

How retailers can unlock more profit with conversations



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Scott is a Business Development Manager at Infinity. His areas of expertise include supporting retailers such as Carpet Right, Hotpoint and Specsavers to unlock insights trapped in their phone calls to optimise marketing activities, deliver first-class customer experiences and drive value, revenue and profit.



The pursuit of profit

The global pandemic has placed the financial recovery of retailers under the spotlight. The crisis has disrupted budgets across the sector, compelling retailers to rethink their marketing strategies, optimise their investments and find smarter ways to financially recuperate.

This eBook will explain how retailers can use the conversations they have with customers to minimise unnecessary spend, curate cost-effective customer journeys, and tap into the most efficient ways to grow revenue and profit.

£1.9 trillion
Global online shopping arena¹



The price of the pandemic on budgets

Marketing budgets dropped to their lowest levels in history — to 6.4% in 2021 from 11% in 2020²

No industry has evaded cuts to their marketing budgets. UK marketing budgets were cut by their highest levels in more than their 20-year history, highlighting the impact that the pandemic has had across every sector. Brands in the most severely disrupted sectors have had few options but to scramble to protect their budgets.

Even as we draw to the end of 2021, there are reports of future lockdowns, with medical officials warning that there are "hard months to come..." Hopes of the economy confidently opening are being dampened.

Marketing budgets are still a long way off from recovering what has been lost.

69% of brands expect they will decrease ad spend in 2020³



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As retailers look to recover lost revenue with less to spend, they also have to contend with rising advertising costs.

Direct-to-consumer marketing agency, Belardi Wong, have been tracking the rising cost of advertising on Facebook, Google, Apple, Pinterest, and Instagram and how it affects their retail clients.

89%
increase in
April Ad costs⁴

Based on the data they've gathered, cost per thousand viewers crept up through 2021.⁵

There was a small 6% year-on-year increase in February which was followed by a whopping 68% jump in March. In April, the cost were up a huge 89%. Increases were also seen in May and June, where 69% and 42% rises in advertising costs were recorded.

Minimising costs while maximising revenue and profit will be no small task for retail marketers.



Navigating the new generation of shopper

Leaving customers dissatisfied costs businesses around £55.8 billion in revenue every year.⁶

Retailers not only need to navigate how to improve their returns on marketing spend, they also need to respond to the new generation of consumer. Consumers are now more discerning and, when interacting with brands, expect greater convenience, and a seamless, frictionless experience. They expect consistency and a smooth flow from the minute they decide to buy to the moment of purchase.

Unfortunately, many retailers are falling short of delivering the level of service that today's consumer expects and, as marketing budgets reduce, so does communication between brands and their customers.

30% of B2C companies have not yet returned to pre-pandemic customer experience levels.⁷



The price of the pandemic on budgets

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This creates a myriad of problems as, without effective communication, the customer experience will suffer and, without engaging customers through effective marketing campaigns, the likelihood of generating any profit is very slim.

Zendesk's annual report on a customer experience illustrates this, stating that approximately 50% of customers would switch to a new brand after just one bad experience.⁸

How a shopper feels about their interactions with retailers will have a huge role to play in how they feel about the retailer and what their purchase decisions may be. If shoppers experience a difficult or disjointed service, it's very likely that retailers will lose out on their business. And, with word-of-mouth directly influencing 90% of all purchases⁹, retailers are faced with the very immediate challenge of ensuring that they offer an exceptional customer experience to drive purchases and add to their bottom lines.

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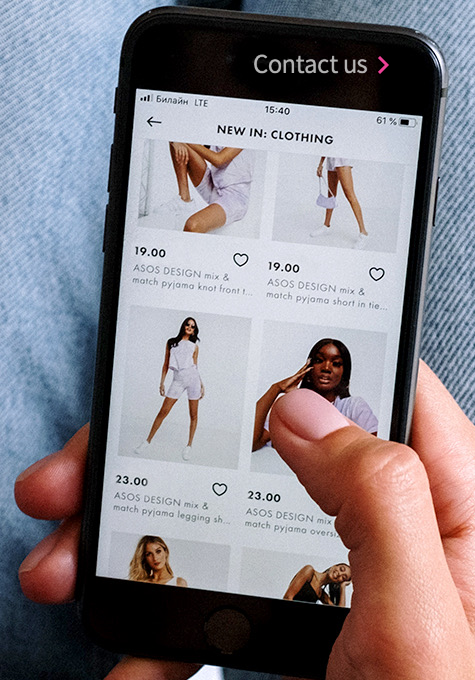
The rise in digital channels

Over the past ten years, there has been a proliferation of online channels and an increasing number of consumers engaging digitally with brands. This trend in digital engagement has only been accelerated by the arrival of COVID-19.

During the pandemic, a significant number of shoppers reported changes in their online shopping behaviour, increasing their time shopping online compared to before the pandemic.

More than half (55%) of UK adults will interact with brands more through digital channels than face-to-face post-pandemic – however only retailers that create a good online experience will win their business.¹⁰

51% of UK shoppers would prefer to use apps or a company's website than go into a bricks-and-mortar branch or store to do their shopping.¹¹



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Despite relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions in Summer 2021, in-store retail sales remain subdued; the proportion of retail sales online rose to 28.1% in September 2021 from 27.9% in August, substantially higher than the 19.7% in February 2020 before the pandemic.¹²

Consumer's hesitation to visit high streets coupled with the demand for convenience has created a £1.9 trillion global online shopping arena, where millions of consumers no longer 'go' shopping but 'are' shopping – from any device, in any geographic location – and at any time.¹

This rise in online channels and the dramatic shift in consumer behaviour has resulted in a highly complex customer journey. It has changed the game for retail marketers who need to demonstrate effectiveness in their marketing campaigns and ensure they're able to pinpoint which campaigns are driving the most revenue. But, with shoppers engaging with retailers across multiple channels and touchpoints, it's difficult for marketers to have visibility on which activities are leading to sales and resulting in profit.







 86% of consumers prefer human interaction over digital channels¹³

Almost 2/3 of online buyers want to have the option of calling at purchase phase¹⁴

Despite online channels experiencing unprecedented growth, there are a wealth of studies highlighting that customers still want and prefer human interaction.

Calling for reassurance

-  81% say there is a greater need for reassurance and confidence in their organisation's products or services⁷
-  80% of all business communications are taking place over the phone¹⁵

Phone calls present retailers with an opportunity to gather insights that can be used to create efficiencies across sales and marketing, and ensure margins look healthy at the end of the financial year.

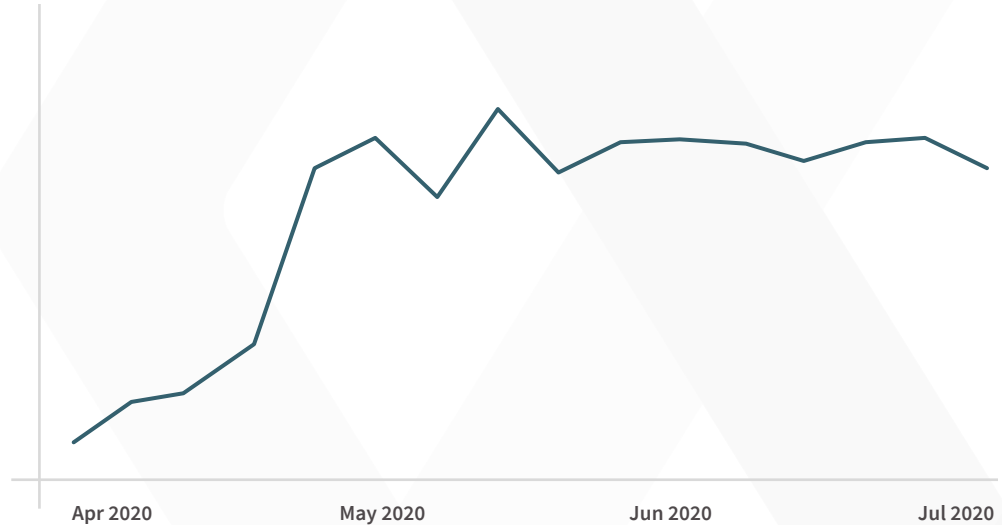


Connecting online journeys to offline sales

The phone call is the crucial point at which online and offline channels converge. Paying attention to your calls and conversations needs to become a business priority.

Our data shows that call volumes in the retail industry have risen since the start of the pandemic, placing marketers in a strong position to recover budgets and unlock value from their customers' dialling habits.

Calls to retailers rose sharply when the first national lockdown was extended



Connecting online journeys to offline sales

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Retailers received 27.9% more calls from shoppers in the final week of March 2021 than in the same period in 2020 – the week after the national lockdown came into force.

Being able to link every phone call to the source and understanding the journey that preceded the call will put retailers in a unique place of power. Without this visibility, it's impossible to identify which marketing activities are resulting in wasted spend and which are generating the most revenue and profit.

27.9%

more calls
year-on-year



Caller: Dimitri James

05:58



Caller: Simon Jones

04:21



Caller: Betty Jackson

11:34



This makes shoppers pick up the phone

By connecting the customer journey to the phone call, call tracking gives you the ability to see which campaigns, channels and keywords make the phone ring. This visibility allows you to see which activities are driving positive actions, so you invest your budget more wisely and eliminate wasted spend.



Visit website

Visitor arrives via marketing channel. Infinity drops first-party cookie on their browser



Infinity platform

Infinity stores all data and passes on to your third-party platforms



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Customer marketing

PPC, SEO, display, direct, social, offline



Make a call

With Infinity, each user will see a unique phone number on your website



There's been real, needle-moving insights in Halfords' call data

The COVID-19 outbreak meant that Halfords needed to identify immediate opportunities to impact conversions from their digital activity. In the first two months of using Infinity, Halfords were able to glean the following key strategic insights:

- Identified and optimised key pages with far higher phone conversions
- Expanded click-to-call campaigns due to proof from Infinity that they were working
- Pinpointed pages where adding a phone number boosted conversions
- Proved the scale of ROPO (research online, purchase offline) revenue, highlighting where to focus improvements
- 2x the amount of customer journeys that can be analysed

halfords
autocentre



15

£2,573
Website direct

Ad

£822
Organic search

£8,779
Paid search

Matching insight to IMPACT

In the current climate, where budget recovery looks set to slow down as concerns over further lockdowns arise, retailers need a solution that not only tracks the volume of calls and their source into the business, but links call revenue to marketing activity.

Smart Match goes beyond average call tracking technology which can measure how many calls a campaign generated, helping marketers understand the real value and outcome of each call.

“Being able to track the lead source and then assign a revenue and margin value has been a major breakthrough for us. Smart Match has allowed us to match a revenue and profit to calls”

Simon Hoe
Global Head of Digital Marketing, Cruise 1st



The screenshot shows the 'Infinity Hub' interface. On the left is a navigation menu with categories like 'Marketing', 'Logs', 'Analysis', 'Dashboards', 'Calls', 'Visits', 'Goals', and 'Channels'. The main area displays 'Logs / Transactions' with a table of sales data. The table has columns for 'Date / Time', 'Action', 'Transaction Value', and 'Channel'. One row is highlighted in pink, indicating a significant transaction.

Date / Time	Action	Transaction Value	Channel
20th Oct 2021 12:47:02	Sale	£9,537 (GBP)	Facebook Ads
20th Jul 2021 18:59:59	Sale	£11,959 (GBP)	Paid Search
22nd Jul 2021 09:05:12	Sale	£13,719 (GBP)	Paid Search
22nd Jul 2021 15:07:02	Sale	£1,802 (GBP)	Organic Search
24th Jul 2021 10:20:25	Sale	£13,261 (GBP)	Organic Search
25th Jul 2021 07:58:46	Sale	£5,082 (GBP)	Paid Search

Revenue and/or profit recorded

Infinity’s Smart Match algorithm matches the sales data to the call, showing which marketing activity has generated revenue. When retailers activate Smart Match, they can add call revenue to their reports and easily discover which marketing source is driving their highest value phone sales. This means it’s now possible to use call data to optimise campaigns based on revenue or profit generated from each campaign, giving their bottom line a big boost.



Maximising your revenue with Google Ads

Google Ads are providing retailers with a very valuable opportunity to track revenue. Clicking to call on Google Ads is becoming an increasingly important channel for customers wanting an instant, direct engagement with the brand, often to progress a purchase.

If retailers are not tracking these calls, they're missing out on valuable insights that can be used to optimise the customers' journey – and retailers' marketing spend.

Of all mobile customers, 70% call their target business directly through Google Ads.

Infinity now tracks calls directly from call ads, location extensions, and call extensions, so retailers can see which keyword groups and campaigns lead to calls from these ads. Coupled with Smart Match, retailers can be primed for generating optimal levels of revenue and profit.

car insurance fully comprehensive

See who searches this...

...and calls this

Ad · www.somaauto.com



Call (800) 830-0660

Soma Auto · Call now for a free quote

Get a free car insurance quote today! Compare rates and save when you switch to Soma Auto



Visit website

Connect these calls to conversions, and adapt your ads to generate more

What's in a conversation?

Insight into what happens before shoppers pick up the phone is paramount to retailers if looking to drive profitability. But there's still more to be gleaned from conversations with callers.

When shoppers pick up the phone, they share insights that can be used to create more efficient marketing strategies. These insights usually stay trapped in the conversations because of the sheer amount of manpower needed to extract them. Historically, the effort required to manually listen to every call, collate data and separate it into systems for other departments to access made the process overwhelmingly difficult and time-consuming.

Conversation Analytics can help marketing teams understand what happens during calls, extracting a trove of insights to enable marketers to drive valuable outcomes, minimising wasted spend and spotting key trends to shape future business decisions.



Impactful calls. Insightful conversations. Intelligent conclusions



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With Conversation Analytics, retailers can monitor the language that prospective buyers are using on those calls. Spotting popular keywords helps marketers understand the questions that consumers are commonly asking – and identify the specific terms most likely to resonate with shoppers and inspire them to get in touch.

This level of call intelligence is helping marketing teams gain unparalleled insight into the true thoughts and actions of customers. And in turn, allows them to make sure webpages and other materials are as hard-hitting and persuasive as they can be.



Identify low value products or keywords, such as “cheapest” or “low cost”



Adjust marketing and positioning tactics with Infinity's insights



Identify high value products or keywords, such as “premium” or “large quantity”

“Conversation Analytics has a huge amount of benefit, not only to identify when sales have been made, but also to highlight the key themes and topics of conversation, which can lead to improvements being made to our digital marketing messages.”

Cai Mullins
Head of Affiliates and Partnerships, Vodafone



Meeting the demands of discerning shoppers

By really understanding the sentiment of a call, and how it changes when specific topics are discussed, retailers will not only be able to make marketing materials work harder, but also enable them to refine their approach to phone calls and deliver the smooth experience that callers crave.

This is great news for retail marketing teams.

Improving the phone call experience will massively increase sales agents' chances of closing more deals. The intel Conversation Analytics provides will help retailers understand which tactics result in their biggest wins, so they can double-down on the initiatives that will help them hit sales targets faster and grow average order values.

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70% of buying experiences are based on how the customer feels they are being treated.¹⁶

More of the sales leads that marketers generate can be converted, and more revenue can be tied back to savvy marketing investment.



Making retail partnerships more profitable

Vodafone's affiliate team are responsible for the business' largest digital channel for broadband sales, and work with third party comparison, content, and cashback sites to drive sales traffic to their website.

Many of Vodafone's broadband sales occur over the phone, and a lack of visibility was making it difficult for them to connect calls back to the correct affiliate, or even the affiliate channel – limiting their programmes effectiveness.

By tracking their calls and analysing conversations Vodafone have been able to map their customer journey, expand the number of products they can sell through their affiliate programme, and accurately reward their affiliate partners.

Vodafone saw 17,000 sales attributed to their affiliates in just six months. Now, they've identified a 7.5% conversion rate from call-to-purchase - higher than any other channel.

17,000
sales attributed
in just six months



The path to profitability

As appetites for digital channels increases and consumer behaviour continues to evolve, it's critical to remember that human interaction remains king. The post-pandemic surge in telephone calls to businesses are a clear indication that customers want human reassurance when on their purchase journey. When retailers do the telephone conversation right, people feel valued, heard and understood. And, as calls strongly correlate with sales, the conversation is a failsafe way to drive higher revenue and profit every time a customer picks up the phone.

Call intelligence is putting retailers on a firm footing even as budgets continue to be stretched. And, as economic uncertainty continues, there's great opportunity for retailers to dramatically reduce costs, raise revenue and unlock more profit.



These customers
already
trust Infinity...
Why not
join them?

carpetright.

Hotpoint

Stannah

vodafone

sky

SAMSUNG

HILLARYS

Specsavers

Whirlpool

Start a conversation with us today, and unlock the profit trapped in your calls.

 02039 934 754

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28010
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