A global retailer was eager to better understand the behavior of its customers across all of its channels—online, mobile, and in-store. The company had multiple touchpoints and interactions with customers before, during, and after their purchases, but it lacked a unified way to tap into that data to glean useful marketing insights for each customer, regardless of channel.

The company’s marketing business unit knew that consolidating customer data from multiple channels could be a huge win, not only for marketing and sales but also for developing core data analytics capabilities that would help the company improve quality and service levels, and help create and share insights across its merchandise and operations organizations, and across its supplier channels.

Achieving a single view of customer behavior across multiple channels and touchpoints would require changes to how data is collected, analyzed and used across the organization to connect with customers throughout their purchase experience. Key to success of this customer master data investment would be input from multiple groups of stakeholders representing marketing, merchandise, operations, services, and IT.
PwC’s Advisory solution

When approached by the Senior Vice President of Marketing to explore a solution for the “omni-channel customer insights” challenge, PwC worked with the company to develop an initial vision of how customer data from various channels could be used to predict buying behavior and for 1-1 personalized marketing, which would result in higher sales and customer satisfaction. Once a working hypothesis was established, a team of PwC professionals was assembled with experience in the retail and consumer business, information management, IT architecture and strategy, program and portfolio management and project management.

Collaborating with the company’s project team, a business needs and technical assessment was conducted that included multiple interviews with a variety of stakeholder groups. Groups spanned sales and marketing, operations, supply chain and others with a vested interest in the success of the proposed solution.

The assessment identified opportunities to capture, analyze and leverage data to create a single view of the customer experience. Pain points and challenges in the current system were identified and defined, and key capabilities were also defined, ranging from data capture, access and analysis to decision support. The assessment also delivered a mapping of various alternative “Big Data” technologies to support the reconciliation of inconsistent customer data formats. With this analysis, a proposed architecture for people, process and technology was developed, along with an implementation roadmap that was reviewed with the stakeholder groups.

To validate the proposed plan, an eight week customer analytics proof-of-concept pilot focused on two industry-leading parallel database platforms. To create the pilot environment, the team used PwC’s Big Data framework, which includes five criteria:

- **Performance**: Can the platform execute high-volume processes with speed and stability?
- **New Capabilities**: Can the platform embrace new data streams and new business concepts?
- **Strategic Relationship of Vendor**: Does the database vendor demonstrate a vision compatible with the organization’s long term objectives?
- **Architecture Compatibility**: Can the new system work well with existing systems and align with the organization’s structural standards?
- **Total Cost of Ownership**: What will the ongoing costs be, and will the project yield increased value for the company and their customers?

The pilot resulted in an evaluation of each platform’s strengths and weaknesses. Stakeholders representing the business, enterprise architecture, IT and systems integration functions made the final selection of the platform that would appropriately support their needs and operating environment.
Impact on client’s business

The new solution will enable the kind of omni-channel customer insights that the marketing executives are hoping for, enabling them to capture and store millions of customer interactions across multiple brands and channels in a single data repository, which can be used to gain customer insights through data and analytics. This will be critical to bridging the gap between the current and the future state.

The company believes it’s positioned to capture ten percent more margin from five percent of its customers across each value tier now that it can identify and target them more accurately. It also believes it can reduce its marketing spend by 1.5 percent while producing the same or better results. By eliminating duplicate direct mailings and by reducing or eliminating ambiguity regarding customer identity, the company’s marketing efforts are becoming more efficient and targeted than ever, and the results so far prove it.

For more information, please visit
www.pwc.com/us/consulting

Or contact

Thomas R Johnson
Principal – Retail and Consumer
(612) 804 5002
thomas.r.johnson@us.pwc.com

Ritesh Ramesh
Director - Information Management
(312) 501 2377
ritesh.ramesh@us.pwc.com

Michael Kupetis
Director – Retail and Consumer
(773) 551 5745
michael.kupetis@us.pwc.com