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Let's stop swallowing that spam



Mary-Anne Baldwin
Head of content,
B2B Marketing

It's amazing how quickly ABM has gone from a handful of confident die-hards to the mainstream – and in such a short space of time. Just a few years ago ABM was shrouded by mystery, or comments about emperors and their clothes.

Since that time we've had countless conversations about ABM with our community of marketers and have been inspired by the efforts and results we've seen all around us. For those still making comments about illusionary garb, our recent survey of practitioners shows 76% will increase their efforts in it over the year ahead.

And it's about time. As we examine on pages 24-27, it's now 40 years on from the first email marketing campaign and let's be frank, we're pretty sick of swallowing all that spam.

In this issue we focus on two key elements behind delivering a successful ABM programme – nailing your account selection process and pooling the information you need on those accounts through proper use of your CRM system. These are two of the main roadblocks that have surfaced over the past year's industry conversations. We're aware they're common problems and we want to talk them through with you.

As you can probably tell from this issue, we're really buzzing over ABM – particularly because on 7and 8 November we have our second annual ABM Conference where we'll share more advice, insights and the obligatory stat or two.

See you there!

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The tech sector was where account-based marketing was born, so where better to look for advice on what the best do differently? Paul Snell reports

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Take your marks for ABM

ABM is more of a marathon than a sprint. David Cotterill tells Molly Raycraft how to make it across the finish line, while reaping lucrative rewards along the way

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The evolution of email: From success to spam

It's 40 years since the first marketing email – a B2B message, no less – was sent. We've come a long way, but have we become anaesthetised to its effects? Rebecca Ley finds out

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How to find your 'eureka' moment

Neuroscientist, author and TV presenter, Dr Jack Lewis, explains how to improve your performance and creativity through simple brain training techniques. Interview by Mary-Anne Baldwin

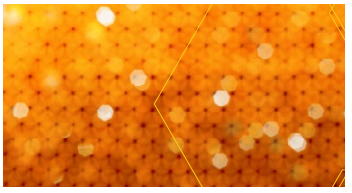
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Adapt or die?

It's often said B2B Marketing is in a state of transition – so much so that marketers have come to accept change as the new normal. Joel Harrison examines the implications for marketing leaders

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Populating the hive: How to encourage internal CRM adoption

A CRM system stands or falls on how well you can get your sales team to use it. Molly Raycraft investigates how you can drive internal CRM adoption to ensure your office buzzes with efficiency

STAR CAMPAIGN

PowWowNow rebrand aims to empower its customers



PowWowNow has relaunched its brand in response to changing customer expectations, the evolution of the company's offer and its move to become more empowering

The new brand includes a new advertising campaign, developed with agency Truant London, which launched in October. The campaign highlights the tech business' move from being seen as a conference call provider to its new focus on web meetings.

For marketing director Simon Prince, the catalyst for the overhaul has been the change in what customers expect from meetings technology, and the way in which the brand's products have evolved to meet that expectation.

"It's the perfect opportunity to look at how we position our products," he told *B2B Marketing*. "We've always had a brand that's challenging, pioneering and different, so it's happened quite organically. Because our brand was always talking about a different way of doing communications, that enabled us to build a different product set, and then we gave the brand a reboot to make it even more relevant in 2018."

It marks the latest step in a conscious move away from its confrontational – yet award-winning – campaigns in favour of a more positive message.

"Brands grow up and mature," says Simon. "We went through our rebellious teenage years, and we're now in young adulthood. It's always nicer to take positive messages to market, and to show people the benefits. As a brand we made a conscious decision to become an empowering and challenging brand, rather than a critiquing challenger brand.

"It has a stronger empathy with the customer rather than the wry, mickey-taking

News round-up

ADOBE SPLASHES CASH ON MARKETO

Adobe is to acquire Marketo for $4.75 billion.

Marketo – which serves 5000 customers – will be added to the Adobe Experience Cloud. Adobe hopes the deal will widen its reach across B2B as expectations for great customer experience grow.

The deal represents a significant increase in the $1.79 billion paid when private equity firm Vista Equity Partners bought Marketo in May 2016.

See Revelations on p50

MARKETERS LACK DATA CONFIDENCE

Half of B2B professionals don't believe in the quality of their data, according to the *B2B Marketing Data Report* by Dun & Bradstreet.

The importance of data quality for sales and marketing has increased by 15% from 2016. But 90% say it is difficult to align sales and marketing data when executing programmes across multiple channels.

The research surveyed 250 B2B professionals.

B2B BEATS B2C ON BRAND EXPERIENCE

B2B brands topped the *Brand Experience Index*, beating many well-known B2C businesses.

The report – conducted by agency Rufus Leonard – ranked brands on five brand characteristics: think, do, feel, connect and sense.

The B2B brands were found to be the most helpful in solving problems and scored highest in the 'do' category. They also performed well in the 'feel' category by using tech-driven personalisation.



that we used to do. That's happened over the past few years."

At the heart of the proposition

The hope is the new brand will resonate on an emotional level with customers and prospects by putting them at the heart of the proposition.

Simon says: "These days, it's B2P [business-to-people]. I'm just trying to deal with people – whether they're at work or at play they can still respond to a message in a positive way if it empathises with them. We put people at the heart of the messaging, champion the way they work, the effective ways they can communicate, and make them believe there is a smarter way to communicate."

This is why the new campaign is leading on product rather than the rebrand itself. As important as brand is, customers are far more interested in tools that'll help them get the job done, says Simon.

His advice to other marketers undertaking a rebrand is to start with the customer, and understand the relationship you have with them. You also need to be brave and single-minded in your ability to deliver, as everyone's got an opinion on marketing and the belief they can do it better.

Simon adds as a final important ingredient. "Just have fun. Building new products, changing the way the company is, and then rebranding it for market is the best thing you can do as a marketer. And our teams are having a lot of fun doing this."

"Marketing operations is, on paper, a critical part of an effective marketing team. You could call it the backbone of the marketing function"

Turn to p35 to discover the skills and attributes that make up the ideal marketing operations leader

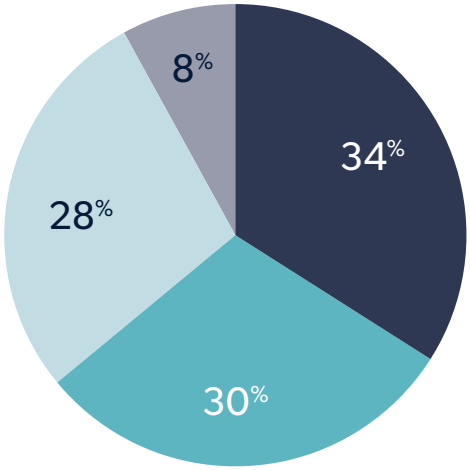


MOLLY MUSES...

#Polloftheday

Which of the following has the biggest impact on improving sales and marketing alignment in an organisation?

B2B writer and Twitter pollster quizzes the industry @molly_b2b



34%	100% adoption of CRM
30%	Joint plan and timetable
28%	Shared metrics
8%	Weekly meetings

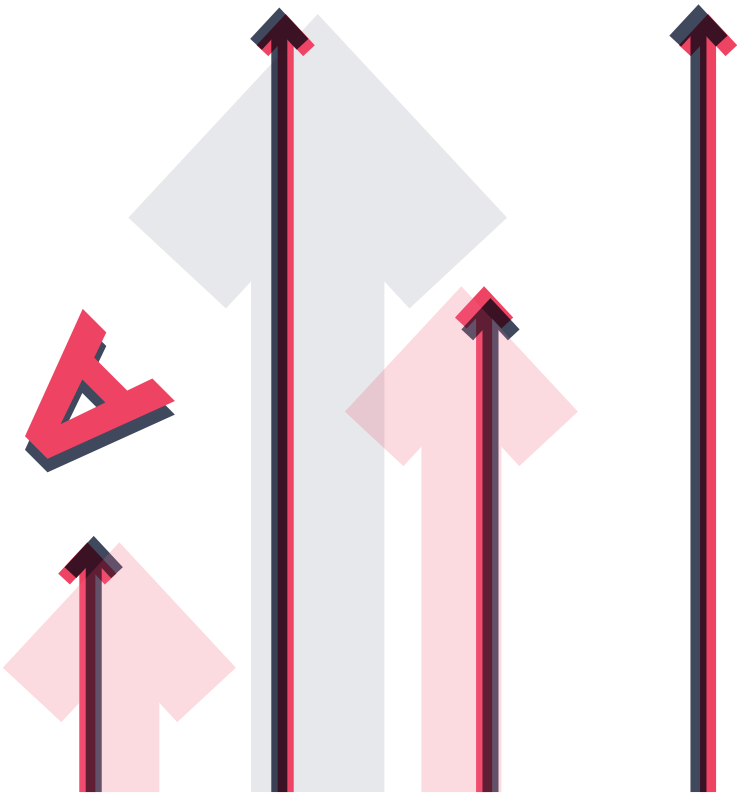
For more advice on the best way to improve sales and marketing alignment in an organisation, turn to Career counsel with David Orme on p29.

ABM ADVICE FROM THE PRACTITIONERS





What to think about before launching



Ahead of the B2B Marketing Conference, *ABM: Getting it right and making it happen* on 7–8 November in London, three marketing leaders share their thoughts on account-based marketing.

Amanda Holmes

Amanda Holmes, EMEA marketing director at Alaris, a Kodak Business, shares the questions you need to ask yourself before you get going

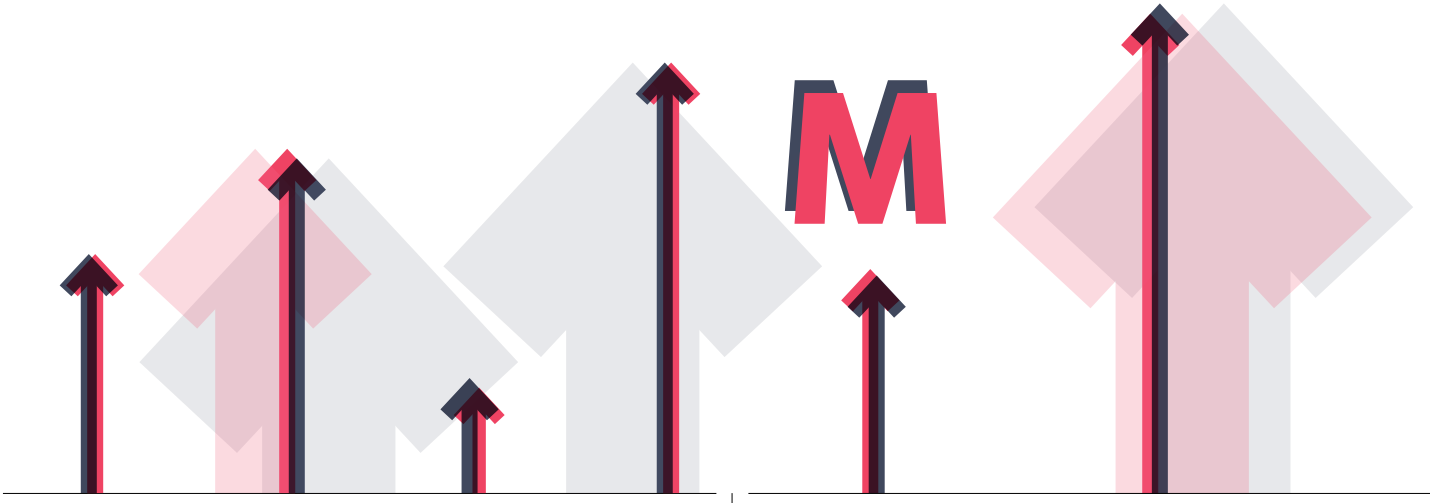
It's ABM again! Don't worry, I am not going to labour on about what ABM's meaning is or why do it. I really want to explore what you need to think about before launching an ABM programme.

The first question to ask yourself is do you know what the strategy is of the business you are involved in? It is paramount to properly understand what the direction of your company is before leaping ahead into any marketing activity. The trigger for determining if I should launch an ABM programme at my previous company was understanding that named/strategic accounts were part of the investment plan for growth. Although I want to stress ABM is still relevant if you don't have a named account strategy. Your business could be vertically-focused and want to go after the whole financial services sector, for example. ABM would still be relevant, as you want to target several accounts within that sector.

Once you've determined what the strategy is, you must figure out who your stakeholders are, and whether you can get them onboard and aligned. Personally, it was all about having the right level of sales leadership engagement in place. I had sales leadership behind me but if you are not that fortunate then you have educating and convincing to do. Keep things simple, focus on an area that you know is set to grow and with some further investment you can prove additional growth.

The next question is how will the programme run? Can you resource it internally or do you need external help? Do you have the skills internally, and how do you determine what skills are needed? What extra funding may be required? A lot of questions but all relate to your required resources.

In summary: Understand your company's strategy; determine your stakeholders and get alignment; check what resources you have. There's a little more to it than that, but that will get you to a good place to launch.





When it comes to ABM, don't be a wimp!

Conrad Wilson

Conrad Wilson, head of marketing and communications at Cranfield School of Management shares 10 things he's learnt on his past 11 months' ABM journey

It's November 2017. I'm at the *B2B Marketing ABM conference*. I'm sitting among 400 marketers listening to Joel Harrison. His speech struck me. That was where my ABM journey began.

Fast forward 11 months and I've learned a lot. Here are my top 10 tips:

1. Own a clear personal vision for ABM. It's much easier to get buy-in when you tie it closely to business strategy.
2. Be a politician – learn to navigate individual agendas and get dark lords on your side.
3. Use the full repertoire of your stakeholder management skillset to back your ideas. I learnt to compromise, cooperate, compete and collaborate to make it happen, just don't be a wimp.
4. Get external ABM training. You'll cut the learning curve, make fewer mistakes and inspire colleagues.
5. Be a conduit for useable ideas. I found cross-functional workshops facilitated innovation and changed mind-sets.
6. ABM is a culture change and old habits die hard. Think about the things that could get in your way. Work smart to sweep them away.
7. I caught a lucky break. I saw the opportunity to introduce ABM during a change programme to my new line manager, it made all the difference.
8. Be prepared to enter what we call the 'zone of uncomfortable debate'. Use evidence, logic and process to win influence.
9. Be inclusive. We adopted the moniker 'accounts-based strategy' as it's a joint sales and marketing initiative.
10. You need energy to drive momentum. I got energy by never letting go of my vision, challenging the status quo and committing to take action.



Using ABM to foster a growth mindset

Gemma Davies

Gemma Davies, global ABM strategy at ServiceNow, has a challenge for marketers running an ABM programme

"A moment's insight is sometimes worth a life's experience."

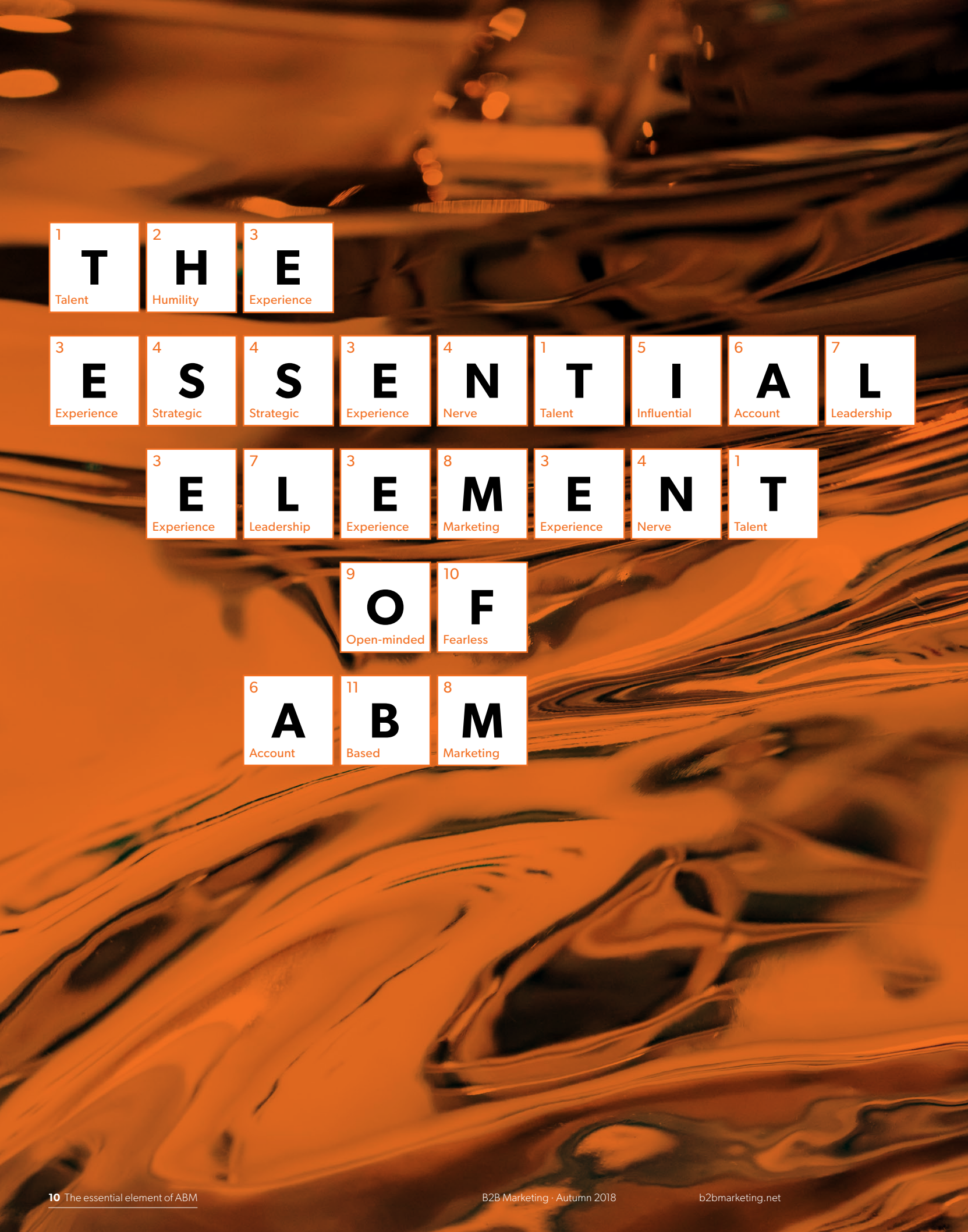
This quote made me think of the growing importance of being open to new insights. It's why cultivating a 'growth mindset' in my own teams has been so important to me, especially when embarking on an ABM journey.

A growth mindset makes employees better team players, they can learn more or become smarter if they work hard, persevere and view challenges and failures as opportunities to improve their learning and skills. Dedication, hard work, learning and resilience – all of these are key when running an ABM programme.

It's one thing to be able to identify, aspire to and reward a growth mindset before you kick off an ABM programme, but how do you use the impetus of ABM to actually foster and develop that kind of mindset among your team? For me, the following steps are key:

- Identify all your stakeholders, clearly define their roles, and highlight their value to the programme to them and to the rest of the team.
- Create a compelling vision that aligns both the core strengths of your team with the core values of your customer.
- Encourage and celebrate collaboration and education across functions, departments and specialisms.
- View failure as 'success in progress'.
- Provide time and space for people to indulge their curiosity to explore, experiment and share their lessons.
- Tie professional development to personal ambitions.

My challenge is if you're working on an ABM programme, pledge to sit in a room with cross-functional business divisions. Work with them to collaboratively design a programme that meets their needs. You'll be rewarded with many lifetimes' worth of experience to shape your moment's insight.


1 T Talent
2 H Humility
3 E Experience
3 E Experience
4 S Strategic
4 S Strategic
3 E Experience
4 N Nerve
1 T Talent
5 I Influential
6 A Account
7 L Leadership
3 E Experience
7 L Leadership
3 E Experience
8 M Marketing
3 E Experience
4 N Nerve
1 T Talent
9 O Open-minded
10 F Fearless
6 A Account
11 B Based
8 M Marketing

The success of your ABM programme hangs on the accounts that you select. Mary-Anne Baldwin speaks to Andy Bacon, the lead advisor for B2B Marketing's ABM Head-Start programme to find out more

You're likely to throw a wry smirk as you read the following advice, but take note – the first step in any successful ABM programme is to create a clear and full agreement on what ABM means to your business.

It's an obvious statement, but far less apparent is how to achieve this alignment, or how easily it can be destroyed.

"People struggle to describe ABM in a coherent and unified way. That's because it exists differently in every organisation," says Andy Bacon, the lead advisor for B2B Marketing's ABM Head-Start programme.

While you can cherry-pick your flavour of ABM there is no off-the-shelf solution for any of them – simply a nuanced approach that leaves it subject to interpretation. "It's a programme that needs to be tailored to how your business goes to market, its organisational structure and its offerings," explains Andy.

To convince your board, executives (and perhaps partners) that a 'spray and pray' demand generation approach is limited, you'll have to pitch a more palatable alternative – one that includes clear, measurable and achievable objectives that sit as much with marketing as they do with sales.

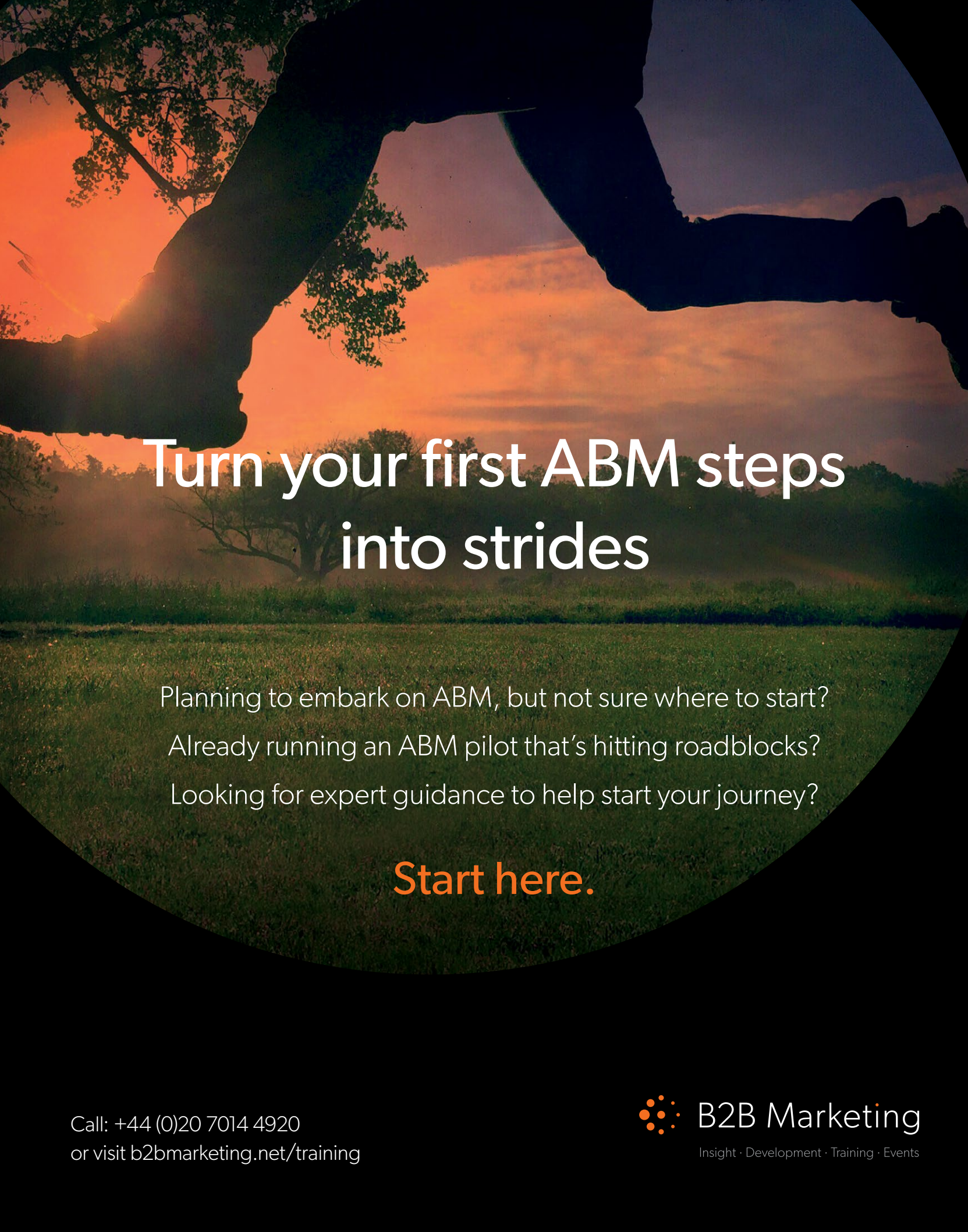
'Know thyself. Know thy ABM strategy'. That's your motto to live by, just don't live it alone. The earlier you make friends with sales the better. That's not just because you need to work as collaborative allies, but because you need a unified mission statement that you can sell to the board and beyond.

Account-based strategy

"The biggest areas of conflict between sales and marketing are building trust versus managing expectations," says Andy. And in this, you will need to find a balance.

Too many marketers pitch ABM to sales rather than making them their pitching partner. That leaves marketers over-egging their promises in a desperate attempt for others (both sales and the board) to see the value of ABM. "Marketing is so keen to create buy-in that they are prone to oversell ABM. It also doesn't know what it's up against so may mismanage expectations," says Andy.

The alternative is a complete lack of buy-in from sales, which manifests in locked accounts and an over-protective distrust in what marketing might do with them. "Sales will either ring-fence its accounts or fire hundreds your way expecting you to manage them all," Andy surmises.


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"When accounts aren't properly selected you get a loss of alignment and poor motivation"

"The biggest problem with ABM is that it has marketing in its name," he adds, while arguing for a rebrand to the rather more inclusive 'account-based strategy'. "It's not about what marketing is going to do, it's about what sales and marketing are going to do together."

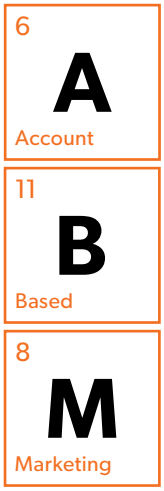
Andy's three core tenets of successful account selection

Account value:

Don't be lured into selecting an account just because it's a big brand, focus on what that account means to your business. That means putting a number against its existing pipeline and volume of potential business. This marks the difference between the sales person's dream deal and marketing's due diligence on the real business opportunity.

Achievability:

You need to assess how realistic it is to achieve your objectives with this account. How likely are you to win or retain your business with this account? Do they have a complicated buying unit and do you know how to engage with the people in it? What's your competition and how deeply entrenched are they in this account?



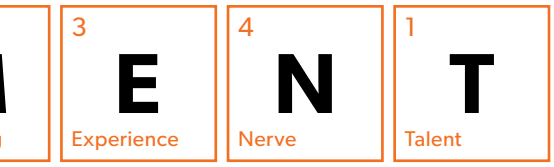
Co-operation:

Are your chosen accounts already engaging with you? If they don't know you, or don't like you, you're bound to have an uphill struggle. You also need to measure the likelihood of having support from those within your own company. If you chose an account that was 'owned' by an uncooperative member of sales you may find they become your biggest blocker.

Account definition: Your route to success

According to Andy, one of the most effective ways to secure water tight alignment across the company is to nail your account definition, yet too many people drift over this process with a cursory nod to their biggest clients or prospects.

"There is a lot more to this than most people think. When accounts aren't properly selected you get a loss of alignment and poor motivation," he says.



Poorly selected accounts means you're less likely to gain results, which can demotivate everyone involved. Conversely, delivering some quick wins is the best way to boost internal morale and buy-in, and this should be factored into your account selection. Choose accounts that will allow you to secure some success in the first quarter or so. A 'win' doesn't have to be ROI but could mean improvements in your net promoter scores or other engagement metrics.

While ABM can be used to win deals with new businesses, Andy advises that the best place to start your ABM practice is by retaining and growing your existing accounts, in particular those you already know a great deal about.

"Under a grow and protect strategy you will clearly have more data on how that company is working with you," Andy highlights. "Strategic ABM is really all about knowing what the business wants to achieve in the next few years – it relies on intent data to find out how to help them on that journey."

Ask yourself whether you have a right to win the business. Do you have proven knowledge, experience and expertise in this account? If not, it might not be the best fit for ABM.

THE INFORMATION AUDIT

While it's advisable to pick accounts that you already know, don't kid yourself about the amount of information you may still need to uncover. Once you've selected your accounts, you need to carry out an audit of what you know about them already plus any new information that has to be gleaned.

The five 'whats' behind your information audit

- What information do you need to have?
- What information would you like to have?
- What information do you already have?
- What are the gaps between these three?
- What are the sources from which you can find information to plug those gaps?

What you need to know

- What are company's challenges and needs?
- Which of your competitors already sell to them?
- How happy is this account with its current suppliers?
- Is this business growing, restructuring or changing in any significant way?
- Where are they on their sales cycle?
- What's the size of the decision-making unit (DMU)?
- Who's in the DMU?
- Who's the key purchasing influencer (both on paper and in practice)?





WHAT CAN WE LEARN ABOUT ABM FROM THE TECH SECTOR?

The tech sector was where account-based marketing was born, so where better to look for advice on what the best do differently? Paul Snell reports

If you want to witness how ABM has evolved, and how it's pioneers are still pushing that agenda, there's no better place to look than the tech sector.

It was there, at the turn of the century that forerunners such as CSC, Unisys and IBM began to codify the principles of account-based marketing.

Those philosophies have increased in popularity among tech marketers. According to the responses of last year's B2B Marketing *Account-based marketing benchmarking report*, 80% of marketers in that sector were either discussing, or in the early stages of implementing, an ABM strategy. Half anticipated their focus on ABM to increase in the 12 months ahead of them.

But even in tech, ABM is an evolving discipline. There are still challenges to clear, such as determining the best approach, how to scale up, and how to create alignment with sales.

What makes ABM in the tech sector different to elsewhere?

When it comes to the application of ABM, the short answer is not much. The principles of ABM remain the same, even though the customers and their challenges may be different. Having said that, there are a number of characteristics that make ABM a particularly good fit for the sector.

More people are involved in the purchase decision

As technology became increasingly complex, the number of people involved in the purchase decision also rose. According to Grad Conn, CMO at Sprinklr: "We're seeing companies look at their technology infrastructure as a source of competitive advantage. Tech decisions have gone from involving one or two people, to strategically involving the whole c-suite and large buying committees."

Services are often more 'abstract' than in other sectors

IT services will often vary from customer to customer, depending on their needs. According to Dorothea Gosling, global head of pursuit marketing and demand generation programmes at DXC, ABM is a great fit for this type of sale because it's necessary for the seller to prove its relevance to the customer.

There's a rise in consultative selling

Often in tech the sales process begins with an attempt to discover the client's business issue, as customers are not always aware of the IT solutions available to them. This lends itself to a tailored ABM approach.

There's a lack of differentiation

Many customers would struggle to spot the difference between one tech provider or another. This is where ABM can be helpful. "The differentiation you need to demonstrate is its application to that customer," says Andrea Clatworthy, head of account-based marketing at Fujitsu.

"Tech decisions have gone from involving one or two people, to strategically involving the whole c-suite"

Changing the mindset

According to our experts, one of the biggest issues under any ABM programme is the change in mentality. "It's always about understanding what the customer needs, and convincing them to buy our [solution] – rather than selling them our [solution]," says Andrea. "It's a different mindset. Part of the skill is enabling the customer to see the benefit, rather than the complexity."

It's not just the customers who needs to be reeducated. This shift was a challenge when Sakina Najmi, CMO at Criteo, first introduced ABM at her organisation. "It's such a huge investment. It's a big chunk of the budget going through to a small chunk of customers. That didn't go down really well," she says.

It led to a repositioning of what was on offer. "We called it 'strategic account marketing' because ABM had become a word had become synonymous with a mindset that if you spend money you don't get any direct return. It's only now we've started calling it ABM."

Account definition and identification

It won't always be marketing's responsibility to come up with the target account list for ABM. In fact,

for the majority of the tech businesses we spoke with, this list was either determined at a strategic level within the business, or by a dedicated account team.

The criteria for the accounts you target will be dependent on your company's objectives. There is no catch-all for the tech sector, but there are considerations that prove paramount to most.

- Company size
- Deal volume
- Deal size
- Importance of the relationship.

There will also be internal considerations:

- Business priorities
- ABM budget
- Team capacity
- Nature of your products or services.

You should also consider whether your strategy will target prospects, customers, or a mixture of both. At Fujitsu, ABM focuses on growing existing accounts rather than prospects. "It's all about growth," says Andrea. "The 54 accounts in our programme are existing accounts. Some of them may be buying a very small part of the portfolio, which we want to increase. Or it might be about retention or contract renewal." Criteo has a different approach. The majority of its accounts are new prospects as ABM can have the most impact on that part of its sales cycle.

Another consideration is whether marketing is seen as a true partner by those involved. DXC takes the accounts identified as being of strategic importance, then looks at the propensity of the account team to work with marketing. "From a marketing perspective we look at how well prepared our accounts and sales teams are," says Dorothea. "My team only works with sales and accounts where we get an equal seat at the table. We look at what sales bring to the party, and how we as marketing can enhance and surround that. Those are the best engagements."

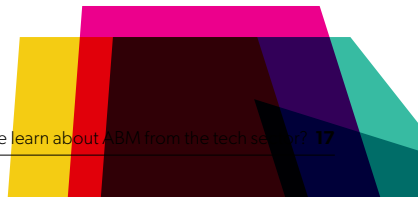
SAKINA NAJMI'S TOP ABM TIP

"You must have the right mindset – especially at the c-level. That takes time. We started thinking about ABM in 2016, but didn't launch until later that year because we took a long time to come up with the right strategy, educate the team and ensure we're all talking about the same thing.

"I have a challenging internal audience, the CEO, CFO, CRO, and the MDs of each region. All of them want the same thing – dollars – but they have different needs and priorities in delivering them. And they use different terminology. You need to understand each and every person, and personalise their education. I had to do an ABM campaign internally to get approval for the ABM campaign for our customers!"



"My team only works with sales and accounts where we get an equal seat at the table"



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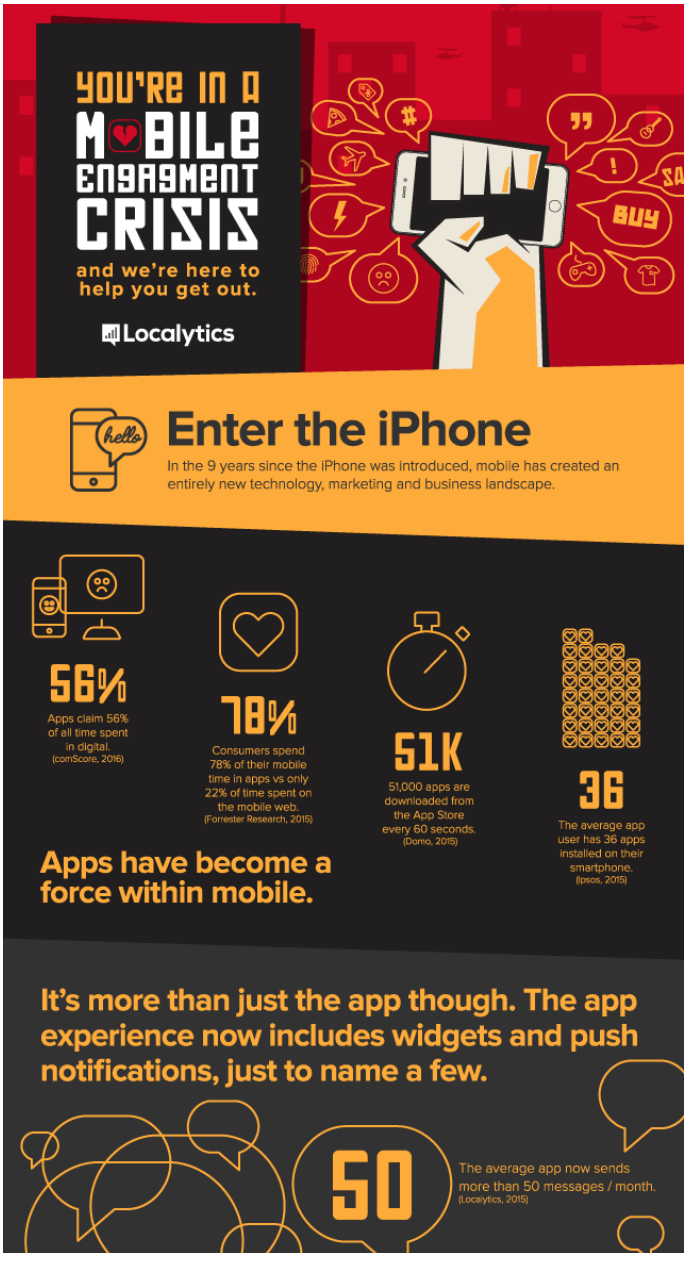
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Case study:
LOCALYTICS PILOT ABM PROGRAMME

A focus on selecting the right accounts made Localytics' pilot ABM programme a success, says its VP marketing, Lisa Skinner. The mobile app marketing and analytics company was sponsoring the Salesforce Marketing Cloud user conference, part of the brand's mobile engagement crisis campaign. Wanting to ensure it had meetings scheduled in advance of the show, it used technographic and firmographic data to guarantee prospects were enterprise-level accounts that were committed to mobile.

The attendees were targeted through a combination of email and direct mail and offered an iPad for taking a meeting. They were then followed up by the business development team. The activity only featured limited personalisation, just the prospect's name and the SFMC logo to highlight being a Salesforce customer.





This article is an extract from our free guide *ABM lessons from the tech sector*. To learn more including:

- How to identify decision-makers
- How to determine the right 'flavour' of ABM for you
- How to measure your success; and
- Case studies from GumGum, Sprinklr and more.

Go to bit.ly/abmlessons to download your free copy

TAKE YOUR MARKS FOR ABM



ABM is often seen as more of a marathon than a sprint. David Cotterill tells Molly Raycraft how to make it across the finish line, while reaping lucrative rewards along the way

David Cotterill, marketing director of Europe, isn't long into his task of setting up a global ABM strategy at Conduent, but he has a wealth of prior experience to help him. He's one of the few who experienced the merits of ABM early on. Back in 2006, he took lucrative returns from a $30 million deal he won through a mere six-month ABM-led sales cycle.

Having ridden the highs and lows, he's ready to reveal his 10 biggest lessons (and mistakes) at the B2B Marketing Conference in November. Here, we ask him a few questions in preparation for the day.

What made you want to start ABM?

David: It started back in 2006 when I set up European marketing at a company called Cognizant. We got the opportunity to work with a large Scottish life insurer. The question was how an Indian organisation (Cognizant) could work with a fairly dowdy Scottish company.

By doing account research it became obvious there were lots of parallels between that organisation and Cognizant. We started to uncover the things that were keeping them awake at night that we were able to solve. We were very quickly able to conceive a strong value proposition based around the clients' needs and wants. Through that process we signed a $30 million deal in a six-month timescale. But it wasn't until afterwards that I realised we were using account-based marketing.

ITSMA had been talking about account-based marketing for a while and I hadn't really realised the relevance. We were still doing what I call 'spray and pray' marketing and doing a lot of outbound lead generation.

Are quick wins possible in ABM?

As long as you've got a really focused set of accounts, you can deliver outcomes in a matter of weeks, that's because the amount of intelligence you can attain in today's very digital world is amazing. We can understand the stakeholder's personality, what content they're



consuming, what discussions they're having; you can really get to the bottom of that individual's challenges.

You measure a win in a number of ways, revenue is obviously important but it's also about how your relationships are developing and how your reputation is maturing in that organisation. If all of the three Rs – revenue, relationships and reputation – are maturing, then the account is becoming more critical to the business.

It's difficult to develop new business quickly through ABM but expanding an account can be done in a matter of weeks or months.

How did you feel about starting ABM from scratch? Was there a lot of pressure?

Absolutely, because the CEO was flying in to meet the client from India so we needed to have very compelling reasons as to why those meetings had to take place. We had to understand the different stakeholders and the different business issues they were facing; the only way was to deep-dive.

How did you train your marketers to do ABM in a short timeframe?

The first thing I did was go to my network and pull in some good hires from the agencies I'd previously worked with. In today's world, marketers are still talking to you about the demand funnel. They haven't really understood having the accounts at the centre of what you do, and that's a critical part of account-based marketing.

You need to have the right people who have the right mindset and if they're just looking to 'spray and pray' or to drive through the qualification funnel, then they're not in the right place for today's marketing funnel.

They could have all the marketing qualifications and traditional marcomms qualifications but it won't make them ABMers. It's a different mindset and capability.

It's difficult to develop new business quickly through ABM but expanding an account can be done in a matter of weeks

You said you regarded starting ABM as a 'once-in-a-lifetime opportunity', do you feel this will become a more common scenario for marketers? Is ABM growing in popularity?

Clients today expect you to understand everything about their organisation; they expect you to come enabled with a properly structured discussion based around their issues. It's purely driven by the customer. If you're not delivering that, the client switches off and actually you're no longer portraying your company in the right light.

If somebody calls you with something that's not relevant you get annoyed and never want to deal with that organisation again. If they contact you about something that you were looking at on the internet 10 minutes ago you can start a well-conceived conversation that will ultimately lead to a good outcome.

What was the most difficult lesson in your ABM journey?

I think the biggest lesson was in how to flip the conversation from inside-out to outside-in. Putting yourself in the client's shoes to understand their issues and then come up with a value proposition

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Campaign manager, Flight Global

"A really good course – lots of ideas generated"

Marketing manager, Eurocell

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that resonates with their challenges. That becomes incredibly compelling.

How did you bring that concentrated relationship with the customer into sales and marketing's focus?

- **Research:** Start by understanding customer challenges and working with the ABM team to ask how you can marry skills and capabilities to deliver on these.
- **Communication:** Establish a strong communication process.
- **Scale:** This is the hardest aspect. You need good agencies, and just because it was a good ABM agency two years ago, doesn't mean they're still at the top of their game. You've got to constantly evaluate and ensure your marketing agency deliver on what your clients are looking for.

How can a marketer source an ABM budget if the board aren't prepared to give it to them?

Try to shift as much budget from 'spray and pray', demand gen and traditional marketing to ABM as quickly as possible. Then build confidence with sales, business development, client partners and start small.

Start with one or two accounts, give them confidence that you can add a lot more value than they can on their own.

ABM is an additive business model so you need to constantly build the business case. Only when you get into the annual budgeting cycle can you clearly define the outcomes that you've achieved through revenue, relationship and reputation. Then you can make the case for a bigger budget, or acquiring different budgets from sales or business development.

The ideal account-based marketer

- Insightful
- Digitally-savvy
- Good all-round marketer
- Extra passion
- Desire to solve problems.

ABM at Conduent

Conduent has been conducting account-based marketing globally since it was founded in January 2017. When the digital platform decided it wanted to have a more consistent approach to ABM, it brought in David.

David and his team have been building the necessary skills and capabilities at a regional level. He's now confident US and Europe have a consistent methodology.

Conduent has marketers dedicated to delivering ABM campaigns, who have a very clear strategy. David says the headcount isn't significant but they shifted some away from brand, business development marketing to concentrate on putting the accounts at the centre. Although there's a dedicated team, he feels elements of ABM have been integrated into the marketing organisation whether that be PR, brand or creative.



THE EVOLUTION OF EMAIL: FROM SUCCESS TO SPAM



It's 40 years since the first marketing email – a B2B message, no less – was sent. We've come a long way since then, but have we become anaesthetised to its effects? Rebecca Ley speaks to marketing leaders and email experts to find out where the channel goes from here

An unsolicited email pinging into your inbox is not a recent phenomenon. In 1978, marketing manager at Digital Equipment Corporation, Gary Thuerk, sent an electronic message (as it was known then) to 400 users of ARPANET, a forerunner of the internet, promoting his company's computer products. While the initiative resulted in $13 million worth of sales for Thuerk, the message provoked anger among users and a reprimand from the network's administrators. This earned Thuerk the unwanted moniker of the 'father of spam'.

This 'batch and blast' approach has proliferated because a small percentage of recipients will still buy the product being marketed to them, but 40 years on from Thuerk's email, we've reached saturation point. So where do we go from here?

The privacy challenge

"GDPR brought a new dawn," says Paul Collier, marketing and inside sales director, western Europe at software company IFS. "If you followed it to the letter, your opt-in rate was on the floor. But it's challenged us to be creative."

For Paul, the new data protection regulation meant confirming what IFS had

been practising for several years – no more junk emails. "Spamming our customers is not a good thing. We haven't sent a mass email to our database for five years," he says. IFS has been moving away from ticking off every channel, becoming less reliant on email and prioritising other strategies. This was prompted by audience fatigue and a general anaesthesia from email, all of which has been exacerbated by GDPR. "It challenged us to say, if not email, then what?"

Emma Westley, CMO of Polymatica Europe, agrees the privacy regulation has had an impact. "It made us think about clearing out our database. If they're [people] not engaged, what's the point of keeping them?" Email, in her view, has become less and less relevant. "Even if you try to make it personal, it's still a blast channel and can put people off." Email should be used for newsletters and company updates, but not as a way to communicate a hand-crafted message. "Don't pretend it's personalised, people aren't stupid."

"Don't pretend it's personalised, people aren't stupid"

MA is part of the problem

Ironically, the success of marketing automation systems in the past few years may also be part of the reason why so many customers are now switching off. "Over recent years, marketing automation has caused a swing back to the use of email as a main channel of communication," says Emma. "Many platforms map a journey around email because vendors have pushed it that way."

With the trend now towards more personalised messaging, the tech has had to evolve in order to keep up. Marketing platform HubSpot has recently released 'conversational marketing', an integration with messaging platforms. They've realised, Emma says, that getting to the next stage means turning away from an email-centric approach and using a mix of channels.

Paul agrees, saying marketing automation is a useful tool only if you have a good database, something email effectiveness also relies upon. "Marketing automation tools are all a bit obsolete if you don't have good data. You can have the best tools for sending messages, but if no one's listening, you're sharing in a dark tunnel."

He suggests MA platforms' reliance on email means their relevance is rapidly reducing, but "they may come back into their own once databases improve".

Alternative approaches

If your customer and prospects are suffering from email fatigue, what other approaches can you take? Emma has seen success with other platforms such as LinkedIn and WhatsApp.

"One-to-one marketing means choosing the right channel for the customer and content you're trying to promote." Polymatica has seen good engagement from LinkedIn with a combination of sponsored content and one-to-one messaging. Emma suggests using social to track customer behaviour and make initial contact, then connecting via WhatsApp for meeting at events and building relationships.

Paul argues there is still a firm place for email in the marketing mix, but as a

EMAIL MARKETING: A TIMELINE

1971 Computer engineer Ray Tomlinson sends the first email (to himself).

1978 Marketer Gary Thuerk sends the first mass email, resulting in $13 million worth of sales.

1980 Email hosting sites begin to appear.

1991 Hotmail launches as the first free web-based email service, introducing personal emails available to all, transforming direct marketing.

1992 The first marketing automation platform, Unica, is launched.

1993 'Email' replaces the term 'electronic mail' in popular vernacular.

1997 There are now 55 million email users worldwide.

1998 The Data Protection Act is updated to ensure all email marketing includes an opt-out.

1999 The number of email users worldwide has reached 400 million.

2003 In Europe, the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulation introduces defining rules for marketing permission.

support function. "The best GDPR-led campaigns we've done are the ones in which we've researched a company and looked to have a positive effect on its objectives." One way to get this across, he says, is to create a message that is articulated in the customer's terms and uses their language.

"We've gone through this 'purge' and now there are fewer emails, but we must start being more creative to get more engagement," says Paul.

Paul found that targeting a specifically researched company meant five times more engagement. He trialled different account-based marketing approaches with a mix of expensive low-number direct marketing (DM) campaigns, cheaper high-number DM campaigns, and an email and social approach. It was a success in all cases. "The key target company we ring-fenced represented 3% of the overall audience in terms of whatever tool we deployed, but 15% of the engagement."

Emails with empathy

To get emails right you must keep them simple and obvious, says Steve Kemish, who is a managing partner at Junction marketing agency and a trainer for B2B Marketing. The best way to use email marketing is to map your customer journey and look for gaps where email can help 'nudge' a customer to move them along. "Too often emails are hard to scan and don't have a clear call to action."

He also recommends an email strategy that focuses on the long-term. He advocates creating a series of messages over time to nurture and engage opportunities, rather than putting all of your hopes into 'one big send'.

Emma agrees that email can still be useful if customers are responding to that channel. She argues that if people are still wedded to their desktops or want time to digest content, email still works. Emailing long form content, such as white papers, that customers can read on a commute, for example, is one way to use it – as long as that's what the customer wants.

Emma adds that if somebody's actually thought about crafting an email properly, and using language that's familiar to the reader, it can come across as very human. The best tactic is to treat people like they're friends or colleagues, rather than names in a database. Do the research, come up with a crafted message, and take the time to get to know who you're emailing, otherwise it won't be opened, she advises.

Such creativity and personalisation is likely to be the future of email, which means marketers should prepare. "There's a broader skillset needed," says Emma. "We need to start thinking like a salesperson, thinking about one-to-one conversations and engaging with the customer."

While Paul agrees that emails should be empathetic and demonstrate that you understand them, he isn't convinced email will regain the prominence it once had. "The answer isn't email and it probably isn't social," he says. "It's definitely challenging marketers – depending on their grey hairs. I used to do this 10 or 15 years ago, so I understand the balance."

2007 Apple releases the first iPhone.

2009 Return Path reports nearly 30% of commercial emails sent to users do not reach their inbox.

2011 Email is used by 75% of British iPhone owners, making it the most popular internet activity on the phone.

2012 40% of marketing emails are opened on a mobile device.

2018 GDPR comes into force, imposing new obligations on how companies use personal data.

2019 It's estimated there will be 3.8 billion email users worldwide by the start of the year.

2022 Email users are expected to reach 4.2 billion.

FIVE WAYS TO BOOST YOUR EMAIL PERSONALISATION

Daniel Incandela, CMO of Return Path, tells us how to personalise your email

"Personalisation is one of the biggest challenges email marketers are wrestling with right now," says Daniel Incandela, CMO of email deliverability advisors Return Path. "Get it right and it boosts engagement, conversions, and revenue. Get it wrong and it alienates your audience, accelerates list churn and creates negative publicity."

1. Use email data so you can implement personalisation that goes beyond a name. Consider other elements of the email, such as content, context and tone of voice to maximise engagement levels.

2. Build a profile of a typical subscriber to ensure emails are sent at the optimum time of day. Using segmentation and conducting a deep and honest analysis of who is engaging and when can determine which types of emails can maximise subscriber engagement.

3. Take into account the recipient's location and environment. For instance, if the weather in the recipient's area is sunny or hot then promoting weather-appropriate products or using relevant greetings can significantly boost email engagement rates.

4. Think about the time of year. The perfect time to open an email will change depending on the season. During the summer, it's no surprise that customers are likely to be active later in the evening compared to the winter. Send the right message at the right time, based on recipients' behaviour.

5. Consider the device the recipient chooses to use. Over the past five years we've started to witness new behaviours, such as subscribers triaging their mail on a smartphone and later opening the saved messages on a desktop to take action. The future of email personalisation needs to incorporate these behaviours into the sending strategy.

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Working your way to the top



David Orme,
SVP sales and marketing,
IDEX Biometrics

David Orme joined IDEX Biometrics, a manufacturer of fingerprint sensor products and technology, as VP sales and marketing in July

Although not a marketer by career, David has significant marketing experience through his work in corporate acquisitions – not least in his previous role as CEO of the Dutch software developer Bell Identification, which was acquired by Rambus in 2016.

He shares his advice on how to find the right leadership style and manage any potential concerns among staff when joining an organisation, as well as how to best to get sales and marketing working together effectively.

How do you know which leadership style is appropriate in an organisation you've just joined?

It's important to do your homework to get a feel for the management style. Once you have your feet under the desk, it's useful to take some time to understand the tempo and rhythm of the business. I like to do a lot of listening! I always appreciate hearing from executives about their targets, key milestones and main objectives.

What's the best way to manage people in your team when still getting to know them?

I think it's all about being generous and taking the time to hear them out. I like to have some guaranteed time with my team, so I plan at least two sessions with each person every week.

As my role focuses on sales and marketing, I like to have good metrics from CRM reporting to review with the team. The team react differently to the metrics and there's always pressure to win, but not at any cost.

What's the secret to great alignment between sales and marketing?

As you've seen, I like metrics, so having an agreed plan and managing the sales funnel from lead through to order means marketing and sales alignment is measured.

Ensuring marketing and sales are both working to the same objective is key. At IDEX Biometrics, the two functions are very closely aligned, we know what's needed and work together (we speak continuously!).

How do you address the fear of change that accompanies the arrival of a new leader in a company?

It really depends on the circumstances into which you find yourself placed. Previously, I've joined teams where there is conflict, poor communication, poor results and little organisational structure. For me, it's about getting the facts as soon as possible and being decisive regarding the necessary transformations.

It is more effective to make a single change than continually tinkering. In organisations, spread over multiple geographies, I like to find a local leader who I can really get behind. I'm a big fan of each locality having a single leader, as often there isn't time to consult everyone on changes.

How can marketing leaders boost their emotional intelligence?

It's all about understanding how to tailor yourself to bring the best out of everyone. At IDEX Biometrics we have tried to achieve this by encouraging our staff to buy into the four key values we hold at the heart of our business: being ingenious, collaborative, passionate and honest. These are all very human values and play to an emotionally intelligent way of working.

We aim for everyone to approach things in clever, original and inventive ways. IDEX is disrupting the market and we believe that to succeed we must think differently and creatively. For a tech company, we're pretty good at embracing our emotions.

What's the best way to unite a team around a shared purpose?

Simple. Build a plan, agree the metrics, create a clear timetable and communicate, communicate, communicate. Celebrate success together when it happens and react to things that need improvement quickly.

I'm a big supporter of getting on a call or getting together in person, rather than operating over email, which is sometimes difficult to organise for multiple geographies. I believe that if the timing is right then it's worth the inconvenience of the odd late night or very early morning, to give people the chance to say something. I'm also a fan of getting people together quarterly, which is a useful way to spend valuable time together.

HOW TO FIND YOUR 'EUREKA!' MOMENT



Neuroscientist, author and TV presenter, Dr Jack Lewis, explains how to improve your work performance, mental focus and creativity through simple brain training techniques.
Interview by Mary-Anne Baldwin



Dr Jack Lewis
Neuroscientist

Your morning starts by checking your emails and flipping back and forth to the addictive, never-ending stream of Instagram images, often before getting out of bed. Does that sound familiar?

How about this scenario? At work, your attention jumps to every email or tweet that pops up, and along with each comes a gnawing sense of anxiety that you must reply immediately.

If that didn't register, this one will definitely get you. You're finally home, crashed out in front of the latest Netflix series, yet your mind is still wandering. One eye on the screen, you send a text to your friend, jot a few things on your grocery list and take another little look at Instagram.

This is you keeping up to date and in control, right? Not quite. According to the neuroscientist and author, Dr Jack Lewis, each little distraction comes at a cost. Every twitch of the attention takes a few pennies from our mental reserves until our funds are too depleted to master the important things like, you know, your entire marketing strategy.

"We're multi-tasking ourselves into concentration oblivion," Jack told his audience of senior marketing leaders at the B2B Marketing Leaders Forum in September.

"Being reactive can make you feel on top of things but the problem is, if you switch your attention from one task to another and then back, there will be a 'switch cost'. It will take you a while to get back to where you were mentally… For some people that can be 10 or 15 minutes."

This applies at all levels of life, and is having a particular impact on workplace productivity. "There is a limit to what a human can do," says Jack. "People work so hard now it's not possible for them to do their best work – they're too overstretched to dedicate the time they need for creative problem solving."

Prioritising your downtime

So how does a neuroscientist start his day? Jack begins by meditating, surrounded by virtual reality projections of an alpine lodge.

Those who aren't Googling 'VR alpine scenescape' in a multi-tasking frenzy of article-reading-meets-online-research are probably finding Jack entirely unrelatable.

WHY MULTI-TASKING ISN'T GOOD FOR YOU

A study conducted by Stanford University professor Clifford Nass, found that people who regularly flip through their social media and emails are less able to maintain focus on other tasks. The study found that these 'social media multi-taskers' can handle two distractions, but when that rises to four their performance falls. Get to six and it plummets. This is not the case with people who don't use social media frequently. The study also suggests that chronic social media multi-taskers have lower performance, even when they're not multi-tasking.

The solution:
Based on this, Nass advises that you limit the number of things you work on to two at any time. Another tip is to spend at least 20 minutes dedicated to a task before switching to another.

"The most important feature of the brain is that it adapts and responds to the environment around you."

But before you fall too heavily on either side, let me get to my point. Jack's VR fir trees really are just the wallpaper – the important bit, as he would tell you, is that he has prioritised downtime. He's found a space, virtual though it is, to unpack his mind from the deluge of information. (And on the side, he's proven you really don't need to be a hippie technophile to try a bit of mindfulness.)

Jack believes that leaders and their teams are much better served by postponing the 'to-do' list until after 10-15 minutes of mindful meditation – a practice scientifically proven to improve physical and mental health, plus cognitive performance. It can even help to quieten the mind sufficiently for those 'Ah ha!' moments of innovation to rise up into awareness.

Take the infamous ancient Greek mathematician and inventor, Archimedes. He resolved the problem of how to measure the volume of an object when he stepped into the bath and watched the water level rise by the same volume as his body. This 'Eureka' moment didn't come to Archimedes when he was deep in thought (which he had already tried very hard at), but during a restful state.

There are between 1000 to 5000 synapses for every neuron in the brain, and the brain houses 86 billion neurons. That means there are more connections in your brain than there are stars in the galaxy

That rest might come through meditation as Jack prefers, or a bath like Archimedes – regardless, there is one thing to remember. "The most important feature of the brain is that it adapts and responds to the environment around you," says Jack. Treat it like it has the attention span of a goldfish and it will begin to behave like it.

Neuroplasticity

Virtual landscapes aside, it's not an unfamiliar story. In fact many businesses, from large corporates to small start-ups, have invested in the likes of mindfulness training and lunchtime yoga initiatives. But has it really seeped into how employees live on a daily basis? Or, have workplace demands, social media and (oops, shall we go there?) life's constant stream of marketing burrowed a little deeper into the collective psyche?

These three things are effectively a form of brain training, it's just that it's the wrong kind. "It's happening whether or not you know or want it," says Jack. "Anything you do regularly and intensively over long periods of

time has the potential to lay down new synapses in the pathways dedicated to performing those functions. That creates faster and more efficient communication between the parts of the brain that need to work together to get things done. The trouble is, all that multi-tasking may well be reinforcing pathways that make us hyper-alert to new information, but at the expense of those that help us focus."

The great thing, of course, is that by changing your habits you can retrain your brain and become increasingly better at the things that matter most to you. To build positive new behaviours means pushing yourself out of your comfort zone a little bit each day, not just once a week. Even then, you need to keep up the good work. "It's no good doing it every day for a month and then giving up as the brain won't change. Or if it has, it'll change back," says Jack.

If meditation is not your thing, Jack has provided two other practices that can improve attention, performance and the ability to tap into creative solutions (see: Henri Poincaré: Structure your hours of work and Thomas Edison: Tap into your Hypnagogic state).

NEUROPLASTICITY IN PRACTICE

Brain scans of taxi drivers before and after doing 'the Knowledge' – the drivers' map of London, which includes 20,000 routes and 25,000 landmarks – showed they had enlarged the hippocampus, the brain area associated with memory.

THE NEUROSCIENCE OF MEDITATION

Yi-Yuan Tang, Britta Hölzel and Michael Posner mapped the physical effects of meditation on the brain. Using 20 different studies they found that the anterior cingulate cortex – the region associated with attention – changes in shape and activity in those who meditate. The practice also engages fronto-limbic networks, which regulate emotion and reduce stress.

Source: The neuroscience of mindfulness meditation, published in Nature Reviews Neuroscience, 2015.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE GREAT CREATIVE THINKERS?

Let's look to history's greatest creative thinkers, to find working patterns and techniques that boosted their cognitive functions.

Henri Poincaré: Structure your hours of work

French mathematician and theoretical physicist Poincaré worked under very structured hours, dedicating two hours, twice a day to complicated mathematical calculations. Absolutely no distractions were allowed during this time. He spent his evenings 'freestyle' reading on diverse subjects to build his general knowledge.

Easy alternative:

Set out of office notifications for the same time or day each week, so that you can work without distraction. Avoid spending your most productive hours, which are early in the morning, on low-level tasks.

Thomas Edison: Tap into your hypnagogic state

Over his lifetime, Edison – famed for inventing the light bulb and motion picture camera – wrote 1093 patents, often using hypnagogia to aid his creative thinking. (Other fans include Salvador Dalí and the German chemist Friedrich Kekulé).

Hypnagogia is the transitional state between wakefulness and sleep, a time of deep thought processing. To access thoughts at that point, Edison caught himself at the moment just before falling asleep. To do it, he held ball bearings, which dropped to the floor when he fell asleep, waking him back up.

Easy alternative:

Set an alarm for 20 minutes giving you enough time to enter a hypnogogic catnap and wake in time to capture your thoughts. Dig around in your ideas and scribble down anything that surfaces.



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Adapt or die?
Leadership in the era of martech transformation



It's often said B2B Marketing is in a state of transition – so much so that marketers have come to accept change as the new normal. Joel Harrison examines the implications for marketing leaders

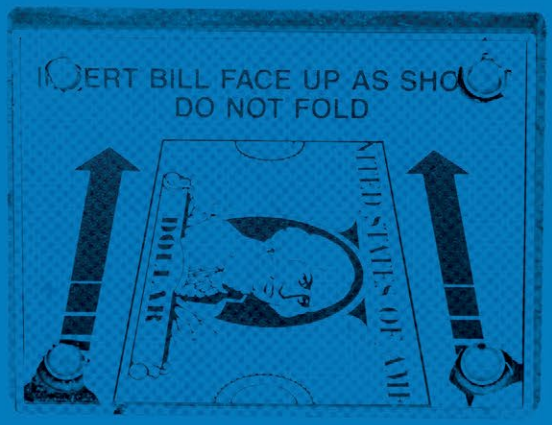
B2B organisations are under pressure to transform. Markets are being disrupted, buyers' preferences are changing, and new marketing techniques are emerging every day. It's crucial that B2B marketing leaders have a clear vision of how that transformation will impact them, including a plan and an assessment of the skills and resources needed to achieve it.

Our new report, *Adapt or die? Leadership in the era of martech transformation*, examines the extent to which B2B marketers are prepared for this transformation and how to tackle it. In particular, it looks at the role that technology is playing in driving and enabling change, plus the nature of resourcing that marketing leaders must allocate to it.

In this exclusive extract from the report, we look at how this digital transformation is changing leadership, and the increasing importance of the role of marketing operations as the compass and guide for this journey.



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Marketing leadership

How should the marketing team be structured and led through this new world? What kind of skills and expertise are required to drive the best results?

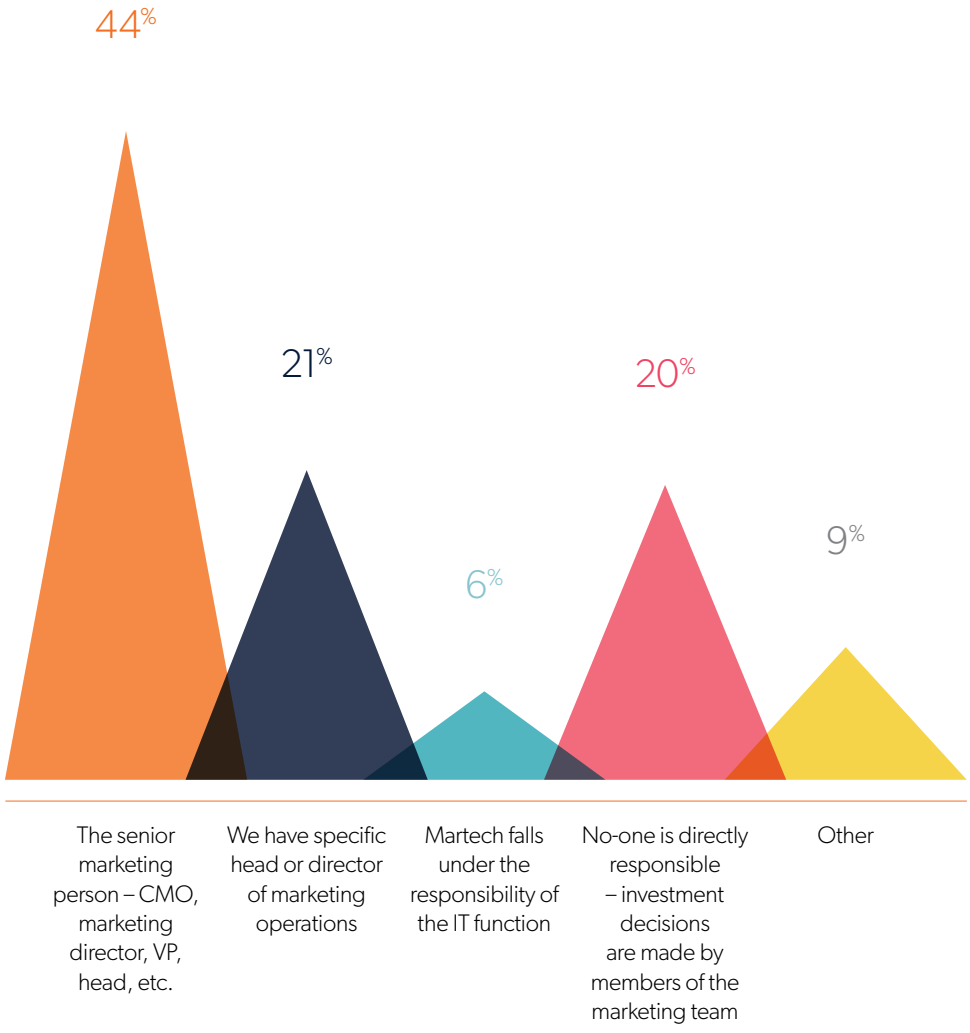
As the accelerated use of martech continues to drive change in both the structure and function of the marketing team, it will correspondingly impact on the role of the marketing leader.

This will have many facets, which will relate in particular to budgeting and the engagement of the executive leadership team. We'll explore some of these aspects ahead.

Although having a formal operations role and/or team is increasingly common in B2B organisations, the extent to which it's able to act autonomously from the CMO or marketing leader is mixed. Nearly half of our respondents said the departmental leader is still responsible for the martech decisions. In many instances this is likely because the individual responsible for marketing ops is not senior or experienced enough to make those decisions.

One in five respondents have devolved this responsibility to a marketing operations leader, while for a similar number of respondents, such responsibility is distributed evenly around the team, aligned with functional need. Responsibility for martech only falls to the IT team in 6% of instances.

Where responsibility for marketing technology sits in the average organisation



How has your role changed as a consequence of the digital transformation?

"Fundamentally my job is about getting the right message to the right person at the right time, in a meaningful and impactful way. The fundamental premise is the same – I need to know a bit about everything. Not be an expert but be able to ask pointed questions. We need to experiment and understand what the client needs but we must be careful not to get too carried away with tech. As people, and as marketers, we like new and shiny things, but we must be careful not to do something because it is a fad."

Annabel Rake, CMO and partner, Deloitte UK

"My challenge is to translate the business need into digital strategy. I know the direction, but not necessarily how to get there. I rely on people in the team to provide information and perspectives, but they can be too narrow in their focus and thinking. It's up to me to take the broad approach. As regards marketing operations: I am 60% of the way through creating this role. I have identified someone in the team who I expect will be in role by the end of our financial year. I have already had the discussion with them, but it's not an overnight transition. We need to ensure that their existing workload is covered. Once they're in place, it will allow me to put my head up and see what's going on."

Simon Rusling, partner and head of marketing, Barnett Waddingham

Which of the following statements best describes the marketing leadership situation?

33%

The CMO needs to be personally involved and visibly responsible for leading digital transformation

25%

Digital transformation should be the remit of one senior member of the marketing team – working with the CMO when necessary

2%

Digital transformation should be led by external parties that have an unbiased perspective on priorities and requirements

1%

The IT function should lead digital transformation

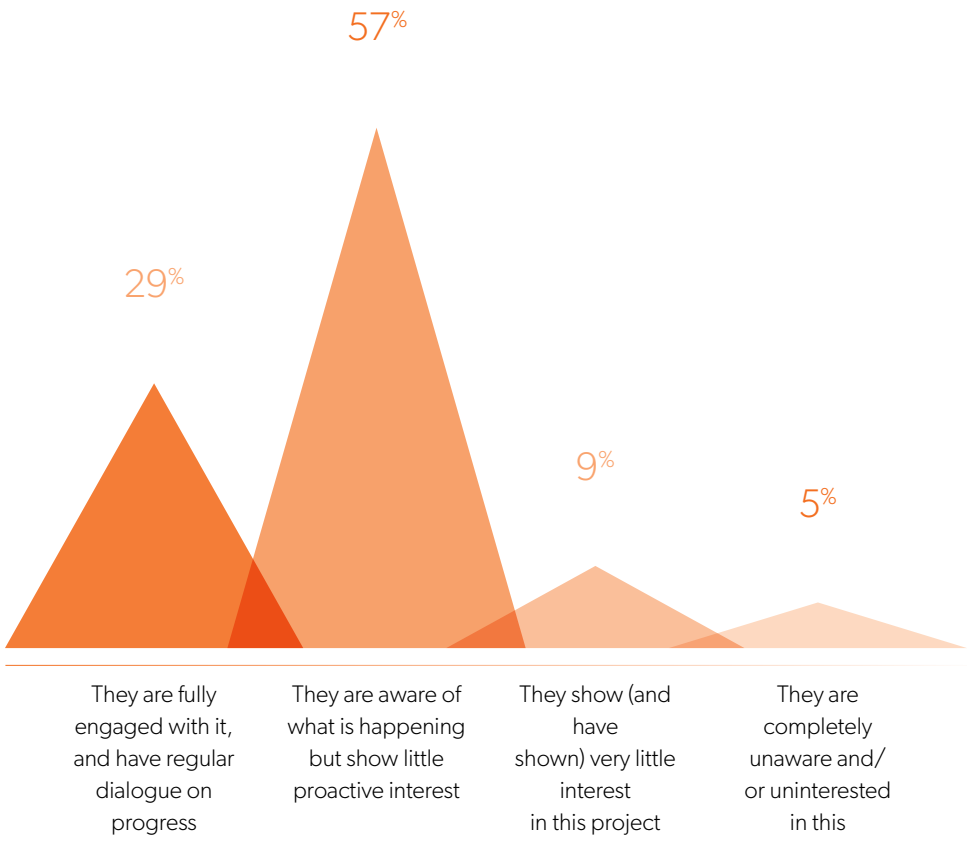
2%

The CEO should be responsible for digital transformation, as it transcends marketing

37%

It's a multi-function challenge, with most or all of these stakeholders participating to a greater or lesser extent

The level of engagement from the c-suite, board or executive leadership team in digital transformation



When it comes to leading digital transformation, the opinions of our respondents were broadly split three ways, with (very roughly) a third believing that this project should be led by the CMO, someone else in marketing, or by a multi-disciplinary team with stakeholders from different departments (including IT). Significantly, very few respondents felt that IT or the CEO should lead this project.

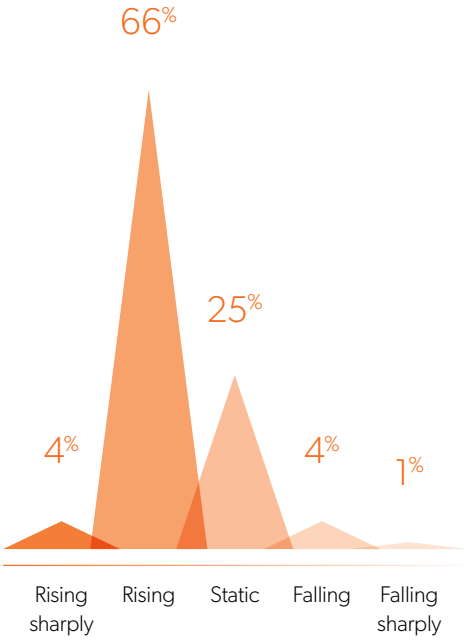
As with many of the questions in this survey, individual circumstances will play a big role in determining the respondent's answer – for example, where there is a senior marketer leader or a marketing ops function, it's likely they would lead the project. Alternatively, in an organisation with a relatively small marketing function and a sales department that is better resourced and respected, it's likely that individuals from the latter would play a more significant role.

Much to marketing leaders' frustration, the c-suite isn't renowned for its focus on what marketing is doing and the progress it's making. However, digital transformation is a topic that appears to be very much on the executive board agenda.

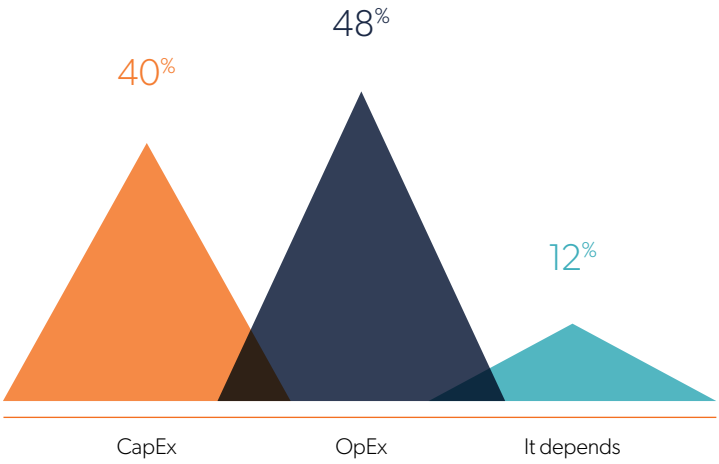
Just under 30% are proactively engaged with this project or process, and are regularly involved in dialogue on the topic. A further 57% are aware of what's happening, without necessarily taking a proactive involvement, and only around 15% take little or no interest in digital transformation.

This suggests transformation can be used as a means for marketing to better align itself to the business and demonstrate its effectiveness in meeting objectives. As such, it can be both cause and consequence of marketing's rise to prominence.

Martech budget changes



Budget structuring and investment planning



Investment in martech is clearly on the rise, although with a degree of caution. Although 70% of respondents reported expecting to spend more on martech, only 4% said investment was rising sharply. This may reflect caution on the part of marketing leaders in ensuring that they're generating ROI from their existing tech stack, and/or difficulties in building business cases for new investment.

A quarter of respondents expect investment in martech to remain unchanged, and only 5% expect it to fall.

While almost half report a fluid approach to budget allocation for the deployment of martech, 48% are largely allocating from operational expenditure. This can be a pragmatic means of securing the necessary budget, but it can also mean the short-term suspension of other activities to pay for it – in particular fulfilment through agencies, which in turn is driving some brands to re-evaluate their use of this external support.

More significantly, for big martech projects such as implementing marketing automation, it can be difficult to sufficiently bend the rules so that OpEx can cover the necessary costs. Many marketing leaders are not used to having discussions with financial directors or CFOs about CapEx investments for marketing, but given the changing nature of martech, these conversations are likely to become more common. Marketers may need to cultivate strategies for this.

For big martech projects it can be difficult to sufficiently bend the rules so that OpEx can cover the necessary costs

What is marketing operations?

Numerous definitions for marketing operations are circulating, but all agree that it's a critical part of the marketing function, at least potentially. Each of the different definitions will resonate with different organisations, and marketers considering implementing this function will find the most appropriate one for them.

Sometimes it's described as the 'backbone' of the marketing department, delivering planning, governance and allowing the team to deliver their objectives. Elsewhere, a hub and spoke metaphor is used, with operations as the hub sitting centrally to the wider functions, such as budgeting, planning, resource management and competitor analysis.

Marketing operations and technology

The role of technology is without question one of marketing operations' core responsibilities, but it's far from the only one. Indeed, few would argue that marketing operations exist for the sole purpose of deploying or enabling marketing technology.

The default drivers of martech excellence are not the technology itself but the expertise in selecting, deploying and actualising it. That comes down to marketing operations, and the increasingly critical role of martech in all aspects of marketing means that tech – and more critically marketing operations – are in greater demand.

Integrating marketing operations into your team

The word 'formalising' is used here because much (if not all) of the responsibilities held by marketing operations are fulfilled prior to its inception, either by different members of the team, or the team leader.

It may be that technology drives the need for a marketing operations function, but once established, it becomes both an enabler of, and a catalyst for, marketing's wider transformation beyond the realms of martech.

For a B2B marketing leader creating an operations function, one of the inherent challenges will be to separate their own role from that of this new one – and understand how the two need to interact in the future.

As our data shows, marketing operations functions currently in existence are commonly led by individuals with a marketing background, rather than one in technology. This means they can often be recruited from within the existing marketing team.

This can offer junior team members great opportunities for advancement and strategic responsibilities. Given the potentially wide-ranging nature of the role, the individual responsible may even become, by proxy, the departmental leader-in-waiting.

For a discipline that is conspicuous by its absence in many B2B organisations, marketing operations is, on paper, a critical part of an effective marketing team. You could call it the backbone of the marketing function.

Given the potentially wide-ranging nature of the role, the individual responsible may even become, the departmental leader-in-waiting

Comment from Clarasys

What does marketing operations have to do?

- Own and manage the customer experience, journeys and supporting processes
- Own and govern data
- Provide insight and analytics
- Deliver and manage change
- Own and manage marketing technology in partnership with IT
- Deliver ROI.

What does good marketing operations look like?

Where has marketing ops been done really well? That's the question I asked myself having read B2B Marketing's report. Maybe I've been unlucky, but nowhere immediately sprang to mind.

In my experience, the focus on well-established and successful sales operations far outweighs the attention and investment in really good marketing ops.

Marketing now has far more moving parts than ever before. You have to integrate creative, data, technology, process and people to deliver the experience that we, as customers, expect. And those expectations are greater than ever before.

In many ways there are as many similarities with technology delivery as there are with the more established business operations domains such as sales operations.

This isn't one person, but a team working together to make best use of their skills. It will call on all the members of the team to be T-shaped and to have, what to me are, core consulting and project management skills.

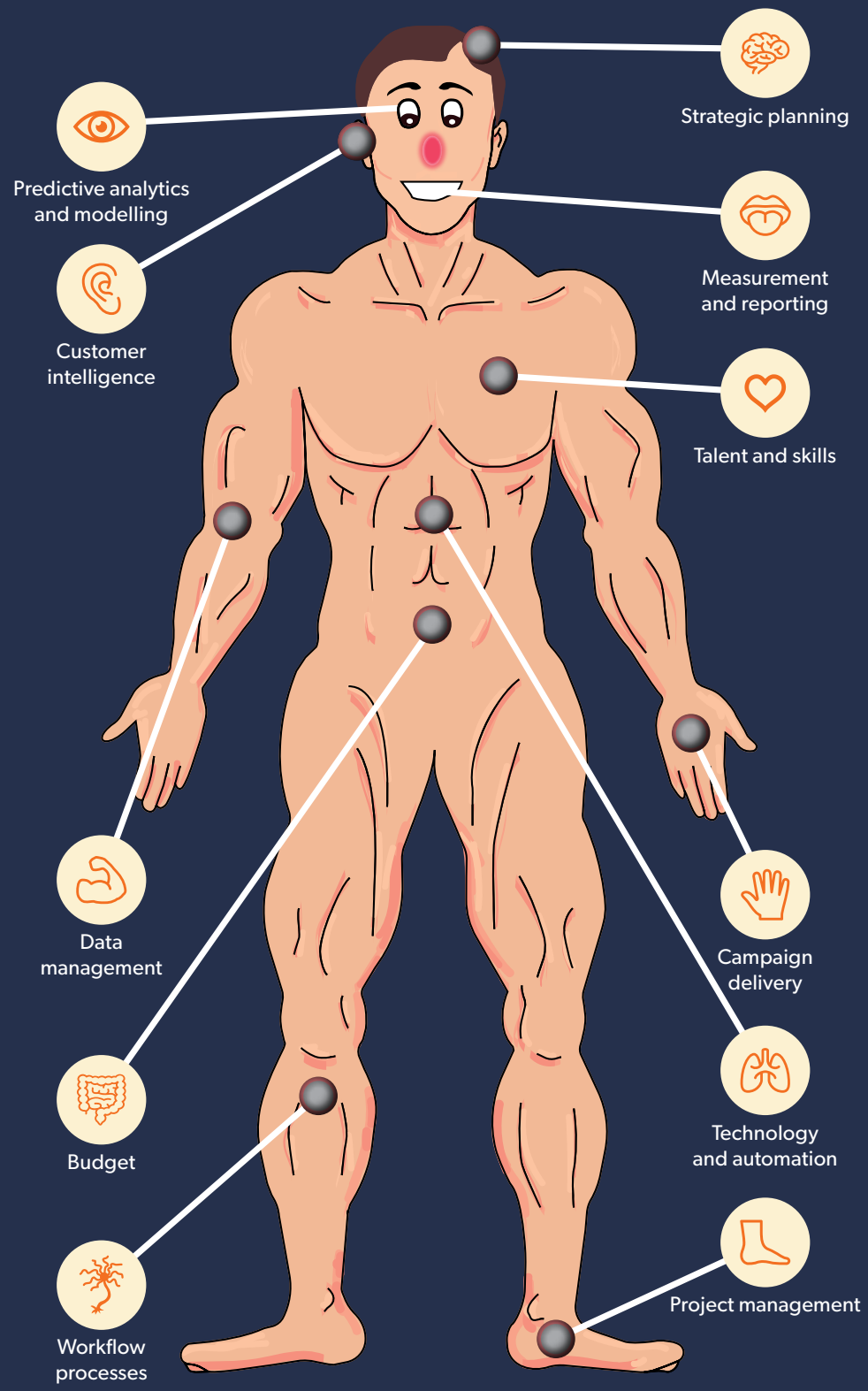
To be successful, the marketing operations team needs a clear vision of what you're trying to achieve and a way of prioritising the ever expanding workload it will receive. It will have to have executive sponsorship to ensure that key initiatives are driven across the business and not dismissed as "just for marketing" – data springs to mind.

Marketing operations isn't optional anymore. If you want to execute with an evolutionary approach to customer centricity and deliver on customer and business expectations, it's a necessity.

Are you built for marketing operations excellence?

B2B Marketing

What skills and attributes do you need to tone and how do you avoid the shocks?



Strategic planning: The brains behind the effort will be your clear strategic planning.

Predictive analytics and modelling: You'll need predictive analytics to hold a clear vision of the road ahead.

Customer intelligence: You must keep an ear to the ground on your customers' needs, challenges and feedback.

Measurement and reporting: Expect to measure and report to key stakeholders on the performance of all endeavours.

Data management: You'll have to put some elbow grease into your data management and analytics.

Campaign delivery: You'll be a guiding hand for the delivery of campaigns.

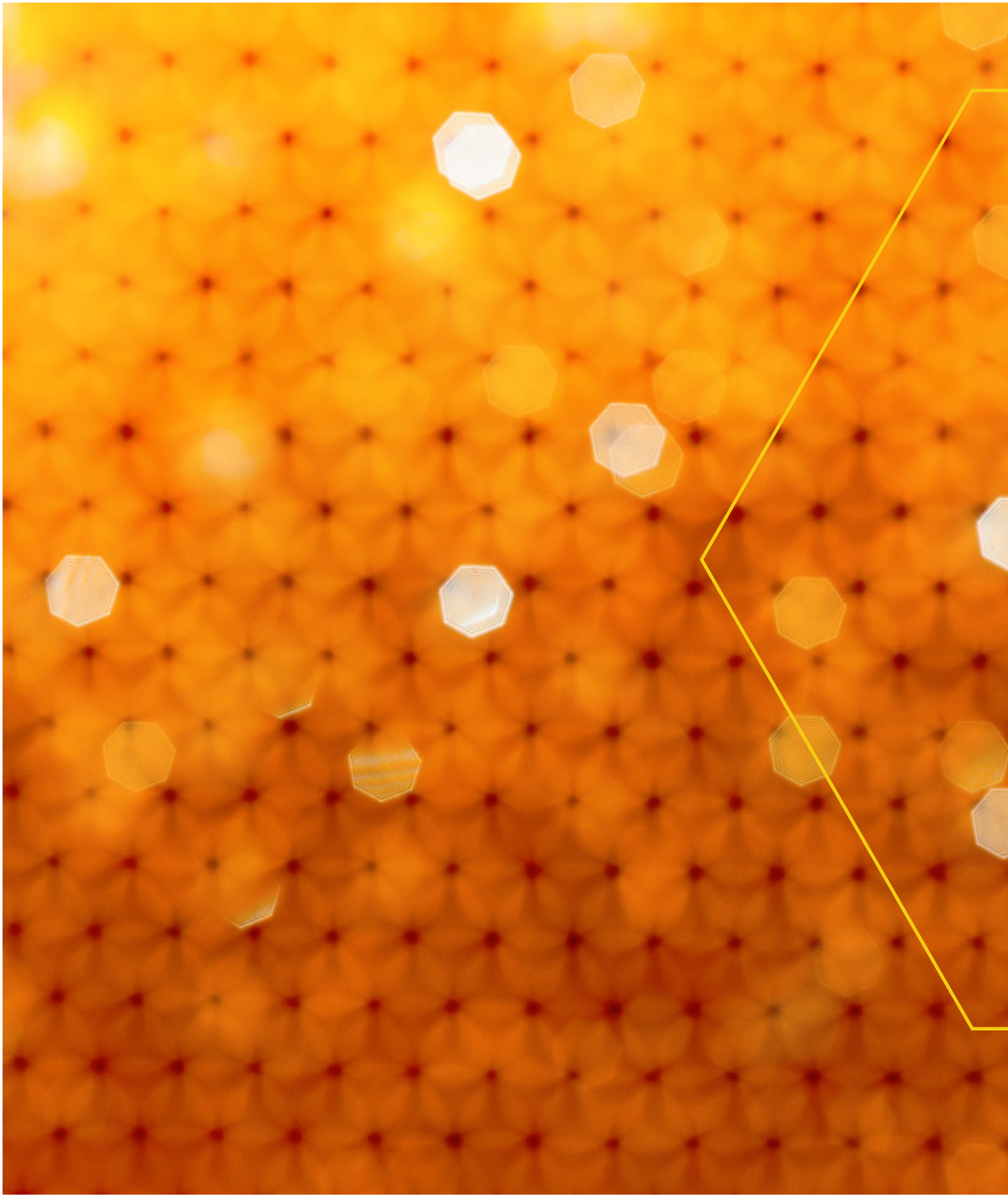
Talent and skills: People are the heart and soul of the operation, together with the passions and skills they carry.

Budget: Central to everything, the budget is the guts of operations.

Technology and automation: A key part of the job is buying and integrating technology – from your CRM to attribution software.

Workflow processes: Just like the blood circulating through your veins, your workflow processes are the life force of all marketing operations.

Project management: Running and managing numerous projects will of course be vital to the role.





POPULATING THE HIVE: HOW TO ENCOURAGE INTERNAL CRM ADOPTION

A CRM system stands or falls on how well you can get your sales team to use it. Molly Raycraft **investigates how you can drive internal CRM adoption to ensure your office buzzes with efficiency**

Bees are known as one of nature's most efficient workers – dare I say, more so than the average human. The reason for this is not just instinctive survival skills. It's data.

Just like we have CRM systems, bees use audible codes that communicate with the entire hive. So it doesn't matter what department the bees work in, they'll know where the resources are and what's available. This is how the hive grows.

This harmonious communication system is something every marketer dreams of. But unlike bees, we work with sales teams.

We've all heard the excuses – they just don't have the time, they're too busy doing deals, they can't see the value in keeping it updated. These attitudes don't only undermine our lead generation activity, but also mean the touch points a prospect may have had with marketing are lost.

We asked marketers to give us their advice on the best ways to drive successful CRM adoption internally.

1. Identify your adoption issues

"Regular reporting and dashboards will help show who are the laggards and where the roadblocks are."

Conrad Mills, marketing director, Mastek

Before you fix a problem, you need to know what it is. By setting up automated CRM lead reporting (which details new leads, where they've come from and how they've been dealt with), you can identify weak spots in the CRM adoption. From this you'll be able to closely target the people who need extra encouragement.

2. Set an example

"Ask for updates via the CRM, rather than on email or Excel. Also make sure all of your client meetings are logged in the system with good meeting notes or actions."

Christelle Fraysse, CMO, Workbooks

If you don't use the CRM yourself, you'll never convince others to get onboard. Incorporate its use into whichever activities you can. This will emphasise just how vital your CRM is to the business and encourage good habits.

3. Change the culture

"Lack of adoption is not something you can only blame users for, you need to have an adoption programme that drives an insight driven culture."

"Lack of adoption is not something you can only blame users for, you need to have an adoption programme that drives the culture"

Hideki Hashimura, CMO, redk

Pre-conceived ideas and negative past experiences can have a detrimental impact on uptake. It needs to be tackled if you want to coax employees toward better use of your CRM. There is no silver bullet to sales adoption, but you can create cultural change using a combination of carrot and stick.

4. Get senior leadership support

"Work with sales leadership to agree a formal lead management process with service level agreements around the follow-up and use of the CRM."

Conrad Mills, marketing director, Mastek

Like most business initiatives it's most likely to see success if it's backed by other senior leaders. In particular, you'll want to have sales leadership onboard to encourage the sales team when you can't.

5. Prompt your sales team

"Sales teams are able to view activity history immediately and receive alerts to speak to promising leads."

Katie Jameson, head of EMEA marketing, Act-On

Programme your CRM to remind the sales team of its value. By setting up lead alerts via automated emails, the sales team will be alerted to promising accounts they may have otherwise missed. This forces sales to follow-up marketing qualified leads, and makes sure there's no room for excuses.

6. Set goals

"Identify the top, middle and bottom of your funnel goals, as well as establishing what data you want to know when a prospect exits the funnel."

Brian Anderson, director of sales operations, Act-On

Sales teams are very goal-orientated by nature, so appeal to this. Set clear goals and make the deadlines well known to all, as this will also make them more likely to do it.

7. Make sure the CRM is easy to use

"Over-engineered CRMs can cause confusion and discourage adoption. If possible, look to automate processes."

Brian Anderson, director of sales operations, Act-On

It's also imperative that your CRM is accessible. In today's workplace, it's guaranteed staff will need to access information out of the office, whether that's at home or on the road.

8. Provide on-going training

"Some people need structured classroom training with real world exercises, others prefer a demo and to just get on with it."

Christelle Fraysse, CMO, Workbooks

Your staff won't become CRM superstars overnight; it will take education for CRM tasks to become effortless. Work closely with your CRM administrator and provide feedback to help further optimise processes. It may also require you to tailor your teaching approach. Allocate a period of time for your staff to learn – but make clear once the honeymoon is over, using CRM will be non-negotiable.

9. Integrate CRM with marketing automation

"Don't use your CRM and MA systems as separate platforms. By integrating you're not only encouraging adoption, but it is a great way to get sales and marketing working more closely."

Conrad Mills, marketing director, Mastek

This also has the potential to improve value for the sales team. If they can see which prospects are surfing your site, and the pages they're reading in real-time, it will help them drive the sales cycle more effectively.

10. Incentivise adoption

"Tie a percentage of the bonuses, say 20%, to the quality of CRM data. This percentage is not paid to the sales people if data is considered incomplete."

Hideki Hashimura, CMO, redk

Incentives should always result in a positive outcome for an employee. If there aren't rules on what happens when sales teams don't use CRM, they won't act on it.

THE CARROT OR THE STICK?

How to motivate sales to use your CRM

- Remind sales that the CRM can format orders and quotes quickly and professionally. This will help them close deals quickly.
- Provide a connected website and CRM so the leads are noted and are easily traceable.
- Provide a mobile-friendly CRM that can be accessed on any device out of office.
- Ensure case studies are stored in the CRM, and are easy to find and send to customers.
- Set up reports and dashboards that will highlight exactly where the money is.

Quick tips for when you need to get tough

- Only pay commission if opportunities are loaded into the CRM.
- Pull out management reports to review how employees are using the software.
- Create a sales leaderboard to highlight adoption performance.

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Adobe and Marketo: Now you've bought it, what are you going to do with it?



What does this landmark $5 billion deal mean for both marketing automation as a category, and more importantly Marketo's loyal users? Spoiler alert: it's not necessarily good news, writes Joel Harrison

Joel Harrison is editor-in-chief and co-founder of B2B Marketing, and is an evangelist, advocate and all-round enthusiast for all things B2B. As well as speaking around the world on business marketing issues, Joel is responsible for the development of B2B Marketing's training and events activities.

So it's official: Adobe is to acquire Marketo for a whopping $4.75 billion, demonstrating the enduring appeal of MA as a central pillar of the marketing cloud proposition.

Indeed, so enthusiastic is Adobe about MA it's the second such vendor that it has acquired in this space – it snapped up Neolane in 2013 which it subsequently rebranded as Adobe Campaign.

But as Tom Jones might have said had he worked in martech, buying two MA platforms is not that unusual: both Oracle and IBM have already done this (purchasing Market2lead and Eloqua, and Unica and Silverpop respectively). In both instances, the first purchase disappeared without trace, while the brand of the latter lives on – and it's not unreasonable to think history might repeat itself.

There's another parallel with IBM's double-dip into this market: As we all know, marketing automation can be complex by definition, to the extent that it defeats some marketers' efforts to deploy and use it properly. But Unica (IBM's first such purchase) and Neolane (Adobe's first) reputedly took this complexity to a whole new level. A far cry from Marketo, which sold itself as being easy to use.

Meanwhile, although Adobe has undoubtedly gained ground with its CX-focused solution suite, its Campaigner platform is rarely mentioned in the same breath as Eloqua, let alone Marketo. In B2B circles at least, Adobe Campaign barely gets a look in. Adobe simply isn't a major player in the marketing automation space, and this move and the associated eye-popping fee is indicative of how much they want to be.

Marketo's acquisition by Adobe is not in the least surprising – its previous purchase by Vista Equity Parters for $1.75 billion in 2016 was for the express purpose of overhauling the business and selling it on again. The deal is arguably most significant as validation to date of Vista's expertise in turning around martech vendors who have lost their way.

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Perhaps the only surprise is the speed and the value: $3 billion on the pricetag after only two years. For context: It dwarfs the $600 million Adobe spent on Neolane, and even the $900 million that Oracle spent on Eloqua.

I predicted Adobe might make a move for Marketo in 2014, in the aftermath of IBM's successful move for Silverpop. This was an easy prediction to make, because if not Adobe, then who?

But where does the acquisition leave MA as a category? And what does that mean for the Marketo platform, its market position, and its customers? This multi-billion dollar investment is a huge statement of confidence in MA, and shows more than a decade after it first came to prominence, its successful use is still the definitive benchmark for success in digital B2B marketing.

Understandably Adobe are tight-lipped for now about what integration into its experience cloud might mean, and in particular what it will mean for existing users of either Marketo or Adobe Campaign. Given the scale, sophistication and success of Marketo, there's surely an argument to migrate users of the former Neolane platform into Marketo, and gradually shut down the former purchase.

Whatever strategy Adobe adopts, for the sake of Marketo's customers and B2B marketers as a whole, I hope they continue to invest in the platform, and don't let it atrophy through lack of investment, attention, interest and understanding of what they've bought… as sometimes happens in such situations.



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