



Consent, Preferences, Insights, Compliance

TRUST
Be Human

IMPLEMENTATION OF CONSENT AND PREFERENCE MANAGEMENT:

A PHASED APPROACH

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We empower the individual's voice, so trust is built, and relationships are enriched.

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Prepare for Success

The management of customer zero-party data, including customer consents and preferences, typically represents a “crossover” initiative — one that begins as a marketing project, gains traction through IT, and finds valuable application in customer service and support. Moreover, in its aim to unify the company's view of a consumer and make information available through a central repository, an effective program acts as a silo-breaker inside companies, encouraging a holistic view of customer interaction. In short, it can be complicated.

Once the educational and budgetary hurdles are cleared and an enterprise has decided to introduce consent and preference management into its technology architecture, a new challenge arises: where to begin?

For some, the challenge is artificially enlarged by the ideal they hope to attain: zero-party data collection at every touchpoint, seamless integration between systems, and a 360-degree view of every customer available on-demand. Overwhelmed by the sheer scope of work, the project team cools and inertia becomes a threat.

For others, zero-party data management is a series of steps beginning with consent and preference management, each step building on the last, each further proving the validity of the original value proposition and demonstrating its worth in a progressive series of tests. This is the model for success.

The modern enterprise-class company is, in part, a living museum of hardware, software, and the various systems designed to connect it all together. Authority over these assets (and, in some cases, liabilities) is spread between multiple departments and leadership hierarchies. In addition, some enterprises' corporate leadership structures are ill-equipped to meet the diverse challenges presented during the implementation process.

In the following pages, a clear and comprehensible path towards implementation will be demonstrated. While the nearly limitless variability of size, existing architecture, decision-making process and other factors make it impossible to present a truly universal playbook, this paper is intended to offer useful guideposts with application to a broad array of organizations and needs.

A Targeted Introduction

In its ideal form, the management of customer consents and preferences, as well as all zero-party data should be present at every interaction point between company and customer, such as mobile, social media, in-store, contact center, and more. However, a sweeping introduction of new functionality across the enterprise would require approval from many stakeholders and the initiative could quickly become bogged down or even abandoned. In many cases, initiative leaders choose a specific brand or line of business to use as a start-up program to prove ROI and gain momentum before seeking company-wide application.

The best starting point for many enterprises is an intentionally-limited start-up project designed to speed the journey towards ROI. Here are three simple goals (offered in order of complexity) that can be proposed, piloted, budgeted and achieved within a reasonable timeframe.

- 1. Offer opt-down functionality in email marketing:** instead of defaulting customers to an all-or-nothing engagement choice, give them the power to tailor communications to suit their interests. Offering an opt-down option drastically reduces opt-outs and helps marketers focus messaging on topics of interest.
- 2. Install a website preference or trust center:** an easy-to-use portal where customers can create individual profiles, maintain or revoke their consent permissions, select topics of interest, preferred delivery channels, and pace of communications. Preference/trust centers empower customers to maintain their profiles as their interests, opinions, and insights change over time.
- 3. Expand to a secondary channel:** with a preference or trust center in place and opt-down functionality already in progress, expand the program to the contact center and leverage service and support calls as opportunities for consent and personalization.

An excellent example of this approach can be found in the experience of a leading national software company that develops financial and tax preparation tools for small businesses, accountants, and individuals. The internal marketing team was struggling in recent years with mounting opt-out numbers — prospects and customers that were acting to prevent future communications from one of their lines of business and in doing so, were legally and permanently preventing the company from ever sending them communications again from any of their lines of business.

In an effort to stem the tide, an opt-down program was initiated within a selected business unit. When a prospect or customer chose to opt out of a given communication, they landed on an opt-down page where they were given the opportunity to opt out of (or into) any number of specific channels. The preference center also allowed customers to refine communications by channel of choice, set frequency parameters, and more. In other words, they were given the opportunity to personalize their experience instead of facing an all-or-nothing choice.

Within months of launching the program, the marketing department was able to report a greater than 60 percent conversion rate from opt-out to targeted opt-in. Extrapolated across the enterprise, that rate represented 200,000-250,000 opt-out saves over the same period of time. Bolstered by the data and the bottom-line savings it confirmed, the enterprise moved forward with an expansion of the broader zero-party data management initiative.

Expanding to Multiple Touchpoints

The goal for zero-party data management is to allow customer consent and preference collection to take place across the full spectrum of prospect and customer interactions. Enterprise-level businesses engage in complex interactions that often feature an expanding set of personal and virtual interactions. It's essential to collect and react to information from all touchpoints such as call centers, social media, and mobile devices, not just the easy or inexpensive ones such as email or websites.

Here are the six most common customer interaction points where enterprises must collect customer consents, preference data, and insights. As the zero-party data management program develops, these points represent excellent targets for inclusion:

1. Acquisition marketing.

Building awareness and earning a purchase is a purposeful and complicated process. Yet many companies fail to use these interactions as opportunities to learn about communication channel of choice, preferred product segment, or other information that could make the difference between a window-shop and a sale.

2. Product and/or services support.

With the sale secured, customer interaction often passes to support — an entirely different team operating a different CRM, a different database, and a different mindset. Customer data and insights can be lost in the transition, slowing the support process and presenting a fragmented and contradictory experience to the customer.

3. Website services and functions.

With very few exceptions, customers begin their journey to sales, support, or social interaction with the brand on the web in an effort to find the information they want in way that is convenient to them. The website is not just a critical opportunity for customer consent, preferences, and insights collection, it's also one of the cheapest and most efficient means to do so.

4. Account services.

For most consumers, the can't-miss brand interaction is the payment process. Learn how and when your customers want to be billed and find innovative ways to remind them to do so. You'll be rewarded with improved receivables collection and customer preferences and insights data applicable to new sales.

5. In-store and point-of-sale (POS).

Many enterprise businesses maintain physical locations where key tasks are handled through human interaction. While much attention has been paid to culture and customer experience in the store environment, too little has been directed at the collection and distribution of customer consents, preferences, and insights. Arm your staff with timely data and give them the opportunity to add to the customer profile.

6. Social media.

As more and more customers rely on social media for interaction with each other and brands, enterprises must stay ahead of new technology adoption to continue to remain relevant and connected with their customer base. The addition of a communication channel becomes a value-add reason to reach out to a customer to further enhance the relationship and better understand the customer's profile.

Centralizing Data

The management of customer zero-party data (consents, preferences, and insights) should be a central repository connected to all departments, units, and appropriate applications. If information isn't easily available across the enterprise, customers will be lost through repetition, contradiction and frustration with a business that doesn't seem to remember what they want and doesn't send them the content they expect and need.

The requirement for a centralized system underlines the need for a truly neutral solution. Native architecture that is incompatible with various CRM systems, ESPs, or contact center management platforms is doomed to failure.

In addition, centralization of prospect and customer data is critical for compliance and risk mitigation. Centralization reduces risk and enhances safe harbor positioning by providing monitoring of critical compliance activities and establishing complete audit records of consent and preference history. Moreover, it facilitates quick responses to inquiries and customer complaints and should improve vendor accountability through process and activity monitoring and alerts.

In short, centralization empowers oversight and allows for organizational governance. For example, when a leading satellite radio service began a consent and preference management implementation project, its IT department discovered that preferences and insights were being captured and stored in myriad disconnected systems, such as the website, contact center, marketing services, Excel spreadsheets, and more.

Alarmed by the risk presented by passive possession of so much data, the enterprise pivoted to an intensive process of assessment to determine what was valid and actionable, what was obsolete, and what was simply irretrievable. They engaged PossibleNOW to act as that essential central repository, a proven architecture that could connect to their entire roster of stove-piped systems and frameworks.

Conclusion: Track Results and Prove ROI

By limiting the scope of the original zero-party data management project, enterprises can simplify metrics and create powerful business cases for additional investment and expansion. In many instances, consent and preference management is initially introduced as an opt-down initiative designed to convert opt-outs to targeted opt-ins. Within 90 days of full implementation, opt-down initiatives have been shown to convert opt-outs to targeted opt-ins by more than 60 percent.

Simple steps for tracking and ROI demonstration include:

1. A clearly outlined initial implementation.

As cited previously in the example of the financial software company, limitation of original scope and clear benchmarking (converting opt-outs to targeted opt-ins) is essential.

2. A reasonable timetable for results.

In concert with the implementation team, create a realistic timetable to manage internal expectations and allow the program enough room to demonstrate value.

3. A detailed “before” picture.

Prior to launching the program, assess the current state of affairs and define what is being collected, where it is stored, how many are opting out, and so forth.

4. Once the program is in place, frequently assess results and course-correct.

In many instances, the challenge of serving as initiative “champion” inside an enterprise is one of connecting departments that wouldn’t otherwise share information. An internal advocate may be a necessary linchpin required to keep the project on track.

5. Translate preference and consent collection to bottom-line value.

In other words, assess the opportunity cost of an opt-out and, in turn, create a value for a targeted opt-in. Without a bottom-line layer to reporting, ROI may be misunderstood.

6. Don’t just explain the difference.

If given the opportunity, demonstrate the future. Presentations that marry results with before-and-after screen shots featuring opt-down functionality and preference/trust center designs help decision-makers see the bigger picture and embrace the effort.

The solution to the implementation of a consent and preference management initiative (or a full zero-party data initiative) is breaking it down into a series of actionable steps. Prepare for success, select a targeted introduction point, expand gradually, centralize data, track results, and prove ROI. For enterprises seeking the enormous marketing and risk mitigation rewards that come from listening to and learning from consumers, it is an essential step.

PossibleNOW is the pioneer and leader in customer consent, preference, and regulatory compliance solutions. We leverage our MyPreferences technology, processes, and services to enable relevant, trusted, and compliant customer interactions. Our platform empowers the collection, centralization, and distribution of customer communication consent and preferences across the enterprise. DNCsolution addresses Do Not Contact regulations such as TCPA, CAN-SPAM and CASL, allowing companies to adhere to DNC requirements, backed by our 100% compliance guarantee.

PossibleNOW's strategic consultants take a holistic approach, leveraging years of experience when creating strategic roadmaps, planning technology deployments, and designing customer interfaces.

PossibleNOW is purpose-built to help large, complex organizations improve customer experiences and loyalty while mitigating compliance risk.

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