Q4 — 16/17

B2B MARKETING



WAR & PEACE

THE AGENCY-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

B2B Marketing


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CONTENTS

6–9

Primed and ready to go

The line between professional likeability and respectability is a fine one – easily smudged, often blurred. As a manager (or leader), it's natural to want to inspire your team to success – but you're probably also struggling with the very real and very human desire to be liked.

So, in the spirit of new beginnings and lofty aspirations, we've spoken to leadership experts and marketers about becoming a brilliant boss, while also shining the spotlight on the topics of career progression and recruitment. What can junior marketers do to climb the ladder and which tricks should client and agency-side marketers be using to attract top talent?

If professional renown is your aim in 2017, look no further for inspiration: this issue also contains a seven-page B2B Marketing Awards extravaganza, complete with interviews with winners and tips on how to emerge front of pack at this year's Awards. Plus, we're also serving up the hottest trends from this year's *B2B Agencies Benchmarking Report*, complete with expert analysis from client-side big hitters.

Elsewhere, we speak to marketers with weird and wonderful backgrounds, share a roadmap for new job success, and get to grips with the magical world of podcasts, examining what it takes to get up and running and how to avoid embarrassing podcast faux pas.

Have a wonderful February and we'll see you again in print form in May.

Jess Pike
Senior editor, *B2B Marketing*

War & Peace: The agency-client relationship



With reputations and repeat tenders on the line, the stakes for agency-client relations are often high. Oliver Matejka speaks to both sides to explore the areas of harmony and conflict

Happy agency-client relations are all alike; every unhappy one is unhappy in its own way. In order to be happy, both sides must be committed to a range of criteria – openness, communication, results, and so on. Failure on just one of these counts can lead to conflict. Thus there are more ways for a relationship to

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10–16

And the award goes to...



As the world-famous B2B Marketing Awards enters its 13th year, Alex Clarke casts his eye over the highs and highs of November's ceremony to give you a head start on your 2017 bid for Awards glory

William Murray Communications were our most successful company of the night, scooping three awards. CEO Anita Murray discusses the undervalued role of PR in B2B and the power of celebrity endorsement. What are the best and worst things about PR in B2B? Do you think it's

18–22

Climbing the ranks

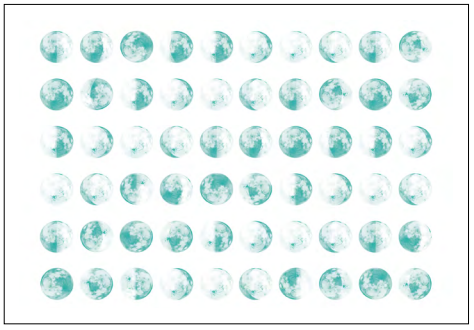


In this CPD-themed extravaganza, Jess Pike explores how senior marketers can make the best impression and discovers what junior marketers need to do to secure the jobs everyone else is vying for

In the first few weeks of the year, the old clichés about gym memberships and weight loss have their origins rooted in reality. Shoving the Baileys to the back of the cupboard, where it'll sit gathering dust for the next 11 months, the nation collectively vows that 2017 will be a

24–28

The first 100 days



You've landed yourself your dream senior marketing role. The LinkedIn profile's been updated and the announcements have gone out. Oliver Matejka imagines how the first three months should go

Day one: Monday morning 9am. Contracts have been signed and, feeling composed, you enter the office of your new job. From the outset, it's clear that expectations are high. Internal communications are laudatory. Your LinkedIn inbox is bursting with well-wishes. PRs

30–34

The marketing renegades

Jess Pike catches up with five marketers with pretty unusual career trajectories to find out what they've learnt along the way and what they bring to their current roles

36–37

Opinion

Our four resident columnists give us their take on everything from sales and marketing alignment to the evolution of the B2B profession

38–41

How to master the art of the B2B podcast

Non-committal self-improvement – no wonder podcasting is proving so popular. Oliver Matejka speaks to three podfathers to find out how B2B marketers can get started



WAR & PEACE

THE AGENCY-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

With reputations and repeat tenders on the line, the stakes for agency-client relations are often high. **Oliver Matejka** speaks to both sides to explore the areas of harmony and conflict



Happy agency-client relations are all alike; every unhappy one is unhappy in its own way. In order to be happy, both sides must be committed to a range of criteria – openness, communication, results, and so on. Failure on just one of these counts can lead to conflict. Thus there are more ways for a relationship to be unhappy than happy.

But with reputations and budgets at stake, we can't blame either party for being a little... cautious. Add to this the pressure that comes with operating in a ferociously competitive market, and we're left with the damning reality that many client-side marketers see their work as too important to be left to a third party. In order to address this false dichotomy, we need to hear from both sides.

I always look for an agency that will consider us one of their most important customers

AN INDUSTRY IN FLUX

The proliferation of niche specialist agencies is causing their larger counterparts to struggle to bring in the required talent, leaving the entire industry in a state of flux. "We're finding agencies that know about data but don't understand the marketing mix, while the ones that know about content and editorial don't understand the brand in a sufficiently compelling way," says Alex Naylor, Barclaycard's director of marketing communications.

Promisingly, though, agencies are under no illusion about this shortfall. When we asked those that took part in our annual league table (see p9) to share their thoughts on the changing relationship, the answers reflected Alex's concerns. "Agencies now need to be sector experts and highly skilled marketers," said one. "No longer can they get away with being generalists – they have to know how to add value and measure marketing success in relation to business objectives and growth."

Taking a demonstrable interest in campaign performance is one way agencies are remedying the problem. To illustrate this, Brian Macreadie, head of brand and campaign marketing at Berwin Leighton Paisner (BLP), outlines an example from the PR world: "Those focusing solely on column inches, follows and likes are being left behind by those who are ROI-literate and measure leads, revenues and hard brand metrics."

Perhaps this should come as little surprise: performance metrics are hard-wired into every marketer, so agencies that show real ability to assist here will always curry favour.

WHAT CLIENTS WANT

Beyond metrics, the devil's in the detail for Stephen Yeo, marketing director at Panasonic. "I want people who truly understand the B2B world: the specifics of EU data laws, how to address mail to other countries, and how to operate the essential channels. I always look for an agency that will consider us one of their most important customers."

Every client wants the best results and to feel valued regardless of whether they're number one or 41 on an agency's account priority list – this is where agencies should be versatile. A global multi-discipline agency, for example, might lack the niche talent for a certain job, while a smaller specialist agency would simply be too stretched to take on the whole thing. Rather than compromising with one or the other, many client-side marketers now want to combine the two.

This *à la carte* approach involves forming a number of strategic partners and exploiting their individual expertise. "I find it really attractive when agencies are willing to work in a more networked way," Alex explains. "It's great when they understand their own key competencies and are willing to partner with others to bring incremental value."

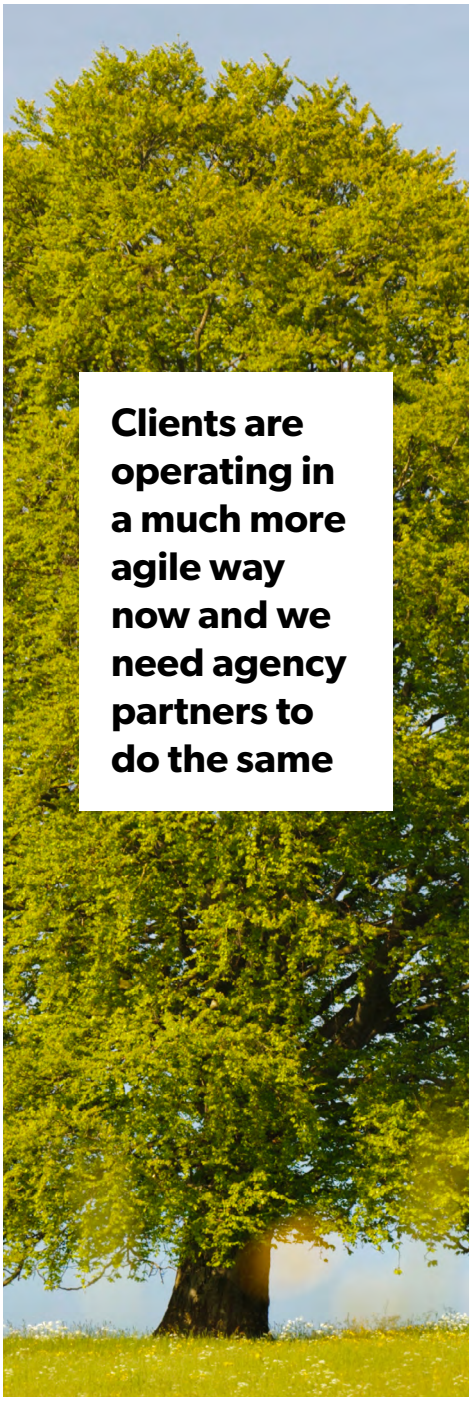
SHOULD AN AGENCY LEAN BOTH WAYS?

Much debate surrounds whether or not an agency should be market partisan. Surely having a B2C arm demonstrates richer experience? Or is it the case that those operating solely within B2B are more committed to the cause? The answer depends as much on the individual client's *modus operandi* as it does the campaign itself.

Brian, for example, only goes for agencies with B2C credentials. "To stand out you need to do new things – bolder and better things – and I believe this demands fresh thinking and new inspiration. I would never hire a design or web agency that has only worked in my patch."

Stephen, on the other hand, is more cautious: "I've often found that B2C operators don't have the necessary expertise to know how to operate some of the infrastructure you need in a B2B environment. For example, we were able to collaborate with our agency Proctor + Stevenson to build one of the biggest B2B sites in Europe. Because it's Drupal-based and we used specialist software like PHP, Minus QL and Lynx, we pay no licence fees. I'm not convinced a B2C agency could do the same."

With consumer agencies often needing to roll their sleeves up to get up-to-speed on the technical specifics, Alex is optimistic for their B2B counterparts. "As the industry produces more exciting and compelling work, the creative opportunities in B2B will become more apparent. This, in turn, will pull in the creative talent and the problem will go away."



Clients are operating in a much more agile way now and we need agency partners to do the same

AREAS OF CONFLICT

According to the industry adage, pitches are won at the top and contracts lost at the bottom. In other words, clients are aware of the agency tactic of sending their most impressive staff to pitches only to replace them with juniors further down the line.

"I avoid pretentious accents and beautiful women," says Stephen. "Agencies often roll out the A-team to take you out for dinner. But frankly, I'm not interested in that. I want an agency with good, genuine people."

This aversion to facade is echoed by Alex, who shuns the 'them and us' mindset. "Clients are operating in a much more agile way now and we need agency partners to do the same. They need to be much more partnered, communicative, collaborative and iterative than in previous years."

When agencies were probed to describe the troubles they face when working with their opposite numbers, many of their complaints surrounded clients' internal bureaucracy, unclear briefs and fragmented leadership. As one said: "You can get 75% of a project complete and then a senior spod can engage in seagull management – fly in, make a lot of noise, shit on everything and then fuck off – they derail a project having no clue as to its objectives or the quality of thought and planning."

This won't be the last time the agency-client relationship is likened to that of a marriage – the parallel being that the fewer times you part ways, the happier you'll be in the long run. Despite foibles admitted on both sides, though, the epilogue is one of resounding positivity and a shared eagerness to produce outstanding work; not just for themselves, but for the B2B industry as a whole.

FIVE AGENCY BONUS POINTS

1. Offer new insights
Divulge fresh perspectives on your client's target audience.

2. Be big and bold
Bring the biggest, boldest, most distinctive ideas along in order to prove that you're ready to convert customer insight into execution.

3. Take a portfolio approach
Be willing to work in a networked way to deliver the best results.

4. Be authentic
Be open about who exactly will be working on the project.

5. Aim for low overheads
Operating out of luxurious buildings suggests to clients that they're paying for your overheads.

Top 75
UK B2B marcomms agencies

This year's *B2B Agencies Benchmarking Report* revealed which marcomms agencies are leading the way in B2B. Here are the top 75, ranked according to their UK gross income.

1 Amaze
2 Oliver Group
3 Bray Leino
4 OgilvyOne Business
5 gyro
6 Expandi Group
7 KHWS
8 Reading Room
9 The Marketing Practice
10 Gravity London
11 DWA Media
12 Tangent
13 Refinery
14 CI Group
15 Kingpin
16 April Six
17 Stein IAS
18 Velocity Partners
19 McCann Enterprise
20 Octopus Group
21 Building Blocks (part of Dept)
22 4Ps Marketing
23 Brandformula
24 Wyatt International
25 ClearPeople
26 twogether
27 Six
28 Pulse
29 JJ Marketing
30 Purple Agency
31 Really B2B
32 CleverTouch Marketing
33 MOI Global
34 Something Big
35 BDB
36 Freestyle Interactive
37 Technical Associates Group
38 Quantum Marketing
39 Ledger Bennett DGA
40 Law Creative
41 CIB Communications
42 Momentum ABM
43 Man Bites Dog
44 Omobono
45 Manifesto Digital
46 Jellybean
47 The Crocodile
48 438 Marketing
49 Oakwood Media Group
50 DirectionGroup
51 Miramar
52 Enigma Marketing
53 Torpedo
54 The Hub
55 Cyber-Duck
56 bcsAgency
57 Proctor + Stevenson
58 Torch
59 Create Health
60 Broadley Speaking
61 Fox Agency
62 Workbrands
63 Konstructive
64 Fieldworks Marketing
65 Forever Creative
66 OST Marketing
67 First Base
68 Moreish Marketing
69 Realia Marketing
70 Considered Content
71 Novacom
72 Digital Radish
73 Popcomms
74 Brew'd Marketing
75 R1se

AND THE AWARD GOES TO...

As the world-famous B2B Marketing Awards enters its 13th year, **Alex Clarke** casts his eye over the highs and highs of November's ceremony to give you a head start on your 2017 bid for glory

Anita Murray, William Murray Communications



An award-winning recipe

William Murray Communications was our most successful company of the night, scooping three awards. CEO Anita Murray discusses the undervalued role of PR in B2B and the power of celebrity endorsement

What are the best and worst things about PR in B2B? Do you think it's undervalued, and if so, why?

B2B PR might not have the glamorous reputation of consumer PR, but from an early age I've always been passionate about what B2B PR can deliver for clients and their businesses.

The best thing is that it puts you at the heart of a business and its challenges because, ultimately, PR needs to be integrated into the sales and marketing strategy to be successful.

And PR in B2B is more dynamic than ever. In our sector (food and drink), FMCG agencies now look to us for inspiration. That's because we're close to chefs and they're the ones changing the way consumers eat. We used to be seen as the poor relation to consumer agencies, but not anymore.

On the downside, PR is misunderstood in B2B circles. It's often dismissed as publicity, rather than an activity that has a specific purpose and that benefits the bottom line.

William Murray scooped not just one, but three awards: how did you feel on the night?



Dan Flood and **Dave Greenwood** of William Murray Communications pick up their first award of the night

It felt amazing. After all the hard work you put into campaigns and being the best you can, to have it recognised among 800 of your peers makes it all worth the effort. When your name gets announced there's a split second where you just take it in, then once it's sunk in and you see your agency's name on the big screen you feel such pride. Then to win a second and a third – you pinch yourself! The whole room gets behind you, there's a fantastic atmosphere and people are genuinely pleased to come up and congratulate you.

But what was really special was walking into the office the next day (with a slightly sore head); the team was so excited. We celebrated with a champagne breakfast.

Your 'Dishing up advice on gluten-free' campaign for Knorr won both 'Best use of thought leadership' and our



coveted 'Grand prix campaign of the year' awards – why do you think the campaign stood out so much?

It had a clear purpose and helped our industry tackle a complex issue by making it simple. At the same time, the campaign delivered growth for the client, addressed a real customer need, and was built on insight.

New allergens legislation was worrying the industry, as well as a number of operational challenges around training, rising ingredient costs, skills shortages and language barriers. Our chef research helped us create a strong business case for operators and give them the tools to help overcome the problem. The partnership with Coeliac UK and celebrity chef Phil Vickery also gave the campaign credibility.

Why do you think celebrity endorsement is such an effective marketing tactic? How did you get Phil on board?

Chef endorsement gave the campaign a face and a talking point, but it's important not just to choose any celebrity; they need to be the right fit for the campaign and audience. Phil's a gluten-free expert and seen as credible by professional chefs, especially those in our target market, which is heavily focused on cooks in schools and care homes.

To get Phil on board we needed his support, so we emphasised our plan to help chefs cater for the growing number of coeliacs. His agent thought it was a perfect fit and Phil has been engaged and enthusiastic ever since.

Celebrity endorsement is still a relatively underused technique in B2B. Why do you think this is the case?

Celebrity endorsement isn't a natural 'go-to' technique in B2B. Customer testimonials are more common. Or businesses look to a trustworthy source such as an industry association for endorsements. Getting the right celebrity fit in B2B PR isn't easy, because very often there's a diverse target audience where one size doesn't fit all.

Establishing a thought-leadership presence was a huge part of this campaign. How important is this tactic in the B2B space?

We're seeing more and more businesses positioning themselves as thought leaders. In competitive markets they're using it to own a specific space or issue – as we did with gluten-free. It's also a great way to create educational, engaging and relevant content that can be published everywhere.

What challenges did you face in relation to this campaign? And how did you overcome them?

Speed was an initial problem; we had to be quick to market as other brands were snapping at our heels. The 'gravy train', where we offered 60 chefs free first-class travel on the opening day of Birmingham's Hospitality Show, was a stunt to own the market space, firmly link Knorr with gluten-free and keep the brand top of mind. It allowed us the time to do our research and produce a set of credible tools before we launched.

Then, of course, there was inter-agency working and stakeholder management. We ran a tight ship in terms of project management and communication to keep everyone engaged and pushing in the same direction.

Getting the right celebrity fit in B2B PR isn't easy, because very often there's a diverse target audience where one size doesn't fit all

How did you find the judging process?

The key challenge is to keep the entry concise yet at the same time make it stand out. The award needs to tell an engaging story yet have a clear purpose and results. That's not easy in the specified word count.
For the judging day we decided to do away with a formal presentation and presented from mood boards.

What piece of advice would you give to anyone looking to enter the 2017 B2B Marketing Awards?

Do it! Encourage your team to submit their suggestions and commit the time to doing it well. Study previous winning entries. Assign the awards to the right level of people within your team – don't leave it to a junior.



Andy Cravos, Genpact

From paperboy to marketing leader

B2B marketer of the year Andy Cravos talks paper rounds, bad days at the office and his journey from marketing grad at Fujitsu to driving growth strategies at global challenger brand Genpact

Where did you grow up?

I'm originally from Solihull, referred to by some as the posh part of the West Midlands (anyone that makes such a statement obviously hasn't seen where I grew up!).

Describe your current position at Genpact.

I lead marketing for Genpact in Europe and Australia. I'm responsible for building the marketing strategies and executing the go-to-market plans in those regions, across all target industry verticals and service lines to drive strategic brand awareness and revenue.

What did you study at university?

I went to the University of Leeds where I studied for a BA in management studies; a deliberate choice in that it was a fairly generic course, which allowed me to hone in on my interests and abilities .

Marketing, of course, was an area in which I found an immediate connection. I then decided to test that thinking by doing a Masters' degree at the University of Birmingham the following year. And it was a defining year for me when I look back on it, and ultimately why I chose to pursue a career in marketing.

The 12-month course in strategic marketing and consultancy involved a six-month 'live' consultancy project working alongside local brands including Cadbury's, JLR and Aston Villa. It was a great initiative and experience that I think has stood me in good stead ever since.

What was your first job, and what did you learn from it?

Technically, my first job was a paper round, which I ended up being released from due to 'poor time keeping' (first major lesson learnt in the workplace!). However, my first notable position was with Fujitsu. After washing away the post-uni blues, I joined its graduate scheme.

I was part of the market intelligence team; a solid grounding for any young marketer seeking to learn about the competitive landscape in which the company operated. I then had a stint in the horizontal marketing team, which strengthened my

Technically my first job was a paper round, which I ended up being released from due to 'poor time keeping' (first major lesson learnt in the workplace!)

One of the many benefits of being a B2B marketer is that we're part of a young industry, which presents big opportunities for the leaders of tomorrow to define its direction in the years to come

ANDY CRAVOS



understanding of the services that it took to market.

I then moved into the client-facing marketing team, where I was responsible for driving strategic business across some of its largest central and local government accounts.

Why did you decide to leave Fujitsu?

I came to the conclusion that I was ready to test myself at more of a challenger brand, and I haven't looked back since. It's a fairly unique environment at Genpact, in that when I joined we were only really setting up shop from a marketing standpoint.

And being able to shape things towards the start of a brand's journey, coupled with the opportunity to help drive an ambitious growth strategy in a modern, dynamic marketing model, was too hard to resist. And it still keeps me energised and enthused today.

What's been your worst day working in B2B?

I've been part of a team that mistakenly emailed our entire client database something that was intended for only a few. While we didn't feel great in the immediate aftermath, the way in which the team managed the issue with our stakeholders so proactively and seamlessly was great to see.

What made you decide to enter the Awards? And how did you feel when you were announced as the winner?

That's a difficult one for me to answer, as I didn't enter myself and wasn't even made aware of the submission until being shortlisted. So it was an unexpected yet very pleasant surprise.

What advice would you give to someone looking to enter the same category?

Make sure your agency partner's got a good copywriter! Ours (from The Marketing Practice) obviously did, and I clearly owe that individual a beer or two for their kind words...

What piece of advice would you give to young B2B marketers at the start of their careers?

Always start by considering the value and the benefit for the end customer. While many claim to do so, hands on hearts, how many of us really practice what we preach? I'm fortunate to be part of a team that does, but have definitely come across those who are inwardly-driven and complacent.

Secondly, really embrace your discipline if you think it's for you. One of the many benefits of being a B2B marketer is that we're part of a young industry, which presents big opportunities for the leaders of tomorrow to define its direction in the years to come.

Thirdly, never stop asking lots of questions.



Russ Powell, Atos



Diary of an award-winning marketing team member

From jostling for a seat on the train to watching intern presentations at lunch, Atos' marketing manager Russ Powell outlines a day in the life of an award-winning team member

In most offices you'll hear the old cliché that no two days are ever alike. Quite often that can feel like something people just say when they can't actually remember what it is they do on a day-to-day basis, but at Atos it really is the truth.

Being such a vast and multifaceted organisation, the variety of activity we get involved with as marketers can sometimes seem rather daunting, especially when we're only a core team of 12 supporting 10,000 people in the UK split across various markets, functions and service lines. However, it's these various challenges you need to take on and deliver against if you want to be team of the year. Here's a rough idea of what a typical day looks like:

7:54

Jump on the train at Reading and fight someone else for a seat. On the journey, listen to music or read. It's always good to use those first bright moments of thinking to take on board something new and get the brain firing properly.

8:50ish

Having successfully survived the tube, arrive into the office, say hello to the rest of the marketing team, get the laptop powered up and deal with any urgent emails that have come in overnight.

9:15

Daily call with my team to get the latest on what they're working on and deadlines they've got coming up.

9:30

Into a workshop session with one of our bid teams to get a full understanding of an upcoming bid, what it is we're bidding for and how we're going to win the deal. We'll dial in our creative agency, Oliver, so they're up to speed and then work together to create the messaging, branding and creative look and feel for the bid. We'll present back our first ideas to the bid team in a week or so.

11:30

Work on a script and storyboard for some video content we'll shortly be filming with a member of the exec team that will form part of an upcoming campaign. Send that over to our internal creative guys to check over and give the thumbs up for a filming day.

12:30

Quickly pop out and grab some lunch and then head back up to the canteen for the interns' latest 'Marketing 101' session. This is a fortnightly meet-up where we get our interns to present back to the rest of the team over lunch on key marketing theories and models, and how they've seen these applied (or not) in the work we're doing. Always an eye opener.

Being such a vast and multifaceted organisation, the variety of activity we get involved with as marketers can sometimes seem rather daunting

13:30
Weekly catch up call with our references team at global to see which new wins can be used as references and the progress being made with the references already being created.

14:00
Session with our telemarketing agency, MarketMakers, and our business development leads in the markets to share the latest knowledge on our target accounts, review campaign activity and discuss progress with the latest opportunities they've generated for us.

15:00
Take a breather to grab a cup of tea, deal with any other emails that have come in, and have a chat with other team members to see what they're up to.

15:30
Checkpoint call with an existing bid team to ensure we're all on schedule with hitting the deadlines for the bid and we've fully briefed in any new deliverables that may have cropped up.

16:30
Review the content and creative that has been worked on by our internal design studio for that upcoming campaign. Open up the PDF, fire up the sticky notes, and send it back with a few edits that are needed to get it into final shape.

17:15
Listen to voicemails that have arrived during the day, return calls or note down what needs to be followed up tomorrow and then head back to Paddington to catch the train home.

17:45ish
Do a final check of emails on my phone while on the train and action anything that needs doing first thing tomorrow morning. Get home and prepare for tomorrow.



It's always good to use those first bright moments of thinking to take on board something new and get the brain firing properly





A night in numbers: The B2B Marketing Awards 2016

500
Total entries

112
Number of first-round judges

159
Shortlisted entries

37
Number of second-round judges

381
Hours spent judging

750
Marketers who attended the night

10
Number of dodgems (yes, dodgems)

6
Number of New Orleans swing dancers

Winners on the night

28 winners, 21 runners-up, 17 highly commended

Sore heads the following morning

We didn't dare ask...

Work in tech?

There's somewhere you need to be on Thursday 23 February

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The single most influential and inspiring tech marketing event of its kind in the UK

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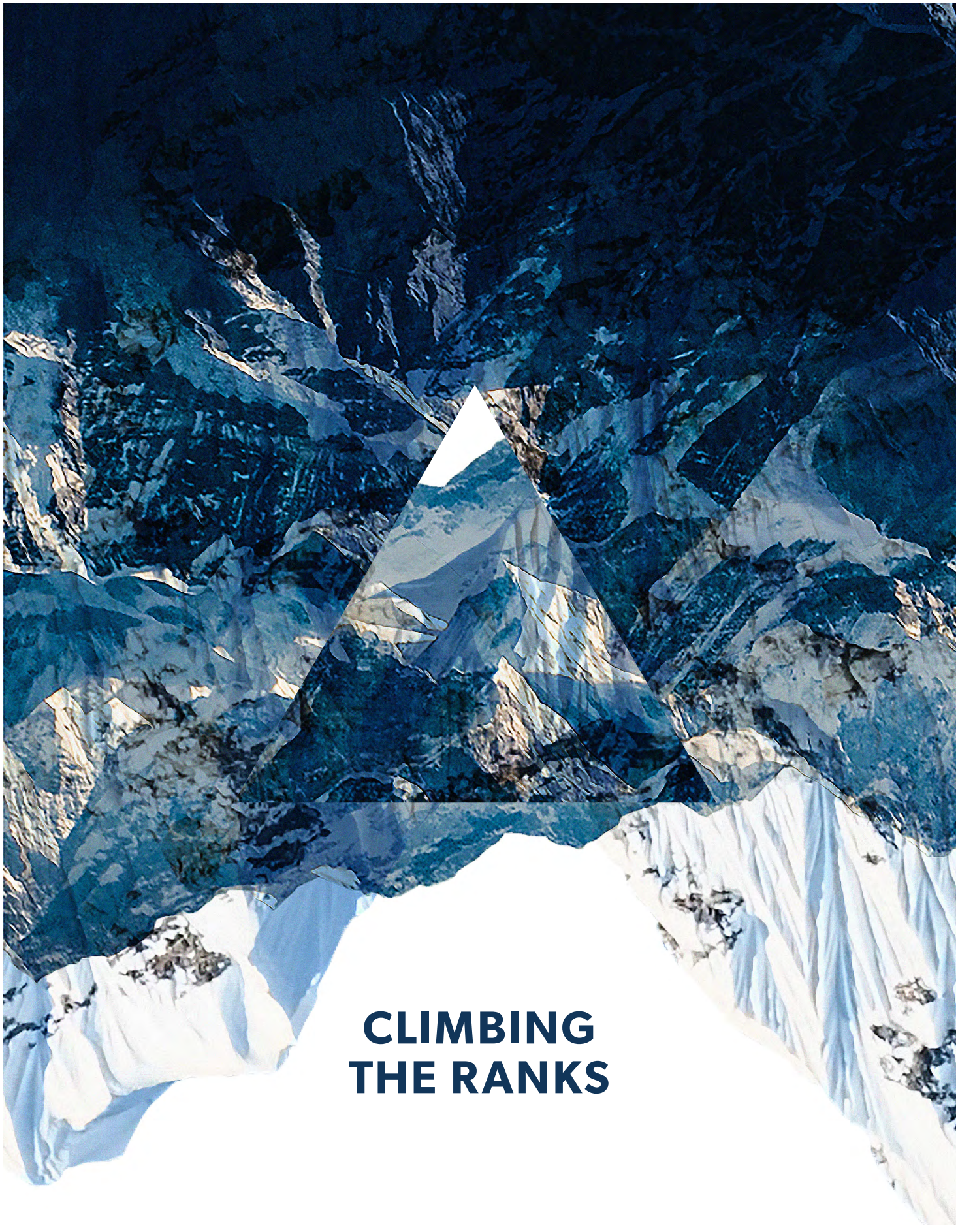
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CLIMBING THE RANKS



In this CPD-themed, five-page extravaganza, **Jess Pike** explores how senior marketers can make the best impression and discovers what junior marketers need to do to secure the jobs everyone else is vying for

In the first few weeks of the year, the old clichés about gym memberships and weight loss have their origins rooted in reality. Shoving the Baileys to the back of the cupboard, where it'll sit gathering dust for the next 11 months, the nation collectively vows that 2017 will be a year of fresh perspectives and sustained fitness plans – a year of positive, all-encompassing change.

Reflecting on accomplishments and shortcomings, and which parts of our physical selves we'd most like to tweak and streamline, it's not unlikely that we're also reflecting on the world of work and how we're doing as managers, leaders and possible mentors. What does your team really think of you? Are you a galvanising managerial force or something of a contrarian? And in your pursuit of legendary status, is your team on track to achieve what needs to be achieved in the months and years ahead?

HALL OF FAME

The beauty of hindsight is that it gives us warm and fuzzy perspectives on old colleagues. "My best ever manager was the living embodiment of the culture of the organisation I was working for," says Gareth Evans, head of sales and marketing at Cogent Elliott. "A hands-on CEO, he was wholly invested in building a deep understanding of commercial structures, imperatives and the ambitions of our clients, and developed strong relationships with them as a result. He inspired me, though, because despite all this he always had time to answer the switchboard if no one was about, greet visitors at the front door and make coffee for meetings."

This has to be at the heart of great leadership: the willingness to muck in and dismantle unnecessary hierarchies. But can you be both a manager and a leader at the same time? Gareth thinks so. "The trick lies in how these two things coexist. My former CEO focused on building and empowering a strong leadership team around him. By doing so he could confidently leave the ongoing business of management to them: he was an effective leader because his leadership was never contaminated by the minutiae of management – and the day-to-day management was always aligned with the broader vision."

A MANAGEMENT MASTERCLASS

For Russ Powell, marketing manager at Atos, a great leader from his past identified herself before he'd even been offered the role. "I'd had an interview for a marketing position and at the end of the interview my potential new boss said: 'I'll let you know by midday on Friday if you've got the job or not.'

"It got to 12.30 on Friday and I hadn't heard from her, so decided to give her a ring. Unbeknownst to me she wasn't able to pick between myself and another candidate so was waiting to see who'd ring her first. From that moment on I knew I was onto a good thing – working for someone who had a different way of looking at things and valued both tenacity and drive."

Senior figures in the workplace tend to have seen it all (or, most of it) and got the t-shirt, so hungry marketers like Russ and Gareth know they can learn a lot under their leadership. "I learnt that you need to understand more than just the features and benefits of what you're selling," says Gareth. "You need to know how your business operates, its commercial models, key clients and our relationships with them – and much more. My boss did this by spending time with and showing a genuine interest in every single person in the company."



One of the areas where companies are increasingly having to focus is their brand from a recruitment perspective

THE FUTURE OF CPD

So apart from being a personable knowledge-sharer, a veritable fount of all things B2B, what traits do inspirational leaders share? "It's about being encouraging without being pushy," says Russ. "My former boss placed a lot of onus on self-reflection, and she was also really open. I now ensure that I'm always as open with my team as possible – it builds trust and respect quickly."

And what about training requirements? Is there a link between great leadership and a particular approach to training? Both Gareth and Russ say they'd always opt for the varied approach, suggesting that the days of rigorous self-certification might be over. "Just jumping into the deep end and getting stuck in has been the best form of training for me at a junior and mid-level," says Russ. "Certifications have their place but I think they're something you add on further into your career. Personally, as somebody in the hiring position now, I'd rather employ a marketing executive with four years' experience in a variety of roles than someone with two years in one company and a CIM certificate."

Gareth's former boss took a 'pick and mix' approach to training. "It was a mixture of formal training, industry events, on-the-job training and company initiatives – and I also had a clear and structured CPD programme. The feedback sometimes felt hard but was always fair and constructive, giving me clear direction on areas for improvement and a plan for training/resources to help me meet those requirements."

The path to leadership enlightenment isn't always a smooth one: prepare yourself for difficult conversations, challenging personalities and the unfailing pull of boardroom politics. But if you can swerve the banana skins and inspire loyalty, creativity and dedication in your marketing team, you'll be earning your place in the leaders' hall of fame in no time.

TOP TIPS

Atos' Russ Powell offers his top tips for junior marketers looking to climb the career ladder

Embrace your mistakes

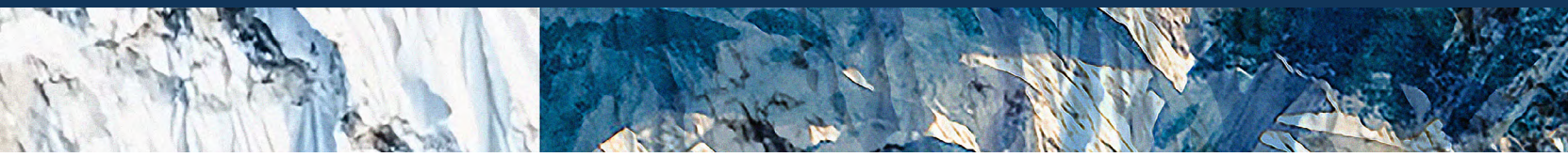
One of the key things I learnt was not to bury mistakes when I made them. If something goes wrong, don't run and hide; be up front about it and say: "Yes, I messed up. This is what I'm doing to do to fix it and it won't happen again."

Don't be afraid to change marketing roles

Moving around regularly when you're young can be a really good thing. While it might sometimes be frowned upon (people think you can't commit) it also helps expand your knowledge of marketing as a discipline and how it works in different organisations.

Remember that senior people are still just people

As long as you can demonstrate value, be helpful or tell them something new they'll always be happy to hear from you.



THE STRUGGLE IS REAL: SENIOR MARKETERS DESPERATELY SEEK SUPERSTAR JUNIORS

Skip Fidura, client service director at Dotmailer and Nick Houldsworth, CMO of Vend, talk about the kind of talent they're always looking out for and what it takes to keep the most promising recruits in the job

Which skills are you looking for in marketers today?

Skip: The phrase 'content is king' has been floating around for years, but there's a real skills gap when it comes to good copywriting or even just writing.

Nick: We don't necessarily look for people with tech skills, but I do make sure each member of my team learns HTML on the job – at least to a basic level. I find it's hugely important; it means the whole team isn't dependent on one or two engineers to code their emails, which can be pretty liberating.

Skip: Database skills are quite hard to find at the moment. I'm not necessarily looking for new grads with hardcore SQL skills, but marketing is becoming so data-driven that having an understanding of the basic mechanics of relational databases, and how data should be collected and kept clean over time, is really important.

What tips do you have for marketers looking to develop inhouse talent? What do you do at Dotmailer, Skip?

Skip: One of the things that marks out younger employees is the innate value they put on development and learning, so it's important that companies aren't just paying lip service to internal training and staff development. You're no longer competing with other firms in your space to retain your talent; you're competing against a wide range of alternative possible career choices.

What about you, Nick? What does Vend do to attract new talent?

Nick: I think it's really important to have a recruitment brand as well as a corporate, customer acquisition brand. Your brand is a window into your culture and you can't fake a great culture; it's about letting your potential employees get a sense of who you are as a business and as people, and why they'd want to work with you. For us, it's things like the fact that we're both small enough to be agile and big enough to have a nice chunk of resource to play with.

What do you think, Skip?

Skip: I agree that one of the areas where companies are increasingly having to focus on is their brand from a recruitment perspective. Wages in the UK have remained relatively flat over the past five years so companies have to build on their intangible strengths. Your employees are key to this because they provide real-world examples supporting your recruiting brand efforts. The first step in turning anybody (employee or customer) into an advocate is to recognise that everything is not going to go perfectly all of the time. It's not when things go wrong that you have the problem; it's how you handle and communicate the issue which will make or break your recruiting brand.



Can anyone become a great leader? An unequivocal yes – because it's a natural human quality

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Anthony Landale and Anni Townend, lead consultants at Steve Radcliffe Associates, outline what it takes to develop into the kind of leader that leaves the right lasting impression

Don't discount yourself

Can anyone become a great leader? An unequivocal yes – because it's a natural human quality. The real question, however, is whether people want to lead. But winning organisations today need more people leading at all levels, in every area of activity.

Find out what your team members care about

People come to work in order to see their own goals and objectives met; by knowing what they're looking for you can match the right opportunity with those goals. Once you've helped them succeed, make sure they get the credit they deserve.

Seek out a mentor

Look for coaches or mentors who can help you keep your focus and shape the future you want. You should also use social media to follow the leaders you find most inspiring.

Learn from others' mistakes

Don't be a leader who tells, instructs and demands – you might win obedience from your team but you'll never secure full engagement. Make sure you listen too; it's important to remember that it's by fostering strong relationships with your team that you'll usually get things done.



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THE FIRST 100 DAYS

You've landed your dream senior marketing role. With your LinkedIn profile updated and the PR announcements sent, **Oliver Matejka** imagines how the next three months should go...

Day one: Monday morning 9am. Contracts have been signed and, feeling composed, you enter the office of your new job. From the outset, it's clear that expectations are high. Internal communications are laudatory. Your LinkedIn inbox is bursting with well-wishes. PRs send press releases detailing the appointment to all, and business journalists are already proofing their stories. "New marketing director to revolutionise company operations," says one.

As expected, you receive an onboarding email: "What do you want to do today?"

> ***"Firstly, talk to your staff and your boss," advises Graeme Fraser, director of CAG buyer marketing at Liquidity Services. "Start with your staff: you can have vision and leadership but without a good, fully functioning, operationally sound team, it's going to be tough."***

Calendar invites are sent accordingly.

In the team meeting you're transparent, almost over-communicative. "Why do you do this?" "Why in that way?" Establishing workloads, activity levels and gauging opinion on what's going well and what isn't puts you in good stead for imminent planning.

> ***"Talk to operational staff to start building a view of the customer," advises Rebecca Halls, strategic growth for central government at Serco.***

You're now better placed to take the next step.

Day two: All eyes are on you as you enter the boardroom. Looking cheerful, smart and well-rested, you take your seat in the chair that's been vacant for the last month. This is the opportunity you've planned for. You know you need to talk to these stakeholders to understand their personalities and objectives – managing their expectations will lay the foundations for amicable relationships in the long run.

Days three-five: Now you're (reasonably) well acquainted with those above and below you, it's time to make plans.

> ***"Set goals, objectives and milestones," says Graeme. "During this period it's about gaining an understanding of the business and its moving parts."***

Accordingly, you delve deeper into the finer points raised by your team earlier – why exactly is that particular thing not working? Is the system outdated? Does the manager need

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training? These answers enable you to set benchmarks against each individual, if needed.

One issue, however, was a concern: there was a definite air of negativity about the comms executive (what was his name again?). So, to allow time to marshal your thoughts, you arrange a one-to-one chat later.

Talking to the people around you, you're forming a clear picture of the company as a whole – the finances, the organisational goals and KPIs, and the internal and external contractors and agency stakeholders.

"You need to plug directly into these areas to ensure your KPIs and interests are aligned. Also share with them how you'll execute your first 100 days," says Graeme.

Week two: Monday brings the first trickle of functional changes and they prove popular with your team.

"Immediately involving the team and having them take on additional responsibility will always make them feel more engaged," says Rebecca.

Plans for what you want to achieve in the first 30, 60 and 90 days of your mandate have also been made, taking into account areas that are likely to change. (The time has been set aside to review these after the first 30, just in case.)

Behind the scenes, you've begun to master the IT systems and processes – some alien, some not so alien. And after a frosty one-to-one with Tim, the cantankerous comms executive, you've outlined a step-by-step improvement plan – involving, among other things, a desk relocation on his request – and agreed to have another chat in two months to review the situation.

As Rebecca points out: "If someone is really unhappy at work, and has a negative attitude, it can bring down a whole team."

Week three: News of your first big win ripples through the company. The shortage of collateral that both sales and events complained about in your introductory meetings proved an opportunistic starting point; something you could swiftly put right. Although inviting members of both departments into a workshop with subject matter experts was time-consuming.

Rebecca says: "Don't be afraid to get your head down and trudge through the mundane stuff to deliver new things."

A senior sales observer affected to notice a spring in your step, remarking on being impressed by the communication displayed by the marketing execs in their last alignment meeting. Clearly the transparent feedback loops and peer-review ethic you implemented are paying off.

Week four: You've made a decision about the audit of the external agency you conducted earlier – it's just not performing. Rather than poor internal deployment, it was made clear on meeting the agency team at their office that your predecessor was too lenient with low-achieving numbers and lapsed timeframes.

Shortly after this you – quite rightly – organise a meeting with another agency director who you met at a recent roundtable. The wheels are in motion to swiftly replace the original agency.

A set-back, sure, but as Rebecca says: "If you're going to be bold you'll probably upset some people; you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs."

After all the extracurricular number-crunching, IT-learning and networking, it's clear that this role is made for you. (One month into a contract is a good time to review your direction; if you've made a bad decision you'll definitely know by this stage.)

Month two: Time to take stock. Using the objectives put in place early on, you're operating a two-pronged performance check, through both your team and senior colleagues. Finding out what both groups think is vital.

If you're going to be bold you'll probably upset some people; you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs

Set goals, objectives and milestones. During this period it's about gaining an understanding of the business and its moving parts

"Overall team performance will be measured through your departmental KPIs," explains Graeme. "However, you'll need to address the human side, so it's about listening and asking for feedback."

With the goal of alignment front and centre, you also decide to report back to other relevant groups – notably finance and sales – to ensure your contributions towards the organisation's goals are working out. It seems the skills gaps plugged and new gamification incentives are paying off in terms of quality of output.

On a less cheery note, mind, you had to let Tim go.

"I'm not convinced it's possible to implement change without rocking the boat," says Graeme. "You've been hired for a reason: to drive and improve performance, not to do more of the same."

In some cases, discomfort is inevitable. But a large part of becoming a leader is accepting this is the case; failure to do so will only hold you back from driving things forward.

Month three: A reliable source tells you your name has been mentioned favourably among the c-suite more than a few times of late. While this is undeniably encouraging, you're nearing the end of your self-imposed probation period and there are still a couple of errands to run.

Indeed, you realise three months in that an objective has been missed. Extremely annoying, but there wasn't much you could have done about it.

"In addressing issues, you need to be stoic," says Graeme. "Things happen and don't work out. As the leader it's on you to demonstrate to the team that failure is an option (providing you and the team can learn from it)."

Now you've got to know most of the highest priority clients, gleaned an understanding of their needs and fed back to the sales team, there's one last task on the list. It seems counterintuitive, but this is a good stage to let go. Take time to review the tasks and functions you don't strictly need to do; anything you do that isn't in your remit. It's surprising to see how many extra things you take on.

So there we have it, an astonishing first 100 days you'd surely agree. Just how long it'll last is anyone's guess, but with the foundations you've set the next 100 look to be all the more fruitful.

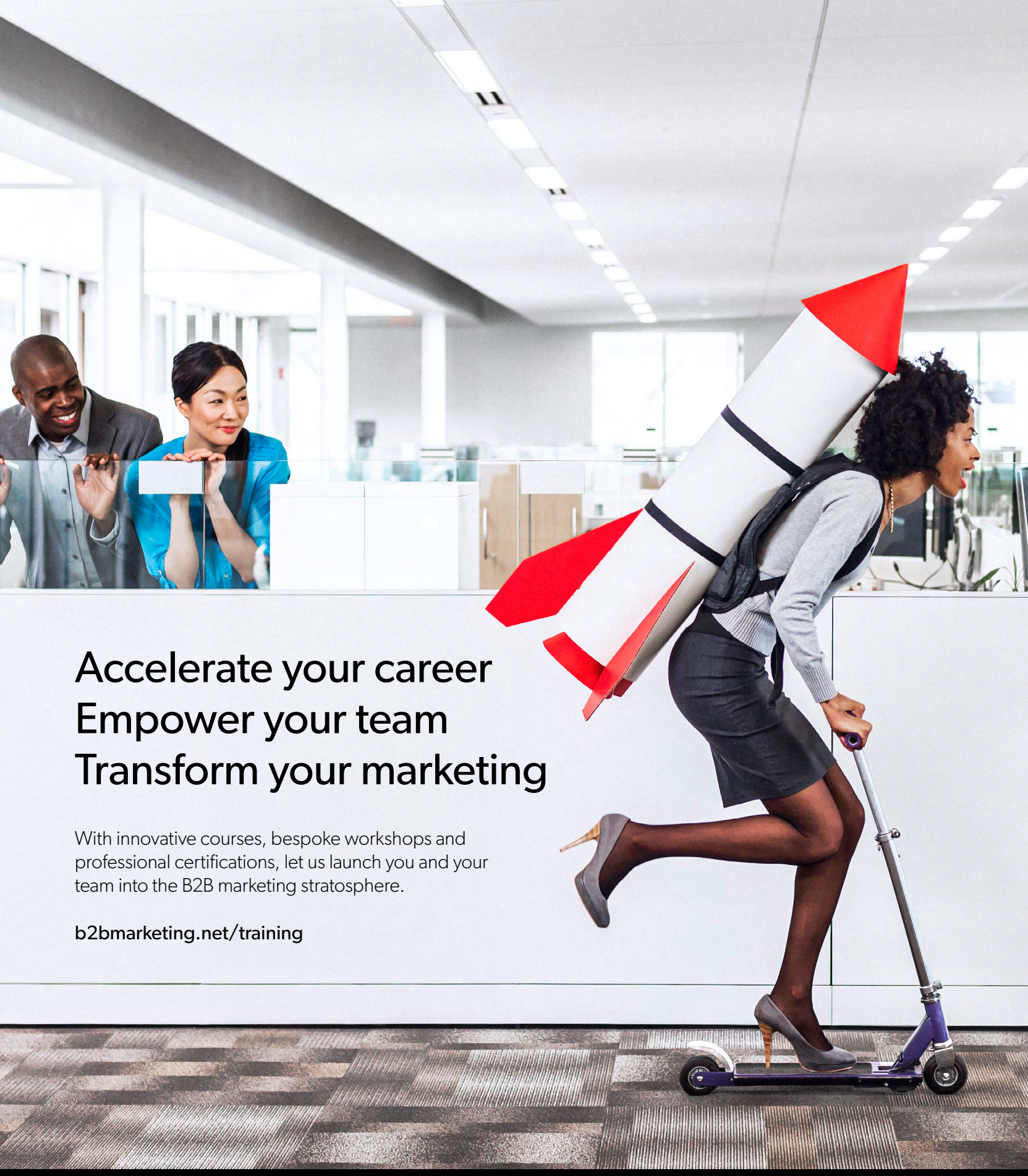
FIRST MONTH CHEAT SHEET

Week one:
Meet with your team and all key stakeholders – immediate superiors and the most important seniors. Understand their personalities and objectives. Always ask a lot of questions.

Week two:
Based on previous enquiries, create a plan for achievements within 30, 60 and 90 days. Implement the first functional changes – possibly around team responsibilities.

Week three:
Thoroughly audit all internal and external responsibilities, identifying any issues that could provide your next quick win.

Week four:
Test yourself on your understanding of company numbers and budgets. Look back on any IT and process skills you might still require. Ask yourself if this is the job for you.



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THE MARKETING RENEGADES

Bookkeepers, property experts and Olympic canoeists: the world of B2B marketing is a melting pot for those boasting weird and wonderful backgrounds. **Jess Pike** catches up with five marketers with pretty unusual career trajectories to find out what they've learnt along the way and what they bring to their current roles



THE FORMER OLYMPIC CANOEIST

NICK GREGORY, CMO AND MTD PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, IRIS SOFTWARE GROUP

I fell into canoeing through being in the sea scouts, although at my very first canoe race I couldn't even get off the start line for falling in the water. In a way it made me determined to be the best; four years later, I was a world championship finalist in Sofia, Bulgaria and the GB team captain. I enjoyed four years competing as a racing canoeist for Great Britain in competitions ranging from 500 metres to 125 miles, which was pretty amazing. Then, in 1982, my canoeing career literally went down the toilet: while racing in Madrid I caught dysentery, which I couldn't shift for more than a year. My weight plummeted from 14 stone of muscle to 10 stone of skin and bone. When I finally recovered both my motivation and finances had run out.

It was the mid-eighties, the computer industry was growing quickly, and I decided to retrain as a computer scientist. In the early 90s I moved to Oracle, first as a software engineer, then into sales and eventually marketing.

Marketing was a natural fit for me… I'm a big fan of Peter Drucker who once said: "Business has only two basic functions – marketing and innovation." What's always amazed me about B2B marketing has been the lack of differentiation in messaging and proposition. So many IT innovations are complete game-changers, yet marketing messages all too often fail to compel users to adopt because they just don't sell the competitive advantage.

What did I learn during my canoeing days? A lot! First of all, there's no such thing as luck. It's all about preparation and seizing opportunities. Preparation is what you do day in, day out, choosing between what makes a difference and what doesn't. Then giving 100% to everything you've chosen to do.

Secondly, you need a great team around you. As a canoeist I had a great coach, team mates and support crew who paid attention to every detail, leaving nothing to chance. In business, your performance is a result of teamwork, planning, and attention to detail. You're only ever as strong as the team around you.



THE FORMER PROPERTY MANAGEMENT EXPERT

SARAH SUTTON, HEAD OF MARKETING, XCHANGING, A CSC COMPANY



THE FORMER PUBLIC SECTOR WORKER

DAVID MCGUIRE, CREATIVE DIRECTOR, RADIX COMMUNICATIONS

THE FORMER PROPERTY MANAGEMENT EXPERT: SARAH SUTTON

Most people today tend to have unusual career paths, in that where they started out has little relation to where they've ended up or where they planned to be. I'm also sure most of us yearn for a meaningful purpose and have every intention of making it happen, but then get caught up in the realities of life and living.

Many years ago I ran a property management company in South Africa, and later worked for a prestigious UK property firm when I emigrated. As a business owner you're in a 'marketing' role all the time – you're constantly seeking ways to hunt down new customers, promote your services and enhance your brand, image and reputation. This was before the digital marketing era so I relied on printed leaflets, newspaper adverts and networking events. I quickly learnt about the power of word of mouth, and that customers like to be clearly told what they're getting and why they should buy from you (but also not be given too many options). It certainly helped me focus on benefit-based selling.

I was already exposed to marketing my services, and adapting these to suit customer demand. But I felt the pull of technology and moved to an IT customer-facing role – customer roles are invaluable. They should scrap subjects at school and just teach young people how to negotiate, collaborate, manage spend, deliver, organise themselves, give feedback, manage conflict, sell themselves. Life skills. Marketing skills.

After spending several years understanding what customers need from technology in a client director role, I moved into communications and PR. PR is a key resource for marketers and is often underrated. Having your voice heard in a noisy marketplace, immersing yourself in content that your customers consume, and getting customer advocates on board with success stories are all invaluable for today's marketer. After that, it was a natural next step to move to an integrated marketing role. I now head up marketing for a global technology business.

THE FORMER PUBLIC SECTOR WORKER: DAVID MCGUIRE

My first proper writing job was in local government doing internal communications and PR – and as it turns out it couldn't have been better preparation for B2B copywriting. Every day public sector-minded, internally-focused experts would give me boring announcements, full of impenetrable jargon and long, formal sentences, and my job was to make them clear and – if possible – exciting for the average person.

Topic-wise, think bin collections, regeneration policy, planning consultations

I'm frustrated by the jargon in B2B, the hype around certain trends. 'It's all about your digital marketing kitbag.' Is it? *Really?* But what I love is the creative process – from concept right through to delivery – and being able to demonstrate how your activities have directly influenced business sales. Now that's true job satisfaction.

Making sports shoes and puddings sound fabulous is easy; we make low-code dev accessible and virtualised infrastructure sexy



THE FORMER BOOKKEEPER

SIMON MORRIS, DIRECTOR, DEMAND MARKETING EMEA, ADOBE

and fly-tipping. I had to decipher the council-speak and find the angle – I quickly found out there was *always* an angle.

Spotting that story was fun, and I was pretty good at it. All I had to do was have thick-enough skin to ask dumb questions like: "What does this mean?" and "So what?" And, to be very honest, that's still the most important part of what I do today.

I didn't consciously make a switch to B2B; I just saw an advert for a copywriter – I figured that if I could make housing policy interesting, I could do this. That was 10 years ago, and since then I've worked for three agencies, writing about forklift trucks and fleet management, GPS testing and enterprise software. I know a little bit about a lot of niche things, and it makes for some interesting conversations.

It's still the same game as before – making dull things compelling and complicated things simple. I love talking to subject matter experts who are so close to what they do they can't see the interesting story under their nose. (I once spoke to an engineer who was more excited about the thermal tolerances of a new motor than the fact it needed such properties because it was going to be sent to Venus.)

Throughout the whole journey, my only frustration about working in B2B marketing is that we – as a sector – tend not to get the recognition we deserve. Just the other week, I saw a post on LinkedIn claiming copywriters only work in B2B because they're not creative enough to cut it in B2C. What rot. Making sports shoes, puddings and hotels sound fabulous is easy. We make low-code dev accessible and virtualised infrastructure sexy. I know which challenge takes the most skill.

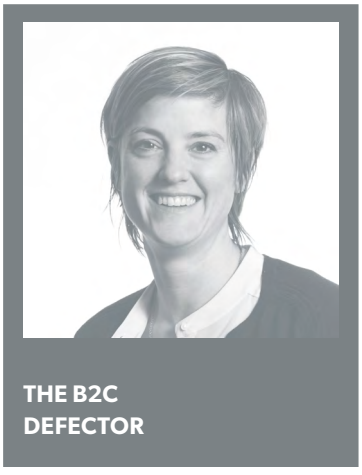
THE FORMER BOOKKEEPER: SIMON MORRIS

Funnily enough, I actually started my career working behind the counter at betting shop William Hill. The average day saw me staring into the eyes of our customers as they placed bets, making sure their betting slips were processed in time, and paying out winnings (every now and again!). The customer service and empathy skills I picked up here served me pretty well throughout my career: it was (and still is) about treating everyone with respect irrespective of bet (or budget), juggling multiple tasks at the same time and learning to prioritise. Managing a branch also exposed me to finance, which has also come in pretty useful ever since.

After William Hill I moved to a small Israeli software company that was looking to expand into Europe – and never looked back. Here I learnt all about how the different functional aspects of marketing worked together; I also learnt what it takes to generate business and the importance of being innovative and results-orientated. After 14 years there I joined Adobe, right at the start of their digital transformation.

What's the most important thing I've learnt along the way? The importance of being obsessed with the customer. To quote Aaron Levie: "You'll learn more in a day talking to customers than a week of brainstorming, a month of watching competition, or a year of market research." It's about keeping on top of consumer trends, staying curious, and embracing new and relevant technologies.

Having worked in B2B for a while, I can say that it's definitely less sexy than B2C, but also much more interesting, complex and challenging



THE B2C DEFECTOR

JOYCE RASQUIN, MARKETING EXPERTISE MANAGER, DSM

THE B2C DEFECTOR: JOYCE RASQUIN

What appealed to me about B2B marketing? First and foremost, the role and the company, but besides that, I was curious to see whether it really was a dull and outdated way of marketing. Now, having worked in B2B for a while, I can say that it's definitely less sexy than B2C, but also much more interesting, complex and challenging. In B2B you get tasked with thinking about ecosystems of complete industries and fitting your strategies around different business models. This is where the true marketing work comes in and is also the fun part of the job.

Having worked in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector as international product manager and marketing manager, I actually see the move from B2C to B2B as a pretty complementary one. For one thing, the FMCG sector is all about the consumer focus, and in B2C this is what you live and breathe 24/7.

When I was working at Alpro, the plant-based food and drink manufacturer, our consumer research was mainly carried out on brand and end products – knowing how FMCG food companies carry out research, I'm now able to provide a complementary perspective in my current role to initiate consumer understanding on specific ingredients. At DSM I recently initiated, for example, a consumer community to find out what consumers thought of a specific ingredient.

What strikes me most is the relatively low understanding among my B2B peers of the amount of effort and resource required to build a B2C brand. Research budgets, brand strategy budgets and activation budgets are often underestimated.

Overall, though, I'm a big believer that B2B and B2C aren't different ways of thinking: you need to understand the needs of the market and answer with a proposition. Yes, you translate it differently according to your place in the value chain: for B2B it might be designing a business model, whereas in B2C it might be a communications campaign. But the underlying way of thinking remains the same.



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Claire Mason

Sales and marketing: A love story

When it comes to these diametrically-opposed departments, it's actually less a case of opposites attract and more a match made in heaven, argues Claire Mason, CEO of Man Bites Dog

Marketing: Loves big-data analysis, brainstorms and using creative communications skills to maximum effect. Seeks engaged prospect for content, links and lead scores. WLTM another marketer.

Sales: Has in-depth knowledge of the customer and enjoys long chats. Seeks like-minded potential buyer to sweep off their feet. No time wasters or marketers please.

It's an age-old love/hate story and the arguments are all too familiar. "Marketing just doesn't understand what I need." "Sales teams don't understand me and my content… they just don't get it."

But this relationship needs to get back on track. In the near future, it might not be about winning the battle or even the war; in a customer-first, increasingly digital world, decision-making authority is shifting away from the familiar sales and marketing roles towards a buyer journey with multiple touchpoints. The future will require not only friendship but also the official joining together of two disciplines to create one long-lasting, ahem, 'smarketing' team.

Because when it comes to sales and marketing, it's not even a case of opposites attract – they're actually perfect for each other. And actually, smarketers need to exploit their full range of skills to work towards common goals.

Marketers have the analytical and creative abilities to move a potential buyer through the sales funnel. Similarly, a customer-centric buyer journey requires the skill of the sales professional – someone able to offer an advice-based human touch to build relationships and move a potential buyer from consideration to purchase.

In turn, the CMO, CXO or CSO should expect to take their place as a key decision-maker on the board – the person most closely connected to the audience and best placed to communicate internal messages.

As in any long-term relationship, both sales and marketing specialists will need to walk a mile in each other's shoes. It will also be important to demonstrate empathy and patience and to take the opportunity to learn from one another. After all, sales and marketing come as a pair. This isn't a competition – it's about combining our skillsets to ensure we all live happily ever after.



Andrew Dalglish

Enhancing the client-agency relationship

While client-side marketers won't always love their agency partners, agencies often have their own bugbears about those holding the purse strings, says Andrew Dalglish, director of Circle Research

While compiling this year's *B2B Agencies Benchmarking Report*, we asked agencies to share their thoughts on agency life. Every day, thousands of agency folk diligently beaver away for the benefit of clients; usually everything's hunky dory, but niggles and gripes can emerge. From an agency perspective, here are five pieces of advice for clients:

- Brief well: Precisely define the goal, provide relevant background information and be upfront about budget constraints.
- Share a clear strategic vision to work towards: If an agency understands the long-term goals of your business, they can ensure every piece of work builds towards the bigger picture. They also ask that they're allowed to work strategically and have a holistic view of the different marketing activities going on across the business.
- Allow your agency time to produce good work: They're not machines that can spit out award-winning campaigns at the touch of a button.
- Do what you can to manage internal stakeholders: Involve those who need to sign off or input into the campaign early on rather than towards the end of the process. This will help avoid what one agency called 'seagull management' – a big bird flies in, makes a lot of noise, shits on everything and then flies away.
- Push the boat out: Agencies are itching to create something remarkable, but they need clients who are less risk-averse and more open to trying new things.

Agencies do recognise that, as a group, they're not perfect. If clients were asked to list their frustrations, agencies expect they'd be told to build a better understanding of the client's business – their market, goals and internal challenges.

They expect they'd also be told to be more transparent about where time is being spent and prove the value of their work by objectively measuring its impact. Finally, they suspect they'd be asked to address the high levels of staff turnover and not to fill the account team with junior staff. After all, people are an agency's best assets – choose them wisely.



Paul Cash

Unlearn to relearn: The importance of a flexible approach

An increasingly competitive and digitised landscape leaves marketers no alternative but to rethink the way they work, says Paul Cash, CEO of Rooster Punk

When I talk to my kids about a time when I didn't have a mobile phone or laptop, they're baffled by the thought of anyone getting through life without digital devices. They can't imagine a world without technology.

As I watch them regularly using smartphones and tablets to chat and game with people across the globe, it's amazing to think that by the time they're my age, they'll have children who'll see this technology as completely obsolete.

And in the next decade, my children (and many others) will probably be working in jobs that are yet to be created. Just look at the times we live in: the top 10 jobs in demand now didn't exist 10 years ago – this goes to show the lightning speed of ongoing change. It's very hard to imagine what the world will look like 20 years from now.

But it's not tech alone that's changing the world. The globalisation and mobilisation of talent, alongside the continual innovation in tech, means we all have to keep up with the pace of change and the type of work we're doing and want to do. And keeping up with the international talent pool that's only becoming more skilled and more mobile is a huge challenge. The strongest individuals will be the ones who are most adaptable to change.

In today's global economy you need to demonstrate a willingness to learn, unlearn and relearn. This means being proactive when it comes to your own professional development so you stay relevant. It's easy to become lazy or lose your passion to learn when life and work get in the way, but if you resist the process of learning, unlearning and relearning, your options begin to dramatically narrow.

Whether this means unlearning the technology you use, unlearning the way you approach your brand, unlearning the way you communicate and deliver value, or unlearning what your target market wants – it's important to start looking at things differently. You might re-engineer your career and how you think in the process.



Catherine Howard

Welcome to a brave new B2B world

Catherine Howard, UK and Ireland marketing director at Atos, takes a look at the changing skillset of the B2B marketer

Over the past decade B2B marketing has emerged as a highly specialised, multi-disciplined profession. According to the *OED*, a profession can be defined as 'a paid occupation, especially one that involves prolonged training and a formal qualification'.

But despite there being debate around whether B2B marketers need certifications as a prerequisite, the question should really be: "Which skills, experiences and behaviours are essential for successful B2B marketers?"

- **Skills:** With a rapid rise in all things digital, most would agree that technical ability and know-how are vital. But while they certainly help, the key skills needed in B2B marketing are an understanding of your customers, the ability to build relationships, knowing what it is about your organisation, proposition or offering that's really going to excite them, and understanding how to exploit this through relevant, timely and tailored communications.
- **Experiences:** As a client-side marketer, I'm always on the hunt for individuals with experience working directly with customers in a client-side or agency context. Why? Client-side experience means you already understand that customers come first, a business background means you can relate to business strategy, and an agency background often means you can work creatively and with multiple stakeholders. In certain roles, this is more relevant to me than any marketing qualification – although I'm a big believer that professional training is crucial.
- **Behaviours:** We work in an environment where customers have complex decision-making units, where buyers are more rational than consumers, and where we only have one chance to get it right. As a result, we need to continuously collaborate with stakeholders, see ourselves as change agents, be braver and open to feedback and, crucially, demonstrate 'bounce-ability'.

If you can use your customer insight to your advantage and differentiate your brand (all while being flexible in your approach), you'll be primed to succeed in this brave, new B2B world.



HOW TO MASTER THE ART OF THE B2B PODCAST

Non-committal self-improvement – no wonder podcasting is proving so popular. **Oliver Matejka** speaks to three podfathers to find out how B2B marketers can get started

In the early noughties, listening to episodic audio content was the pastime of a small fringe of web bloggers and Harvard types. Fast-forward a decade and every notable radio station produces its own podcast; this has, in part, brought the concept into the mainstream. "Naturally with this growing popularity, brands will be attracted into the space," says Russell Goldsmith, founder of Audere Communications. "Especially due to the fact that it's reasonably cheap, very cost effective, and enables them to reach not just a wide audience, but niche interest groups too."

To put this into context, LinkedIn recently asked the following to almost 3000 of its members worldwide: 'Do you listen to podcasts?' Not only did it find out that over a third do, but also that podcast consumption increases in line with seniority: 44% of your average B2B podcast audience will comprise department heads, VPs, owners and c-suiters.

Perhaps this surge in popularity among senior professionals isn't such a wonder. Attend any summit or conference and you'll see that B2B marketers have two things in common: they're relentless self-educators and they're also smartphone addicts. In podcasts they've found a way to combine the two. But this new-found popularity can't be attributed to smartphones alone, as Jason Miller, leader of global content and social media marketing initiatives at LinkedIn, explains: "Along with the attractive portability of podcasts, add to that the rise of storytelling – it's the perfect non-committal content for folks on the go."

Podcasts are another channel in the content marketer's growing arsenal, but unlike the written word and video, "…they can be engaged with when the listener is doing other things," says Jelle Drijver, founder of MegaExposure (and proud owner of Twitter handle @podcast). Whether listeners are tuning in while commuting, cooking or popping out to the cobbler, podcasts offer brands the ability to reach their prospects while they're otherwise engaged.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD PODCAST?

Despite the passive nature of podcasts, no-one's going to tune into your content on a regular basis for the sake of it (this luxury's only afforded to those who write and produce soap operas) – there needs to be a hook that's followed up by sustained entertainment.

We'll look at audio equipment later, but arguably the most important component is a host with personality. Podcasts should entertain; they don't have to conform to the establishmentarian – even didactic – style of some funnel-serving webinars. An example here is in the success of one of the early pivotal podcasts, *The Ricky Gervais Show*. Launched back in 2006, its off-the-cuff anecdotal musings and shambolic format kept it exciting and its listeners coming back for more – even at a price (it was the first podcast to charge for downloads).

"From a B2B perspective, I like podcasts that are informal and not overly produced," says Russell. "I want to get into the content as quickly as possible and not have to hear long intro theme tunes. It's good to play with formats to find what works." Offering a variety of features such as panel discussions and one-to-one interviews is a safe way to attract a throng of interesting guests. However, all formats, as Russell explains, will have to be planned for. "Produce a running order with a list of questions or topic areas you're going to cover, and – this comes back to the storytelling element – ensure you have a beginning, middle and end. Naturally you may go off on a tangent, so long as the presenter is in control and can bring the podcast back on track."

44% of your average B2B podcast audience will comprise department heads, VPs, owners and c-suiters



HOW DO YOU DELIVER IT?

In conversational English, we're already seeing 'What's the duration of a podcast?' replace 'How long is a piece of string?' While for Jason's *Sophisticated Marketer's Podcast* the sweet spot is 20-25 minutes, Jelle and Russell are more fluid; however it's generally agreed that podcasts should be as long as they need to be. (By nature they're on-demand, so people have full control over how long they listen for.) As far as frequency's concerned, though, consistency is the only rule. Whether you choose to record daily, weekly or monthly, set realistic expectations: don't commit to producing a weekly podcast if you only have monthly means.

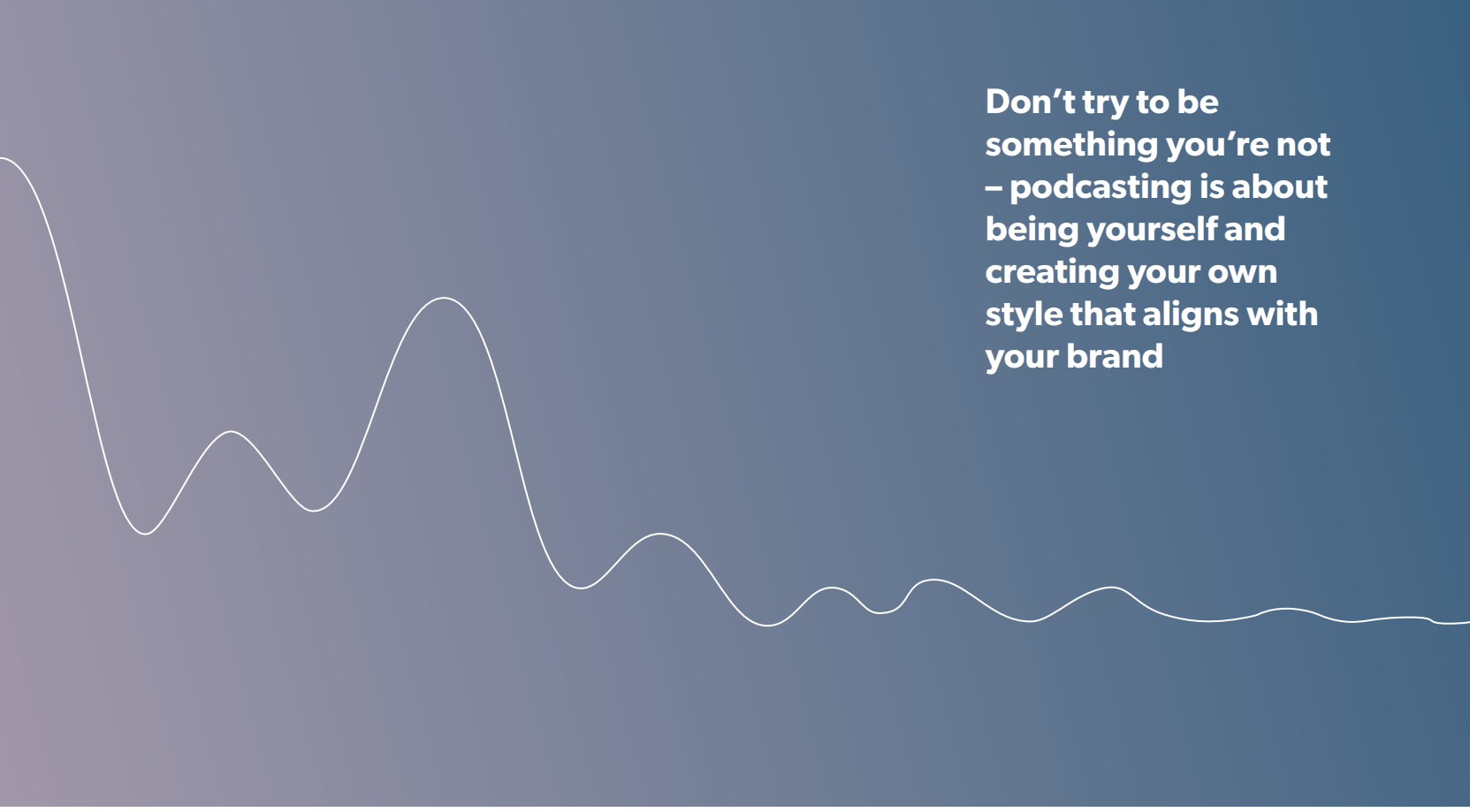
Each episode then needs to be submitted to the major platforms – iTunes, Stitcher, TuneIn and SoundCloud. For a site to host the MP3 files try Libsyn, which will not only let you track and measure results, but also promote it for you. Although each of these platforms will automatically update subscribers when new shows are uploaded, distribution doesn't stop there. As Jason says: "Now you need to get it in front of the right audience. That can be done using smart creative – branding your podcast – and promoting via the blog and social media (both paid and organic)."

Podcasts: perfect non-committal content for folks on the go

When sharing the finished shows through various channels, a degree of resourcefulness is required. If you have a famous guest, for example, cajole them into sharing it with their mailing list and followers. When it comes to hosting on your own website, it's important to write a compelling, keyword-heavy summary to help boost SEO. "If you have good content or soundbites, PR it," suggests Russell. "Share it with relevant media owners or bloggers who might be happy to feature it on their own sites, drawing in new audiences for you."

WHAT WILL THE WHOLE PROCESS SET YOU BACK?

The accessibility of the necessary resources is one of the main reasons podcasting is so popular now. In theory, a podcast can be produced without cost using a mobile phone app and free editing software, but to avoid amateurish audio blunders it's best to invest in slightly more sophisticated kit. "The most important thing is to invest in some quality recording equipment up front (ie a mixer, condenser mic and cable)," says Jason. "Next you just need some simple editing software, such as Camtasia, or there are some free options such as Audacity."



Don't try to be something you're not – podcasting is about being yourself and creating your own style that aligns with your brand

Similarly, when Russell records interviews on location, he uses a Tascam DR-40 Portable Recorder and two external microphones. "Together with my microphone stands, connections and pop-filters for the mics themselves, the total investment in recording equipment was just £300."

AVOIDING PODCASTING FAUX PAS

Ostensible ease of creation means podcasts are all too easy to get wrong. A grandiose two-minute musical intro followed by an Alan Partridge-meets-David Brent concoction of self-aggrandising rambles is likely to be shared for all the wrong reasons; the poor have-a-go podcaster would never live it down. "Don't try to be something you're not," explains Russell. "Podcasting is about being yourself and creating your own style that aligns with your brand. But don't produce a podcast just for the sake of it or because everybody else is doing it."

MEASURING IT MEANINGFULLY

Most of the platforms mentioned above offer the ability to track downloads, subscribers, traffic sources, and the geographic location of the audience, but when it comes to finding more in-depth information about who those listeners are, things get more difficult.

According to Russell, there are a few ways to circumnavigate this measurement blind spot: "Encourage your listeners to subscribe to an email newsletter so you can collect some data on registration, or create a community on Facebook for them to get involved in discussions around the show. At this point, when the time is right and the sample size is big enough, you can start to ask some survey questions to get a better understanding of who your audience is and what they think about the content you're producing."

Clearly, the precision with which you can measure your audience will improve the longer your podcast runs, and the larger the community that surrounds it. Diverting the data to areas where it can be probed – such as mailing lists and Facebook groups – is the best way to expose more information. This slight limitation of measurement is a cause for trepidation among brands, but if we consider the trivial cost of set-up and the myriad potential brand-building benefits there really is very little to lose.

SEVEN WAYS TO AVOID PODCASTING FAUX PAS

- Don't skimp on audio quality: audio is everything and it has to sound great.
- Have a structure in place and be consistent with each episode.
- Don't forget to ask for comments and reviews.
- Don't rope in the same guests as everyone else. If all the other podcasts have the #1 expert, get #2 or #3.
- Always have a backup recording.
- Even though iTunes is the major player in Podcasts, don't forget about Stitcher as there are lots of Android listeners out there as well.

FIVE PODCASTING MUST-HAVES

1. High-quality audio
2. A host with personality
3. Interesting guests
4. Relevant topics
5. A solid plan for building an audience.



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Considered Content
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Radix Communications
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Citrix
Services: Appointment setting, digital marketing, marketing services and technology, online video
Industry expertise: IT, telecoms
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Incite
Services: Appointment setting, business development, lead generation, telemarketing
Industry expertise: Business services, media, professional services, publishing, IT, telecoms
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IRSDirect
Services: Business development, digital marketing, demand generation, lead generation, telemarketing
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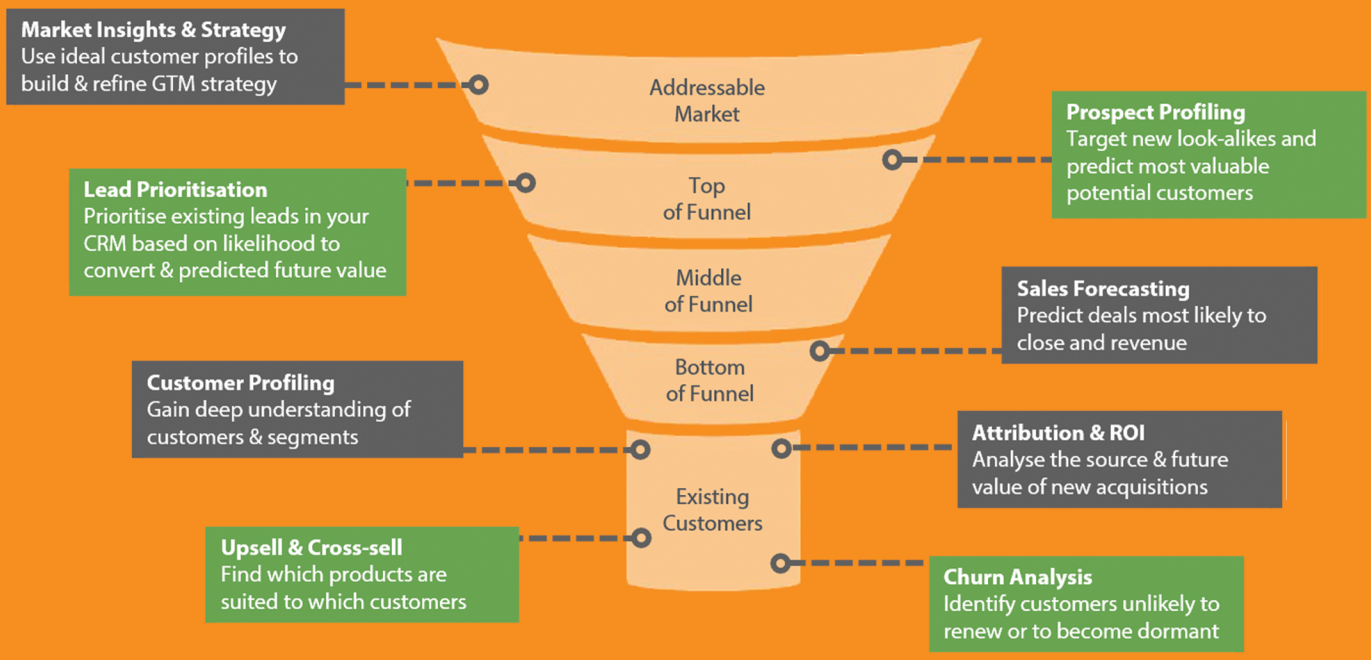
Protocol
Services: Content marketing, customer insight, data analytics, demand generation, marketing communications, marketing services, technology
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Industry expertise: Marketing, media, pharmaceuticals, publishing, IT, telecoms
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DIRECT MARKETING

CMFG

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ECOMMERCE

Neoworks

Services: Ecommerce
Industry expertise: Automotive, industrial, manufacturing, engineering, leisure and entertainment, professional services, retail and wholesale
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BrightTarget

Services: Customer insight, data analytics, data management
Industry expertise: IT, telecoms
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Services: Telemarketing
Industry expertise: IT, telecoms
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ClearPeople

Services: Affiliate marketing, business development, website development
Industry expertise: Business services
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Expandi Group

Services: Demand generation solutions, email marketing, marketing automation, marketing communications
Industry expertise: IT, telecoms
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LinkedIn

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Bray Leino

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Industry expertise: Media and publishing, retail and wholesale, leisure and entertainment, financial services, automotive
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Industry expertise: Marketing, media, pharmaceuticals, publishing, IT, telecoms
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Oracle Marketing Cloud
Services: Marketing automation
Industry expertise: Financial services, leisure and entertainment, media, publishing, marketing
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Silverpop, an IBM Company
Services: Marketing automation
Industry expertise: Business services, financial services, leisure and entertainment, media, publishing and marketing, retail and wholesale
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PUBLIC RELATIONS

Bite

Services: Content marketing, marcomms, marketing services, technology, PR
Industry expertise: Aerospace and defence, automotive, business services, leisure and entertainment, media, publishing, marketing, professional services
b2bmarketing.net/bite

Mexia Communications

Services: Content marketing, event and exhibition services, marcomms, PR, social media services
Industry expertise: Business services, health and beauty, IT, telecoms, media, publishing, marketing, property and construction
b2bmarketing.net/mexia-communications

Skout

Services: Branding, content marketing, copywriting, customer insight, demand generation solutions, digital marketing, inbound marketing, marketing communications, PR, social media, web design, website development
Industry expertise: Business services (eg. post, transport, utilities etc.), financial services, industrial, manufacturing, engineering, IT, telecoms, media, publishing, marketing, professional services, public sector, retail and wholesale
b2bmarketing.net/skout

Speed Communications

Services: PR, content marketing, marcomms, social media
Industry expertise: Automotive, business services, financial services, industrial, manufacturing and 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, telecoms, media, publishing, marketing, retail and wholesale
b2bmarketing.net/hootsuite

TELEMARKETING

GCL Direct

Services: Data cleansing, demand generation, direct marketing, lead generation, list brokers, telemarketing
Industry expertise: Business services, IT, telecoms, media, publishing, marketing
b2bmarketing.net/gcl-direct

Lingo Telemarketing

Services: Appointment setting, business development, demand generation, lead generation, telemarketing
Industry expertise: IT, telecoms, media, publishing, pharmaceuticals, professional services, property and construction
b2bmarketing.net/lingo-telemarketing

MarketMakers

Services: Appointment setting, business development, data cleansing, lead generation, market research, telemarketing
Industry expertise: Automotive, business services, financial services, industrial, manufacturing, engineering, IT, telecoms, professional services
b2bmarketing.net/marketmakers

The Telemarketing Company

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

WEB ANALYTICS

Google

Services: Marketing services, technology, online video, web analytics
Industry expertise: Business services, financial services, marketing, media, professional services, publishing
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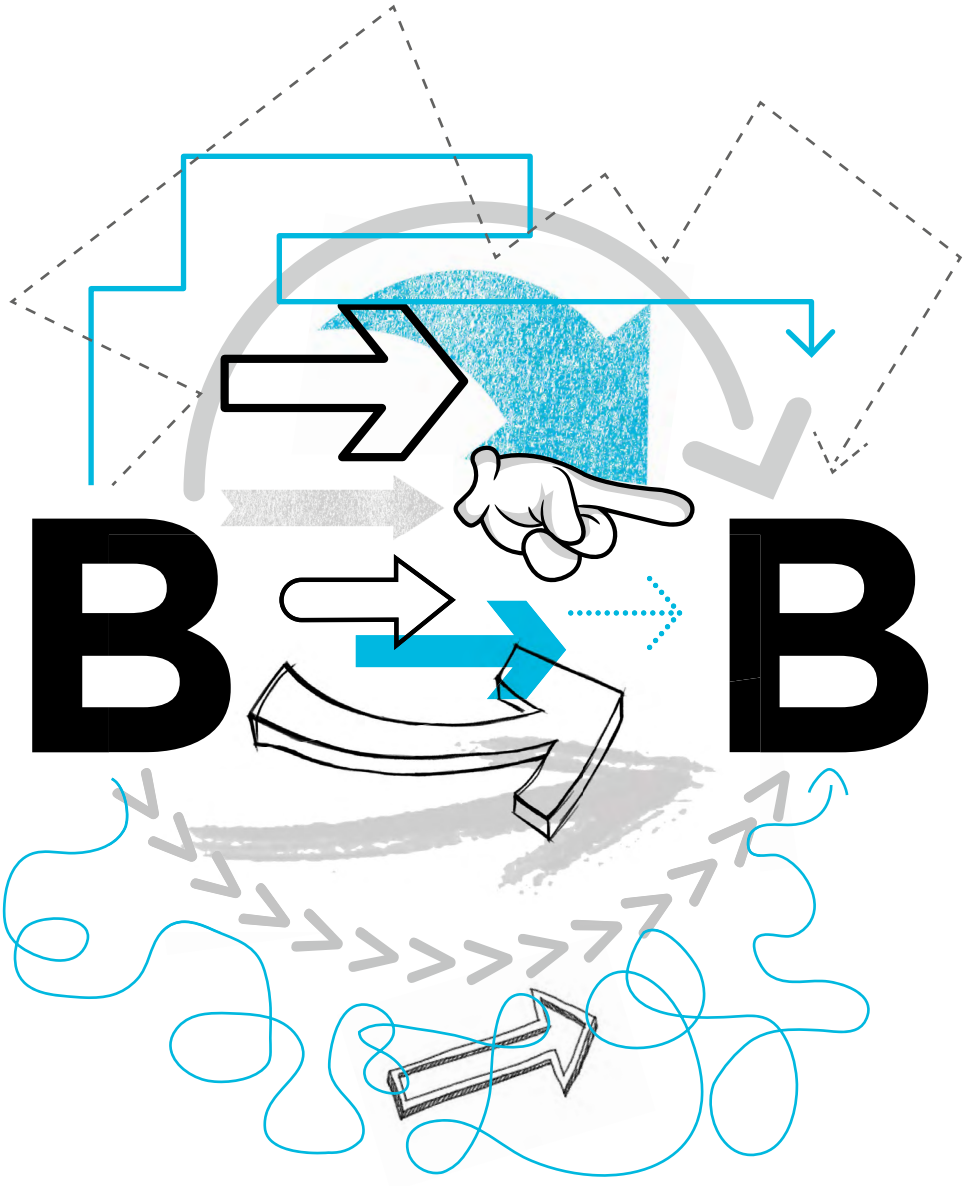
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NOW MORE THAN EVER, IT'S TIME FOR MARKETERS TO INVENT THEIR OWN FUTURE



Withstanding the challenges ahead is one thing – but can marketers take a more proactive approach to defining and shaping the environment in which they work?

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 also responsible for the development of B2B Marketing's training and events activities

I was stopped in my tracks recently by a famous but familiar quotation written in bold letters on the wall of London's V&A museum. The quote was: "The best way to predict the future is to invent it", and it was credited to Alan Kay of Xerox's influential early '70s PARC research function (where it was effectively a mantra).

Although the originator of this quote may be moot (derivations have been attributed to the likes of Drucker, Lincoln and Gabor), its relevance to marketing in 2017 is anything but, and that's why it resonated with me so profoundly.

Context is key – the quote features at the very end of the V&A's landmark 'Revolution' exhibition, tracing the transformations in culture that were unleashed in the 1960s, and are still reverberating today. I visited eager to understand more about the explosions in creativity around music, art, design, fashion and culture that defined the '60s, and while there was much exciting material on these themes (including original Beatles suits and song lyrics), there were also much more challenging sections on war, politics, environmentalism, marketing and technology. By the end, I had to reappraise my opinion of this period, recognising that it had both highs and lows, challenges as well as opportunities, and was sometimes characterised by struggle, sacrifice, disharmony and conflict.

On reflection, it's obvious that such negative implications are inevitable consequences of profound transformations in society – people respond with different levels of resistance and willingness, and are sometimes downright hostile. For every opportunity for positive change, there's an equal one for negative change, and different groups will have divergent opinions on what falls into each of these categories.

The biggest transformation impacting today's society is obviously digitisation, and the mixture of challenges and opportunities to emerge from this evolve and mutate almost daily, impacting every aspect of our lives, for both good and bad. For every viral message of goodwill, or new online business opportunity, there's a fake news site or an extremist commentator, spreading lies and stirring fear and discontent – as 2016 has shown us.

For marketers, the implications of digitisation are more profound than in many other professions – it places practitioners in a situation where they are constantly required to question and re-evaluate what they're doing and how they're doing it, in the knowledge that there are likely to be better, faster, easier or trendier ways out there. This can be stressful, confusing and exhausting, and simply unmanageable for some.

But for me, this is where the Alan Kay quote becomes empowering – a clarion call for action and a new state of mind. Instead of being reactive and responsive to the change defined elsewhere, marketers must increasingly seek to invent their own futures – to define or shape the environment, context and manner in which brands engage and connect with buyers. Never before has the environment been so fluid, or the opportunities for fresh, transformational thinking so many and varied. Not even in the halcyon days of the 1960s.

To invent your own future requires a bold and decisive mindset, a willingness to think differently and explore new scenarios, and the ability to pivot to align with and embrace new technologies and opportunities.

Such attributes are not just nice-to-haves: they'll become increasingly essential to enable us to withstand the challenges ahead, and whatever 2017 throws at us.

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