



The Business Case for Single Customer View

Using Customer Data to Enhance Trust, Engagement, Customer Experience, and ROI

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Introduction: Seeing the Big Picture

Imagine for a moment that you've heard of an amazing painting called the "Mona Lisa," but you can't see it in its entirety. Each finger, eye, cheek – every element – has to be viewed independently. How can you fully appreciate this painting? Even the iconic smile can be hard to enjoy without the rest of the "Mona Lisa" to give it context.

Unfortunately for many brands, this kind of disjointed view is the only picture they have of their customers. Data may be scattered through multiple applications and silos. Each record may provide a glimmer of a customer's wants and needs, but the complete picture is almost impossible to fathom.

As a result, opportunities to drive revenue and brand loyalty from the data are limited. The customer experience with the brand is also fragmented and confusing.

Single customer view, also known as unified or 360-degree view, resolves this problem by bringing together data from disparate online and offline sources and merging it into a single, accurate record for each customer.

In this white paper, we'll look at the strategic and operational benefits of single customer view and how a modern customer identity and access management (CIAM) solution can help you realize those benefits, while streamlining the user experience and improving security and data privacy.

Enhancing Customer Engagement, Trust, and Experiences

Customer data records are among the most valuable assets in any organization. They hold the key to getting a consumer through the virtual or physical door and into your business, then transforming that consumer into an engaged and loyal customer.

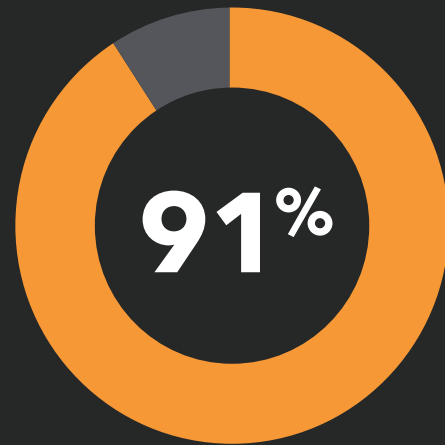
In many organizations, however, the value of that data is hard to unlock because it's scattered through multiple applications and silos.

There may be no way to know that the customer who visits a web page is the same one who looks for locations on a mobile app and then spends money in the store. Or if the visitor to one brand's website is very loyal to another one of the organization's brands. Or if the call to the service department comes from one of the 20% of customers who deliver 80% of the profits.

Meanwhile, the customer also has a disjointed brand experience, including inundated inboxes, irrelevant promotions, and the need to search through multiple channels to check or change preferences.

"If customers can't quickly and easily engage with your digital properties, they will take their business elsewhere."

– Building A Customer-Obsessed IAM Team, Forrester Research, Inc., June 3, 2020



of consumers are more likely to shop brands that provide relevant offers and recommendations

– Accenture Pulse Check

The issue often begins at registration and account management – with customer identity. The underlying technologies may be a messy amalgam of employee solutions. There is no practical way to get these systems talking to and sharing data with one another.

This is where a modern CIAM solution comes in. According to Gartner:

"One of the key goals of CIAM is to provide the organization with a unified view of customer identity data across all forms of contact, including internal and third-party online data sources. This unified view of the customer is a key prerequisite for understanding the customer well enough to effectively cross-sell and upsell, as well as to plan new product offerings and product improvements."¹

This unified view of the customer – single customer view – brings customer data together to unlock its value.

Building Blocks of Single Customer View

CIAM should be the key to your customer experience strategy. Working arm in arm with your other systems, it provides customer journey analytics from registration to preference management to repeated engagement to loyalty membership.

Here are some of the more critical data points that contribute to a useful and effective single customer view.

Transaction Data

Most transaction systems have excellent records of the entire relationship with the customer, including purchases, returns, and pending transactions. Some systems also track shopping cart abandonments. Your single customer view should include these records.

Online and Mobile Behavior Data

Analytics tools add customer interests to your single customer view. They tell you which categories and products customers browsed, what content they viewed, and how much time they

spent on specific pages. Advanced tools will even tell you what they clicked on, what they scrolled or hovered over, and more.

Demographics

Demographic data – everything from age and gender to income and lifestyle – are key elements to the understanding of customers. Some demographic data may be in proprietary systems. Other data may come from third parties. Single customer view helps make both part of one comprehensive picture.

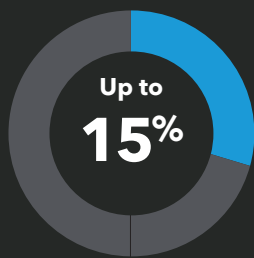
Customer Service Information

Service tickets and resolutions play a big part in shaping the overall customer experience. Collecting this information into your single customer view gives you a better understanding of a customer's overall satisfaction with a product, company, and brand.

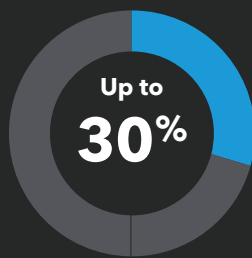
Contact, Permission, and Preference Data

Along with contact information like email addresses, phone numbers, and social media usernames, CRM databases include permission and preference information for each contact. This information will ultimately inform many of the efforts that single customer view enables.

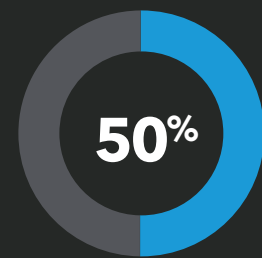
Impact of Personalization



Increase in revenue – McKinsey²



Increase in marketing spend efficiency – McKinsey²



Reduction in customer acquisition costs – Adweek³

5 Strategic Imperatives That Single Customer View Enables

There's a reason that so many digital transformation roadmaps call for accurate, up-to-date, single customer views. More than just a marketing tool, single customer view is behind a number of critical business imperatives.

1. Business Intelligence and Customer Journey Analytics

Customer profile data forms the foundation for analyzing, understanding, and predicting consumer behavior and customer journeys. Benefits include:

Better Segmentation: Segmentation is the heart of modern marketing. The more information you have about customers in one place, the more accurate and granular your segments can be. Better segmentation also lets you leverage A/B testing to build more effective communications, offers, and customer experiences.

More Revenue from Each Customer: When you combine transaction data across multiple brands and channels into a single view, you gain a better understanding of consumer behavior, which you can use for cross-sell and upsell opportunities.

Better Advertising ROI: What should you advertise? Whom should you advertise to? Where should that advertising appear? Data from single customer view can help answer these questions, so you can target marketing activities for better performance.

Improved Cross-Channel Engagement: Customers don't do business with your apps, websites, or stores. They do business with you. When you have all their information in one place, you can seamlessly manage interactions with customers across every channel.

Reduce Fraud: The more information you have about your customers in one place, the more suspicious activity you can flag. The single customer view can help you tag suspicious activity – like a large, uncharacteristic order from a previously unknown IP address – for offline follow-up.



Customers don't do business with your apps, websites, or stores. They do business with you.

2. Build Customer Trust and Brand Loyalty

Research suggests that only 30% of economic decisions are made rationally. Emotions drive the other 70%.⁴ You can use single customer view to help build that emotional connection by demonstrating to customers that you understand them.

Custom Content and Offers: Data from single customer view can help you personalize promotions and interactions to a customer's needs and wants. If you have a loyalty program, single customer view lets you design rewards and incentives around a customer's brand preferences and purchase behaviors.

Proactively Meet Customer Needs: Single customer view gives you the ability to model and predict. You can offer replenishments and subscription renewals before a customer realizes the need. You can offer solutions to problems that customers may or may not even know they have.

Better Customer Service Interactions: When a customer calls, the representative can pull up accurate records about their past purchases and communications. This spares customers the need to repeat the same story every time with every communication, and gives representatives the information they need to resolve the issue.

Easy Customer Access to Preferences: A high-quality single record for each customer helps demonstrate that the customer is valued. If there's a mistake in the spelling of a name, customers should only have to correct it once. If they want to change preferences, they should not have to visit multiple pages.



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Up-to-Date Customer Records: Behind every record, there's a person. That person may move. Their family situation may change. Even without dramatic changes, their needs and wants are always in flux. Single customer view ensures that customer data is consistently and carefully maintained.

3. Secure, Friction-Free Registration and Login

According to Forrester, “the best way to ensure that customers have a delightful and secure CIAM experience is to minimize the friction customers face during identity verification and authentication processes.”⁵

Simplify Registration: You can begin to enhance customer engagement, trust, and experiences right at the registration process. Through A/B testing, you can optimize the login experience to just those questions with answers that deliver the best ROI, as informed by single customer view.

Offer Single Sign-On (SSO): This central tenet of CIAM lets customers seamlessly and safely interact with multiple properties through single login. Today’s digital customers expect that convenience. At the same time, it lets identity become the hub for transaction and behavioral data across your entire ecosystem.

Allow Social Login: The ability to leverage an existing account and profile has been shown to greatly simplify and reduce friction during the registration and profile management process. In addition, it allows you to collect necessary data from the social profile to enhance your single customer view.

Defend Against Unauthorized Logins: Account takeover attacks are a fact of life in digital businesses. Akamai observed 100,195,620,436 credential stuffing attacks from July 2018 through June 2020.⁶

4. Meet Data Privacy and Compliance Requirements

A growing body of data protection and privacy regulations (GDPR, PIPEDA, CCPA, etc.) govern the use, storage, and security of personally identifiable information (PII). In many ways, single customer view makes compliance easier.

Customer Control over Their Data: Regulators now require brands to give customers access to view data, modify preferences, and revoke consent at any time. When the data is available in a single customer view, it is easier to provide these privileges.

Ensure Data Management Compliance: Many privacy regulations have their own rules regarding the centralized management of data consumption by downstream systems. A CIAM system that enables single customer view will help you better govern each customer’s data in compliance with these requirements.

Comply with Data Security Requirements: A single customer view enabled by a modern CIAM solution lets you enforce identity data management and authorization policies. It protects each account against abuse with strong user authentication methods, including federated login, traditional login, two-factor, and one-time-password authentication.

“The best way to ensure that customers have a delightful and secure CIAM experience is to minimize the friction customers face during identity verification and authentication processes.”

– The Forrester Customer-Obsessed Identity And Access Management Operating Model, Forrester Research, Inc., April 20, 2020

5. Reduce Costs

Maintaining multiple systems can stress even the most generous information technology budgets. Implementing the technology that's necessary for a single customer view can significantly reduce your time to market and total cost of ownership (TCO).

Reduce Security Risks: CIAM systems can provide a highly secure and resilient environment for collecting and storing sensitive user information, while safeguarding against malicious activities.

Simplify Management and Scalability: Along with performance issues, many homegrown identity stores can be difficult to manage and scale. A hosted CIAM takes that technical overhead off your plate.

Hosted CIAM takes technical overhead off your plate.

Centralized Profile Management: The ideal CIAM solution for single customer view would be a flexible SaaS platform built to scale, perform, and comply with regulatory requirements around the world. This reduces cost and risk.

Easily Customizable UX: No need to develop and deploy a UX to meet your needs. A CIAM solution can offer a fully customizable UX that deploys quickly and scales to millions of users instantly.



Single Customer View Best Practices

Although many brands have made it easy for customers to register through a website or mobile app, the underlying legacy technologies can be a mess. They may include homegrown, application-specific, country-specific, or jerry-rigged employee solutions.

The resulting data silos, in addition to impeding a macro-level view of the customer, can force customers into a confusing and disjointed experience with brands – everything from mobile alerts to meaningless promotions to the need to opt out of multiple mailing lists multiple times.

Here's how to ensure a smooth transition to an effective single customer view.

Centralize Single Customer View Around Customer Identity

Your relationship with a customer begins with identity. Whether they register with a username/password or social media account, they give you a unique identifier that's automatically tagged to their interactions with your business and the data those interactions generate. It's also where they provide their personal information and set their preferences.

This makes customer identity a natural, central repository for customer data. In fact, a modern CIAM solution should be able to collect rich, first-party data about customers and their behaviors across all properties, including web, mobile, IoT, and in-store loyalty program purchases.

Your single customer view can be as rich and as detailed as you need to be. However, make sure your solution offers robust dashboards. This will help marketing and IT teams gain real-time visibility into customer activity data. You can see the factors that influence a customer's journey, as well as the difference between legitimate and fraudulent registrations.

Make Sure Your Solution Scales

Businesses grow. Traffic spikes. Unanticipated use cases emerge. A robust cloud solution should be able to scale on demand to millions of identities – for any use case and in every area where you do business. You need it to provide customers with a seamless user experience without impeding the ability to collect and process data.

Ensure Compliance with All Local Regulations

Some compliance issues, like consent and access to PII, may seem fairly straightforward. Others may vary by jurisdiction.

Cloud solution providers should make it easy to manage the appropriate regulatory requirements. A global provider, one with physical points of presence in every jurisdiction where you do business, can help you meet data governance requirements, as well.

Your relationship with a customer begins with identity, making CIAM a natural home for customer data.



Cloud CIAM providers should make it easy to manage multiple regulatory regimes.

Don't Neglect Security

Your solution needs to offer robust protection for both end-user data and the registration/login infrastructure. This includes:

- Protection from volumetric and application layer attacks that can result in breach, downtime, or performance degradation
- Strong and varied authentication options
- The latest TLS encryption standards (2048/256 bit keys) and TLS 1.1 or greater security protocols for all in-transit data

At the same time, this security has to run swiftly and seamlessly in the background, with no discernable impact on the end-user experience.

Look for Ease of Integration

The multiplicity of identity systems in many organizations can require so many resources to maintain and scale, there are none left for integration. Make sure your CIAM is designed from the ground up to work with your enterprise application ecosystem.

Ideally, your CIAM solution will offer bidirectional APIs and webhooks to simplify integrations with the major digital experience and analytics solutions, as well as content management systems (CMS), customer data platforms (CDP), mobile device management (MDM), customer relationship management (CRM), programmatic tools, commerce, and social platforms.

Simplify Migration and Deployment

Look at the migration path from old systems to new. A complex migration path can frustrate customers and hurt your brand. Seek out a solution that makes it relatively easy to either bulk migrate to the new CIAM or migrate customers one by one at login – with no need for password reset.

Also check the skills required to integrate, operate, and maintain the system. You do not want to be trading in one set of complex, hard-to-manage systems for another. Your CIAM and single customer view solution should require minimal training and technical debt to be effective.

Look for the ROI

Following the steps in this guide can help greatly reduce your initial outlay and TCO for the system. More important, once your organization starts using single customer view, you'll be in a better position to achieve your critical strategic imperatives.



Learn more about single customer view and how Akamai Identity Cloud can help you enhance customer engagement while improving compliance and security.

Key Akamai Identity Cloud Capabilities

Registration, Authentication, and Single Sign-On: Provide multiple sites and systems with a single login through seamless, safe authentication

Progressive Registration and Profiling: Capture additional information over the course of the relationship with the customer

Integration with Existing Systems: Accelerate digital transformation and improve customer experiences by leveraging webhooks and bidirectional APIs to connect with your existing systems

Customer Insights, Personalization, and Segmentation: Get a comprehensive, data-driven view of customers across web, mobile, and IoT

Regulation-Compliant Customer Data Storage and Consent Management: Comply with GDPR, PIPEDA, CCPA, and other regional consumer data regulations right out of the box

Scalability and Availability: Meet the demands of high-volume customer identity management, including regional differentiations and surprise spikes in usage

Flexible Deployment: Enable fast-to-market delivery across multiple applications with a wide array of customizations

Customer Data Security: Enforce identity data management and authorization policies and protect accounts against abuse

Architected for Global Use: Akamai Identity Cloud currently manages more than 1.5 billion identities for the world's largest brands

Sources:

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Akamai secures and delivers digital experiences for the world's largest companies. Akamai's intelligent edge platform surrounds everything, from the enterprise to the cloud, so customers and their businesses can be fast, smart, and secure. Top brands globally rely on Akamai to help them realize competitive advantage through agile solutions that extend the power of their multi-cloud architectures. Akamai keeps decisions, apps, and experiences closer to users than anyone – and attacks and threats far away. Akamai's portfolio of edge security, web and mobile performance, enterprise access, and video delivery solutions is supported by unmatched customer service, analytics, and 24/7/365 monitoring. To learn why the world's top brands trust Akamai, visit www.akamai.com, blogs.akamai.com, or [@Akamai](https://twitter.com/Akamai) on Twitter. You can find our global contact information at www.akamai.com/locations.

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