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What to Look for in a Demo of Distributed Marketing Software



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Participating in a Demo is an opportunity to gain insight before taking the next step in evaluating Distributed Marketing software providers. Demos are an effective way to compare software solutions and to determine whether a provider's offering and process is capable of meeting your brand's challenges. And to get the most out of a Demo, it helps to know what should be covered. Here are five key areas to watch for:



1. Onboarding and Implementation

2. Partner Engagement Strategy

3. User Experience

4. Ad Customization Features and Functionality

5. Modules on the Platform

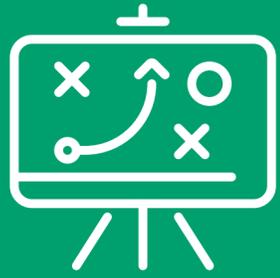


Onboarding and Implementation

Choosing the right Distributed Marketing software solution for your business requirements isn't only about the software itself. Less tangible than the software is how your provider is going to properly steward your company through the Discovery process to re-confirm what you purchased and set the parameters for onboarding and implementation. An experienced provider will do all the heavy lifting, while effectively and efficiently guiding you to launch.

Leading Distributed Marketing solutions provide current-user references. Talking with references offers the chance for greater visibility on what to expect:

- | How did the Distributed Marketing provider manage this process with your company?
- | Was the process from onboarding to launch easy or difficult for your team?
- | Were there tools in place for collaboration between your team and the Distributed Marketing provider?
- | Does your team's experience with the software reflect what you were told during the sales process?
- | Did you hit your goals?
- | Did you feel it was a success?



Partner Engagement Strategy

The Demo should give you insight on whether the Distributed Marketing provider has a proven and effective partner engagement strategy. Too often engagement strategy is an afterthought. Some brands may believe they should own the communication delivery to their partner network of local retailers, resellers, dealers and distributors.

Yet, in our experience working with leading brands, it is an enormous advantage to the brand when engagement and execution are handled by the software provider.

Collaboration between the brand and the provider is, of course, essential—especially regarding messaging and the timing of partner communication. Consider how much time and work this would save your brand team if partner engagement were handled by a leading Distributed Marketing software provider. **Having the right experts at the helm is critical, because the deployment and execution of partner engagement can make or break a successful launch.**



User Experience

Whether the partner engagement strategy is successful or not is often largely dependent on the user experience. It's important for a Demo to cover how the Distributed Marketing provider plans to ensure your partners have a high-quality experience from the start. **If the provider doesn't address it, here are some questions you should ask:**

Will partners receive communication about the platform in advance, so they know what to expect?

Are partners given documents explaining what they are being offered?

Do partners have access to short videos that illustrate what their user experience will look like?

Can partners attend training webinars to help them get started?

What makes the platform user friendly and intuitive?

What's available to help partners navigate the platform?

How easily can they tap expert support while they're on the platform?

Is the platform equipped to capture partner feedback? If so, how?

Does the software platform have a comprehensive search functionality, deep linking and share links to help partners find answers or assets quickly?

How does the platform handle permissions for users and assets?



Ad Customization Features and Functionality

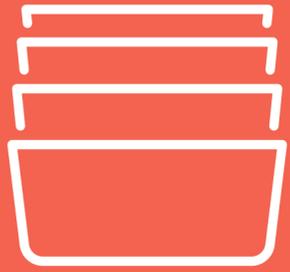
Any Demo with a Distributed Marketing software vendor should address ad customization features and functionality. While you may have an idea of how the customization process should work, let the vendor solution for this, so you can evaluate whether the explanation, features and benefits described will drive results for your brand. It is critical to provide your prospective vendors with a wide array of your current assets, so they can conduct an audit and offer feedback and recommendations to improve the end user experience with ad customization. Experienced software providers are knowledgeable about a wide variety of ad customization requests and how to handle them. **The Demo is the perfect moment to find out if the software allows for different types of ad customizations, including:**

Data-driven customization: Instantly auto-populate changes to ads — such as featured products, images, descriptions, pricing or promotional offers — across hundreds of templates, where parameters are set by the brand, and partners easily choose from a menu of pre-approved options.

Themes: Consolidate advertising templates to make it simple for partners to select photos and color schemes tailored to a given geographic region or season or promotional offer.

Form-filling customization: Localize ads with custom changes to text and photos, ranging from minimal to extensive revisions.

Dependent selects: This involves automatic form-filling customization, where a single revision activates a series of related changes. For example, selecting a different product name in a menu of options would automatically trigger a series of other customizations, such as the headline, product sku, and image. Essentially, the end user can quickly build a customized template thanks to rules that are preset when the template is programmed in the back-end of the platform.



Modules on the Platform

Before the Demo begins, the Distributed Marketing software vendor should have a solid understanding of the challenges your brand needs to resolve, whether you're focused on a single pain point and aiming to evolve your local marketing program. Is your brand replacing an existing platform provider or multiple platforms cobbled together by your existing provider or internal IT teams? What is the user experience like today and how can you make it easier in the future? All of this comes into play when you consider how you may evolve your program over time. Having a "modular" architecture right out of the box will help you phase out your entire deployment with consideration for the end users in your partner network, without overwhelming them.

During the Demo, ask about specific modules, such as list management, call tracking, funds management, claims and reimbursement, media buying, Co-Op Advertising, and analytics — to ensure that the software provider's capabilities can meet your brand's expectations.

Any vendor offering you a Demo should be cognizant of how valuable your time is. That's why the Demo should be designed to answer your brand's most pressing concerns and give you a sneak peak at what working with that vendor would be like. Giving the vendor information in advance about your brand's goals and challenges will help make the most of your time and theirs. It's a chance to find out how the software provider problem-solves and if they're responsive to your questions and concerns. Can they give you both a global view of the process and clarity on the specifics that matter most to your brand? **Knowing what to expect in a Demo with a leading software provider brings you one step closer to finding the right Distributed Marketing software platform for your brand.**



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Learn more about SproutLoud's
Distributed Marketing platform

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