



FLYDE

TALKS

10 LESSONS for directors of marketing, ecommerce, digital strategy and data in retail, automotive, and hospitality

Top lessons we've learned from a year of conversations with industry experts.

FLYDE Talks Episodes 1-5 · 2025–2026

# INTRODUCTION

During the first year of FLYDE Talks, we held five conversations with professionals who have spent decades at the intersection of data, technology and business: a digital marketing and attribution expert, the Head of growth at Real Madrid, a data scientist specializing in AI and machine learning, a data strategy consultant with twenty years of international experience, and one of the leading voices in Hispanic ecommerce and customer strategy.

The result is more than four hours of conversation about the same challenges facing marketing, ecommerce, digital strategy and data leaders at mid-sized companies in retail, automotive, financial services, energy providers, hospitality and food & beverage. Challenges that are more about business strategy than technology.

This document distills the ten most relevant lessons to emerge from those conversations. These are not FLYDE's opinions: they are conclusions that came up, again and again, from people with very different disciplines and backgrounds.

## The five episodes

### Episode 1 The Challenge of Attribution in Omnichannel Marketing

Andrés Azpilicueta, Digital marketing expert

### Episode 2 Top Challenges for Growth Marketers in 2025

Luis Serrano, Head of growth, Real Madrid C.F.

### Episode 3 Generative AI and Customer Data: The Value That Goes Beyond ChatGPT

Victor Moreno, Data scientist, TomTom

### Episode 4 From Data to Impact: Strategies to Activate and Monetize Insights

Álvaro Pariente, Founder and CEO, BEOC9

### Episode 5 Beyond CRM: The Anatomy of a True Customer Strategy

Enrique Miralda, Ecommerce and digital strategy expert, FLYDE



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# INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

When structure blocks strategy

Data and customer challenges at mid-sized companies are rarely technical. They tend to be organizational: a question of who owns what, who talks to whom, and which tools serve which function. These two lessons are about that.

# WITHOUT AN OWNER OF THE CUSTOMER, THERE IS NO CUSTOMER STRATEGY

## THE UNDERLYING PROBLEM

Ask ten companies who owns the customer and in nine of them no one will raise their hand. Not because there aren't departments that interact with customers. There are, and many of them. But because no single department takes full responsibility for understanding the customer across every stage of their lifecycle.

The result is predictable: Marketing has one picture of the customer, CRM has another, the physical store has a third, and ecommerce a fourth. None of these pictures show the same person. And no one is responsible for reconciling them.

This is not a technology problem. It is an organizational one. And until it is solved, no tool, not even the most advanced AI, will perform the way it should.



Enrique Miralda, Episode 5  
Digital strategy expert  
FLYDE



“What is the top asset in any business? Its customers, plain and simple. No customers, no business, no machinery, no anything. And yet in most companies there is no owner of the customer. Ask who is responsible for the customer and no one raises their hand.”

## WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE

A director of client strategy is not the CRM director, the CMO, or the head of customer experience (which in many companies has become the complaints and returns department). It is a role that reports to senior leadership with one single mission: to understand the customer in depth (how they arrive, how they buy, how they evolve, and how they leave) and to coordinate across departments so that every interaction with the customer is consistent.

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## ESSENTIAL STEPS TO TAKE BEFORE INVESTING IN TOOLS

- Define who owns the customer and with what authority.
- Map how many departments interact with the customer and whether they communicate with each other.
- Decide whether customer strategy sits under marketing or reports directly to senior leadership.
- Establish shared metrics: acquisition, engagement, satisfaction and churn.



# CRM IS NOT A CUSTOMER STRATEGY. IT IS A TOOL WITHIN ONE.

## A VERY EXPENSIVE MISTAKE

When a company answers "we have a CRM" to the question of what their customer strategy is, they are confusing the map with the territory. CRM is essential. Nobody questions that. But it has a specific and defined function: maintaining an up-to-date picture of existing customers.

What CRM does not do: it does not track anonymous users, does not connect online behavior with offline behavior, does not predict which customers are about to stop buying, does not know how much a customer will spend in the next twelve months, and cannot precisely feed activation tools with the data they need.



Enrique Miralda, Episode 5  
Digital strategy expert  
FLYDE



With my CRM, I don't know who is going to become my customer tomorrow. And I don't know who is going to stop being my customer tomorrow. All the predictive capability that a CDP can provide, a CRM simply does not have.

## THE EVOLUTION: CRM → DMP → CDP

Twenty years ago CRM was the answer. Ten years ago it was the DMP, for managing audiences at scale. Today, the Customer Data Platform (CDP) is the logical evolution: a non-invasive layer that collects data from all company systems (CRM, ERP, ecommerce, PMS, point of sale, app) without replacing them, unifies it into a single customer profile, and activates it in real time across marketing and commercial channels.

The difference from MDM (Master Data Management), its closest predecessor, is that it does not require months of implementation or disruption to existing systems. It integrates on top of what you already have.

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## HOW ROLES ARE DISTRIBUTED IN A MODERN DATA ARCHITECTURE

- CRM: transactional and relational history of identified customers.
- CDP: unified profile, anonymous users, prediction, attribution and activation.
- Marketing Automation: campaign execution. Its effectiveness depends on the quality of the segments it receives from the CDP.
- BI / Dashboards: historical reporting. The CDP complements this with predictive and real-time insights.





# MEASUREMENT AND PROFITABILITY

Knowing whether you are making money

The financial challenge in marketing is not just about investment: it is about metrics. Many companies measure volume well and margin poorly. These three lessons address how to calibrate measurement in order to make decisions on solid ground.

# 70% OF MARKETING SPEND GOES TO ACQUISITION. THAT'S THE MISTAKE.

## THE NUMBERS THAT CONCERN

Approximately 70% of a mid-sized company's marketing budget goes to acquiring new customers. Only 30% goes to retention and loyalty. Meanwhile, everyone in the industry repeats that it is five times more profitable to sell to an existing customer than to acquire a new one.

The contradiction is not irrational: marketing has more tools, more tradition and more visibility on the acquisition side. And internal team incentives are usually aligned with new customers, not with customers who stay.



Luis Serrano, Episode 2  
Head of growth  
Real Madrid C.F.



If I lose a Madridista, reactivating them later is very difficult. That is why churn is a critical KPI for us, not just acquisition.

## THE SECOND PURCHASE CHANGES EVERYTHING

For the vast majority of companies, the point at which the business becomes truly profitable is the client's second transaction. From there, the acquisition cost has been recovered and every additional purchase generates real margin.

80% of marketing professionals still measure their activity on a last-click model: one action, one sale, full stop. That model ignores recurrence, word of mouth, and the halo effect of a satisfied customer. And in sectors with repeat purchases, it systematically leads to poor investment decisions.



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## QUESTIONS YOUR TEAM SHOULD BE ABLE TO ANSWER TODAY

- How many purchases must a customer make to become profitable in your business?
- What is the average lifetime value by customer segment?
- What percentage of your customers have bought more than once in the last 12 months?
- Is your CPA calibrated on contribution margin or gross margin?

# YOUR MEASUREMENT HAS A GAP. AND IT'S PROBABLY BETWEEN 15% AND 35%.

## THE PROBLEM WITH CURRENT MEASUREMENT TOOLS

Since the rollout of Google Analytics 4 and the changes to Chrome's cookie policy, there is a significant gap between what one analytics tool measures and what another reports. Affiliate platforms have recorded discrepancies of between 15% and 35% in attributed sales, with the same campaigns, the same investment and the same optimization.

The problem is not only technical. When the CPAs you are working with carry an uncertainty of about 20%, a poor decision does not just drive up acquisition costs: it costs you sales volume. You are optimizing on data that does not reflect reality.

Andrés Azpilicueta, Episode 1  
Digital marketing expert

“ It is very difficult today for a marketer to make decisions when there is a gap of 15, 20, 30 points between one measurement tool and another. This is not a matter of a few percentage points.

## THE NEW LANDSCAPE AND HOW TO POSITION YOURSELF

With third-party cookies now in the process of deprecation and Google having clarified its position, we have an opportunity to rebuild the measurement framework on more solid foundations. This means three things: knowing which tools you use and by what criteria you attribute, having a layer that connects those tools and allows you to audit discrepancies, and complementing with first-party tracking.



### CONCRETE ACTIONS TO IMPROVE YOUR MEASUREMENT

- Audit the gap between your current measurement tools: do they align or are there significant discrepancies?
  - Define different attribution models by product type and purchase cycle.
- 
- Implement first-party tracking to reduce dependence on third-party cookies.
  - For products with long purchase cycles: extend the attribution window beyond 7 days.

# ZERO-BASED BUDGETING: MARKETING CAN NO LONGER RELY ON INTANGIBLES.

## THE NEW FINANCIAL AUDIT

There is a global movement changing how companies make marketing investment decisions. It is called zero-based budgeting, and it requires teams to justify every euro of budget from scratch. Not to explain why the budget should be 5% more or less than the previous year, but to demonstrate why investment in each channel, each format and each audience is warranted.

Andrés Azpilicueta, Episode 1  
Digital marketing expert

“ Anyone who has not yet had to justify their entire budget to leadership will face that moment soon. We are all going to go through it sooner or later. And it is better to arrive with everything in order and a solid numbers-based rationale.”

## BEWARE OF THE TRIP: ROAS AND GROSS MARGIN

One of the most common indicators in ecommerce, ROAS, can be positive while still losing you money. This happens when it is calculated on gross margin instead of contribution margin. Contribution margin deducts the real variable costs: shipping, returns, payment fees, packaging and customer acquisition cost. Without that calculation, the decision of how much to invest to acquire a customer is miscalibrated from the start.

### THE METRIC THAT MATTERS: CONTRIBUTION MARGIN

- ➔ Gross margin minus shipping minus returns minus payment fees minus packaging minus attributable marketing cost equals contribution margin.
- ➔ The maximum CPA you can pay for a customer is: the contribution margin of the first purchase, or of the projected LTV if you have reliable data.
- ➔ A ROAS of 4 may or may not be profitable: it depends on whether your gross margin is 20% or 60%.
- ➔ Involve the CFO or finance team in defining these thresholds.





# UNDERSTANDING YOUR CLIENT

Connecting channels and segmenting effectively

Most companies have more information about their customers than they realize. The problem is that it lives scattered across different systems and no one has brought it together. These two lessons address how to do that and what to do with it.

# THE BIG OPPORTUNITY IS NOT DIGITAL. IT'S CONNECTING DIGITAL WITH PHYSICAL.

## WHERE THE MOST VALUE IS LOST

In many businesses, a significant volume of sales happen in person or involve a meaningful physical component. A customer may have researched online, received an email, seen an ad on Instagram and ended up buying in store. Yet in most companies that sale appears as "no source" or is automatically attributed to the last digital click.



Luis Serrano, Episode 2  
Head of growth  
Real Madrid C.F.



For me, a CDP at its most basic is like a spreadsheet. All the information lands there and then we segment it. The central piece of our strategy is the Real Madrid fan community, and around it we have everything connected: ecommerce, the physical store, social media, stadium capacity, consumption on RM Play and food and beverage at the stadium.KPI for us, not just acquisition.

## THE SINGLE CUSTOMER VIEW

The key is not the technology: it's identifying the customer at every touchpoint. An email collected at the checkout, an online reservation linked to check-in, a scanned loyalty card, a QR code at the table. Each of those moments is an opportunity to match online and physical behavior.

Real Madrid does it with stadium data, food & beverage, museum visits, in-app consumption and behavior on RM Play. A retailer can do it with the POS and loyalty program. A hotel, with the PMS and online check-in. The architecture is the same: capture the identifier, link it to the digital profile.

### IDENTIFICATION LEVERS BY SECTOR

- Retail: loyalty program, digital receipt, email at checkout, customer app.
- Hotels: PMS, online check-in, app, loyalty card.
- Restaurants: reservations system, points program, order app.

Source: FT1 — Andrés Azpilicueta · FT2 — Luis Serrano · FT5 — Enrique Miralda

# EVERY CUSTOMER SEGMENT NEEDS A DIFFERENT MESSAGE.

## THE SINGLE-SEGMENT ERROR

For decades, mass marketing defined targets as a set of demographic attributes: urban men and women, aged 25 to 45, with an interest in X. That model is still useful for media planning, but it is insufficient for activation. Because within that segment there are radically different behaviors.



Víctor Moreno, Episode 3  
Data scientist  
TomTom



Customer segmentation is only as powerful as your ability to adapt the message to each segment. These tools allow you to go from managing tens or hundreds of segments to thousands or tens of thousands, and reach each one where they are most receptive.

Each of those five customers has a different reaction to the same message. Offering a discount to the recurring customer who was willing to pay full price is unnecessarily losing margin. Doing nothing with the customer who repeatedly abandons their cart and keeps visiting the same product is leaving money on the table.

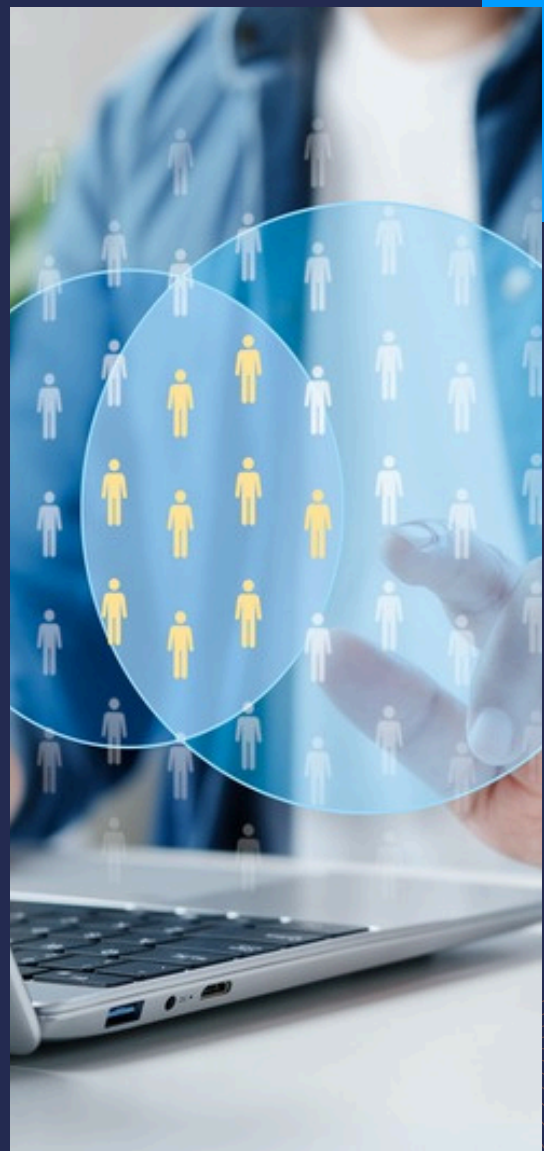
## THE SECOND MISTAKE: ASSIGNING THE SAME IMPORTANCE TO ALL ATTRIBUTES

When we define a segment with six variables (gender, age, city, interest A, interest B, interest C) we tend to treat them as if they were equally determinant. But in real data, there are almost always one or two variables that explain most of the purchasing behavior. Finding them and prioritizing them is what makes one tactical campaign have ten times the impact of another with the same budget.

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### BEHAVIOR CLUSTERS APPLIED BY SECTOR

- Retail: impulsive vs. reflective customer, deal buyer vs. brand buyer, single-product vs. multi-category.
- Hotels: city traveler vs. leisure traveler, direct booking vs. OTA, business vs. leisure customer.
- Restaurants: proximity customer vs. destination diner, weekly frequency vs. special occasion, low vs. high average spend.
- Automotive: first purchase vs. replacement, rational vs. emotional buyer, short vs. long decision cycle.





# TECHNOLOGY AND AI

Applying the right tools correctly

AI is in every conversation. These three lessons clarify what needs to be in place before it makes sense, how to use it as a competitive advantage, and why the return comes much sooner than most companies expect.

# AI IS NOT THE ANSWER. WELL-ORGANIZED DATA IS THE ANSWER. AI IS WHAT ACTIVATES IT.

## THE MOST COMMON MISCONCEPTION

There is an idea circulating in many organizations: if we buy the right AI tool, it will solve our data, segmentation and personalization problems. It is exactly the opposite. AI without well-organized data generates generic, incorrect or, worse, convincingly incorrect responses.

The real value of AI applied to business does not come from OpenAI or Anthropic models querying generic information from the internet. It comes from those same models querying your data: your transaction history, your customer segments, your churn patterns, your product behavior. That is what generates actionable insights.



Álvaro Pariente, Episode 4  
Founder and CEO  
BEOC9



If your data is not organized and you are trying to pull up information about a specific customer, or a customer is calling you and you need the right data in that moment, no amount of AI, no LLM, no sophisticated technology is going to give you a good result.

## THE FOUR LEVELS OF ANALYTICAL MATURITY

Organizations that extract the most value from data follow a clear progression: first they describe (what happened), then they diagnose (why it happened), and finally they predict and prescribe (what is going to happen and what to do about it). Most mid-sized companies are still at the first level, using BI dashboards to report on the past. AI only makes sense from the second level onwards, and only becomes truly powerful at the third and fourth.

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### THE PATH TO INTELLIGENT DATA USE

- ➔ Level 1 – Descriptive: What did I sell yesterday? What are my top products? Which channel generates the most traffic?

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- ➔ Level 2 – Diagnostic: Why did conversion drop this month? Which segment is losing recurrence?

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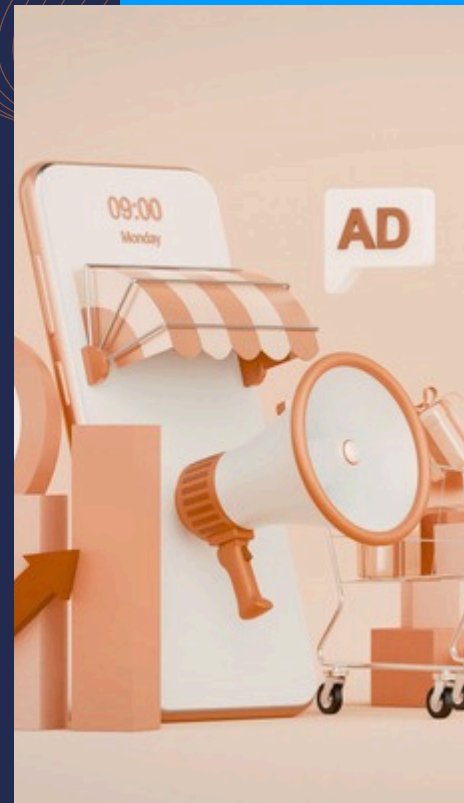
- ➔ Level 3 – Predictive: Which customers are going to churn in the next 30 days? What is the projected LTV by segment?

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- ➔ Level 4 – Prescriptive: What specific action should I take today with this segment to maximize margin?



# AI AS A BUSINESS ASSISTANT: THE RIGHT QUESTIONS WIN.



## THE REAL PARADIGM SHIFT

Generative AI is not going to replace the director of marketing or the ecommerce manager. What it is going to do, and already is doing, is amplify the capacity of those who know what to ask. The professional who previously spent weeks preparing a segment analysis for a campaign can now have it in hours, provided the data is well organized and the right questions are being asked.



Víctor Moreno, Episode 3  
Data scientist  
TomTom



If before the companies using these techniques were moving at fifty while you were moving at ten, now those who use them for everything are moving at two hundred. And if you do not start accelerating, you fall further and further behind, not just as a company but as an individual professional."

## PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS AND REAL LIMITATIONS

Generative AI connected to first-party data has immediate and tangible applications: proposing high-value audiences without manually configuring filters, analyzing campaign performance and suggesting improvements, identifying churn patterns before they become irreversible, or summarizing thousands of customer interactions to detect the prevailing sentiment without the need for an NPS survey.

The limitations are equally clear: AI makes mistakes, it has no strategic context beyond what you have given it, and its responses can vary when asked the same question twice. Having it on the team is like having a brilliant analyst with no experience in your sector: very useful if you know how to supervise them, dangerous if you let them work alone.

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## BUSINESS QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR OWN DATA THAT YOU CAN ASK AI TODAY

- Which segment has the highest purchase probability in the next 30 days and what product should they receive?
- Which high-LTV customers are showing churn signals this month?
- How can I improve the average ticket of the occasional segment in this category?
- Which active campaign has generated the best attributed contribution margin in the last 90 days?

# THE RETURN COMES SOONER THAN YOU THINK. BUT ONLY IF YOU START WITH THE RIGHT USE CASE.

## THE ERROR OF TOTAL IMPLEMENTATION

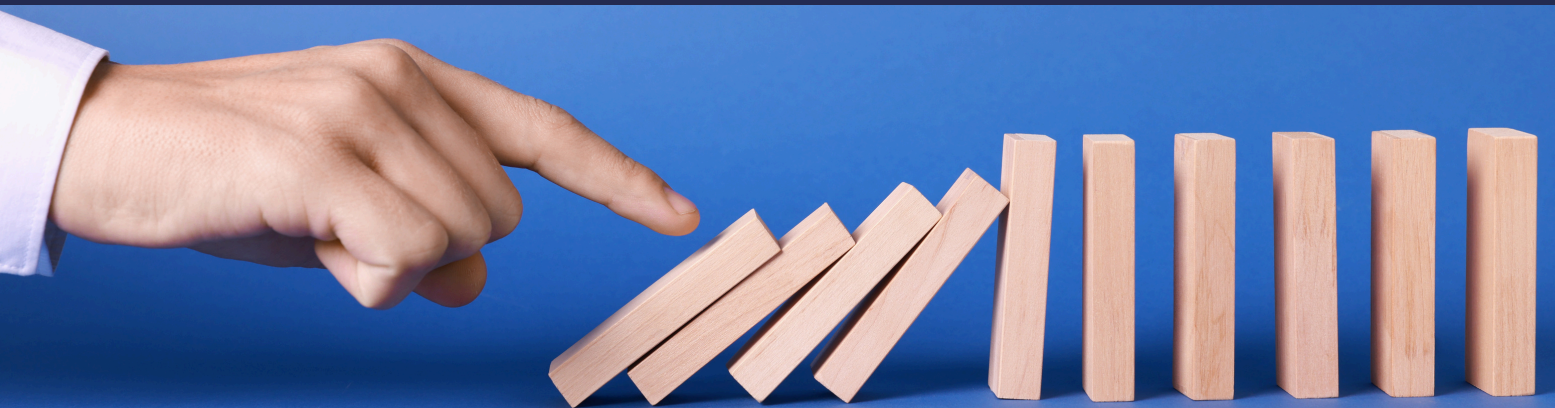
For years, many data projects followed the same pattern: an ambitious eighteen-month project, a significant budget, a promise of transformation and, at the end, a system that took so long to implement that the business had already changed before it was operational. That model no longer works and is no longer competitive.



Álvaro Pariente, Episode 4  
Founder and CEO  
BEOC9



When we work on a CDP implementation, we aim for a single use case to start. You need to begin connecting data and have a measurable business impact within two or three months. As you get a use case working and keep adding more data, the effect becomes exponential.



## THE SINGLE USE CASE METHODOLOGY

The approach that most consistently generates fast returns is the opposite of the total project: choose a single use case, connect it, measure it and demonstrate the impact on the chosen KPI within a maximum of 90 days. Then add the next one. This approach builds internal confidence, reduces resistance to change, and creates a data culture that is far more valuable in the long run than any tool.

As you add use cases, the data is already better organized, the integration is already in place and the organization already knows how to use it. Costs go down and results go up. The return comes sooner than you might think, but only if you start with the right use case.

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## WHERE TO START: THE THREE USE CASES WITH THE HIGHEST INITIAL RETURN



**Churn reduction**



**Second purchase**



**High-precision audience**

- Churn reduction: identify your highest-LTV customers showing signs of abandonment and activate a personalized retention campaign.
- High-precision audiences: eliminate ad spend on customers who have purchased recently and redirect the budget toward high-probability profiles.
- Second purchase: identify customers who bought once more than X days ago and design a reactivation sequence calibrated by behavioral segment.

# WHAT THESE TEN LESSONS HAVE IN COMMON

These ten lessons come from five people with very different backgrounds. But there is one idea that runs through all of them: the problem is rarely the technology. It lies in the organization, in the incentives, in the mental models used to make decisions.

The data already exists in almost every company. Customers are already leaving traces: on the website, in the app, at the point of sale, in the booking, in the email opened at eleven at night. The question is not whether you have data. The question is whether you have an organization capable of using it, a strategy that puts it at the service of the customer, and a financial model that measures whether you are actually making money from all of this.

## **If you take three ideas from this document:**

- Define who owns the customer in your organization before buying anything else.
- Measure whether your business is truly profitable: contribution margin, not gross margin.
- Choose a single use case, focus on demonstrating its return within 90 days, and build from there.



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