



# The Definitive Guide: **What's Trending in E-Commerce MarTech?**



# Contents

## Introduction

02

### Chapter 1

## Augmented Reality and 3D Modeling

05

### Chapter 2

## Omni-channel Personalization

09

### Chapter 3

## New Wave Automation

14

### Chapter 4

## Voice of the Customer

18

### Chapter 5

## Internationalization

22

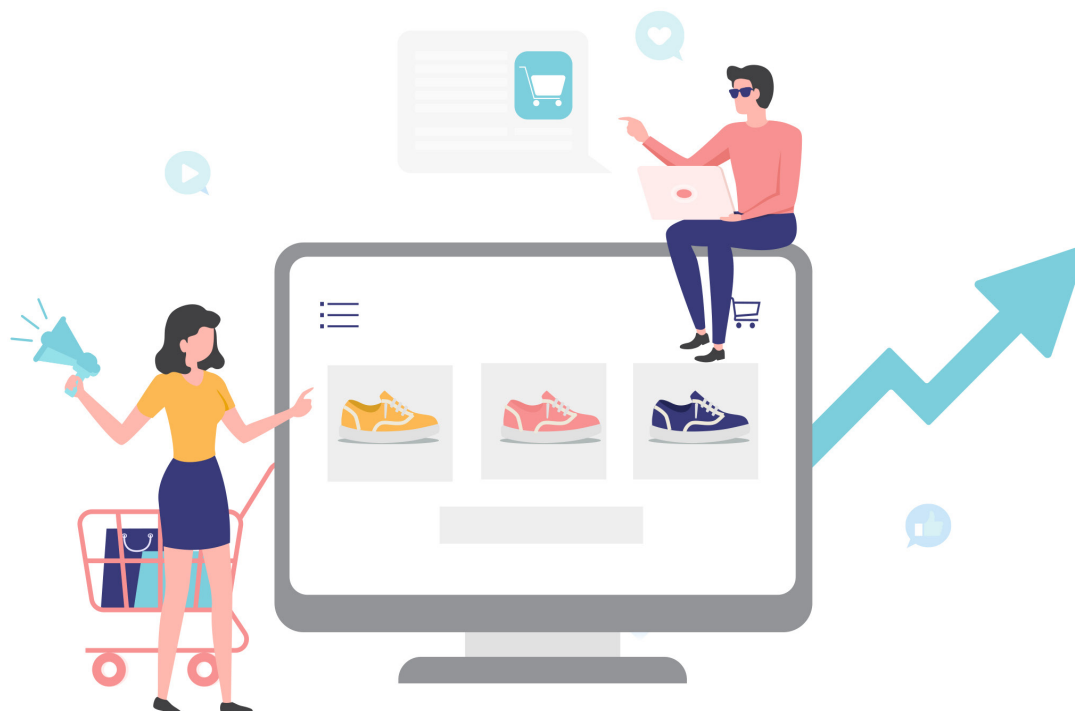
### Chapter 6

## Conclusion

26

# Introduction





The world of e-commerce is fast-paced and competitive, with a marketing scene to match. We're willing to bet that this atmosphere is a reason many love working within the industry. But with no pause button allowing us to catch up with shifting trends and technology, it can feel like a struggle to keep ahead of the game.

Added to that, in today's crowded marketplace the protection and promotion of brand are more important than ever before.

The desire for a tighter grip on the reins has led to a

trend favoring in-house expertise over outsourcing.

This additional level of accountability means it's more important than ever to be at the top of your game.

## The Rise of MarTech

As the e-commerce market flourishes, so does the world of MarTech — an industry that promises to detangle data and supercharge your digital spend. Highly polished tech solutions exist to help automate and data-drive every step of your

marketing process. Machine learning is reinventing marketing, and AI is no longer a futuristic concept.

There's little doubt that this powerful intersection of marketing and technology represents the future of our industry. North American and UK brands have increased their MarTech budgets by [44% in the last year](#), meaning this is now a market worth \$52 billion.

Advances and integrations are rapid, with development often outpacing businesses' ability to implement new technologies. It's important to not only tool up, and [pick the right tools](#) for your MarTech stack — but to use them in the right way, as an enhancement and extension of your existing expertise and creativity.

## Clarity in the Chaos

With competing companies keen to maximize the hype surrounding their latest solutions, it can be challenging to gain a solid perspective on the options on offer.

As early as 2016, [close to a quarter of global marketers](#) said that their teams were stretched by

having to manage too many marketing technology platforms or vendors. With this in mind, it's crucial to keep your [stack selective and well-curated](#).

This ebook is a chance for you to take stock of the current e-commerce marketing trends and technologies that will help you [attract the customers of the future](#).

It will help to demystify key areas of industry interest — AR, personalization, new wave automation, voice of the customer and internationalization — and the direction of things to come, so you can decide where your time, effort and energy will be best invested.

# Chapter 1:

## Augmented Reality and 3D Modeling





## Back to Reality: Understand the Trend

It's fair to say that AR's arrival has experienced a few false starts. A handful of high profile early ventures ([Google Glass](#), we see you) blazed a trail, but suffered from being ahead of their time.

Today, vast sections of society confidently interact with AR on a daily basis. Snapchat filters and mobile games that interplay with our surroundings are ubiquitous, barely novelties anymore. We also see vast, continued investment in companies such as [Magic Leap](#).

AR is finally coming of age in the realm of marketing and e-commerce. Shopify CEO, Tobi Lutke, recently proclaimed the AR emblem to be "the most powerful icon in online retail" and the platform recently announced native support for video and 3D modeling. We're also seeing significant investment in AR by some of the major marketplace players, notably Alibaba. These commitments are clear signals of industry faith in the potential and longevity of the technology.

With the release of Apple's [AR Quick Look](#), it's easier than ever to add AR capabilities to our

mobile brand experiences. Couple this with the huge rise in mobile commerce ([expected to account for 54% of total e-commerce sales by 2021](#)), and the stage is set for leverage of this powerful tool.

## View from All Angles: Why Should You Care about Augmented Reality and 3D Modeling?

Why should you care about AR now? Simply put, its ability to boost multiple performance metrics for commerce is proven. And where increased conversion is observed, adoption is sure to swiftly follow.

Although the general rise in online shopping (and adoption of multitouch attribution models) continues to blur the line here, conversion rates for online stores are traditionally somewhat lower than their brick and mortar counterparts. The figure for e-commerce hovers in the realm of [2%-4%, while traditional in-store conversions range between 20%-40%](#). It's fair to assume that the sensory element lacking from the online experience is a contributing factor here. [54% of customers prefer visiting stores](#) because they struggle to visualize the online products they're considering buying.

By bridging this sensory gap, and giving consumers a real sense of the scale, quality and physicality of the product they're considering, AR helps foster purchasing confidence, getting sales across the line. As shoppers can already see a product within the context of their own home — even superimposed onto their own body — there's a greater feeling of ownership and possession. Brand story is bolstered, and shoppers are more emotionally invested. According to data gathered from 2 million customers by Houzz, those who use their AR tool are [11 times more likely to purchase](#).

And it's not just conversion rate that AR has been proven to boost. It has a positive effect on dwell time. A recent case study by Motoman showed that when 3D modeling was introduced to their web experience, [time spent on site increased by 300%, with page views per visit doubling](#). Other benefits include more social sharing of customized products or personalized content, and a reduction in return rates because goods are more likely to live up to shoppers' expectations.

AR impacts pricing sensitivities, too. [40% of customers would be amenable to paying a higher price](#) for any products previewed with AR, meaning this technology has the potential to impact not just conversion, but AOV.



### [A recent experiment from Hidden Creative](#)

showed likelihood to buy a toy increasing from 45% (having viewed 2D advertising) to 74% (having viewed an AR experience). The amount a parent was willing to pay for the toy also increased, from £4.99 to £7.99.

## Time to Get Real: Prepare for the Future

It's estimated that AR could be responsible for [\\$2 of every \\$10 e-commerce spend](#) within the next five years. With proven potential for wide-ranging impact on key marketing metrics, AR and 3D modeling are no passing fad.

As with any new tech, an element of novelty will still be inflating statistics and our impression of AR's potential. As it becomes commonplace, the level to which AR enthralls our customers will doubtless level off. With this in mind, it's the early adopters of the tech that will reap the highest rewards, and gain the experience to keep innovating.

We typically associate AR-enhanced e-commerce experiences with larger household items (such as [IKEA's Place](#) or [WayfairView](#)) or personal apparel ([GOAT](#) for sneakers, [Modiface](#) for beauty). But there's scope for multiple sectors, and the tech lends itself well to products that have varying

features, or customizable elements such as color variants.

Added to this, machine learning means that future AR experiences will be able to take past preferences, existing interior decor and even factors like eye color into consideration when serving up intelligent product suggestions.

Progressive Web Apps, AR Quick Look and platforms like Shopify have enabled embedded AR experiences with no need for an additional app install — streamlining your customers' buying journey.

If you haven't already dipped your toe into AR and 3D modeling, start to assess the opportunities for your brand. The most successful applications combine wow factor with genuine problem solving, and drive a definitive action within their audience. Brands such as ASOS are starting to push some [really fun experimentation](#) in this realm into the public eye.

To future-proof investment, ensure that you leverage AR which is geared towards this kind of seamless experience. There's huge scope for creativity within the medium — and it's a gift in terms of your capacity for playful, smart engagement with your customer base.

# Chapter 2:

## Omni-channel Personalization





## Beyond First Name Terms: Understand the Trend

Consumer shopping habits and expectations have shifted monumentally in recent times. As a result, omni-channel personalization is becoming a crucial element of the most successful brands' game plan. As shoppers become more accustomed to switching between devices, omni-channel personalization — which is truly channel

agnostic — is vital in serving up a seamless and consistently relevant experience.

Long gone are the days when personalization was limited to a customized greeting and discount email on your birthday. While this may once have carried some degree of novelty and weight, today it's an assumed baseline.

[Pure360's research](#) revealed that entry-level personalization doesn't result in a significant boost to customer engagement. A mere 8% of

survey respondents said that being addressed by their first name would encourage them to interact with a brand. Just 7% said they would be likely to engage with a birthday email.

A deeper customized experience, with the individual consumer at its heart, is the new norm: the vast majority of marketing efforts now involve some degree of personalization. And modern personalization in marketing is an increasingly sophisticated operation driven by AI, advanced data collection and automation capacity.

The process of baking omni-channel personalization into your marketing flow starts with broad-ranging data analytics and encompasses all aspects of the customer life cycle. This shows a deeper understanding of modern shopping habits — in particular, our increasing tendency towards multi-channel, multi-device user journeys.

The ability to track user journeys and customer relationships between channels is recognized as a high priority. [80% of brands and 91% of agency respondents](#) to a survey stated that they either

planned to use or already use MarTech tools (such as the industry-leading [Nosto](#) or [Dynamic Yield](#)) to do so.

There's also a growing focus on bridging the on and offline divide and serving up relevant, helpful content and offers. This capacity will only grow as the Internet Of Things and our fondness for [connected wearables](#) develops.

In-store beacons are set to play a key role here, with [400 million expected to be in use by 2020](#). They serve location-specific offers and incentives directly to a customer's device while they shop in-store. Networks Inc. found that [over 70% of shoppers](#) confirmed that beacon-triggered content increased their likelihood to purchase while in-store. Geofencing can also be used to great effect for location-based campaign deployment, with platforms like [Dotdigital](#) working with [Plot Projects](#), and [Salesforce partnering with Bluedot](#) to offer exceptional accuracy and relevance.

## Up Close and Personal: Why Should You Care about Omni-channel Personalization?

Whether B2C or B2B, ultimately selling is human to human, and the tendency to favor a personalized approach is universal. According to Marketingprofs, businesses that adopt personalized marketing see an [average 19% increase in sales](#).

Consumer desire for data to be captured and usefully harnessed to their ultimate benefit is real. [57% of consumers are willing to share personal data](#) if it means they'll be served personalized discounts, and GDPR has assisted with marketers' ability to leverage this. [60% of customers](#) prefer an online store to remember and recall their contact details and past purchase information.

Understanding and responding to customers' unique paths to conversion is the main driving factor behind our collection of data. Modern MarTech tools and machine learning give us the capacity to use this information to incredible effect.

What are the end results of building sophisticated omni-channel personalization into the core of your strategy and MarTech stack? Online retail success is optimized as barriers to conversion are removed. From auto-filled personal info to appealing offers served up in real-time, laser targeted content to custom landing pages – once you have a firm handle on your data, the list of opportunities to enhance UX and CX is endless. Marketing becomes more predictive than reactive. You can stay ahead of your customers, who are no longer roughly segmented, but genuinely unique in terms of the purchase journey they undertake.

The ability to fine-tune messaging at multiple stages of the funnel has a beneficial, long-tail effect on lead nurturing. A personalized shopping experience was shown by [Segment's research](#) to increase brand loyalty, with 44% of consumers reporting that it would make them more likely to become repeat buyers.

The same research also suggests that impulse purchasing and AOV are heightened. 49% of shoppers stated an increased tendency to

purchase a product they didn't originally plan to buy, and 40% said they bought something that was more expensive than they had originally intended.

## Take it Personally: Prepare for the Future

As with any powerful and proven marketing technique, there's a right and a wrong way to go about serving personalized experiences to your customers. With great power comes great responsibility, and as our capacities as marketers expand, it's increasingly important to pay heed to ethical best practices. With an ongoing [rise in conscious consumerism](#), the standards that businesses are held to by their customer base will only grow over time.

The sophisticated approach of modern MarTech solutions allows you to create experiences that feel truly advantageous to your customer, and it's important to keep focus on this genuine value add. A high degree of personal benefit can tip some people's perception of personalization from creepy to positive.

Success in this field has everything to do with good quality data and the way that it's deployed.

Audience profiling, segmentation and testing are [absolutely key](#), but so is surrounding yourself with the best tools to enhance your capacity for success.

The best solutions are those which leverage data at customer level to serve up personalized experiences in real time. [Klevu's personalized search](#) functionality is a great example here, acting to 'finish shoppers' thoughts for them' with intelligent, clickable suggestions that go beyond recent or popular queries.

You'll also want to ensure your stack is integrated. Different data needs to work together holistically. Avoid falling into the trap of standalone tooling that results in siloed, redundant data.

Similarly, your tech should focus on cross-device functionality, reflecting modern shopping habits and the multiple touchpoints that personalization should impact. A good starting point is a solid [Customer Data Platform](#), to unify customer profiles and centralize data collection, tracking on and offline behaviors.

Don't forget to take a look at our rundown of recommended [tools and apps for personalization](#).

# Chapter 3:

## New Wave Automation





## Automation for the Nation: Understand the Trend

Automation is pursued by most industries at some stage in their evolution, and the world of marketing is no different. The appeal of having marketing actions automatically prioritized and executed is clear, but does come with a few preconceptions. But automation isn't about making roles redundant, or a 'lazy' approach. It's still a strategy requiring a good deal of input, planning and expertise, and ultimately exists to make us more efficient at our jobs, enhancing rather than replacing them.

The trend is already widely adopted – 75% of marketers say they currently use at least one type of marketing automation tool. Over half of all B2B marketers use (or plan to use) marketing automation to communicate with prospects and customers. However, with over a quarter of companies still considering themselves 'new' to automation, it's clear there's a lot of untapped potential. And as ever, technology is advancing quicker than companies can adopt it. A new wave of automation is here to stay, promising predictive modeling, granular segmentation, advanced data visualization and much tighter third party integrations.



Traditionally, marketing automation largely operated within the realm of email strategy, often referring to campaigns linked to time delays or triggering actions. As machine learning extends our ability to understand audience behavior, lead nurturing strategies can be based on far more substance than a few rudimentary click throughs. While automation is particularly well suited to email channels, there's also the potential for it to be deployed across social media, landing page, lead generation, management and much more.

Advanced automation is concerned with enhanced nurturing rather than selling. The goal of automation is to optimize your existing audience relationships. By combining real-time data and behavioral insights, modern automation tooling gives us the potential to do this on a scale that's otherwise unimaginable.

## **As If by Magic: Why Should You Care about New Wave Automation?**

By shortening the sales cycle, and freeing your team from the more repetitive aspects of their roles, the stage is set for improvements across multiple aspects of performance. [Liana Technologies' international survey](#) found that 68.5% of users of marketing automation reported

improved targeting of messages, 45.9% spoke of improved customer experience and 37.7% felt that the quality of leads was higher. [91% of marketing automation users](#) say it's "very important" to the overall success of their online marketing strategy.

The latest developments in automation are primarily concerned with better interconnectivity of MarTech tools. This helps to avoid silos, bringing data sets together and resulting in outcomes that are very much greater than the sum of their parts. From hyper-personalization, through to vastly improved data visualization bringing clarity to complex automated workflows, automation is becoming a much more polished, and powerful, affair.

Automation also holds up well when you assess it as an investment. [44% of companies see ROI in 6 months, and 75% within 12 months.](#) The real opportunity lies in getting up to speed with what's on offer, and pushing the benefits past traditional realms.

As customer retention starts to rival qualified lead pipeline improvements in importance, there's tremendous potential in using automation to strengthen CX and existing relationships.

## Level up Your Automation: Prepare for the Future

Considering its powerful potential, barriers to entry are low for automation. A study by Ascend2 found that only [27% of marketing influencers find marketing automation difficult to utilize](#), making it one of the least difficult practices to adopt. As with any MarTech implementation, the key lies in how you go about [finding the right tools](#) for your specific requirements. Be crystal clear on your objectives and measurable goals around automation, and how wide-reaching you expect the technique to be across your various channels. Automation isn't a "set and forget" strategy. Your plans should be constantly reviewed and revised as they play out in real-time across your various campaigns. The beauty of it is that you now have extra time to put your brain to work — problem solving, fine tuning and optimizing based on concrete performance stats as you go.

The most successful marketing teams of the future will ensure that their automation strategies go beyond the tried and tested realm of email, applying the latest AI capabilities to multiple channels and campaigns to give them competitive edge. From automating intelligent cross-selling (based on instant assessment of a customer's most likely needs and preferences) to re-engaging

lost customers (predicting and delivering the exact discount or offer that will win back interest), the combination of automation and AI has epic potential to expand marketers' capacity.

The new wave of automation will continue to place strong emphasis on integration, and this should be kept front of mind. Prioritize tools that holistically complement and enhance the ability of your wider stack.

Trusted Klevu partners [Nosto](#) are a great starting point for exploration, using AI and [segmentation insights](#) to supercharge their customers' acquisition, retention and retargeting campaigns.

# Chapter 4:

## Voice of the Customer





## It's Good to Talk: Understand the Trend

In modern marketing, establishing dynamic conversation between customers and business matters. In addition to focusing on how your own brand sounds, it's vital to pay attention to what your customers are saying. Of course, one will doubtless inform the other. Enter 'Voice of the customer' (VoC) – a set of methodologies to help you collect, interpret and action the feedback of your current audience. If this isn't an area in

which you're already investing, the excellent Copyhackers has [an overview of best practice](#).

As brands move away from pushy interruption models and start to bring some all-important personality back into the game, VoC uses a variety of techniques to gain feedback on needs, expectations and opinions. It aims to remove all guesswork from your approach, finetuning your products or services, and maintaining strong relationships.

Let's be clear — this is in the context of marketing, rather than customer service. The process of actively pursuing feedback on products, experience and impressions enhances understanding of the expectations and assumptions surrounding your brand.

Customers are spontaneously talking to brands like never before. This gives us unprecedented extra insight into thought processes, desires, concerns and assumptions, in much the same way that [Social Listening](#) can inform VoC strategy.

We're also rapidly becoming accustomed to talking to our tech. Using voice commands has lost its novelty (dare we say cringe) factor – at this point, Alexa and Siri are old friends. And as voice commands prove their convenience, adoption is picking up momentum.

## **Listen Here: Why Should You Care about Voice of the Customer?**

A better understanding of your customer leads to a better serving of their needs. And a better serving of their needs leads to incredible

retention rates. Gartner found that companies which actively engage in VoC programs spend 25% less on [customer retention](#) than those that don't. The same report suggests that collecting customer feedback can increase upselling and cross-selling success rates by 15% to 20%.

Beyond these kind of measurable metrics, there's now a general expectation for brands to be listening and receptive. Channels of communication are broader than ever, and feedback is more likely to be given in real time on social media than via traditional means. With this in mind, it's vital that marketers have a strong grasp of their VOC data, helping businesses to ensure they're communicating in the way that their customers want and expect.

Voice commands and conversational commerce have flourished in this age of immediacy. [90% of customers say an immediate response is "important"](#) when they interact with brands. As ever, AI steps in to oil the wheels. Chatbots are becoming better utilized by businesses and customers alike, as their capacity to problem solve becomes ever more refined.

Our general willingness to interact with software on a “human” level through conversational means is growing. [22% of smart homeowners](#) have made a purchase using their voice assistant, and Comscore has predicted that [by 2020, 50% of all searches will be voice searches](#). This trend is here to stay. And there’s a very rich seam of opportunity for enhancing the customer experiences of tomorrow.

## Get In On The Conversation: Prepare for the Future

There are immediate benefits to [making your brand more open, human and conversational](#). When it comes to conversational commerce, businesses simply can’t afford to fall behind. It’s essential to cultivate a brand that listens, and talks back in a voice that feels familiar and fitting.

Listening to your customers is just the beginning — the real impact comes from the action taken as a result from careful, considered analysis of what they’re telling you. Ensure that you have a clear strategy in place for teasing out true insight from the data you collect (here’s a great [tutorial from Copyhackers](#), to get you thinking).

The most successful marketing campaigns of today and tomorrow will place high importance on a human, conversational approach that’s informed by a deeper, more personal understanding of the customer. As with so many of the trends covered within this ebook, this concept is rapidly moving from “nice to have” into the realm of customer expectations.

Look for the various ways you can open active channels of communication, ensuring that conversational capacity is integrated into all potential elements of your users’ experience.

With the [inevitable rise of social shopping](#), there’s huge scope to see conversion taking place right alongside conversation. It will pay to think big in this area. Conversational commerce can work to amplify the benefits of omni-channel personalization and interplay beautifully with the Internet of Things or real-time geo-targeted content, which we discussed earlier in this guide.

[Klevu’s powerful voice search capacity](#) offers an invaluable opportunity to encourage your customers to converse. Learn from what they say and how they say it — this is powerful data.

# Chapter 5:

## Internationalization





## Marketing Sans Frontiers: Understand the Trend

Going global in your e-commerce brand is increasingly important. The international retail market is predicted to reach [\\$25,038 trillion in 2019](#) (an increase of 4.5% and a slight acceleration in growth compared to the previous year), and the world is becoming increasingly well connected

(with [4.1 billion internet users in the world](#) in December 2018). So with the pie growing and everyone keen for their slice, how are modern marketing technologies and techniques helping to simplify expansion?

Content (and the translation thereof) is often a stumbling block for international marketing efforts. Brands are typically met by one of two problems. Either they have the capacity to



localize content for some, but not all, regions – or they are able to localize only a few superficial touchpoints, with the majority of content served up still potentially unintelligible to customers.

A very small proportion of the world's online shoppers feel comfortable enough to make a purchase in unfamiliar territory, so it's imperative to remove all possible barriers to conversion. Enticing a new audience with a targeted, professionally translated landing page but leaving them hanging with incomprehensible product listings and check out experience, won't cut it.

## **A World of Opportunity: Why Should You Care about Internationalization?**

The heart of e-commerce is starting to shift from the Western hemisphere. The share of total global market once enjoyed by the US is predicted to shrink by as much as [16.9% in 2020](#). This has little to do with declining domestic spending power and everything to do with the rise of non-Western regions, as infrastructure improves and internet penetration grows.

Cross-border purchases are on the up, with [57% of online shoppers](#) responding to one survey having made a purchase from an overseas seller in the last 6 months. It's a promising atmosphere. And in an ideal world, products would fly off digital shelves the world over, but in reality you need to make a thorough assessment of market viability before considering any form of expansion.

Then, smooth international sailing comes down to smart interpretation of data, leveraged to give you clear insights into emerging trends and potential for demand. Again, machine learning is our friend here. It brings the ability to integrate considerations such as local weather, market prices, public holidays and more into our campaign strategies. Using a product like [SpyFu](#) to research local competitors may also prove advantageous when assessing market viability. Similarly, certain payment solutions (such as [APEXX Fintech](#)) provide the capacity to localize currency within your website, reducing the cost of accepting payments.

## Setting Sail in Global Waters: Prepare for the Future

The concept of catering to such a broad, diverse range of markets can seem daunting. But ever since the dawn of digital, our efforts have never truly been bound by international borders. Campaigns can of course be specifically targeted, but they'll inevitably 'leak' to a certain extent. This has led to the rise of culture-agnostic campaigns, and the pursuit of coherent global brand identities that ensure broad recognition.

While the future of internationalization appears to be clear cut — there's going to be a lot more of it — the way that we build out our stacks and our brand will be key to individual success and failures.

An important aspect to keep in mind is to start thinking globally as a general rule, and not as an afterthought. Plan the content your marketing strategy with local audiences in mind, and not just a "one size fits all" approach that throws translation in at the end.



# Chapter 6: Conclusion





More than half of marketers think the MarTech industry is evolving faster than their companies' use of marketing tech. Modern marketing solutions within the world of e-commerce can seem overwhelming. But curated and deployed correctly, they have the potential to make many elements of your role easier, more efficient and productive.

Ultimately, you're freeing yourself to focus on the more exciting strategic elements of your

role, whilst deploying incredible extra abilities to supercharge your marketing efforts.

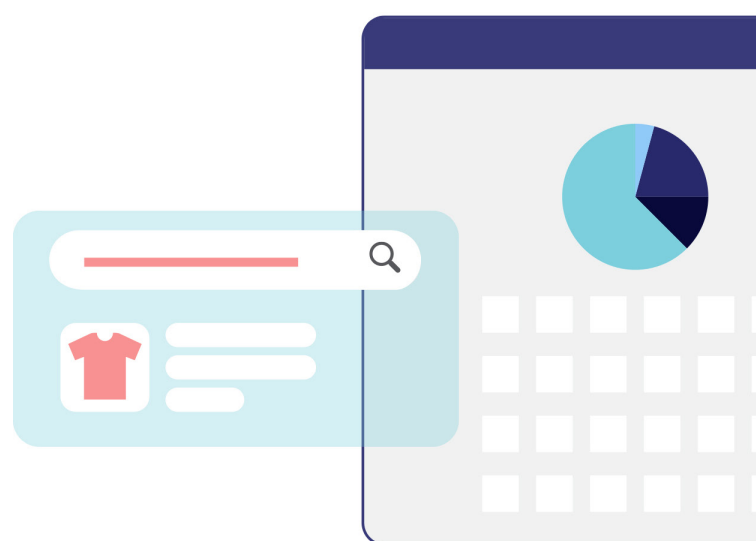
The art of MarTech lies in knowing how to build and balance your stack. The "best" MarTech solutions are the ones that best fit your current and ongoing needs as a business. The most certain way to future-proof is to spend time defining these needs clearly and precisely.

It's important to remember that tools are just tools — they're worth very little without the right strategy and creativity.

Aim for data to remain unified. Set clear goals for how the information you gain will lead to tangible improvements within the key areas of AR, personalization, new wave automation, voice of the customer and internationalization.

Customer experience has always been key to success within e-commerce. Now that expectations of that experience are shifting, it's time to get ahead of the curve.

Check out Klevu's [blog](#) for more insight into all things e-commerce. To explore the ways in which Klevu's AI-powered smart search can keep you at the forefront of your field, [schedule a live demo](#).





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