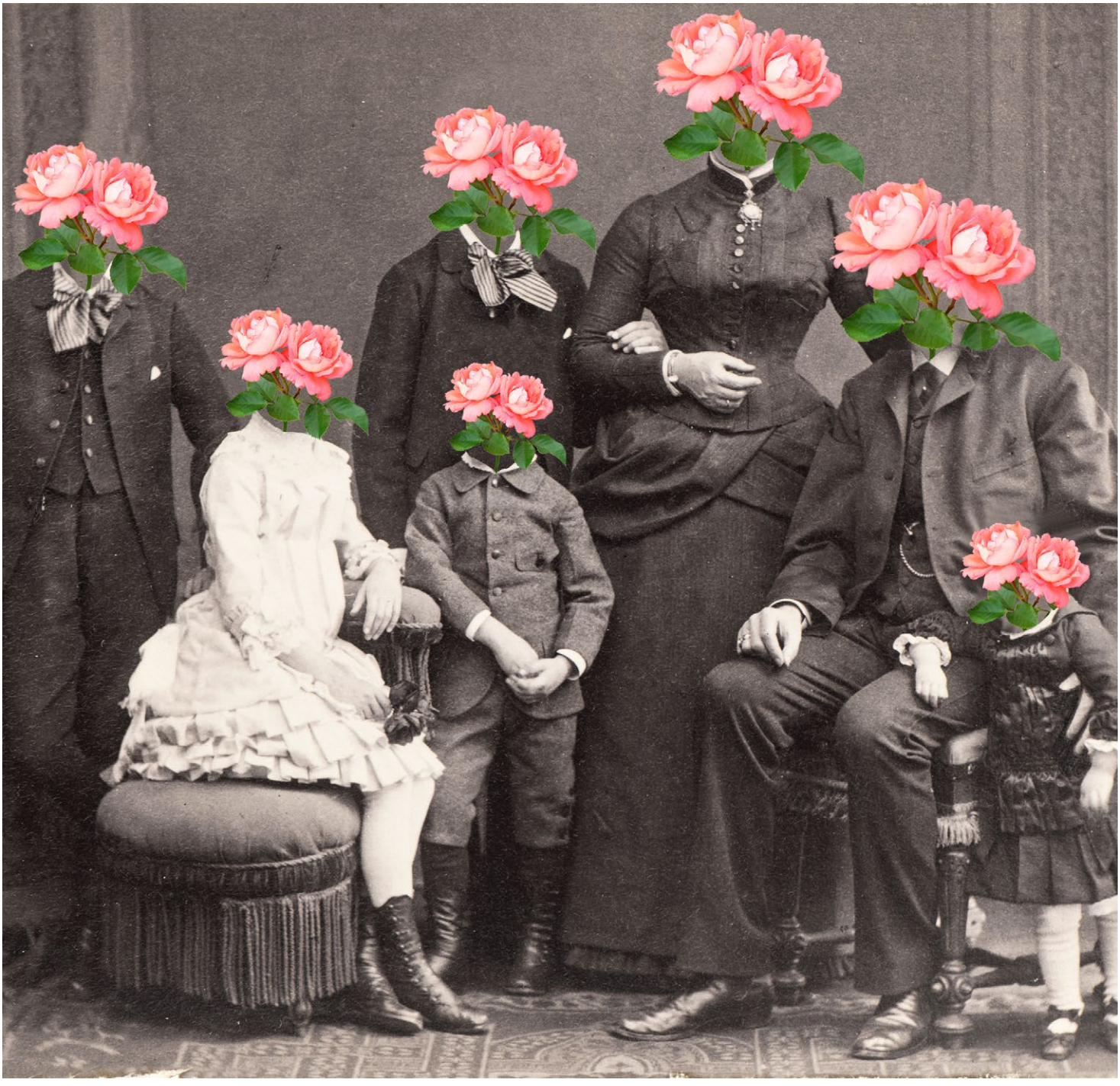
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BBN **THE WORLD'S B2B AGENCY**

Learning to embrace the irrational customer



Paul Snell
Deputy editor,
B2B Marketing

In my career as a magazine editor, it's often the things you don't anticipate to be controversial that cause the biggest commotion among readers.

While as an editor you experience sleepless nights worrying about the potential reader reaction to a particularly contentious or polarising article, it's sometimes the things you don't worry about, such as a change of font or a specific photo that cause the most problems.

It's a reminder that however well you might think you know your audience – or customers – they constantly have the ability to surprise you. Many speakers at the blockbuster B2B Ignite conference last month pointed this out, highlighting the frequently emotional and sometimes irrational decisions customers make.

Understanding these motivations is crucial when trying to identify and reach individuals within target accounts as part of an ABM strategy. As I found out in my piece starting on p10, the traditional organisational hierarchy is not always the best way to map the decision-making unit, so we've sought advice on alternative approaches.

As marketers, the ability to find and act on customer insight will be increasingly important – whether you're undertaking a rebrand (p18), implementing a CX strategy (p38), or simply trying to avoid mistakes as a leader (p34).

If you don't, that ability to surprise might turn into a nasty shock.

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B2B Marketing
Clover House
147–149 Farringdon Road
London
EC1R 3HN

Tel: +44 (0)20 7014 4920
b2bmarketing.net
info@b2bmarketing.net

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Editor-in-chief
Joel Harrison

Head of content
Mary-Anne Baldwin

Deputy editor
Paul Snell

Assistant magazine editor
Rebecca Ley

Digital content writer
Molly Raycraft

Social media executive
Susanna Hewitt

Head of media
Mitch Hole

Publishing director
James Farmer

Design manager
Nicola Stephens

Printing
Buxton Press Ltd

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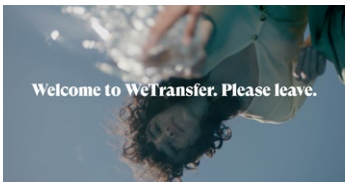
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Three marketing leaders discuss the value of understanding your customers' behaviour and the ability to relay that back to the business

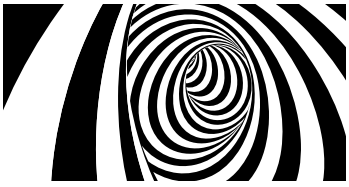
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Target acquired: how to get the right individuals in your sights through ABM

Struggling to identify the right individuals to target with your ABM campaigns? You're not alone. Paul Snell asks the experts how to pinpoint and reach them

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10 pitfalls every account-based marketer must sidestep

The path to successful account-based marketing is strewn with hurdles and traps. ABM specialist Andy Bacon outlines the 10 most common missteps and how to avoid them

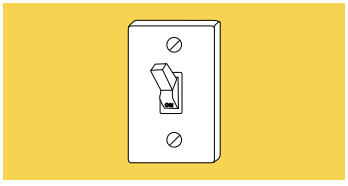
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Uniting the family

Uniting a set of disparate, distinct sub-brands is an enormous challenge. Molly Raycraft speaks to marketing leaders who've been through the process to share how they did it and what they learned

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B2B burnout: how marketing leaders can avoid a 24/7 work culture

There are numerous ways to deal with the stress of a high-powered job. Rebecca Ley talks to marketing leaders who've found a way to avoid burning the candle at both ends

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5 common leadership mistakes you're most likely making (and how to avoid them)

Everyone's suffered a B2B blunder or two, but how do great leaders turn failure into fortune? Five senior marketers reveal their biggest career mistakes, and how they turned things around

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Become the CXpert your customers deserve

Struggling to improve your customer experience? You're not alone. Mary-Anne Baldwin shares the survey results of 200 B2B marketers, showing there's a long way to go in the bid to beat our B2C counterparts

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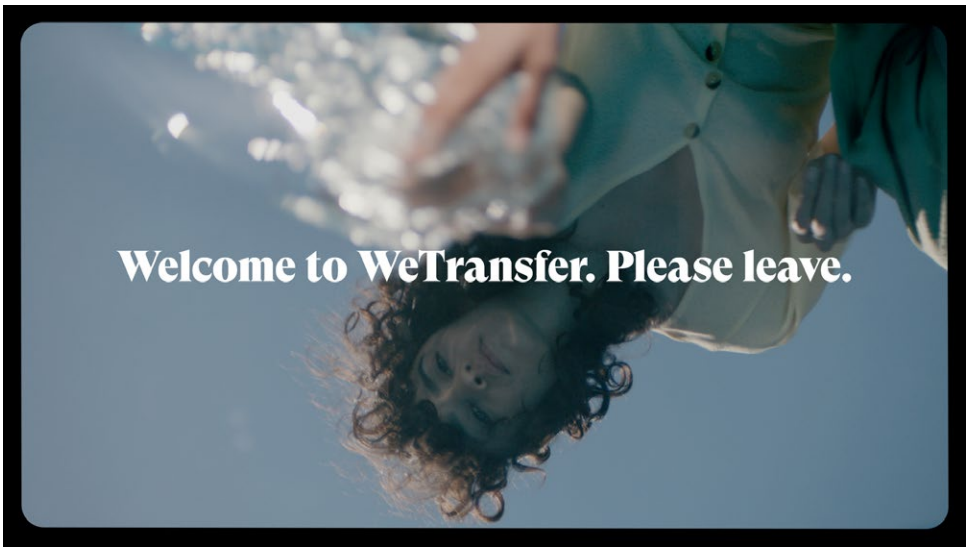


Accelerating your digital marketing transformation: B2B leaders share their journeys

Digital marketing is far from new. But digital marketing transformation (DMT) is another story. We talk to leaders about the benefits and barriers to success

STAR CAMPAIGN

WeTransfer tells users to ditch the screen and step outside



The file transfer provider's 'Please Leave' campaign pushes users away from their screens into the big wide world, emphasising its role in 'facilitating creative flow'

Reverse psychology is at play in WeTransfer's latest campaign. You'd think it'd be counter-intuitive for an online sharing platform to encourage its customer base to step away from their monitors – but it has done.

Its 'Please Leave' campaign is a response to the company's global Ideas Report, which uncovered how and where 10,000 creatives (WeTransfer's primary audience) get their best ideas from.

The study found 75% said the pressure of work, time management and online distractions were key obstacles in chasing their good ideas. So WeTransfer set about moulding a campaign to encourage their customers to spend less time distracted in front of the screen and more time absorbing the inspiration the outside world has to offer. By doing this, it aimed for users to create more products they could share through WeTransfer.

Julia Shapiro, senior director of marketing at WeTransfer, said the campaign was an acknowledgement of its creative user base. "It was meant to be a rallying cry to our community. To really say 'we see you. we get it and we're here to help'," she says.

It's also a reminder of why Julia and everyone else in the community got into the creative industry. "Sometimes it takes a step away from the screen to rediscover that inspiration that really gets you up in the morning."

Julia believes the differentiation from other tech brands has resulted in a successful reaction from its customers. "We've received a very encouraging response from our community," she says. "I don't think people are used to hearing this type of message

News round-up

ICO FINES BRITISH AIRWAYS £183M

UK data protection regulator the ICO has fined British Airways £183.39 million for infringing GDPR.

The fine relates to a cyber incident notified to the ICO by BA in September 2018, in which user traffic to the BA website was diverted to a fraudulent site.

Through this false site, customer details were harvested by the attackers and the personal data of 500,000 customers was compromised.

B2B CMOS AMONG TOP 10 MOST INFLUENTIAL

The CMOs of Adobe, General Electric and Cisco have been named among the top 10 most influential marketing leaders in the world.

Adobe's Ann Lewnes was the highest-placed B2B CMO taking fourth place.

The list, compiled by Sprinklr, Forbes and LinkedIn, also included marketing leaders from SAP, IBM, Deloitte, AT&T Business, Deloitte Digital, G2 and Accenture within the top 50 ranking.

PR AGENCY SEES 70% GROWTH FROM 4-DAY WEEK

After trialling a four-day week for a year, Radioactive PR has increased its earnings by 70% while retaining its net margin.

Employees now work 31 hours, Monday to Thursday, and are paid the same salary. Staff are 'on call' on Fridays, should clients or journalists need them.

Lunch hours were reduced to 45 minutes, and holiday cut from 25 to 20 days. Staff have gained 44 additional days off work per year.



from a tech company… it's the reason the WeTransfer brand has always resonated so well with our users. We put people first."

Preaching and practising creativity

The main focus of the campaign is a whimsical video, narrated by a poem read by American writer Roxane Gay. The poem aims to embody the company's file sharing values such as 'keeping you in flow', and 'the best ideas happen offline.'

Damian Bradfield, CMO at WeTransfer, describes the poem as a reminder of the cultural paradigm shift in the relationship we have with technology. "Go outside," he says. "Get coffee with a friend. Put your phone down. Our view was, is, and always will be: people first, creativity second, technology third."

WeTransfer is not just focusing on these values at an aesthetic level. The company has also run initiatives to give users back their time: this includes removing paywall barriers from its premium content.

The company has also built the value of making users' lives easier into the wider organisation. Julia says this is clearly demonstrated through its three new products: presentation tool 'Paste', sketching app 'Paper', and idea collation tool 'Collect'.

Julia adds: "Although 'Please Leave' is a campaign, the sentiment of it will continue to live in our company values. The idea of respecting our users' time is a philosophy that affects everything we do, on a communications level and a product level."

"We celebrated our 150th anniversary last year and felt the brand didn't reflect the modern, dynamic business that we are now"

Turn to p19 to learn how Marc Koskela, head of marketing at PA Media, delivered the Press Association's rebrand

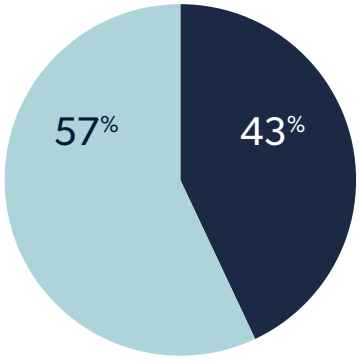


MOLLY MUSES…

#Polloftheday

Do you have a marketing qualification, or has your learning been gained on the job?

B2B writer and Twitter pollster quizzes the industry @molly_b2b



43% Have a marketing qualification

57% Learned on the job

B2B Marketing's upcoming career and succession planning report – the results of which will be presented in London on 12 September – 18% of marketing leaders said qualifications had helped them develop plans for their career. Half of those surveyed said business coaching and membership of networking organisations had greatly impacted their career development.

For more advice about the benefits of professional qualifications for a marketing career, turn to Career Counsel with Helen Lancaster on p33.

INSIDE THE MIND OF YOUR CUSTOMERS

Three marketing leaders discuss the value of understanding your customers' behaviour and the ability to relay that back to the business





Look outward to align with your customers

Kate Owen

Marketers have an almost-endless list of ways to gather customer insight, but it won't be valuable if they're used in isolation says Kate Owen, head of marketing and communications at NHS Property Services

'Outward-facing, not inward' – that's my motto. Too often we see companies marketing to customers about who they are and what they do, forgetting the fundamental rule about aligning marketing to the voice of the customer.

We should speak to our customers in a language that resonates with their goals and objectives. We should make their challenges a shared opportunity and provide solutions via a range of multi-channel, targeted, and personable marketing and communication initiatives.

As marketers, we have an endless list of digital options including social listening, influencer tracking, CRM systems, lead scoring and more. All of these can build a picture of who our customers are what they care about and what forms of marketing content they consume. But we must not use them in isolation; this is where my second motto comes into play.

'People are people', and relationship building is fundamental. We need to know our customers at every level, especially in large organisations such as NHS Property Services, where tone of voice and objectives can differ across departments and regions. Building a customer engagement map is crucial.

What works for one organisation will be completely different for another. Insights need to be drawn from a variety of sources so that we can use this intelligence to tailor our conversations with our plethora of clients and stakeholders – identifying the appropriate medium to facilitate collaboration is key. One size doesn't fit all.





Check the pulse of your customer relationships

Paige O'Neill

Marketers are sometimes overconfident on how much they understand their customer personas, says Sitecore CMO Paige O'Neill. The answer is a constant learning

The process of understanding your customer, like any relationship, is an ongoing journey. You should consistently check the pulse of the relationship and never stop learning about your customers in order to evolve as they do.

For example, we recently overhauled our company website. Although we knew our customers, and in some cases well, we needed to go deeper to ensure a seamless user experience. We started with an extensive customer journey map which illustrated the different ways customers interacted with us on our website, the questions they were asking, and any hang-ups they were facing along the way. It was during this customer journey mapping process that we realised we didn't understand some of the personas as well as we wanted to.

Unfortunately, this is a common pitfall for marketers: overconfidence on how well they know each customer persona. That makes it even more critical for companies to really take time to go through the strategy and mapping process, and check back with the map over time. It will continue to evolve with your business and customers.

When our new site launches, the learning process won't stop. As customers and prospects come to sitecore.com, we'll learn from their visits and continue collecting data to create a more compelling experience for them. More data means better personalisation as we ensure every customer or prospect, (whether they are a first-time or regular visitor) receives an experience that meets their expectations at every stage of their journey.



Be brave and offer unbiased advice

Ian Hunter

In a disrupted world, marketing will need to understand the market to drive organisational change, says Ian Hunter, VP of EMEIA marketing at Fujitsu

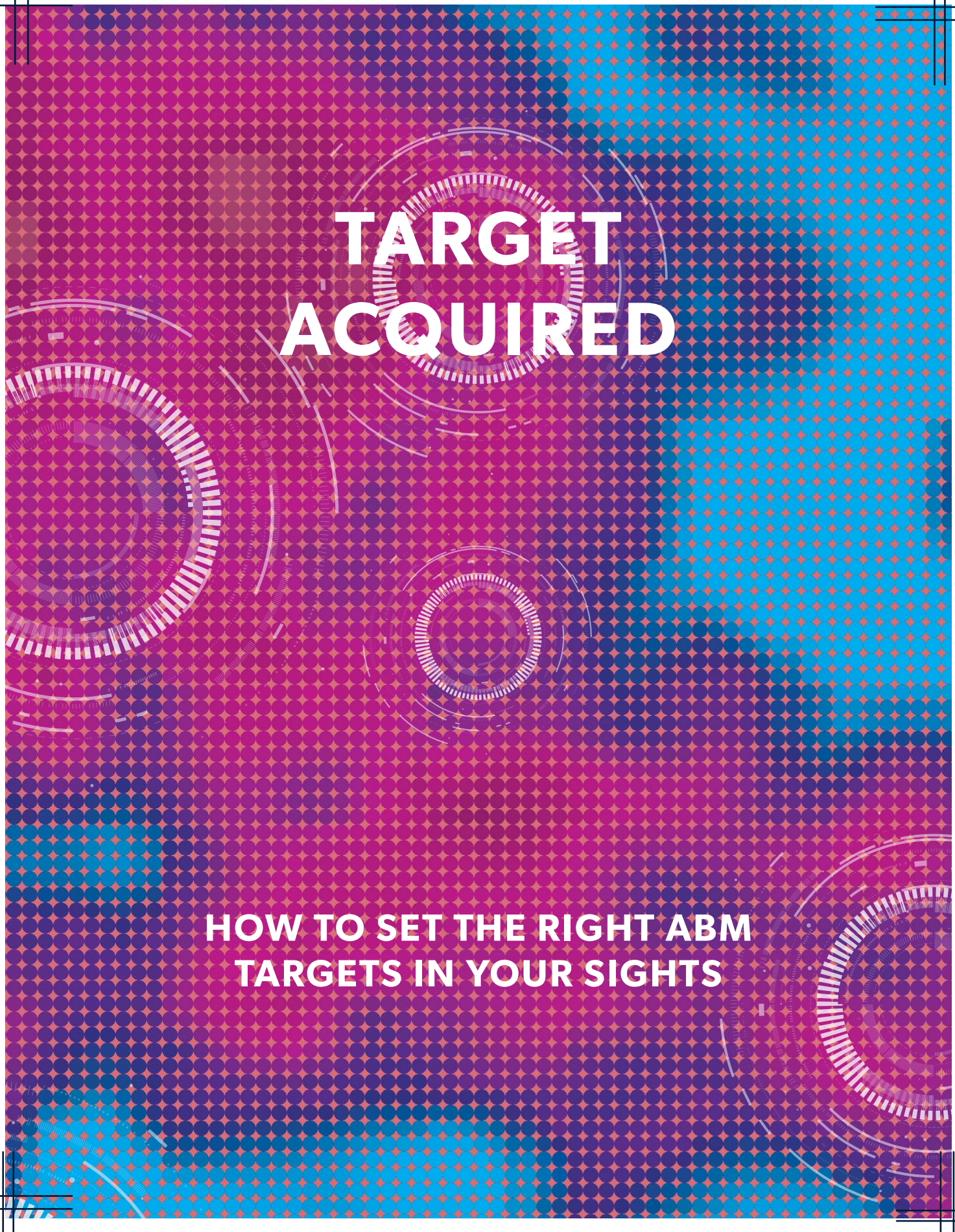
Organisations and individuals alike are operating in a world that has witnessed massive change, brought on by technological disruption. Despite many businesses still operating at 'corporate speed', organisations are now recognising the need to move at 'customer speed'.

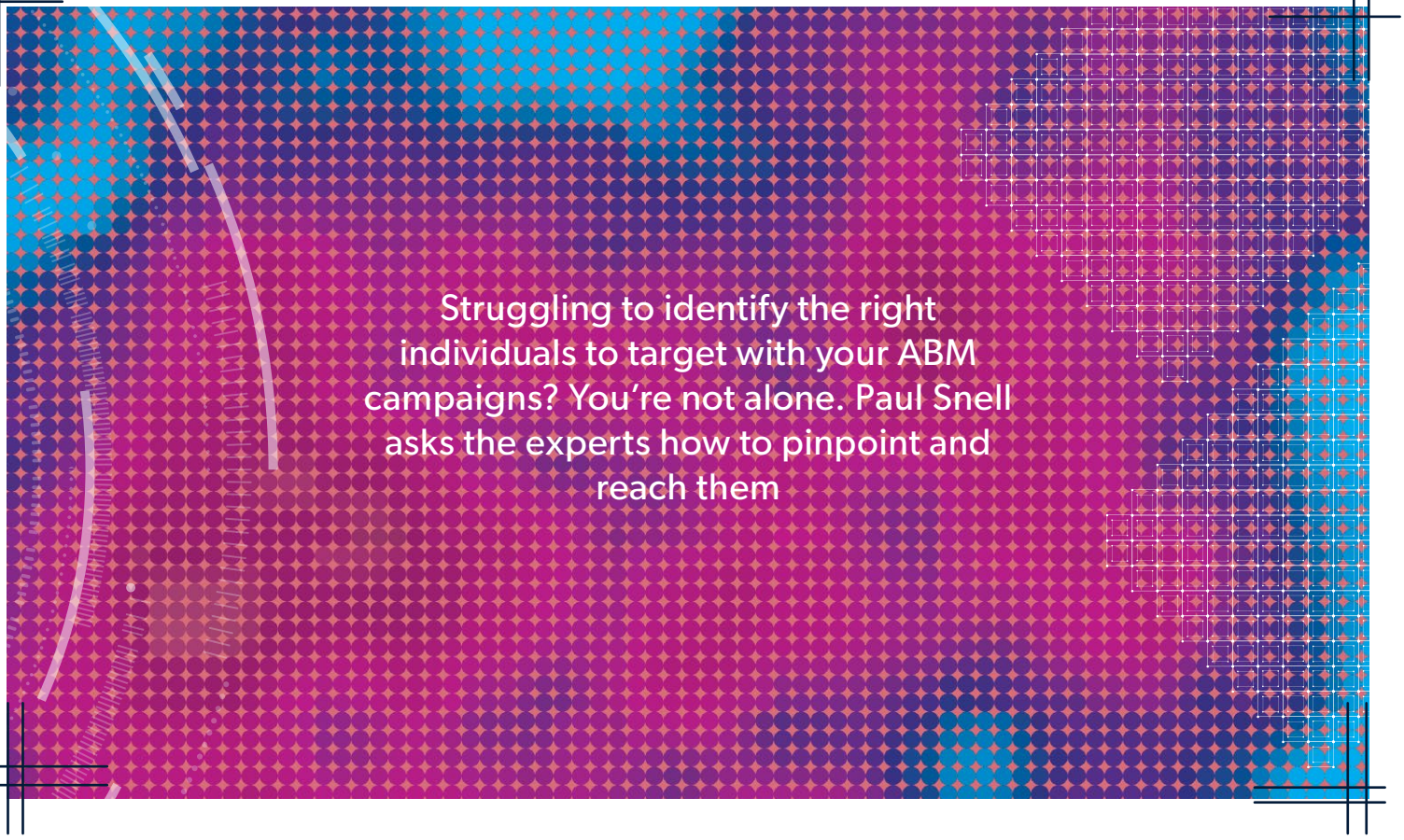
Customer understanding remains a central focus for marketers. But in this changing world, the future marketer must aspire to be a change leader, using their understanding of market disruption to transform the organisation.

Marketers need to be more aware than anyone of the external perspective – from customer understanding to competitor and market analysis – and their mission must be to bring this to the business as a whole.

In turn, this will link to the softer skill of collaboration, which is necessary to bring together diverse views found within an organisation. The modern marketer must be able to feed into strategic plans by using technology, data and unrivalled audience understanding. At times that may be at odds with the views of the board. Part of the role is to be brave, offering unbiased advice based on market understanding.

Collaboration is a vital skill here – marketers of the future will need to be fearless and fast, working with sales, the board and external stakeholders including customers. Marketers should no longer be asked to execute a business plan, we must fight to be central to its development and use all of the skills, knowledge and insights we have at our disposal to help our businesses thrive.


TARGET ACQUIRED
HOW TO SET THE RIGHT ABM TARGETS IN YOUR SIGHTS



Struggling to identify the right individuals to target with your ABM campaigns? You're not alone. Paul Snell asks the experts how to pinpoint and reach them

When embarking on an account-based marketing (ABM) strategy, a lot of focus rightly goes into choosing the correct accounts. Less so on the people behind those brands – the decision-makers, influencers and stakeholders who'll be on the receiving end of the campaigns.

Marketers are relatively confident about choosing the right accounts, but are less self-assured about finding the right people to target. When martech providers Demandbase and Integrate jointly surveyed 500 B2B marketers, they identified this as the number one challenge.

Reaching the right people has only become more onerous in recent years. Previously you might have needed to reach just one or two individuals (probably the most important in the function) to make your sale. However, we've seen the number of people now involved in a B2B purchase decision balloon year-on-year. While most estimates put the number in the decision-making unit between five and seven, it can be as high as 15 (when purchasing corporate tech, for example).

This is partly why Sprinklr's CMO Grad Conn doesn't like the term 'ABM'. He prefers the term 'people-based marketing', because that's where he thinks the focus should be.

Get your account selection right

Targeting the right people goes hand-in-hand with selecting the right accounts and account selection is a complex process. There are three main considerations.

Account value: Assess your existing pipeline and calculate the potential new business.

Achievability: How realistic is it that you'll win this business? (This point is especially important with regards to identifying decision-makers, because the complexity of the DMU and whether you already know or engage with them will be factors in whether the account is achievable.)

Co-operation: You'll be more successful with accounts that are already engaged than those who don't know you. The purchase behaviour of existing accounts can be a strong indicator of their potential value. You'll also need internal support for chasing certain accounts.

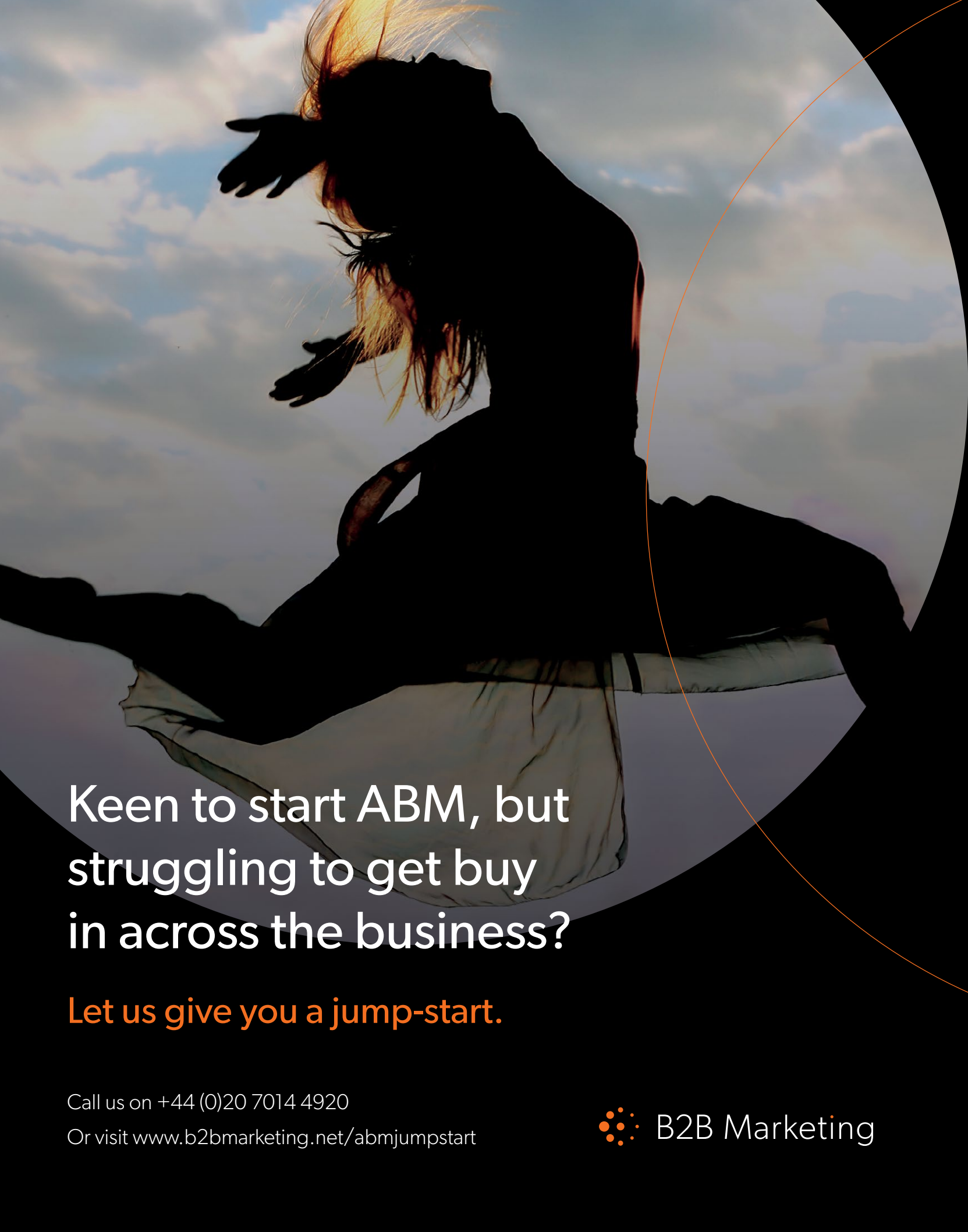
ABM isn't something to attempt on the fly, but getting this step right will certainly save time, money and effort in the long run. "Effective ABM means broadening the scope of influence and engaging the full DMU throughout the buying process. However, you can save time and money by not wasting effort on the wrong accounts," says B2B Marketing's ABM senior advisor, Andy Bacon.

The identification process

It can take a lot of hard graft to identify decision-makers. The message from experts is 'research, research, research'. "There is no substitute for putting the effort in. You have to really 'live and breathe' the target account," says Mike Boogaard, CEO of ABM agency Alias Partners.

There are a few different ways to approach this.

- **Talk to sales.** Sales should be a key source for account insights, and the first port of call on the research journey. This is the case at AI tech business GumGum. Once the target accounts have been finalised, the growth marketing team partners up with the seller or account owner to identify the decision-maker



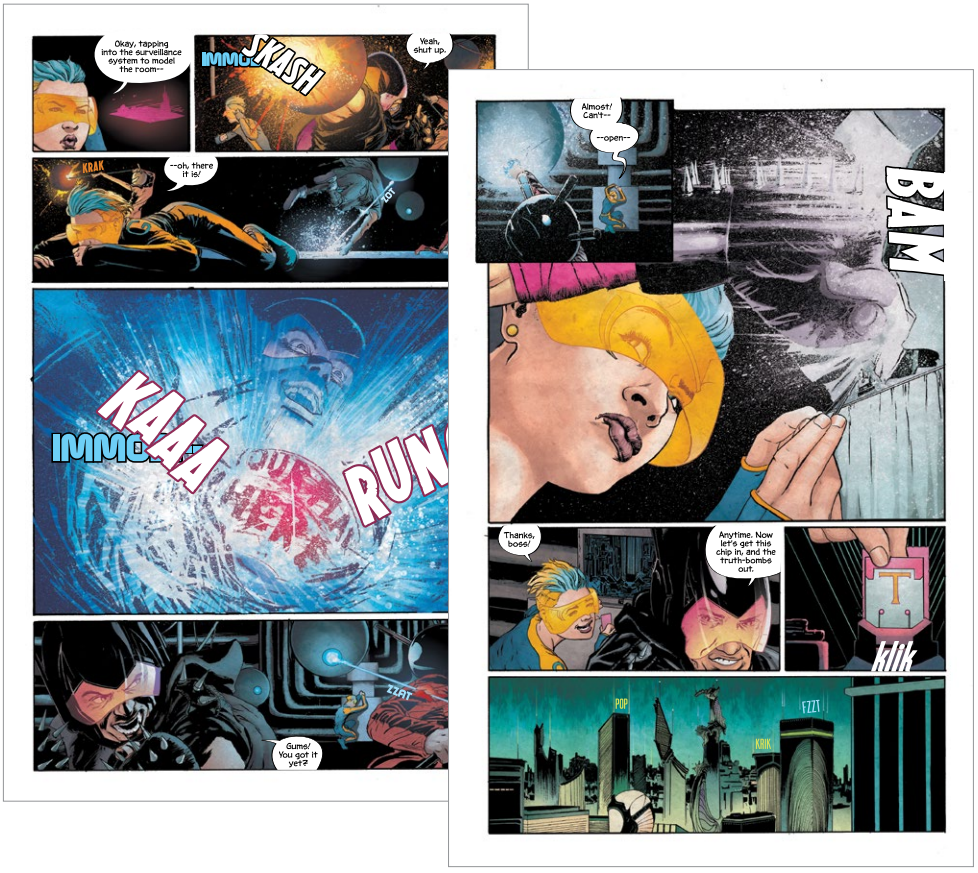
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and influencers, says Som Puangladda, VP of global marketing.

› **Create a network map of your own organisation.** The goal is to highlight connections between members of your own business and the target account. Mike says: "With larger enterprises, there is often a surprising amount of interconnection through previous education and work experience. Identifying your HR director is best buddies with the HR director of a target account that relies on HR as a key influencer, gives you a deeply personal angle that can be a goldmine of information and often directly open doors."

› **Trawl your CRM.** Desk-based research can be a slog, but collecting the intelligence you already have will still be quicker than starting from scratch with external sources. Long term, ensure the correct information is inputted by all relevant people.

› **Examine your intent data.** You may have used predictive intelligence to assist your account selection, for instance tracking which companies have visited your website. If you collect data from webforms or gated content, this can be used to build a picture of who's interested in content at different stages of the customer journey.

› **Check social media.** Grad Conn says a social network is often more indicative of a buying committee than an organisation chart. When he was CMO at Microsoft US, his own 'social matrix' was mapped. He says this was much more indicative of who he'd bring into buying decisions than the 'structural matrix' – the traditional organisational view.

› **Customer interviews.** These are hard to get, says Mike, but if you're able to, they can provide great insight into who's actually involved in the buying decision. Win/loss debrief calls are a huge source of insight into existing accounts.

Importantly, the research process needs to be a collective effort. "Too often, many people think that ABM sits on the shoulders of the account executive," says Rachel Tait, head of account-based

If they can't find you, don't expect to find other people

According to Grad Conn, if you want to find new contacts you need to open yourself up to being contacted. He likens it to the moment in Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, when the archaeologist has to step out over a chasm, trusting there'll be an invisible bridge beneath him. Grad's experience of opening up (primarily through LinkedIn) has been a positive one, introducing him to a new set of contacts.

marketing, UKI at analytics business SAS. "In identifying your decision-makers, it's important that you bring together everyone who touches an account.

"Getting everyone in a room together for a half-day's research and insight session enables you to identify the key decision-makers and those who may be influencers, advocates or detractors. If you depend on one view, you will only get part of the story."

What should you do with all this research once you've collected it? As well as the process of mapping the account, Alias creates contact profile cards. These specify the role of the individual in the buying process, and their reporting line.

At SAS, contacts are categorised into a traffic light system – advocates, neutrals and detractors. Once mapped out, this information is uploaded into its account-planning software.

Personalisation and creativity at its heart

With targets locked in, it's now time to work out how you're actually going to get your message in front of them. The two most important aspects are personalisation and creativity.

Personalisation is at the heart of ABM. Having identified the individuals, you need to put the insight gleaned during the research phase to work. This manifests itself in the pain-points you address, the language you use and the channels you select.

No particular tactic or channel will be effective for every prospect, and that's why creativity is critical. Nadja Gram, COO at McDonald Butler, says: "The right concept can be personalised with minimal effort and provide the target audience with the perception that the collateral has been produced exclusively for them."

This is a tactic tech services business DXC has used. Adapting content that already existed, it created personalised 16-20 page magazines highlighting the messages they were trying to get across. These magazines were handed to targets following meetings, and were combined with retargeted online advertising, sponsored LinkedIn content and even geo-located out-of-home ads.

The advice is to let your creativity run riot. "No idea is too crazy or too small," says GumGum's Som. "It must be different from what you have seen before. Blend the creative minds with sales insights – you will not be disappointed when the alignment delivers instant meetings."

"No idea is too crazy or too small. It must be different from what you have seen before. Blend the creative minds with sales insights – you will not be disappointed when the alignment delivers instant meetings"

When GumGum wanted to work with T-Mobile, it targeted its US CEO John Legere directly. Legere is very active on social media, where he frequently expresses his love for Batman. GumGum played on this by hiring editors, writers and illustrators to create a personalised comic book, *T-Man and Gums*, to get across its message. 100 copies of the comic were sent to T-Mobile and its agencies, and within hours John responded on Twitter saying how much he loved it. A meeting was set up, and T-Mobile is now a GumGum client.

Unsurprisingly for a social media management platform, Sprinklr is also a big fan of targeting prospects through social. The firm has 6000 target accounts in its customer experience centre. The DMU has been mapped in each of these organisations – that's a quarter of a million people to keep track of. Their names have been entered as keywords in Sprinklr's platform so they can be tracked, and when they post something relevant Sprinklr can respond to it.

An example would be its interaction with Burger King, which Sprinklr wanted to land as a customer. The Burger King CMO announced on Twitter its new crispy pretzel chicken fries were now available. A pair of Sprinklr's experience team bought the fries and responded to the CMO with a boomerang video of them eating them. The CMO then responded to them saying how funny it was. The conversation continued and led to Sprinklr being invited to an RFP.

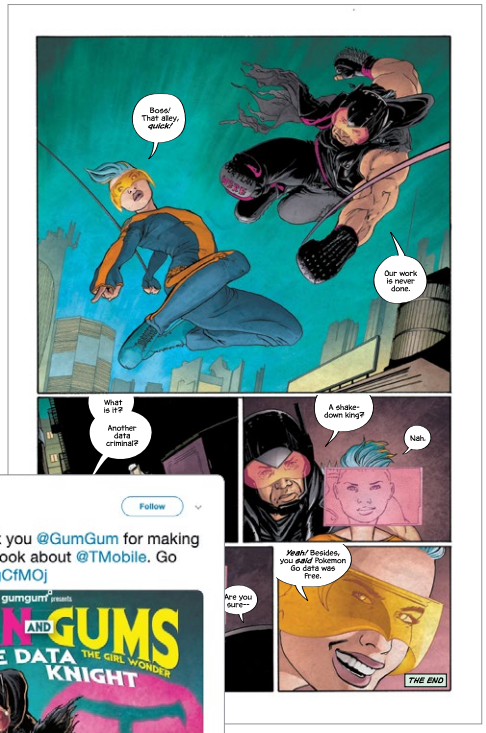
Targeting the 'shadow buyers'

Equally as important as aiming campaigns at decision-makers is to target those people who influence the buying process but don't have a final say on the decision – the so-called 'shadow buyers'.

For example, according to IDG, 65% of those who influence an IT purchase sit outside the IT function.

These shadow buyers could be within the organisation, in a separate function, or at a more junior level with no decision-







making responsibility. Or they could be external influences, such as consultants, influencers or peers.

"It's essential you not only identify these people, but also highlight how you should interact with them," says Rachel Tait.

If they're advocates, can they be used to amplify your voice? If they're detractors, how can they be educated (or how can we minimise the negative impact)? At GumGum the message aimed at influencers is different. It focuses much more on the success of clients in the same vertical, and is more educational than sales-driven.

A common misconception is only targeting the c-suite or VP level. These people often delegate the workload to their staff. Targeting those a rung or two down the ladder is often a sweet spot for many ABM campaigns. "Target the doers as well as the thinkers," says Mike Boogaard.

Shadow buyers can also be an easier target to reach when focusing on net-new accounts, says Nadja Gram. Some companies find that targeting influencers can mean higher engagement rates, as they don't typically have the same barriers as the DMU.

Key takeaways

- **Invest the time upfront.** It's essential to invest time in collecting information from a variety of individuals and sources, as this guides your next steps and activities in the process. "It is critical not to short circuit this step, even when it can appear time-consuming and expensive to do thoroughly," says Andy Bacon.
- **Break down the walls between sales and marketing.** Sales know who they want to speak to, so ask them. That will at the very least create opportunities they value.
- **Don't try to boil the ocean.** Start small by identifying a key target group of individuals in the target account, and aligning a relevant message to that group.
- **Think big with creative.** If they are an obvious target, they'll probably also be targeted by your rivals. You need to stand out, so ensure your creative makes an impact.

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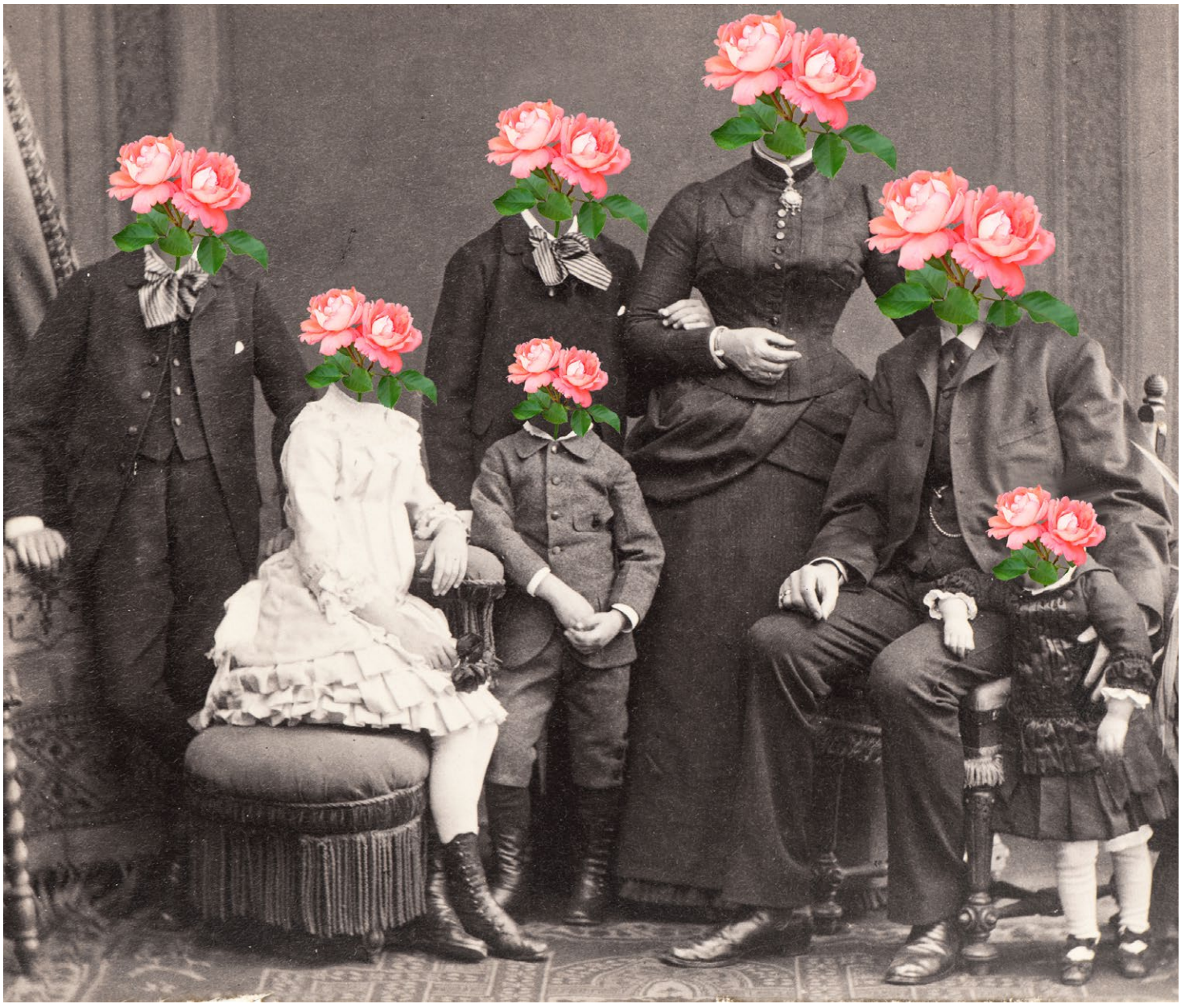
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B2B Marketing



UNITING THE FAMILY

Uniting a set of disparate, distinct sub-brands is an enormous challenge. **Molly Raycraft** speaks to marketing leaders who've been through the process to share how they did it and what they learned

Your brand creates the first impression customers have of your business. We all know its importance, but getting it right isn't easy.

For some it's more complicated than others. Perhaps you've grown by acquisition, incorporating new companies into an ever-expanding empire? Maybe one of your sub-brands is so strong it leaves the others in its shadow? Or it could be that your brand is just a bit old-fashioned and doesn't reflect what you do anymore.

Here we share examples and advise on each of these issues…

Refreshing a heritage brand

The Press Association has been around since 1868, but recently the company decided to undergo a brand refresh. "We celebrated our 150th anniversary last year and felt the brand didn't reflect the modern dynamic business that we are now," explains Marc Koskela, head of marketing at what is now called PA Media.

The rebrand was also prompted by a long-term strategy to diversify its business and reduce its reliance on traditional customers within the print media sector. Press Association's parent company PA Group changed its name to PA Media Group, while Press Association became PA Media. Other already PA-branded businesses within the group – PA Training and PA Images also received new visual identities.

A challenge for heritage brands is to modernise without obliterating the trust and reputation built up and attached to the brand. For Marc, this meant balancing the old with the new.

A new hexagonal logo was designed, incorporating both old and new brand characteristics such as collaboration, accuracy, innovation, creativity, speed, immediacy, fairness and balance. Hints towards the old brand were also included within the wider aesthetic. "PA is the industry shorthand for the agency. One of the brands [PA Training] has also retained the red colour. Those were some of the nods back to our heritage," says Marc.

The sub-brands had individual identities that needed consideration. With a lot of research into the specific markets they operate in, these brands were aligned but differentiated. For example, teal was used as the colour for PA Images, because it's an under-used colour within that market.

"Fundamentally when there's change, people are very loyal to brands with existing heritage. It's very important you educate them on the journey and why that's changing"

PA Media Group's other sub-brands – the agencies Globelynx, Sticky Content, StreamAMG, TNR, and EBS – were left untouched. "There was a feeling that they all work well within their own markets and they reflect who they are today and the objectives they have. So that wasn't something we looked at changing," Marc says.

Uniting multiple existing brands

The aim of uniting Unlimited's 27 individual agency brands was to simplify things for both customers and staff. "We had to align because no one wants to talk through 27 agencies at a group meeting," says group CMO Sarah Shilling. "The rebrand signalled us moving forward. It was a matter of simplifying, signposting our expertise, and giving it real clarity. It's been so much easier for people internally to understand the breadth of our offering, and communicate that with our clients."

Unlimited chose to restructure in April 2018 by segmenting its 27 agencies into seven pillars – health, customer engagement, brand, digital transformation, B2B and technology, CRM, and insight and research. This has now grown to eight, with the recent acquisition of data and analytics company Realise Unlimited. Each expertise is represented by one agency, with Nelson Bostock Unlimited leading the B2B pillar.

Customers can work with a single discipline, but also have the option to bring in other expertise such as insight and research. If the client needs a more integrated solution, then the group can create a team who work across agencies to deliver this. Sarah says the visual and structural alignment enables the group "to remain client-centric and provide agile solutions".

The group's sub-brands retained their names, adding 'Unlimited' to the end. The agencies are also united with the Unlimited shield used within their logos. "There's a lot of equity in the brands we have in our portfolio. So it made sense to keep them very distinct, yet join them together with the Unlimited name," Sarah says.

Driving global brand consistency

The challenge for accountancy and business advisory network Baker Tilly

was to drive brand consistency across its 125 member firms in 145 different countries. Internal research found only 17-20% of those firms were trading under the Baker Tilly brand, with a further 60% using some variation of it.

Brand manager Jo Luck realised the value of bringing all the members under one global trading title, namely less confusion among customers and a greater sense of togetherness among employees.

A new visual identity was developed, with logo, colours, fonts, imagery and applications all updated. Crucial to this was the implementation of a brand management platform, which allows staff around the world to access brand assets.

The result has been 70% of member firms now operating under the global brand, with only a few firms left to join, mainly due to local regulations or ongoing transition periods.

There's also been a positive knock-on effect for marketing. Previously firms ran their marketing campaigns independently, while others didn't even have a marketing function. "Now we're able to invest in and undertake global marketing campaigns to build the profile of the whole network, not just individual firms," Jo explains.

Buy-in from the board

A common denominator among these three rebrand projects was the support they had from senior leadership.

"It seems obvious but you need to identify senior stakeholders and bring them on the journey with you," says Unlimited's Sarah Shilling. "Fundamentally when there's change, people are very loyal to brands with existing heritage. It's very important you educate them on the journey and why that's changing."

Marc agrees. He was keen to have execs pledge their commitment, understanding the size of the task that lay ahead. "Throughout the project we've had a catch up with the execs every two weeks to talk through where we've been and have developed a culture of transparency."

These meetings gave him the opportunity to discuss potential challenges that lay ahead, and work together to find solutions. Without that buy-in from the top of the business, it can be difficult and can act as an internal obstacle to what you're trying to deliver.

4 questions to ask your board

When Jo Luck made her case for a rebrand to the Baker Tilly board, she asked if they could answer the following four questions.

- Does our visual identity represent who we are?
- Does it convey who we aspire to be in the future?
- Does it help us reach a broader audience?
- Does it set us apart from the wider competition?

When they answered no to these, it created the impetus at senior level to move ahead with the project.

Take time to plan your strategy

Baker Tilly knew it wanted its brand to be relevant and relatable to customers, so a lot of emphasis was placed on the research stage of its project, which took four months. "You can't create a new positioning statement and visual identity based on what you think you know," warns Jo. "Our new identity and positioning came directly out of the research we did."

Sarah agrees that you need to spend time building a strategy that will last. "You need to have a clear vision from the strategy about what your proposition and branding might look like in a year or two."

Unlimited also conducted a large amount of customer research, a phase Sarah says agencies often overlook – being too quick to "tell and sell" without understanding their clients' needs. She recommends asking lots of questions to help form your strategy, and this doesn't necessarily have to be all formal research. "The best way to maintain good relationships with clients is to have direct conversations."

Winning over sceptical employees

Employees can feel protective about a brand – particularly if they've worked on curating it or have been at the company a long time. Marc encountered this during the PA Media Group rebrand. "We've got people who have worked here for 30 to 40 years, and have become attached to the brand," he says.

The team leading the rebrand decided to make the project a company collaboration to ensure people feel heard. Otherwise, it can be quite demotivating to be handed a new logo and told to use it, Marc says.

Soon after the project was signed-off, staff from a variety of sub-brands, locations, roles and responsibilities were approached to get involved. A series of workshops were held to get employee feedback on what the new brand should represent.



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"We went round the business to five different offices to actually present the new brand to the business. We took them through the process of getting there"

Marc recalls a critical point for getting the company on-board was after the initial designs had been put together. "We went round the business to five different offices to actually present the new brand to the business. We took them through the process of getting there."

During these presentations, staff were able to ask questions and raise points the rebrand team hadn't considered. These were then incorporated into the next iteration of the design.

Since the rebrand launched in June, the marketing teams at PA Media have continued to build upon staff feedback. Marc says: "The important thing is accepting the communication will continue. There may be use cases that emerge that haven't been considered by the brand guidelines, and we very much see those guidelines as a living, breathing document that can be added to."

Jo agrees with incorporating staff feedback into your guidelines. Baker Tilly is about to launch its second, more robust, version of its guidelines, featuring case studies and examples.

Even though Baker Tilly's history isn't as long as PA Media's, there was still an emotional connection to the existing brands. However, Jo says there wasn't a lot of push-back, as member firms recognised the need for change and wanted it. However there were some firms who've had to change their names completely. It's with these firms that the transition has taken longer.

One of these is the Canadian member Collins Barrow – now operating under the Baker Tilly name. "Collins Barrow was a very well-known name in Canada, but we really needed them to transition to the Baker Tilly name," explains Jo. "They knew it too. Many of their clients were moving into global markets and needed their advisors to be global. It was a strategic decision taken by them when the question was asked 'Do you want to be national business or global business?'."

Another was Strego in France. It is currently in its transition period using a combination of Baker Tilly with their national name Strego. For two years, the firm will trade as Baker Tilly Strego to build equity in the new name. After that, they will become Baker Tilly. "This approach is working well for countries where the Baker Tilly name is not well known locally," says Jo.

The 6 stages of Baker Tilly's rebrand

1. Select an agency.
2. Put an internal governance structure in place to oversee the strategy.
3. Desk research.
4. Client research.
5. Partner research.
6. Create new positioning and visual identity from insights.

10 PITFALLS EVERY ACCOUNT-BASED MARKETER MUST SIDESTEP



The path to successful account-based marketing is strewn with hurdles and traps. B2B Marketing's senior advisor and ABM specialist Andy Bacon outlines the 10 most common missteps and how to avoid them

1. Starting too soon

There's a lot to get excited about when reading ABM success stories, but overlook the importance of proper planning and it can easily go awry. It's no secret that strategic ABM is resource intensive. You need to be realistic about how much time your team can dedicate to the programme, and what you can deliver.

"When I meet organisations there's often a need to reset expectations. They may have started to engage with wider stakeholders and have been setting unrealistic expectations to gain buy-in," Andy says.

ABM is a marathon not a sprint, and you need to buy yourself time to build and test a long-term strategy rather than get caught up in short-term random acts of tactical activity.

2. Not having a team-defined strategy

One of the biggest challenges businesses face is a lack of alignment between the sales and marketing teams. This can be common in ABM as even the term 'account-based marketing' infers that it's the marketing team's responsibility rather than sales. Some companies chose other terms, such as 'account-based strategy', to avoid this.

"Many confuse alignment with buy-in and they are not the same!" says Andy. "Alignment is notoriously difficult to measure, but it is borne out of a shared vision and strategy, which is a product of full collaboration and mutual trust in the programme. 'The 'big divide' between sales and marketing exists because they frequently don't fully appreciate what the other does and the day-to-day challenges they face. ABM provides the catalyst for transforming that relationship and aligning a cohesive team to common goals. With a shared vision you've got something concrete to align sales and marketing behind so that both teams understand the value each are delivering. You need to define that strategy together."

3. Overselling the programme

Buy-in to an ABM programme, especially from sales, is crucial to getting the green light but marketing teams can approach this the wrong way. Marketing are often on the back foot, so believe they must sell ABM to the sales team to gain commitment. This means they often make promises they don't know if they can keep. "It's not about that," says Andy. "Gaining buy-in is actually the easy bit, but you do need to be honest and let the benefits of ABM speak for themselves. The tricky bit is the ongoing process of building alignment."

4. Lack of internal trust

If there is any residual disconnect between sales and marketing it will be fuelled by the absence of trust. "Trust is the bedrock of any successful team, it's fundamental to building the alignment needed for ABM to succeed," explains Andy. "Building that trust and alignment takes time, yet it can be eroded very rapidly if expectations are not met. Oversell the programme and you'll run the risk of losing any trust you started with."

5. Selecting the wrong accounts

Selecting the right accounts for your ABM programme is a critical process that could make or break the success of your new strategy. One of the biggest pitfalls businesses encounter when choosing accounts is in allowing sales to 'assign' them. "Often these will be aspirational – those accounts sales have struggled to gain traction with and are offered because marketing is unlikely to do any harm. It's not uncommon to discover they are not even in market." Andy says.

You need to ensure the accounts are fit for purpose and meet the criteria of your chosen ABM approach before jumping in and wasting precious time and money. This means taking an objective, measured approach where suspect accounts are scored. "Looking at a perfect existing account as a benchmark and creating an ideal customer profile is a good place to start. ABM is hard enough without making life any more difficult, so selecting the lowest hanging fruit makes sense – particularly with a fledgling programme," says Andy.

6. Selecting too many accounts

The pressure to meet overarching business requirements can drive marketers to push lots of accounts into their ABM programme in an attempt to get as many results back as possible. This is resource intensive, will most likely mean accounts receive a half-hearted ABM campaign, and ultimately defeat the object of strategic ABM. It's important to shake the mass marketing/demand generation mindset, and start small. Prioritise is Andy's recommendation. "We advocate doing between four and six accounts (for one-to-one) or one or two clusters (for one-to-few) until you have established the programme and are ready to scale."

Many marketers look at ABM as the answer to an underperforming demand gen programme, so they default to a one-to-many ABM approach. This may work, but they really miss out on the long-term value and experience that a strategic ABM programme can deliver.

"Looking at a perfect existing account as a benchmark and creating an ideal customer profile is a good place to start"

7. Insufficient research

The cornerstone of ABM is account insight. Without this it will be impossible to develop a bespoke proposition that says what the target needs to hear, rather than conveying a generic message based on what you want to say.

There is no way to cut the corner and expect ABM to be any better than whatever you were doing before. While sales teams, your CRM and MA will tell you a certain amount, sales is rarely the font of all knowledge (and they may not have dialogue across the wider business). Marketing can add significant value by bringing fresh insight to the table (see p10 for further insights on researching individuals in target accounts).

8. Falling back on generic content

Don't forget that an essential aspect of ABM is in tailoring your approach to meet your account's specific needs. Under a mix of enthusiasm and pressure to get things rolling, some marketers fall back to the generic mass marketing

ABM risk-buster: How to understand and target accounts with tech (the right way)

You may be tempted to use technology to help you choose your accounts. That's a big mistake, says Kirsty Dawe, MD at agency Really B2B. "I would 100% advise against that because technology on its own cannot deliver that deep insight you need to understand businesses," she told the audience at B2B Ignite in 2019.

However, the right use of technology can help marketers take on the challenges an ABM programme can throw their way. At Really B2B, ABM campaigns are broken into three stages: Identify, create and connect, then convert. For each of these stages different tools are used to understand and target accounts.

Identify stage challenges:

Navigating the size of the decision-making unit, investing in the right account contacts, and addressing sales scepticism about ABM.

Tools: Zoominfo, DiscoverOrg, LinkedIn Sales Navigator, Mintigo, and Bombora.

Create and connect stage challenges: Addressing sales scepticism (again), creating relevant messaging, talking to prospects in the right way.

Tools: Crystal, Turtl, Radiate B2B.

Convert stage challenges: Investing in the right prospects, talking to prospects in the right way, and measuring ROI.

Tools: Webeo, Lead Forensics, Tableau.

approach. "The temptation is to charge in, skip the research phase, second guess a customer's specific challenge and take some piece of content from the cupboard and repurpose it. You can invest a great deal into the strategy and insight only to fall at the last hurdle by not investing in a really bespoke, punchy bit of content," says Andy.

9. The wrong KPIs

A strategic ABM programme is likely to have a different runtime to more tactical campaigns that are measured by short term KPIs such as MQLs and SQLs. With this in mind you'll need to adjust your KPIs to ones that will measure value (i.e. changing the quality of the relationship with customers) rather than a blunt volume of leads. Some metrics you use for mass marketing campaigns may still be applicable to your ABM campaign but they will no longer be the main focus. "It needs to have a different set of KPIs that are relevant to ABM and so you can understand its value and purpose," says Andy. "The pilot needs to be given a bit of free rein. If you're wanting to create change you need to give it space to have that transformation before you start burdening it with KPIs that serve to undermine the whole purpose."

10. Inertia

Fall into too many of the traps above and commitment from your stakeholders will quickly diminish.

"ABM can feel like a long uphill climb with a very fast slippery slope waiting for you if you stumble. However, it can also be hugely rewarding, especially when sales win a deal and you gain the recognition you justly deserve," Andy says.

Most seasoned ABM practitioners agree with the assessment of Andrea Clatworthy, head of account-based marketing at Fujitsu. She's said that if only she'd known at the beginning what she knew at the end, her journey would have been considerably less painful.

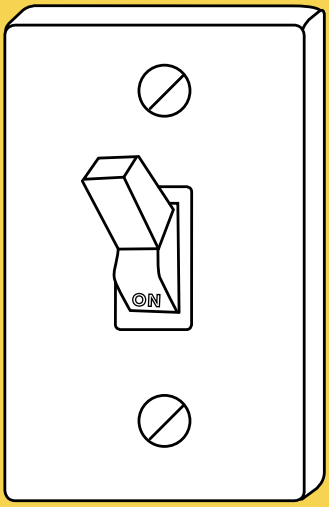
"ABM can feel like a long uphill climb with a very fast slippery slope waiting for you if you stumble. However, it can also be hugely rewarding, especially when sales win a deal and you gain the recognition you justly deserve"

ABM risk-buster: How to maintain bespoke ABM content at scale

When scaling up, the uniqueness of ABM content can become diluted because it's costly and time-consuming to continue personalising to this extent. Martin Simcock, CEO at Enigma Marketing Services says there's a way to keep that content personalised as you scale, just like Subway personalises its sandwiches to their customers' individual tastes. Visit the franchise and you'll be given the choice of: seven breads, two sizes, 19 filling options, cheese or no cheese, and 64 salad variations. That makes 272,348 potential combinations. "Subway has done a brilliant job of creating a product that can be personalised to me. That's our challenge as marketers."

Enigma took the same approach with its client cyber security company Symantec. The ABM sandwich consisted of: nine vertical markets, two sub-sectors, eight personas, six messaging variations (for sub-sectors), 14 unique assets, three asset variations, six languages. This created 217,728 variations to choose from, making for a tailored content experience for individual decision-makers.

B2B BURNOUT:



HOW MARKETING LEADERS CAN AVOID A 24/7 WORK CULTURE

From ‘inbox zero’ to mindfulness retreats, there are numerous ways to deal with the stress of a high-powered job. **Rebecca Ley** talks to marketing leaders who’ve found a way to avoid burning the candle at both ends

If you’re a CMO, chances are you’re stressed. Managing a global team, digital transformation, expectation from the top, and a smartphone that never lets you switch off means squeezing in the rest of your life can be tough.

It’s these pressures that have led many marketing leaders to re-evaluate their approach to the role – and their downtime. From flexible working that supports family commitments and side hustles, to starting out on your own, or switching between client-side and agency positions, there are many approaches to getting a life beyond the office. We spoke with three leaders who’ve gained a work-life balance on their own terms.

Motherhood and marketing

Iulia Balan, MD, head of product and account-based marketing at investment bank State Street, was forced to address her attitude towards work ahead of the birth of her daughter last year. She initially returned from a six-month maternity leave working three days a week for two months, and is now back to full-time.

Iulia described the shift as a huge adjustment. During her six months maternity leave many things changed within the company, including the arrival of a new CEO. Iulia's responsibilities changed as a result of this wider transformation, allowing her a fresh challenge.

"When you're focused on your career as I have been for many years, the break helps create balance. Returning to work made me appreciate my time at home, and being part-time at first made me realise how important work was," Iulia explains.

Setting boundaries between work and time at home has meant a change in the way Iulia organises and prioritises. "I used to be the person checking my emails last thing before bed and first thing when I opened my eyes in the morning. That's no longer possible because of my daughter, so I only check my email after I drop her off on my way into work."

Planning and designated time has replaced an always-on approach to work – in particular keeping on top of emails from the US and Asia Pacific. "I plan time during the day to ensure I haven't missed any emails overnight. The amount of planning I have to put into my day overall has increased tremendously since I've gone back to work."

She's also had to be strict about cutting down on things that soak up her time, namely meetings. While saying no is not always well-received, it's been crucial to prioritise to avoid long hours.

"The other thing that's helped is delegation," she underlines. "I'm very lucky to have built a team I trusted before going on maternity leave. That forced me to think about people's ownership of certain areas of work, which is good for their progression and good for my peace of mind, because I know things are getting done."

Striking out on your own

Changes in life circumstances can prompt a change of pace. This was the case for Jarmila Yu, who took the decision in 2016 to improve her work-life balance. After 25 years working in client-side roles she set up her own business, YUnique Marketing.

"I was never going to be a yoga instructor or have a complete career turnaround, I just tried to figure out how to deliver marketing on my terms"

"I had two young children and woke up one morning and thought now's the time for a change," she says. "I was never going to be a yoga instructor or have a complete career turnaround, I just tried to figure out how to deliver marketing on my terms." Wanting to avoid the instability of freelance work, Jarmila decided running her own marketing consultancy was the right way to grant better control of her time.

Leaving the corporate rat race was the change she needed, but it was still a steep learning curve. "I thought I was at the top of my game and knew about marketing, but I didn't know how to set up my own business. I had to learn from Google, books and other people's mistakes."

Despite this, she saw immediate benefits. Working from home means she's more accessible for her children, and this flexibility quickly benefited her partner too. "My second employee was my husband, who's also a director in the company. This means the children get to see a lot more of us and we can share school drop-offs and childcare."

From client-side to agency, and back again

Ruth Connor, marketing director at Kalibrate, has spent more than 20 years working across client-side and agency roles. In 2018, Ruth decided a part-time role at the agency Earnest would allow her to pursue other interests, as well as the opportunity to work as a trainer.

"I realised at the mid-point in my career that I was going to be working for the next 25 years and didn't want to work 10 or 11 hour days. I wanted to have a life outside of work," she says.

The switch to part-time required a new way of working and a lot of discipline. "I've learnt from working mums who have gone down to four days a week, that they're more productive because they've got fixed deadlines and they need to leave on time."

During this time, Ruth was able to ramp up her passion for playing tennis. "If I could give a piece of advice to my 25-year-old self, I would say 'get a hobby that you're passionate about and will make you leave the office on time'."



After learning to play six years ago, Ruth joined a tennis club and used her time to practise, get onto a team and become captain. She now also runs the tennis committee.

Ruth credits tennis with giving her greater resilience and providing her with an 'inner cheerleader'."If I'm managing people now I always want to know what they do outside of work because something that they're passionate about will inevitably help them develop skills or qualities they can bring back into the workplace," she adds.

Ruth joined Kalibrate in April, and returning to a full-time marketing director role has been an adjustment. She has, however, stuck to her tennis commitments and is strict with her time. "I try to have balance over the course of the week," she says, "I'll get into work early but make sure I leave at 5.30pm, even if I then do an hour more at home." While she might work late a couple of evenings a week, and the occasional hour at the weekend, she tries to break her day up so she knows she still has time for her family and is working in the most effective way. "With marketing, the to-do list is never done," she explains, "If you try to achieve everything you'll just drive yourself crazy."

How to switch off from 'always-on'

If you're taking a more flexible approach, leisure and work time can quickly become blurred. The advent of the smartphone means it's easier to work out of the office, but also means it's much harder to switch off.

Iulia's life changes mean she's had to put her phone away. "The fact that I now get home and have to look after my daughter and put her to bed means I have to switch off quite a bit. It's easy to log on in the evening after you're done with parental duties, but I've got a different perspective now."

While there is temptation to use your free time to catch up on the latest hot Netflix series, switching off from work might take the form of a new venture.

"I do a lot of pro-bono work now, which I never had time for before," Jarmila says. "I've got involved with the local business association, and was elected as a Parish counsellor. I'm on the board of Battersea Dogs and Cats Home and the London School of Management, as well as supporting the local school and being a mentor for university students." All of this philanthropy ties into a clear purpose; helping those that enter marketing map out their career.

None of this would have been possible in a full-time role. It was only stepping away that allowed her to think about what she could use the time for. It's her purpose and vision that is ultimately 'uplifting', and if she ever feels stressed, it's this she returns to.

Avoiding the busy trap

Working all hours of the day is not the answer, so a reduction in stress requires an increase in efficiency. While tennis has brought Ruth a focused and resilient approach to work, she's also implemented other strategies to boost her productivity.

"I use what's called the Pomodoro technique," she explains. "You work in sprints of 25 minutes. You spend 25 minutes on one thing and then take a five minute break. You do that four times and then you

"I don't think people should feel under pressure to try the latest app. Just find something that works for you"

take a 25 minute break. And then you do it again in the afternoon."

This helps especially if you're working at home or freelance, she says, breaks allow you to keep your concentration up. "I also don't try to multi-task anymore," she says, "You're better off chunking up your day into similar tasks so you can wear the same hat. I'll work on copywriting in a chunk if I've got my creative hat on, or budgets if I've got my numbers hat on."

Modern life is hard, so it's vital to find a method that works for you. "I've tried everything from productivity books to podcasts, but at 45 I'm probably not going to find a way of suddenly managing emails that I haven't so far. I don't think people should feel under pressure to try the latest app. Just find something that works for you."

5 ways to avoid being stretched too thin

Feel like butter over too much bread? Here are our leaders' top tips to avoid the cycle of stress.

1. Stay connected (without the tech). "There's no app for efficiency, because there's nothing that can replace human conversation," explains Iulia. "I try to make sure I'm as connected with the team as possible, which means a meeting early on in the week and connecting directly over the phone."

2. Know the difference between good and bad stress. "Life always has a degree of stress, but watch whether it's good – making you forge ahead and out of your comfort zone – or bad, eating away at you and giving you sleepless nights and indigestion," warns Jarmila. "Focus on your vision and you'll be driven by the good."

3. Make your time in the office count. "Don't multi-task," warns Ruth. "Find a technique that works for you and helps you get the most done. There's a lot to be said for trying to be productive in normal working hours, and packing up your desk knowing you've done as much as you can."

4. Take a step back. "It helped to take time for myself and think about what I want to be doing in 20 years' time, then think ahead to five years' time," says Iulia. "It's easy to get dragged into survival mode when you're worried about finances day-to-day, but hiring a career coach and finding an hour to sit and think about things was essential."

5. Have a passion that isn't your job. "Have something outside of work that you want to get home for," explains Ruth. "That could be family or hobbies, but it's something that makes you leave the office on time."

Working your way to the top



Helen Lancaster,
head of demand generation,
EMEA, Arkadin, part of NTT

Most modern leaders recognise the need for continuous training and development, both for themselves and their team. Helen Lancaster, who heads up Arkadin's demand generation in EMEA, is one such person. Here she shares the benefits and advice for those considering the investment

As head of demand generation EMEA, Helen oversees a multi-channel approach to demand gen from the creation stage right through to execution. Helen and her team of five play a strong role in social selling at Arkadin and is now driving the company's account-based marketing.

You've had external training both at a junior and senior level. What drove you to make that investment when you were new to your career in marketing?

When I took my first diploma, a three-year course in marketing, I was in my early twenties. I just wanted to get a foot in the door and I had an English Literature degree, not business qualifications. It definitely proved to be a useful thing. I think it gives you confidence. Even now when I look at projects, I still sometimes draw on my diploma. I even remember the different modules. The challenge when you're younger is finding the motivation to swap hours of your social life for studying, but it's absolutely worth doing.

You trained again as a seasoned marketer. How did you juggle that with the demands of your job?

I took my second diploma, a course in digital with the Chartered Institute for Marketing in 2013, It was a year-long evening course in London. I found that one more challenging because it was quite coursework-heavy and meant using evenings and weekends to sit in dark rooms and apply myself for hours. That's hard with a busy job and the demands of family life. It may seem like a hard trade-off but I saw almost immediate benefits that made it well worth it.

Given they've already reached seniority, why is it important that leaders still seek training?

By consequence of how fast things move, if you don't train you're already out of date. I would absolutely encourage any marketer to go for it – if not paid courses then the free ones. The knowledge can also filter down into your team. Tell them about it, brief them and give them a presentation about what you're learning.

How do you get your boss' buy-in for the time commitment of a qualification?

It's all about proving the value and impact it will have on your job. Sometimes people suggest things that are difficult to support because you can't tie them back to work and the value is hard to prove. Once you know that, you should find evidence from other companies in the form of testimonies. I think a challenge organisations face – especially during tough times – is that there isn't funding to support people. It can be a constraint from a management point of view because you can't push and encourage people to take these qualifications without providing the financial support. Then it becomes about what else you can do to support them.

If qualifications aren't an option, what other ways can you learn?

I remember a marketer saying this to me once: "You have to be nosy, inquisitive, curious, and ask questions all the time - whether you think it's in your remit or not." You need to find out what's going on in a business and draw on that experience.

Would you do any more qualifications?

You know what? I would absolutely love to. My current constraint is having a two-year-old and a busy job, so it's dropped down my priority list a little bit – but it's on the horizon.

B2B Marketing

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5 COMMON LEADERSHIP MISTAKES YOU'RE MOST LIKELY MAKING (AND HOW TO AVOID THEM)

Everyone's suffered a B2B blunder or two, but how do great leaders turn failure into fortune? Here, five senior marketers reveal their biggest career mistakes, from the wrong tech and metrics to communication errors – and how they turned things around

1. The grass isn't always greener at another organisation



"I realised we were all experiencing the same problems, and I knew I wasn't alone"

Kerry Simmons, Lee Hecht Harrison

Falling for the unreality of sophisticated marketing

Kerry Simmons, vice president of marketing, EMEA and APAC at Lee Hecht Harrison, struggled early in her leadership career with the idea her marketing team was focused on unsophisticated marketing activities. "It seemed everyone else was doing more groundbreaking work." Even now, marketers can fall foul to the idea that everyone is focused on AI and blockchain while they're struggling to report accurately. This mentality is isolating and demotivating, and illusory. "You can often think the grass is greener because other companies are using the very latest tech for example, but it doesn't reflect the reality of what's happening as a whole," Kerry admits.

Engage with peers externally

Kerry gained a different perspective when she started attending networking events, run by local CIM groups and B2B Marketing Leaders roundtables. "We were all having the same basic challenges, like tracking the impact of marketing activity, and building a business case for more investment in marketing," she says. "It made me realise that what we were doing was still the right thing to do. It might not have been what was portrayed on social media, but it was what the vast majority of marketing professionals were doing on a daily basis." Kerry also realised a lesson within the lesson – she needed to engage with peers beyond company walls in order to gain perspective. And that she was worthy of her right to do so. "It was only when I met another senior marketer who explained they were friendly events, that I went," she says. "Don't assume it's not for you, give it a try. You can be as active as you want, or you can just listen and learn from other people. You have a seat at the table."

2. Don't assume your expectations are clear



"I'm German, so I always get told I'm very direct, but even that doesn't protect you from miscommunication"

Riccardo Weber, Prysmian Group UK

Planning before data

Riccardo Weber, director of customer care, marketing and product development at Prysmian Group UK, inherited a huge campaign that began in 2017 to enhance the group's brand within the UK market. For him, it was clear an end-user survey was needed to identify the needs of the target group before investing. "I didn't spell it out to my team or agency because it seemed so obvious to me, but everyone else thought they knew the market already," he said. Before he knew it, they'd all invested time and resource into a plan with a strong focus on print advertising before getting the data. "I had to pull them all back and ask them questions: where's your proof? I'd assumed they thought the same things I did."

Ask the right questions

"As a leader, I learnt to be absolutely clear on the goal we're trying to achieve, clarify my expectations on timelines or method and also probe with a few questions. My favourites are 'why' and 'so what'?" This enables everyone to be on the same page, making sure they can explain why they're doing something and managing expectations on both sides. It doesn't take much time to ask the right questions and get everybody aligned, but if it goes pear-shaped, the amount of resource to fix it is much bigger, explains Riccardo. His top piece of advice? "Don't assume anything. If your team knows what's expected of them, they'll tell you."

Before he knew it, they'd all invested time and resource into a plan with a strong focus on print advertising

3. Don't put tech before process



"If you don't understand your processes, buying software to help you manage them is a ridiculous thing to do"

Ian Bennison, TMF Group

Banking on a cure-all

Ian Bennison, marketing operations director at TMF Group, was after a quick fix. His teams were heavily reliant on communicating by email, which caused friction when messages were missed. In a bid to manage resource, budget and communications, Ian bought a marketing resource tool. "All our marketing directors thought it was perfect, so we agreed a three-year contract," he says. "But when we tried to implement it, we found it didn't fit and was far too complex. That's when the troubles began." The tool was binned after two years, and in the third year it was hardly used.

Workshop solutions

If you don't understand your processes, you'll try to make them fit the tool, rather than the other way around, warns Ian. After the software was shelved, he created a working party with representatives from each team who wrote down their processes and workshopped solutions. Once everyone's requirements were clearly understood, he looked for a tool that would allow them to deliver the improvements. "We bought a new piece of tech for a third of the price, and it works 100% better," he said.

4. Don't measure success with the wrong metrics



"It's all about vanity metrics versus sanity metrics"

Doug Marshall, Wilmington

Being seduced by wishy-washy metrics

When Doug Marshall, group head of marketing at Wilmington, first started out in marketing, there was a simple way to measure campaign effectiveness – the piles of envelope orders in response to a direct mail push. There's a lesson here, he explains. "Despite all the amazing software, platforms and techniques at our disposal, we always need to keep our eye on commercial results." Doug remembers his team's excitement in the infancy of digital marketing when they reached 20,000 followers on Twitter. "But when I asked what this milestone meant the answer was vague," he says. It's all too easy to measure metrics which might help you look good fleetingly, rather than the harder to measure metrics which makes the company successful, he warns.

Attribution model that adds value

Doug and his team focus on ensuring they add value at all levels, leveraging technology to improve clearer attribution. "Our US-based Foundation Research Associates business has used lead scoring to improve conversion rates by 50%, providing an enhanced service to sales teams that demonstrates the currency, temperature and interests of qualified leads," he explains. "This helps us understand the value of marketing activities and guides us more quickly on the actions to take to achieve commercial targets. Our focus is moving to outcomes, using questions to understand to what extent learning will be put into practice, and the impact on performance, which is a better indication of value. If the metric doesn't give you an insight on how to improve commercial results, is it worth measuring?"

5. Expect your team to see the world differently



"I was quite dogmatic, and expected everyone in my team to have the same drive as me"

Ali Griffiths, Innovate Finance

Prioritising speed and efficiency

Ali Griffiths, director of strategy at Innovate Finance, built a reputation as someone who gets things done quickly. "That desire to create a rapid impact caused problems as often as results early in my career," she says. "For a long time, I assumed, quite innocently, that my peers and direct reports would see the world exactly as I did. Even with evidence mounting up that this might not be the case, I wasn't sure what to do about it." If a task was requested by her boss, Ali prioritised fulfilling it as rapidly and effectively as possible. "I would feel hurt that my intentions or directions had somehow been interpreted as malign," she explains, "while my team were often in equal parts frustrated and resentful. According to my 360-degree feedback, I was 'ambitious' and 'good at managing up, but not down'."

A new worldview

The turning point came when Aviva, where she was head of corporate marketing, sent a group of 12 on a management course. "Over three weeks in the Namibian bush, we renovated a school and built a playground, guided by Raleigh International's leadership development coaches," she says. Being pushed out of their comfort zones was a good metaphor for business, she explains, and exposed behaviours under pressure. "We undertook in-depth Myers Briggs personality profiling. Each evening around the camp-fire, we would dissect our reactions to different challenges, and explain why we had chosen a particular route. During these sessions, and other conversations and activities, I finally saw the world through multiple new lenses."



BECOME THE CXPERT YOUR CUSTOMERS DESERVE

Struggling to improve your customer experience? You're not alone. **Mary-Anne Baldwin** shares the survey results of 200 B2B marketers, showing that there's a long way to go in the bid to beat our B2C counterparts

Customer experience (CX) is both everyone's problem and no one's problem. While we all want to improve our CX most are unsure who should do what, or how it all ties up. It's what psychologists call 'diffused responsibility'. While everyone thinks someone else will fix CX, or is better placed to do so, nothing much improves.

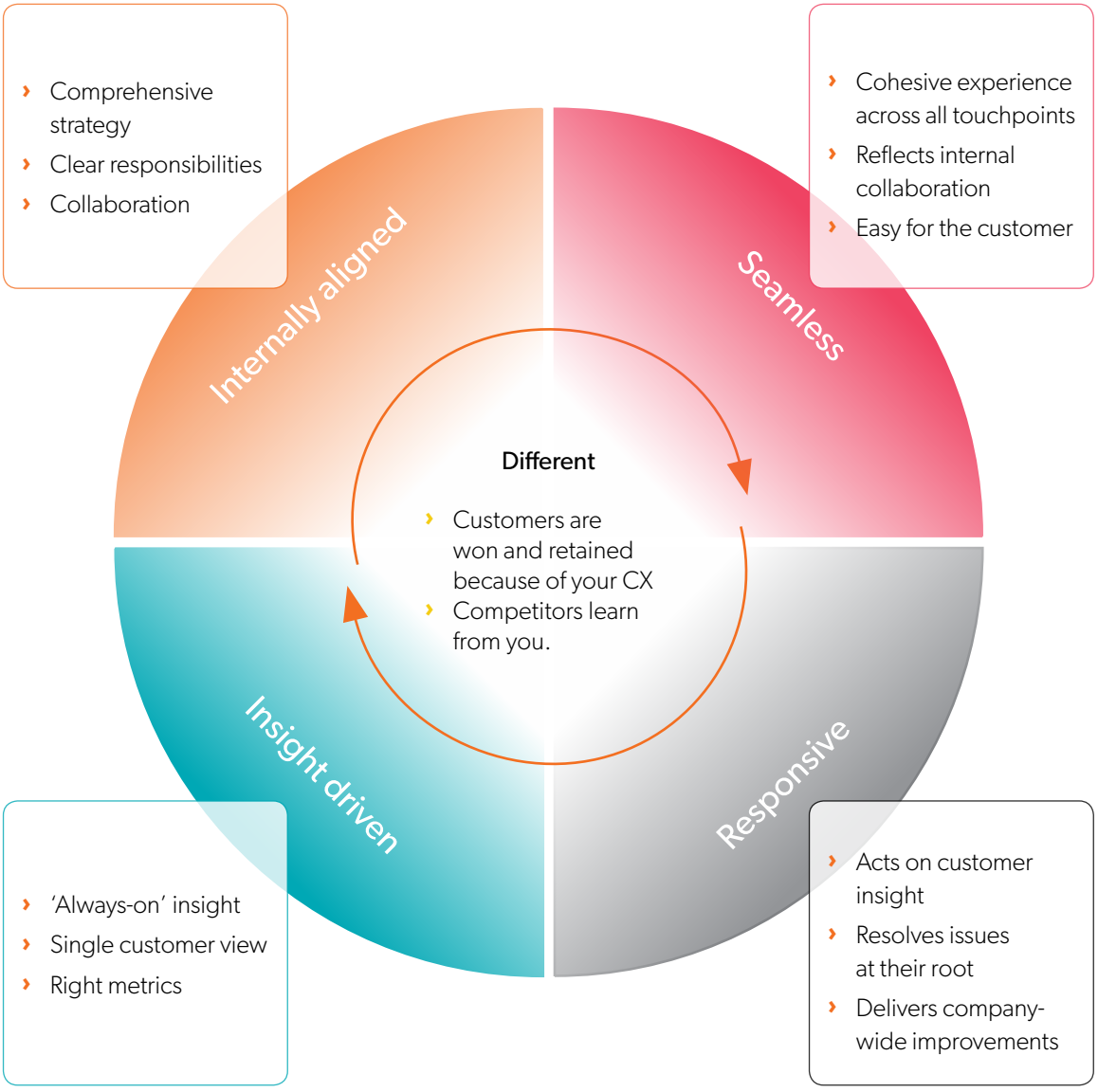
Even companies with leaders or teams dedicated to CX are failing to keep up with their B2C counterparts. B2B Marketing's recent survey on CX shows that across the industry, only 3% of marketers say their business is aligned to a cohesive, operational CX plan. Actually many don't have a CX plan of any kind, and for the significant majority, it's tackled in a piecemeal approach with each department doing what it can with the limited information and stretch it has.

It takes a village, but that village also needs a chieftain, someone to drive the collective efforts forward with insight and shared goals. The amount of customer insight you have as a marketer, makes you well placed and fully armed to take on this job. It's time you recognised and celebrated the pivotal role you can play. If not you, then who?

Marketers should hold on to the customer throughout their journey

Marketers' responsibility and budgetary spend for CX drops significantly during the middle of the customer lifecycle, when customers are buying or using your product. Our survey shows that 70% of marketers take little or no responsibility for CX during the point of sale or aftercare and 76% spend little to none of their budget. That means that while marketers have significant responsibility for retention, they have little to no impact on the reasons why a customer might leave.

For marketers to take a more holistic responsibility for CX they must change their relationship with the business, recognising that marketing is not there to serve and support sales, but the customer. Marketing's reach should therefore stretch across the customer lifecycle and across the business.



You need a single internal view on serving customers

Marketers should not only strive for a single customer view, but also a single internal view on how to serve them. Too many organisations suffer from a disjointed approach to CX with siloed teams pushing in different directions. The outcome is an incoherent, irritating and often irrational experience for the customer. To work through this, the company needs to align to CX targets that are shared at board level and disseminated down. Most marketers use the Customer Satisfaction Score or the Net Promoter Score but be warned – these are flat metrics that tell you what, but not why. Ultimately though, it matters less which metric you use, so long as it's agreed across the company and delivers meaningful improvement to the customer

B2B companies aren't using their CX to differentiate

Only 13% of B2B marketers believe their customers are won and retained because of CX. There is vast room for improvement, not least because 79% of B2B marketers say CX is a significant (or even their highest) priority for the year ahead. You simply can't differentiate by taking tried and tested measures, yet of all the areas in which marketers are investing their efforts, brand comes out top. This is above customer loyalty, data and mapping. By taking this well trodden path marketers are failing to innovate.

The CX essentials

Using survey results of almost 200 B2B marketers, plus interviews and case studies, we've distilled customer experience into 'The CX essentials' – five fundamental areas you need to focus on to improve your delivery (shown in the model above).

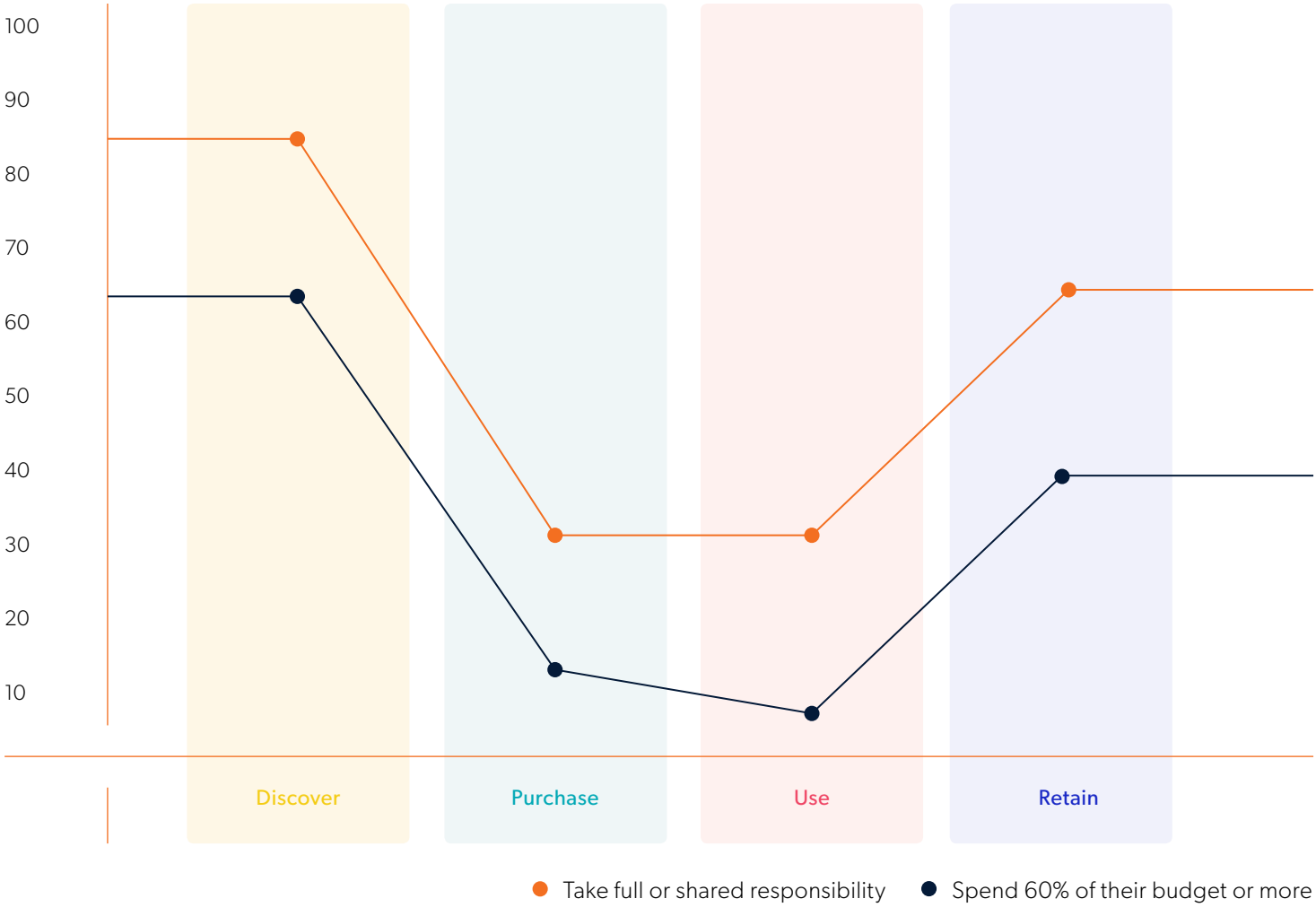
On page 42, you'll find a series of questions based on these essential elements of CX, which allow you to assess where you are in your journey towards a great customer experience, and benchmark yourself against your peers.

Stake a claim on the customer experience

Marketing's responsibility and budgetary spend for CX dips significantly at the mid-point of the customer lifecycle, demonstrating that marketers aren't holding onto the customer. For too long marketers have proudly handed leads to sales only to lose sight of those customers once the deal has been signed. They are then called on again to seduce and to enamour those same customers when it's time to renew that deal. There's a world between those two contracts and you should stick a flag in it.



Marketing's responsibility and budgetary spend for CX across the customer lifecycle



Businesses are suffering from confused CX metrics

Customer Satisfaction Scores, Net Promoter Scores and retention value are the favoured methods of measuring CX, yet these metrics are very limited in that they only monitor one aspect at a single point in time. In addition, they only give you the 'what' and not the 'why'. To get a true understanding of your customer's behaviour and feelings, you need continuous feedback through contact centres, customer portals and social listening.

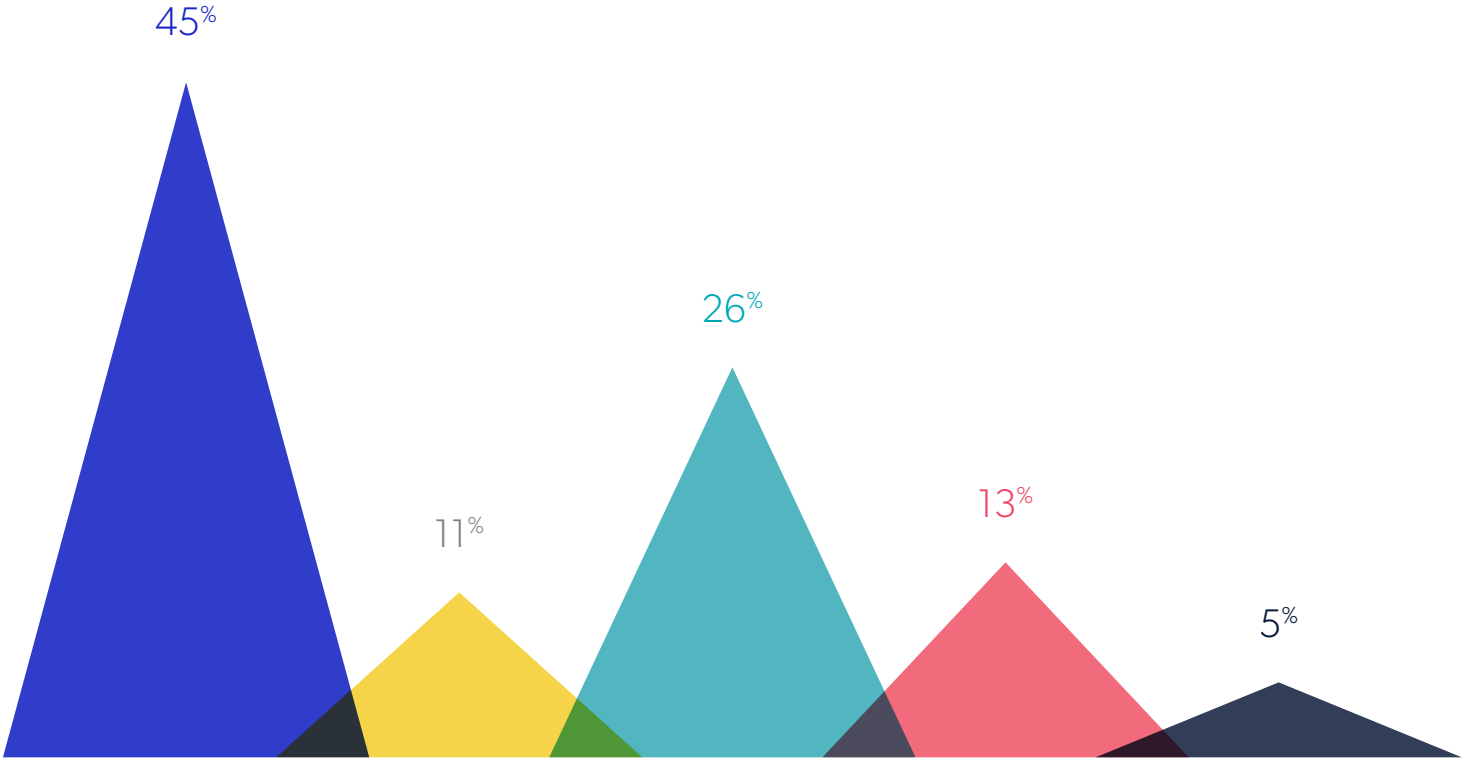


This is an extract from our exclusive member-only report *Become a CXpert: The marketer's guide to customer experience*. For an in-depth look at CX in B2B, including:

- Models
- Frameworks
- Practical advice
- Care studies

Download your free copy at b2bmarketing.net/CXpert

To what extent does your company have a clear and established set of metrics for CX?



Barely or not at all: There is limited and/or confused metrics for CX with little harmony across the business or understanding of the customer journey	Initially – there is agreement but no action: All relevant parties have agreed metrics, which encompass the full customer journey	Partially – well in places, poorly in others: There are company-wide CX metrics, which we have recently started measuring	Wholly – its good, but it's not perfect: We are relatively sophisticated in our CX metrics. We have company-wide systems and processes, although they need some perfecting	Robust and meaningful: Our CX metrics are fully defined, tracked, measured and constantly improved. This is taken as a company-wide effort

Internal alignment

A. There is a strong but siloed, often conflicting, view on who 'owns' CX.

B. A CX strategy and responsibilities have been agreed but we haven't implemented it.

C. All stakeholders are working collaboratively to an agreed CX plan.

D. We are fine-tuning our active CX strategy through measurement, engagement surveys and KPIs.

E. Staff are highly informed, engaged and collaborative in their efforts to improve CX. Staff cite pride and customer satisfaction as reasons for working for us.

Seamless

A. Our customer experience is good in areas but on a holistic level it's confused, disjointed and cumbersome.

B. We're evaluating the seamlessness of our CX, including pain-points and churn.

C. We are taking targeted, collaborative and decisive actions to improve seamlessness across the business.

D. Customer satisfaction and risk data are being measured and acted on, improving CX and reducing churn.

E. Our customer experience is seamless, unified and positive.

Different

A. Our CX has little or no distinction from our competitors.

B. We have benchmarked our CX against our competitors and seen where we can excel.

C. We're delivering distinctive improvements to our CX.

D. We're measuring the impact of recent improvements and A/B testing our developments.

E. Customers are won and retained because we excel at delivering unique CX. Our competitors learn from us.

Insight driven

A. We agree the value of understanding the customer across the customer journey, but don't have that insight yet.

B. We're starting to understand customers across their journey, including by personas and segments.

C. We're at the early stages of acting on the customer journey intelligence we've collated.

D. We're continuously delivering, measuring and improving our CX based on reliable customer data.

E. Our CX is fully defined, tracked, measured and constantly improved. These insights deliver improvements across the business.

Responsive

A. Our interpretation of customer feedback across the business is confused or too political to action.

B. We understand our customer pains and where we need to make improvements.

C. We're making limited improvements, communicating on those changes. Where we can't change things, we say why.

D. Improvements are being actioned and measured. Risk data is prioritised to reduce churn. We're testing and improving as we go.

E. Improvements based on customer feedback are enshrined in our culture.

Take this test to find out how you compare to your B2B marketing peers on the five essential elements of CX.

Select the answer you relate most closely to, keeping note of the letter beside it. Once you've answered all five questions, tally up those letters. Whichever you receive most of reflects your progress towards CX excellence!

Your scores

Mostly As: Understanding:
You match 26% of your peers
Like most of your peers you're at the early stages of planning, improving and fully understanding your CX. There may be a long way to go, but you're certainly not in it alone.

Mostly Bs: Preparing:
You match 25% of your peers
Like a quarter of your peers, you're in the planning stages of your CX journey about to start testing and learning. You have a long way to go but don't loose heart, the greater your efforts here the smoother the ride ahead.

Mostly Cs: Delivering:
You match 24% of your peers
Good news, you're delivering your CX strategy, which means you're ahead of most. Next up you'll be tweaking and improving that plan.

Mostly Ds: Measuring:
You match 15% of your peers
You're doing great, just 15% of B2B marketers are measuring the results of their CX strategy. You're just one step away from industry excellence.

Mostly Es: Perfecting:
You match 10% of your peers
Congratulations, you're at the top of your game.



ACCELERATING YOUR DIGITAL MARKETING TRANSFORMATION: B2B LEADERS SHARE THEIR JOURNEYS

Digital marketing is far from new. But digital marketing transformation (DMT) is another story. Global marketing agency Stein IAS has undertaken the first large-scale quantitative study of 450 senior marketers across sectors and geographies to level set how B2B brands are undertaking their transformation journeys. Here, we talk to leaders about the benefits and barriers to success

Key findings from the survey

Digital marketing transformation is about more than enhancing your tech stack, embracing marketing automation and ABM, or leveraging more digital channels. It's about fully digitalising marketing – from people, processes and tools to go-to-market and customer experience.

1. 81% of B2B companies think that pursuing DMT is important for their companies. This percentage rises to 91% for larger enterprises.
2. Over three-quarters see DMT as a complex process and many cite cost as the biggest barrier to pursuing DMT.
3. The ability for marketing to directly contribute to revenue growth and the ability to deliver a connected customer experience from brand to demand to in-life are the biggest drivers of DMT.

The importance of digital marketing transformation

DMT is a staged journey that requires aligning marketing and business objectives. The fourth industrial revolution – underpinned by technology such as automation, AI, machine learning, blockchain, the internet of things, big data and other digital technology – is at the heart of this transformation.

It places digital technology at the core of operational delivery, marketing innovation, customer experience and multichannel go-to market approaches. The pace of transformation depends on the commitment to transform marketing maturity, and involves people, processes, tools and tactics to maximise business benefits.

What digital marketing transformation means to marketing leaders

"I don't even know why we use the term digital marketing anymore – there is just marketing. Everything we do now has a digital component. We have a complete end-to-end digital customer experience that covers the whole customer journey and will win them back. DMT is at the heart of our brand, and it's increasingly about the whole business."

Gary Hurry, Thomson Reuters

"Buyers are delaying engaging with sellers until much later in the funnel because they can do their own research online – so marketing in general and digital marketing in particular have become more important. Oracle competes with the likes of Google, Amazon and Microsoft, so we need to be faster and more consistent. The only way to do this is to digitally transform our marketing."

Eric Andrews, Oracle

"I think the role of a digital marketer has changed. It used to be email marketing and websites to get your comms out, and it's migrated into marketing operations. Now we take ownership of the entire customer journey to get the ROI we're looking for."

Emma Parker, Ingredion

"Martech will never remove the need for creativity and creative marketers. Once tech is defined, it must be an enabler rather than an inhibitor of emotionally-rooted creative experiences. You could go out each week and buy a new bit of kit, but it's not necessarily the big investments that make the biggest difference. Tech is an enabler to help you address business issues, but you mustn't take your eye off the ball with KPIs and customers."

Paul Stevenson, O2

How long should DMT take?

Although those surveyed by Stein IAS believe a multi-year timeframe will be required to embed digital transformation, our interviewees state this will just be the beginning of the journey.

As Emma Parker from Ingredion says, "With a five-year roadmap, everything will move very quickly. The tool you desperately needed is no longer relevant two years later, or it's suddenly time to redesign the website. I don't think you can ever say you're finished, but if you chip away each year, and you're proud of the key elements in place, then you're winning."

Paul Stevenson at O2 said its initial tech audit took only four months, but there is still work to be done. "Now we have a blueprint for the future, but it's probably going to be a two or three-year journey." Similarly, Eric Andrews at Oracle spent two years adding features to its new sales enablement platform, but it's just the beginning of the journey. "We're going to continue to modernise our assets and improve user experience, so in a sense I don't think we're ever done."

"I don't even know why we use the term digital marketing anymore – there is just marketing. Everything we do now has a digital component"

The benefits and barriers to successful transformation

Emma Parker at Ingredion says the most crucial factor to advance DMT is to gain advocates in your senior leadership team. "It's important to have at least one key leader to give you buy-in. I'm very lucky to have an extremely supportive director who really believes in digital marketing."

However, the leadership team will need convincing why marketing needs to spend the money on transformation. Emma adds, "You need to take them with you and deliver ROI for them. It's not always simple to get a clear number at first, but it gets easier with CRM systems and marketing automation." Results and revenue performance aid understanding, which means having a close relationship with sales to prove what opportunities have been passed onto them.

Another way to gain senior advocates is through the recognition from award wins and nominations. "It's very visible, motivational and the leadership team are always impressed by them," Emma states. Even with buy-in, DMT is never smooth-sailing. "Take your time and plan, and

whatever you think you can achieve, halve it and you might get it done," she advises.

Make your budget work for you

When Paul Stevenson of O2 oversaw a complete overhaul of the company's martech strategy, budget was a key consideration.

The initial overview of O2's tech stack took four months. It was clear from this that rationalising the number of platforms used was crucial. "Consolidation should be driven primarily to make your budget work harder," he says.

Transformation puts strain on the marketing budget. Paul chose to move money spent budget on creative and fulfilment into the transition.

"One way to achieve this migration is to create efficiencies. We covered the implementation costs of Eloqua within a year." This was done through savings such as eliminating manual processes. Before implementing Eloqua, O2 invested heavily in getting customer address data right, fixing small errors and inconsistencies. Now the Eloqua app called 'Data Washing Machine', which costs less than $100 a year, fixes this across the whole database in a matter of minutes.

For budget's sake, Paul advises that you must avoid a 'Frankenstack' at all costs – a tech stack of disparate solutions that are stitched together. This is highly inefficient, easily broken and won't allow you to benefit from automatic upgrades and enhancements.

The quick wins and long-term benefits of DMT

The foremost benefit of transformation is revenue growth – both directly and indirectly. Many of the respondents to the Stein IAS survey cited the ability to deliver a connected customer experience from brand to demand. Many cited closer alignment between marketing, sales and other key functions. Both of these benefits ladder directly to revenue performance. Other key benefits come into play as well, such as improved efficiency and better insights into customer behaviour.

Marketing leaders' top 4 unexpected wins from digital transformation

1. *"We've seen our core demand generation metrics increase by up to 50%."*

   Gary Hurry, Thomson Reuters

2. *"From when I started, we have five times more of our total addressable market in our database."*

   Emma Parker, Ingredion

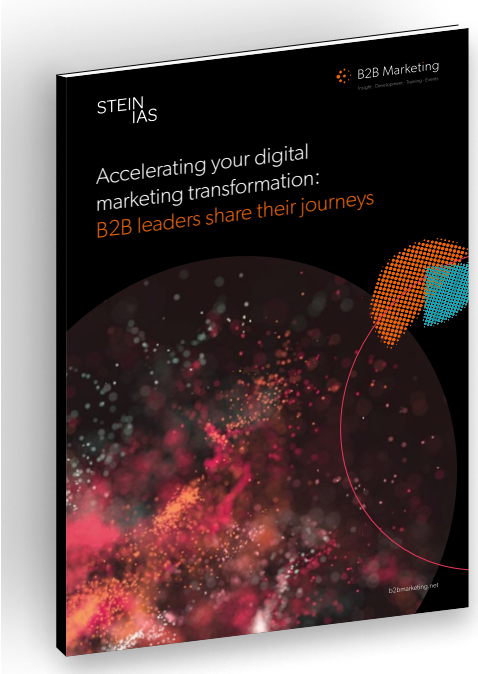
3. *"Martech has enabled us to be agile – in terms of data, content delivery and customer demands. We can respond to customer behaviours and triggers, delivering back to them what they are actually looking for, at any stage of the customer journey."*

   Paul Stevenson, O2

4. *"We no longer get called from field sellers saying 'you're not helping'. It really has made a difference in our relationship with sales."*

   Eric Andrews, Oracle

For budget's sake you must avoid a 'Frankenstack' at all costs – a tech stack of disparate solutions that are stitched together



This is an extract from our free report, *Accelerating your digital marketing transformation: B2B leaders share their stories*. To learn more, including:

- The key use cases for digital marketing transformation.
- The tech needed for successful transformation.
- More DMT case studies from B2B leaders.

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Industry expertise: Marketing, media, pharmaceuticals, publishing, IT, telecomms
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Oracle Marketing Cloud
Services: Marketing automation
Industry expertise: Financial services, leisure and entertainment, media, publishing, marketing
b2bmarketing.net/oracle-marketing-cloud

Marcomms

Amberjack
Services: Branding, content writing, copywriting, design, lead generation, marketing communications, web design
Industry expertise: Business services, financial services, IT, telecoms, media, publishing, marketing, professional services, retail and wholesale
b2bmarketing.net/amberjack

Armstrong
Services: Advertising, branding, design, digital marketing, ecommerce, marcomms, online video, web development
Industry expertise: Automotive, industrial, manufacturing and engineering, property and construction
b2bmarketing.net/armstrong

Bray Leino
Services: Branding, events and exhibition services, marcomms, media buying, mobile, web design
Industry expertise: Automotive, industrial, manufacturing, engineering, IT, telecomms, professional services, public sector, retail and wholesale
b2bmarketing.net/bray-leino

Digital Radish
Services: Content marketing, design, digital marketing, direct marketing, lead generation, marcomms
Industry expertise: Financial services, IT, telecomms, leisure and entertainment, media, publishing, marketing, retail and wholesale
b2bmarketing.net/digital-radish

Earnest
Services: Branding, digital marketing, direct marketing, lead generation, marcomms
Industry expertise: Financial services, IT, telecomms, professional services
b2bmarketing.net/earnest

Expandi Group
Services: Data analytics, demand generation solutions, email marketing, marketing automation platforms, marketing communications, web analytics
Industry expertise: IT, Telecomms
b2bmarketing.net/expandi-group

Godfrey
Services: Advertising, branding, content marketing, customer insight, demand generation, marcomms, PR, web development
Industry expertise: Industrial, manufacturing and engineering, property and construction
b2bmarketing.net/godfrey

Gyro
Services: Advertising, branding, content marketing, copywriting, CRM, data analytics, demand generation, design, digital marketing, direct marketing, lead generation, marcomms, mobile, PR, SEO/SEM, social media, web design, web development
Industry expertise: Industrial, manufacturing and engineering, IT, telecomms, pharmaceuticals, professional services, property and construction, telecomms, public sector
b2bmarketing.net/gyro

Gravity
Services: Branding, digital marketing, marcomms, PR
Industry expertise: Automotive, business services, financial services, industrial, engineering, IT, telecomms, public sector
b2bmarketing.net/gravity

Iris Business
Services: Advertising, branding, content marketing, customer insight, digital marketing, ecommerce, events and exhibitions, marcomms
Industry expertise: Aerospace and defence, IT, telecoms, property and construction
b2bmarketing.net/irisbusiness

Kingpin
Services: Advertising, digital marketing, lead generation, marcomms, media buying, telemarketing
Industry expertise: IT, telecomms
b2bmarketing.net/kingpin-communications

Lesniak Swann
Services: Advertising, customer insight, design, digital marketing, marketing communications, marketing services and technology, web design, website development
Industry expertise: Media, publishing, marketing
b2bmarketing.net/lesniak-swann

Miramar
Services: Branding, demand generation solutions, design, digital marketing, events and exhibition services, marketing communications, web design, web development
Industry expertise: Financial services, industrial, manufacturing, engineering, IT, telecomms
b2bmarketing.net/miramar

MOI Global
Services: Digital marketing, direct marketing, event and exhibition services, marcomms
Industry expertise: IT, telecomms
b2bmarketing.net/moi

Nelson Bostock Unlimited
Services: Branding, content marketing, copywriting
Industry expertise: Media, publishing, marketing
b2bmarketing.net/nelson-bostock-unlimited

Octopus Group
Services: Content marketing, marcomms, PR, social media
Industry expertise: Financial services, IT, telecomms, media, publishing, marketing
b2bmarketing.net/octopus-group

Ogilvy
Services: Advertising, branding, digital marketing, email marketing, marcomms, social media
Industry expertise: Financial services, IT, telecomms
b2bmarketing.net/ogilvyone-business

Point to Point
Services: ABM, advertising, customer insight, demand generation, digital marketing, inbound marketing, media buying, SEO/SEM
Industry expertise: Media, publishing and marketing
b2bmarketing.net/pointtopoint

Red House B2B Marketing
Services: ABM, content marketing, data analytics, digital marketing, direct marketing, lead generation, social media, web development
Industry expertise: Industrial, manufacturing and engineering, IT, telecomms
b2bmarketing.net/redhouseb2bmarketing

Retina
Services: Branding, content marketing, demand generation, digital marketing, martech, media buying, web analytics, web development
Industry expertise: Financial services, IT, telecoms, public sector
b2bmarketing.net/retina

Saatchi & Saatchi pro
Services: Advertising, branding, digital marketing, marcomms
Industry expertise: Aerospace and defence, automotive, financial services, industrial, manufacturing, engineering, retail, media, publishing, marketing
b2bmarketing.net/saatchi-saatchi-pro

The Crocodile
Services: Demand generation, digital marketing, direct marketing, marcomms, marketing automation, PR, web design
Industry expertise: Automotive, financial services, industrial, IT, telecomms, pharmaceuticals
b2bmarketing.net/the-crocodile

The Marketing Pod
Services: Branding, content marketing, copywriting, customer insight, design, direct marketing, email marketing, events and exhibition services, inbound marketing, marcomms, PR
Industry expertise: Aerospace and defence, automotive, business services, industrial, manufacturing, engineering, IT, telecomms, media, publishing, marketing, professional services
b2bmarketing.net/marketing-pod

The Mx Group

Services: Branding, content marketing, demand generation, digital marketing, telemarketing, web development
Industry expertise: Aerospace and defence, automotive, business services, financial services, health and beauty, industrial, manufacturing and engineering, IT, telecomms, leisure and entertainment, media, publishing and marketing, pharmaceuticals, professional services, property and construction, public sector, retail and wholesale
b2bmarketing.net/mxgroup

Tomorrow People

Services: Content marketing, data analytics, digital marketing, inbound marketing, lead generation, marketing services and technology, PR, social media services, web design and development
Industry expertise: Financial services, industrial, manufacturing, engineering, IT, telecomms, professional services
b2bmarketing.net/tomorrow-people

Torpedo

Services: Branding, digital marketing, design, lead generation, marcomms, video, apps, websites, content
Industry expertise: Aerospace and defence, business services, industrial, IT, manufacturing, engineering, telecomms
b2bmarketing.net/torpedo

TricomB2B

Services: Advertising, branding, content marketing, digital marketing, events and exhibitions, marcomms, PR, web development
Industry expertise: Industrial, manufacturing and engineering
b2bmarketing.net/ tricomb2b

twogether

Services: Branding, content marketing, digital marketing, direct marketing, lead generation, website development, media, telemarketing, web design
Industry expertise: Financial services, IT, telecomms, professional services
b2bmarketing.net/twogether

Weber Shandwick

Services: ABM, content marketing, data analytics, lead generation, marcomms, PR, social media
Industry expertise: Financial services, industrial, manufacturing and engineering, professional services
b2bmarketing.net/webershandwick

93x

Services: Content marketing, design, digital marketing, marcomms, marketing automation platforms, SEO/SEM
Industry expertise: IT, telecomms
b2bmarketing.net/93x

Market research

B2B International

Services: Branding, customer insight, market research
Industry expertise: Business and financial services, industrial, manufacturing, engineering, IT, telecomms, professional services, property and construction
b2bmarketing.net/b2b-international

Savanta

Services: Customer insight, market research
Industry expertise: Business services, financial services, IT, telecomms, media, manufacturing, professional services, property, retail
b2bmarketing.net/savanta

Public relations

Speed Communications

Services: PR, content marketing, marcomms, social media
Industry expertise: Automotive, business services, financial services, industrial, manufacturing, engineering, professional services, public sector
b2bmarketing.net/speed-communications

Social media

Hootsuite

Services: Digital marketing, marketing communications, marketing services technology, social media services, web analytics
Industry expertise: Business services, IT, telecomms, media, publishing, marketing, retail and wholesale
b2bmarketing.net/hootsuite-media-inc

Telemarketing

The Telemarketing Company

Services: Appointment setting, business development, data cleansing, demand generation solutions, lead generation, telemarketing
Industry expertise: Business and financial services, industrial, manufacturing, engineering, IT, telecomms, pharmaceuticals, professional services
b2bmarketing.net/telemarketing-company

UK distribution and digital printing

Washington Direct Mail

Services: Direct mail, post fulfilment, design, digital and lithographic presses, print finishing, campaign management
Industry expertise: Marketing, business services, software, health and beauty, financial services, publishing, pharmaceuticals, public sector
b2bmarketing.net/wdm

Web analytics

Google

Services: Marketing services, technology, online video, web analytics
Industry expertise: Business services, financial services, marketing, media, professional services, publishing
b2bmarketing.net/google

Show me the money: Why revenue ops is the hottest new trend in B2B



Revenue operations is the latest solution touted to bridge the chasm between sales and marketing, and enable both to operate more effectively. The hype bandwagon is already rolling, and **Joel Harrison** finds out what's driving it

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.

About five years ago, the chief revenue officer (CRO) was the Next Big Thing™ in B2B marketing. This role, we were told, was going to be huge – all B2B organisations were going to need a CRO. They were going to resolve the issues regarding sales and marketing alignment overnight, drive more revenue, boost profits and allow us to live happily ever after.

So what happened? Some companies did employ CROs, and some still have them. But more did not, and most of those that did (in B2B at least) were martech or adtech companies. For the rest of the market the reaction was more muted, and actual evidence of CROs on the ground was limited. In the interim, the hype bandwagon moved on, the concept faded into the background, and sales and marketing remained misaligned.

But fashions always recycle themselves, and the core of compelling ideas typically doesn't die. That's probably why we're seeing the re-emergence of revenue operations – or 'revenue ops'. It refers to a combined operations function incorporating both marketing and sales elements, providing a holistic view of all revenue-related activities, processes, activities and technologies. If it's done right, it will inevitably help bridge the aforementioned marketing/sales divide.

Revenue ops at the tipping point

The interest and hype surrounding revenue ops seems to have reached a tipping point. Sirius Decisions was waving the revenue ops flag at its summit this year, and I went to two events on the topic in the same day in June. Both suggested we've barely scratched the surface.

The first was a breakfast briefing organised by the UK Sales Operations Network. It included a fascinating discussion led by Sales Hacker founder Max Altschuler. The second was organised by demand gen agency Ledger Bennett at its Kings Cross HQ, where it presented some great case studies and unveiled Cortex: its custom-built revenue insights platform – designed to facilitate revenue ops.

Congratulations to Ledger Bennett on stealing a march on many bigger and better established vendors by launching a solution to this category – it will be interesting to see how long it takes for the rest of the market to catch up.

If it's done right, it will inevitably help bridge the marketing/sales divide

As the old saying goes, two swallows don't make a summer – and while these two events are more than a coincidence, you'd be forgiven for saying they don't represent a tidal wave of interest. I'm going to stick my neck out and say this is just the start of something.

What's likely to mark the difference between this and the previous hype is building out a combined operations function for both sales and marketing feels like a more intuitive, less combative means of drawing the two functions together. And more importantly, one that's more likely to be successful. Expecting disharmony to be resolved by appointing yet another c-suite figure to sit above both teams, or choosing between either CMO or CSO to fill this combined role, seems naïve, heavy-handed and unnecessary. If the teams can see the advantages of collaborating on an operational level, that makes it far more likely to happen, and much more seamless when it does.

Perhaps revenue ops is the right idea for our times. If your martech vendor or agency isn't talking to you about this now, you can bet they soon will be.

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