

5 Common Mistakes to Avoid with Omnichannel Marketing

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After two decades in pharmaceutical marketing, I've witnessed the evolution from simple multi-channel approaches to sophisticated omnichannel ecosystems. Yet despite the industry's embrace of omnichannel marketing, I continue to see the same costly mistakes repeated across organizations—mistakes that not only waste precious resources but can derail entire brand strategies.

The margin for error continues to shrink. In today's saturated pharmaceutical landscape, brands face mounting pressure to demonstrate value with shrinking budgets while navigating increasingly complex stakeholder ecosystems. Healthcare providers are overwhelmed with information, patients demand personalized experiences, and payers scrutinize every dollar spent. Against this backdrop, omnichannel marketing isn't just nice to have, it's essential for survival.

Having helped brands navigate these treacherous waters, I've identified five critical mistakes that can undermine even the most well-intentioned omnichannel initiatives. More importantly, I'll share how to avoid them.

5 Omnichannel Mistakes to Avoid:

1. **Treating Omnichannel as Multi-Channel Marketing**
2. **Ignoring the Infrastructure Beneath the Surface**
3. **Underestimating the Complexity of Personalization at Scale**
4. **Measuring Channels Instead of Customer Behavior**
5. **Failing to Plan for Ongoing Optimization**

MISTAKE

01

Treating Omnichannel as Multi-Channel Marketing

I can't tell you how many times I've heard: "We're doing omnichannel, we have email, digital ads, and our sales reps." But having multiple channels doesn't make you omnichannel any more than having multiple instruments makes you an orchestra.

True omnichannel marketing creates a seamless, orchestrated experience where each touchpoint builds upon the last. When a cardiologist receives an email about your heart failure drug, then sees related content at a conference, followed by a personalized discussion with your rep, that's orchestration. When these touchpoints exist in isolation, delivering inconsistent messages at random intervals, you're just creating noise.

The Fix

Start with your customer journey, not your channels. Map how your stakeholders actually move through their decision-making process, then design touchpoints that guide them smoothly from awareness to action. Every interaction should feel like a natural progression, not a random encounter.

MISTAKE

02

Ignoring the Infrastructure Beneath the Surface

Here's a harsh truth: most pharmaceutical companies are trying to build omnichannel experiences on top of siloed systems that can't talk to each other. It's like trying to conduct a symphony when the musicians can't hear each other.

I've seen brands spend millions on sophisticated campaigns only to discover their CRM can't integrate with their marketing automation platform, their content management system operates in isolation, and their analytics provide fragmented insights across channels. The result? Physicians receiving the same message three times in one week while promising prospects go completely untouched.

The Fix

Invest in the plumbing before you build the house. Ensure your data flows seamlessly between systems, your content can be deployed dynamically across channels, and your measurement provides a unified view of performance. Yes, this requires upfront investment, but the alternative is throwing money at campaigns that can't deliver on their promise.

MISTAKE

03

Underestimating the Complexity of Personalization at Scale

“We want to personalize everything for everyone” sounds visionary until you confront the operational reality. I’ve watched teams enthusiastically launch personalization initiatives only to burn out their content creators and overwhelm their compliance teams with endless review cycles.

The challenge isn’t just technical, it’s organizational. True personalization requires modular content systems, streamlined approval processes, and teams trained to think systematically rather than tactically. Without these foundations, personalization efforts become unsustainable bottlenecks that slow time-to-market and exhaust resources.

The Fix

Start with a modular content strategy. Create pre-approved building blocks that can be assembled into personalized experiences without requiring fresh compliance reviews. Focus on personalizing the most impactful touchpoints first, then scale systematically as your operational capabilities mature.

“The good news? These mistakes are entirely avoidable with proper planning, appropriate investment, and realistic expectations about the complexity involved.”

MISTAKE

04

Measuring Channels Instead of Customer Behavior

Traditional marketing metrics (email open rates, website visits, event attendance) tell you what happened in your channels but nothing about whether you’re actually changing minds. This channel-centric measurement approach misses the forest for the trees.

The real question isn’t whether your email performed well; it’s whether your integrated campaign moved physicians from awareness to consideration to action. Are you building sustained engagement or just generating momentary attention? Are you reaching the right people at the right moments with the right messages?

The Fix

Measure engagement velocity (how quickly prospects move through your journey). Track message resonance (which content combinations drive deeper engagement). Most importantly, connect your omnichannel activities to real business outcomes, not just channel metrics.

MISTAKE

05

Failing to Plan for Ongoing Optimization

Perhaps the most dangerous mistake is treating omnichannel as a “set it and forget it” strategy. Markets evolve, competitive landscapes shift, and stakeholder preferences change. What works today may be irrelevant in six months.

I’ve seen brands launch sophisticated omnichannel programs with great fanfare, only to let them stagnate because they lack the processes and capabilities for continuous optimization. Meanwhile, more agile competitors iterate rapidly, learning from real-world performance and adapting their approaches accordingly.

The Fix

Build optimization into your DNA from day one. Establish regular review cycles, create testing frameworks for new approaches, and maintain the organizational capability to pivot quickly based on performance data. Treat your omnichannel strategy as a living system that requires ongoing nurturing, not a static campaign.



The Path Forward

These mistakes aren't just operational failures; they're strategic vulnerabilities that can compromise your brand's competitive position. In an industry where physician attention is increasingly scarce and regulatory scrutiny continues to intensify, brands that can't execute sophisticated omnichannel strategies will find themselves at a severe disadvantage.

The good news? These mistakes are entirely avoidable with proper planning, appropriate investment, and realistic expectations about the complexity involved. The brands that get omnichannel right don't just survive in today's challenging environment, they thrive by creating meaningful connections with stakeholders who are drowning in irrelevant communications.

The question isn't whether you can afford to invest in true omnichannel capabilities. It's whether you can afford not to.



Annemarie Crivelli is EVP, Managing Director of Omnichannel Enablement at BGB Group, where she leads the development and implementation of data-driven omnichannel strategies for pharmaceutical and biotech brands. With over 20 years of experience in healthcare marketing, she specializes in translating complex scientific innovations into compelling stakeholder experiences.

Struggling to create a seamless omnichannel strategy?

Contact Amanda Eckel at aeckel@outreach.bgbgroup.com to leverage BGB Group's expertise and elevate your brand's impact.