



# Engaging journeys for adventurers.

Virgin Holidays tailors customers' travel communications for a 150% jump in conversion with Adobe Experience Cloud.



*"With a single tool to manage unified data, we can help departments find ways to improve communications. We're becoming the central hub for customer experience."*

*Saul Lopes, Customer Lifecycle Lead, Virgin Holidays*

## SOLUTION

Adobe Experience Cloud, including the Adobe Campaign solution within Adobe Marketing Cloud

## RESULTS

 Reduced campaign creation time to **ONE HOUR**

**33%** Increase in **REVENUE** with contextual messages

 **CONSOLIDATED** data from multiple sources for better customer visibility

**90%** Engagement with **CROSS-CHANNEL** messages



## Virgin Holidays Limited

Established in 1985

Crawley, United Kingdom

[www.virginholidays.co.uk](http://www.virginholidays.co.uk)

Partner

Merkle

[www.merkleinc.com](http://www.merkleinc.com)

### CHALLENGES

- Improve customer experiences by delivering personalized customer communications
- Keep customer engagement high for services with a slow purchase cycle
- Improve internal efficiency and reduce complexity by consolidating multiple campaign management tools and workflows

### USE CASES

- Personalized Experiences
- Customer Intelligence
- Campaign Orchestration

## Improving the customer journey

Virgin Holidays is one of the UK's favorite worldwide holiday companies. Founded more than 30 years ago, Virgin Holidays is known for using its entrepreneurial spirit and passion for innovation to benefit customers and communities around the world. The brand is particularly known for the "magic touches" its customers experience, no matter who they are or what their destination. In 2016, it was voted Best Large Holiday Company traveling to the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean for the sixth consecutive year at the prestigious, consumer-voted, British Travel Awards.

"Technology is disrupting the travel sector and creating exciting new opportunities," says Saul Lopes, Customer Lifecycle Lead at Virgin Holidays. "Our customers are aspiring adventurers who take great pleasure in researching their holidays, whether that's looking into a typical packaged holiday or something more adventurous through Virgin Holiday Experiences. We want to help our customers find the information that they need at every stage of the sales cycle, and inspire them without taking over the planning process."

Virgin Holidays traditionally took a more fragmented approach when communicating with customers. Teams from 10 departments often reached out to people simultaneously, leading to inconsistent messages. In addition, most communications were simple transactional messages, such as plain text emails with attachments, coming from an outdated reservation engine.

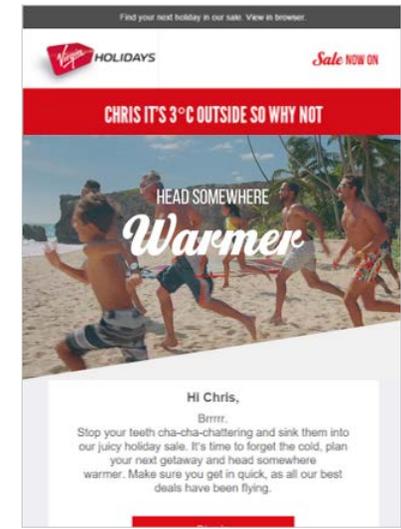
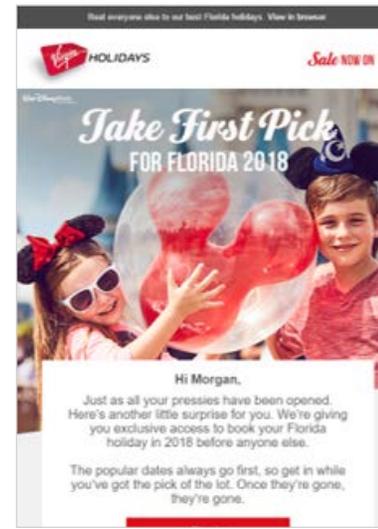
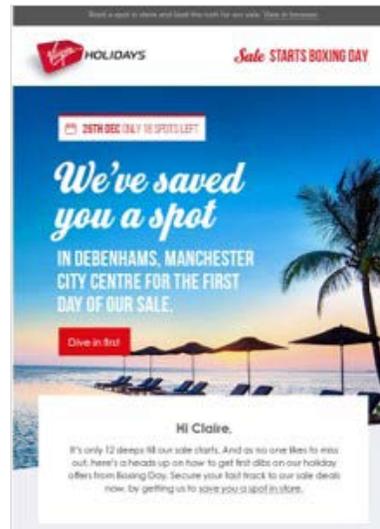
Even inside the company, communications and collaboration among teams could be complex. It took three tools, including Unica (now part of IBM), to build marketing campaigns, so a marketer might spend an entire day securing the right data and creating emails for a single campaign.

Virgin Holidays realized that to continue satisfying customers and thereby growing its revenue, it needed to provide a seamless, end-to-end customer journey. The company decided to centralize communications for all departments and channels through a single scalable solution: Adobe Campaign, part of Adobe Marketing Cloud within Adobe Experience Cloud.

"Adobe aligns with our marketing goals to put the customer experience at the center of everything that we do," says Morgan Bell, CRM Trading Executive at Virgin Holidays. "Through campaign orchestration we can now have conversations with our customers across channels, which increases engagement, experiences, and revenue for Virgin Holidays."

“Adobe Campaign is quick and easy to use for anyone on our team. We have a much more complete view of the customer journey since we’re not using multiple tools to deliver communications.”

*Morgan Bell, CRM Trading Executive,  
Virgin Holidays*



## Creative communications that inspire travelers

Virgin Holidays enlisted the help of Merkle to implement Adobe Campaign, a critical factor in delivering its first campaigns quickly and efficiently.

“We needed to get Adobe Campaign in production before the peak booking season, as 40% of our sales happen within this period. Merkle was an essential part of our success,” says Lopes. “We looked at many partners, and Merkle stood out for its sizable team and experience with Adobe. Thanks to Merkle, we were up and running in just six weeks.”

In the first phase of implementation, Virgin Holidays reduced three campaign tools down to two and consolidated its workflows into Adobe Campaign. While marketers once spent an entire day working with technical specialists to create one email campaign, they can now develop a campaign on their own in just one hour.

“Adobe Campaign is quick and easy to use for anyone on our team,” says Bell. “We have a much more complete view of the customer journey since we’re not using multiple tools to deliver communications.”

Marketers now have more time to develop long-term strategies, explore creative campaigns, and reach out to travelers with more engaging communications. For example, Virgin Holidays sends customers communications during pre-departure—the period between booking and leaving for holiday. These communications keep excitement high and encourage travelers to upgrade or add on to their experiences.



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*Saul Lopes, Customer Lifecycle Lead,  
Virgin Holidays*

## Conversations instead of transactions

With more time to spend looking at what the customers want, marketers at Virgin Holidays can have personal conversations with customers that deliver strong returns. In the company’s “Save your Spot” campaign, customers received a personalized email inviting them to book an appointment with a retail agent. Using location data, the email displayed a map showing their nearest retail office with a call to action to book an appointment. Adding personalization to this campaign increased click-through rates by 50% and increased retail appointments by 100%.

Contextual email campaigns add relevance to the messaging, which has encouraged even greater customer engagement. A “Back to Work” campaign ran in early January. The email playfully suggested that people use their first day back to work after the holidays to dream of their next vacation. The campaign was an outstanding success with an uplift in click-through rates of 300%.

In another winter campaign, Virgin Holidays sent emails that compared the customers’ rainy, cold, and gloomy local weather forecasts with bright, sunny weather in vacation spots such as Cancun or Barbados. Not only did this campaign achieve a 67% increase in click-through rates, 50% increase in appointments, and 22% increase margins, but the campaign was also widely shared on social media.

“We’ve found that contextual messages dramatically outperform traditional marketing, achieving a 37% increase in website traffic and 33% higher revenue,” says Lopes. “Our customers want to have a conversation with us, and we can encourage that using Adobe Campaign. It makes it easy for our marketers to talk directly with customers.”

## Understanding customers across channels

In phase two of the implementation, Virgin Holidays retired Unica, leaving just one tool, and linked and organized customer data from numerous online and offline sources. All data from its CRM platform, online communications, retail offices, and call centers is now integrated through Adobe Campaign. Overall, 44 data tables and nearly 1,000 variables were consolidated into 7 tables and 200 variables.

Having all of the data centralized in one location improves efficiency and allows marketers and analysts to gain a clearer view of customer journeys across channels.

“With Adobe Campaign, I no longer spend my time pulling data from multiple locations for the marketing and communications teams,” says Beatrice Benavidez, Senior Consultant, Customer Analytics at Virgin Holidays. “Instead, I can focus on creating data models that feed back into Adobe Campaign to improve our customer communications. We’re seeing that personalized content is generating 150% higher conversion rates than generic content.”

## SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Adobe Experience Cloud, including:

Adobe Marketing Cloud

- Adobe Campaign
  - Campaign Management
  - Cross-channel Execution
  - Integrated Customer Profile
  - Personalized Targeting

Attribution models provide a better view of channels that perform well with different groups of customers and enable the CRM team to directly measure the margin and revenue from communications.

With Adobe Campaign, Virgin Holidays can create a single campaign that reaches customers across direct mail, email, SMS, or even outbound calls. The week after a customer requests a vacation quote is a key conversion period, so Virgin Holidays developed a campaign that sends a reminder email with a follow up prompt to a retail agent to call the customer to encourage a response.

“Our customer experience objective is twofold: to decrease customer anxiety through services communications, and to increase anticipation. Adobe Campaign enabled us to create multi-touchpoint communications and leverage a huge amount of personalization to achieve this,” says Chris Insall, Customer Communications Manager at Virgin Holidays. “We’re driving engagement of over 90% across our communications, and our pre-departure emails are yielding a more than 800% increase in website visits because we can send the right content to the right customer at the perfect time.”

### End-to-end customer experience

With Adobe Campaign in place, Virgin Holidays is building a cross-channel digital CRM strategy to drive end-to-end, personalized customer experiences. This will include greater use of SMS touchpoints and push notifications through the upcoming Virgin Holidays mobile app.

“Working with Adobe Campaign has really raised the visibility of the work that those of us on the email team are doing,” says Lopes. “With a single tool to manage unified data, we can help departments find ways to improve communications. We’re becoming the central hub for customer experience.”

For more information

[www.adobe.com/marketing-cloud.html](http://www.adobe.com/marketing-cloud.html)



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