



# THE WINNING PLAYBOOK FOR EXPERIENCE PERSONALIZATION



Aligning strategy, people, processes, and technology to deliver great experiences

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## Executive Summary

Personalized customer experiences can drive double-digit revenue growth for your business. However, poor personalization can hurt your bottom line, as consumers switch from companies that fail to meet expectations to those that do.

In this playbook, we provide **clear guidance** to help you formulate a **winning personalization strategy** for your organization over **three phases of maturity**:



For each phase, we describe four key building blocks for achieving success: strategy, people, processes, and technology foundation. In particular, the technology foundation should provide a scalable platform to support data, content, and intelligence capabilities spanning all digital touchpoints. To complement marketer-defined business logic, organizations can now choose artificial intelligence (AI) techniques for deciding which experience to present to a consumer. AI has become a preferred method for scaling experiences to millions of customers for use cases that deliver one-to-one personalization.

To become a center of excellence (COE) for personalization, you need to establish a framework that empowers teams across the enterprise while maintaining governance over processes and your technology foundation. Adobe can help as your trusted partner for personalization excellence.

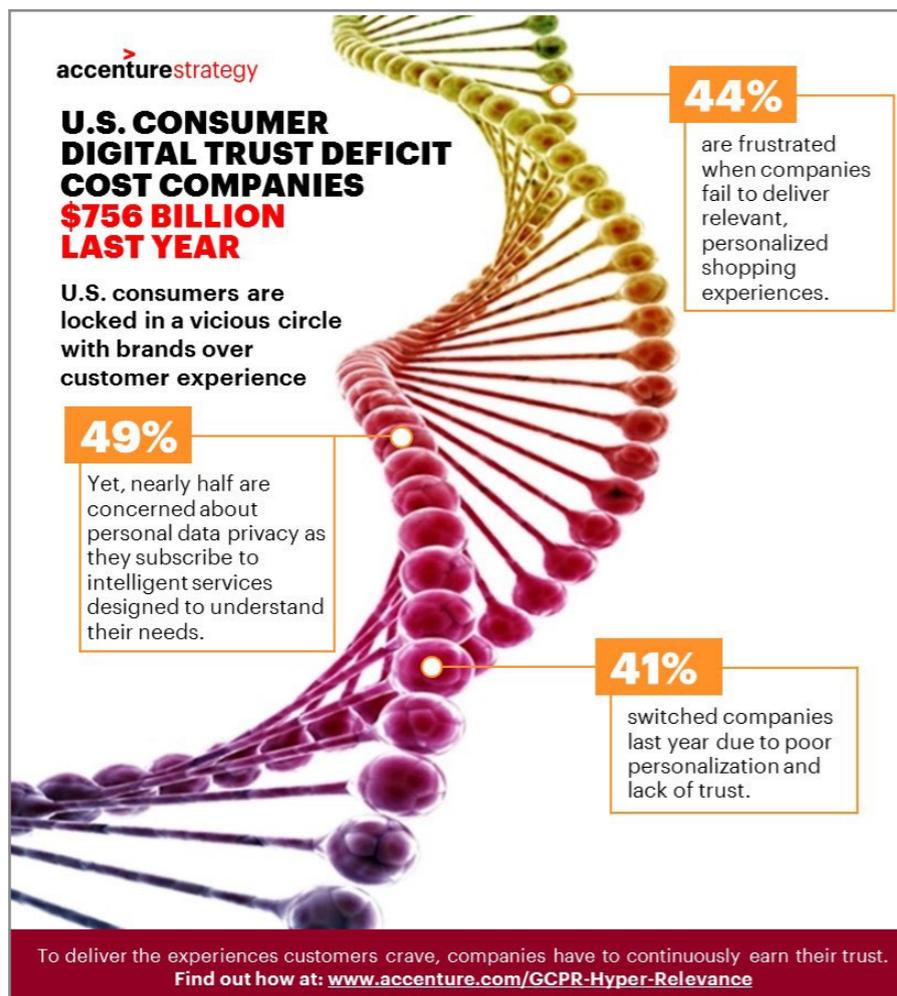


# Business Value of Personalization

In the quest to improve customer experience, organizations are investing in personalization strategies that span multiple touchpoints in the customer's journey. We know that every person wants to be treated as a unique individual by the brands they trust and with which they engage, but what is the business value of personalization to your organization?

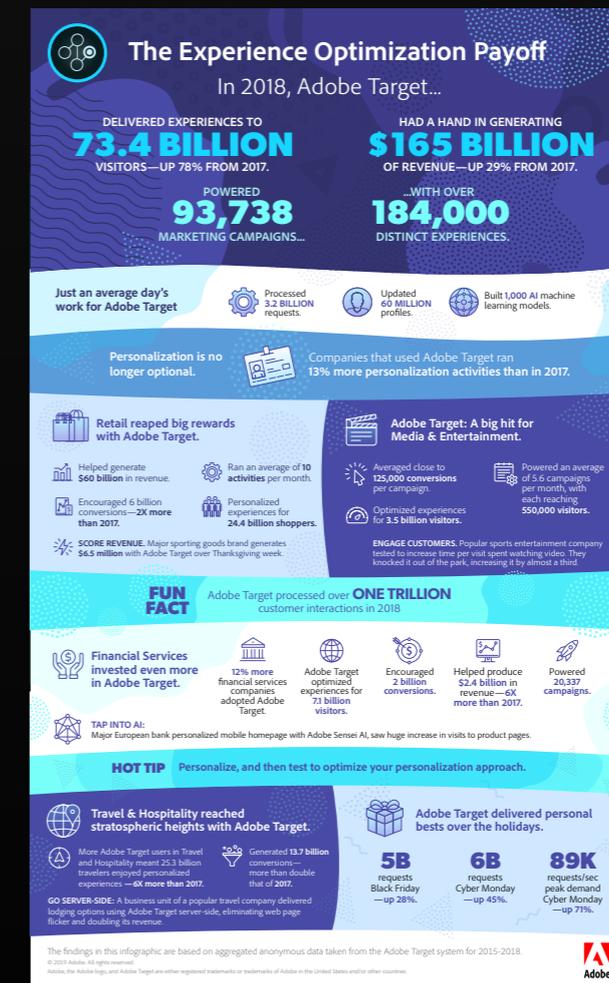
## Poor Personalization Hurts Your Bottom Line

According to [Accenture](#), poor personalization and lack of trust cost U.S. organizations **\$756 billion** last year, as **41 percent of consumers** switched companies. Companies place their business at risk by providing irrelevant experiences, insensitive messages, or using personal data without consent.



## Effective Personalization Drives Revenue Growth

During 2018, **Adobe** helped to personalize **73.4 billion visitor experiences** (up 78% year over year) for clients across industries including retail, travel, financial, and media & entertainment, which in turn helped **drive \$165 billion in revenue** (up 29% year over year). The use of personalization technology to power **personalized marketing campaigns, website experiences, mobile engagement and internet-connected devices** and screens can lead to significant revenue growth for your organization.



# Personalization Maturity Model: Engage, Expand and Embed

Personalization of customer experiences across multiple touchpoints requires a clear strategy. But where should you start? We recommend that you engage your organization and build a foundation for personalization. The plan should establish the right strategy, people, processes, and technology foundation for the long term. As you mature, this foundation will help you to expand personalization efforts across all channels and use cases. Over time, you will become a center of excellence for personalization initiatives across the entire enterprise.



In this playbook, we will provide recommendations for each stage of your personalization journey. We will also explain the key building blocks for your technology foundation and capabilities for data, content, and intelligence.

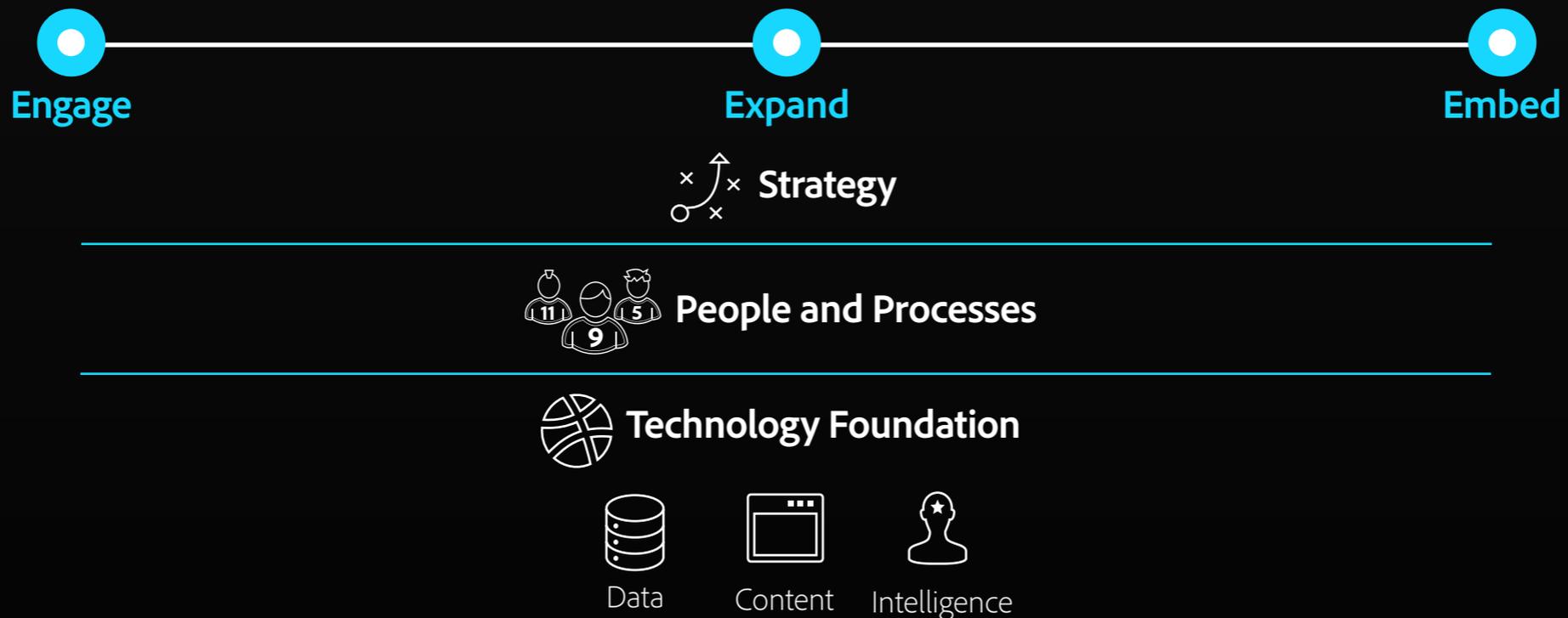


Table 1. Personalization Maturity Model

## Engage: Strategy

Your organization seeks to develop a comprehensive, forward thinking personalization strategy that moves away from tactical, ad-hoc campaigns. To go beyond website A/B testing, you need to establish a broader set of goals and objectives for personalization across touchpoints.

### Goals and Benchmarks

In addition to conversion rates, you should define goals and KPIs that measure other aspects of your business. For example, personalization may reduce the bounce rate — the number of visitors who leave your website after viewing one page — and drive deeper engagement. Personalization may also reduce the cost of serving your customers. For example, providing a personalized customer support experience through your mobile app can reduce the number of phone calls to your contact center.

Your analytics team is an essential stakeholder and collaborator that can provide key metric definitions as well as reporting to identify high value personalization activities. After defining a comprehensive set of KPIs, you should establish benchmarks for quarterly reviews where you assess your current performance and how much you seek to improve.

### Program Roadmap

Create a program roadmap that defines a timeline for achieving your goals. The roadmap would describe the **strategy, people, processes, and technology** platform for attaining your most important objectives. By placing a time period around your goals, you can begin to assess resource requirements and dependencies.

Phase 1 Jan to Mar Goals and Objectives	Phase 2 Apr to May Goals and Objectives
 <b>Strategy</b>	 <b>Strategy</b>
 <b>People and Processes</b>	 <b>People and Processes</b>
 <b>Technology Foundation</b>  Data  Content  Intelligence	 <b>Technology Foundation</b>  Data  Content   Intelligence

Table 2. Example of Program Roadmap.

Plan and Play for the Future

*"A good hockey player plays where the puck is. A great hockey player plays where the puck is going to be."*

**WAYNE GRETZKY**

Canadian ice hockey legend



## Engage: People and Processes

To form your personalization team, your organization must invest in the right people. What are the key roles and responsibilities? What initial activities can the team focus on to drive quick wins for the business? It doesn't require many resources to begin a program. Many programs begin and remain at one to two primary or part-time resources. It's the roles and responsibilities that are key.

### Team Framework and Roles

First, secure an executive sponsor who can help to evangelize the program benefits, benchmarks and successes with C-level and VP-level stakeholders. Next, identify a program owner or lead who can drive the overall personalization strategy. The program owner needs to be supported by execution resources in marketing, data science, development, quality assurance, and project management. In addition, the owners of your technology platforms should be part of the extended team given dependencies on capabilities powered by technology systems.

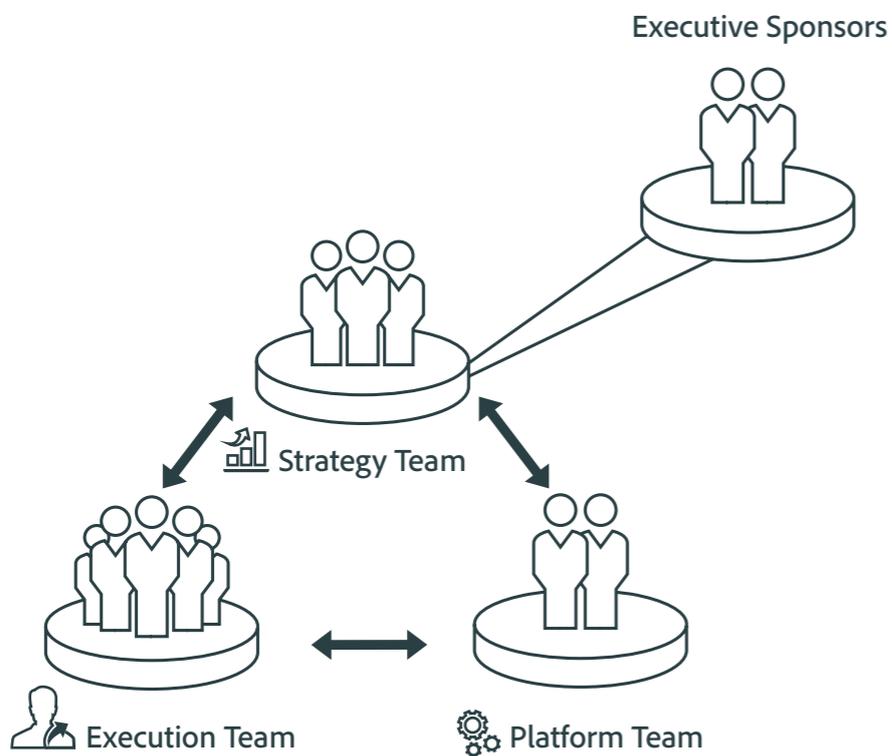


Figure 1. Example of a Team Framework

## Focus on the Process

*"Concentrate on what will produce results rather than on the results, the process rather than the prize."*

### BILL WALSH

Head football coach, San Francisco 49ers



## Celebrate Team Success

*"Celebrate what you've accomplished but raise the bar a little higher each time you succeed."*

### MIA HAMM

US soccer great



## Ideation and Cost/Benefit Analysis

With your team in place, brainstorm ideas for achieving the initial goals of your program and evaluate the cost/benefit of each idea. Some initial quick win opportunities may include:

- Personalized landing pages for campaigns based on referrer and behavioral profile data
- Targeted offers based upon category affinity
- Recommendations for relevant promotions, content or product suggestions and continuity across multiple visits
- Remarketing and retargeting offers and recommendations via offsite channels, email, or return visit

## Learn and Use Your Toolset

As you select and deploy tools for your personalization program, plan for product training. This training will ensure that team members can learn how to use features correctly and apply their knowledge. Your team needs to understand how product capabilities can support your top priority ideas and use cases.

## Execute Quick Wins

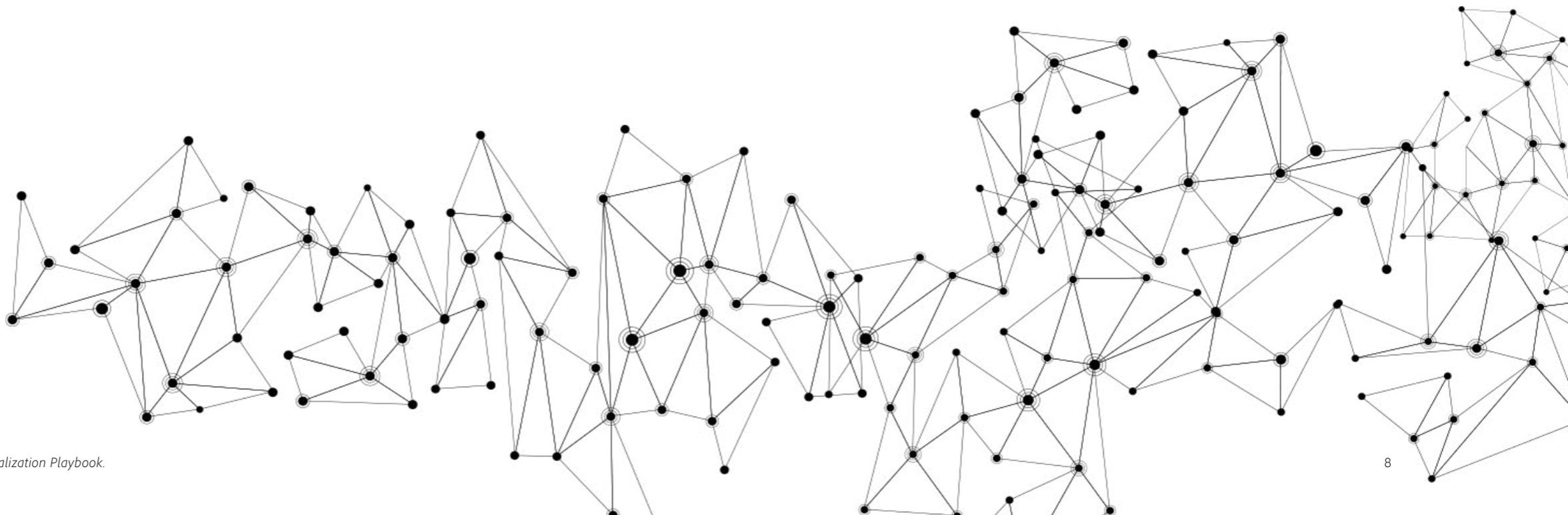
After reviewing and prioritizing your ideas for personalization, select and execute “layups” — quick wins that let you easily put points on your business scoreboard. Move quickly to demonstrate the value of your program.

## Evangelize Impact

Share and evangelize early wins with your executive sponsor and key stakeholders. Focus on telling a success story that is supported by metrics and insights. Find opportunities to share stories more broadly across the organization and celebrate success with your team.

## Quarterly Reviews

Conduct quarterly reviews where you evaluate your current performance in terms of activities, processes and results. Once you know where you stand, you can establish new benchmarks for maturing your program.



## Engage: Technology Foundation

To support your goals and use cases, your technology systems need to provide foundational capabilities for data, content, and intelligence.

### Data

Basic personalization use cases can be supported by collecting anonymous, behavioral data from your digital channels, such as first-party data based on cookies or mobile ids. Using this data, you can define audience segments to receive personalized messages and experiences. For example, you can present returning website visitors who searched for a product with recommendations for similar products.

### Content

To deliver personalized offers or landing pages, you need a content management system that supports variations of digital assets, such as images, videos, and dynamic media. In addition, these assets should be optimized for viewing on multiple screen sizes and device types.

### Intelligence

The business logic for choosing which experience to present to a consumer can be defined using two primary methods:

- **Marketer Intelligence.** Business rules are created by marketers to deliver the appropriate experience to specific audience segments (e.g., people who visit a travel website from Chicago will only see discounted airfares departing from O'Hare and Midway airport).
- **Artificial Intelligence.** Automation using artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning algorithms decides the best experience for the user. For example, AI can automatically personalize banners for each website visitor or even personalize the layout of the entire page and multiple content areas based upon each individual's unique profile and interests.

In many organizations, teams will strike a balance between the two methods and choose the right approach for a specific use case.

Champions Combine  
Teamwork and Intelligence

*"Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships."*

**MICHAEL JORDAN**

Basketball great, Chicago Bulls



## Expand: Strategy

After you have successfully executed some quick wins and evangelized program success, you should expand your personalization efforts across channels and use cases. First, identify key stakeholders responsible for channels or business teams, including websites, mobile apps, email, and paid media advertising. By partnering with channel stakeholders, you can explore and enrich your customer's journey with personalized experiences across touchpoints. Similar to the "engage" phase, brainstorm additional use cases that generate positive impact and ROI for your business while creating happiness for your customers.

## Expand: People and Processes

Your program roadmap can be enhanced with predictive analytics to determine the propensity of visitors to convert based upon key attributes. For example, visitors from email campaigns who view more than three pages are more likely to buy items from category A. Once you understand the key attributes of high value customer segments, you can use personalization techniques to promote the right content to them. In addition, you should fine-tune your processes with advanced reporting and insights. For example, seek personalization insights to understand how AI activities are generating lift by exposing key attributes used in modeling or valuable segments the model discovered.

### Adobe Sensei

Adobe Sensei is the technology that powers intelligent features across all Adobe products to dramatically improve the design and delivery of digital experiences, using artificial intelligence and machine learning in a common framework.

Adobe Sensei supports capabilities in three key areas:

- **Creative intelligence.** Adobe Sensei understands the language of images, illustration, and animation, and helps you handle the time consuming and repetitive tasks, so you can spend more time executing your creative vision.
- **Content intelligence.** Adobe Sensei searches and understands large amounts of content at a deep level, like the sentiment of documents or the aesthetic qualities of images. This helps you refine and identify what you need in seconds rather than hours or days.
- **Experience intelligence.** Adobe Sensei helps you deliver relevant, personalized experiences in real time, learning what customers want, identifying significant events, and making recommendations to reach the right customer at the right time.

## Expand: Technology Foundation

To support more sophisticated use cases across channels, you will need to ensure that your foundation can support additional capabilities.

### **Data.**

For relevant experiences across multiple channels, you need to establish a unified visitor profile that provides a 360-degree view of the customer. The profile will augment data that you own with third-party consumer data (e.g., demographic, lifestyle, and behavioral propensities). More advanced use cases will incorporate second-party data from partners who share common audience segments (e.g., customer data shared between airline and rental car companies). In addition, to help manage these data sets and audiences, you may invest in a data management platform (DMP) to support digital advertising and marketing use cases.

### **Content.**

To support content across channels, your content management system will need to provide flexible interfaces to support channels beyond websites such as mobile apps, email and display ads.

### **Intelligence.**

Both marketer-defined and AI-powered rules will need to support the orchestration of messages and experiences across channels. Your goal is to deliver relevant, timely messages that align with the customer's channel preferences.



## Embed: Strategy

To become a center of excellence (COE) for personalization, you need to establish a framework that empowers teams from across the enterprise. What does this look like? Ideally, you establish a federated program that provides enterprise governance and administration for your processes and technologies. For example, new teams embarking on personalization projects can check-in with the COE for best practices. In addition, the COE can act as the central administrator for your personalization technology and grant access to authorized individuals. Furthermore, the COE can focus on broader, strategic initiatives that span multiple business teams and channels. For example, use cases can move “beyond the browser” and focus on personalization everywhere initiatives that reach new devices including kiosks, gaming consoles and voice assistants.

## Embed: People and Processes

On a quarterly basis, you should audit the performance of your program and evaluate the current state of maturity. Adobe provides a [self-assessment tool](#) to help you understand your organization’s strengths as well as prioritize focus areas within six dimensions: culture, strategy, organization, leadership, execution and reach.

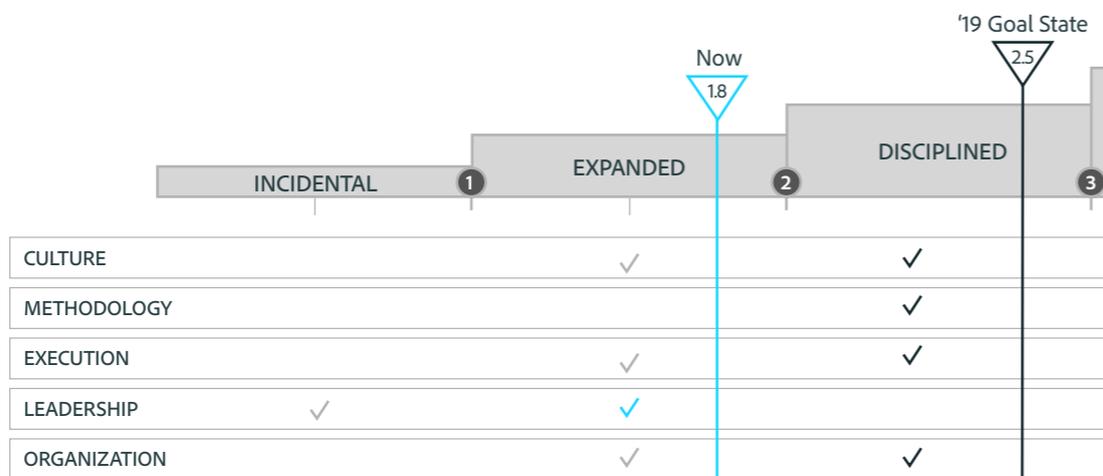


Figure 2. Example of Maturity Assessment from AdobeTargetPro.com

## Experiential Privacy is Critical for Personalization

**Experiential privacy** means that when done right, privacy is a positive part of the experience and further delights the customer. When defining a customer journey map, marketers guided by experiential privacy would be thoughtful about what data they collect, provide easy-to-understand notice about how that data is used at meaningful points along the journey, and offer consumers choices about how their data is used. For example, a travel company explaining through a just-in-time notice within its app why access to GPS data is needed to help users find their cars upon returning from a trip.

Adobe’s four guiding principles on privacy and responsibly unlocking the power of data are to:

1. Design our products and services with privacy in mind
2. Protect and respect the data entrusted to us
3. Build and sustain trust with our customers — and help our customers build and sustain trust with their consumers
4. Grow Adobe’s strong privacy partnership with our customers

## Embed: Technology Foundation

To achieve one-to-one personalization at scale, your systems need to support the following capabilities:



**Data.** Your unified visitor profile will continue to expand as you add new data sources for channels beyond the website. In addition, data governance becomes more critical as you focus on maintaining high quality of data for existing sources and tackle requirements for managing sensitive personal information such as GPS location. Follow best practices for “experiential privacy,” and partner with your legal and privacy team to ensure that consumer trust is not broken.



**Content.** For personalized one-to-one experiences, your content management system needs to support thousands or millions of asset variations. However, manually tagging images with descriptive and contextual metadata is tedious, inconsistent, and often incomplete. You need AI-powered smart tags that can provide consistent content-based metadata in seconds.



**Intelligence.** Your personalization technology will provide algorithms that are designed to support one-to-one experiences. If you have the right data and content platforms in place, your AI technology will provide the brainpower to intelligently orchestrate experiences that are tailored to individual preferences and behaviors.



**Connections.** To enable personalization everywhere initiatives, your systems will provide APIs that can establish connectivity to new touchpoints, including IoT (Internet of Things) and OTT (Over the top) platforms, smart cars, VR/AR (virtual reality, augmented reality) applications, soft drink machines, digital assistants, kiosks, gaming consoles, and point-of-sale (POS) devices.



## Customer Success: Grainger Personalizes Experience with Recommendations

[Grainger](#) is a business-to-business (B2B) giant, distributing over **1.5 million products** that its customers use to maintain, repair, and operate facilities. In addition, the company is a major force in the digital space, ranked as the **10th largest e-retailer in North America** by Internet Retailer. The company's eCommerce platform, Grainger.com, is a multi-billion-dollar e-commerce site that receives **millions of visits** each month from customers and prospects.



**Challenge:** Personalize homepage experience for over **3 million customers** and **1.5 million products**.



**Solution:** Adobe Target and recommendations for products and categories that leverage website behavioral data.



**Results:** Using the "recently viewed" algorithm on the homepage, Grainger increased overall recommendations engagement on the homepage by [12 percent and doubled revenue](#) from products in the Recommendations zone. In addition, they enabled category recommendations to drive more engagement for visitors interested in product categories.



On average, our customers have a **17-YEAR HISTORY** of buying from Grainger.



## Customer Success: AT&T Uses Automated Personalization to Drive Lift

AT&T is a world leader in communications, media and entertainment, and technology. In 2017, they generated revenues of more than **\$160.5 billion**. The company serves millions of consumers and businesses by providing video, broadband and voice services. To help formulate a personalization strategy, their marketing team developed a “personalization playbook” that addresses three questions:

- a) **What data attributes are available for personalization?**
- b) **Which visitor states (e.g., authenticated, anonymous, new, returning) should be personalized?**
- c) **What can be personalized on the webpage?**

By defining these elements, the growth marketing team was able to develop a set of plays for improving the user experience and increasing conversions.



**Challenge:** Move away from “**one size fits all**” messages and speak to the customer the way they want to be spoken to.



**Solution:** Adobe Target and **automated personalization capabilities** to match different offer variations to each visitor based on their individual customer profile.



**Results:** A search engine landing page with automated personalization of campaign offers resulted in a **13.4% lift** in conversions over a rules-based approach defined by marketers. Similarly, a BOGO (buy one, get one free) campaign with automated personalization drove a **220% lift** vs. rules-based logic.

## Recommendations

Personalized experiences drive tangible business value for your organization while delivering customer delight across touchpoints. The personalization strategy for your organization requires comprehensive planning of resources and technology over three phases of maturity: 1. Engage, 2. Expand and 3. Embed. We recommend that you take the following steps to achieve success:

**Start by laying a foundation.** Your personalization program needs to establish four key elements: strategy, people, processes and technology foundation. Since you are planning for the long term, the technology foundation should provide a scalable platform to support data, content and intelligence capabilities.

- Playbook analogy: "Build your team to win championships"

**Execute quick wins.** After reviewing and prioritizing your ideas for personalization, select and execute quick wins where you can easily demonstrate the value of your program.

- Playbook analogy: "Look for layups and put some points on the scoreboard"

**Evangelize impact and success.** Share and evangelize early wins with your executive sponsor and key stakeholders. Find opportunities to share stories more broadly across the organization and celebrate success with your team.

- Playbook analogy: "Celebrate victories with your fans"

**Expand across channels and use cases.** After some quick wins, expand your personalization efforts across channels including websites, mobile apps, email and paid media advertising. Explore and enrich your customer's journey with personalized experiences across touchpoints.

- Playbook analogy: "Great teams win at home and on the road"

**Focus on scale and excellence for the long term.** To become a center of excellence (COE) for personalization, you need to establish a framework that empowers teams from across the enterprise. The COE can focus on broader, strategic initiatives that span multiple business teams and channels.

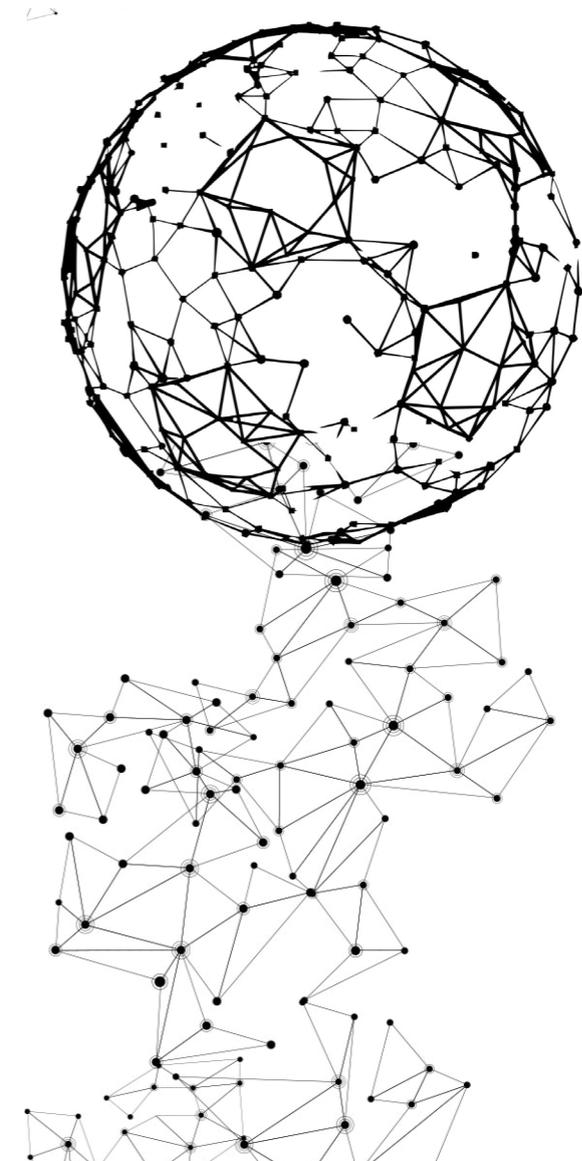
- Playbook analogy: "Become a sports dynasty"

## The Success Playbook

*"Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all, love of what you are doing or learning to do."*

**PELÉ**

Brazilian soccer legend

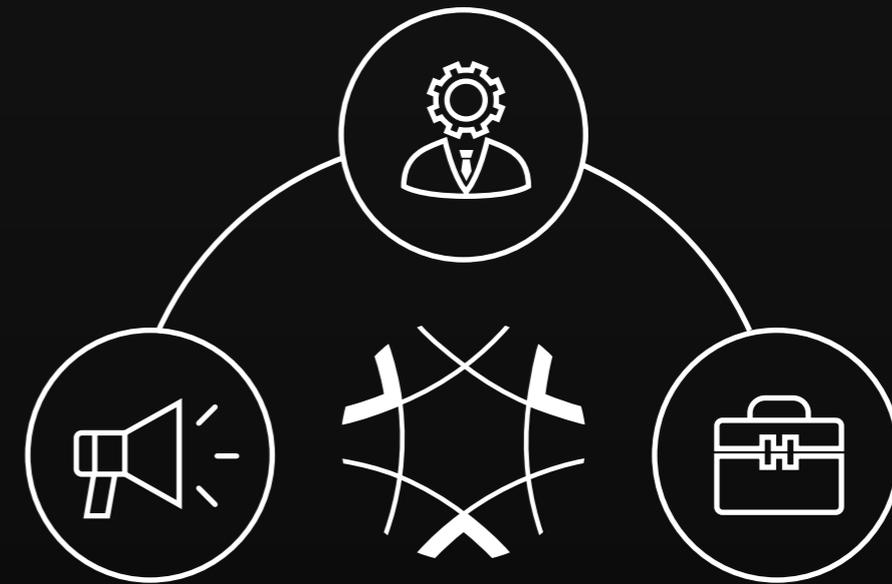


## Adobe can help

**Adobe Experience Cloud** gives you access to an integrated set of solutions to build **campaigns, manage your advertising**, and **gain deep intelligence about your business**. And it's all unified through powerful core services that give you access to your customer profiles, centralized assets, powerful tagging, and an ecosystem of partners and developers to extend the value of all the solutions. It's everything you need to orchestrate a great customer experience.

**Adobe Target** is a complete optimization solution that allows **data driven marketers** to **rapidly experiment** and **create high-converting personalized experiences**.

To learn more about how you can succeed with personalization, visit <https://www.adobe.com/experience-cloud/topics/personalization.html>





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