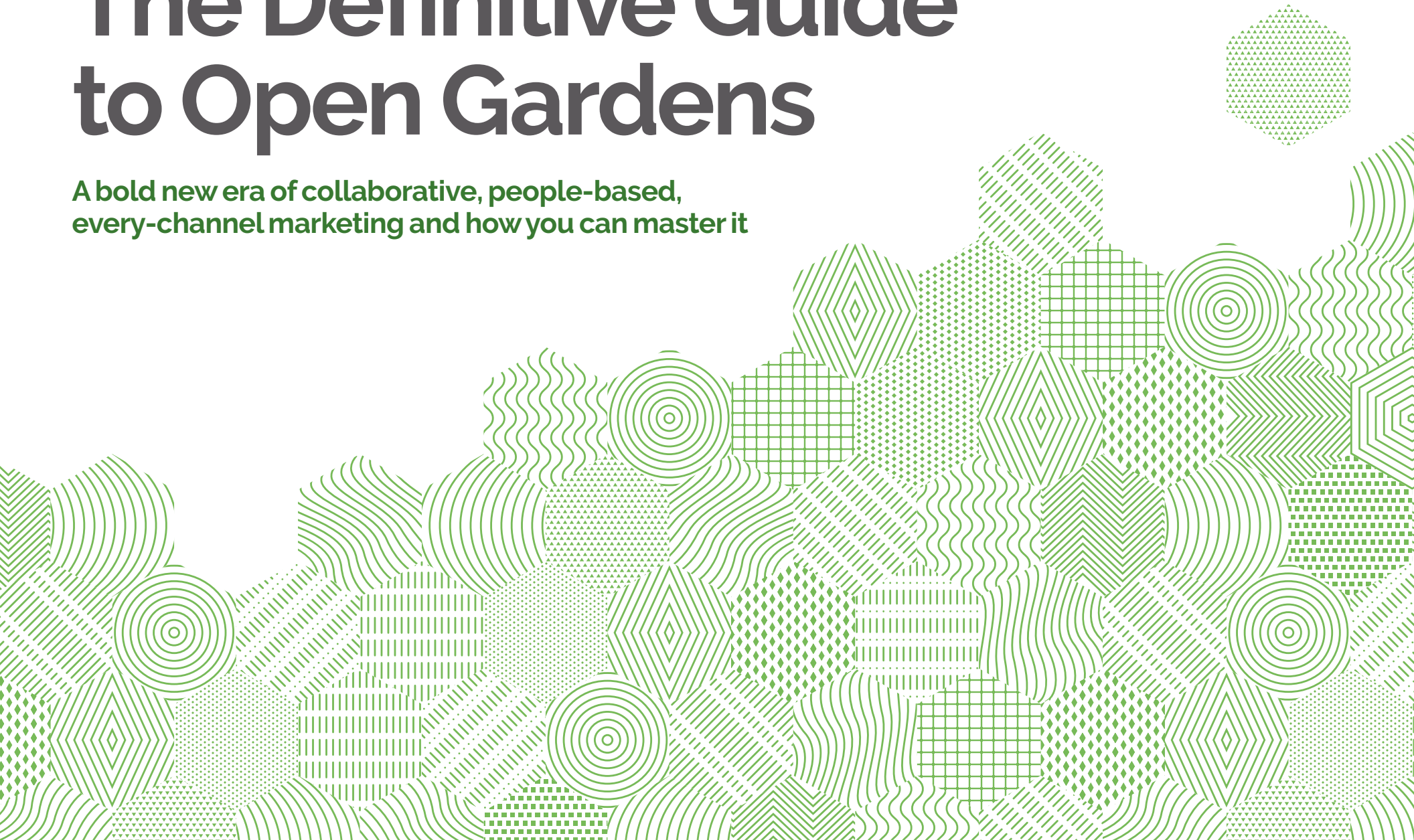# acxiom

The Definitive Guide to Open Gardens
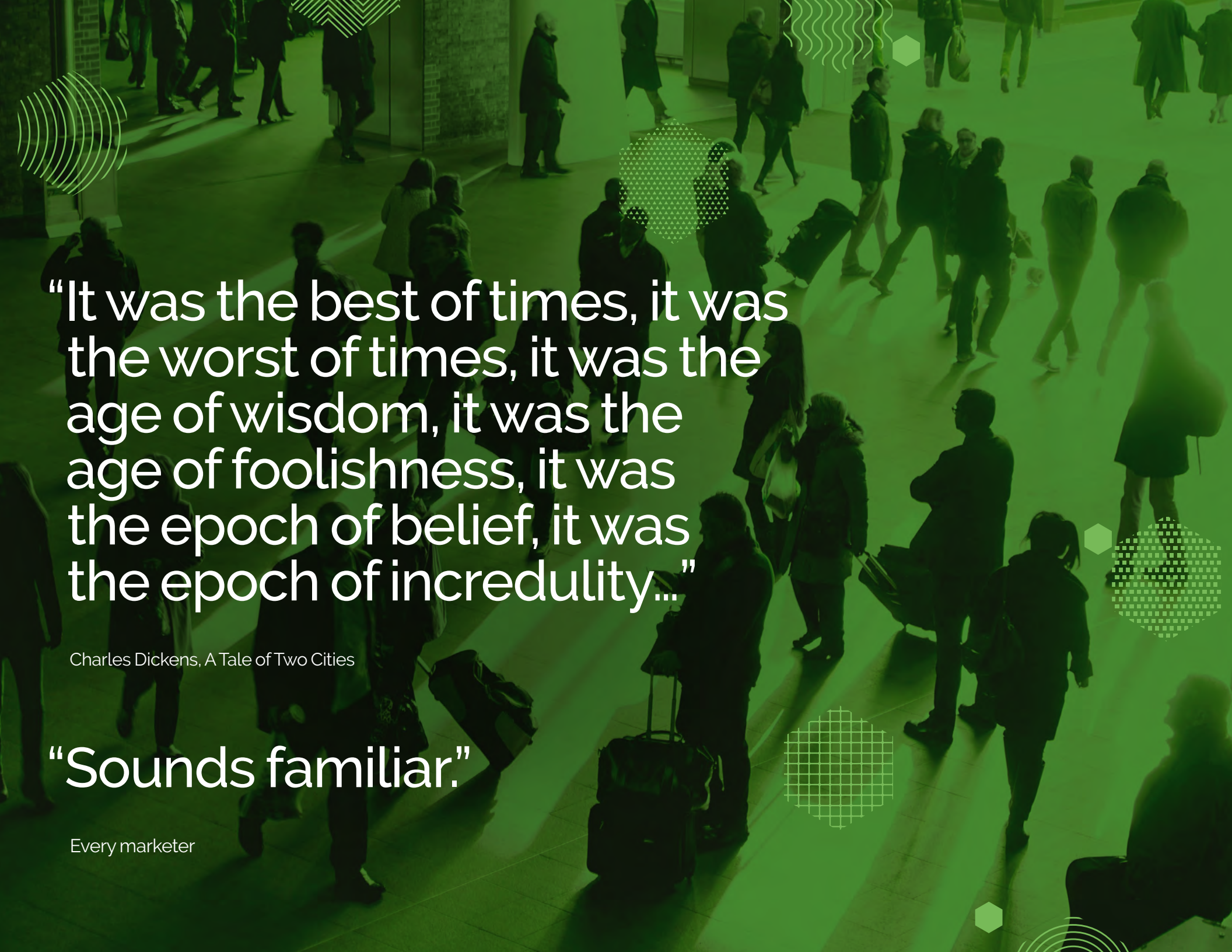
A bold new era of collaborative, people-based, every-channel marketing and how you can master it

What's inside?

1. The market realities driving the Open Garden movement

2. The business outcomes Open Garden can drive

3. The business challenges Open Garden can solve

4. The inner workings of an Open Garden

5. How to build your own to take the next big leap for marketing

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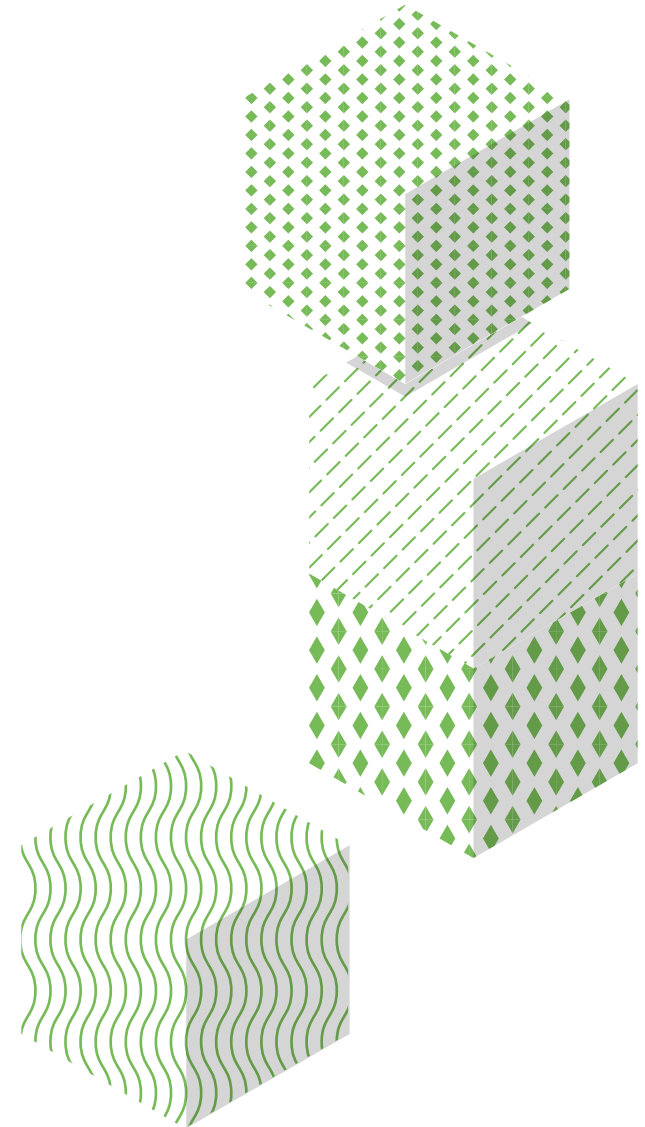
"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity..."

Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities

"Sounds familiar."

Every marketer

What is going on here?

If you're a marketer, you're living in interesting times.

If you're a senior marketer – and the majority of your career happened in the pre-digital era – you're experiencing a bizarre combination of dream, nightmare and category 5 hurricane.

The dream
If your pre-digital self had a marketing wish list, the new era has delivered pretty much everything on it:

You have more data on your customers – more insight into their behaviors, preferences and propensities than you could ever have dreamed of.

You have countless new ways to reach people – with new channels popping up faster than you can say Snapchat.

You have an overwhelming range of technologies, applications and platforms – to help you listen, analyze, plan, predict, activate, engage, test, measure, model, and optimise.

All this has combined to turn marketing from a guess-based, hunch-driven art form into a measurable, accountable, data-driven discipline.

Today, CMOs that used to have to master the boardroom tap-dance are now batting back the toughest questions and building irrefutable business cases for bigger budgets.

All good.
In fact, all great.

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The nightmare

The same tsunami of innovation that gives you all this power and opportunity has also created something not-so-helpful. It's created chaos.

Your people-based data is scattered across anywhere from a dozen to a hundred different channels, silos, applications and product teams.

There's a massive gulf between your offline world (stores, contact centers, CRM, email...) and your digital world (web, social, mobile...).

The campaign management and analytics in your martech stack are entirely divorced from the DMPs and programmatic tools in your adtech world.

The demands of consumer privacy and data protection regulations mean you're walking a tightrope in trying to manage all of this.

Any of these demands would make it exponentially harder to get even a fuzzy, pixellated view of your customer much less a crystal-clear single view of the customer in all her omnichannel glory.

Not so good.
And not even the whole story yet.

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The category 5 hurricane

If all this complexity wasn't enough, you also have to deal with change. Rapidly accelerating change on literally every front.

A non-stop firehose of new data tools, technologies, techniques, channels, regulations, innovations and vendors make it harder to stay the course even for a few quarters, much less plan for the next few years.

A way forward

If you're a senior marketer, you've got one of the most challenging, exciting, nerve-wracking, high-stakes rides of any job in any industry in the world.

The bad news: a lot of people out there will promise you they can take all your complexity away with a single wave of their cloud-based wand. (Spoiler alert: they can't).

The good news: there actually is a way for you to take control of your entire marketing ecosystem so that you control and manage your data, using it to drive better-informed analysis and more meaningful and relevant interactions in every channel.

The key to this new approach is that you're not giving up control to any vendor or limiting your reach to any channel or application. In fact, you're taking back that control, so you can deepen your understanding of your customers, serve them better everywhere and focus your budget where it will make the most impact.

This is big. Read on.

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When your 'best-of-breed' won't stop breeding

If yours is like most marketing teams, you've made lots of good decisions about which tools and platforms to use for all the different things today's marketers have to do.

This best-of-breed approach isn't just necessary — it's almost certainly the right way to go. But there are some serious penalties that come with your fragmented marketing stack. Here are just a few:

- You can see what's happening in any given channel, but you can't assemble all those interactions into a single view of each customer.

- Even if you did have a complete, single view, you can't recognize people everywhere, so you can't activate what you know about each person to give them consistently relevant experiences.

- You can't model entire customer journeys or see how your online activities drive offline sales.

As marketing gets more expensive and more competitive, these limitations move from painful to unsustainable.

Beyond the warehouse

Someone has to say it: your traditional marketing stack – built around a marketing data warehouse – is not equipped for this new, omnichannel challenge.

The velocity, variety, dynamism and sheer messiness of today's marketing data is simply not what the old-school databases were built for. There's still a place for your warehouse (and you've invested way too much in it to even consider ripping and replacing it now) but you can't let its inherent rigidity limit your agility.

In short, there's a growing mismatch between your strategy and your ability to execute on it. And that mismatch causes missed opportunities, wasted budgets and the kind of irrelevant marketing that, instead of charming people, annoys them.

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Relevance everywhere

Uniting the marketing ecosystem at the data layer

In marketing, relevance wins every time.

An offer or a message that's relevant to a person – that reflects who they are, what they love and what they want right now – is many times more likely to convert than a generic, broadcast-style message.

Delivering this kind of relevance every time you touch a consumer isn't just the fast track to revenue, it's also the high road to remarkable levels of loyalty and lifetime value.

Clearly, the only way to deliver this kind of every-channel relevance is to unite your entire marketing ecosystem. And the only place to do that is at the data layer.

Until you can do that, every one of your marketing applications or channels will continue to speak its own language, with its own data schema and proprietary customer IDs.

Connecting everything at the data layer lets you keep the marketing and advertising platforms, partners, applications and channels that you love while benefiting from the integrations that are critical to every-channel success.

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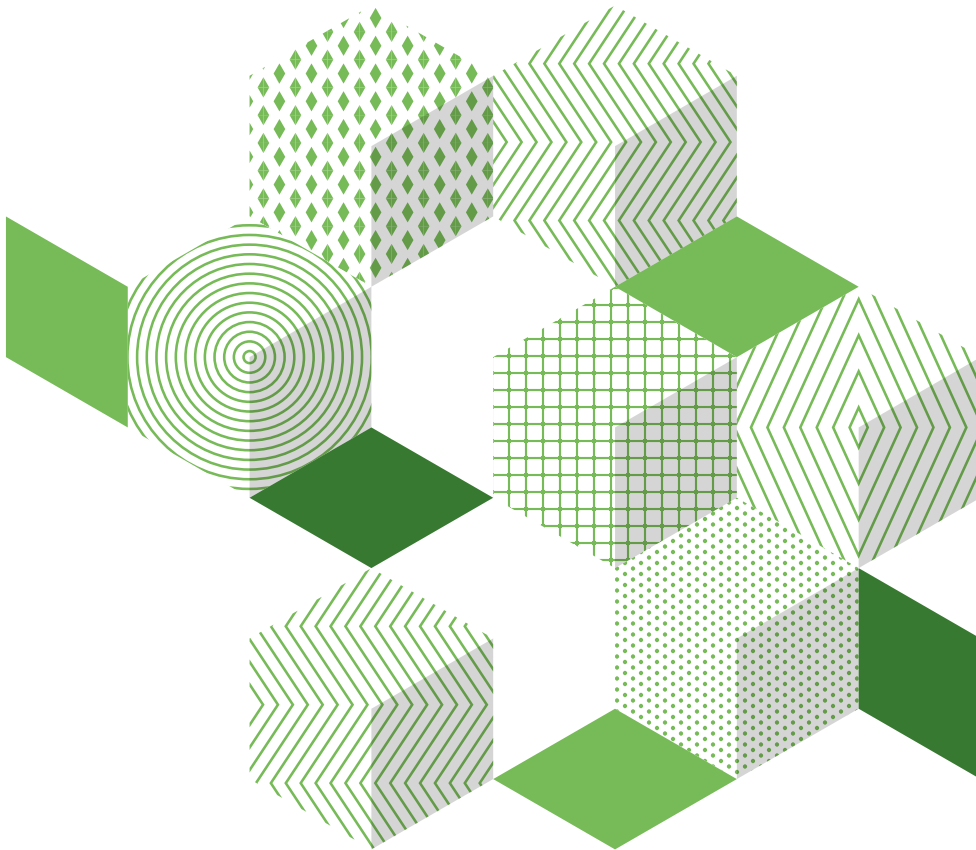
What is the data layer?

Right now, marketing integrations tend to happen at the application layer, generally through APIs or custom-built connectors. So your Salesforce instance can push data to Marketo or your Unica can push data to Adobe Analytics or Mailchimp or what have you. Maybe you even use two-way syncing to keep each system up to date.

The trouble is, as your systems multiply, the integration spaghetti becomes impossible to manage and maintain. And you're soon back in silo-land.

When you connect at the data layer, you create consumer portraits centrally – in a data environment that you control – ingesting data from each system (for analysis and segmentation) and publishing data back to each, as needed (for activation and engagement).

Seemingly small changes make a world of difference – to your agility, transparency, and your ability to deliver relevance everywhere.

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Introducing Open Garden

The next big leap for marketing

Open Garden is a new blueprint for a marketing and advertising ecosystem that's connected at the data layer.

An Open Garden foundation lets you bridge offline and digital, adtech and martech to drive the smarter, more relevant, more consistent every-channel experiences that win markets.

This new foundation layer isn't about technical elegance (though it approaches beauty when done right) – it's all about hard-nosed marketing outcomes. Specifically, Open Garden can:

Boost your revenue – by lifting your click-throughs, engagement levels, conversion rates and cross-sales

Extend your reach – activating your data wherever your best audiences are

Prove your increasing ROI – the mother of all metrics

In the rest of this guide, we'll take you through Open Garden and the strategic and technical decisions you need to make to get there.

For now, keep one idea in mind: when you build your own Open Garden, you turn your collection of independent marketing applications, tools and platforms into a connected ecosystem that recognizes your customers everywhere so you can deliver relevance.

Open Garden gives you a data foundation that's rich soil for omnichannel growth.

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This is inevitable

Open Garden is a broad movement across the industry (it just hasn't been named until now).

The movement reflects an inevitable trend in all tech markets: from closed to open; from fragmented to connected; from isolated to collaborative; from budget-leaking to value-creating.

The Open Garden movement is the market's response to the unsustainable fragmentation and silo-isation of today's marketing environments.

How it's different

Unlike the fragmented marketing ecosystems of today, an Open Garden creates a connected, collaborative marketing ecosystem where everything and everyone works better together.

Better together

At the end of the day, it's better when consumer experiences work seamlessly together, it's better when marketers work together and it's better when suppliers (platforms, devices and channels) work together.

The result is win-win-win marketing: brands win because more of their budget is spent making an impact; publishers and vendors win by increasing the value of their audiences and technologies; and consumers win because they get marketing they value instead of marketing they hate.

But the biggest difference between Open Garden and every other omnichannel marketing vision is this:

• You own your Open Garden

• You manage direct relationships with your customers

• You take control of your data and your partnerships

• You actively manage your marketing ecosystem

• So you control your destiny

Tech vendors are eager to help you succeed – but they're not eager to give you complete ownership and control of your ecosystem.

Traditional	Open Garden
Cookie or device-based	People-based
Adtech isolated from martech	Adtech meets martech
Some digital channels	All channels, offline and digital
Forced partners	Choose best-of-breed
Closed silos	Open connections
Anonymity-bound	Privacy-compliant
Hunch-based	Data-driven
Opaque	Transparent and measurable

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The benefits of Open Garden

In a snapshot, you can:

Unite your world - bring together offline and digital; martech and adtech

Deliver great customer experiences – with smarter, more relevant, more consistent every-channel engagements

Perform better everywhere – maximizing your data leverage for increased acquisition, conversion and lifetime value

Understand your audiences better – with closed-loop analytics fed by every interaction, everywhere

Control your own destiny – uniting your chosen best-of-breed partners and tools around data that you control

The bottom line: Creating a seamless customer experience helps you grow your business.

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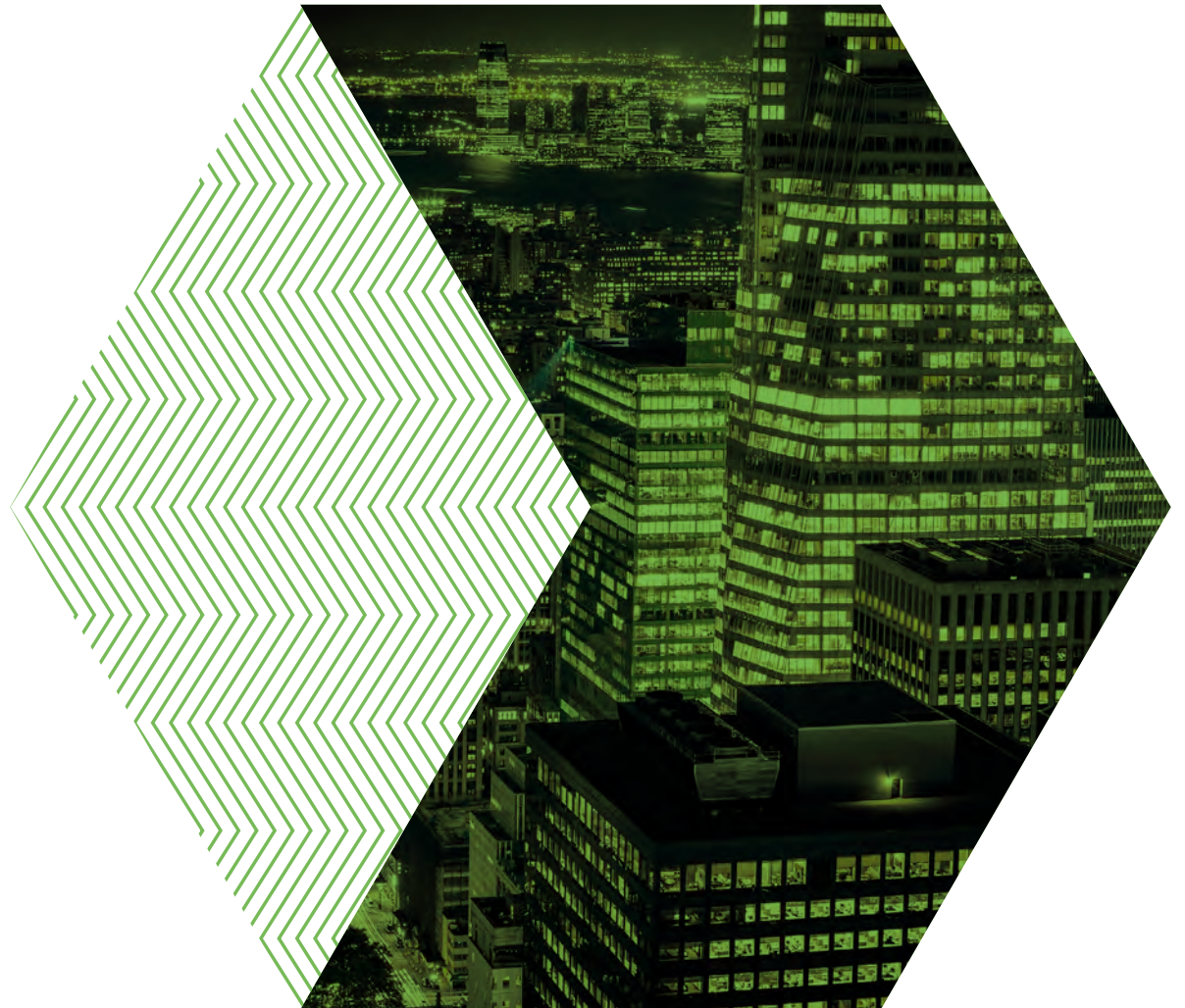
Open Garden use cases

Some of the big problems that Open Garden solves

Open Garden addresses the most pressing challenges facing every CMO. The most important of these will always be growth and ROI – these are how every CMO is measured and they're the primary drivers of the Open Garden movement.

Other, more specific use cases include:

Future-proofing investments
• How do I build a plug-and-play architecture that gives me the freedom to work with anyone?

• How do I maximize agility instead of closing doors?

• How do I keep up with the pace of innovation?

Data and technology integration and management
• How do I integrate my complex ecosystem efficiently?

• How do I simplify my world to accelerate data activation?

• How do I make my applications work together without massive investment?

Marketing effectiveness
• How can I deliver relevant, personalized marketing at scale?

• How can I create seamless customer experiences that people value?

• How do I improve my targeting, conversion, retention, loyalty and upsell?

Marketing efficiency
• How do I best integrate and optimize my offline and digital marketing? How do I make my data, systems, and teams work better together?

• How do I maximize the efficiency of my budget and operations?

Collaborative marketing and monetization
• How do I squeeze the value out of all this data?

• How can I best work with my partners to enable collaborative marketing? How do I monetize data in new ways?

Marketing mix analytics
• How do I measure the impact of my marketing programs on real sales?

• How do I know which investments are delivering the best results?

• How do I build attribution models that really work?

Data privacy and trust
• How do I balance the need to personalise marketing while respecting consumer privacy and maintaining trust?

• How do I achieve compliance with all data privacy regulations and ensure the ethical use of data?

• How do I share insight without sharing my actual data?

These aren't nice-to-have use cases; they're the critical imperatives facing every marketing department today.

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What can you expect from an Open Garden?

Open Garden is a paradigm shift, giving marketers the freedom to assemble their own ecosystems, the connectivity to deliver relevance everywhere and the control to continuously drive increased ROI.

Open Garden wasn't pulled out of thin air, it was built from the solid principles that the most progressive modern marketers already follow:

Identity resolution
To treat people in a relevant way, you need to recognize them wherever you interact with them. That's why resolving identity in every channel in a privacy-conscious way is a core principle of Open Garden. Without it, relevance is left to chance.

Deep understanding
Open Garden leverages 1st, 2nd and 3rd-party data for the deep understanding that leads to better targeting. That means privacy-conscious data collaboration with your partners.

Connectivity
The ability to deliver your audiences to all publishers and platforms is a cornerstone of Open Garden. All the insight in the world can't help you if you can't connect it to people everywhere.

Closed-Loop Analytics
Connect online and offline data to close the loop with the analytics and measurement you need.

Trust
Trust is the currency of all marketing. Breach it and you've lost your right to market. Protecting identities with holistic privacy-conscious practices is an unbendable Open Garden principle.

Governance
Maximizing the value of your data assets with best-practice data hygiene, quality and authentication is just common sense. This stuff is gold. Treat it that way.

Not a bad set of principles to build your future on.

Open Garden is enabled by next-generation technology

An Open Garden leverages a new generation of technologies to deliver unprecedented levels of connectivity, speed and agility, including:

Cloud – bringing your data closer to your digital channels

Data Lake – Hadoop enabled environment to store and process hyper data

Real-time – marketing delivered at the right time

Advanced analytics – for scoring and driving bid strategies

Safe Haven processing – for holistic, privacy-conscious governance

Next-gen data management tooling – for automated data quality, mastering, data curation and authentication

Artificial Intelligence and machine learning – for predictive capabilities and self-improving rule sets

In short, this is not your mother's marketing stack.

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Open Garden: the Acxiom approach

Open Garden is a new blueprint powered by a simplified, integrated ecosystem that turns your isolated silos into cogs in a well-oiled machine. But trying to bring all the components and expertise in-house can be very expensive and time consuming, taking important strategists away from the front line.

The right Data Architects can help you design and build your own Open Garden – and even run all or part of it for you.

This is exactly what Acxiom does for our clients.

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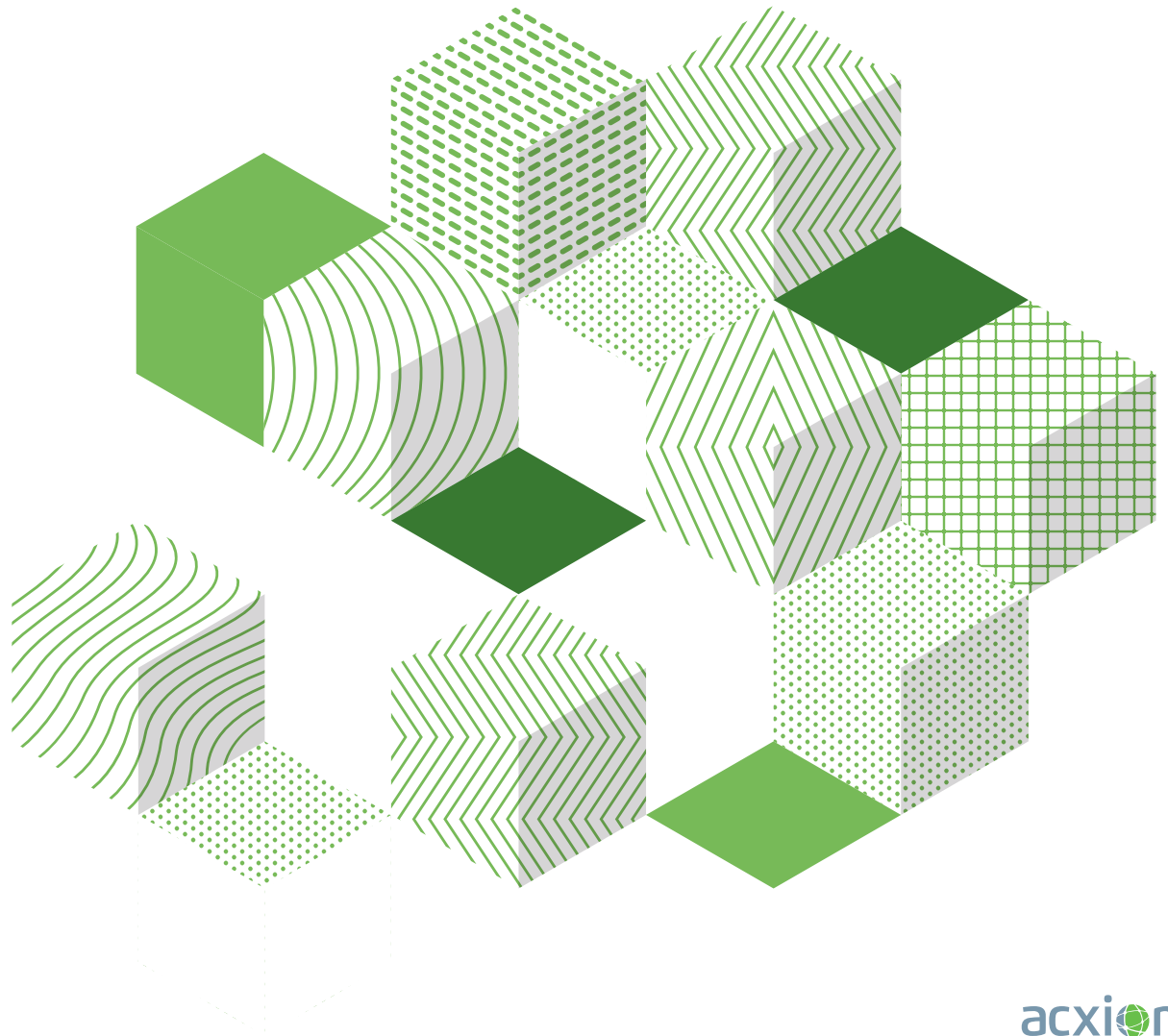
Join the Open Garden

Open Garden is the way marketing is going: uniting your entire marketing ecosystem at the data layer so you can:

Drive the next big leap in revenue – by data-powering your acquisition, conversion, loyalty, cross- and upsell, lookalike and analytics.

Unite your world – connecting all channel fragments and silos, offline and online.

Collaborate to share data – with anyone who has data that can help you target better and deliver more relevant marketing.

Control and activate your data – managing it like the strategic asset it is and employing it in real time.

Deliver relevant, compelling customer engagement everywhere – across all channels, offline and online.

Do it all in a privacy-conscious way – accessing insight without compromising consumer trust.

Get better all the time – with closed-loop analytics that takes in – and feeds out – data from all channels and touchpoints.

Critically, all of this starts from where you are today – you don't have to 'rip and replace' important parts of your infrastructure. Instead, you leverage your existing investments and empower them to perform much better.

This is big.
Open Garden is much more than a tech stack or a strategy. It's a completely new blueprint for turning a disconnected set of best-of-breed platforms and tools into a unified ecosystem that works better for everyone.

You're more than half way there right now. Talk to us about completing the journey.

The role of Data Architects

As marketing transforms into a highly tech-driven discipline, it has created ever-widening skills gaps. Keeping your operation lean and cost-effective means finding the right balance between in-house talent and outside partners.

As Data Architects, Acxiom works closely with both marketing and IT teams to design, build, manage and monitor marketing ecosystems. For many marketing teams, this is far more cost-effective than building an entire team in-house.

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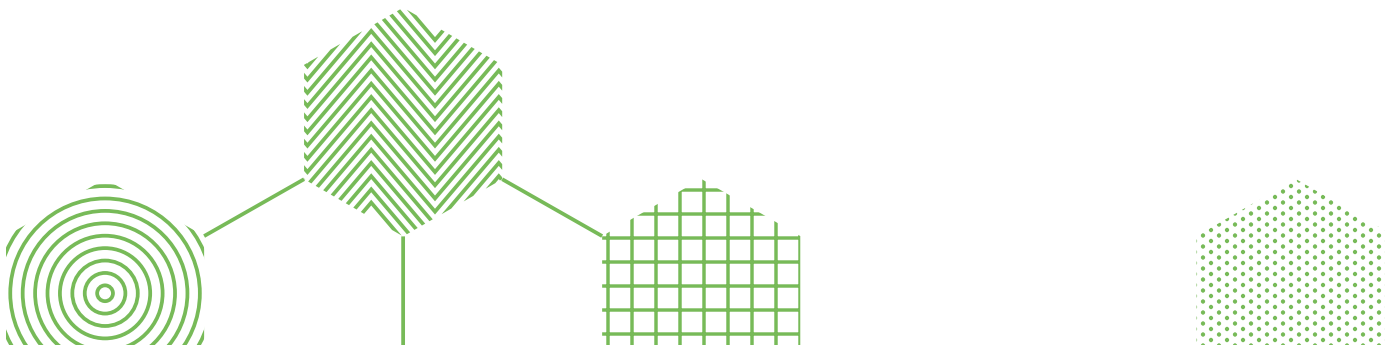
Working with an Open Garden Partner

We architect and build your Open Garden
A next-generation marketing ecosystem that ingests, enhances, connects, activates, distributes and governs your marketing data.

We help you manage and optimize your marketing data operation
To maintain data quality and embrace new channels and partners.

### We provide neutral, Safe Haven connectivity
To share data between you and your partners in a privacy-conscious way.

We don't just bring expertise, we bring powerful technology and rich data to the table.

As your Open Garden partner, Acxiom can help you with:

• Data strategy and architecture

• Data and systems integration

• Data measurement and analytics

• Data privacy and security

Acxiom provides the data foundation for the world's best marketers. We enable people-based marketing everywhere through a simple, open approach to connecting systems and data that drives seamless customer experiences and higher ROI. A leader in identity and the ethical use of data for more than 45 years, Acxiom helps thousands of clients and partners around the globe work together to create a world where all marketing is relevant.

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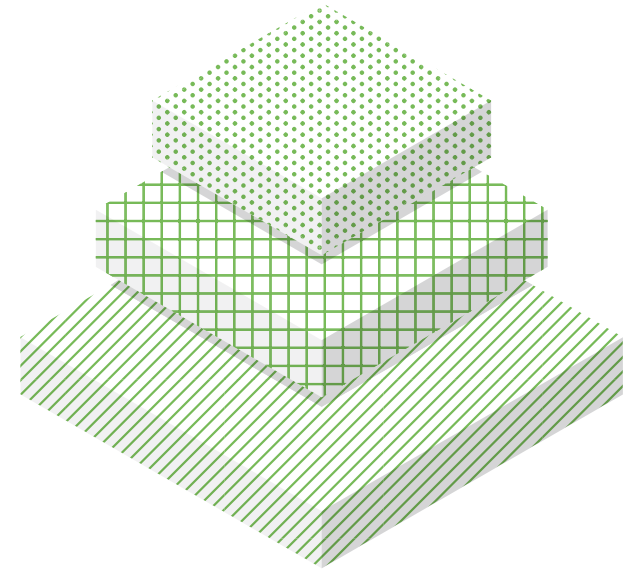
The CMO's Open Garden Checklist

If you can't check all of these boxes, you need to begin setting up and building your Open Garden today.

☐ I can easily integrate my existing offline and digital marketing channels.

☐ I have the freedom to choose best-of-breed partners.

☐ I can easily integrate new marketing technologies into my stack.

☐ I have a single view of my customers across channels.

☐ I can create seamless customer experiences.

☐ I collaborate with my marketing partners to deliver more relevant marketing.

☐ I can accurately close the loop on every campaign to know which investments are delivering the best results, and optimize accordingly.

☐ I can personalize marketing while respecting consumer privacy.

☐ I am always in compliance with data privacy regulations.

☐ I can deliver relevant, personalized marketing at scale.

For more information, email us at
info@acxiom.com

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