# The Three Stages of Digital Marketing Maturity

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## Introduction

The modern digital marketer's job is more complex than ever before. Today's data-driven marketer must be able to manage a myriad of online channels while staying on top of ever-changing market conditions. And while independent marketing applications are able to handle the speed and volume of data individually, they provide only a narrow perspective of the information that today's digital marketing organization needs in order to have a significant impact on the business. The real insights are often hidden in data across multiple applications, such as customer relationship management (CRM), marketing automaton systems, in complex spreadsheets or locked in an enterprise data warehouse. For example, a digital marketer will find it extremely difficult to answer the following three questions with visual inspection of multiple reports:

1. What is causing a spike in sales of a certain product that we're not actively promoting?
2. How do we take advantage of this opportunity before it evaporates?
3. How do we minimize our response times to such trends in the future?

While the IT organization can help aggregate and integrate data from these disparate channels, their delivery cycles are often too long and too late for the data-driven marketer operating at cloud speed. The result is that many digital marketers remain frustrated with their inability to understand, analyze and engage with their target audience in a timely fashion. This lack of comprehensive real-time data also prevents them from maximizing the return on their growing digital marketing investments.

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Fortunately for the modern digital marketer, recent technology advances can help alleviate these challenges. The right technology approach can help tame this complex problem of channel explosion and need for cloud speed without the need to be a technical expert for handling data. This approach empowers digital marketers to take ownership of data and accelerate digital marketing strategies and execution. With the right techniques, digital marketing can be converted into a more exact science. This paper presents the three stages of digital marketing maturity and describes how modern marketing organizations operate at each stage.

## The Three-Stage Digital Marketing Maturity Program

Let's start with an example. Let's say you are a digital marketer for an online retailer and you notice that sales for a brand of mauve-colored sweaters has spiked in the last 48 hours. While you may be pleased, the cause for the spike is unclear because you haven't run any promotions around this or related products. Upon further analysis, you notice that web traffic to this product is driven via your search engine marketing (SEM)

channel. But the root cause is still unclear, so you log into your SEM dashboard to see the common keywords that resulted in the customers clicking on your sponsored links. Here you find that the search term 'lavender sweater' has resulted in your sponsored ad showing up in the search results. You also realize that mauve and lavender are very similar colors. This is insightful but still not very useful. You have no way of knowing why the search term 'lavender sweater' was so popular today. With a comprehensive approach to analyzing data and signals across channels, accessed through a digital marketing dashboard, you would be able to correlate (either automatically or with manual investigation) this pattern with trending Twitter and Facebook topics, in this case about Jennifer Lawrence appearing on a popular talk show wearing a lavender sweater.

**Stage 1:  Aggregation and Integration**

The first stage of digital marketing maturity focuses on improving your cross-channel visibility. With the myriad of options available today, you are in a position to evaluate the success or failure of a campaign in the context of a single channel. The more interesting audience feedback, however, often comes from gathering information across *multiple* channels. A comprehensive approach to aggregating data and signals across channels has the potential to deliver winning insights.

Aggregating and integrating data across multiple marketing channels in real-time will help you detect both emerging opportunities as well as threats to your brand and, ultimately, your bottom line. A typical digital marketer is unable to respond to such trends due to lack of access to complete and trusted data when and how it is needed. By the time IT is able to bring together data across disparate channels, the opportunity may be long gone. Speed and self-service are the critical ingredients in the "SMACT" era of Social, Mobile, Analytics, Cloud and the Internet of Things.
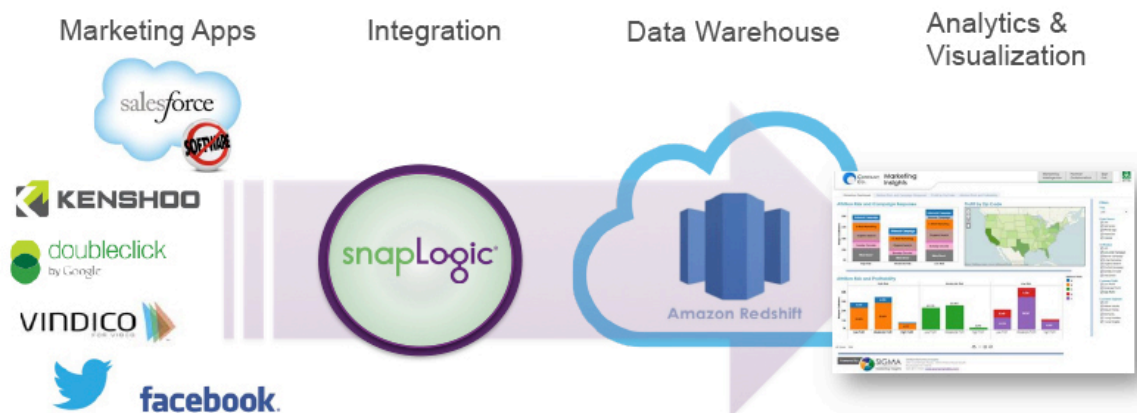
Customer Data, from Apps to Decision Within Minutes!

**Aggregation and Integration in Action:  Getting More from Social Media Channels**

The marketing organization of a multinational consumer packaged goods company was looking to measure key performance indicators of its digital marketing initiatives. They were using Google Analytics to track their website traffic and wanted to combine this information with their social media presence to correlate performance of their marketing and promotional activities. The social media channels included YouTube, Twitter and Facebook. Before this initiative, they were using different agencies to manage this portfolio, but struggled with the not-so-intuitive dashboards each agency provided. They also struggled with the lack of a unified view of their performance across these channels.

These digital marketers built a global command center to actively monitor their marketing activities. They chose a cloud-based business intelligence platform as their analytics and data warehouse solution, and the SnapLogic Integration Cloud to aggregate and integrate data from the various data sources. Now they can actively track fan counts, engagement rates, bounce rates, and viral distribution of posts across all these channels, with data refreshed on a daily basis. The first command center was rolled out in Brazil and it is now being extended to other countries.

They chose the SnapLogic Integration Cloud because of its intuitive user experience, which supports self-service data access for digital marketers. They also benefited the scale-out performance of the integration platform as a service (iPaaS), which was particularly important when handling data spikes that can be common when tracking and analyzing social channels.

**Stage 2: Automation**

The second stage to increasing digital marketing maturity is automating responses to the trends detected in stage one. As an example, with insights gained from aggregating data in stage one, a marketer may decide to increase or decrease marketing spend across one or many channels. Typically, these changes are implemented manually across every channel. However, an organization at stage two will automate the response via a business process that systematically updates all digital marketing channels with the changes.

Through a single automated business process, targeted ads can be automatically pushed to the audience of an identified trend via social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook. With the same automated process, ad word spend for the keyword 'lavender sweater' could be increased without any manual effort to individually implement this tactic across all possible channels. A technology-savvy marketer with the right set of tools should be able to implement such automated processes and even make changes to them with minimal reliance on IT, if any.
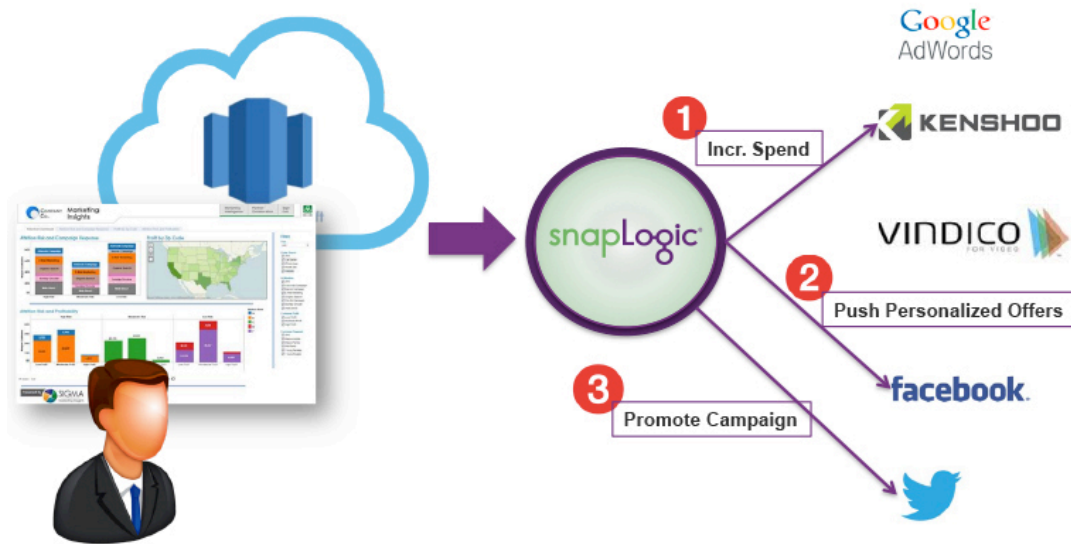
**Automation in Action:  Eliminating Manual Processes**

The digital marketing team at a Fortune 50 consumer packaged goods retailer was struggling to capitalize on market opportunities, even with an annual budget of 50 million dollars. The problem was long wait times for IT to aggregate and deliver information needed to respond to fast-changing market conditions, which reduced overall ROI on marketing initiatives.

The team turned to the SnapLogic Integration Cloud, which provided a highly productive user experience and empowered them to rapidly integrate data from many digital media properties, improve visibility and track efficacy of digital marketing initiatives on a daily basis. By being able to more flexibly access additional data sources, they were able to increase the number of data sources without IT assistance.

And instead of needing IT to code cumbersome APIs exposed by the digital media properties (an expensive programming endeavor), the business users were able to easily integrate with online properties such as Doubleclick, Facebook, Vindico and Kenshoo using prebuilt connectivity. Using this approach, they improved spend analysis of the digital marketing budget, sped up campaign design, reduced campaign

costs and freed up marketing resources to focus on marketing strategies rather than managing tedious file feeds.

After having reached stage one maturity on their digital marketing program, they raised the game by automating the implementation of their digital marketing tactics. They improved customer engagement by automatically pushing personalized and targeted offers to their audience via their Facebook application. Their fan page followers received targeted offers based on their individual Facebook profiles. These targeted offers will eventually replace the print ad inserts that they typically place in local newspapers.

## Stage 3:  Self-Optimizing

Stage three builds on the previous stages to enable self-optimizing digital marketing. The mature digital marketer goes beyond automating systems to creating self-optimizing systems that implement strategic tactics without human intervention, ensuring no time is lost in taking advantage of ever-changing market opportunities. Of course, the algorithms executed to make this possible will be based on a certain set of pre-defined business roles, which could include parameters such as budget spend changes and types of channels used.
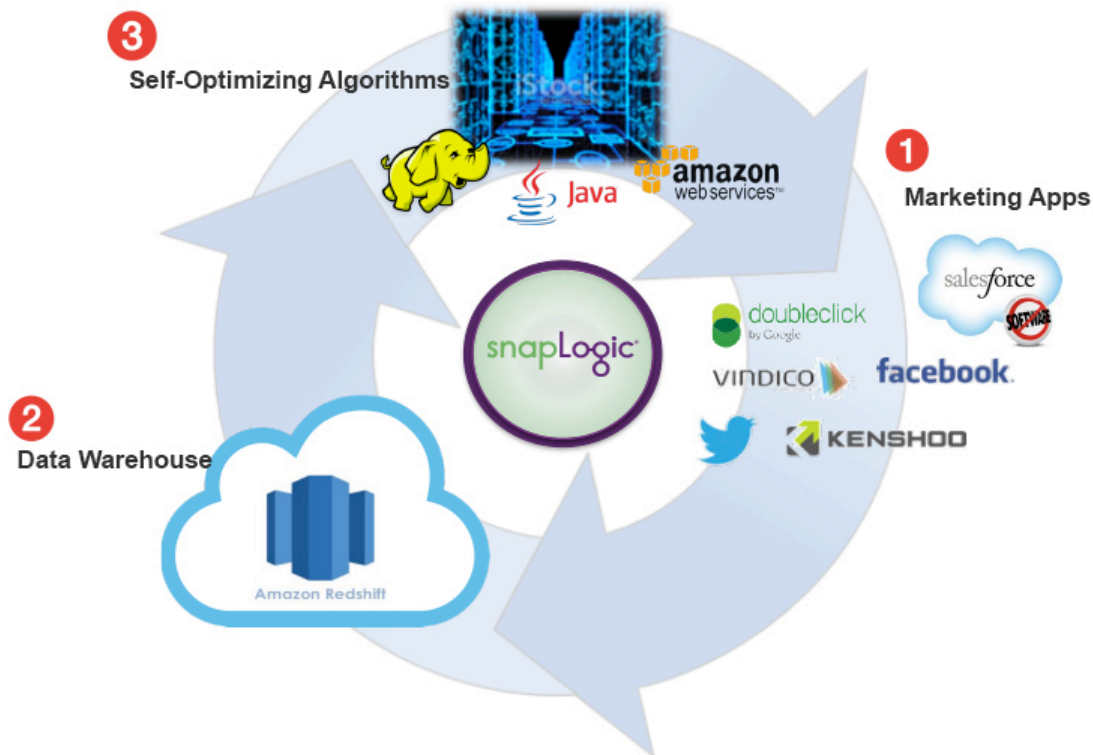
## Self-Optimizing in Action: The Digital Marketer's Utopia

The digital marketing team at a leading flash sales site for the home market wanted to be more agile in their marketing efforts, so they conceptualized and developed a self-optimizing digital marketing program. The program involves aggregation of data in real-time, optimization of response via sophisticated algorithms, followed by the implementation of those responses via automated processes.

The flash sales site aggregates data from the company's website (clickstream data), Facebook, ExactTarget and Google DoubleClick into Vertica (an on-premise database). Their visualization tool is Tableau. They run complex custom algorithms on Amazon Web Services (Amazon S3, Amazon EC2, etc.) to crunch all the data in real-time that correlates the identity of the website visitor (from ExactTarget), past purchases and the purchase intent (deduced from Facebook preferences and clickstream behavior). Using the SnapLogic Integration Cloud, the company is able to aggregate data from all these disparate endpoints to identify purchase intent. Upon identifying the purchase intent, they can deliver compelling offers that have a much

higher rate of conversion than industry averages.

## Summary

To be successful in today's fast-moving market, digital marketers must be able to reign in control of their data and find ways to more quickly and effectively aggregate and integrate data. Taking the next steps to automating processes will deliver even greater agility to respond to market opportunities and also to mitigate risks of misspent budgets or missed opportunities. Finally, the most savvy of digital marketers will develop a system that can be self-optimized, so instant and strategic reactions to fast-changing market opportunities can deliver greater return on marketing investments.

## About SnapLogic

The SnapLogic Integration Cloud for Digital Marketing is a cloud-based integration solution that is designed to enable modern marketers to easily move from basic data access and aggregation, to automation of response, to a self-optimizing approach to digital marketing execution. By simplifying integration processes that were previously costly and time-consuming IT endeavors, SnapLogic provides digital marketers with the ability to design and control their own success.

SnapLogic is the leader in Elastic Integration, helping companies connect enterprise applications in the cloud and on-premise for improved business agility and faster decision making. With the award-winning SnapLogic Integration Cloud, organizations can more quickly and affordably achieve data and application integration and improve the timeliness of their information flow. SnapLogic offers a scalable, elastic integration platform as a service (iPaaS) and a rich library of intelligent connectors called Snaps. Funded by leading venture investors, including Andreessen Horowitz and Ignition Partners, SnapLogic is used by prominent companies in the Global 2000.