



**Unlocking growth with a unified
customer data ecosystem**



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Executive summary

Here's a harsh reality consumer packaged goods (CPG) companies are facing: fragmented custom data = disconnected experiences.

Cognizant's customer data ecosystem (CDE) helps companies unlock real-time customer insights, deliver hyperpersonalized engagement and drive revenue growth. **Recent reports** suggest that 75% of customers expect a consistent experience across every channel they engage with, but only 25% are satisfied with the experience provided.

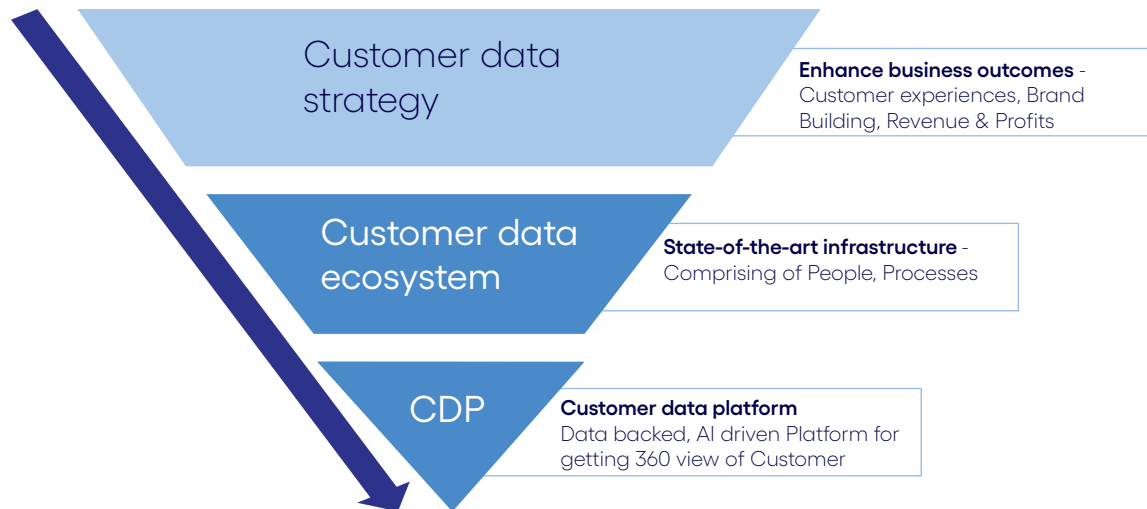
With our expertise in AI, ML and data unification, we help businesses create a 360-degree customer profile that enhances retention, optimizes marketing spend and identifies new revenue opportunities. Our pre-built tools and accelerators ensure faster adoption of customer data platforms (CDPs), delivering measurable impact and tangible ROI.

This white paper explores the significance of a unified customer data strategy, the advantages of implementing a CDP and the key trends shaping the **CPG market**.

Cognizant's CDE framework

At Cognizant, we're often asked what the most important component of a CDE is. Our answer is simple—having a broader customer data strategy. This helps to mitigate inefficiencies, lost opportunities and inconsistent growth. It is important to introduce a comprehensive analytics plan to understand customer behavior, influence purchasing decisions, and create effective marketing and business offerings. Without a robust customer data strategy, companies risk losing real-time access to customer data, hindering their ability to predict next actions and suggest better offers. The absence of clear customer identity data impedes effective audience segmentation, resulting in fragmented customer views and scattered user histories across devices. Additionally, without insights into customer behavior, orchestrating efficient customer journeys becomes challenging. Consequently, businesses are unable to retrieve valuable customer insights or deliver seamless omnichannel experiences.

Cognizant's CDE framework helps CPGs in acquiring new customers and business opportunities while creating a streamlined environment for the entire customer behavior lifecycle, enabling the extraction of meaningful insights.



Key trends in the CPG market

A well-defined CDE strategy enables businesses to gather, unify and analyze customer data in real time, providing a comprehensive view of customer behavior. This holistic approach not only enhances customer engagement through hyperpersonalized interactions but also drives revenue growth by identifying new business opportunities.

In this section, we explore several key trends shaping the need for a robust CDE approach for CPGs:

- **Omnichannel customer experience:** Providing a seamless and consistent experience across all channels, including web, mobile, social media and retail stores. Customers expect a consistent experience across every channel they choose to engage.
- **E-commerce and D2C expansion:** The expansion of e-commerce and direct-to-consumer (D2C) channels is reshaping the way customers interact with brands. Influenced also by the dramatic shift towards online retail and "at-home" channels demands responsiveness, convenience and transparency.
- **Social media influence:** Social media plays a significant role in product discovery and customer engagement, with 41% of customers discovering products on social media. Making the propensity for customers to switch brands higher than ever, necessitating stronger engagement strategies.
- **Personalization and customization:** Personalized engagements drive customer satisfaction and loyalty, with marketers for example from a leading cosmetic firm achieving 17% increase in revenue per session through personalization and A/B testing. Customers seek personalized prices and promotions tailored to their preferences.
- **Sustainability and ethical consumerism:** Customers are increasingly concerned about sustainability and ethical practices, influencing their purchasing decisions.

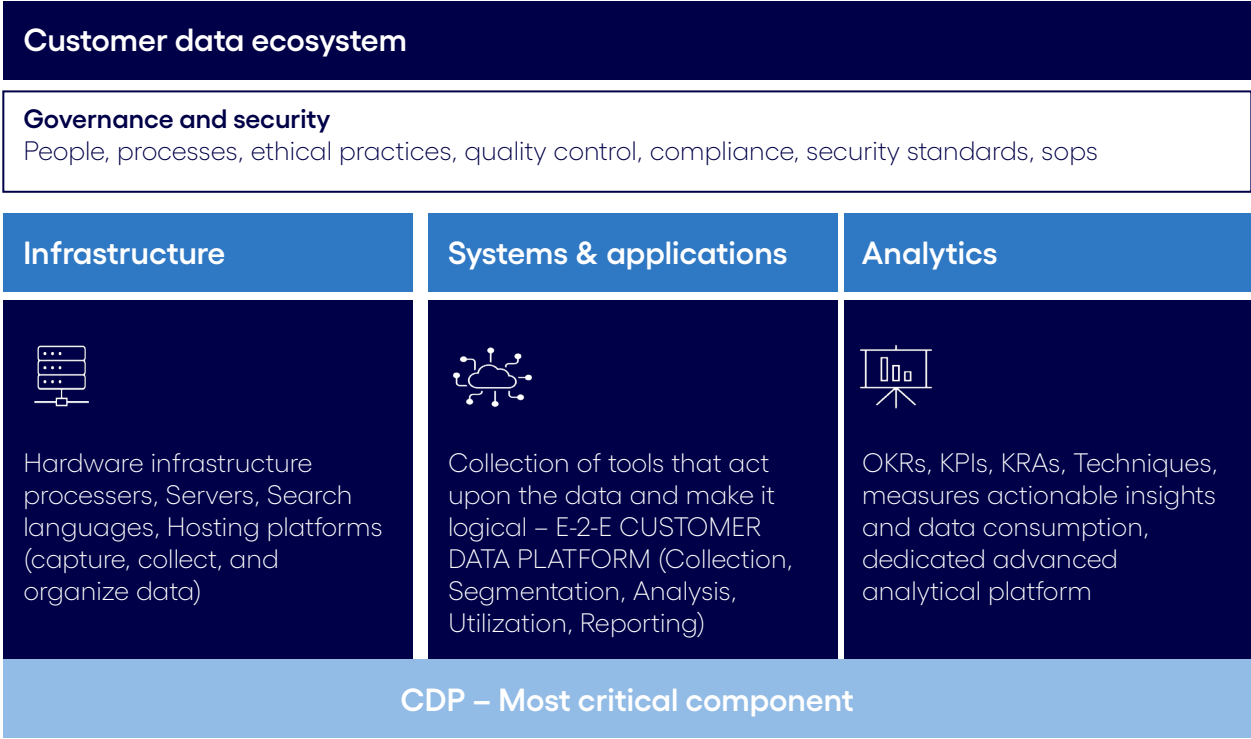
Building a robust CDE

Cognizant leverages end-to-end capabilities to build and implement CDPs , resulting in key business outcomes such as:

- Integrating data comprehensively
- Enabling targeted marketing and personalization
- Providing actionable insights and predictive capabilities
- Enhancing customer experiences and operational efficiency
- Ensuring transparent performance tracking and compliance

What does our platform look like?

It's a data-backed, AI-driven platform that provides a comprehensive 360-degree view of the customer. Designed to deliver efficient targeting, enhance customer retention, uncover new business opportunities and predict accurate business trends, it integrates people, processes and technology to offer a unified, interconnected and multichannel experience. This platform combines enterprise infrastructure and applications to aggregate and analyze information, enabling companies to better understand their customers and develop superior marketing, pricing and operational strategies.

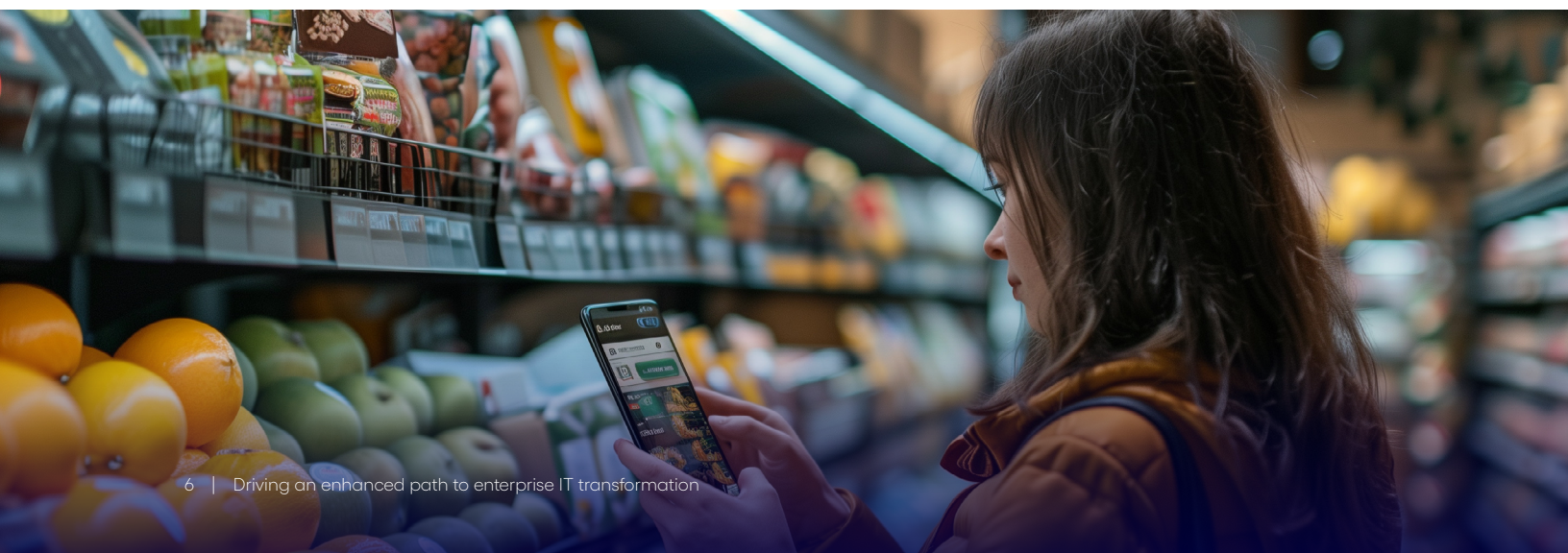
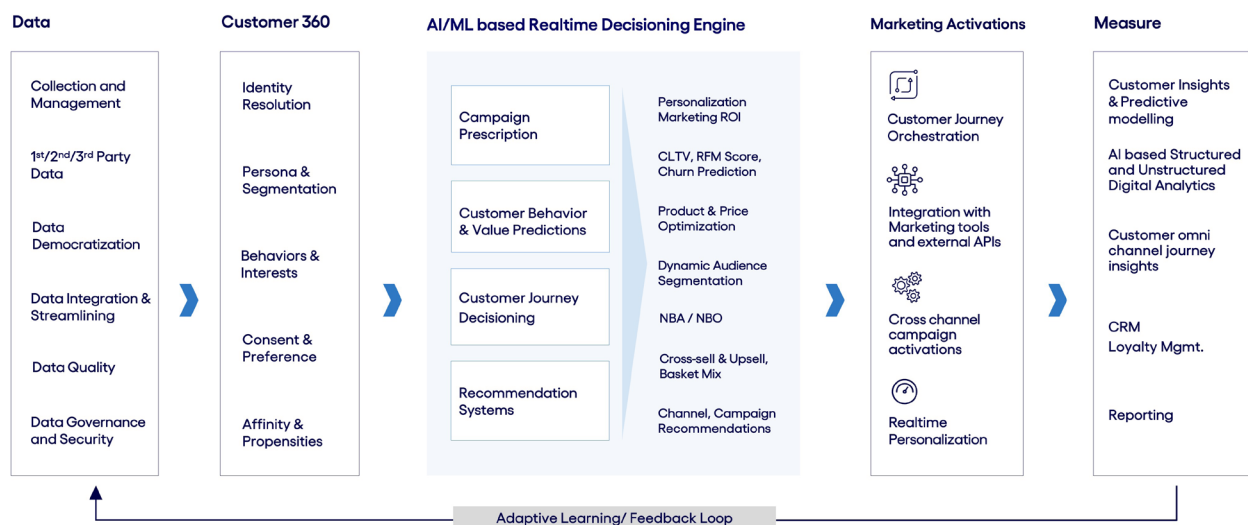


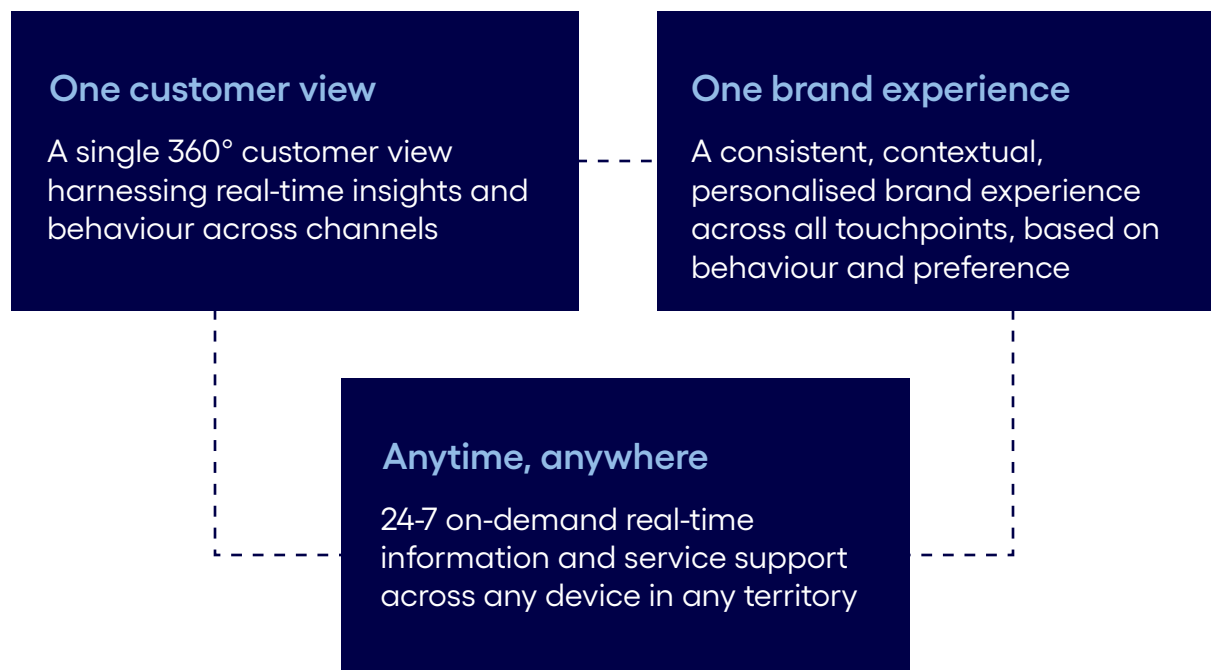
Our customer data platform (CDP) aggregates data from various touchpoints to create a unified customer profile, enabling hyperpersonalized experiences.

Key components that a CDE should enable:

1. **Data aggregation and unification:** Creating comprehensive data sets by consolidating and gathering data from different sources
2. **Data analysis:** Extracting meaningful data insights through advanced analytics and data mining techniques
3. **Customer profiling:** Businesses can tailor their strategies and offerings to specific customer groups based on their preferences, behaviors and demographics
4. **Predictive modeling:** Models can be built by leveraging historical data to forecast future customer behavior
5. **Marketing and campaign management:** To foster brand loyalty, businesses can cater to individual preferences by customizing marketing efforts, product offerings and customer experiences
6. **Privacy and security:** Built-in security and data protection ensures customer trust can be maintained

Key components that a CDE should enable:





By leveraging rapidly advancing technologies such as artificial intelligence and generative AI, Cognizant can automate data democratization, analysis, recommendations, design and strategy. Through adaptive learning and feedback loops, our ML algorithms develop a robust customer data strategy, opportunity identification engine and idea generation framework.

We engineer experiences across various channels—web, mobile, social media and retail stores—using a layered and integrated approach to create a seamless customer experience. Our proposed technical architecture enhances existing MarTech and analytical capabilities to support.

Leveraging the right insights

Deriving accurate insights is crucial for the success of a customer data ecosystem. Companies often use a persona-based approach to provide relevant analysis and insights. This method ensures that different personas receive tailored information that meets their specific needs.

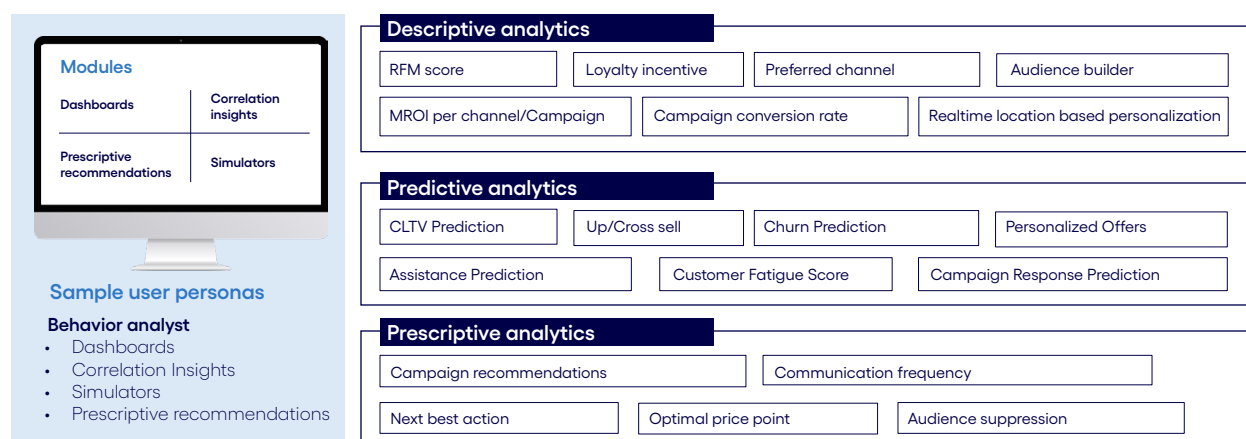
To start, it's essential to understand the needs of each persona. Identify the key personas within your organization or customer base, such as marketing managers, sales executives and customer service representatives. Assess their unique requirements and determine what information they need to perform their roles effectively.

Once you understand their needs, provide tailored information. Generate specific reports and insights based on each persona's requirements. For example, marketing managers might need insights on campaign performance, while sales executives might focus on lead conversion rates. Ensure that the information provided is actionable and relevant to each persona's role.

Focus on key insights that are critical for each persona. Identify the most important metrics and trends that will help them achieve their objectives. This could include customer engagement rates, purchase history or feedback scores. Emphasize the data that will have the most significant impact on decision-making and strategy.

Address the needs of each persona through three levels of insights: **descriptive**, **predictive** and **prescriptive**. Descriptive insights provide a clear understanding of past events and behaviors, helping personas understand what has happened and why. Predictive insights offer forecasts and predictions based on historical data, enabling personas to anticipate future trends and outcomes. Prescriptive insights recommend actions to optimize future results, guiding personas on the best steps to take to achieve their goals.

By understanding each persona's needs and delivering the right insights, companies can ensure that all stakeholders are equipped with the information they need to make informed decisions and drive success



Key use cases to maximize CDE outcomes

A use-case driven approach to building CDE helps in demonstrating business value early on. This also ensures that the effort remains focused on the goal. In this section, we reference critical use cases that shape CDE strategies for CPGs today, using potential value and data maturity.

- 1. Look-alike acquisition models:** Analyze their best customers to find attributes that distinguish them and then find others who are similar.
- 2. Cross-sell programs:** Identify which products each customer is most likely to buy next, based on a complete view of purchases across all channels.

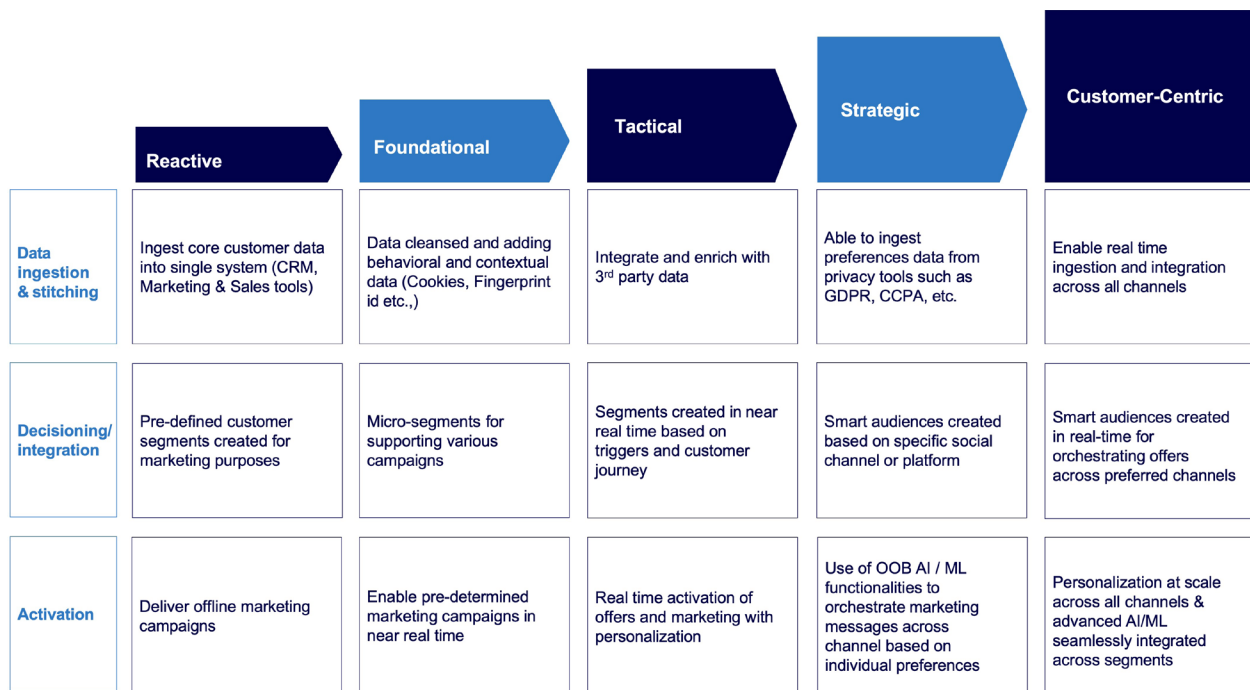
3. **Retargeting:** Provide better experiences for customers by removing customers who have made a purchase from retargeting programs in email, social or display advertising programs.
4. **Customer support:** Enable employees to view complete timeline of messages sent, customer behaviors and purchases across all channels.
5. **Churn prevention:** Adjust customer treatments based on recent experiences, such as pausing marketing emails to customers who recently made a complaint or offering help to those who had a problem.
6. **Loyalty program:** Provide a consolidated view of customer activity, including behaviors that were not captured with a loyalty member ID.
7. **Journey management:** Create individual journey maps and react with appropriate treatments when customers move or don't move from one stage to the next.
8. **Geolocation targeting:** Leverage location data to deliver targeted messages or offers relevant to a customer's specific location.
9. **Attribution:** Assess the impact of campaigns on immediate purchases and long-term behaviors and thereby measure program, content and product performance, and to optimize spend over time.
10. **Reduce cart abandonment:** Reduce cart abandonments in real time or via email personalized offers.
11. **Improve ROAS:** Identify effective and non-effective ads and channels to optimize the ad spend. Track in real time the effectiveness of ad spends and campaign performance to optimize the spend.



Where do you stand today?

By evaluating the maturity of the CDE across data **ingestion**, **integration** and **activation** stages, companies can identify strategies to advance their capabilities and achieve sustainable profit growth. This approach maximizes brand revenue through customer-centric practices. Recognizing that no company starts from zero, it is crucial to understand the varying maturity levels and where each organization stands in its journey.

Assessing these stages helps pinpoint areas for improvement and tailor solutions that align with the company's current capabilities, ensuring a progressive path towards enhanced customer data utilization and business success.



The solution: A unified, AI-driven CDE

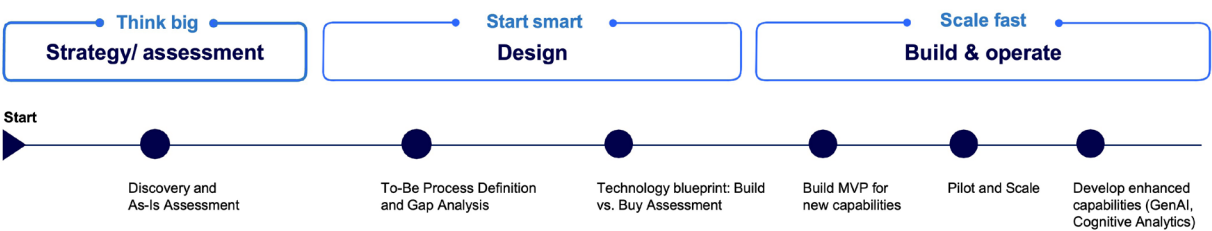
Getting started on a best-in-class CDE journey

Our engagement roadmap begins with a strategic assessment, where we define business goals and conduct insightful workshops. During these workshops, we align on both current and future-state requirements. This alignment allows us to identify growth levers and perform a comprehensive gap analysis, which sets the foundation for an intelligent design start.

Following the assessment, we proceed to build a robust CDE framework. This involves capturing the available customer journey maps and prioritizing the necessary capabilities. For each identified capability gap, we clearly define the vision, strategy and value. These elements are crucial for calibrating the CDP-decision framework and establishing evaluation criteria.

Once the framework is established, we define the future-state architecture and identify consolidation candidates. This step is pivotal in developing a value-driven implementation roadmap, which spans governance, consumer journey, roadmap planning and technology spectrum, ensuring a holistic approach to achieving our goals.

In summary, this structured engagement roadmap is designed to seamlessly guide businesses through the process of creating an effective and sustainable CDE strategy.



Strategy	Design	Build & Operate
<p>Vision and objectives: Understand vision and define objectives</p> <p>Maturity assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Understand current state capabilitiesMap the current state maturity <p>Identify opportunities through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Stated pain points and objectivesIndustry best practices <p>Business case: Develop a business case/benefits case if required</p>	<p>To-Be state: Define future state processes</p> <p>Identify customer data use cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Build a list of CDP use casesIdentify metrics or measure of success for each use casePrioritize use cases <p>Identify capabilities: Build future state capabilities list</p> <p>Define MVP: Define MVP which covers the high priority use cases</p> <p>Develop high level technology solution architecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Evaluate potential solution options including Lift, shift and enhance current solution (Build) vs New solution (Buy)Finalize solution option along with ROM for each solution option <p>Solution roadmap: Build a long-term solution roadmap</p>	<p>MVP and rollout: Develop MVP and Rollout</p> <p>Change management: Build and implement the change management strategy</p> <p>Measure and refine: Measure Business value realized</p> <p>Develop beyond MVP: Bring in additional use cases</p> <p>Scale: Scale up to other brands and markets</p>

Cognizant's CDE is designed to break down silos, unify customer intelligence and drive seamless experiences across all touchpoints.

Key features and benefits

Customer 360: A unified, real-time view of every customer

By integrating structured and unstructured data from multiple sources, Cognizant helps organizations create a single source of truth for every customer, capturing:

- Demographic data (age, location, preferences)
- Behavioral insights (purchase history, browsing patterns, engagement metrics)
- Real-time interactions (in-store visits, mobile app activity, social media engagement)

Business impact: Increased customer retention, loyalty and engagement

AI-powered personalization and dynamic segmentation

Using machine learning models, Cognizant enables businesses to:

- Segment customers dynamically based on real-time behavior and intent
- Deliver hyperpersonalized marketing across email, web, mobile and social media
- Automate next best action (NBA)/next best offer (NBO) to improve conversions

Business impact: Improved marketing efficiency, reduced acquisition costs, higher customer satisfaction

Accelerating CDP adoption with pre-built tools and accelerators

Many businesses struggle with long and costly CDP implementations. Cognizant's ready-to-use accelerators simplify deployment, helping organizations:

- Integrate a CDP in weeks, not months
- Reduce implementation costs and complexity
- Scale quickly across multiple brands and regions

Business impact: Faster time to value and increased adoption of customer-centric strategies

AI-driven predictive analytics for growth and market expansion

Cognizant's AI-driven predictive models analyze customer data to:

- Identify new market segments and expansion opportunities
- Optimize pricing and promotions based on demand patterns
- Forecast trends to stay ahead of customer expectations

Business impact: Increased revenue through smarter product and business decisions



Proven success: How Cognizant is driving business growth

Global retailer transforms customer experience, achieves 16% sales growth

Challenge: A global retailer struggled with disconnected customer data, inefficient marketing campaigns and poor personalization.

Solution: Cognizant implemented an AI-powered customer data platform, enabling real-time segmentation and hyperpersonalized marketing.

Results:

- 16% increase in sales
- \$7M cost savings through optimized marketing spend
- 18M new loyalty customers
- 30% boost in campaign efficiency

CPG leader boosts revenue by 160% with AI-driven insights

Challenge: A leading CPG company lacked real-time customer insights, leading to ineffective promotions and missed revenue opportunities.

Solution: Cognizant deployed a custom CDP to unify customer data and enable predictive analytics.

Results:

- 160% YoY revenue growth from targeted campaigns
- Improved customer retention with AI-powered personalization
- Optimized product offerings based on demand insights

Conclusion

The CDE is a powerful framework that enables CPG companies to better understand their customers, craft superior marketing strategies and drive business growth. By leveraging advanced technologies and robust governance, businesses can achieve a unified, interconnected and multichannel experience for their customers.

Ready to harness the power of real-time customer intelligence? Let's unlock new revenue streams and drive unparalleled growth.



Contact Cognizant today.

About the authors



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AVP—Consumer BU Strategy Office

Vinay leads the strategy office for the Consumer Business Unit, backed by over 20 years of consulting expertise in the CPG and travel and hospitality (T&H) sectors. As a trusted advisor to CIOs and CDAOs, he specializes in developing data and AI strategies, bringing valuable insights for creating effective go-to-market strategies for CPG and travel and hospitality clients.

Before joining Cognizant, Vinay managed numerous digital and data transformation projects for prominent CPG and airline companies. His experience includes setting up and leading data and AI centers of excellence at top global consulting firms, demonstrating his capability in spearheading innovation and growth in digital transformation and data analytics.



Abhishek Pandey

Consulting Principal—Data Strategy Consulting, Retail and Consumer Goods

Abhishek leads the Data Strategy Consulting practice for the Retail and Consumer Goods industry. He has over 20 years of work experience in business and data consulting, advising CIOs and CDOs across the retail and consumer goods value chain to help build data and insights-driven organizations. He specializes in marketing, sales, innovation & R&D, merchandising and supply chain. He has been instrumental in driving decision-making, ensuring solution and strategy alignment, driving best-practice adoption and institutionalizing processes across multiple engagements.



Cognizant (Nasdaq-100: CTSI) engineers modern businesses. We help our clients modernize technology, reimagine processes and transform experiences so they can stay ahead in our fast-changing world. Together, we're improving everyday life. See how at www.cognizant.com or [@Cognizant](https://twitter.com/Cognizant).

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