PROPOLIS

GET STACKED RESEARCH REPORT:

MOVING FORWARDS WITH A MARKETING OPERATIONS FUNCTION

Measuring ROI, driving continuous improvement and aligning your business strategy



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Want to learn more about marketing operations?

By joining our Propolis community, you'll get access to an even more comprehensive version of this report, loaded with interviews and commentaries by expert marketing operations professionals, and key insights from B2B Marketing lead analyst, Peter O'Neill.

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SECTION 1

MORE THAN JUST MARTECH



SIMON DANIELS,
marketing operations
and process Hive expert

As always, I've been eagerly awaiting the results of the B2B Marketing survey on the state of marketing technology. For this year's report, I'm particularly delighted with the additional focus on marketing operations (MOPs). I don't think I'm alone in this respect either, as one response to one of the questions asked for more coverage next time on handling the vicissitudes of global MOPs management. While that might require a report unto itself, I'm confident there's plenty more advice here in the meantime!

One particularly striking finding for me is that around half of respondents with martech specialists said that they have a MOPs function in their company, suggesting a decent level of maturity for a still relatively nascent function. This function frequently reports directly into the CMO or other head of marketing, which is also encouraging in terms of MOPs' place and influence at the marketing top table. That said, it's important simply to ensure that the data, technology, process and people elements that make up the remit of MOPs enjoy sufficient focus, and this seems to be the case in many businesses too. Still, it seems that a lack of time and resources to use marketing technology properly remains a key challenge in deploying these solutions, so greater focus here may still be necessary. As such, the guidance in this report on MOPs and its priorities ought to be well received and closely scrutinised. In particular – and I won't apologise for being a broken record on this one – MOPs is more than just martech. Key findings from the research spanning data management, process refinement, skills development, budget responsibility and planning all point towards the importance of a comprehensive MOPs function. Although it's never too soon to start in my opinion, Shane Redding provides some, as ever, succinct pointers on when to consider setting up a MOPs team if you haven't already.

Another highlight for me is the relatively widespread view that current martech provision is sufficient for immediate needs. While it's true to say that the longer-term picture isn't so rosy, I think there's a glass half-full story to be told as well. I was interested too in the breadth of tools in use, including work management and sales engagement platforms. The former is a firm favourite of mine and the latter is gaining traction too. Are either of them actually martech though?

Also of note are the varying degrees of martech adoption among respondents, with more mature platforms such as CRM and marketing automation doing better than newer technologies like customer data management. MOPs should take responsibility for maintaining focus on adoption of these solutions. I am very heartened to see that marketing are overwhelmingly in charge of their own martech budgets and decision-making though. This isn't for a moment to suggest that IT in particular should not be involved, but I'm firmly of the view that marketing needs to take point. Perhaps the growing prevalence of MOPs teams is driving this outcome.

The pandemic has of course increased the focus on investment in digital and, in turn, the role of martech and MOPs. It will be intriguing to see the results of that the next time the survey runs.

SECTION 2

WORDS FROM CHRIS WICKSON, INTEGRATE



CHRIS WICKSON,
GM, EMEA, Integrate

There is no doubt that the last 12 months has accelerated an exciting, but somewhat daunting, shift in the B2B marketing landscape. The term 'digital transformation' is arguably overused these days, but the impact on how we and our target accounts operate now and in the future is forcing many businesses to rethink their go-to-market strategies, the way they organise themselves internally, and the tools and technology they leverage.

The complexity of the buying process within our target accounts has only increased in this remote, digital-only environment we are currently operating in. With exceptionally high expectations, and low purchasing confidence, our buyers today research covertly and make buying decision by committee, based on multiple interactions across channels. They are reaching partial decision-consensus with a group of diverse stakeholders well before they ever reach out or interact with our sales teams. Whilst our buyers have always called the shots, consumer expectations are driving the need for a better buying experience; a desire for us to engage with them in their channel of choice, at the right moment in time.

So, what are the consequences for us as B2B marketers?

Today's buyer-driven world demands marketing play a bigger, more complete role. An approach that is focused on the buyer, with connected, aligned and personalised experiences. As marketers, we need to ensure our efforts are connected across the channels buyers rely on, enabling identification of known and unknown buyers and accounts, and activating engagement when we know which accounts or buyers show intent signals.

This new era in marketing requires moving beyond our old marketing or sales-led approaches to a new buyer-driven, buyer-focused approach, which analysts refer to as precision demand marketing – the next step, and the new way forward to speed lead conversions and drive predictable revenue at scale.

Easier said than done, right? Precision demand marketing requires a number of foundational pillars in place with martech and MOPs at the heart.

As the latest results from this B2B Marketing survey indicate, years of building up often complex martech stacks is not necessarily leading to high performance. Teams are now reviewing their existing stacks and considering new vendors to adapt to this evolving buyer-driven landscape, and the importance of a strong MOPs function continues to rise.

For me, I believe we are finally reaching the point of realisation that it has never been about how many, or indeed which, martech vendors we use, but the way in which we deploy and leverage those vendors to connect to our buyers that determines success. As we emerge out of the pandemic and into this new era with buyers' needs and habits shifting, 2021 is the perfect time to determine what's the right strategy for your business and the markets you serve.

SECTION 3

B2B MARKETING IS NOW A DIGITAL OPERATION



PETER O'NEILL,
lead analyst,
B2B Marketing

It's no secret that marketing is now mostly digital, and that successful digital marketing is all about leveraging technologies to communicate, calibrate, schedule, analyse and report success. So, while martech is recognised as a critical component in enabling successful B2B marketing, the challenge of managing it efficiently is increasing. Some companies assign specific people, or even teams, to be responsible for martech operations, while others try to operate the technologies in parallel with their day jobs.

Meanwhile, a larger and more strategic function, usually called marketing operations (MOPs), is also emerging as a critical discipline within the marketing organisation. MOPs covers martech operations, but also non-technological tasks, such as overall process design and management, as well as measurement and reporting.

The demand for a formal MOPs function is driven by the increasing need for an agile and efficient marketing team that can report quantifiable ROI and is aligned with an organisation's business strategy. This need has become an acute priority as many organisations battle to adapt to a constantly changing business and consumer environment as a result of Covid-19.

3.1 FIVE SIGNS YOU NEED A MARKETING OPERATIONS FUNCTION

In the 2019 B2B Marketing report on MOPs, marketers were advised to seriously consider launching a MOPs function based upon their response to five simple statements, created by Shane Redding, marketing consultant, Think Direct, and B2B Marketing's Hive expert on strategy and evolution. Survey participants could answer 'yes' to one or more of the following statements.

1. You've invested in marketing automation, but aren't getting the promised return.
2. You've got lots of data sitting in different siloed systems and are struggling to get a single customer view.
3. Marketing is reliant on data in CRM and it's not cutting the mustard.
4. You're aiming for high growth and to scale at speed using the best tech to support you.
5. CX is high on your company agenda and you want to design better customer journeys.

So, how are these principles being enacted in practice?

"Don't hesitate because you are managing a small marketing team. The tipping point isn't size or spend. These five key signs will scream 'get a marketing operations function right now'"

SHANE REDDING,
digital, direct and data marketing consultant, Think Direct, and B2B Marketing Hive expert, strategy and evolution

3.2 B2B MARKETING SURVEYED MARKETERS TO FIND OUT MORE

This report is based on findings from our Q1-2021 survey of nearly 100 B2B marketers from companies of all sizes, small and large, and across all industries. The survey reveals B2B marketers' martech investment and development plans, as well as the state of play for MOPs in these companies. It provides a snapshot of B2B's martech stack, the levels of satisfaction for those technologies, and an overview of some of the challenges faced in operating it. We also asked for responses to the five statements listed in the left hand column to identify the urgency of MOPs.

The survey respondents were all senior marketers, with 42% being the head of marketing in their organisation, and a further 22% in the first line of reporting to the head of marketing. Over three-quarters of the respondents had formal responsibility for martech, and 72% claimed formal responsibility for the MOPs function within their companies.

For each section of the survey, we have documented the answers with appropriate descriptive commentary. Some insights are then provided about these results when applicable.

The report also discusses what should be part of an ideal MOPs function, and provides guidance to the organisation and process elements of managing marketing technology and processes effectively.

While this report will reveal some industry secrets, plenty of statistics and peer-to-peer advice, its main aim is to ignite a conversation by providing actionable advice. The advice given can help to open the debate in your company about the challenges and ambitions behind building a modern MOPs function.

3.3 REPORT INSIGHTS

- The state of martech in practice.
- An industry audit of how much MOPs has been formalised.
- Advice on how to develop a MOPs function and what this should entail.

SECTION 4

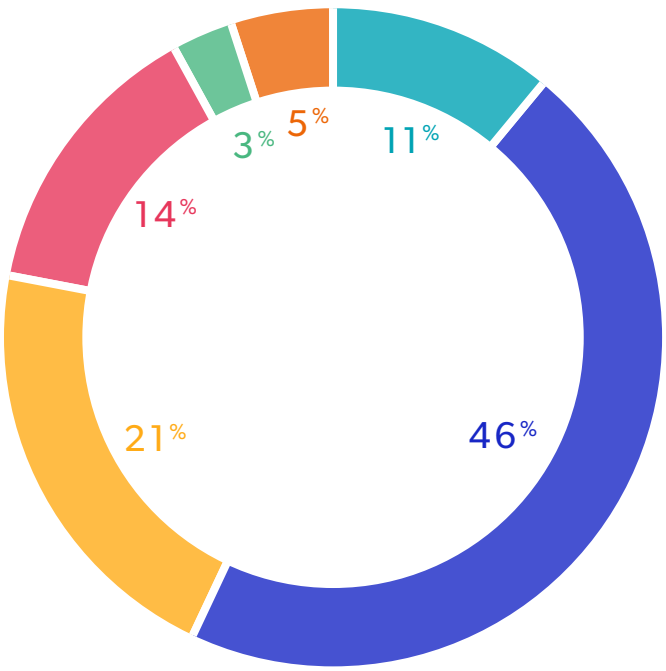
MARTECH SATISFACTION IS NOT CLEAR

We opened the survey by giving respondents the chance to self-assess the state of their martech stack. The returns were thought-provoking. We also asked about their challenges, and asked them to rank these according to technology area.

4.1 EVERYBODY HAS ISSUES WITH SOME SYSTEMS IN THEIR MARTECH STACK

The survey respondents were quite critical about their current martech stack. A staggering 89% of respondents were not able to confirm that the stack was performing well for both current and future needs. Close to half (46%) stated that their stack is 'adequate', but will need development in the next 12 months, while another 21% expect those developments to be over 24 months.

Q. Which of the following best describes your organisation's current marketing technology stack?

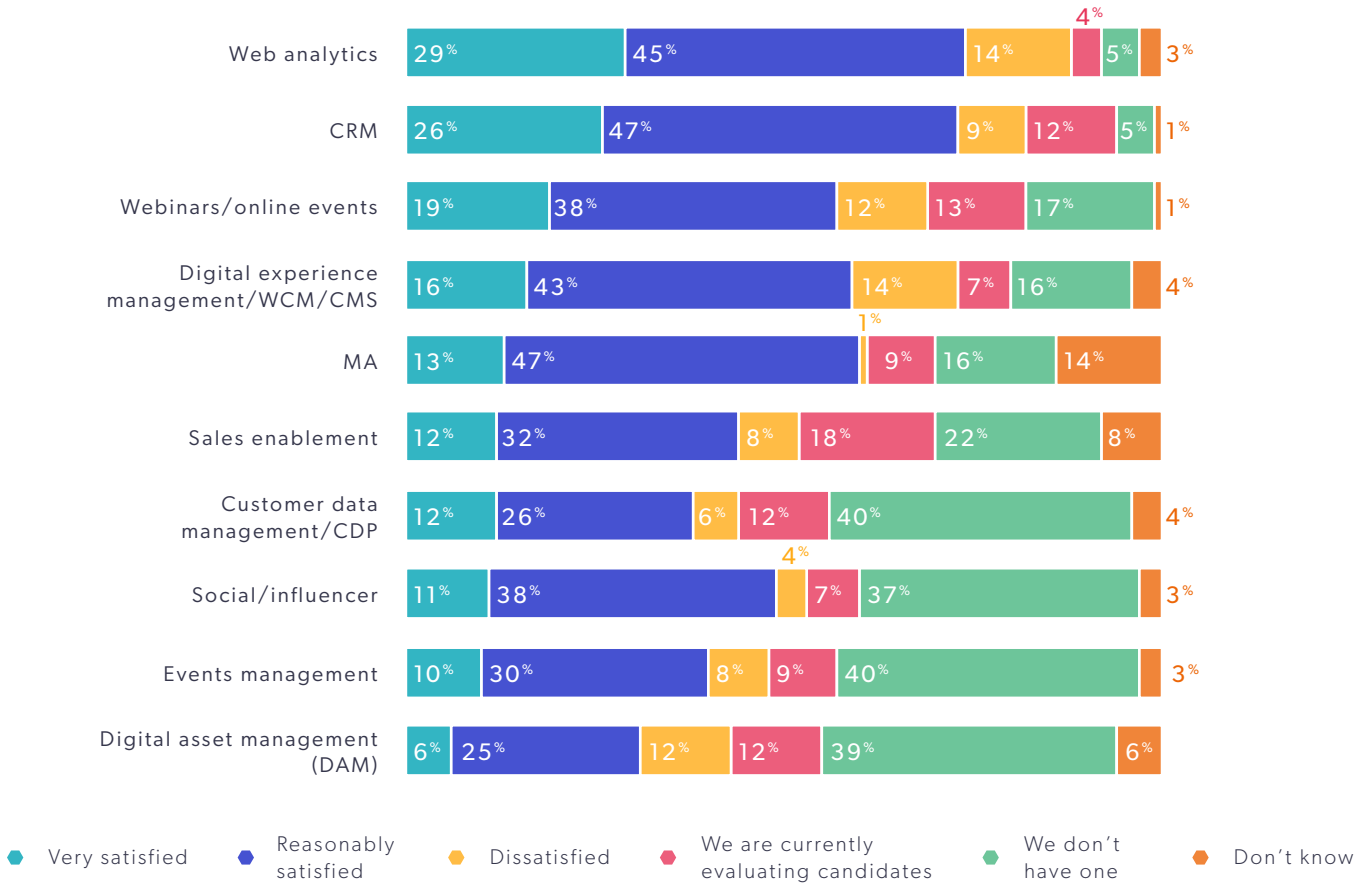


When asked about specific systems or platforms within the stack, a high proportion (nearly three-quarters) of the survey cohort reported satisfaction with their web analytics and their CRM platforms. Half of the respondents were satisfied with their MA or ESP platform, which means that the other half were not happy. The lowest satisfaction numbers were to be found for systems like CDPs (38%) and DAM/PIM systems (31%), which are not yet widely installed across all B2B sectors. Just 44% were satisfied with their sales enablement system. This category also showed the greatest buying activity, with 18% currently evaluating candidates. There is also some noticeable buying activity for webinar platforms, as well as DAM/PIM systems and CDPs.

Another aspect that we asked about was the level of adoption of the full capabilities for each martech system. Only CRM, web analytics and webinar systems were fully or mostly deployed by over half of the respondents. All other systems were marked as such by less than 50% of respondents. Notably, the full adoption of sales enablement system capabilities was reported by less than a quarter of companies. This probably reflects the nascent usage of that platform.

We also offered 'Bought, but not deployed' as one possible answer, which was occasionally selected when there has been a recent purchase. In addition to this, we also offered 'Deployed, but not yet adopted by the users.' Here, the most significant input was 8% of respondents who said this applied to their events platform.

Q. Overall, how satisfied are you with the various martech systems you currently deploy?



SECTION 5

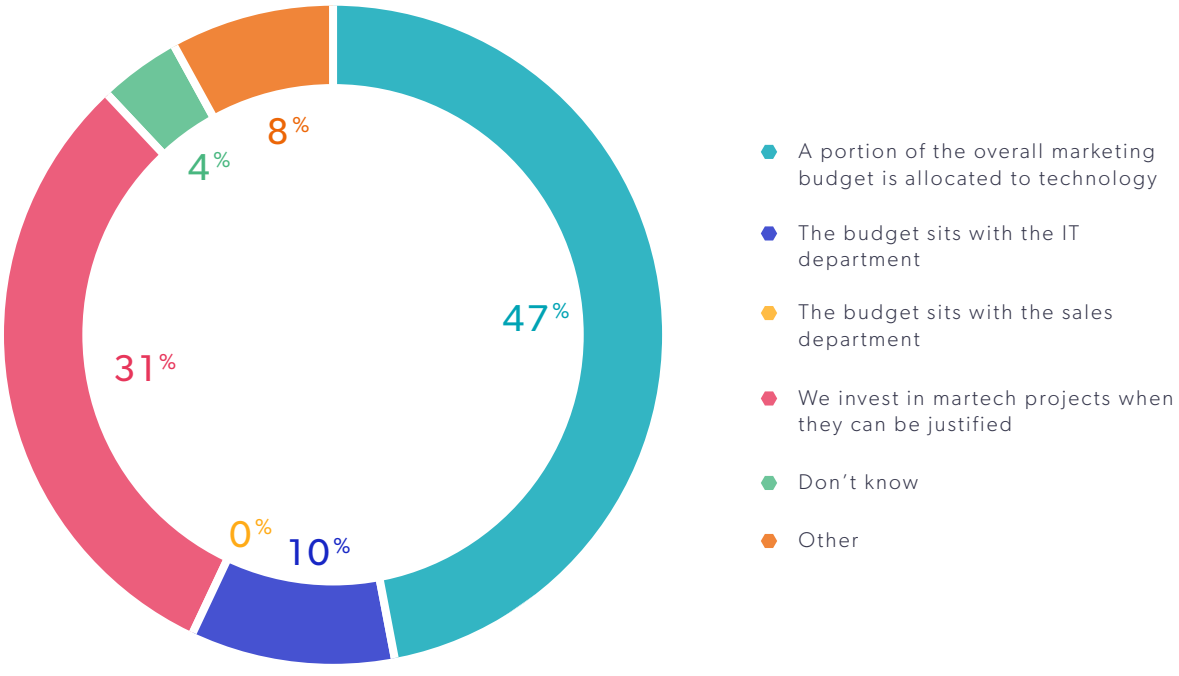
MARTECH BUDGETS AND CHANGES DUE TO COVID-19

The survey continued by asking about the financial aspect of buying and operating martech platforms, and whether or not there have been changes in marketing's work due to Covid-19.

5.1 WHO OWNS THE MARTECH BUDGET?

When we asked about the ownership of the budget for martech investments, we found that just under half (47%) of respondents stated that they manage their marketing technology budget within the overall marketing budget. This is exactly the same number as last year. One in 10 claimed that the budget sits with the IT department, while 31% say 'It depends on the project.'

Q. Where does the budget for buying martech sit in your organisation?

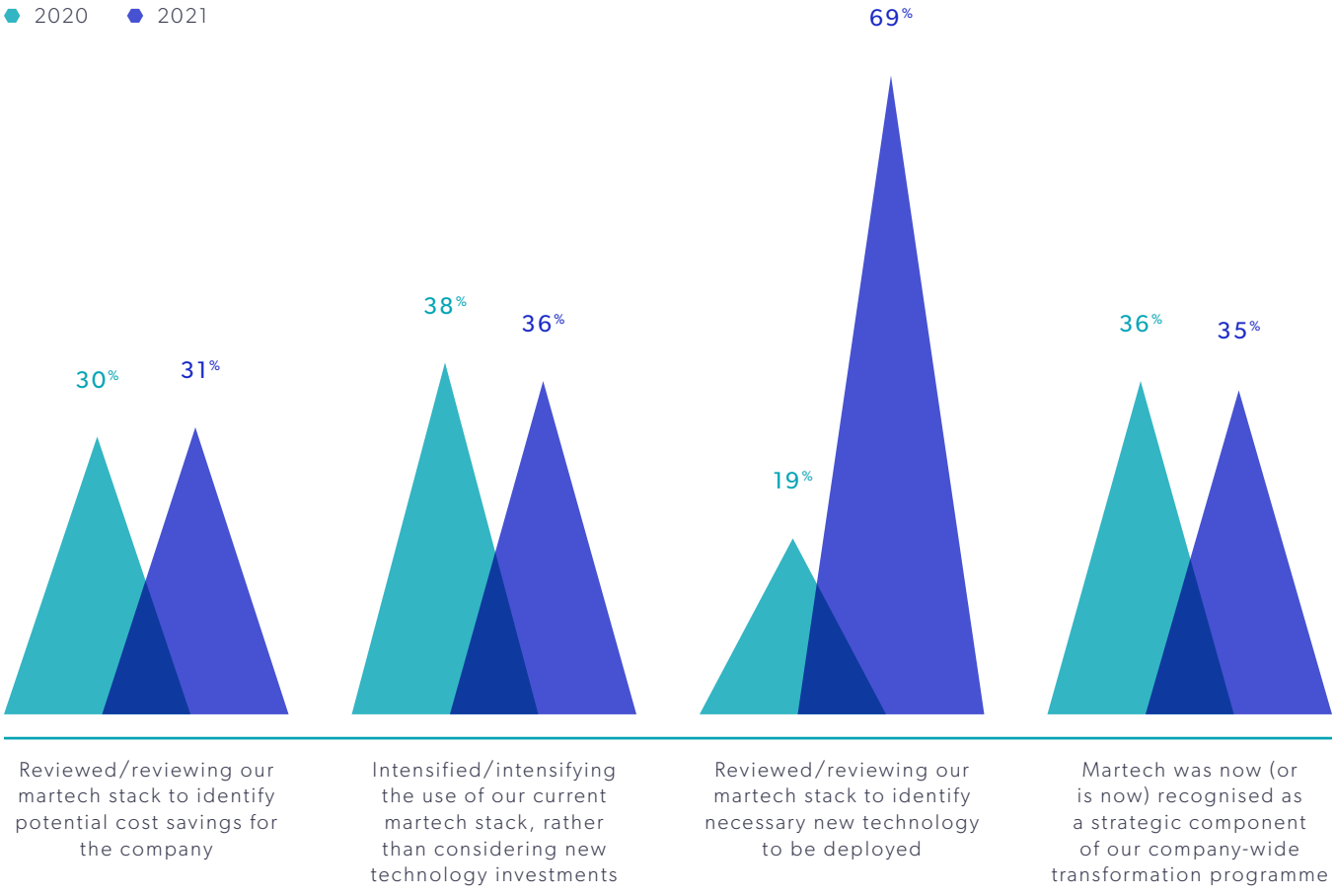


5.2 HAS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MARTECH CHANGED DUE TO COVID-19?

The survey then proposed a list of potential changes in martech strategy and operations that may have been caused by the Covid-19 crisis, and asked if these had happened at all, or if they would do in 2021. 38% of the respondents stated that they did start to intensify the use of their current martech stack as opposed to considering new technology in 2020. 19%, meanwhile, said they had to review their martech stack to identify potential costs savings last year. In 2021, 69% are reviewing their martech stack to identify necessary new technology to be deployed. Nearly three-quarters of respondents acknowledged that one result of the crisis is that martech is being recognised as a strategic component of the company-wide digital transformation programme. 36% achieved that status in 2020 and a further 35% expect it in this year.

Another list presented was a series of potential improvement activities to better utilise martech systems. The respondents were asked to indicate whether each activity was: not significant; indeed underway; or a major priority for their organisation. More than half of the companies interviewed are hiring additional martech talent: 32% of the respondents are on a hiring spree, with another 22% even considering it a major priority.

Q. Have your martech strategy and operations changed overall, or will they change, due to the Covid-19 crisis and, if so, how?

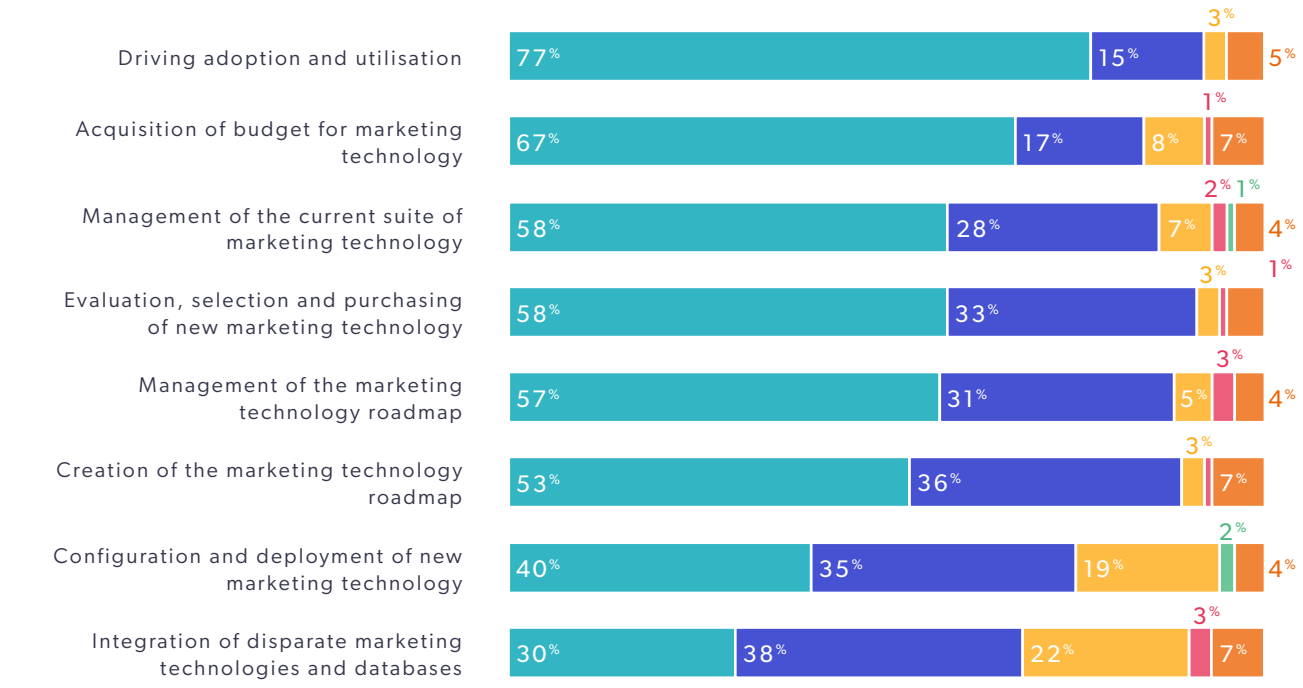


SECTION 6

WHO IS OPERATING MARTECH IN PRACTICE?

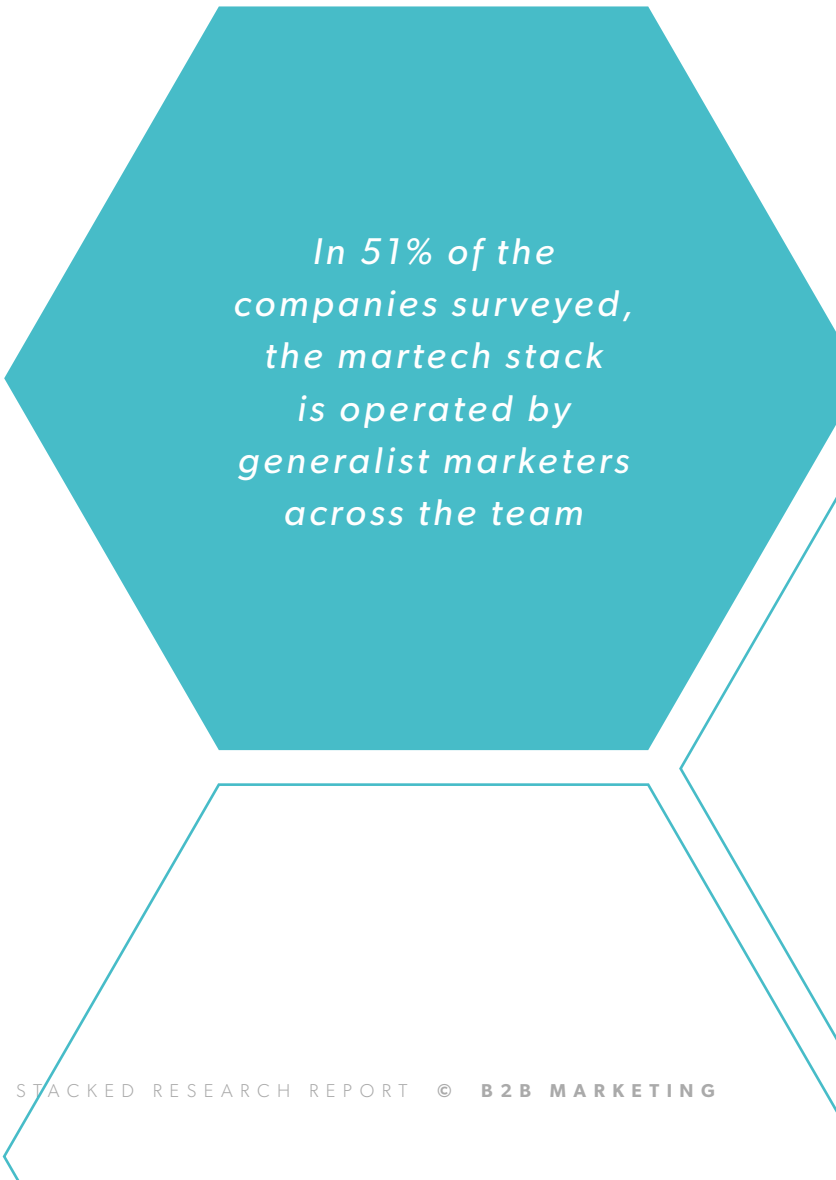
The next section of the survey asked about MOPs staffing, organisation and processes. The respondents could assign responsibility between marketing and IT for various processes around the martech stack. In around 90% of the companies reviewed, marketing has the overall control over most processes, especially the creation and management of the martech roadmap or strategy, the acquisition of budget, and even managing the suite of marketing technology. For some 20% of the companies, IT has leadership in configuring and integration projects.

Q. Which organisation is responsible for the following processes around your martech stack?



In 51% of the companies surveyed, the martech stack is operated by generalist marketers across the team. Nearly one-quarter (23%) report that they do have a dedicated team of specialists for this work, while 19% state that they depend on some expert users across the department. In terms of headcount, 64% think that these specialists/experts make up 10% of the whole marketing team, while another 19% say that between 11% and 20% of the team are specialists.

Within the cohort of 51 companies where there are martech specialists identified, 41% have the specialists reporting to an executive called the 'marketing operations manager', or something similar. In turn, this individual reports directly to the CMO or marketing director. In another 12% of cases, there is still a marketing operations manager, but one who reports below the CMO. In 31% of the companies, the specialists report directly to the CMO/marketing director. These are likely to be the smaller companies with just a handful of marketers overall.



SECTION 7

RECOMMENDATIONS

A MOPs function is finding favour with many marketing leaders because it better provides the intelligence, insights and tools they need to drive global campaign and budget visibility, agility and operational efficiency. All of these remain the cornerstone to delivering high-impact marketing and business outcomes. Indeed, some companies are combining sales and MOPs into an even more holistic revenue operations function. The prevalence and size of a dedicated MOPs team depends on the following:

- Organisational maturity: A CMO or marketing director who is measured on revenue contribution must set up a MOPs function to collect and provide those numbers.
- Geography: Marketing teams in North America tend to be larger and more automated than in Europe, so there are more MOPs professionals active in those companies.
- Industry sector: Large B2C companies have voluminous and geographically dispersed lead and awareness programmes requiring almost industrial-level management and reporting.
- Complexity: Large enterprises selling to large enterprises have a multitude of product lines and go-to-market channels, including business partners.

One major reason for focusing a team on MOPs is to improve the management of the more labour-intensive work that marketeers face in executing campaigns. This enables them to focus on the strategic and creative priorities that will drive better business outcomes. The ultimate objective for the MOPs function, however, is to put in place a framework to identify and address priorities and gaps in process design, technology provision and data orchestration within marketing organisations.

A MOPs function is finding favour with many marketing leaders because it better provides the intelligence, insights and tools they need to drive global campaign and budget visibility, agility and operational efficiency

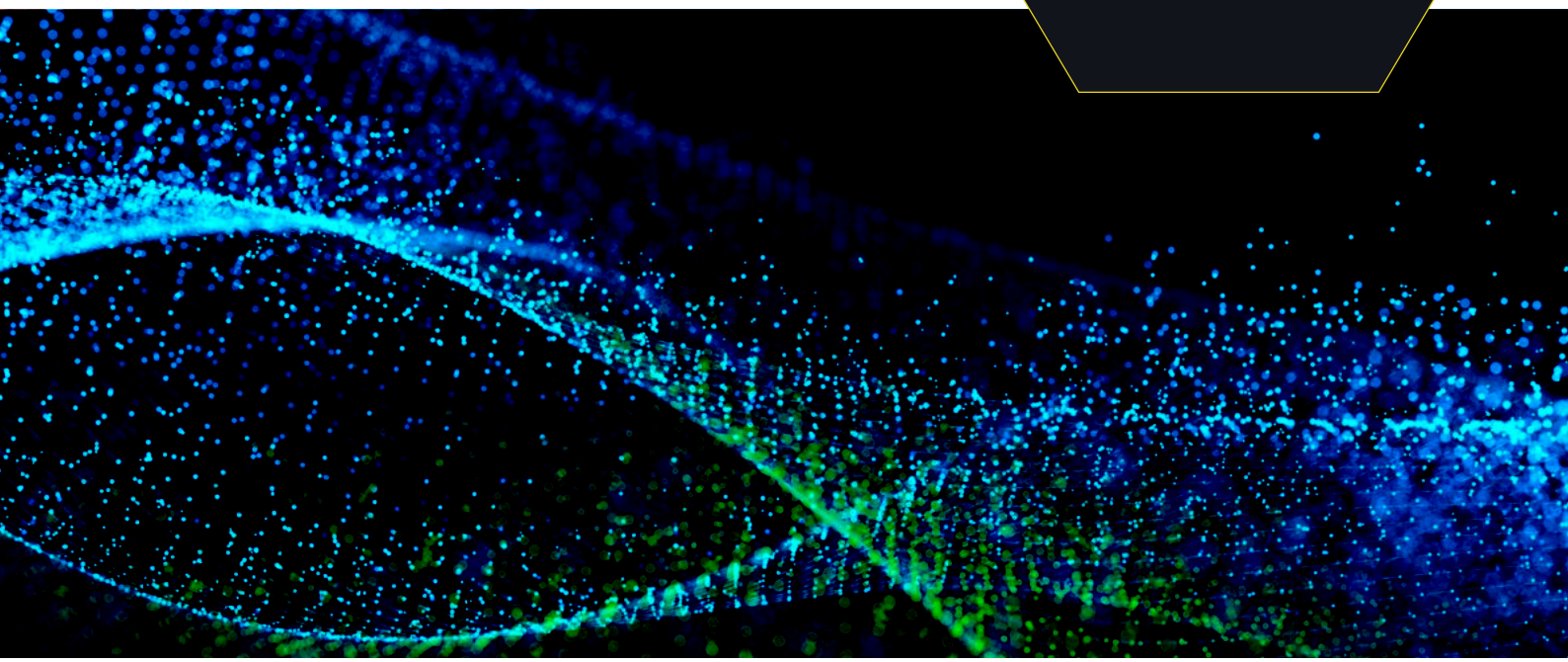
SECTION 8

MARKETING OPERATIONS COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The following framework seeks to define the different stages of marketing operations maturity, and map them against different criteria required for success. This is an abridged and edited version of a comprehensive MOPs framework, which is available to members of Propolis – B2B Marketing's online community. There are eight frameworks in total, which map across all aspects of B2B marketing practice, relating to the eight community Hives within Propolis.

Each framework is a flat or static version of the interactive Competency Assessment Programme which is designed to help you determine your specific level of competency against these criteria, compare them against other Propolis members and highlight areas to focus on for improvement. It is available as part of Propolis membership.

If you'd like to speak to someone about joining Propolis, please visit b2bmarketing.net/propolis



MARKETING OPERATIONS COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK 1.0

	BUSINESS CONTRIBUTION	1. BUILDING	2. DEVELOPING	3. PERFORMING	4. IMPROVING	5. EXCELLING
Marketing technology strategy	Martech selection, management and development	Piecemeal 'user-chooser' selection and management of tools, with minimal guidance or oversight.	Central oversight on tool management and deployment, plus some user guidance.	MOPs owns budget, tool selection, management and planning.	MOPs leads development using roadmap, including routine monitoring and ROI evaluation.	MOPs responsible for martech governance, including proactive management as part of ongoing change-management remit
Marketing operations management	Operations formalisation, structure and management	MOPs reponsibilities distributed across the team to non-specialists, with projects operated in isolation.	Expert users support wider team; formalisation of MOPs responsibilities begins, including project management	Individual MOPs specialists appointed, but with management outside of marketing.	MOPs team established, reporting to marketing leadership, including clear career progression, and project ownership/ oversight.	MOPs leader recognised as senior role; MOPs function recognised as a centre of excellence.
Marketing process definition and monitoring	Process formalisation and set up for ongoing improvement	Individuals operating in isolation with no formal methodologies.	Sharing and formalisation of workflows and best practice begins.	Centralised best practice repository maintained by MOPs, with standardisation of methodologies beginning.	Two-way dialogue regarding process development between users and MOPs; specific working methodologies in place.	Continuous improvement ethos for process evolution with MOPs co-ordinating uptake.
Reporting and analytics	Metric formalisation and monitoring, plus attribution	Reporting and testing highly individualised and effectiveness difficult to determine.	Centralised report creation and sharing begins, plus simplistic campaign testing. Attribution is manual.	Significant formalisation of report sharing and testing regimes; basic attribution instigated.	Robust and rigorous reporting via dedicated platform; rigourous and thorough campaign testing, aligned with statistical analysis.	Metrics driving business decisions; campaigns highly optimised and subject to continuous improvement; model-driven attribution enables in-depth analysis.
Cross-organisational coordination	Collaboration, deployment, budgeting and stakeholder management	Collaboration only through standard sharing docs; limited central view of spending or relationships with functions outside marketing.	Random acts of collaboration; standardised budgeting tools, but limited co-ordination; informal relationships outside marketing.	Standardisation of means and methods of collaboration; central spreadsheet tool to track budgets; informal cross-functional efforts on significant issues.	Marketing workflow tools integrated across organisation; marketing budgets formally linked to finance systems; proactive formal collaboration with wider stakeholder groups.	Ongoing workflow optimisation; proactive budget management to maximise utilisation; formal cross-functional working led by MOPs.

ABOUT

B2B MARKETING AND PROPOLIS

Powered by the community, for the community.

Established in 2004, B2B Marketing is now the number one go-to resource for B2B marketers across the globe.

Right from the start, we had a clear mission that remains as strong and clear today: to provide marketers at business brands with the tools, insight and inspiration they need to grow and succeed – as both individuals and businesses.

To do this, we need to continually evolve to make sure we are delivering what you need.

This is why Propolis was born.

We're proud to serve as the focal point for the B2B marketing sector, and to be a force for greater connectivity, enabling marketers and leaders to share experiences and learn from one another.

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INTEGRATE

Integrate is the leader in precision demand marketing – an emerging category to help B2B marketers develop and deliver an omnichannel demand strategy, convert leads to revenue and drive marketing ROI. Integrate works with high-growth and enterprise organisations like Salesforce, Microsoft, Akamai and Pluralsight to power their precision demand marketing strategies. Over the past decade, Integrate has evolved from solving the complex challenges across each demand generation channel to powering account-based, buyer-driven omnichannel experiences. Today, Integrate's Demand Acceleration Platform helps marketers orchestrate connected buying experiences that drive qualified conversations at scale and accelerate revenue generation.

For more information, please visit **integrate.com**.

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