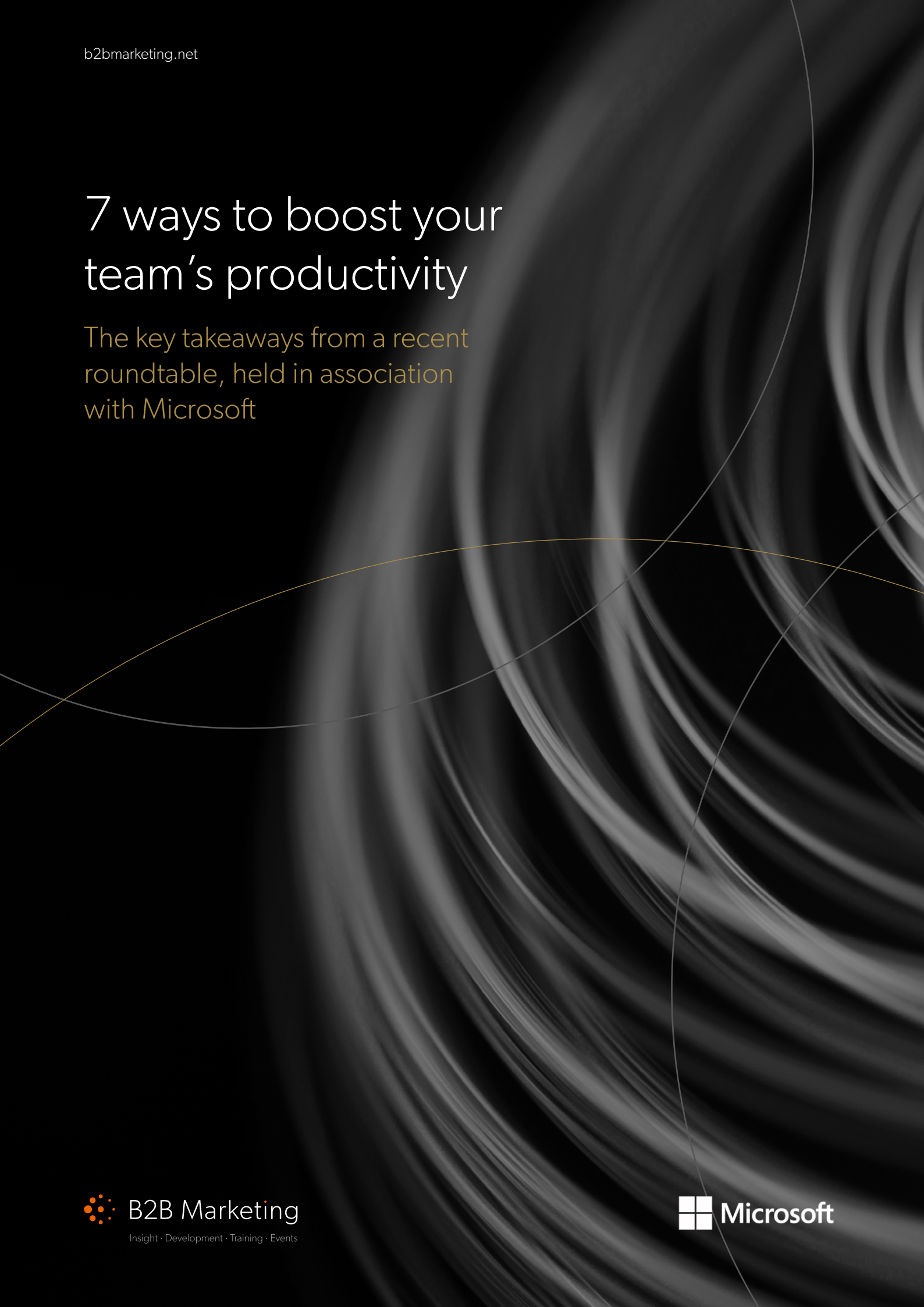
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7 ways to boost your team's productivity

The key takeaways from a recent roundtable, held in association with Microsoft



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The productivity predicament

If it's not complaints about silos, or grumbles over dwindling productivity, it's hushed corridor catch-ups over lack of departmental collaboration. Knowing that the work of a marketing manager is never done, we decided to host a roundtable, in association with Microsoft, to discover the productivity hacks that every marketer needs to know...

Imagine the scene: the executive board meeting is looming, your CMO's on the hunt for quantifiable results, and your counterpart in sales is bemoaning the lack of SQLs filtering through to the sales team. Aside from your clogged-up inbox and a badly-made cup of coffee on your commute in, could the day get *any* worse? It could, actually. Just glance around: your team – your lovely, cheerful, hard-working team – is in complete and utter disarray.

On one side, your digital content manager's ploughing ahead with his social strategy without checking in with the content marketing lead; on the other, your data experts have their earphones plugged in and are failing to communicate the success (or otherwise) of your latest email campaign. Merrily they roll along: a team comprising so-called experts working as disparate groups; collaboration at an all-time low. (You dread to think about frayed lines of communication out into the wider world.)

Such a scenario isn't just the stuff of fitful nightmares; for many it's the (slightly-heightened-for-dramatic-effect) reality. So, in a recent roundtable held in association with Microsoft, we sought to address some of the main management challenges facing marketers today. And here are the key findings.

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1 Collaboration's essential for marketing pros in 2017

In those heady, sepia-tinted days of yore, marketers could quite happily sit alone in their ivory towers planning the next big DM campaign; today, face-to-face conversations with key stakeholders across the business are crucial. Not only that, but marketers must find ways of communicating in a language that's understood by those whose first love isn't marketing. (Yes, they *do* exist).

2 Digital skills are lacking in marketing teams

One attendee even admitted that one of their agencies has expressed concerns that the internal team's lack of digital know-how threatened to hamper progress, and that as a result they (the internal team) wouldn't be able to effectively critique the agency-in-question's work.

3 Marketing teams are all too often wasting time on the wrong tools

While some attendees highlighted the value of webinars, others were less confident. Webinars can be useful for providing demos and nudging warm leads further down the funnel, but they require some serious planning and preparation – marketers need to be certain that what they're using is delivering the kinds of leads (or brand awareness) that they're looking for.

4 Could Agile be the way forward?

Yes, it's a project management methodology that needs demystifying, but it could have a place in modern marketing teams, particularly if it helps prevent bottlenecks and increases flexibility.

5 As sales takes on more marketing responsibility, silos will inevitably be broken down

LinkedIn's InMail, for example, puts marketing control firmly in the hands of sales, which is a great thing. A new focus on employee advocacy also means that brands are encouraging their employees to become their greatest drum-bangers, and customers are no longer just following company pages but individuals within organisations instead.

6 Empowering sales people through third-party tools is another way of encouraging improved external communication

Using account-based marketing analytics and sales automation software is another fairly straightforward way to give your colleagues in sales the opportunity to drive engagement with clients and prospects.

7 Appealing to people's sense of competitiveness is a great way to foster cross-departmental collaboration

One attendee's introduction of a whiteboard, entitled 'Marketing Matters' was intended as joke, a raising of collective eyebrows at the wider company's apparent lack of interest in marketing. The marketing team were then shocked when colleagues across the organisation began to collaborate in bid to see their ranking on the board rise: what had been created for internal guffaws was actually succeeding as a collaboration tool. So, the sales team love a bit of competition. Who knew?!

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The four pillars of workplace productivity

- **Collaboration:** Share first and refine later. Remember to embrace the power of co-editing: a lot of time can be saved by enabling different team members to jump on a document at the same time.
- **Mobility:** Ensure your team is able to work anytime, anywhere and that they have the tools they need at their disposal.
- **Intelligence:** The best technology uses machine learning to help focus our attention and draw out the stories that matter.
- **Trust:** In order to truly harness the potential of your team, you need to be able to confidently share documents and have ultimate faith in the tools at your disposal.

Take a look at Microsoft's productivity e-book here: aka.ms/marketing-productivity

Attendees

Participating in February's roundtable, held at InTech 2017 in association with Microsoft, were:

- Andrew Ridler, lead, marketing capabilities and brand comms, BT Group PLC
- Jonathan Chilton, marketing manager, Wolters Kluwer
- Mirja Sickel, head of sales and marketing, Amadeus Rail
- Louise Eagle, marketing manager, Eduserv
- Angela Norman, marketing manager, CACI Ltd
- Ciara Ennis, marketing manager EMEA, Apttus
- Laura Hughes, marketing manager, PayDashboard
- Natalie Lane, marketing manager EMEA, Apttus
- Sally Elliott, commercial marketing lead – Office, Microsoft
- Mark Green, commercial marketing director, Microsoft
- Levente Nagy, Office 365 product marketing manager for enterprise, Microsoft

The discussion was moderated by Jess Pike, senior editor at B2B Marketing.

About

B2B Marketing

The B2B Leaders programme is a network of the most senior marketing figures at prestigious B2B brands.

Members benefit from a unique and invaluable opportunity to regularly network and collaborate with senior-level peers, sharing insights and discussing strategic challenges at events every month.

Membership is by invitation only, and includes:

- Your B2B Leaders Forum ticket, the only B2B marketing leaders' event of its kind.
- Regular roundtables focusing on key marketing leadership topics.
- Monthly roundtable findings reports.
- Annual *B2B Leaders Report*, with key research data and insights.
- Monthly premium content reports.
- A subscription to *B2B Marketing* magazine.

The B2B Leaders programme counts senior marketing names from Deloitte, Oracle, Atos, Dell, HSBC, KPMG and Adobe among its members, all sharing ideas on topics ranging from team development to board interaction.

To register your interest in the programme call +44 (0)20 7014 4920 or email adam.harper@b2bmarketing.net



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About

Microsoft

Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT", @microsoft) is the leading platform and productivity company for the mobile-first, cloud-first world, and its mission is to empower every person and every organisation on the planet to achieve more.

In the UK we share Microsoft's global vision to empower every person and organisation to achieve more; but we also pursue a wide range of initiatives with particular resonance and relevance to the UK. From working responsibly and sustainably to ensuring the technology we create makes life better – not just for our customers, partners and employees, but for everyone. That's why we are constantly investing in three key areas:

In education

We are born to learn.

At Microsoft, we understand that the real value of technology lies in the skills it builds, the opportunities it creates, and the horizons it broadens. That's why we are empowering the education community with a wide range of products, services and programmes that help transform learning and make it more accessible.

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We are driven to succeed.

Whether supporting start-ups and SMEs, promoting apprenticeships though our partner network, or reimagining business productivity in radical new ways, Microsoft UK is all about ensuring today's workplace really does 'work' for everyone.

In society

We are committed to people.

In ensuring all our products, processes and practices are safe, secure and always accessible, we're proud to work with many leading charities, businesses and organisations committed to the same high ethical standards. These are just some of the ideals we champion in spirit and action.



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