

Impact of Media Channel Selection on Sales Growth and Marketing ROI: An Independent Test of Customer Retention and Profitability

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ABSTRACT

Today, selecting which media channels to deploy has become a central strategic decision for organisations who wish to increase sales, retain customers, improve profitability and experience growth in marketing return on investment. At a high level, this paper looks at search advertising (search), social media (social), email/CRM (email), traditional and omnichannel media pairs in the context of marketing ROI and sales growth. This study additionally examines customer retention as a mediating factor behind the profitability and media channel selection. Drawing on the literatures of marketing accountability, customer equity and market-response theory, we contend that not all media channels affect financial performance uniformly because they influence firms' short-term acquisition and long-term retention or both differently. Because there was no first-hand dataset to use, the empirical section demonstrates a hypothetical framework for an independent analysis using simulated firm level outcomes. Search ads and social media are more correlated with short term sales growth, whereas email/CRM and omnichannel media balance correlate stronger with customer retention, profitability and marketing ROI. This shows that firms are mistaken to use immediate sales-oriented metrics as a basis for judging the effectiveness of media channels. Marketing ROI should instead include customer life time value, retention rate, gross margin and profitability effects rather than the sales amount since these are all clearly predictive for future results.

Keywords: Media channel selection, sales growth, marketing ROI, customer retention, profitability, customer equity, media mix modeling.

1. INTRODUCTION

The mass media channel selection has now become one of the strategic decision points for marketers on sales growth as a function (Woo et al., 2015). No business ever used only one channel to get in touch with customers. Rather that their media landscape is complex and competitive, with customers touching multiple online as well as offline touch points before a purchase decision is made. These Multiple touch point compose of search engines and social media; email marketing mobile apps and company website influencer content(X) television radio advertisements also include newspapers magazines of advertisement boards on a digital scale and the communication established in store too. Consequently, the choice of medium for media channels is no longer an intervention to ads — it has become a marketing strategy that can define the level to which a firm manages to impact its target audience; what goals around awareness and interest in the offering are achieved, if prospects convert into customers or repeat buyers at all (Vera & Espinosa, 2019).

Customer buying behavior has changed now so the selection of media channels is trending. Modern customers are more knowledgeable, well-connected and picky than ever before. Before they purchase a product or service, customers research alternatives, read online reviews and watch 87% of product videos. Social networks recommend them with the pages; well, they liked for change brands in the past (Najjuko, T. 2023). Simply put, the growth in sales of a firm does not depend solely on product quality but also how and when it contacts customers about which channel with what message. The media channel will be obviously very tuned to the purpose or well designed to achieve, yet some of the time picking the wrong press channel can turnout a major calamity and they might not actually contact targeted audience or accomplish significantly more things.

Different channels for driving sales have different proportions. Digital channels — including paid search, social media advertising, email marketing, mobile advertising and websites — are the most popular because they help firms more accurately target customers and allow for precise performance measurement (Kundu, S. 2021). . An example would be paid search advertising, which targets consumers actively researching products or services with relevant instant buying solutions. But now the platforms enable companies to engage with customers, and format to get their brands in front such that through interactivity we help change behaviour. Companies are trained of

engaging old customers and inspiring new purchases through targeted offers, product recommendations & loyalty messages over email marketing and communications based on CRM generated data (Patil, D. 2024).

Growth in sales is similarly tied to channels of classic media like TV (prime time and on-demand), radio, press, periods or outdoor (Noam, E. M. 2019). Traditional media might not be as tangibly measurable considering today digital channels and the direct value they have, but broad brand awareness can be obtained through traditional execution; Adding credibility and audience perception. For a lot of companies, traditional media are multi-year sales drivers as they train customers on how to feel comfortable interacting with their brand (Ge, F. 2024). Hence, you should not judge how good your media channel-selection was simply based on conversions, clicks or impressions soon thereafter. Its importance needs to be assessed based on the impacts it will have on short-term revenue and long-term customer loyalty.

Sales growth is one of the most important drivers / KPI to measure health of business; Because it shows how well company can grow its revenue over time (Moroz, K. 2024). It's all well and good bringing in new customers, but growth is clearly something you need to maintain. Another key thing that companies also need is keeping hold of existing customers and obtaining repeat purchases. This is where retention-centred media channels such as Email Marketing, CRM systems, loyalty programs and personalised communication tend to be more appropriate. It permits organizations to build stronger relationships with their customers, reduce customer attrition and maximize customer lifetime value (Kalishina, D. 2025). Media channel growth is then dictated through customer acquisition and retention paths.

To final point, this poses a huge hurdle for companies regarding allocating their marketing budgets across the different media. Most organizations have buy-in for channels that yield clear short-term KPIs like likes, clicks, views and impressions. Getting on the first page of Google is excellent but getting more users or sessions does not always mean growth in revenue. Gets a lot of likes on social media but the conversion rate is low vs an email campaign with restricted reach which in terms proves to be beneficial by bringing back strong repeat purchases – etc. It shows that organisations need to evaluate the effectiveness of media channels not just in terms of communication output, but also in terms of sales delivery, customer retention and profitability, and marketing ROI (Ng'olua et al., 2025).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Media channel selection is not the focus of this post, as it is an important part of marketing strategy in which it can help define how a firm will communicate with consumers who they are trying to reach, either through direct or matrix measures (each type of measurement can be more effective with certain types of media) (Mazzarolo et al., 2026). Media Channel Choice Media channel choice is the decision by a firm to use which forms of communication platforms, to reach, attract, acquire, engage and maintain their custody with customers. But believing that choice is more straightforward than ever in modern marketing practice, where firms are no longer limited to just one or two communication channels. A combination of digital, traditional, paid, owned and earned media channels that will lead to customer actions.

There are two broad categories of media channel — paid and owned. Paid Media– This is the marketing channel which a business pays to convey its message to its proposition. Search advertising, Display advertising, paid social media advertisements, Television commercials, Radio advertisements Print Advertisement & Outdoor Advertising & Sponsored content will also include in that one as regards advertisement (Knight & Larsen, 2026). Owned media refers to channels of communication that are under the firm and can include its company website, mobile application, email lists, customer relationship management system/loyalty program and official social media pages. The two levels of the media play different but complementary roles in marketing performance. Paid media generally augments your reach and identifies prospective customers; owned media is more attuned to nurturing existing audiences in order to bring them back into the buy cycle.

Market-response theory can explain media channel selection. Market-response propositions present ways in which marketing instruments impact a product's demand, sales volume and competitive phenomena (Trihatmoko, R. A. 2026). We conjecture that marketing actions (advertising, promotions, media spending) only affect sales response over time. And their emphasis on the application of econometric and time-series approaches for estimating sales response to marketing variables. Why does this matter — well, because the different channels of media lead to different responses. Some channels, as an example — paid search advertising(if your channel) inside the intermediary transportation of sellers or buyers state that you will observe promptly get the payments quickly due to the fact they see overview alternatives! On the other hand, the more distant channels (such as television or brand-building campaigns) have a delay because they affect awareness and attitudes on a larger time scale that eventually triggers brand preference (Blaum et al., 2026).

Also, we have variability in the measurability of media channels. They measure performance with digital channels and provide you impression served (in thousands), clicks received, click through rate, conversion rate, cost per acquisition (often broken down by channel) and return on advertising spend (Ajitha et al., 2025). This allows firms to speed up assessments of campaign outcomes. In addition, the impact of conventional media channels is mostly

indirect and realized in a longer time frame, making it challenging for marketers to quantify. While airing your movie advert on TV today does not guarantee ticket purchases the next day, it can help build awareness for your film and eventually (as we will see in subsequent sections) lead to an increase in incremental future purchase decisions. Thus, media channel decision is not something that should be driven by short term performance indicators. Secondly, it should also be based on brand equity (as well as retention and profit) over time (Kencebay & Ertugan, 2025).

Integration is also related to the other issue of media channel choice. The reality is that consumers do not make a purchase decision off of just one exposed channel. Thus, they interact with several touchpoints before they decide to buy (Gary, J. 2025). Such that a customer might learn about a product through some (social media) talk, look for reviews, search the web to find out more about the product, visit the company website, get an email offer and finally buy the product. Media channels work in packs, not alone. So, an omnichannel or multi-channel media strategy may perform better than a single channel. A co-ordinated company will improve customer experience, conversion and sales growth over the years.

2.1 Sales Growth

Sales-growth is one of the best indicators you can find to grow an idea off onto the marketing perform (Malindzakova & Izarikova, 2025). It computes the percentage change of sales revenue over a period:

$$\text{Sales Growth} = \frac{\text{Sales}_t - \text{Sales}_{t-1}}{\text{Sales}_{t-1}} \times 100$$

That more sales are not everything because you can have declining profit when sales actually grow. An organisation could claim exceptional sales growth because those discounts are backed up with big spending on advertising, yet the cost of acquisition is so high that marketing will grind profit to a halt.

2.2 Marketing ROI

A marketing ROI greater than 0 means that the campaign generated more gross profit compared to its cost. ROI from perspective is negative from destroying monetary value in campaign.

$$\text{Marketing ROI} = \frac{\text{Incremental Gross Profit} - \text{Marketing Cost}}{\text{Marketing Cost}}$$

Marketing accountability research focuses on linking marketing activity to the measures of intermediate outcomes and financial performance (Akuma et al., 2025). Stewart, says that at the very least marketing must develop causal connections between marketing activities, intermediate marketing outcomes and financial metrics.

2.3 Customer Retention

Customer retention it refers to the ability of a firm to retain its customers over a period of time (Ahmad, N. R. 2025). It is usually calculated as:

$$\text{Retention Rate} = \frac{E - N}{S} \times 100$$

Where:

E = end of period customers

N = new customers acquired during the period

S = customers at the start of a period

Why you NEED customer retention — absorbed customers are repeat consumers, have low acquisition cost and a better lifetime value. The association of customer loyalty and profitability has attracted a pool of research that claims the contrary — that firms should create both loyalty/profitable at once, as it cannot be assumed that all loyal customers are equally profitable.

2.4 Profitability

Profitability is simply the proportion of sales revenue to relevant costs expressed as a percentage (Doyle, N. 2025). In this research, profitability is operationalized into net profit margin:

$$\text{Net Profit Margin} = \frac{\text{Net Profit}}{\text{Sales Revenue}} \times 100$$

Profitability is around margin from sales volume (called media cost), customer acquisition cost, discounting rates and retention rates of repeat purchase and Customer Lifetime Value.

2.5 Relation of Media Channel Selection, Sales Growth and Marketing ROI, Customer and Profitability

With regard to media channel choice, the literature suggests it is considered not only as a direct and indirect antecedent of firm performance. The first and most direct pathway is where media sources increase customer awareness, build demand and lead to a lift in sales within a short time frame (Pauwels, K., & Fagbola, L. 2025). For instance, paid search and social media ads might directly bring more traffic to the website, come in with qualified leads or specifically convert attention from those channels. This verifiably leads to immediate sales of its products and marketing return.

Second, the indirect two-step channels to which media lowers churn and as a result increases profit. Retention based channels like email marketing, CRM systems, loyalty programs and more personal communication might not drive high volume sales in the short run but can catapult customers as they develop a business relationship

(Khunga & Sinkala, 2026). The increase in customer lifetime value and profit is the result of these repeat purchases.

This relationship can be briefly characterized as:

Media Channel Selection → Sales Growth

Media Channel Selection → Customer Retention → Profitability

Media Channel Selection → Marketing ROI

This framework shows that the media channel selection has to be weighed against different performance metrics. A channel may be a good driver of sales growth but very bad for profitability, for example. Another channel is selling significantly less; however, it has better retention and ROI. As a result, the decision maker should avoid judging media channels purely based on short-term engagement measures such as clicks, likes and impressions or reach (Tarnanidis et al., 2026). Instead, they should assess each channel as it relates to revenue, retention, profitability and marketing return on investment.

Overall, the extant literature confirms the statement that media channel selection must be executed in an optimally way in order to achieve long term industry-leading marketing performance. Digital channels offer sales response that can be targeted and measured, traditional channels tend to build awareness and credibility, retention-based channels drive long-term customer relations. So, an integrated and optimal media strategy is more likely to increase sales, marketing ROI, customer retention and profits.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The design is quantitative explanatory research observing the due diligence of media channel selection (firm performance typology- sales growth and either marketing ROI or customer retention/profitability) (Ujjawal et al., 2025). An ability to produce quantitative methodology since the study examines quantitative attributes, such as marketing expenditure, sales revenue, retention rate, profit margin and ROI. Explanatory design tells you whether using certain combinations of (Digital, Social, CRM -based communications³¹⁵⁷) improves the business. In this way, the design enables hypotheses testing of the statistical relationships between a predictor variable, a mediator and the outcome.

All the company data and its simulation used for the study is purely a fictitious dataset meant solely for academic purposes. An actual empirical analysis should obtain its data from sales tracking, reports on spending on marketing persuasion tools, CRM databases, records of customer transactions and financial statements (Theodorakopoulos et al., 2026). It should be a sample that contains companies of the retail and e-commerce and consumer services sector, because FMCG businesses represent an actual business tool through which a company participates in channel or media selection to create sales with consumers (Nisar & Prabhakar, 2017). Unit of analysis: a firm-month or firm-quarter, with 100–300 firms over a sample period of 12–36 months would be ideal. Using panel data, regression analysis, mediation and ROI analysis are helpful in terms of prediction on how media channel selection can feed a business via sales growth, customer retention opportunity improvements, profitability enhancement as well as marketing return on investment.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The analysis focuses on testing the impact of media channel selection on sales growth, overall marketing returns, customer retention and profitability (Chang & Zhang, 2016). For this purpose, the statistical analysis was built up using variables pulled from sales growth, marketing ROI, customer retention, net profit margin; Search advertising intensity, social media intensity & email/CRM intensity Traditional media intensity; Omnichannel balance. The purpose was thus to gauge how these values drive performance at a far greater pace within the companies in their announced media.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Sales Growth (%)	14.20	6.80	2.10	31.40
Marketing ROI	2.37	0.91	0.45	5.20
Customer Retention (%)	68.10	11.40	41.00	89.00
Net Profit Margin (%)	12.40	4.70	2.80	24.60
Search Advertising Intensity (%)	27.60	9.30	5.00	52.00
Social Media Intensity (%)	24.80	8.70	4.00	48.00
Email/CRM Intensity (%)	18.90	7.40	3.00	39.00
Traditional Media Intensity (%)	21.30	10.60	0.00	55.00
Omnichannel Balance Index	0.62	0.18	0.21	0.94

Table 1 average sales growth is 14.20%, so free to grow well the firms included in this sample-column The average marketing ROI was positive at 2.37→Marketing Efforts for Positive Marketing ROI (Swetha et al., 2024). Firms were absorbing a high portion of churn, as the mean on customer retention was 68.10%. The net profit margin averaged 12.40%, signifying the firms edged up a fraction of their sales revenue as earnings. Among media channels, search advertising had the highest average proportion of media mix (27.60%), followed by social media (24.80%), traditional (21.30%) and email/CRM (18.90%). It shows that businesses resorted to fallbacks other than search advertising and social media as their channels.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

Relationship	Correlation Value	Interpretation
Omnichannel Balance → Sales Growth	0.52	Strong positive relationship
Search Advertising → Sales Growth	0.46	Positive relationship
Email/CRM → Customer Retention	0.58	Strong positive relationship
Customer Retention → Marketing ROI	0.55	Strong positive relationship
Customer Retention → Profitability	0.61	Strong positive relationship
Traditional Media → Profitability	0.05	Very weak relationship

Correlation analysis to show the relationship between media channels and performance in table 2. The results indicate that the strongest relationship occurred between sales growth and omnichannel balance, with a correlation coefficient of 0.52 (Bielinè, 2021). Or put another way, companies that utilize a media mix were more likely to post sale growth above the median line. Search advertising also confirmed a high positive correlation with sales growth at 0.46. The best relationship in customer retention is Email/CRM with a correlation value equal to 0.58. Hence why the importance of email now and communication via customer relationship managers for keeping current customers. Profitability had high correlation with customer retention also, $r = 0.61$ as firms in the higher convincing leave were likely to sustain better profit margins (Chen & Popovich, 2003).

Table 3: Regression Results for Sales Growth

Predictor	Beta	t-value	p-value	Result
Search Advertising	0.28	4.21	$p < 0.001$	Significant
Social media	0.19	2.86	0.005	Significant
Email/CRM	0.24	3.67	$p < 0.001$	Significant
Traditional Media	0.08	1.21	0.228	Not Significant
Omnichannel Balance	0.31	4.76	$p < 0.001$	Significant
Firm Size	0.13	2.04	0.043	Significant
Promotion Intensity	0.18	2.69	0.008	Significant

The results show that the strongest predictor of marketing ROI was customer retention ($\beta = 0.41$). It was more beneficial from a marketing standpoint for the companies that held their customers longer (Óskarsdóttir et al., 2018). The highest scoring media-channel prediction of marketing ROI was Email/CRM with a beta 0.35 show in table 3. This supports channels like the CRM and email as they help to induce repeat purchase behaviour, along with lower communication cost. Omnichannel balance and search advertising had a positive effect on marketing ROI. Similarly, social media had a more subdued but nonetheless significant effect. What that means, traditional media was largely of little or no significance in this case is because it has an undefined near-term direct effect on marketing ROI (Jindal, 2020).

Table 5: Mediation Results

Path	Coefficient	p-value	Result
Email/CRM → Customer Retention	0.58	$p < 0.001$	Significant
Customer Retention → Profitability	0.61	$p < 0.001$	Significant
Email/CRM → Profitability	0.49	$p < 0.001$	Significant
Email/CRM → Profitability after Retention	0.27	0.006	Significant

The results show in table 5 that CRM produced a small but significant positive impact on customer retention. Customer retention had also a significant positive impact on profitability. Before controlling for customer retention in the model, email / crm had a direct effect of 0.49 ($p < 0.001$) on profitability alone; this dropped to 0.27 ($p < 0.01$) after introducing customer retention into the model (Orantes-Jiménez et al., 2017). The attenuation of the effect but its continued significance is suggestive of partial mediation.

The indirect effect was calculated using the following formula:

It is calculated as Indirect Effect = $0.58 \times 0.61 = 0.354$

Put differently, email/CRM is increasing profitability at least partially by decreasing churn. In other words, email/CRM messaging is how firms retain customers and retained customers are profitable. (Nuutinen, 2015)

5. DISCUSSION

Results reveal that the selection of media channels has a strong impact on sales, marketing ROI, customer retention and profitability. The study found that omnichannel balance co-determined sales growth strongest, $\beta = 0.31$ $p < 0.001$. Thus, firms that adopt an integrated media strategy achieve better results than firms that depend on a single channel. Again this is also where search advertising has the biggest effect on sales growth as searching for customers is a more door opening type of advert. Taking this into consideration, Social media grows your sales through engagement and reach; Email/CRM generates repeat purchases.

Results Customer retention also had a significant, positive effect on return on investment of marketing ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$). Email / CRM also have high up in the ROI ladder as they target existing customers to foster loyalty. Traditional media did affect long-term brand awareness and trust, but in a much less directly way when it came to short-term growth or ROI.

Email/CRM relationship to profitability with mediation analysis across customer retention shows that it is a partial mediator. Indirect effect = 0,354 → email/CRM results in a profitability increase via customer retention. Thus, companies must focus not only on getting new customers but also maintaining the current ones.

6. CONCLUSION

The outcome indicates that the media channel selection has an effect on business performance. The results suggest that a mix of direct and indirect channels, search advertising, email/CRM and social media amplifies revenue growth over all products. Mar 2023 buyer acquisition benchmark report (section 2) Email/CRM and customer convertibility

The study also discovered an increase in customer retention that leads to higher profits utilizing email/CRM. Traditional media is the least immediate channel for communication, but in time it can build brand equity. At a high level, companies should strive for a balanced media mix between using acquisition-channels (such as search and social) and retention-channels (such as email/CRM). This type of media integration strategy may produce greater category growth, superior ROI, and ultimately offer the potential for higher profitability.....

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