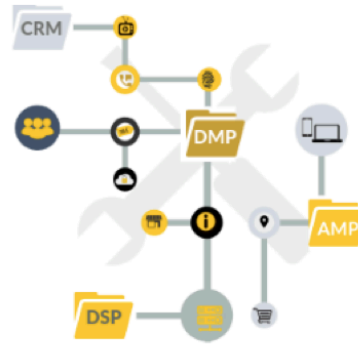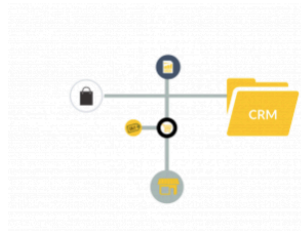# Are You Using the Right **Data Management Tools** for Your Omni-Channel Strategy?

Use our simple checklist to help you decide what types of data management tools to incorporate into your marketing stack and what functionalities to look for when shopping for each platform.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

A CRM is a system for managing a business's interaction with its current and potential customers. It includes the analysis of customer behavior to improve relationships with those customers, especially for the purpose of increasing retention and driving sales growth.

A CRM houses information like names, addresses, phone numbers and even marketing communications such as emails, live chat, and social media.

Questions to Ask when Evaluating a CRM

☐ **Does your CRM solution integrate with other platforms?**
CRM solutions need to integrate with other business platforms such as sales, marketing and customer support. They typically have a dashboard that provides users with an overall view of these functions for each customer. A CRM dashboard may also provide information that summarizes the relationship the company has with its customers.

☐ **Does your CRM solution export and share data?**
Collaboration is also a primary goal of CRM systems. They need to incorporate information from external stakeholders such as distributors, suppliers and vendors. Furthermore, CRMs must also share this information across multiple organizations and even specific departments. For example, a CRM can collect feedback from customer support calls to provide direction for future products and services

☐ **Can multiple departments simultaneously manage the CRM?**
CRMs were initially designed for use by the sales department, but modern CRM solutions allow other departments to benefit from it. Every department has customers, even if they are other company employees. CRMs can thus improve communications between departments, resulting in reduced IT costs for managing multiple systems.

☐ **What kind of security does the CRM have?**
Security is a particular concern for CRM solutions due to the large amount of customer data they store. This software should have features that allow administrators to implement best practices in security such as the concept of least privilege. This practice means that users should only have access to the CRM data they need to do their job.

☐ **Is the CRM scalable?**
A CRM solution needs to be scalable, meaning that it can easily grow with the company. For smaller organizations, you can accomplish this just by adding application servers and load balancing them. For larger organizations, it may be necessary to further separate individual CRM services, such as placing an asynchronous processing service on its own server.

Data Management Platform (DMP)
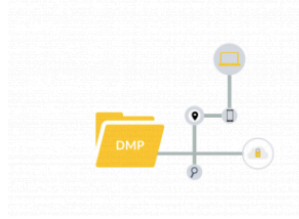
DMPs are third-party repositories of algorithmically assembled consumer behavioral data that help marketers expand their reach to look-alike audiences across the media ecosystem. They onboard an advertiser's first-party data and integrate additional third-party data insights via data matching. You should look for a platform that allows you to layer deep data insights such as interests, intent signals, behaviors, demographics and media consumption data.

Questions to Ask when Evaluating a DMP

☐ **Does the platform provide a network of best-in-class data providers?**

Some DMPs offer greater access to extensive data networks than others. When researching DMPs, look for a platform that offers a network of top consumer data brokers and access to billions of profiles. Some big data names include CoreLogic, Acxiom, Experian, Google, and Oracle.

☐ **Does the platform allow you to build complex lookalike audiences based on a combination of unique attributes?**

A lookalike or similar audience is a group of users on one network who resemble another group of members in some way. Marketers use them to reach potential customers who are similar to their existing customers. This capability allows marketers to get more value from their advertising dollars by filtering their ads based on a potential customer's location in their journey towards a purchase. Look for a platform that allows you to layer deep data insights such as interests, intent signals, behaviors, demographics, and media consumption data.

☐ **Can the platform match the identity links of anonymized individuals with data from multiple devices?**

Identity links can help marketers understand the media habits of your customers across multiple channels by matching your anonymized audience data with household level media consumption data such as TV viewership, mobile app usage and online web browsing behaviors. Find out how extensive the platform's third-party data network is for matching device IDs.

Audience Management Platform (AMP)
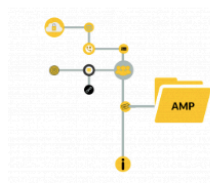
AMPs combine online and offline customer data such as CRM data, transactional data and website user data into rich audience profiles. They remove first-party data silos to create a unified customer database that you can onboard with downstream data partners. An AMP connects all the platforms you use to execute your media campaigns.

AMPs help advertisers improve match rates when onboarding your data with a data management platform (DMP). Higher match rates mean that you can layer more third-party data into your anonymized audience profiles. AMPs also build identity graphs that you can use across all media channels, allowing advertisers to execute omni-channel marketing campaigns.

Questions to Ask when Evaluating an AMP

☐ **Does the AMP remove data silos?**

Look for an AMP that collects your first party data across online and offline data silos. Examples of silos include CRM, transactional (point of sale) records, web traffic, lead lists and historical campaign response data.

☐ **Are security measures in place to safeguard your customers?**

The security of your customer's personally identifiable information (PII) should be taken seriously. Look for a system that ensures customer data management is GDPR compliant.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a regulation in European Union (EU) law that addresses data protection and privacy for everyone in the EU. It also covers the export of personal data to areas outside the EU. and EEA areas. The generally purpose of the GDPR is to grant individuals control over their personal data. GDPR compliancy basically requires a business to inform people about why it needs their data.

☐ **Is there a dedicated account manager to guide you through the onboarding process?**

Data onboarding is becoming more important to marketers as they increase their investment in identity-based strategies like AMP. One of the biggest advantages of using your media agency's proprietary AMP is that they have the burden of providing technical support.

This feature is especially important for small- and medium-sized businesses that don't have their own IT department. A media agency that hosts an AMP for their clients will likely handle all onboarding with downstream platform providers, including DMPs an DSP/S.

Demand-Side Platforms (DSPs), Supply-Side Platforms (SSPs) and Ad Exchanges

Marketers use DSPs, SSPs and ad exchanges in programmatic media buying or real-time purchasing of digital advertising inventory. Media publishers and buyers transact media through a bidding system. In an ad auction, the advertiser secures the inventory with the highest bid and serves it to target audiences that are actively browsing the web.

Questions to Ask when Shopping for a DSP/SSP or Ad Exchange

☐ **Are you purchasing a self-service platform, or will you have a team of media experts to build and execute media campaigns for you?**

Look for a platform that provides hands-on expertise from real media strategists. You want to find a provider that assigns a dedicated account manager to guide you through the onboarding process and who will help you iron out any kinks you may run into. If you feel confident managing the software yourself, be on the safe side and choose a provider with a dedicated phone number and a live customer support team.

☐ **Is it a DSP, SSP or Ad Exchange?**

This will tell you a lot about the service you can expect and how much of your media budget the end publisher will receive. A DSP uses its own technology to buy the ad inventory and management fees are likely paid through their own margin. If it's another type of platform and they don't disclose its fees, they will likely take a cut before payment reaches the DSP.

☐ **Do they have direct Private Marketplace (PMP) agreements?**

A Private Marketplace transaction is an invitation-only ad auction environment that offers premium inventory at proprietary rates to a select number of advertisers. PMP deals provide first look inventory, where buyers can access inventory at comparatively lower CPMs before it hits the open exchanges.

> **PMP deals are an attractive option for advertisers looking for scale, ad quality and the ability to target specific audiences.**

Data management tools are becoming increasingly important to businesses as they transition to people-based marketing. Whether you're in the market for a new solution to integrate into your current stack or your team is considering a replacement for one or more of the tools you already use, be sure to do your research and evaluate these systems carefully.