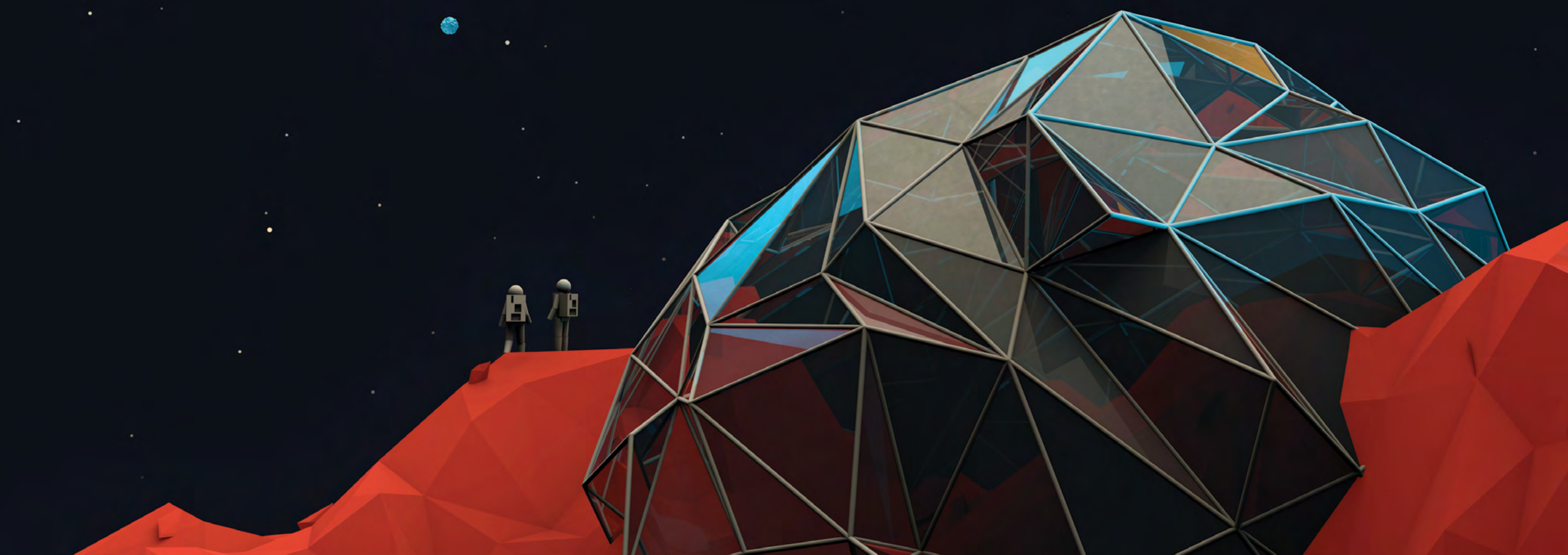
Ten ways

CROSS-CHANNEL MARKETING

is not rocket science

Create cross-channel campaigns with confidence

June 2015



WE ALL KNOW
the world's changing.

Marketing is changing. The traditional model, which saw the customer path as a linear funnel, is broken. Today, customers follow whatever path they want, and you're expected to reach out to them on their terms. And it's more than simply blasting them with messages through every channel you can find. Your customers expect you to be there when they want you and to back off when they don't. They expect you to remember what they told you at one point and anticipate their needs at another.

You need a way to succeed in this evolving marketplace to give your customers the experience they deserve. You need cross-channel marketing.

Of course, from the outside, cross-channel marketing can look hard. All those different channels, all that content, all that complicated technology. It might seem that executing a successful cross-channel initiative is like rocket science, something only über-scientists can figure out.

Well, it’s not.

In fact, if you’re involved in digital marketing now, you probably have many of the pieces you need to launch a successful cross-channel campaign. It’s just a matter of changing your perspective.

10 You choose the channels.

WHY IT SEEMS SO HARD:

There are so many channels.

You want to launch a cross-channel campaign. You want it to hit your customers right where they live. But where is that?

With so many ways to reach your customers these days, it can be overwhelming. From related products online to loyalty programs for in-store purchases.

From display ads to TV ads. From emails, newsletters, blogs, social media to direct mail, print advertising, or trade shows. And that's not to mention new channels like smart cars, wearables, or the Internet of Things (IoT).

The number of channels available to you just keeps growing. According to one study, marketers today feel they need to optimize their content for 2.5 times as many channels as they did last year.[1] Millennial marketers said they were accounting for at least 10 different channels in their campaigns. As the industry emphasis on customer experience continues to expand, that number is only going to grow.

So as you're sitting down to plan a cross-channel campaign, how do you know which channels to use?

WHY IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE:

You choose the channels.

Just because a channel exists doesn't mean you have to use it. Just because someone else has supposedly become the Next Big Thing because of their use of some channel doesn't mean it's right for you.

For years, Facebook dominated the social media channel. Everywhere you turned, people were talking about it. Businesses were investing in it and at least some were having real success. But in 2014, the online marketing site Copyblogger made news by completely shutting down their Facebook presence.

Why? According to Erika Napoletano, "Copyblogger's main focus is serving its audience. And if that audience wasn't engaging on Facebook, there was no real reason for us to pour energy into it. That's energy we can put into other areas—ones [our audience] appreciate[s] more."

Cross-channel marketing isn't about hitting as many channels as you can. It's about playing off the natural synergies in the channels you are using to create a customer experience that's natural, unobtrusive and useful. If you're not sure if you can do that with a given channel, you're not obligated to use it.

Start with what you know. What channels are you using right now? Why are you using those channels and what do you like about them?

Next, consider channels you're interested in trying. How can these channels complement the ones you're already using?

Remember, cross-channel marketing is not about how many channels you use. It's about how effectively you weave your channels together to successfully interact with your audience.

9 Repurposing is easy.

WHY IT SEEMS SO HARD:

Different channels are different.

Not all channels are created equal. Not only do they work differently for your business, but they just downright work differently. Some are easy to use, others require more planning and work, and each requires a different kind of content to be most effective.

A newsletter, for example, usually requires some kind of editorial content, whether it's curated or built in-house. Social media, on the other hand, involves clever status updates or other easily consumable content, like infographics or images. Mobile apps, emails, printed collateral. Each of these call for their own content.

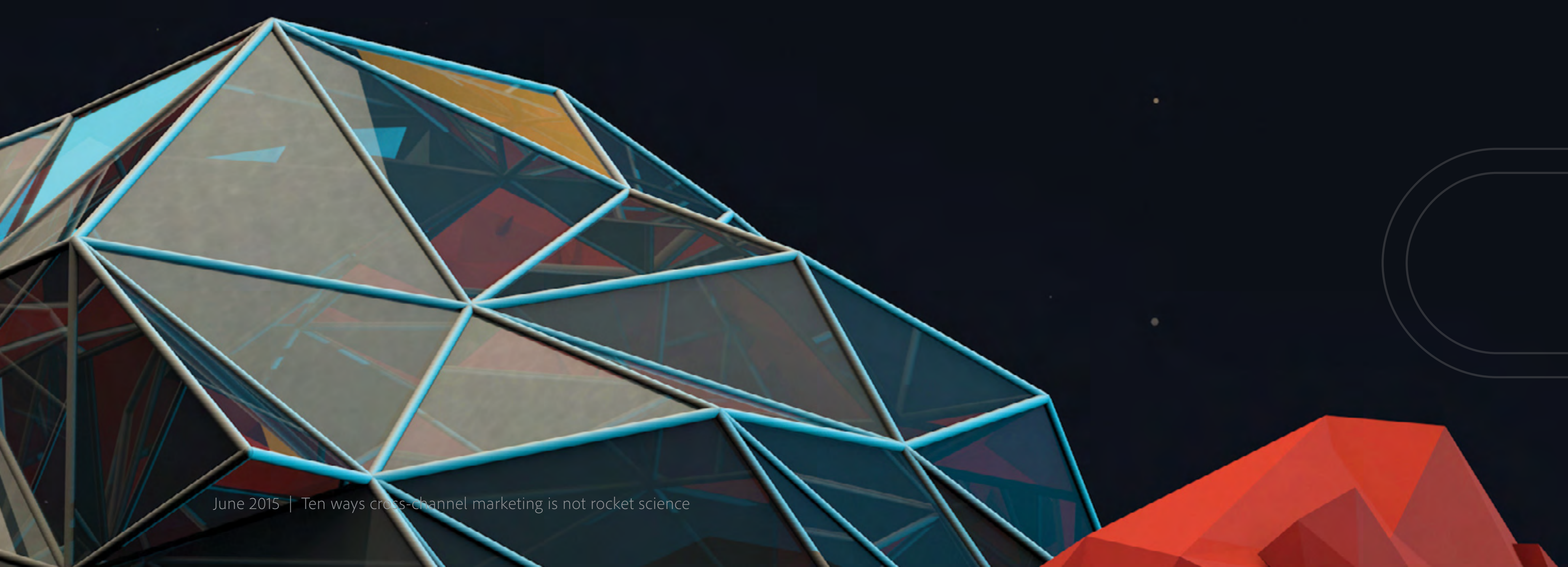
WHY IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE:

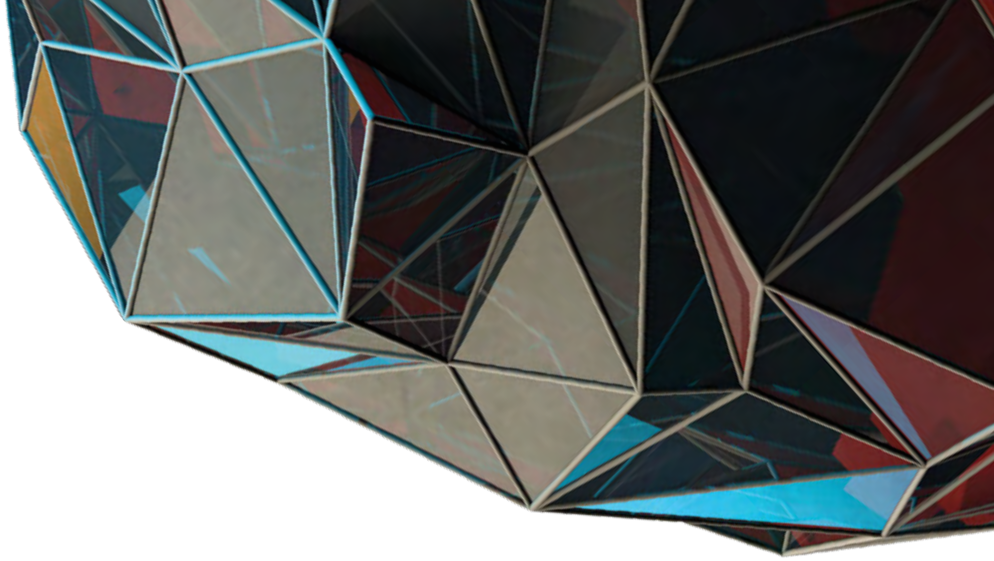
Repurposing is easy.

Remember, cross-channel marketing isn't just about blasting messages out through as many channels as possible. It's about coordinating your channels and leveraging their individual strengths to change the lives of your customers. So if you have a clear idea of which channels are going to lead out, content creation and management becomes a lot easier.

Decide which pieces of content and which stories are going to be your flagship. From there, you can figure out how to repurpose that content so that it unlocks the power of each additional channel. Creating a white paper and an infographic on two separate topics is time consuming. Creating an infographic from a white paper on the same topic, however, is much more manageable and produces cohesive content that is tailored to specific channels.

However, you definitely want to think about some kind of asset management. As you continue to expand your cross-channel effort, the content you create will grow. Frequently that content comes in the form of different versions of the same asset. Luckily, asset and content management systems have got your back.





8 You have what your customers want.

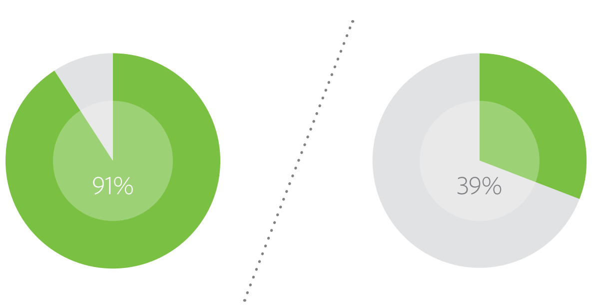
WHY IT SEEMS SO HARD:

Getting customer information is hard.

Cross-channel campaigns are fueled by customer information. The whole point is to give them what they want. But if you don't know what they want, you can't give it to them.

With all these different channels, your data is coming from a bunch of different sources. Over time, that data can change. And sometimes customers simply refuse to offer any information. Or they don't give you the whole truth.

In fact, according to a 2012 study from Columbia Business School, "91% of senior corporate marketers believe that successful brands use customer data to drive marketing decisions. Yet 39% say their own company's data is collected too infrequently or not real-time enough."



WHY IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE:

You have what your customers want.

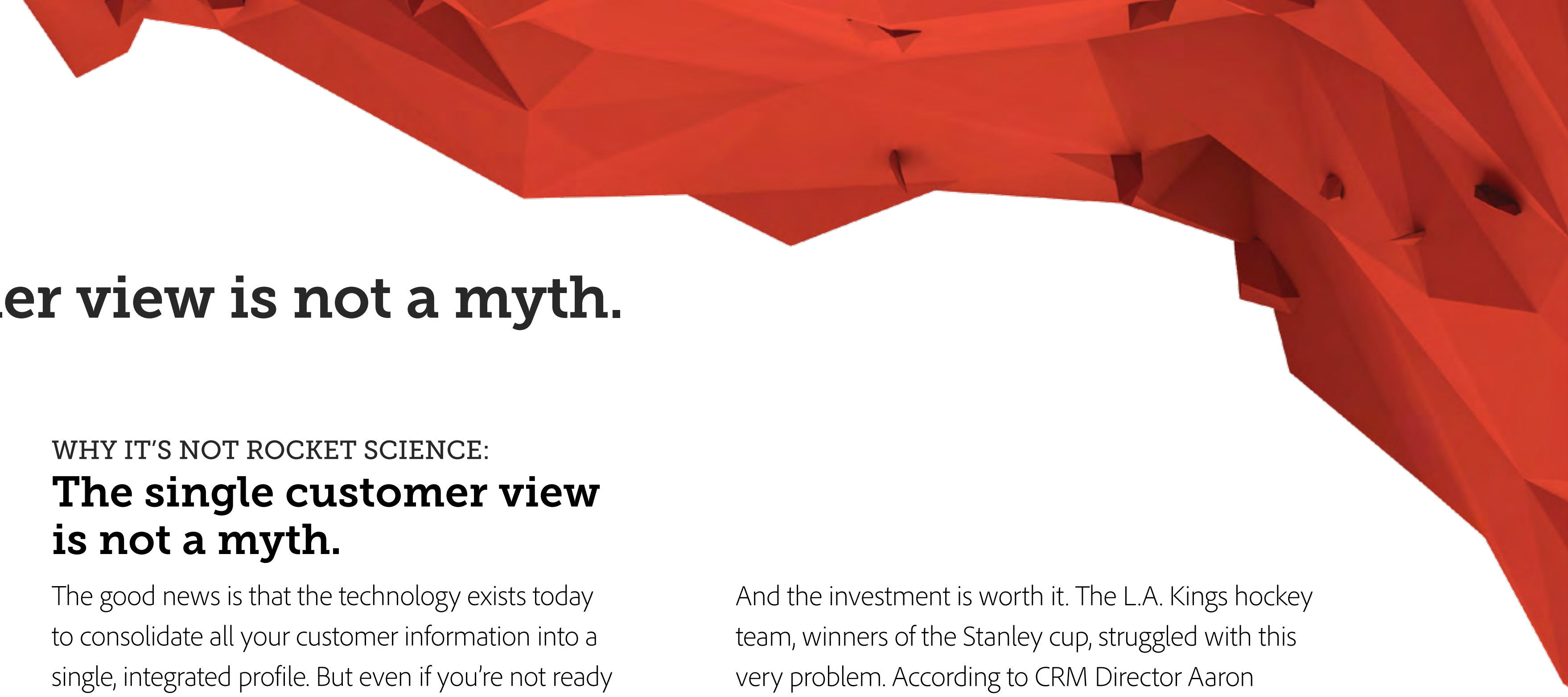
The customer information puzzle has many pieces (some of which we'll look at in reason #7), but at the core, the answer is you. Remember, people aren't giving you their personal information out of the goodness of their hearts. You have something they want.

The key is to make a fair exchange. From the beginning, consider how you're going to present your offer so that people want to give you their information. You understand your product, service or content. You understand your value proposition. Use that knowledge to present yourself in a way that's inviting and that lets your customers know they're in charge.

Also, take advantage of the differences in your channels during the process. How is giving information different on a mobile device than on a laptop or in a store? Make sure that the process for capturing customer information is tailored to each channel so that your customers don't feel any friction.

And when they do give you their information, take note. If someone shows their willingness to engage, that's a relationship you want to foster. For example, marketers at Marriott hotels wanted to give priority to their rewards members, so they used targeting technology to deliver automated campaigns at the appropriate stages of those customers' journeys. As a result, they not only made more money from their rewards members, but enrollments in the rewards program itself grew by 50%. (Watch more about Marriott's experience.)

Some people are never going to give you their information, so why not focus on those who are eager to engage.



7 The single customer view is not a myth.

WHY IT SEEMS SO HARD:

Customer information is fractured.

Of course, even if you're getting customer information, it might be totally fractured. Unless you've built your marketing engine from the ground up with cross-channel in mind, it's likely that you have different systems managing different touchpoints.

Your customer app maybe gathers information into one database, while your website has it's own repository for customer data. And this gets even more complicated when you factor in online and offline channels.

How can you use all this data in a meaningful way?

WHY IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE:

The single customer view is not a myth.

The good news is that the technology exists today to consolidate all your customer information into a single, integrated profile. But even if you're not ready (or don't have the budget) to jump on the technology bandwagon yet, you can still wade into the cross-channel waters.

Creating a single view of a customer is a matter of understanding what it is you want that customer to do. Even if you're getting data about that customer from a bunch of different sources and those sources don't talk to each other, you can still start by understanding the information you're getting and then manually tying it together.

Focus on just a couple channels to get started. Be mindful of the data points that overlap, as well as the points that are unique to each channel. These distinctions can help you map the customer journey in a way that makes campaign planning a piece of cake.

And the investment is worth it. The L.A. Kings hockey team, winners of the Stanley cup, struggled with this very problem. According to CRM Director Aaron LeValley, "Without a single, comprehensive view of fans' behavior and interests, we were limited in our ability to tailor [our] products to the right individuals or groups, and then engage them with targeted marketing messages."

LeValley and the L.A. Kings understood what they wanted out of customers, and so they were able to develop an informed solution, leading to highly successful campaigns. (Read more about the L.A. Kings experience and their solution to this problem.)

6 You don’t need everything.

WHY IT SEEMS SO HARD:

There’s so much data.

You’ve solved the problem with gathering customer data, but now you’re getting so much data that you don’t know what to do with it. In fact, according to a Forrester report, most companies only use 12% of the data they’ve collected.[2]

And with new channels like the IoT, wearables, and smart cars, the amount of data you receive will only continue to grow. How do you get a handle on all this data and use it productively?

WHY IT’S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE:

You don’t need everything.

Honestly? You don’t need to use it all productively. As that Forrester statistic suggests, not every piece of data you receive is going to be actionable, so the way to start is to identify which data you really do need.

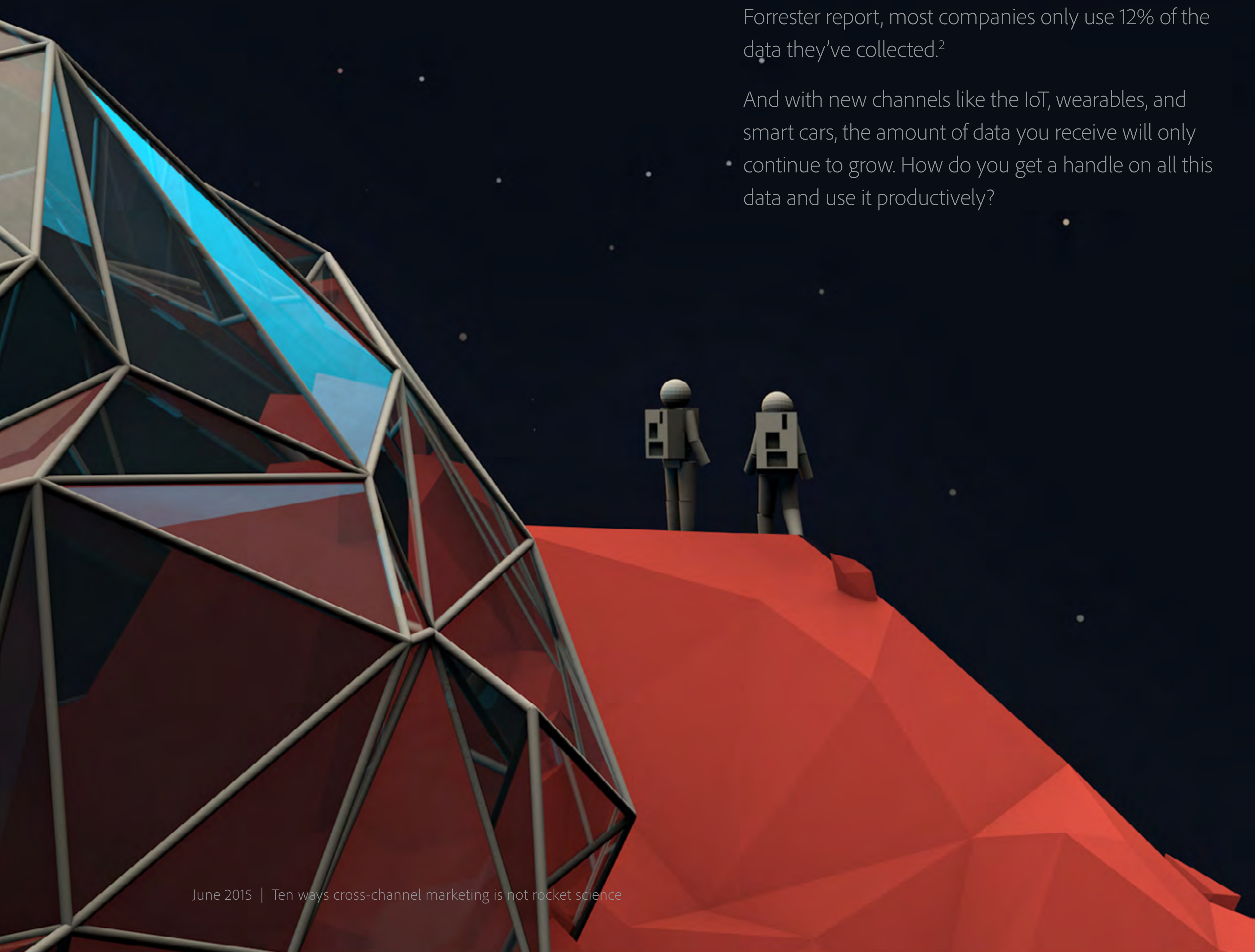
Consider the purpose of your campaign and then consider the information you’re requesting from your customers. If you’re getting information that doesn’t have an impact on your ability to communicate with them in real time, consider trimming down a bit. For example, is a long form really necessary or does just the customer’s name and email do the trick?

Beyond that, there are other ways to manage the data you’re getting. Adopting a robust data management tool, for example, can make things much easier.

John Bollen, senior vice president and chief digital officer of MGM Resorts International, suggests four tips for using your data more intelligently:

- Organize and manage resources
- Identify your customers accurately
- Talk with your customers
- Use data to look forward

(Read the rest of John’s thoughts on turning big data into smart data.)



5 Telling one story is easier.

WHY IT SEEMS SO HARD:

Messaging is difficult to manage.

You have multiple channels, multiple campaigns, multiple products and so on. Each has its own messaging and its own plan. Getting them all to play together is a chore.

In fact, according to eMarketer, 62% of marketers worry that their messaging is not integrated across touchpoints.[3]

How do you make sure you're not sending your customers one message via email and another—perhaps a contradictory one—on social media?

WHY IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE:

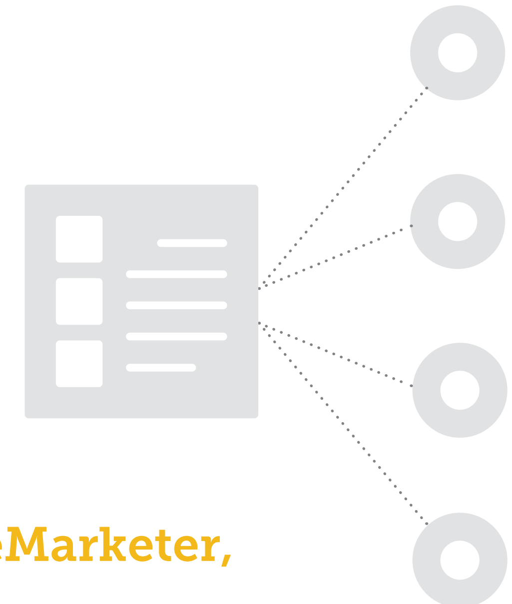
Telling one story is easier.

Cross-channel marketing is about getting along. It's about taking the strengths of each channel and weaving them together. You can accomplish the same thing with your messaging.

Let's face it. Everything runs smoothly when everyone is singing from the same song sheet. If you take the time at the beginning to get all the stakeholders together and coordinate your messages, offers and general visions for the company, it will be easier down the line to create campaigns that are consistent.

Be sure to create documentation so that everyone has something to refer to. Establish lines of communication so that no one's left in the dark.

62%



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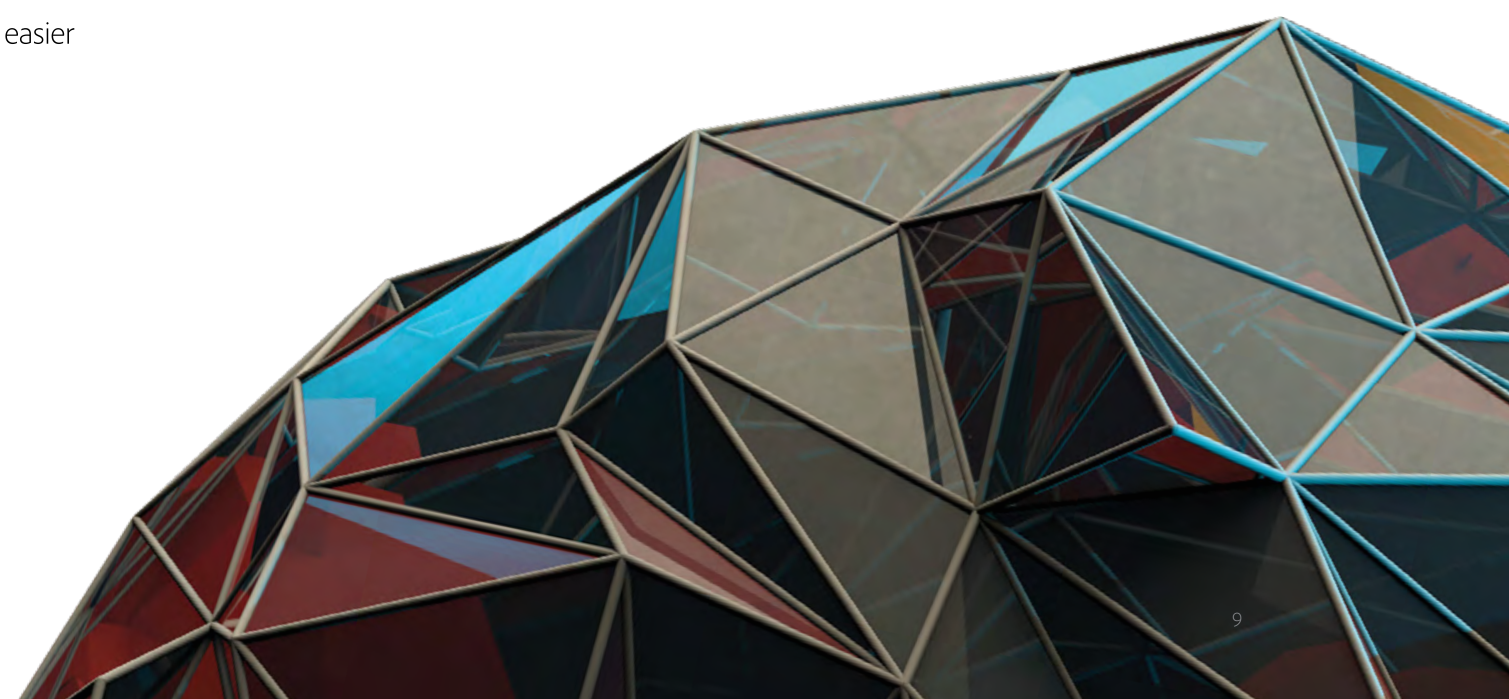


4 Virtual teams are here to stay.

WHY IT SEEMS SO HARD:

Teams are in silos.

Everybody hates silos, but they seem to keep cropping up. And when it comes to cross-channel marketing, they can be a serious problem. According to Econsultancy, as many as 70% of teams don't have a cross-team organization to support an integrated marketing initiative.[4]

But cross-channel marketing involves a lot of different pieces working together (there's a reason they call it "orchestration") and if each of those pieces is hunkered in isolation, things fall apart.

Of course, you might not be able to simply restructure your whole company to facilitate a shift toward cross-channel. At least not right away.

WHY IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE:

Virtual teams are here to stay.

Thanks to the wonders of modern technology, you don't have to. Traditionally, virtual teams were designed to overcome geographical problems, but they can function as silo-killers as well.

By creating cross-functional teams to address specific campaigns or problems while ignoring the usual organizational challenges, you can work around the dangers of silos and focus on building your relationship with your customers.

As with everything we've discussed so far, the key is to have a plan. Identify who needs to be involved to make your cross-channel initiative succeed, and then start building virtual teams around those needs.

The point here isn't to create greater confusion in your organization. Instead, you want to create project-driven task forces that deliver great marketing and lay the ground for greater integration in the future.

3 Success is a starting point.

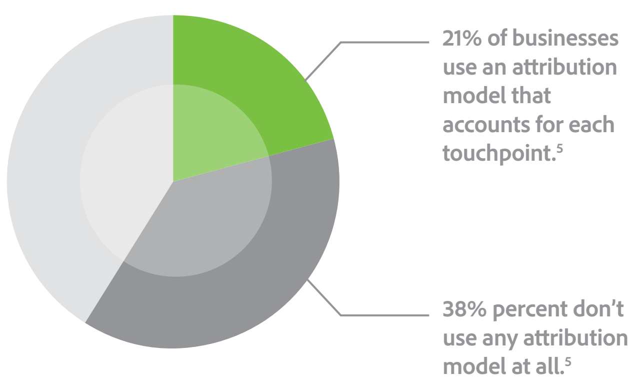
WHY IT SEEMS SO HARD:

It's difficult to measure success.

At the end of the day, you need to prove that your cross-channel efforts are actually doing something. But with so many channels in play, how do you know what's driving success—or what's causing a failure?

Understanding the contributions of different channels in a campaign (that is, attribution) can be a major challenge. In fact, according to one study, only 21% of businesses use an attribution model that accounts for each touchpoint. 38% don't use any attribution model at all.[5]

How do you understand what's working?



WHY IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE:

Success is a starting point.

Your goal is to show success as holistically as you can. The technology exists to deliver detailed, multi-touchpoint attribution. But even if you're not able to invest in that yet, you can start the process with some careful planning.

Also, keep in mind that attribution is about more than ROI. Good cross-channel attribution helps you plan more powerful, effective campaigns. According to Forrester, optimizing to attribution-based insights can reduce cost per action by 30% to 50% and drive improvements in ROI by 50% to 100% over time.[6]

2 It pays for itself.

WHY IT SEEMS SO HARD:
It's expensive.

Cross-channel marketing is possible today because of technology, and sometimes that technology is expensive.

According to an Econsultancy study, 79% of marketers increased their marketing spend on technology for 2015.

But if you're just starting out, trying to justify the cost can seem daunting. So what do you do?

WHY IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE:
It pays for itself.

There's a reason so many marketers are increasing their budget for marketing technology: It works.

Consider this. Forrester conducted a Total Economic Impact of a large U.S. specialty retailer that had invested in technology to execute a cross-channel strategy. According to their in-depth analysis, the retailer

- Enjoyed risk-adjusted benefits of its investment over three years of $29,334,306
- Boasted an ROI increase of 338%
- Paid back its initial investment in 6.6 months

Obviously, investing in marketing technology can easily pay for itself and more. (The published Total Economic Impact of Adobe Campaign report offers greater details about the retailer's success.)

But even if you're on a tight budget, don't fret. You can start with what you have and still find cross-channel success. In fact, a lot of what you need, you're probably already using. For example, if you're doing any kind of digital marketing, you surely have some way of gathering analytics. So you can begin by mapping out your customer journey, and you're on your way.

1 Your business needs it.

WHY IT SEEMS SO HARD:

Organizations are still living in the past.

Sometimes, businesses are just slow to change. Maybe some executive doesn't understand what marketing is for. Maybe the company is happy to let the sales team do all the heavy lifting. Maybe the organization is bloated and full of competing agendas. Maybe your company is fine with a standard multi-channel approach and sees no need to invest in a cross-channel campaign.

If you're looking to start a cross-channel initiative, situations like these can be a challenge. How do you overcome this kind of organizational inertia?

WHY IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE:

Your business needs it.

The first step is to remind yourself that you're right. You understand the changes in the marketplace. You know that customers choose businesses that offer the best customer experiences. And you know that cross-channel marketing is the key to delivering the best customer experiences.

Your company does need cross-channel marketing. Let's look again at these:

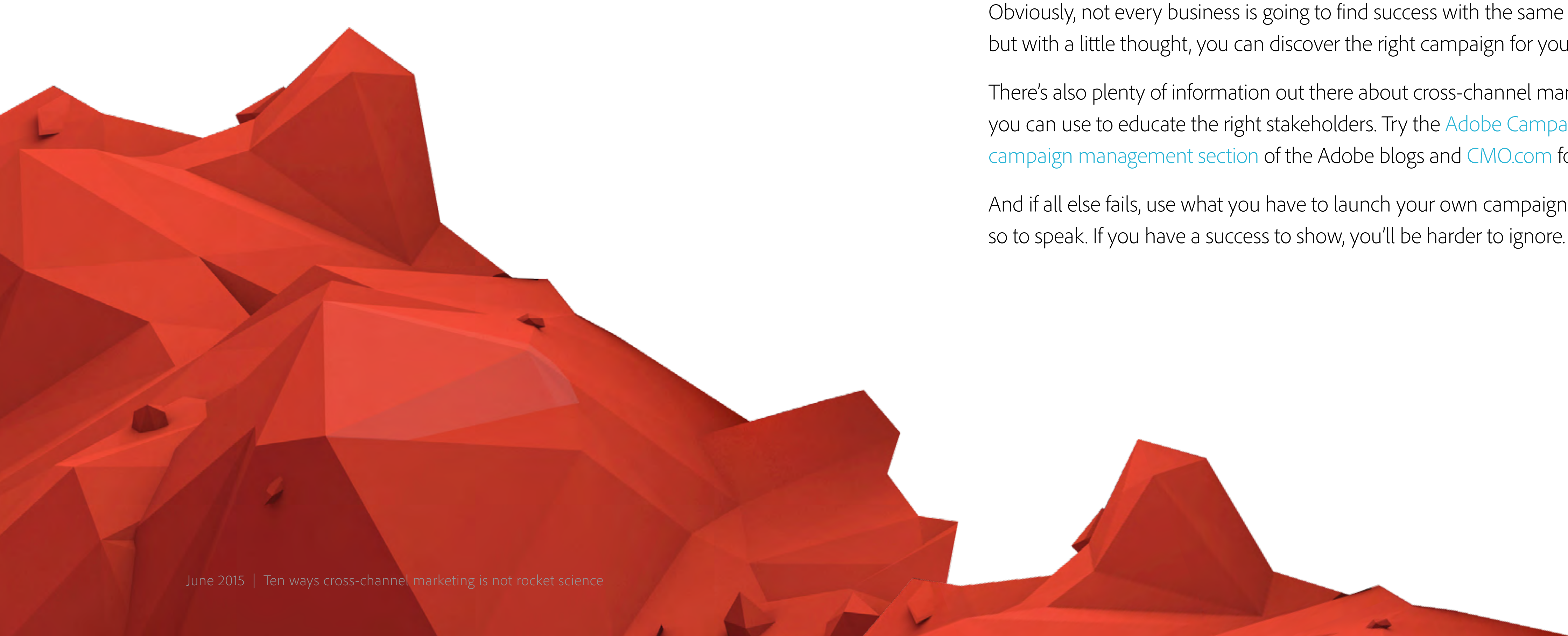
- $29,334,306 benefit
- 338% increased ROI
- 6.6 months to pay it off[7]

We've seen other success stories in this paper that prove that cross-channel marketing is the way to go. And there are plenty of others.

Obviously, not every business is going to find success with the same kind of campaign, but with a little thought, you can discover the right campaign for your audience.

There's also plenty of information out there about cross-channel marketing that you can use to educate the right stakeholders. Try the Adobe Campaign page, the campaign management section of the Adobe blogs and CMO.com for starters.

And if all else fails, use what you have to launch your own campaign—under the radar, so to speak. If you have a success to show, you'll be harder to ignore.



CONCLUSION

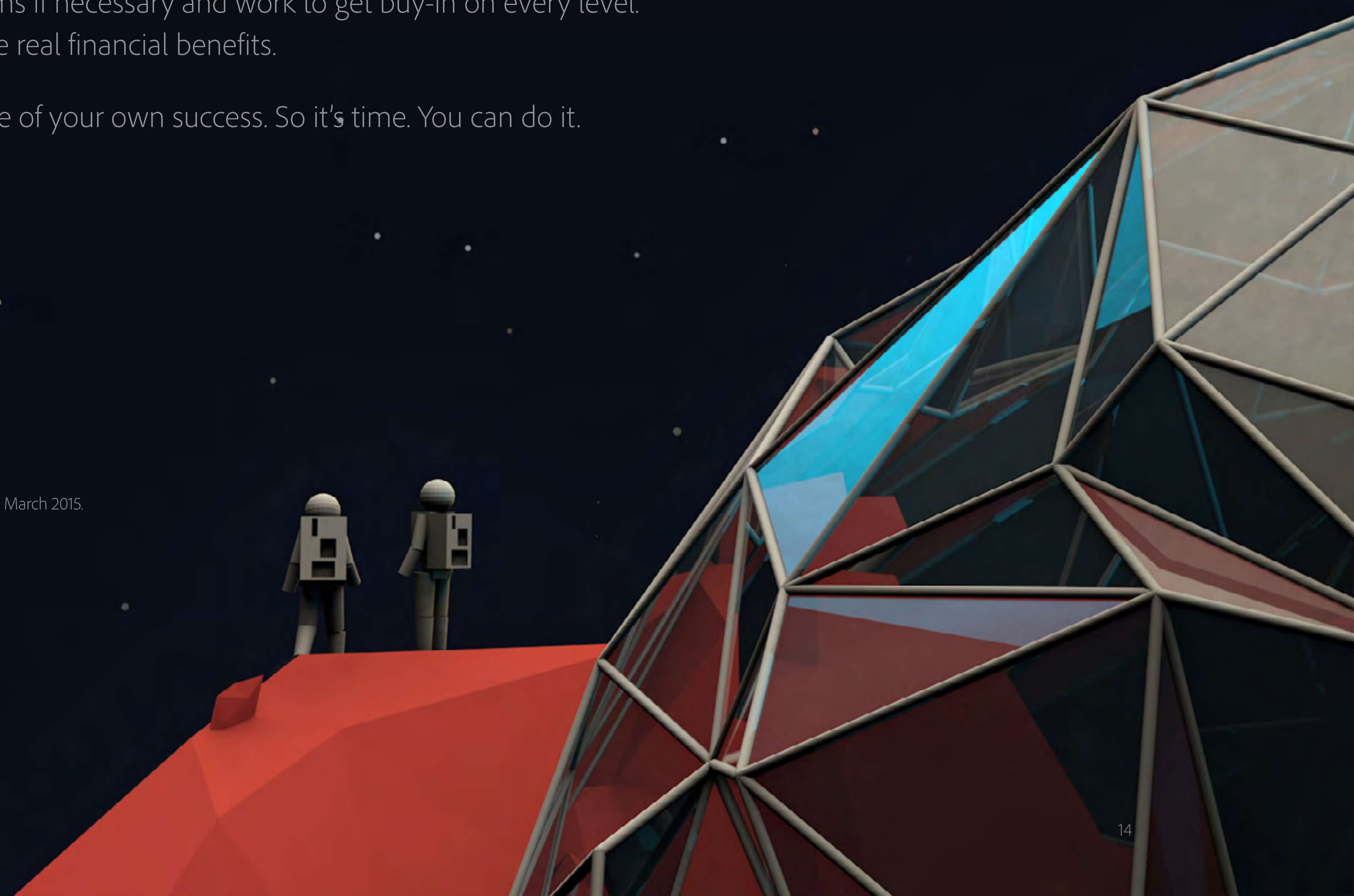
See? It's not hard. It just takes some thought, some planning, and a willingness to try. And it's crucial to your success. It's crucial to building a relationship with your customers in this modern, crazy world.

So start by picking the channels that work for you. You can expand later if it makes sense, but you should start with the channels you know you can support. Then create your content so it tells your story in the best possible way through each of those channels. Let each channel shine in its own way, telling the story in its own unique way, but be sure it's the same story.

Next get a handle on your data. Take the time to understand each of your customers and be disciplined in the data you use so you're not swimming in numbers. And finally, make the changes you need in your organization to make cross-channel marketing a reality: use virtual teams if necessary and work to get buy-in on every level. Make sure you have a clear plan and that you highlight the real financial benefits.

And that's it. It's not rocket science. It's simply taking charge of your own success. So it's time. You can do it.

To learn more, go to adobe.com/campaign.



1 *U.S. Marketers Research Results*, Adobe, March 2015.

2 *The Forrester WaveTM: Big Data Hadoop Solutions*, Q1 2014, Forrester Research, Inc., February 2014.

3 *Cross-Channel Marketing: Hot, but Not Happening*, eMarketer, Inc., September 2014.

4 Ibid.

5 *Cross-Platform Attribution 2015: Device Identification, Big Data Pose Continued Challenges*, eMarketer, Inc., March 2015.

6 *Measure the Impact of Cross-Channel Attribution*, Forrester Research, Inc., June 2014.

7 *The Total Economic Impact™ of Adobe Campaign*, Forrester Research, Inc., March 2015.

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