How IBM and Adobe craft personalization at scale

Combining the content supply chain, CX
orchestration and intelligent commerce
to create the ideal customer experience

IBM

Introduction

IBM and Adobe work at the intersection of strategy, data, design and technology to digitally reinvent your business. Together, we deliver personalized and trusted experiences that delight customers across every digital touchpoint. Our experts help you capitalize on Adobe's world-class solutions to continually meet and exceed the rising expectations for customer experience (CX)—unlocking the value of your data to make every interaction more meaningful.

The value of Adobe offerings

The 5 pillars of personalization at scale showed how personalization at scale is both essential and achievable, engaging your entire organization and uniting disparate functions to deliver exceptional experiences in real time to every customer. Adobe is a key partner in this space, having led the industry for decades on its mission of "changing the world through digital experiences."

This mission is powered by three Adobe cloud offerings:

– *Adobe Creative Cloud* provides the world's leading creative tools to design, produce, collaborate on and publish content.

– *Adobe Document Cloud* provides not only the ubiquitous PDF technology to share documents but new functionality to perform digital signatures and unlock data from PDFs to apply machine learning (ML) to stimulate additional customer and business value.

– *Adobe Experience Cloud* provides a suite of enterprise marketing tools to surface content into the hands of customers, manage workflow within marketing, identify insights to design and run effective marketing campaigns, and analyze performance to improve future initiatives and secure customer loyalty.

In addition, all Adobe products can connect to modern platforms from Salesforce and SAP®, among others, to form an integrated technology ecosystem. Together, these offerings and the associated expertise power three foundational capabilities that are essential for personalization at scale.

# 3 foundational capabilities powered by IBM and Adobe

Personalization at scale isn't a state you achieve; it's a way of conducting business, applying your whole company to the goal of making CX better and always striving to make personalized experiences more valuable for your customers. That value is in high demand: 73% of consumers and 87% of B2B customers expect delightful experiences both before and after purchase.[1] But "delightful" means different things in different contexts, so personalization at scale can take many forms depending on your resources and priorities. To get started, here are three powerful personalization capabilities built on shared Adobe and IBM resources—and how each one could accelerate outcomes for your business.

1. *Enable quality content with speed and scale through the content supply chain.* Organizations need to keep up with customer expectations for richer and richer digital experiences at a faster and faster speed. A robust content supply chain is the answer.

2. *Deeply know the customer and orchestrate the right CX.* With the right knowledge and orchestration, you'll be able to build a 360-degree view of each customer, pinpoint relevant offers and activate them with accuracy.

3. *Apply intelligent commerce to generate value for both customers and companies.* At some point, experiences need to be converted into purchases—this is the point at which your business monetizes the customer journey. Intelligent commerce makes this more efficient by making every experience shoppable.

Let's consider each capability in more detail and see how IBM and Adobe make them possible.
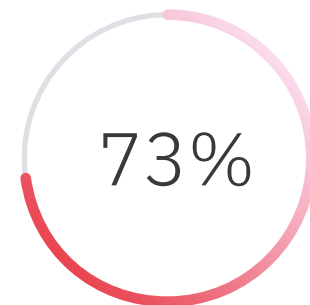
73%

of consumers and

87%
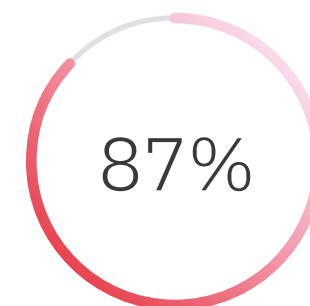
of B2B customers expect delightful experiences both before and after purchase.[1]

1. The content supply chain

Marketing organizations need to create captivating, relevant and compliant content across multiple channels, geographies, demographics and products in order for there to *be* a personalized approach to CX.

> Companies that moved from traditional content to one-to-one personalization saw a 10x improvement in conversion rates.[2]

Yet creativity is tough to scale. Powerful new tools and workflows mean that creatives are empowered to create incredible content, but expanding this capability in line with demand can become expensive and unmanageable. Enabling quality content with speed and scale is essential.

This is a new version of the old imperative to achieve more with less. Fortunately, there's a new answer: the *content supply chain*. This evolution connects people, processes, tools, insights and ways of working into a single workflow, providing end-to-end visibility for all of your stakeholders and the ability to extrapolate data and insights into the overall decision-making process. The resulting content allocation is more efficient and responsive, creating a bedrock foundation for personalization at scale. Adobe offerings make it possible.

Adobe Workfront is the content supply chain's foundation layer. Using Workfront, you can connect the siloed teams and stakeholders who need to be involved in the end-to end-process of planning, creating, distributing and measuring the impact of content. The result is a single optimized and automated workflow for any and all content. For example, *Workfront Fusion* automates workflows and *Adobe Creative Cloud APIs* and *Adobe Sensei* automate content generation.

This workflow reduces friction, allowing your marketing organization to design and configure a "happy path" that considers, optimizes and automates steps such as the approval and publication of content. And content design and configuration are made easier thanks to seamless integration with the appropriate tools, such as Adobe Creative Cloud*, Frame.io* and *Adobe Experience Manager Assets*.

> With the content supply chain model, you'll not only have fewer steps and less ambiguity but also a lower error rate and quicker time to completion.

For individual employees, this also means they can do the work they love where they love to do it, eradicating the need to switch from tool to tool to complete tasks and reporting.

Technology and tools are just one enabler of the content supply chain; you need human expertise to put them to work in a beautiful, intuitive and exponentially valuable way.

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IBM and Adobe have partnered to combine our products, technologies and business design expertise to help clients achieve valuable content outcomes more quickly. And we weren't afraid to try it ourselves—radically simplifying IBM's marketing processes led to significant benefits.

> IBM saw 35% better ROI on media spend and 75% improvement on time to develop and publish web pages.[3]

Combining tried and tested methods and processes, IBM and Adobe put real users in the center of the design process to envision, test and refine the ultimate experience grounded in the technology and tooling available—all guided by IBM iX®. This drives adoption and buy-in by informing next-level change management programs and creates evangelists and ambassadors within your organization. The content supply chain should be something professionals design to make their own jobs better, easier and more impactful—not something being pushed upon them.

In pursuit of client ROI, IBM iX business design experts are empowered with unique assets and accelerators to expedite and automate the delivery and scale of new processes. These can include AI activation to further automate transactional tasks, inclusion of chat functionality to enhance the user experience (UX) and technical toolsets to automate and scale global deployment of campaign assets.

These components come together under IBM Garage™, our unique methodology for accelerating and scaling business transformation. IBM Garage helps clients generate innovative ideas and equips them with the practices, technologies and expertise to turn those ideas into business value in weeks.

Our experts work with clients to adopt leading technologies and speed up solution development in three phases, all of which involve working closely with your teams. There's *co-create*, in which we collaborate to define your vision; *co-execute*, where we prove the value of your vision; and *co-operate*, in which we scale your solution and your team's capabilities. By design, IBM Garage is agile and hyper focused on measurable ROI and business outcomes.

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2. Know the customer and orchestrate the right CX

The second capability focuses on orchestrating your CX. This is becoming increasingly important as industry dynamics drive companies to shift focus from customer acquisition through advertising to customer retention and loyalty.

> For example, increased data privacy regulations are reducing the ability to target new customers.

Saturated digital impressions put pressure on advertising ROI. The rise of the cookie-less world is making customer acquisition more challenging, and customers have more options than ever to take their business elsewhere. In this context, personalization is proving its worth; organizations that prioritize CX reported three times higher revenue growth over two years than organizations that place less emphasis on it.[4]

Adobe and IBM offer a suite of capabilities to help you meet these challenges and reap the rewards of exceptional CX.

As explained in The 5 pillars of personalization at scale, a customer data platform (CDP) is central to personalization at scale. *Adobe Real-Time CDP*, part of the *Adobe Experience Platform*, offers the essential functions to help you deliver the right experience, to the right customer, at the right time.

These functions include:

– Unified customer profiles for real-time integration of offline and online data, plus analytics

– Advanced segmentation and AI/ML that use both online and offline data to categorize profiles in real or near real-time

– Real-time customer activation, sending segments to analytics, targeting, commerce and more

– Trusted profile management for governance, privacy and security

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Because it's part of the Adobe Experience Platform, Real-Time CDP integrates well with other Adobe tools.

Two of the most important for your CX initiatives are:

– *Adobe Journey Orchestration (AJO)*, which allows you to tailor individual journeys for every customer based on previous behavior and preferences. This results in a multichannel, real-time feedback loop mechanism to anticipate needs and orchestrate customer journeys across channels, then receive feedback about what outcomes were achieved and what needs to be adjusted.

– *Customer Journey Analytics (CJA)*, an analytics tool that reports on customer behavior throughout the entire customer journey. Adobe has uniquely comprehensive visibility into the customer journey, meaning you can connect data from every touchpoint, visualize it end to end, get AI-driven insights to make data-driven decisions, and then activate those insights in real time. With robust data sourcing and a patented data governance framework, you can be confident in your ongoing ability to discover and act on cross-channel insights in real time.

IBM Consulting™ can play a valuable role in implementing and activating all these tools. We'll help you conduct a golden thread exercise to visualize what ideal personalization would look like for your organization and customers. Then we can implement, configure, activate and operate these tools to meet your unique needs.

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3. Apply intelligent commerce

Traditional digital commerce can be described as a tactical set of commerce capabilities, such as product catalog management and search. The time is ripe for a new evolution: intelligent commerce. This transformational capability enables you to orchestrate ecosystems to deliver best-in-class CX. In short, it makes every experience shoppable.

Eighty percent of consumers are more likely to make a purchase from a brand that provides personalized experiences.[5] By harnessing the power of AI, smart data and analytics, intelligent commerce uses rich customer insights to design contextually personalized interactions. It drives client growth and maximizes efficiencies through the activation of experience orchestration, interactions driven by data and insight, and technology ecosystem evolution.

At IBM, we believe that powerful new technologies like AI must be transparent, explainable, and as free as possible of harmful and inappropriate bias in order to earn society's trust. We are developing models that monitor for and mitigate bias, rather than reinforcing it from existing data.

Executed effectively, intelligent commerce delivers what customers really want: an experience that combines trust, relevance and convenience. And better experiences translate into measurable results.

> 59% increase in online sales inquiries

For example, Audi UK increased sales inquiries by 59%.[6] And 40% of shoppers have made at least one unplanned purchase in the past 6 months due to a personalized discount or loyalty reward.[7] IBM and Adobe solutions are the key to making intelligent commerce possible.

Adobe Commerce supports engaging and personalized experiences for buyers in B2B, B2C and B2B2C environments. When enabled with supporting solutions in the Adobe Experience Cloud and the *IBM Experience Orchestrator* framework, Adobe Commerce is unrivaled in its ability to personalize the shopping experience by using data and analytics to understand customers.

A key feature of Adobe Commerce is its ability to create customer segments based on data such as purchase history, browsing behavior and demographic information. These segments can be used to create targeted marketing campaigns, personalized product recommendations, and customized pricing and promotions. For example, a business could create a customer segment for high-spending customers and offer them exclusive discounts or promotions to encourage repeat purchases.

Adobe Commerce also provides the ability to customize the look and feel of online stores based on customer preference. Using customer browsing behavior data, businesses can create personalized landing pages, product pages and even entire websites tailored to the customer's interests and preferences. This can help improve the customer's experience, increase engagement and ultimately drive more sales.

Another potential option for intelligent commerce is subscriptions, specifically Adobe Subscriptions and Billing, powered by *Zuora* and delivered by IBM. This is a software integration within Adobe Commerce.

> 64% of customers feel more connected to brands that offer subscriptions than those that solely offer one-off transactions.[8]

Zuora is a subscription billing and management platform that enables businesses to deliver anything as a service (XaaS). Zuora can play an important role in supporting your commerce personalization strategy by transforming the enterprise mindset from "transact" to "contract," empowering richer customer interactions and optimizing lifetime customer value.

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A key feature of Zuora is its ability to create personalized subscription offerings for individual customers using data on the customer's behavior, preferences and purchase history. These customized offerings can include specific products or service bundles and deepen customer relationships while creating enterprise business resiliency.

Furthermore, Zuora's analytics and reporting capabilities inform additional service offerings and increased personalization capabilities, meaning they are perfectly suited to the increasing focus on lifetime customer value. This richer first-party data set can itself be monetized or enable new strategies, such as retail media.

A key tenet of personalization at scale is the involvement of company functions beyond marketing. Personalized experiences depend on having the right inventory available when it's needed. Implementing an order management software (OMS) that has pre-built integration with Adobe Commerce is essential to this goal. IBM Consulting can work with any OMS that's connected to Adobe Commerce, such as Fluent Commerce, Manhattan or IBM Sterling® OMS.

In cases where quick time to market is crucial and an enterprise-grade OMS is needed, IBM Sterling OMS is recommended. It can deliver a single, scalable, real-time view of inventory and demand across a client's physical stores, warehouses and online orders. Coupled with instant in-store product and inventory searches, it allows store employees to work better and faster. Brick-and-mortar establishments can become agile distribution centers capable of fulfilling customer needs in the channel that suits them best.

IBM Sterling OMS also harnesses the power of AI to supercharge your customer service and satisfaction. Across countless use cases, IBM Sterling OMS empowers your employees to tell customers what they want to hear: "Yes." "Yes, we have that in stock at a store near you." "Yes, you can order online and pick up at your preferred store." "Yes, we'll deliver your purchase wherever and whenever you want."

> Be empowered to tell customers what they want to hear: "Yes."

IBM Sterling OMS supplements and enhances—rather than replaces—your existing order management applications. It optimizes infrastructure performance without the delay or expense of reengineering everything. And because IBM Sterling OMS can be deployed as a cloud, hybrid cloud or on-prem solution, it can be designed exactly how you need it to serve your needs, now and in the future.

In addition, IBM Consulting has several offerings that go to the heart of intelligent commerce:

IBM Garage and the IBM Experience Orchestrator provide our clients with an essential key to growth: the ability to quickly launch new experiences, products and business models with reduced development costs and risk. By employing decoupled architecture and microservices, companies can easily refine CX. Prebuilt connectors and resolvers seamlessly integrate platforms on any cloud, including the Adobe product suite.

Together with other resources, these form an integrated IBM Consulting intelligent commerce offering that uses intuitive software to support CX and personalization at scale across the front, middle and back offices of every enterprise.

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Conclusion

Companies that can consistently perform all three of these foundational capabilities gain the ability to truly deliver personalization at scale. When you combine the content supply chain, knowing the customer and orchestrating the right CX and intelligent commerce, you can create the ideal customer experience. For details on how the products mentioned throughout this paper align with Adobe's clouds, see the table on the right.

Next steps

Learn more about IBM and Adobe's strategic partnership.

Read The 5 pillars of personalization at scale.

Discover the IBM Garage methodology.

Explore IBM iX.

Subscribe to topic updates on customer and employee experience.

Adobe products

Adobe Creative Cloud

Including:

– Adobe Photoshop
– Adobe Creative Cloud Pro
– Adobe Frame.IO
– Adobe Substance
– Adobe Stock

Adobe Experience Cloud

Including:

– Adobe Experience Manager: Sites
– Adobe Experience Manager: Assets
– Adobe Workfront
– Adobe Experience Platform
  – Adobe Customer Journey Analytics
  – Adobe Journey
  – Adobe Real-time Customer Data Platform

Adobe Document Cloud

Including:

– Adobe Acrobat (PDF)
– Adobe Scan
– Adobe Sign

Authors and contributors

Justin Ablett
Global Adobe Lead
Partner
IBM iX

Pierre Charchaflian
Vice President
Senior Partner
IBM iX

Eric Gutoski
Global Adobe Commerce Lead
Partner
IBM iX

Kathryn Bath
Adobe Communications GTM
Associate Partner
IBM iX

Jay Trestain
Global Adobe Workfront Lead
Associate Partner
IBM iX

Endnotes

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