physical channels to engage with brands - with a preference towards digital and mobile first. The always-on, always connected nature of mobile and its presence at every stage of the path to purchase means it is becoming the most important channel.

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*"You'll see I wear only gray or blue suits. I'm trying to pare down decisions. I don't want to make decisions about what I'm eating or wearing. Because I have too many other decisions to make."*



## Removing Barriers

What President Obama exemplifies, is the need to free his mind by removing decision making on the less important parts of life from his day. We are all seeking to do this: seeking to reduce our cognitive load.

We can see this in marketing too. Falling response rates, ad blocking, data privacy laws, consumer fatigue, channel proliferation and more, all make cut through and engagement harder for marketers. Too much marketing is about interruption, but in fact individuals want less interruption, less decision making and less friction in their lives.

We must recognise that digital connectivity creates paradoxes.

- We are simultaneously both more and less connected (more digitally and less physically).
- We have more choice, but we are overwhelmed by it.
- We can know almost anything in an instant, but we struggle with information overload.

Brands must strive to simplify, to ease and reduce the stress caused by connectivity. Automation will help. Personalisation and contextual relevance will help as will, of course, understanding the individual and their needs. Part of the role of a Connected Marketer is to search out every friction point in their relationship with a connected individual and seek ways to remove it. That means everything from cutting the number of clicks or taps it takes to buy a product to finding ways to shorten queues in store or wait times in restaurants.

## Ultimately, individuals seek out frictionless experiences.

Walgreens Pharmacy app has the capability for individuals to scan a barcode on their prescription to re-order it and get alerts when it is ready to collect. This simple service now fills a prescription every 8 seconds.

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*“Our promise is so different...it's not just about our products. It's also about education and serving as a resource to customers. If we haven't taught her, we've failed her. We want to empower clients to be in control”*

Bridget Dolan, Sephora VP and Head of Sephora's Innovation Lab



## Being of Service

What Sephora understands is the need to be of service to their target audience.

They seek to understand them as individuals, recognizing individual needs, introducing as much personalization into their brand experiences as possible, and taking advantage of contextual relevance.,

## The underlying principle of being a Connected Marketer is to **create value with individuals, not from them.**

This is not semantics. So many companies only consider how to extract value from their customers, rather than considering the value that could be given back in return. This is especially true of the data being collected during customer engagement and experiences.

Brands need to explore how individuals define engagement and what their expectations are. The expectations of how digital experiences should work are not being set by your brand. In all likelihood, they are being set by one of the big four digital giants. They are being set by what some people refer to as GAFA - Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple.

These are the companies setting the bar for what digital experiences are, and should be. So when brands think about their company competing digitally, they are not competing against their direct competitors. They are competing against the best digital experiences in life. The challenge here again is that the younger the individual, the more likely that they have a very high expectation that a brand will deliver them a highly personalized service through digital channels. The Millennials of today, will give way to those who are under 18 right now, those you might call Centennials. Those individuals are shifting from a mobile-preferred, to a mobile-only world.

The rise of The Connected Marketer is a direct response to the rise of connected individuals. It is not a new type of marketing. In fact, the approach urges marketers to revisit the fundamentals of marketing, to understand the needs of their target audience and find a way to meet those needs in a mutually beneficial way.

What has changed for marketers is the fact that as individuals we have both a physical and a digital self that coexist and marketers must find ways to create brand experiences that cater to both. The number of tools available has changed. The skills and capabilities required to be a marketer have changed. The need to deal with every member of the target audience as an individual is a huge change. In the past, businesses sought to realize economies of scale through standardization, now they must generate those economies by reaching the individual at scale.

The Connected Marketer approach offers a way to plan, organize and execute against all these changes and requirements. It is marketing in the age of the connected individual.

Data is essential to The Connected Marketer approach. But the way that we collect, store and use data from connected individuals has to change too.

The third book in this series **“Data: the heart of connected marketing”** will explore the role of data, privacy and the new rules of engagement for Connected Marketers.



A blurred background image of a desk with a laptop and a smartphone. The laptop is on the left, and the smartphone is on the right. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

To learn more about The Connected  
Marketer™ approach and The  
Connected Marketer Institute visit:  
**[www.theconnectedmarketer.com](http://www.theconnectedmarketer.com)**

The Connected Marketer™ is an mCordis Inc. initiative.

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