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A new era for B2B

Introducing Post-Modern Marketing – what's new and why it matters



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The Post-Modern Marketing report was written by Joel Harrison, editor-in-chief of B2B Marketing, with contributions from Tom Stein, chairman and chief client officer of Stein IAS. Interviews with leading marketers were conducted via telephone during May 2017.

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Introduction
A new era for B2B marketing

That's a grandiose claim – but bear with us, because we think it's justified.

B2B marketers live in an era of unprecedented change and upheaval. Never before has the profession been changing so quickly or so profoundly. And never before have marketers had to work as hard to react, respond and reinvent themselves to ensure they are relevant.

The factors driving this change are many and varied, but digital technology is at the forefront – unlocking new opportunities, revealing new horizons; and all the while creating new challenges amid increasing expectations.

The myriad changes sweeping through B2B marketing come both large and small. Their impact is that B2B marketing as a whole has transformed – and is transforming. It's significantly and demonstrably different than it was just a few short years ago, and will be just as significantly changed a few short years from now.

So profound is this ongoing transformation, that we (at B2B Marketing and Stein IAS) believe B2B marketing is entering its next stage of evolution.

Over the past 10 years, the term 'Modern Marketing' did much to define B2B, inspired and catalysed by the launch of the first wave of marketing automation and other marketing technologies, and further encouraged by the efficiency and accountability demands put on marketing in the wake of the financial crisis which begun in 2007.

Oracle describes Modern Marketing, and the accountability that arose as part of it, as "the paradigm of inbound marketing programmes driven by digital channels, served by multiple touches, measured by sophisticated technologies – and where data analysis is king."

But the circumstances that made Modern Marketing pertinent and definitive 10 years ago are giving way to a new and distinct set of parameters and necessities.

This new era of B2B marketing needs a name, and we're calling it Post-Modern Marketing, to demonstrate its relationship to, and distinctness from, what went before.

To put this report together, which serves to define the many aspects and facets of Post-Modern Marketing, we interviewed leading marketers at prominent B2B organisations to understand their views with regard to industry transformation. Their responses represent the front line of this transformation of B2B marketing, and are both inspiring and insightful.

We've grouped responses around five key themes:

- What change looks like and what drives it.
- The roles of technology and creativity in 2017 and how they interplay.
- The core marketing proficiencies that will be required of B2B marketers, henceforth.
- How marketers are imagining and building their teams for the future.
- How the relationship between brands and agencies will evolve.

Once we've looked at these areas in detail, we'll provide our definition of Post-Modern Marketing, and what it means for you.

Joel Harrison and Tom Stein
May 2017

Section 1
What change looks like for prominent B2B marketers

We started by asking our interviewees about their experiences with the change agenda in their organisations – how fast it's moving and what's driving it.

There was universal acceptance that the speed of change is increasing, although, both the iterations and implications of these changes varied from organisation to organisation. Here follows some of the standout responses on this topic:

"Marketers need to be working on the future, while also delivering on today's priorities. Things are moving faster, and there's a growing volume of work. The speed of change is impacting on planning, both now and for the future. Marketing cycles are very different today. You might be planning the next quarter, and then have to re-plan the whole thing in response to unforeseen developments. You might need a wholesale shift in strategy every two years. These changes are coming more rapidly than before. Today, technology means anything is technically possible – the challenge is to work out what is feasible."

Phil Clement, global CMO, Aon

"Marketing is definitely changing faster than ever, but then life is too. Technology is driving everything. How you work, how you engage, how you communicate. There are so many tools, and there is so much data. B2B marketing is more empowered than ever. But so are customers."

Chas Moloney, marketing director UK, Ricoh

"The reality today is that we're dealing with increasingly complex decision-making groups and processes. Frequently we run marketing campaigns to companies with as many as 20 key decision-makers, each with different roles, requirements and responsibilities. The message has got to be targeted to ensure the right people make the right decisions."

Chris Harrop, group marketing director, Marshalls

"No one in the world would disagree that change is accelerating. New technology is driving a lot of this. The latest marketing technology LIndscape super graphic chart demonstrates the scale and speed at which new technologies are emerging. New technology creates new opportunities for data, which can be more rewarding, but more difficult to process. The ability to deliver relevant, timely and targeted communications has never been more important."

Richard Whale, UK and I marketing leader, Dun & Bradstreet

In summary

- Planning cycles are shorter, and the environment is transforming faster, making meaningful planning more difficult than ever. Ability to be agile and to anticipate and respond quickly to situations is essential.
- New technology has vastly expanded the data and tools at marketers' disposal, but their sheer volume and complexity can make them hard to activate effectively. The learning curve is still fairly steep.
- The imminence of next-gen technologies – artificial intelligence and machine learning, for example, add additional complexities and opportunities on top of the preceding ones that have not yet been fully mastered.



Section 2

Today's number one challenge: Roles of technology and creativity – and how they interplay

As we can see clearly from the preceding commentary, the pace of development of technology is the primary, although not only, factor driving change for B2B marketers. So what impact does this have on marketers' ability to interact with their audiences? And in particular, what impact does it have on their ability to generate genuinely creative and cutting-edge approaches to shift perceptions and achieve results?

"Technology enlarges the opportunity for creativity. We have more access to insights. We can be more granular and build messaging on a personal level. In previous years, creative was based on a broad approach. That doesn't cut it today. We need more creative approaches. Emotional truths are fundamental, and we need to start thinking about the individual. Marketing needs to reach everyone."

Richard Whale, UK and I marketing leader, Dun & Bradstreet

"People's reaction to a brand is still based on emotions, and marketing should aim to drive an emotional response. It needs to take your breath away. Meanwhile, technology is becoming table stakes. Technology deployment will not be discussed in the way that it is today in two years' time: it will all be about emotions. Buyers are not robots. B2B marketers can't lose sight of this or they will get eaten up. Digitisation is a scale game, and it's easy to lose sight of the quality aspect. B2B is all about relationships, and requires an empathetic connection. It's marketing's job to articulate that, and to exploit its full potential."

Antonia Wade, CMO, Thomson Reuters

"Technology nothwithstanding, today's buyers expect a more empathetic approach. Yesterday's product marketers don't have the right skills. Marketing needs to have a more dynamic approach to reflect customer behaviours. Our buyers are changing, and we need to be able to connect with them."

Antonia Wade, CMO, Thomson Reuters



"We have an abundance of technology and data, but there's a big challenge to make it relevant. Research shows that B2B is extremely emotionally driven. Brand reputation and careers ride on successful purchasing decisions. There's a growing reliance on big data, but at the same time, buyers increasingly expect to be spoken to as individuals. Messages that do not resonate will jar. Marketers need to fuse intelligence with human relevance."

Gary Hurry, director of marketing for Europe, ABN AMRO Commercial Finance

"Creativity remains really important, and marketing leaders need to find new ways to help their teams be creative. Everyone needs the opportunity to work creatively. The culture of the team is really important – marketing leaders need to provide freedom to try things."

Chas Moloney, marketing director UK, Ricoh

"I hear the word 'mechanisation' used increasingly in marketing, as if marketers can be replaced by the push of a button. The importance of starting with the customer will never change. We can make the processes quicker and slicker. But the front end will always be human. Technology should allow us to focus more on messaging and creative. Marketing can't be replaced by tech. You'll never get away from people in B2B."

Anna Harry, head of marketing for Go-To-Market, Experian

"Tech can be a great driver, but you still need to turn the insights into creative solutions.

"Marketing used to be all about cut-through and standout in magazines, etc. Today it's the same, but in a different, digital and more fragmented media set."

Chris Harrop, group marketing director, Marshalls

"Marketers need to combine technology and creative to get the best out of both. We are increasingly being compared to the last experience that our customers had. People want to be delighted and inspired, and to do that we need to raise the level of what we do and look outside of B2B. Creative messages need to be more simple, and shift away from corporate positioning. Having a more conversational tone is fundamental. "

Lucy Birch, head of campaign management, PwC

"The opportunity for creativity is bigger. We have more access to insights – we can be more granular, and build messaging on a personal level. In previous years, creative was based on a broad approach, defined by industry trends. That doesn't cut it today. We need more creative approaches. Emotional truths are fundamental, and we need to start thinking about the individual. Marketing needs to reach everyone."

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Lucy Birch, head of campaign management, PwC

In summary

- Skilful technology deployment is empowering, but it's not relevant for its own sake. It's only useful if it allows you to do better, more creative and more effective marketing.
- Emotional connection is at the heart of great marketing, and brands and marketers must not forget that. It is this, in combination with advanced data science and technology, that enables marketing to make a difference.
- Buyers are increasingly expecting the personalised, one-to-one communications that technology enables. The onus is on marketers to develop messages and experiences that fully leverage the potential of individualisation.



Section 3
Core marketing proficiencies are evolving

As marketing transforms, so does the core set of skills that need to exist within a B2B marketing team. This skillset already looks radically different than it did 10 years ago, and looks likely to change faster, further and more fundamentally in the years ahead.

So what are the emerging proficiencies that a leader in a B2B marketing organisation needs to be able to count on, either today, or in the next couple of years? Our panel provided their views – with universal or near-universal agreement that the following either are essential today, or will be very soon:

- **Data**

  The ability to understand a complex, varied and sometimes inter-operative set of technologies to better understand and leverage buyer behaviours – typically at a granular level.

- **Programmatic**

  The ability to tap into the programmatic ecosystem of ad networks, third-party data providers, data management platforms (DMPs), data service providers (DSPs) and third-party adtech providers, focusing on how they integrate to deliver audience-targeted digital advertising.

- **The tech stack**

  The expertise to build, deploy, maintain and hone an integrated suite of martech and adtech systems.

- **Content strategy and implementation**

  The ability to tell stories that are creatively thrilling while extremely valuable and shareable. Connecting highly personalised experiences that draw customers in and have utility to engage, inspire and empower.

- **CX**

  The ability to co-ordinate and constantly refine the numerous touchpoints throughout and beyond the customer journey, using both technology and human processes.

› Creative

The understanding and deployment of creative thinking throughout the marketing team and across the enterprise, working truly collaboratively with agency partners. The appetite for creative invention and innovation, including emerging creative technologies such as virtual and mixed reality.

› Orchestration

The structures, processes and management skills to run a complex, multi-faceted marketing team, including a mix of specialists and generalists, within each of the eight listed areas and their critical subsets.

› Brand management

The responsibility and authority to develop and maintain a robust and relevant brand identity, in all iterations and across all activities. The need to be agile and flexible to enable brand relevance in an omni-channel world.

Of note, feelings about AI (artificial intelligence) were more mixed, with about half the respondents agreeing that AI needs to be a core departmental marketing skill and the other half uncertain (although all recognised that it is an important development). Respondents in some cases were wary of the hype around AI and machine learning, but saw the ultimate potential and, in half the cases, the considerable near-term opportunity.

> *"It's all a question of the technology adoption curve and pace. At first people will not feel the need to have it on their team and will bring in the expertise for impact. At this phase, just having AI will be a competitive advantage in terms of speed and accuracy through data aggregation and analysis. This will change over time, and AI will open up new opportunities for innovation – this will increasingly determine which firms win and which lose."*
>
> *"I suspect in the short term, the savvy market leader will need to embrace AI, building a long-term strategy, but may not need resources internally. That being said, long-term strategies need to figure out how to make AI a competitive advantage that can be protected inhouse. There is a further, even more practical dimension to the question. AI skills are going to be too expensive in the short-term for the average B2B marketing team to be able to hire. This talent is being greeted by seven-figure salaries!"*
>
> Phil Clement, global CMO, Aon



There were a number of other attributes that respondents believed would be important to marketers in the immediate future:

"Marketers need to know more about the fundamental principles of driving commerciality and improving ROI. They learn this through business exposure. We need to get them to go and speak to the rest of the business, so they can understand the need for, and real value of, marketing's contribution."

Gary Hurry, director of marketing for Europe, ABN AMRO Commercial Finance

"Marketing benefits from further accelerating its total commercial mindset and the link to the overall business strategy. If in B2B companies marketing is being positioned as a standalone activity, the risk of not being perceived as a true enabler and business contributor is obvious and you create silos. One of the success factors is to create a well-established bridge to sales as a brand equity builder and a sales lead generator."

Patrik Romberg, SVP corporate communications, Trelleborg

"Brain science: that's having the ability to get beyond the symptoms and to the root cause. Understand what's working, what isn't and why. You could call this cognitive science, and it includes questions like: 'why does this particular colour work?' or: 'why does smell work?'. Previously it was largely guesswork; now we have much more insight into these things."

Phil Clement, global CMO, Aon

"Brand management is something which is on the wane. It isn't talked about. Marketers don't see brand as something that has a buzz around it. They are much more focused on the latest tech. Also, relationship skills are fundamental. Marketers need to work with the business. Use data to add insights and build personal relationships with key stakeholders. No one teaches this - it's well beyond a tactical skill. Marketers need to be able to sell what it is they're doing."

Richard Whale, UK and I marketing leader, Dun & Bradstreet

"Marketing benefits from further accelerating its total commercial mind set and the link to the overall business strategy. If in B2B companies, marketing is being positioned as a standalone activity, the risk of not being perceived as a true enabler and business contributor is obvious and you create silos."

Patrik Romberg, SVP corporate communications, Trelleborg



In summary

- There are a clear set of proficiencies which marketing teams need to adopt or secure. Some of these are fairly new or brand new. Some are reframed or redefined versions of those that went before. But they're sufficiently different to demand consideration in a completely new light. The ability of marketing leaders to adopt, develop and enable these proficiencies is likely to be a key determinant of success in the future.
- A greater emphasis on brand for B2B marketers is also considered essential. This is driven in part by fragmentation and all the channels in play. It's also is driven by B2B's historical reticence to embrace emotion as part of companies' relationships with audiences – a reticence that inhibits differentiation and commercial success.
- A commercial mindset and the ability to understand business issues are increasingly essential proficiencies which marketers within the team need to grasp in order to succeed in their roles and in their careers. It's not something that is easily trained or necessarily occurs by osmosis.
- AI is a potential game-changer, but a core departmental skill that marketers are approaching in a measured fashion.

Section 4
The next generation of marketing talent

Obtaining the proficiencies outlined in section 3 is obviously a major area of concern for B2B marketers leading teams. The success of their future marketing efforts will depend on having the right people in the right place at the right time, doing the right things.

So how are they addressing this challenge? And where do they believe these skills and people are going to come from? There were a range of observations and strategies being deployed by those interviewed.

"Previously, to be a good marketer, there were very established routes for career progression. These days we're seeing statisticians, accountants, technologists coming into marketing, and the profession is much better for it. Marketing is not about execution of campaigns – it's about solving problems."

Phil Clement, global CEO, Aon

"Marketers need to be agile. There's a danger of focusing too much on the tech rather than empowering people to be agile. Particularly when it comes to young talent, there's a risk of becoming too templated and prescriptive. Marketers need to ask themselves: are you getting the best out of the junior members of your team?"

Chas Moloney, marketing director UK, Ricoh

"My main focus is upskilling our current team. Where we can't, we will bring in an external resource, but I've worked hard at getting the right people in the right role with the right attitude. We need a roughly 50:50 mix of specialists (such as content marketers, data analysts, social media marketers, etc.) versus generalists. It's inevitable that you'll always need some specialists, particularly in areas like social or public affairs, which are potentially high risk."

Danielle Regan, head of marketing and communications, Mace Group

"I'm interested in bringing in people who offer something different. We need to provide a safe place to try new things and experiment, allow people to fail fast. We need to create a different mindset. I expect marketers to have a curiosity around data. They need to understand that this is really important. They can't ignore it. They need credibility and they need to understand revenue numbers."

Lucy Birch, head of campaign management, PwC

"Marketing teams need a mixture of specialists and generalists. Specialists can be great at driving innovation, but you need other marketers focused on customer groups, and build them both into an integral organisation. By themselves, specialists are drawn to create a siloed customer journey. They need to see the bigger picture."

Richard Whale, UK and I marketing leader, Dun & Bradstreet

"As demands change, the range of skills needs to change. The traditional funnel of people into the marketing team needs to change. We are looking for people with different skills; people who might not have instinctively chosen a career in marketing in the past. We are looking for secondments from sales, finance, operations. We'll balance these with more traditional people who are still relevant. But we'll need to upskill in a slightly different way."

Antonia Wade, CMO, Thomson Reuters

At an organisation level, traditionally there were fairly set structures. Today, increasingly we're looking at flexibility, agility and the ability to co-create."

Lucy Birch, head of campaign management, PwC

In summary

- The skillset of the traditional marketer is growing less relevant. Marketing leaders are seeking a diversity of skills, outlooks and opinions – both from within and outside the organisation, and from functions like sales, finance and IT.
- Marketers need to be given the opportunity to experiment and the latitude to fail sometimes in order to grow. Environments where innovation and creativity are stifled will not optimise their growth or retain them for the long term.
- The ideal marketing team contains a mixture of specialists and generalists to drive innovation at a channel or platform level – but at the same time to keep the bigger picture in sight and help integrate silos.

Section 5
The future of client/agency relationships

According to our interviewees, the changing nature of B2B marketing will also be felt within the most critical and dynamic relationships in the industry – the relationship between marketers and their agencies.

Marketers have relied on agencies to provide a range of services and disciplines, from highly strategic to creative to executional. So how would the senior marketers we interviewed like to work with agencies in the future? What are their expectations, and what must agencies do to prepare for their future needs?

"Our relationships with agencies are already changing dramatically due to the nature of the work required now and going forward. The best way of working with agencies is as a strategic partner, where the agency is intrinsically linked to us. Ideally I'd be looking for them to think and operate more like consultants, like McKinsey and Deloitte. I prefer fewer and deeper relationships."

Gary Hurry, director of marketing for Europe, ABN AMRO Commercial Finance

"We see agencies as an extension of our firm. These relationships are not disposable – we're looking for proper partnerships. Fundamentally, the agency relationships we have are similar to the way they have always been. Tactically, though, they are quite different. There are lots of new technologies out there, and it's the job of agencies to be up to speed on all these things. Also, marketers only spend about 10% of time outside their environment. I like working with agencies that show me something new or something that I didn't think could be done; things that really blow me away."

Phil Clement, global CMO, Aon

"Every agency claims to be full service, but there will always be a skill or area of service which is not as strong as their others. With so many skills and service areas required, agencies need to be able to work comfortably with competitors. Also, in the past, campaigns had long time frames. Today, agencies need to be more agile in their way of working."

Patrik Rombert, SVP corporate communications, Trelleborg Group



"The way we work with agencies has definitely changed. Organisations must look hard at who their partners are. It's not possible to employ at the same level for every skillset within the internal marketing organisation. We are expecting more now than ever to fill these gaps by working with agencies. Historically, we have tried to work with a limited number of agencies. We've struggled to find one agency that can do everything well. Our aim now is to have one lead agency that can work with other specialists and optimise relationships with them."

Chas Moloney, marketing director UK, Ricoh

"Agencies need to become more relationship focused. They need to understand our business better. They need to have more understanding about what drives the business and what will get buy-in. I'm looking for more collaboration – one team at client and agency and fewer, bigger projects. I'm always looking for suggestions for how we can be more efficient. They've got to understand that they can't always do something perfectly. We won't buy something twice the size of what we asked for."

Danielle Regan, head of marketing and communications, Mace Group

"Fifteen years ago, you could probably have a single agency that could do everything. That's less realistic today due to the complexity of the challenge and the speed of change. You need a range of specialist skills and platforms and tasks. For strategy, though, we have a single agency. Planning as a discipline is sacrosanct.

"It's more important now than ever. For tactical activities, we use specialists. I'm not a fan of big agency models – I need to speak to people who are actually doing the work. Sometimes there are too many layers. In the future, we'll be looking for innovators who can find new and better ways of doing things, and new technologies."

Chris Harrop, group marketing director, Marshalls

"Expectations are changing. We're looking for fewer, better-orientated agencies that really understand what we're trying to achieve. I'd like them to be more consultative"

Antonia Wade, Thomson Reuters

"We've just undertaken a major rationalisation of our agency relationships. Expectations are changing. We're looking for fewer, better-orientated agencies that really understand what we're trying to achieve. I'd like them to be more consultative. Those who can work this way are getting more work from us. Good agencies are invested in our brand's success. They stretch our thinking and cultivate genuine relationships. You can't have genuine relationships with a hundred different agencies. Trust in the relationship is key. I trust key partners to bring in specific skills when we need them, if they don't already have them."

Antonia Wade, CMO, Thomson Reuters

In summary

- Agencies have an opportunity to break down the walls between their teams and the in-house marketing teams in order to maximise the potential of the relationship and get the best out of both sides. All sides need to view the relationship as a true partnership.
- Marketing leaders value agencies' role as a gateway to new ideas, innovations and technology. This must be balanced with delivering solutions which are viable, efficient and relate to clients' needs.
- Marketers seek primary agencies that can serve as strategic partners and deliver robust and integrated services. That said, advances in digital and tech mean having a single agency that can meet all requirements is increasingly difficult. To this point, lead agencies need to be realistic and honest about their ability to fulfil all client needs, to work collaboratively with specialists where appropriate, or to resource accordingly.

Section 6
Modern versus Post-Modern – so what's new?

The extent and pace of the transformation of B2B marketing is laid bare in this report. It's clear that there is a fundamental change taking place which is having a significant impact on almost every aspect of what marketers need to do in order to succeed.

From how marketing organisations are structured to the channels they use, and from how they identify and speak to customers to which agencies and technologies they deploy, there is a root and branch transformation underway. This all requires new thinking and a bold approach. As Antonia Wade of Thomson Reuters puts it, "Marketing at a time of this kind of change can be both daunting and exciting. The people who succeed will be able to take risks and show differentiation."

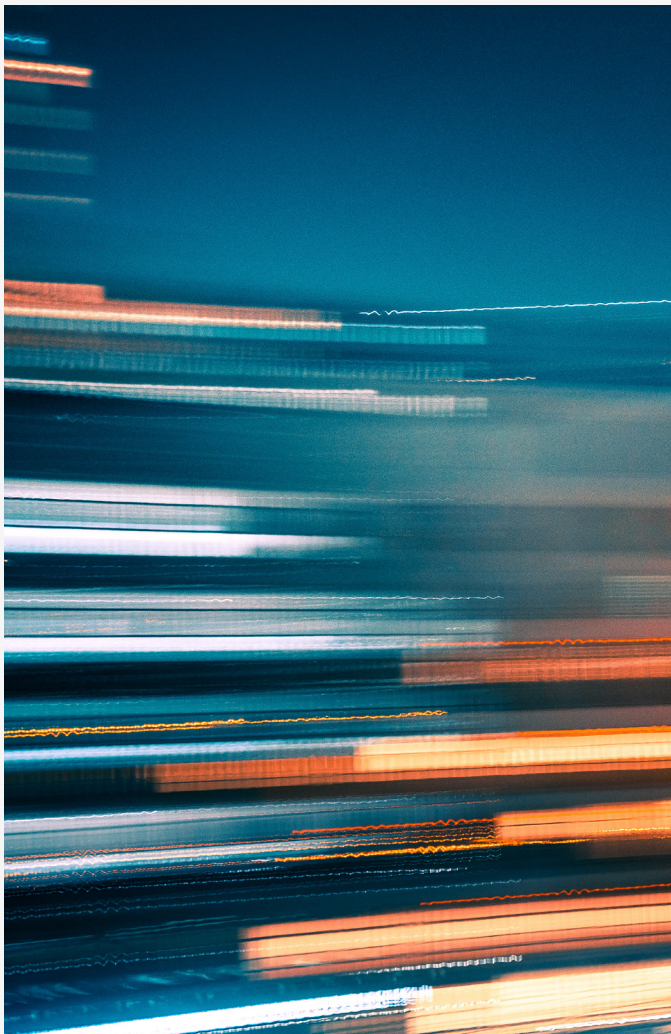
Given the extent of this change, as we mentioned way back at the beginning of this report, we believe the term 'Modern Marketing' is no longer adequate to define the environment in which B2B marketing is operating.

Importantly, you can hear ambivalence in our interviewees' comments about the rise of digital technology – a concern that an over-focus on technology has come at a creative cost. As Modern Marketing gained traction, marketers with finite budgets and bandwidth increasingly shifted their emphasis away from intuitive creativity and human emotion in the search for more predictable and measureable results.

We believe B2B marketing has entered its 'Post-Modern' stage. Post-Modern Marketing represents a necessary correction to Modern Marketing's emphasis on technology and static buyer journeys. The marketers we spoke with are looking to restore the balance between art and science. Post-Modern Marketing corrects the left-brain lean toward data-driven marketing "math" and re-emphasizes right brain creativity that touches human souls.

Other attributes of Modern Marketing, as defined by Marketo in 2008, include customer control over interaction, community engagement/participation, media channel proliferation and bottom-line accountability. These attributes are largely regarded as givens in today's world. Consequently, they offer little insight to marketers about how to prepare for the future.

The chart on the following page demonstrates the criteria which will determine and drive the Post-Modern Marketing era, highlighting how they differ from what has gone before.



6.1 Modern and Post-Modern Marketing compared

	Modern Marketing	Post-Modern Marketing
Data	A well-managed database and specialist marketing automation users adept at reporting. Typically this will encompass management of data and audiences within CRM and marketing automation platforms and campaign measurement tools like Google Analytics.	Specialist data analytics skills within the marketing team or in a related function, pulling in data from multiple platforms and providing predictive analytics on metrics such as customer churn and propensity to buy. More fundamentally, account-based marketing skills and processes to identify, assess and target key decision makers, all aligned with sales.
Programmatic	Did not exist until recently although some teams will have had some experience of utilising ad networks such as the Google GDN to activate display advertising across multiple Web venues.	A fundamental part of the marketing machine where DMPs, DSPs and third-party data and adtech vendors are integrated together and with wider Marketing Cloud platforms to enable the activation of audience-targeted, self-optimising digital advertising campaigns across different channels and ad exchanges.
The tech stack	At its best, an effectively deployed marketing automation platform, integrated with CRM, with lead scoring activated and closed-loop processes aligned with sales.	A comprehensive, flexible and constantly evolving integrated suite of tools (web, CRM, DMPs, DSPs, CDPs, marketing automation, apps, etc.), encompassing all significant marketing activities and providing dashboards to provide clarity of reporting up and down the team.
CX	Did not exist as a discipline – where it did, this was highly unlikely to be owned by marketing. Even the website was likely to be owned by the Tech or specialist 'digital' team, which was entirely separate from those involved in analog customer dialogues.	The key battleground for B2B marketers with relevance before, during and after transaction, digital and real world, and encompassing all customer touchpoints and customer facing staff, plus external influencers and advocates.

	Modern Marketing	Post-Modern Marketing
Creative	Offline campaigns 'digitised' to make them multichannel. Often email campaigns treated separately to offline creative. Strict divide between agency and in-house teams.	Digital and content first. Consciously omni-channel campaigns that speak directly to individuals – and with authentic human emotional impact. Increased collaboration among agency and in-house teams. [MA2] Increasingly immersive customer experiences, utilising augmented and virtual reality technologies.
Orchestration	Marketing operations manager/ head focused on co-ordination between siloed, channel based marketing activities.	Agile marketing techniques increasingly deployed to bring multi-disciplinary teams together for short periods, break down silos and encourage cross pollenisation of skills and disciplines. Leveraging AI developments to automate high volume repetitive tasks.
Personalisation	Generic or untargeted messages become ignored – MA enables automation at scale, at least in terms of address, broad theme and to enable dynamic content based on response.	Personalisation at scale no longer resonates – highly focused, insight-driven, one-to-one approach (ABM) to individuals at an account level.
Content marketing	Buyers increasingly invisible to brands instead relying on branded or third-party content to research solutions, only making contact two thirds of the way through the purchase process. Brands consequently double down on content investment.	Exponential increase in output of low level content raises the cynicism threshold and demands a higher level of 'cut-through' content, featuring greater depth and insight in order to resonate.

6.2 A Post-Modern Marketing action plan

Now that you've seen how we're defining this new era, the next obvious question is: 'what does it mean to me?' or more pointedly: 'what do I need to do about it?' Here's a list of 10 action points that we believe marketers need to address to maximise their success in the Post-Modern Marketing era.

① Embrace agile

If not as a methodology, then at least as a guiding philosophy to enable a flexible and dynamic approach to marketing, responding with speed to situations and opportunities as they arise. Expect to continually recalibrate your marketing.

② Develop IQ, EQ and TQ in equal parts

Be emotionally intelligent. Now more than ever before, great B2B marketing demands an emotional connection – being stubbornly rational and logical is a shortcut to a career change. B2B brands must be more human and empathic. Skilful use of established and emerging digital technologies can take highly creative approaches to even greater heights.

③ Take your focus to a new level

Whether you call it one-to-one marketing, ABM or 'just good marketing', a laser-focused approach to insight and targeting allows you to connect with and influence key decision makers. And increasingly it's how they expect to be engaged.

④ Be commercial

Ensure everyone in your team understands the bigger picture and can speak the language of the business. Tear down the walls to the business unit leaders, sales teams and finance. Don't get trapped in the marketing silo.

The marketers we spoke with are looking to restore the balance between art and science. Post-Modern Marketing corrects the left-brain lean toward data-driven marketing "math," and re-emphasises creativity that touches human souls.

⑤ Critically audit your team's proficiencies

Does your team have the right mix of skills and expertise to succeed? Can you deeply understand and apply technologies and approaches such as AI, programmatic and CX? What can you develop, what do you need to bring in, and what can your agency provide?

⑥ Create a culture of innovation and constant curiosity

Allow team members to experiment without impediment and actively encourage and facilitate learning. Ensure both successes and failures are widely understood.

⑦ Don't outsource, co-source

Build partnerships. Break down the walls between agencies and internal teams. Enable better collaboration and co-operation, plus sharing of ideas and resources. Think beyond 'us and them'.

⑧ Build and renew your stack

Secure the scalable infrastructure to meet your marketing needs. Ensure you have access to the insights and expertise needed to maintain your MarTech stack's relevance and effectiveness in a rapidly evolving environment.

⑨ Map and prioritise your CX

Do this both on and offline, as one. Identify weaknesses, join up functions, agree on metrics, engage influencers and encourage feedback.

⑩ Raise your content game

Think 'less and better is more'. The content factory approach is becoming rapidly obsolete. Deliver real insight, on a personalised level where possible, and aim to genuinely challenge, inform and (above all) help.

Conclusion

It's difficult to argue against the idea that, like much of society, B2B marketing has entered a period of unprecedented change. Certainly our interviewees tend to agree.

In the short term, it is most likely that this pace of change will continue to accelerate. Consequently, marketers must constantly scan the horizon to see what's coming, regularly recalibrate to understand what new developments mean to them, and pivot where necessary.

To an extent, the question of whether or not B2B has entered the era of Post-Modern Marketing is academic. What is undeniable, is the need to understand the specific transitions taking place, and how you and your team should best respond to them.

We hope this report has gone at least some way towards clarifying this and provided insights on how to address your challenges and ensure your marketing is fit for the future – whatever era you choose to call it.

Tom Stein,
chairman and chief client officer,
Stein IAS



Feeling Machines and the Rise of Post-Modern Marketing

> *"Humans are not either thinking machines or feeling machines but rather feeling machines that think."*
>
> Antonio Damasio,
> Director of the USC Brain and Creativity Institute and David Dornsife Professor of Neuroscience

Post-Modern Marketing is Stein IAS' view of our industry's fast-approaching, inevitable and exciting future. It represents the next logical and necessary step in marketing's transformation over the past 30+ years – from pre-modern to modern to post-modern, – and from interrupt-driven advertising and mass media to the emotional, psychological, technological and scientific truths at the centre of all future customer interaction.

It is driven by the breathtakingly fast advancement of digital technology and its myriad ramifications. But it is driven equally by a necessary reclamation of marketing's roots which lie at the core of human emotion.

From Stein IAS perspective, the essence of marketing's rapidly arriving future is this:

- The technologies that brought us Modern Marketing – digital detection of audience members' "information exhaust" the big data analytics to interpret it, and the programmatic systems that automate marketing activities based on it – will continue to rapidly evolve.
- Natural language recognition and artificial intelligence are sitting at the top of the modern marketing technology stack to enable highly personal – and in fact, individualised – conversations between brands and each audience member, automated and at scale.
- Together, these technologies dramatically raise the bar on brand and customer experience, enabling brand drivers and business objectives to be automatically embedded into all forms of brand-customer interactions.
- None of this can succeed without harking back to marketing's'pre-modern' era – finding and leveraging brands' emotional truths
- Similarly, Post-Modern Marketing cannot realise its potential without the right organisation to support it. And most marketing organisations via intuitive, iconic ideas and experiences.

Post-Modern Marketing will bring about a new era in which marketers will have an unprecedented ability to do what they've always done best: find the right person for a brand's message/product/service, at the perfect moment, and engage him or her in an authentic way that creates a lasting emotional impression of value.

Importantly, Post-Modern Marketing will bring a much-needed rebalancing of marketing science and human emotion, on the back of new technologies that can help us find, touch, and engage with people as well as or better than Modern Marketing technology can count impressions.

Stein IAS' new book, 'Paradox: Feeling Machines and the Rise of Post-Modern Marketing', provides a compelling perspective on the ideas, approaches, people and brands that are leading the way to marketing's rapidly arriving post-modern future. Read it here: steinias.com/thinking/post-modern-marketing-intro/

About B2B Marketing

With hundreds of thousands of users across the globe, we are the leading trusted voice at the centre of the B2B marketing community.

B2B Marketing members are kept up to date with the latest strategies, insight and inspiration from the B2B marketing space, through our dedicated:

- Research and analysis
- News
- Information portal
- Events
- Training
- Networking.

Why become a B2B Marketing Premium member?

Our Premium membership package delivers outstanding value, and is the go-to choice for thousands of senior-level B2B marketers, decision-makers and leaders.

Here's just some of the value Premium membership provides:

- Access to five on-demand DMA- and CPD-accredited training courses worth £875.
- B2B marketing-specific Best Practice Guides worthover £3000.
- B2B industry benchmarking reports worth over £3300.
- Business cases priced at £150 each for non-members.
- Premium research, analysis, benchmarking reports and guides published every month.
- An annual subscription to the quarterly *B2B Marketing* magazine.

Our promise to you

Things change fast in B2B. Just staying on top of the changes can be a full-time job. So we do that job for you.

With our membership, training and events we guarantee you'll:

- Put your best ever strategies in place.
- Lock down the multiple skills, tools and insights you need.
- Find real-world inspiration for rolling out outstanding marketing initiatives.

How to get started

- Go to b2bmarketing.net/join to set up your Premium membership.
- Check out Events, Training and Enterprise Solutions on our website.
- Call us on +44 (0)207 014 4920 if you'd like to discuss your specific business needs.

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About Stein IAS

Stein IAS (steinias.com) is a global digital and integrated marketing agency whose purpose is to help make B2B brands the most important in their respective markets. With strategic locations across the Americas, EMEA and APAC, Stein IAS works with such tier 1 brands as ABB, BP Castrol, HSBC, Korn Ferry, Ingredion, Juniper Networks, Merck, Panduit, Riverbed Technology and Western Union Business Solutions. The Business Marketing Association's Agency of the Year in 2017, 2016 and 2015 – and The Drum RAR Agency of the Year in 2017 – Stein IAS fuses award-winning creative and content experiences with transformative digital, data- and technology-driven interactions approaches – connecting brand to demand to business results.

Services we offer:

- Brand strategy
- Audience Personas / Messaging
- Go-To-Market / Media
- Creative
- Content
- Digital Experience
- Research
- Data / Analytics
- Social Media
- Internal Activation
- Marketing Technology
- Public Relations
- Website / App Development

STEIN IAS

The Post-Modern Marketing Agency

The biggest sectors we operate in:

- Industrial, manufacturing, engineering
- IT and telecoms
- Pharmaceuticals.

Some of our key clients:

- 1010 DATA
- ABB
- BP Castrol
- HSBC
- Ingredion
- Juniper Networks
- Merck
- Panduit
- Trelleborg
- Weight Watchers Health Solutions
- Western Union Business Solutions

Some recent honours:

- Named one of The Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work For
- ANA/Business Marketing Association International Agency of the Year in 2017 and an unprecedented six times in the last eight years
- The Drum Recommended Agency Register (RAR 2017) B2B Agency of the Year
- ANA/Business Marketing Association B2 Awards Corporate Marketer of the Year for 1010data & Best in Show for Merck Animal Health
- Named to the prestigious AdAge A-List of "Agencies to Watch" – the first and only B2B specialist agency to ever make the list

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