

The B2B Marketing UK Agencies Benchmarking Report *2021*

2021



UK



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Introduction

The future is bright



David Rowlands,
editor,
B2B Marketing

'Uncertainty' was the common thread running throughout everything in 2020. Uncertainty around Brexit; uncertainty around when the pandemic will end; uncertainty around whether or not international events are going to be possible any time soon.

It would be reasonable to assume, therefore, that the UK agency marketplace would have undergone a pretty dire year – one full of redundancies, lost business and dwindling hope.

And yet, as this report demonstrates, nothing could be further from the truth.

There were of course casualties in 2020, and not every agency has seen success. Indeed, some smaller agencies or start-ups have walked a fine line between collapse and

existence. However, on average, agencies' headcounts have risen, and their gross income increased.

Of course, financial data taken from agencies included in this report was from their most recently concluded financial year. In most cases, this was December 2019, or March 2020, but, as our feature on page 38 demonstrates, many agencies are actually thriving in the pandemic. Although certain sectors have been dealt a hammer blow (direct mail, we're looking at you), others have received more interest than ever before (hello, virtual events).

2021 will, of course, not be without its challenges.

So, what challenges do agencies foresee over the next 12 months? Unsurprisingly, the themes that emerge time and time again are related to Covid-19, namely: challenges caused by a change in working practices; and a rise in short-term thinking over a long-term, strategic approach.

With teams working separately and from home, they have become harder to reach than ever before. In addition to this, with little knowledge of what even the next month holds in store for us, relying on short-term thinking has prevailed. Agility is great – in fact,

it's something that the highest performing agencies are all advocating for 2021 – but there's a fine line between being agile, and just not having a long-term strategy.

So, what are agencies focused on in 2021? How do they intend to face the challenge of Covid-19? Well, as our Trend Tracker shows, agencies are thinking more about the customer than ever before, with customer success, personalisation, customer experience and emotional engagement all making the top five trends among agencies. Could it in fact be that the pandemic has catalysed the need for agencies to really understand what the customer needs, and deliver that effectively? It certainly appears that way.

I will leave you with this. Our survey results state that 89% of UK agencies are expecting growth or strong growth over the next 12 months. This is only a few percent shy of where it was in last year's report. Of course, if agencies were asked to provide their predictions in April 2020, it's likely that they'd have been significantly less optimistic. Nevertheless, it appears that, with time to adjust and reset their sights, agencies are confident that they can deal with any challenges 2021 has in store. 2020 was, overall, a strong year, and the future is bright.

Section 1: League tables

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League tables

Top 95 UK B2B marcomms agencies

Rank Agency	Type of agency	UK GI in £m in most recent financial year	UK GI YoY change in £m	YoY UK GI % change	UK headcount 2020	UK YoY headcount % change	Rank in 2020	Rank change
1 Edelman	Integrated	51	-2	-3.8	525	6.5	n/a	*
2 MSQ B2B (p.96)	Digital	49.6	2.1	4.4	581	7.2	n/a	*
3 Iris	Creative	46.9	3.2	7.3	396	-5.3	n/a	/
4 MRM McCann	Integrated	23.3	0.3	1.4	203	10.9	2	↓
5 Merkle B2B (p.88)	Integrated	21.7	-2.1	-8.9	176	-12	30	↑
6 Bray Leino (p.80)	Integrated	19.6	-1.5	-7.1	242	-8	3	↓
7 Gravity Global (p.84)	Integrated	17	-1	-5.6	140	0	5	↓
8 Radley Yeldar (p.102)	Integrated	15.8	-0.6	3.7	172	1.2	10	↑
9 Transmission	Integrated	14.1	0.6	4.5	110	29.4	11	↑
10 Really B2B	Demand generation	13.6	-1.2	-8.1	47	-85.3	8	↓
11 Expandi (p.82)	Integrated	13.5	-3	-18.2	35	0	6	↓
12 twogether (p.108)	Integrated	13.3	3.3	33.4	119	-4	13	↑
13 Kingpin Communications (p.86)	Integrated	10.2	2.6	34.7	37	32.1	18	↑
14 Precision	Integrated	10.1	-0.8	-7.5	60	-9.1	n/a	*
15 The Marketing Practice	Integrated	9.8	1.6	19	114	-10.2	12	↓
16 MOI (p.92)	Integrated	9.5	1.7	21.8	70	16.7	17	↑
17 Teamspirit	Integrated	9	0.9	11.6	86	-4.4	15	↓

Key: * New entry: Included in the survey for the first time ↑ Moved up rankings ↓ Moved down rankings
 - Stayed the same / Re-entry: Returning to the survey after a year's absence

Notes and annotations on specific agencies MSQ B2B (2) is the parent company of Stein IAS, whose information is also included in this report (25). Stein's data is shown separately, but is also included in MSQ B2B's data. Silver Agency (62) and The Marketing Pod (79) both have 'n/a' entered in the 'Global GI YoY change in £m' column, as their YoY increase was less than £5000. Agencies in bold are sponsors of this year's report. To hear more from them, head to the page numbers listed.

Rank Agency	Type of agency	UK GI in £m in most recent financial year	UK GI YoY change in £m	YoY UK GI % change	UK headcount 2020	UK YoY headcount % change	Rank in 2020	Rank change
18 Omobono	Digital	8.8	0.7	8.6	61	-11.6	16	↓
19 The Crocodile	Integrated	8.7	1.9	28.2	72	46.9	21	↑
20 Harvard	Integrated	7.6	0.1	1.7	81	6.6	19	↓
21 CTI Digital	Digital	6.9	1.9	39.2	120	-7.7	n/a	*
22 Purple Agency (p.100)	Integrated	6.9	-0.4	-5.7	117	-23	20	↓
23 Tangent	Digital	6.1	-1.1	-15.9	64	-7.2	23	—
24 Clarify	ABM	6	0.6	11.5	77	35.1	n/a	*
25 Stein IAS	Integrated	5.8	0.3	5.5	76	-8.4	27	↑
26 Velocity Partners	Content marketing	5.7	0.7	13.5	63	14.5	32	↑
27 MarketOne Europe	Integrated	5.4	0.2	3.6	67	-9.5	28	↑
28 alan.	Integrated	5.4	1.1	24.3	65	10.2	n/a	*
29 Revere	Integrated	5.4	1.2	29.5	47	4.4	38	↑
30 Octopus Group	Integrated	5	-0.1	-2	49	-9.3	31	↑
31 Wyatt International	Other	4.9	0.1	2.7	35	-12.5	34	↑
32 Clevertouch Marketing	Martech	4.9	0.3	7.2	74	1.4	37	↑
33 Selbey Anderson	Integrated	4.8	-0.01	-0.1	45	28.6	n/a	*
34 April Six	Integrated	4.6	1.8	66.5	84	35.5	n/a	*
35 Whiteoaks International	Integrated	4.4	0.2	4.3	38	-2.6	39	↑
36 TMW Business	Integrated	4.3	-1	-18.9	38	-28.3	n/a	↘
37 Inside Marketing	Demand generation	4.2	1.2	43.1	78	44.4	n/a	*
38 Enigma Marketing (now JUST Global)	Integrated	4.1	0.1	2.6	33	0	40	↑
39 BDB	Integrated	3.9	0.3	8.3	44	22.2	n/a	*
40 The Telemarketing Company	Demand generation	3.9	-1.4	-26.2	226	-25.4	29	↓
41 CCgroup	PR	3.7	0.2	5.9	25	-10.7	n/a	*
42 Metia Group	Integrated	3.5	-1.1	-23.9	39	-7.1	n/a	*
43 Earnest	Creative	3.5	0.4	12.9	38	11.8	n/a	↘

Rank Agency	Type of agency	UK GI in £m in most recent financial year	UK GI YoY change in £m	YoY UK GI % change	UK headcount 2020	UK YoY headcount % change	Rank in 2020	Rank change	
44	Tangerine Communications	Other	3.4	0.3	9.4	62	6.9	44	—
45	Speed Communications	PR	3.4	-0.3	-8.4	48	-5.9	n/a	↗
46	Hallam	Digital	3.4	0.5	17.2	50	-9.1	42	↓
47	Something Big	Creative	3.2	-0.1	-3.1	34	-10.5	n/a	*
48	Brilliant Noise	Digital	3.2	0.3	10.3	25	-24.2	n/a	↗
49	AML Group	Integrated	3.1	-0.4	-11.4	30	-14.3	41	↓
50	Sherpa	Channel marketing	3.1	1.2	60.5	13	-7.1	49	↓
51	Miramar (p.90)	Integrated	3	0.4	15.4	29	-9.4	51	—
52	Red Lorry Yellow Lorry	Integrated	3	0	0	19	-9.5	46	↓
53	Mulberry Marketing Communications	Integrated	2.9	0.4	16	15	15.4	n/a	*
54	Napier Partnership (p.98)	Integrated	2.7	1.1	66.1	34	88.9	63	↑
55	Wildfire	PR	2.6	0.3	13.4	25	-7.4	n/a	*
56	CIB	Integrated	2.4	-0.5	-17.3	32	0	47	↓
57	Modern	Integrated	2.3	1.4	156.1	16	33.3	77	↑
58	Fox Agency	Integrated	2.2	0.08	3.5	24	0	55	↓
59	Jellybean Creative	Integrated	2.1	0.2	13.2	22	4.8	61	↑
60	Freestyle	Digital	2.1	0.01	0.5	31	3.3	n/a	↗
61	Infinite Global Consulting	PR	2.1	0.2	12.4	22	-4.3	n/a	*
62	Silver Agency	Integrated	2	n/a	0.1	32	0	58	↓
63	The Think Tank	Integrated	1.9	0.06	3	28	0	50	↓
64	Punch!	ABM	1.8	0.3	23.1	37	37	n/a	*
65	Cyber-Duck	Digital	1.8	0.3	19.5	53	17.8	59	↓
66	Definition Agency	PR	1.7	0.5	47.6	17	-22.7	60	↓
67	438 Marketing	Integrated	1.6	-0.7	-29	21	10.5	52	↓
68	Velo	Integrated	1.6	0.3	24	20	5.3	66	↓
69	Digital Radish	ABM	1.5	0.5	42.8	25	66.7	n/a	↗

Key: * New entry; Included in the survey for the first time ↑ Moved up rankings ↓ Moved down rankings
— Stayed the same ↗ Re-entry; Returning to the survey after a year's absence

Rank Agency	Type of agency	UK GI in £m in most recent financial year	UK GI YoY change in £m	YoY UK GI % change	UK headcount 2020	UK YoY headcount % change	Rank in 2020	Rank change
70 Coterie Marketing	Content marketing	1.4	0.2	19.7	8	33.3	n/a	*
71 Don't be Shy	Digital	1.4	0.4	45.8	25	38.9	74	↑
72 OST	Digital	1.3	0.04	3.5	27	17.4	70	↓
73 Rooster Punk Group	Creative	1.3	0.1	9.8	11	57.1	n/a	*
74 Strategic ABM	ABM	1.3	0.3	29.3	21	50	n/a	*
75 Forepoint	Creative	1.2	-0.08	-5.9	23	4.5	71	↓
76 4CM	Other	1.2	0.4	42.6	13	-13.3	n/a	*
77 Upp B2B	Integrated	1.1	-0.3	-20.7	15	-11.8	64	↓
78 Agency Inc	Integrated	1.1	0.2	20.7	20	0	68	↓
79 The Marketing Pod (p.104)	Integrated	1	n/a	0.2	14	16.7	73	↓
80 Jargon PR	PR	1	-0.1	-9.6	16	6.7	69	↓
81 Bright	Integrated	1	-0.3	-22.3	14	27.3	67	↓
82 Zircom	Other	1	0.08	8.9	12	9.1	75	↓
83 Grippped	Digital	0.9	0.2	21.4	15	50	n/a	*
84 Magenta Associates	Integrated	0.8	0.1	13	11	22.2	80	↓
85 Lesniak Swann	Integrated	0.8	0.1	20.5	16	45.5	81	↓
86 Stream Loyalty	Digital	0.8	0.1	13.9	12	-14.3	n/a	↔
87 Novacom	Digital	0.8	0.2	43.1	11	22.2	82	↓
88 JTF Marketing	Martech	0.7	0.2	36	5	-76.2	n/a	*
89 Fourth Day	PR	0.7	-0.06	-7.3	13	8.3	79	↓
90 Move Marketing (p.94)	Integrated	0.4	0.04	10	7	40	n/a	*
91 Ice Blue Sky	ABM	0.4	0.1	39.7	5	0	n/a	*
92 POPcomms	Digital	0.4	0.06	18.6	10	42.9	85	↓
93 Big Ideas Machine (p.78)	PR	0.3	-0.04	-9.9	7	16.7	n/a	*
94 South Thames Marketing	Integrated	0.2	0.04	29.7	1	0	89	↓
95 BCM Agency	Integrated	0.2	-0.08	-33.3	4	-33.3	n/a	*

Content writing: leverage our B2B technology specialists

Content can be differentiated through superior structure and readability.

In today's fast-paced, digital world, B2B marketing content may face a challenge to generate engagement. Prospects matching key personas, who are typically time-poor, can find themselves overwhelmed by the plethora of assets vying for their attention. The situation is exacerbated when the market communicates through either corporate hyperbole, or excessively academic phraseology.

Producing B2B technology content demands specialised writing capabilities.

In order to achieve breakthrough, marketers are advised to pivot to a more innovative approach – deploying content that unpacks its value proposition quickly, and utilises the familiar patterns of human speech. In such circumstances, content creation can be expedited by sourcing an experienced copywriter, whose skillset combines sector knowledge with the ability to compose clear and compelling text.

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to read this?!*

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David McGuire

Creative Director, Radix Communications
david@radix-communications.com



Top 15 fastest growers

This table shows the UK agencies that reported the largest increase in UK gross income year on year

Rank Agency	Type of agency	UK GI YoY change in £m	UK GI in £m in most recent financial year	YoY UK GI % change	Rank in main league table	Rank in 2020	YoY UK headcount % change
1 twogether (p.108)	Integrated	3.3	13.3	33.4	12	13	-4
2 Iris	Creative	3.2	46.9	7.3	3	n/a	-5.3
3 Kingpin Communications (p.86)	Integrated	2.6	10.2	34.7	13	18	32.1
4 CTI Digital	Digital	1.9	6.9	39.2	21	n/a	-7.7
5 The Crocodile	Integrated	1.9	8.7	28.2	19	21	46.9
6 April Six	Integrated	1.8	4.6	66.5	34	n/a	35.5
7 MOI (p.92)	Integrated	1.7	9.5	21.8	16	17	16.7
8 The Marketing Practice	Integrated	1.6	9.8	19	15	12	-10.2
9 Modern	Integrated	1.4	2.3	156.1	57	77	33.3
10 Inside Marketing	Demand generation	1.2	4.2	43.1	37	n/a	44.4
11 Revere	Integrated	1.2	5.4	29.5	29	38	4.4
12 Sherpa	Channel marketing	1.2	3.1	60.5	50	49	-7.1
13 Napier Partnership (p.98)	Integrated	1.1	2.7	66.1	54	63	88.9
14 alan.	Integrated	1.1	5.4	24.3	28	n/a	10.2
15 Teamspirit	Integrated	0.9	9	11.6	17	15	-4.4

Top 15 rising stars

This table shows the UK agencies that reported the largest increase in UK gross income year on year as a percentage

Rank Agency	Type of agency	YoY GI % change	UK GI in £m in most recent financial year	UK GI YoY change in £m	Rank in main league table	Rank in 2020	YoY UK headcount % change
1 Modern	Integrated	156.1	2.3	1.4	57	77	33.3
2 April Six	Integrated	66.5	4.6	1.8	34	n/a	35.5
3 Napier Partnership (p.98)	Integrated	66.1	2.7	1.1	54	63	88.9
4 Sherpa	Channel marketing	60.5	3.1	1.2	50	49	-7.1
5 Definition Agency	PR	47.5	1.7	0.5	66	60	-22.7
6 Don't be Shy	Digital	45.8	1.4	0.4	71	74	38.9
7 Novacom	Digital	43.1	0.8	0.2	87	82	22.2
8 Inside Marketing	Demand generation	43.1	4.2	1.2	37	n/a	44.4
9 Digital Radish	ABM	42.8	1.5	0.5	69	n/a	66.7
10 4CM	Other	42.6	1.2	0.4	76	n/a	-13.3
11 Ice Blue Sky	ABM	39.7	0.4	0.1	91	n/a	0.0
12 CTI Digital	Digital	39.2	6.9	1.9	21	n/a	-7.7
13 JTF Marketing	Martech	36.0	0.7	0.2	88	n/a	-76.2
14 Kingpin Communications (p.86)	Integrated	34.7	10.2	2.6	13	18	32.1
15 twogether (p.108)	Integrated	33.4	13.3	3.3	12	13	-4



PROPOLIS

BY THE COMMUNITY, FOR THE COMMUNITY

PROPOLIS

pro·puh·luhs

Definition in ancient Greek:

Pro – first

Polis – community

Also: An aromatic glue produced by honeybees in their hive

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B2B Marketing

Top 15 international B2B marcomms agencies and networks

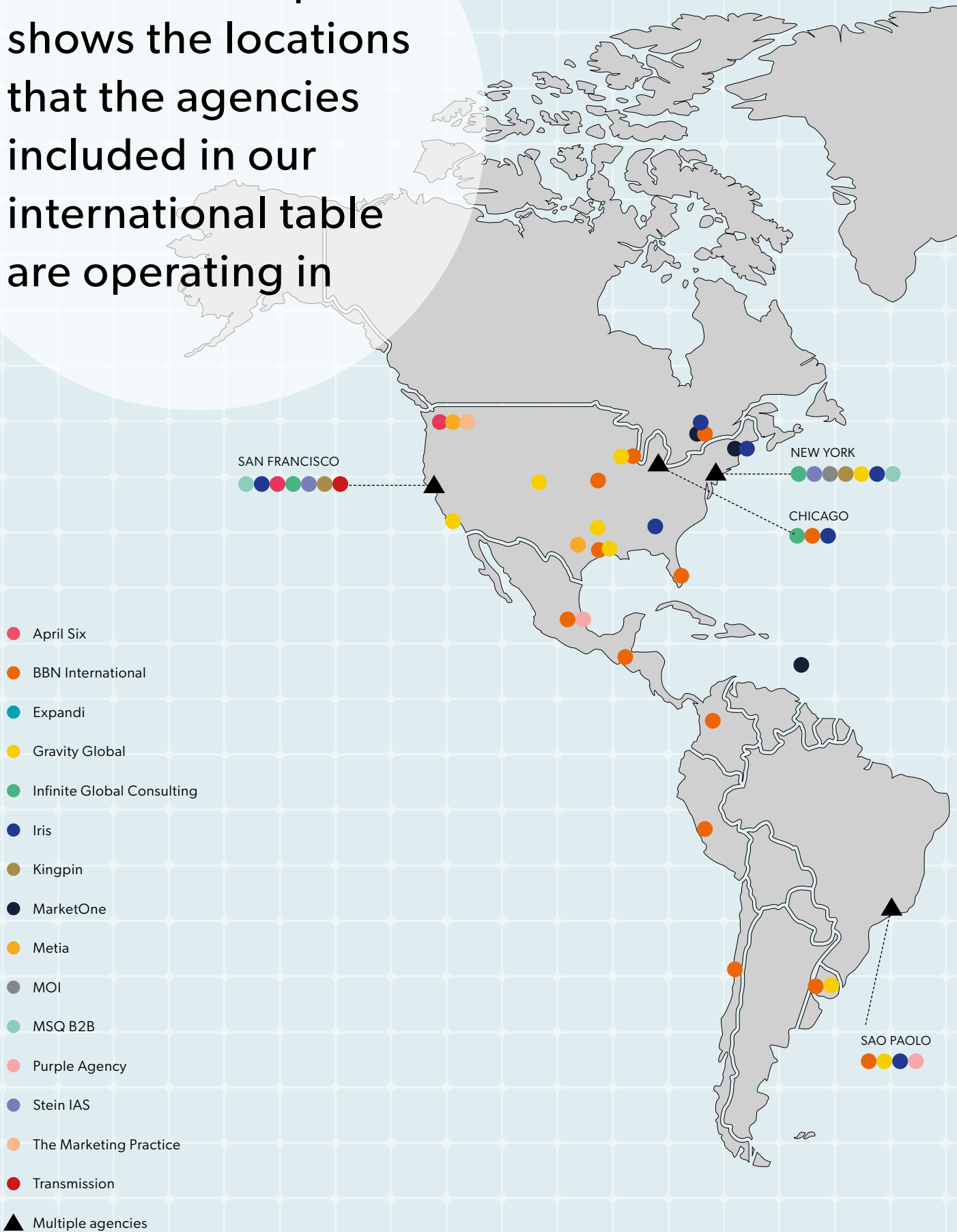
To appear in the international table, more than 20% of an agency's global gross income must come from outside the UK

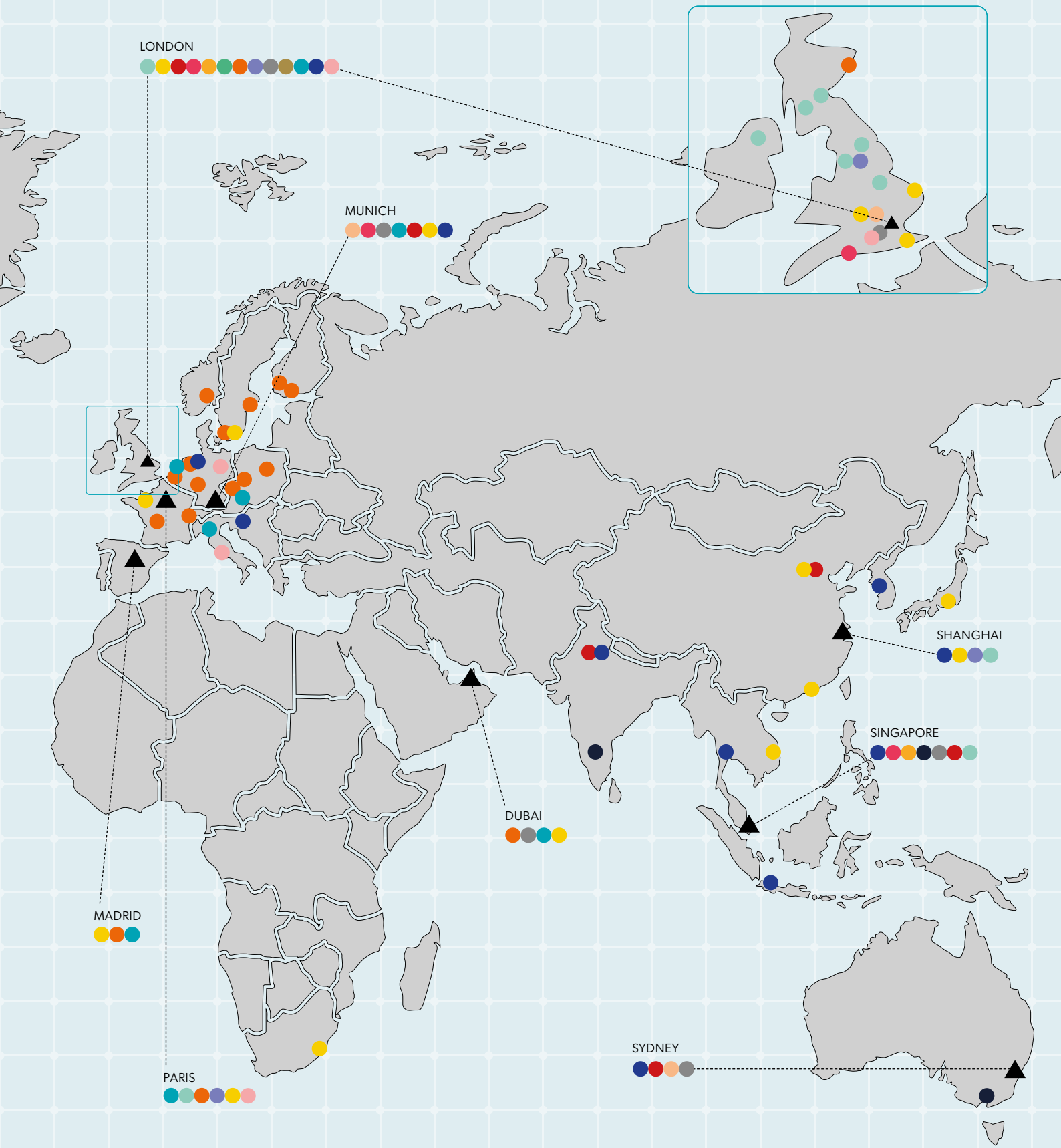
Rank Agency	Non-Uk GI in £m in most recent financial year	Global GI in £m in most recent financial year	UK GI in £m in most recent financial year	Global GI YoY change in £m	YoY global GI % change	Global headcount 2020	Global headcount YoY % change	Global table rank 2020	UK GI as a % of global total
1 Iris	104	150.9	46.9	107.2	71.1	891	-5	n/a	31.1
2 BBN International (p.76)	67.1	72.6	5.4	-17.1	-23.6	970	-11.3	1	7.4
3 Gravity Global (p.84)	63	80	17	-3	-3.8	367	162.1	2	21.25
4 MarketOne Europe	22.1	27.5	5.4	n/a	0	381	1.6	3	19.6
5 MSQ B2B (p.96)	19.4	69	49.6	-3.4	4.9	723	8.1	n/a	71.9
6 Expandi (p.82)	12	25.5	13.5	-4.6	-18.0	300	-14.3	4	52.9
7 Stein IAS	9.5	15.3	5.8	0.7	4.6	136	-8.7	6	37.9
8 Transmission	6.6	20.7	14.1	20	96.6	212	89.3	7	68.1
9 Metia Group	6.5	10	3.5	-1.7	-17	100	1	n/a	35
10 The Marketing Practice	6.3	16.2	9.8	2.5	15.7	162	3.2	8	60.5
11 April Six	5.9	10.5	4.6	1.9	17.6	132	36.1	n/a	43.8
12 Infinite Global Consulting	4.6	6.7	2.1	0.5	8.1	52	13	n/a	31.3
13 MOI (p.92)	4.1	13.6	9.5	11	80.8	115	27.8	11	69.9
14 Kingpin Communications (p.86)	4	14.2	10.2	3.1	21.7	47	34.3	9	71.8
15 Purple Agency (p.100)	2.2	9.1	6.9	-0.4	-4.2	152	-16.5	12	75.8

Gross income (GI) is calculated by deducting external media and production costs from the invoiced total. It includes income from all above-the-line and below-

the-line activity. If the agency has been subject to a takeover or merger during the financial year in question, gross income includes the combined figure.

This world map shows the locations that the agencies included in our international table are operating in





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The state of the agency marketplace 2021

Each year, our agency benchmarking survey gathers the facts and opinions of the UK's leading B2B agencies. In this feature, **David Rowlands** dissects the data, demonstrating how agencies are winning business, how their headcount and gross income have grown (or decreased), and what they predict for the months to come

Despite uncertainty around Brexit and the general mayhem caused by Covid-19, B2B marketers shone in 2020. If anything, the need to adapt rapidly has brought the best out of the marketing department, with imagination and bravery rewarded in spades.

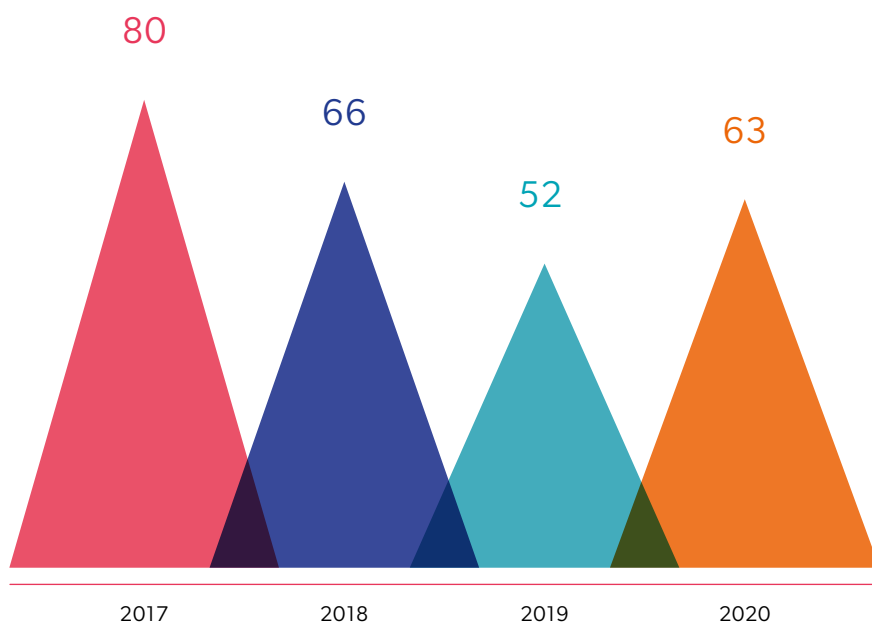
With a deal now having been struck, and vaccines well and truly being rolled out in the UK, the hope is that stability is on the horizon. With the ship starting to steady, agencies are bullish on their expectations for 2021.

In fact, 61% of agencies we surveyed are expecting growth

over the next 12 months, with a further 28% expecting strong growth. 12% are expecting to remain flat, while just 1% are either anticipating a reduction.

Combined, this means 89% of agencies are expecting growth or strong growth over the next 12 months. This is just shy of last year's results, in which 91% were expecting growth or strong growth. Admittedly, agency's expectations were likely to have stopped short due to a certain coronavirus last year, but it's good to see that optimism and expectation amongst agencies have not been rocked.

Average UK agency headcount over the past four years



Headcount

An obvious place to start, maybe, but there's no denying that headcount is a good way to gauge the success, business and profitability of an agency. Ultimately, more business = more people. So, with that in mind, what do the figures reveal?

Our survey asked for each agency's global headcount as of 1 September 2019 and 1 September 2020. Unfortunately, a saddening, but unexpected, 38% of agencies reported a decrease in their global headcount YoY. 5% remained flat, whilst 57% increased.

This is, of course, not surprising. In a year when revenues have contracted, workforces have been forced to follow suit. As stability returns, and Covid-19 fades into the background, these numbers will of course start to recover. However, there is no getting away from it, 2020 saw many casualties, and huge swathes of those were not of the medical kind.

It's not all bad news, of course. Whilst 38% of agencies reported a decrease in their headcount, the majority of agencies reported an

increase, with certain agencies expanding significantly.

In fact, several agencies reported an increase in UK headcount of 50% or more.

These were as follows:

- ▶ Transmission: 89.3%
- ▶ Rooster Punk Group: 57.1%
- ▶ Grippid: 50%
- ▶ Gravity Global: 162.4%
- ▶ Napier Partnership: 88.9%

In addition to this, despite 38% of agencies reporting a decrease in headcount, the average headcount has actually risen compared to last year.

In this year's report, the average UK headcount of an agency is 63. Last year, this was 52. It's worth noting that last year's figure excluded our usual contributor Oliver, which had a headcount of 1153. This was far and above every other agency, and would have skewed the numbers to a headcount of 65. Regardless, Oliver has not taken part this year, and the average headcount has still risen. Impressive, given the year we've just concluded.

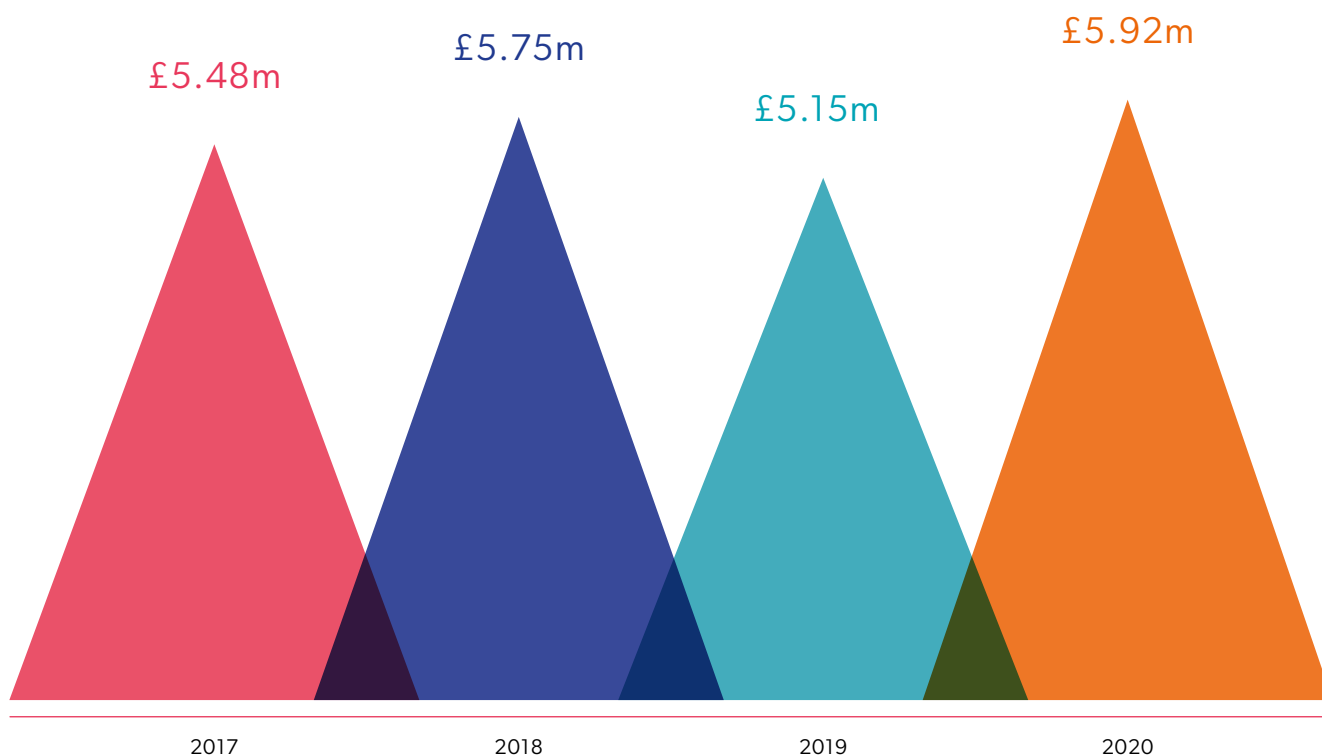
Who's missing this year?

In an effort to get the fullest possible picture of the UK marketplace, we contact all agencies included in the previous year's report, as well as any other suitable candidates. However, not everyone wishes (or has the time) to be involved. With this in mind, it's worth noting that 28 agencies included in last year's report did not take part. In addition to this, some of the agencies included in last year's report have been acquired by other agencies. For instance:

- ▶ Direction Group, acquired by Unlimited
- ▶ ALIAS Partners, acquired by MOI

A number of agencies have also entered or re-entered, including sponsors Big Ideas Machine, MSQ B2B and Move Marketing.

Average UK GI over the past four years



Gross income

But what about the big one – the real indicator of success? Gross income. Before we go any further, it is absolutely crucial to note that the majority of agencies included in

The average UK gross income is the highest it has been in any of our previous benchmarking reports

our survey closed their most recent financial year in December 2019 or March 2020.

In other words, the majority of the financial data we have comes from a time when Covid-19 was nothing but a scare story reduced to the bottom of the homepage.

In their most recent financial year, the agencies that participated in our survey reported gross income (GI) of anywhere from £160,000 to £60 million. On average, most agencies reported a GI of around £5.92 million.

This is an increase from the previous report figures, in which agencies reported an average GI of £5.15 million (again, excluding Oliver).

We expect, however, that there will be a hit in agencies' GI presented in the 2022 UK Agencies Benchmarking Report. Undoubtedly, damage

to agencies' bank accounts is being inflicted as we speak, but – perhaps mercifully – it's too early to assess the scale of the damage.

Another thing to keep in mind is that, although the average GI has increased compared to last year's report, not every agency has seen growth. In fact, around 29% of agencies included in this year's report actually reported a decrease.

In summary, 72% of agencies reporting an increase in GI suggests a pretty good year all round (the remaining agencies reported flat results). However, let's not bury our heads in the sand and pretend Covid-19 hasn't happened. The financial impact will be felt, but the only thing we can do now is wait and see.

How marketers' biggest challenges are shifting YoY

YoY trend	Challenges	% ranking as 'very significant'
↑ Up 1 place	Pressure on clients' budgets	17.5
↑ Up 2 places	Ability to measure campaign effectiveness	8.2
↑ Up 2 places	Clients' appreciation of creativity	7.2
↑ Up 5 places	New product/service developments	6.2
↑ Up 3 places	Embracing and managing internal digital capability	5.2
↓ Down 5 places	Ability to attract and retain quality staff	4.1
↑ Up 3 places	Role of procurement and purchasing departments	4.1
↓ Down 1 place	Clients moving agency activity in-house/insourcing	3.1
↓ Down 3 places	Business model transformation	3.1
↓ Down 7 places	Brexit-related concerns	1
— Same	Data privacy/GDPR	0

The biggest challenges facing agencies

Each year, we ask agencies the following: 'How significant are the following challenges to your agency currently?'. A list of 11 potential challenges are provided, with survey participants asked to rank each one from 'very significant' all the way through to 'insignificant'.

In the previous two years, the top two challenges agencies faced were the ability to attract and retain quality staff, and pressure on clients' budgets. Last year, Brexit-related concerns rose to third place as the deadline to leave the European Union grew ever closer. Perhaps understandably, with Covid-19 and the associated

financial devastation, Brexit-related concerns have now fallen to 10th place. Pressure on clients' budgets has remained the number one most significant concern amongst the agencies we surveyed. Given the economic consequences of the pandemic, this is hardly surprising, as clients may still not be willing to loosen their belts just yet.

Interestingly, the ability to attract/retain quality staff has plummeted from first place, as the number one most significant challenge, to joint sixth place, tied with the role of procurement and purchasing departments.

Last year, we included 'data privacy/GDPR' for the first time in our survey as an option. For two years running, not a single

agency has said that this is a 'very significant' challenge. In fact, only around 16% of agencies even think that it's a 'significant' challenge they will face. Nonetheless, 54% said it would be 'neither significant nor insignificant', suggesting that, while not at the forefront of their minds, it remains an important thing to consider.

Brexit-related concerns among marketers have fallen seven places from last year's report

Services and skills

So, what about the services that UK agencies currently provide, or are looking to provide in the future?

This year, the most common services currently offered by UK agencies were:

- › Digital development, provided by 81% of agencies. A further 6% are considering adding this within the next 12 months, while another 5% are considering adding it in more than a year's time.
- › Data analytics, provided by 64% of agencies. This looks set for a something of a boom

this year, as 22% of agencies we surveyed are looking to add this as a service within the next 12 months. It also received the fewest number of agencies saying that they aren't interested in it, with just 6% saying they're not interested in offering this service.

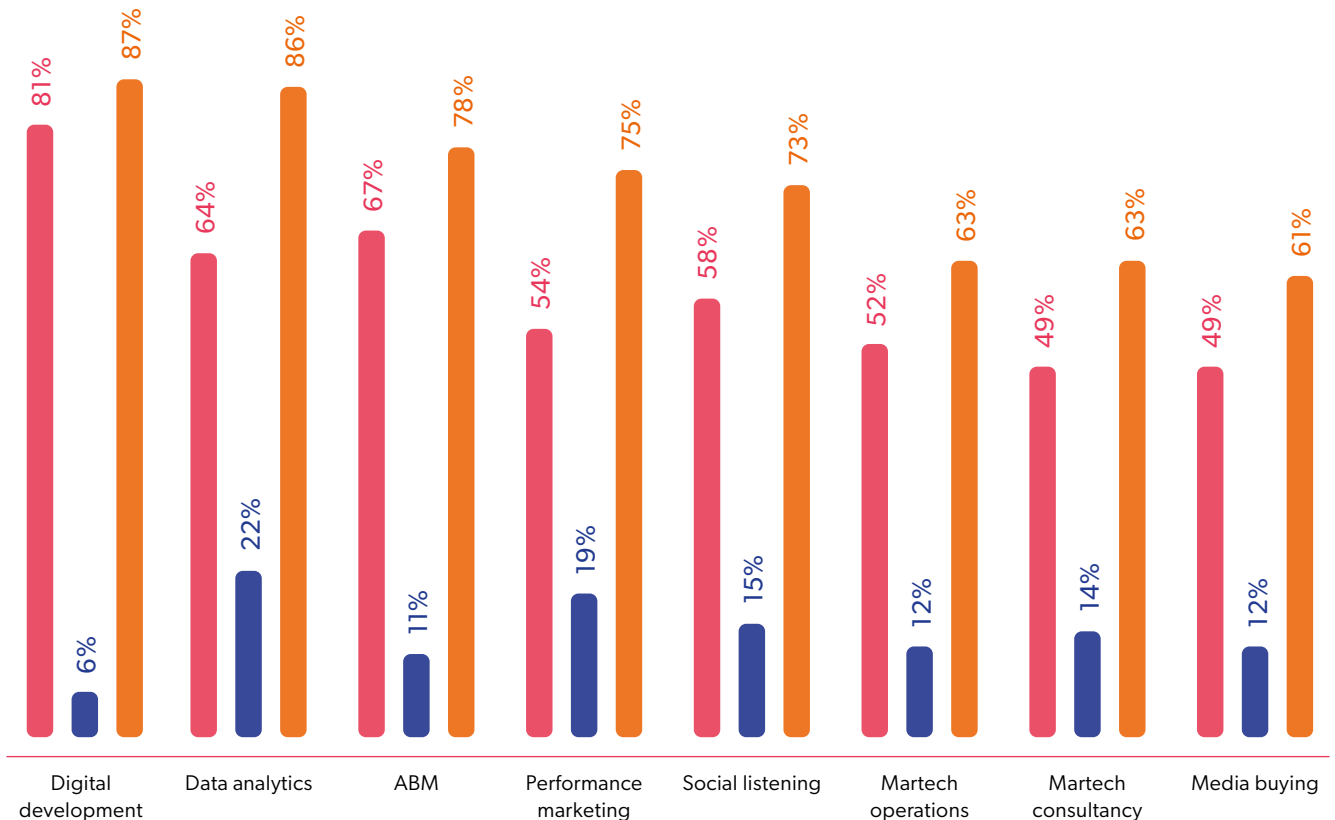
- › Account-based marketing, provided by 67% of agencies. ABM is continuing to assert its dominance in the world of B2B marketing, as a further 11% of agencies claim they are considering adding it as a service within the next 12 months, and an additional 7% considering adding it in more than a year's

time. Some basic mathematics would indicate that we could be looking at a world where around 85% of agencies are providing ABM services within a couple of years. It's worth noting, however, that 15% of UK agencies are not at all interested in offering it as a service. Let's check in on that in a few years...

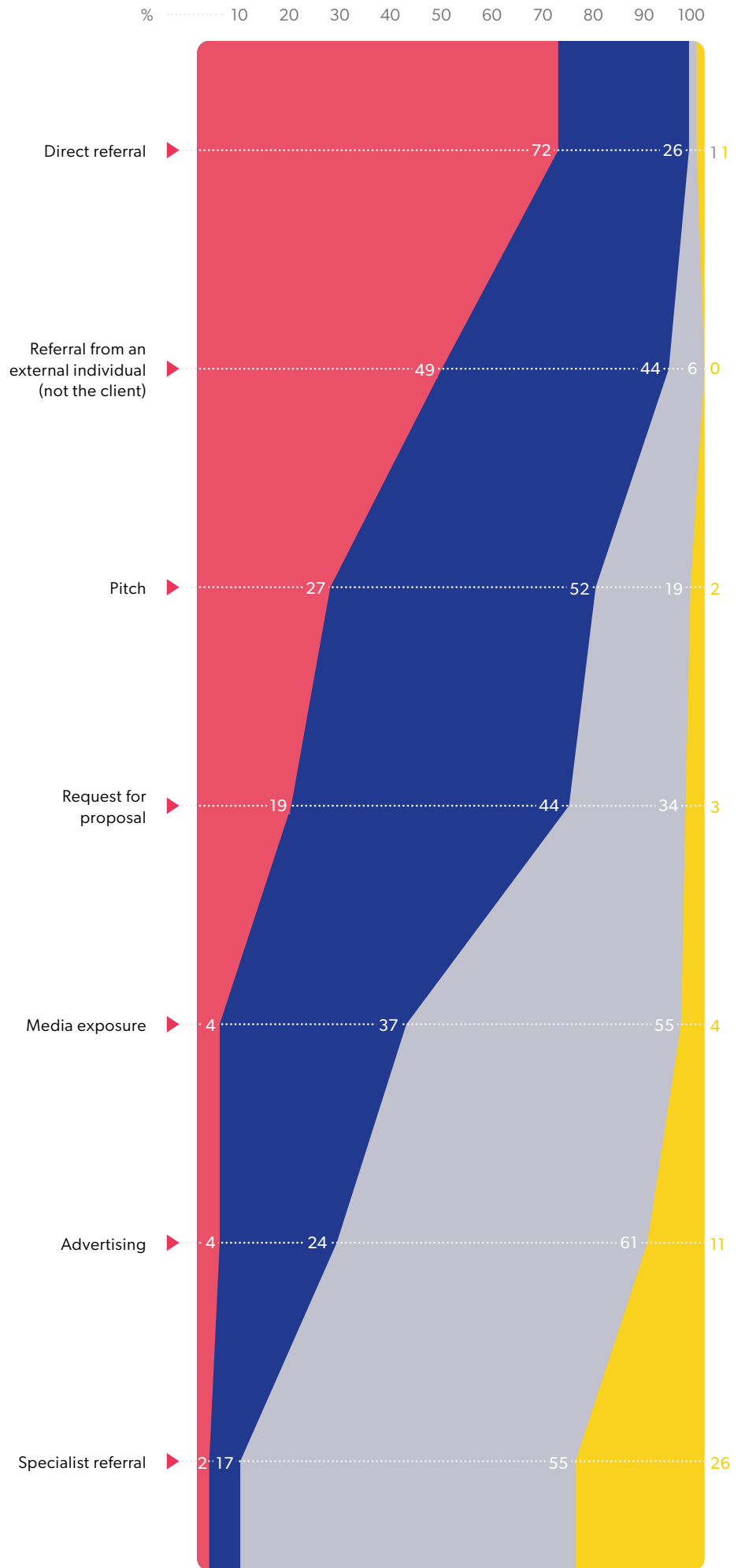
Every service listed is currently provided by approximately 50% of agencies, but it is interesting to note that media buying, martech consultancy and martech operations have received the greatest number of agencies saying that they aren't interested in offering this service at all.

Services provided by UK agencies

● We already offer this ● Will will offer this in the next 12 months ● Total percentage of agencies that will offer this by year-end



How UK agencies are winning business



WE DON'T DO WALLPAPER

Repetitive, predictable, monotone B2B work is everywhere you look – although we wouldn't blame you if you hadn't noticed. We often wonder if the old saying that you can 'piss money up the wall' was coined as a direct result of the millions wasted on B2B ads that people stroll (or scroll) past every day, without so much as a glance of the eye.

True was founded to be a different type of B2B agency. To break free from the world of short-term 'performance' marketing that swamps the industry with no lasting business effects. We are in the business of making a difference. And we do that by harnessing data-driven and cultural insights to unearth powerful human truths that are creatively transformed into memorable brand communications – and delivered with pin-point media accuracy.

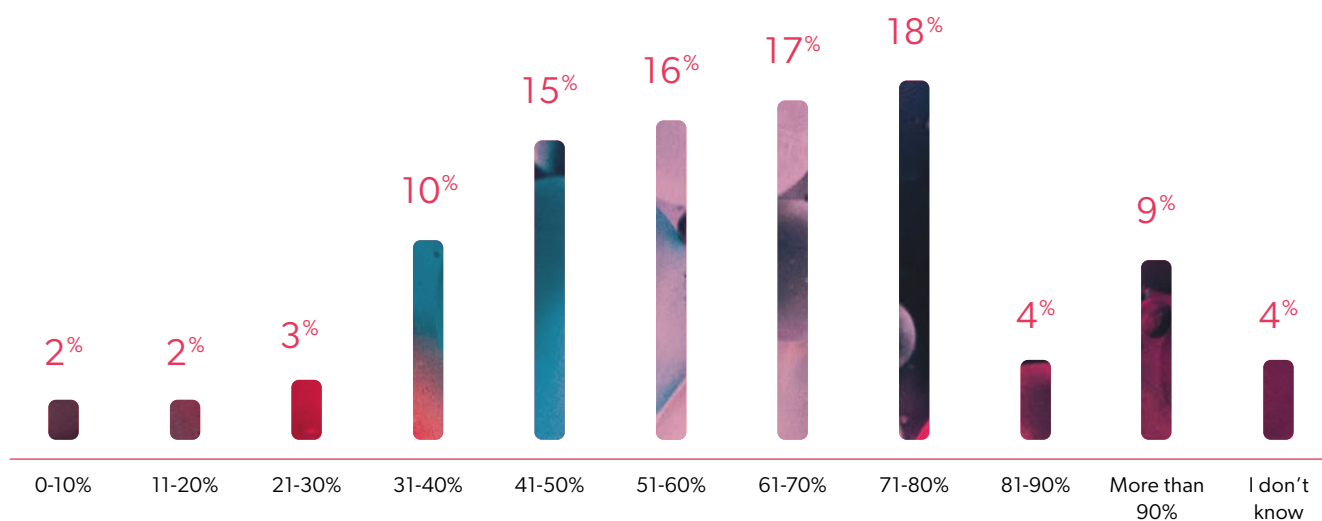
See our work at trueagency.com/work

MAKE IT MEMORABLE.

true
a BBN agency

Award-winning creativity and media
powered by next-generation audience intelligence.

Percentage of pitches entered agencies won over the last 12 months



In short, not much has changed since last year in terms of how our UK B2B agencies are looking to win new business

So, how are most UK B2B agencies finding new business?

As was the case in last year's report, most agencies we surveyed reported that direct referral was their main way of finding new business, with 72% saying this method is 'very common', and an additional 26% claiming it is 'common'.

Following closely behind is referral from an external individual (not the client), with 49% stating that this is 'very common', and a further 44% claiming it is 'common'.

Third place is 'pitch', with 27% claiming it is 'very common' to win new business this way, and a further 52% claiming it is 'common'. Request for proposal also remains a strong approach to winning new business, with 19% claiming it is 'very common', and 44% saying it is 'common'.

In addition to this, advertising, media exposure and special referral agencies also remain in the mix.

In short, not much has changed since last year in terms of how our UK B2B agencies are looking to win new business.

Conclusion

2020 was a strange year for everyone – let alone marketing

agencies – but the trends across the agency marketplace are relatively unchanged. Despite Covid-19, UK agencies are only marginally less optimistic than they were the previous year, they remain a 'glass half full' market, and are expecting growth over the next 12 months.

In addition to this, although some agencies have seen a significant hit to their headcount, on average, there has been an increase in headcount.

In their most recent financial year (for most agencies, this being the year ended December 2019 or March 2020), agencies' revenues grew once again. However, as discussed earlier, a hit in revenue is expected to be demonstrated in next year's report, as Covid-19 once again rears its ugly head.

Ultimately, when asked to describe the current state of the market for B2B marketing services, 39% said 'good', with a further 32% describing it as 'strong' or 'very good'. Although, we cannot deny that 13% see it as 'static', and 16% as 'challenging', given the turmoil of the last 12 months, 71% describing the industry as good or better is reason to celebrate.

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A new approach to address the uber-fragmentation of channels

It's time to focus on content creation and distribution, rather than marketing tactics, says Mike Maynard

When I was young, a real treat was visiting the sweet shop. I stood in wonderment, looking up at shelf after shelf with rows of glass jars containing the most amazing confectionery. Inevitably, I'd stand there for ages, my brain unable to cope with the vast range of sugary treats, any one of which would taste delightful. After my parents became frustrated at my inability to choose, often threatening that we'd have to leave if I couldn't make up my mind, I'd almost always point to either cough candy or strawberry bonbons and ask the shopkeeper for a quarter of a pound – my ration for the week.

Although it's not quite as exciting as my youthful trips to the sweet shop, I get that same overwhelming feeling when I see how many channels are available to reach an audience in today's digital world. Today, we are faced with a wide variety of different channels, all of which are great choices to amplify our campaigns, just like the sugar rush boosted my energy all those years ago.

As marketers, however, we have taken a different approach to dealing with overwhelm. We're more mature than my younger self, so we don't let a plethora of channels overwhelm us. We specialise. Unfortunately, this is a terrible idea.

Marketers define themselves by the channels that they use: we have content marketers, PR pros, SEO experts and all manner different specialists. This is certainly the case in larger organisations, where HR

Mike Maynard,
MD, Napier Partnership



managers carefully 'org-chart' the members of the marketing team into silos. It then falls to the CMO to magically pull everyone together to ensure that campaigns are integrated. It's an impossible task.

The old model of organising by marketing tactic is broken. The uber-fragmentation of media, whether that's paid, owned, earned or social, makes it impossible to coordinate campaigns when everyone is working in silos and often ends up in duplication of effort.

The solution is a new way of thinking about what the marketing team does: companies need to think in terms of content creation and content distribution, rather than marketing tactics.

When I started in marketing, distributing content was difficult and expensive. That's why marketers organise around marketing tactics: you had to work really hard, and spend a large amount of money, to market directly to an audience as the channel to reach your audience was the postal service. Today, things are reversed: to reach a specific audience, there is a huge choice of hyper-targeted tactics that are phenomenally powerful compared with the options I had at the start of my career.

The uber-fragmentation of media makes it impossible to coordinate campaigns when everyone is working in silos and often ends up in duplication of effort

Napier is organised around two concepts: content generation and content delivery. When we plan a campaign, we're not thinking about the best way to promote a new product or service through PR, or any other specific marketing tactic, we're thinking about what content is going to generate customers. We then consider the best way to distribute the content: what channels would be most effective for both the audience and the content types. We still have experts in different areas, but at Napier it's not the marketing tactics that drive us; our approach means we drive the different channels to get the best results.



B2B buying, an increasingly complex journey of problem finding, solution exploration, procurement interrogation, finance briefings, calls on zoom, kids in the room, google searches, webinar views, peer reviews, browsing the news, consultation, consolidation, reconsideration of the suggested findings, social media, whitepaper downloads, budget approval and risk removal, sales enter with targeted precision until finally... there's been a decision.

At Kingpin, we use actionable intelligence and a rich understanding of how businesses make purchase decisions to help B2B technology brands identify in-market accounts, reach and engage with buyer groups and nurture and acquire business customers.

Kingpin

Actionable Intelligence. Measurable Results.

Integrated demand gen strategies – where does programmatic ABM end and demand gen begin?

Mirza Fur explains why ABM versus demand gen should be a thing of the past. It's time for account-based everything

2020 was a ride. In general, there was a feeling that 10 years had passed in the space of a few months. The world of ABM has been a little contradictory to that. In some ways, things have gone backwards in terms of targeting efficiency and capability, with IP targeting presenting huge challenges with everyone is working from home. Various global data protection laws made it difficult, or even illegal, to send something directly to someone's office address, so direct mail became even more of a headache.

However, technology is getting more sophisticated with each passing hurdle. It wasn't long ago that display impressions were not targeted enough to be considered an option for lead generation. Or that it was a significant challenge to connect the dots between event attendees, whitepaper downloaders and website visitors. Now, we are not far off being able to link those who have seen a digital outdoor placement with a direct opportunity... without a unique promo URL. We have found a way to overcome every barrier we have been presented to create sales opportunities. Except one. **Meaningful and effective ABM.**

The lines between programmatic ABM and demand gen are blurred, but they shouldn't be. Programmatic ABM, whether one-to-one, one-to-few or one-to-many, is still ABM. It implies that you have worked cohesively across

Mirza Fur,
director, co-founder,
Kingpin



teams, created an agreed target list, processes for how to monitor, track and follow-up on engagements and applied stakeholders that take ownership of these processes.

In the B2B world, buying teams sit within an organisation and consult purchase decisions with the input and authority to accelerate or block a purchase. A recent example of this was when Kingpin, our small business of 53 employees, decided to roll out a new financial system. There were four individuals involved – two from finance, one that would deal with Salesforce integration, and myself to sign the cheque. All of us were equally relevant in the decision-making process. On an ABM level, our engagements were minimal. Combined, however, it would have been apparent to anyone looking that Kingpin was in market for a new financial system. On a demand gen level, not one of us would have scored high enough for a follow-up.

To embrace ABM, focus must shift towards measuring account-based engagements or marketing qualified accounts

To embrace ABM, focus must shift towards measuring account-based engagements or marketing qualified accounts (MQAs) and away from individual-based engagements or marketing qualified leads (MQLs). Despite the lessons of years gone by and the advancement of technology and data access, there are still too many organisations trying to activate with one strategy and measure by the other.

Part of the issue is that mainstream automation platforms and CRM systems aren't structured on an account level. Kingpin has been banging this drum for over 10 years, and even developed its own analytics platform – Argus (named after the all-seeing Greek god). Argus' purpose is simple: to help you identify those 'accounts that matter', based on what they are doing.

Essentially, using the correct tools, marketers should be implementing a combined strategy for accounts, incorporating sales, customer retention and product teams. Thanks to the catalysed industry-wide change we saw last year, as well as the availability of data, the ABM versus demand gen argument should be a thing of the past.

WHY DO THE WORLD'S **LEADING B2B TECH BRANDS** CHOOSE TWOGETHER?



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You're in a new era for digital media. Make the most of it

It's time to add more nuance to how you measure success, says Michele Reale

Today's digital media landscape is full of dizzying choice for B2B marketers. Long gone is the one-size-fits-all approach – over the last 20 years, the number of digital media channels has exploded. Yet, in many ways, we're still stuck in a mindset that's two decades old.

Many still obsess over click-through rates and other basic metrics. Now that your audience consumes content in much more sophisticated ways, that simple approach masks the complex truth. It also masks the real opportunity. Because, in reality, you have more tools at your fingertips, and a better chance of creating impact with your nuanced audiences, than ever before.

That's if you evolve your approach. If you meet a fragmented media landscape with integrated teams. And if you redefine the metrics that you use to measure success.

We all want 'impact'. What is it?

Impact is never a few clicks. It's never a few leads in a quarter. It's not even a few sales. It's all about how your marketing activity feeds long-term growth for your business.

Whether you're spending big or keeping things relatively cheap, your campaigns will create impact if they boost revenue over time.

Why many campaigns fall short

When we look at standard metrics, there's a lot we don't know. We don't know what 95% of people did when they saw your banner. If they searched for your product. What they think about your brand.

Michele Reale,
media director,
twogether



Yet all of these things matter. They show the big picture. You can't create an impactful campaign with the wrong metrics, because you'll only chase after short-term rewards. In today's fragmented media landscape, that means your strategy ends up stuck in silos as each team works to a different agenda.

Redefine success to measure impact

Better metrics for success are the first step towards impactful campaigns. That means blurring the lines between lead generation and brand awareness, for one. After all, many lead gen campaigns underperform because prospects don't trust the advertiser.

Ideally, you need some form of qualitative study before and after campaigns, whether you're doing big awareness or tactical demand generation. You should also consider delving into more sophisticated metrics in your reporting.

Face fragmented media with tight teamwork

Long-term success depends on so many different departments. Is your brand and PR work coordinated with your lead generation efforts? Are global and local teams pulling in the same direction? Are sales teams ready to follow up on leads from a campaign?

Once you've got the right metrics, you can align your teams with much more consistent targets. These consistent targets help you move in the same direction. It means you're ready to pull strategies together across many channels. Plus, you're only being measured by what really matters.

Never try to cheat the clock

You've created the right measures for impactful work. You've got your teams on the same page, aligned around those metrics. Now, you need to make sure you can perform against those KPIs.

That can only happen if you invest time up-front. Whether it's creative, media or comms, you can't cheat the clock. It takes early effort to deliver ideas with cut-through, a carefully balanced media plan, and an optimisation approach that will make sure your campaign performs as well as it can.



THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION.

IN FACT, WHY? IS THE BEST QUESTION.

When **why?** is the question, the answer is always the most important discovery we can make.

At MOI, we always ask **why?** It's a discipline that requires us to be confident, curious, and open-minded.

Why? explores the unknowns, reveals clients' purpose, and verifies our assumptions.

So, why do so many of the world's top tech brands work with MOI Global? Good question. Talk to us and learn why. turningheads@moi-global.com

Banish webinars forever

No prizes for guessing what Matthew Stevens thinks about webinars. Is it time to ditch them, or do they just need a rethink?

It used to be Death by PowerPoint, now it's Wipe-out by Webinar. Since Covid-19, digital devices, channels, messaging, gaming, viewing, buying, selling and conferencing have skyrocketed even more staggeringly than before the global crisis. But how much digital can a human being reasonably consume? Is our great virtual hope no longer effective? It's certainly looking that way.

So, is it time to ban webinars as we know them? Here's my take on 2020 to explain why I think so.

Up to the early part of the year, the effectiveness of face-to-face sales meetings meant they were the ultimate goal of most demand generation and nurture programmes. When these came to a halt, sales teams looked to marketing departments to find alternative ways to grow and convert leads.

But while many salespeople thought this meant sales would fall off a cliff, they didn't. Quite the opposite. According to McKinsey, nearly half (48%) of B2B decision-makers believe digital has become more effective than the traditional model for winning new customers – up from 20% at the beginning of April.¹

All summer, social selling, ABM and digital content grew exponentially and organisations saw unprecedented levels of sales and marketing collaboration, cooperation and alignment. Happy days. Video conferencing was everywhere, virtual events became a thing, and people couldn't make webinars quick enough.

But in early 2021, we've reached saturation point.

Not only that, but the expectation is that the channel alone will do the work. Just because it's digital, the content will be effective, right?

To be fair, the McKinsey report backs this up, saying both B2B buyers and sellers believe digital channels are more effective than face-to-face. Some

Matthew Stevens,
MD, MOI



70% of decision makers say they'd be happy making self-serve or remote purchases of \$50,000+ and 15% of them would even be prepared to spend over \$1 million.

But things change fast, and while 'Zoom fatigue' started as a neat buzzword, catchy headline and source of humour, the problem is real for marketers trying to achieve cut through.

The solution is clearly not another webinar. Not if 'webinar' basically means a digital slide deck.

If ever there was a time to think differently and act creatively, it's now. And, for us, creativity doesn't start and end with a traditional creative department. It doesn't even start the moment we have our first conversation – it starts with our people and our philosophy. It's why at MOI you won't see the traditional silos of creative and account management.

'Zoom fatigue' started as a source of humour, but the problem is real for marketers trying to achieve cut through

The creative process includes strategists, data experts and an inclusive, joined-up attitude that the big idea can come from anyone, and we bring our clients into that process from day one.

So embrace change, play with it, and win with it. You can create stand-out, engaging and memorable experiences online – from large scale events to intimate sales 'meetings'. Even webinars.

Give us a call and we'll explain how we can turn unwatchable one-offs into a binge-worthy series where registrations outperform targets by 92%. You'll never call a webinar a webinar again.

¹The McKinsey COVID-19 B2B Decision-Maker Pulse

Insights from the UK's highest performing agencies

David Rowlands spoke with a handful of this year's highest performing agencies, seeking to understand how they performed so well, what challenges they foresee this year, and more

Each year, the UK Agencies Benchmarking Report reveals the fastest growers in the UK agency marketplace, using YoY growth in gross income (GI) as the leading indicator of success. Whilst there's nothing wrong with this of course, there's an inherent favouritism in it, as the bigger agencies will invariably bring in the largest sums of money.

As a result, we have also included a table with the UK's 'rising stars' – those agencies that might not be generating the highest annual gross incomes overall, but, as a percentage of the previous year's income, have shown the highest growth.

So, with that in mind, we spoke to both the fastest growers and rising stars across the marketplace to understand just how they're doing so well, what challenges they're facing, and how they see the B2B space currently. As a reminder, financial results were taken from the most recently closed financial year at the time of completing survey. As a result, most agencies included in this report are using financial information

from the financial year ended December 2019 or March 2020 – in other words, before the pandemic.

Drivers of success

Modern was the standout rising star this year, posting a YoY increase in UK GI of 156.1%. So, how did this Bristol-based agency do so well? In an email exchange, Stuart Ray, director and founder, explained. Over the course of the last 18 months, the agency has been carrying out a lot more marketing, releasing guides on B2B digital leadership, B2B transformation, B2B performance marketing and campaigns to promote Pardot services. This has helped the agency to bring in more leads, and positioned the agency strategically.

"Thus," Stuart claims, "we created more opportunities with VPs who need frameworks and approaches that can be embedded into their business or scaled across markets or verticals. So, when we secured them as clients, the work

grew very quickly as they saw the value at a senior level."

More generally, Stuart added that Modern is managing a significant amount of PPC globally for one particular client, and the scope ballooned. As a result, Modern saw a lot of growth from work associated with this client.

Nicola Ray, founder and CEO of Modern, added that this growth has continued during Covid-19, stating: "We've seen rapid growth over the last 12 months, both from strong client relationships, and programmes secured before Covid-19 hit. Right now, clients are looking for flexibility to scale activity from pilots to EMEA programmes systematically and easily. Our frameworks, and ability to respond quickly to the changing needs and demands being asked of our clients have been a source of reassurance for them."

Inside Marketing made the cut for both tables, reporting a UK GI YoY increase of £1.2 million, or 43.1%. For Andrew Remes, co-founder, "Our growth and success was



What are rising stars and fastest growers?

If you head to pages 14 and 15, you'll see that we have two tables: one for the industry's fastest growers, and one for the rising stars.

Fastest growers are the agencies that reported the largest increase in UK GI YoY. Together, our number one fastest grower, reported an increase in UK GI YoY of £3.3 million.

Rising stars are the agencies that reported the largest increase in UK GI YoY as a percentage. As an example, Modern was our number one rising star, reporting an increase in UK GI YoY of 156.1%

Contributors



Lorna Charlish,
managing director,
Digital Radish



James Collis,
managing director,
Revere

driven by the growth and success of our clients – solving delivery and scale challenges, as well as a closed loop on the revenue we generate, enabled us to demonstrate the key part we play across marketing and sales.

"We invested heavily in big data, leveraging millions of data points to segment by buyer intent, persona, industry and location, allowing us to inform the best personalisation of messaging and approach at the right time."

Personalisation is, of course, a hot topic this year, with our Trend Tracker listing it as the fourth most important trend among client-side marketers in 2021, and the third most important trend amongst agencies.

Andrew added: "In increasing our headcount across multiple departments and two locations, our people – existing and new team members – have been critical in making sure we continue to deliver during this growth."

For Will Yates, client services director, Novacom Group, success

in financial year 2019-2020 was driven by new client accounts won through referrals, as well as building on existing client projects through a combination of proactive ABM, and delivering a range of exciting campaign concepts.

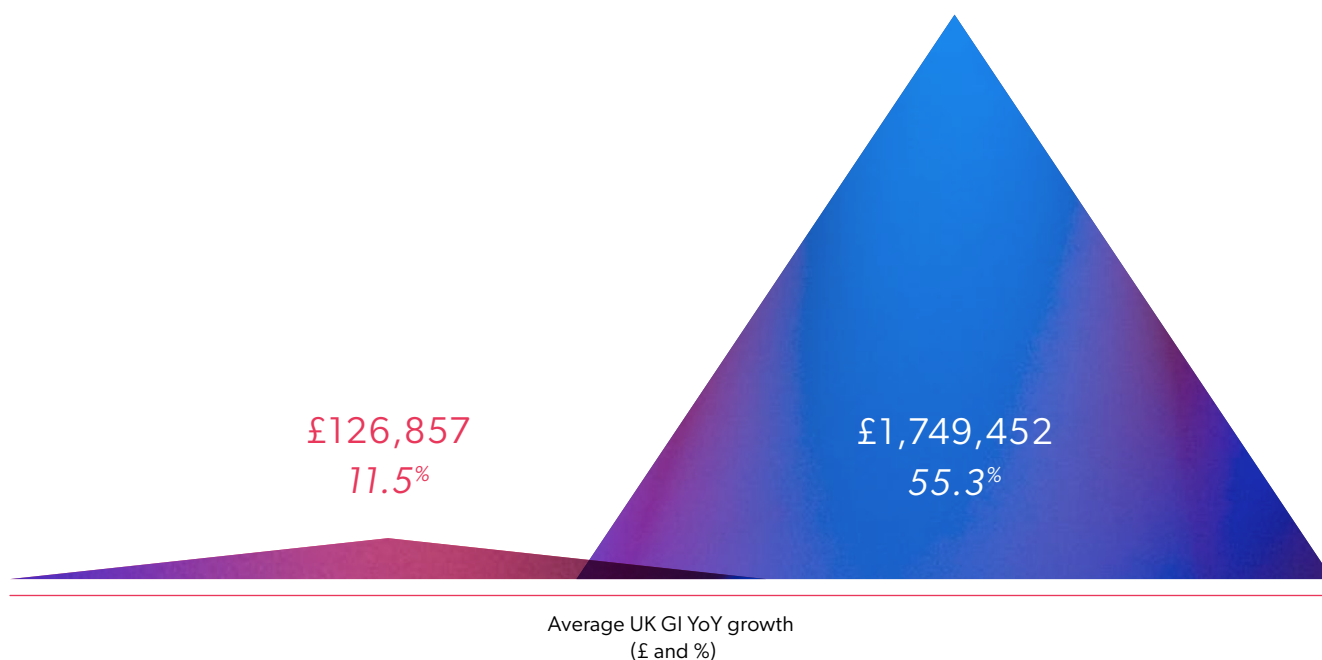
"For example, we were the leading digital agency on a client's global product launch, which featured an augmented reality product showcase, leveraging technologies that aren't readily available commercially yet," Will said.

Success in the face of Covid-19

Success amongst these agencies, however, does not appear to be a fleeting moment in the sun. In fact, a number of agencies included in both tables have reported continued success throughout the pandemic. For Lorna Charlish, managing director, Digital Radish, the client sectors they work with have been important to sustained success. For Digital Radish, 2020 was a year of progression, with Lorna claiming:

How do our highest performers compare against the masses?

● All agencies in the UK ABMR ● Top 15 highest performers



“The clients we tend to work with are predominately technology, often cloud-orientated, businesses. For many of these brands, Covid has accelerated their progression. One of our clients’ clients, a retailer, said they’d had to achieve in three months what had originally been a digital transformation plan lasting eight years.”

Clearly, for every door Covid-19 has closed, another has opened, allowing some agencies to thrive. Of course, even those agencies that thrived in 2020 have rarely done so easily.

Louise Vaughan, managing director and co-founder, Definition, for instance, claimed: “For our team, our business and our clients, 2020 has been a year of monumental highs and lows, where we’ve tried to predict the unpredictable, revolutionised how we work and play, swapped offices for homes and fast tracked both tech and flexible working to help our team realise a better work-life balance. So, in the year

that forced us apart, we’ve united more as a team. The fact we’ve secured investment to realise two acquisitions mid-pandemic, acquiring internal communications agency Words & Pictures and strategic brand agency Redhouse gives optimism that, with the right vision, commitment and commercial rationale, there are still significant opportunities to secure funding investment for growth.”

Short-termism and rapid transformation are 2021’s biggest challenges

It goes without saying that the impact of Covid-19 on agencies has been dictated by the services they offer and the markets they serve. As Andrew Remes pointed out: “Those agencies specialising in physical events will probably have had a challenging year.”

For Inside Marketing, however, Andrew claims: “Our core service – on demand inside sales – is naturally resilient to the changes to working life

the pandemic has brought about and continues to provide tangible growth for our clients.” However, he added that the shift in working practices – in other words, working from home – remains a challenge for everyone. Those who adapt quickest and evolve will be the first to see success.

For James Collis, managing director, Revere, this also rings true: “We have done a fantastic job of working without an office for the last 10 months, and introduced a ‘work anywhere’ policy, where everyone in the company will be able to work where they want, when they want. However, this hybrid model brings unique challenges in ensuring operations and culture remain strong.”

Louise Vaughan is hopeful for 2021, but acknowledges that this year will not be without its challenges. “We’ve started 2021 on a far more buoyant footing, but there is still some nervousness around both Brexit and the easing of restrictions that’s resulting in more short-term campaigns until we have greater economic clarity.”

“The clients we tend to work with are predominately technology, often cloud-orientated, businesses. For many of these brands, Covid has accelerated their progression. One of our clients’ clients, a retailer, said they’d had to achieve in three months what had originally been a digital transformation plan lasting eight years”

Lorna Charlish, Digital Radish

Matt Harper, CEO, The Marketing Practice, echoed these sentiments, claiming: “The biggest trend is short-termism. Before Covid, it felt like the tide was turning towards a re-balancing of long with short-term focus. Naturally, businesses are planning their activity now by quarter or half, and scrutinising short-term metrics to justify the next. The risk for us as agencies, and for our clients, is the impact that will have on long-term marketing effectiveness.”

For Nick Rhind, CEO, CTI Digital, the new home-working set-up and lack of physical meetings remains a challenge. “I think agencies are facing a lot of challenges working remotely. It makes building relationships and feeling understood a lot harder.” Ultimately, while easily

accessible video call services have made long-term home working feasible (imagine if the pandemic happened 20 years ago), the lack of face-to-face interaction cannot be underplayed, particularly where new business is concerned.

Mirza Fur, director and co-founder, Kingpin, agrees. He claims that, with buying teams more spread out and disparate than before, “we need to focus on boosting awareness to reach everyone on that team, no matter where they are sat. This is where having the right tools, teams and analytics comes in.”

For Nicola Ray, the biggest challenge is even more daunting. “From our perspective, there has been a dramatic shift in clients having to rethink what they’re doing. It’s not just a simple reallocation of budget from in-person events to digital, but more fundamental questions about the long-term change that’s happening in their businesses. Clients are looking to external consultancies to understand what this means for them, how this impacts their customers and the opportunities that presents. Clients are looking for more strategic services, insight and business change to shape their operations – and they need partners that can respond, understand their technologies, deliver wide-reaching solutions and scale them – fast.”

So, 2021 will not – unsurprisingly – be without its challenges, even for the highest performers of the UK agency marketplace. The challenges that keep emerging amongst our sample group are:

- › **Short-termism** – a reluctance (or is it inability?) to think long-term and strategically, in favour of tactical wins. Although effective in the short-term, there is doubt that this approach can deliver long-term value.
- › **Remote working** – although the once office-bound workforce has successfully

Contributors



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Kingpin



Matt Harper,
CEO,
The Marketing Practice



Richard Perry,
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Iris Business



Nicola Ray,
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Modern



Stuart Ray,
director and founder,
Modern

adapted to working from home, it is by no means an ideal solution. Maintaining existing relationships may be feasible, but is building new relationships the same? Is reaching people more difficult than before?

- › **Rapid transformation** – with clients needing to rethink everything, and needing results by yesterday, agencies are under greater pressure than ever to deliver success.

So, what are agencies' hopes and expectations for the next 12 months?

For Richard Perry, CEO of Iris Business: "I expect a big theme for this year to be the acceleration of the B2B buying process, from brand story to optimising the demand engine through to the digital experience. Helping B2B decisions going from requirement and enquiry through to deal closed. For many years, we've been passionate about establishing world class participation brands with consumer clients like adidas, Starbucks and Samsung. Over the next 12 months, I hope to find more opportunities to do this in innovative ways with our B2B clients."

"I expect a big theme for this year to be the acceleration of the B2B buying process"

Richard Perry, Iris Business

Given the catalytic effect that Covid-19 has had on the world's transition to digital, the idea that the buying process might mature in 2021 is perhaps not surprising. Indeed, Will Yates claim: "I think

the big themes this year will be building on the digital-first and 'customer experiences at a distance' initiatives that we've been delivering over the last 12 months."

Will went on to explain that Novacam has been working on a number of immersive 3D virtual event spaces to replace physical events and exhibitions. Will added: "I think with the realisation that these digital solutions save time, money and reduce emissions, they will continue to grow in popularity, even as we're allowed to travel again."

Of course, physical events will return at some point in the not-too-distant future, but there is certainly more faith in the ability of digital events to succeed now than there was at the beginning of 2020. With this in mind, it is not surprising that the digital event space is set for another big year.

For Alex Swann, he expects engagement to become a clear forerunner in technical B2B marcomms activity over the next 12 months. "Historically," he says, "brands and their agencies have focused on nailing the relevancy of a campaign or product in order to attract customer buy-in, stimulate action or drive awareness. However, customers are more perceptive today and, to some degree, immune to many of the traditionally deployed marketing techniques. Engagement is absolutely vital for making a customer or individual feel listened to, understood and, above all else, provides that personal touch."

Indeed, with social media and advertising becoming increasingly saturated, it is only natural that client and agency-side B2B organisations will need to think more deeply about how they engage with their audience. Whether this is through digital events, VR, community marketing, or something else, is besides the point. The main thing to note is that the top B2B agencies are thinking heavily about engagement.

Matt Harper, meanwhile, expects marketing to continue

"We'll see the most agile agencies win. It will be more important than ever to have flexibility, especially within any set models, to ensure you can respond appropriately. This is just as relevant for the small independent agencies as it is the networks. We'll also see more demand for clarity on an agency's particular specialism. Being distinctive will be key"

Richard Perry, Iris Business

to focus on making contributions to sales metrics, sustaining the wave of support for ABM. Two less publicised trends, he claims, will be around “significant changes in channel marketing, and a growing investment in customer renewal or lifecycle marketing.

“The partner landscape has been impacted significantly by Covid – vendors that respond to that smartly and quickly have an opportunity to establish partner loyalty and provide a significant leg-up for their indirect sales channel.

“With the potential for slower or more conservative buying, a focus on retaining and growing existing customers will be vital. I think we’ll see some redirection of investment from new business marketing to customer marketing.”

How might the landscape evolve in this period?

In response to Covid-19, agencies have had to evolve. Challenges that, at first, appeared to be temporary, will start to have longer-term consequences, as the world continues to align itself with the new normal.

So, how will the agency landscape evolve over the next 12 months?

For Nick Rhind at CTI Digital, agencies will need to start working together more. “Brands are increasingly looking for specialist skillsets in agencies,” he says. “They don’t want giant tech houses who do everything to an okay level and nothing is done spectacularly.” In response to this need, Nick says: “We’ve been building the ‘CTI Group’ – an integrated network of agencies with specialist skillsets who work great together, but, by operating independently, still have to compete and constantly up their game.”

On a similar note, Louise Vaughan at Definition argues that mergers and acquisitions are likely to become more frequent, as “complimentary agencies look to create greater

resilience through scale and by broadening service lines.”

Louise also went on to say: “We’ve also already seen a run of specialist boutique agencies starting to spring up as a result of the global networks shedding headcount. As a result, 2021 could mark a big year for the boutiques as many brands working with reduced budgets will be taking a serious look at ROI and the value that can be delivered by smaller, nimble, talented alternatives.”

Interestingly, Richard Perry at Iris Business claimed: “We’ll see the most agile agencies win. It will be more important than ever to have flexibility, especially within any set models, to ensure you can respond appropriately. This is just as relevant for the small independent agencies as it is the networks. We’ll also see more demand for clarity on an agency’s particular specialism. Being distinctive will be key.”

Alex Swann claims that, although clients of the past had a clear idea of the type of service and support they required from an agency, there has been a definite shift. “Clients are increasingly calling for more holistic support to address specific commercial challenges or wider market or customer problems,” he claims. “This enables us to take a more strategic, cohesive approach, drawing on the most effective combination of marketing disciplines and techniques to deliver results.”

So, how are our highest performers expecting the UK agency marketplace to evolve?

- › **Greater agility** – agencies will need to be able to respond to client’s exacting requirements, and quickly.
- › **Sharing the load** – agencies will need to clearly lay out what their specialties are, and work alongside other agencies who specialise in different areas.

Contributors



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Alex Swann,
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Lesniak Swann



Louise Vaughan,
managing director and
co-founder, Definition



Will Yates,
client services director,
Novacom Group



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Brand purpose in the age of Covid

John Ozimek explains why brand purpose is set to be more important than ever, post-Covid

Brand purpose is the belief that brands can have a meaningful and measurable impact on the world around us. Ironically, that's a pretty good description of what Covid has done to our work and home lives.

To say that it's been a marketing challenge for brands to stay relevant in the midst of a global pandemic is a gross understatement. It's been hugely impressive to see thousands of businesses and brands use their resources and expertise in incredible ways to help key workers, consumers and stakeholders get through the past year.

For businesses with a well-defined brand purpose, navigating the challenges of Covid is made simpler because acting with purpose requires an action-orientated mindset. Brands that understand and can communicate their purpose are creating a roadmap towards a more focused, innovative and dynamic business. In a world filled with noise and content, a clear brand purpose is a powerful way to be distinctive.

The arrival of Covid turned much of the marketing and advertising world upside down in a matter of months, and, if your experience of it has been anything like mine, it feels like years of change has been squeezed into a matter of months. So, when we emerge from our current life of lockdowns, home working and social distancing, we will naturally seek out those brands whose purpose has helped us make it through.

Brand purpose is more than a corporate mission to do some good. We know that consumers actively prefer brands that share the same values as they do. Research by Accenture¹ found that 63% will choose brands that reflect their personal values and beliefs over those that don't.

John Ozimek,
co-founder,
Big Ideas Machine



Leading with purpose means not just telling, but showing what difference you can make to people's lives. Sometimes, that might mean taking a stand on some of society's most contentious issues. Done well, purpose-led campaigns can effect real change, at the same time as attracting a fanbase that can last a lifetime.

I believe that post-Covid, brand purpose will be more important than it's ever been before. Living through Covid has reprioritised many aspects of our daily lives, and, although a return to normality will see many of us slip back into old choices and habits, there will be many aspects that will have changed forever. Brands that can reflect these changes through authenticity and a renewed purpose are the ones we will trust in a post-Covid world.

Leading with purpose means not just telling, but showing what difference you can make to people's lives

Of course, not every brand needs to have a voice on every topic. With Covid, many brands have seemed tone-deaf, with quick campaigns feeling like they have been done for the sake of commercial gain and a few PR brownie points.

So, it's essential that, as marketers and communicators, we listen and understand the deeper needs of our audiences. Many businesses and brands will look very different as they emerge from this period of profound change. Those that understand that purpose creates distinctiveness, relevance and authenticity will be the best positioned for our post-Covid world.

¹[accenture.com/us-en/insights/strategy/brand-purpose](https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insights/strategy/brand-purpose)

Strategy can provide the technicolour bullet in an age of uncertainty

As B2B marketers navigate the pandemic, Alex Cairns explains how using a more agile approach to strategic planning can help companies strike the right balance between self-preservation and pinpointing opportunities to attack competitor market share

The age of inaction in B2B marketing is coming to an end. With the explosion of martech, the democratisation of publishing and the evolution of more sophisticated competitor approaches, the rules of engagement have been completely transformed in recent years. Direct access to audiences alongside a variety of engagement tools have created a temptation to cut corners and focus on delivery mechanism as an illusion of the 'ultimate solution' on its own. While martech is indeed an excellent enabler for executing strategy, understanding the customer and crafting insightful messaging angles are as vital as ever.

The core principles of B2B haven't changed – people still aren't so much buying for pleasure as they are buying to reduce pain (and with someone else's money!). Item values can be much higher, the sales cycle is much longer – in certain cases up to 18+ months – and there are more decision-makers working through a far more complex buying process that demands more information and stages to reach a final purchasing decision.

Consequently, B2B marketing needs an almost ruthless approach in terms of focus, data, analysis

Alex Cairns,
founder and MD,
Move Marketing



and, most critically of all, strategy. This is critical in terms of balancing brand requirements against lead generation, as brand strength is directly proportionate to your ability to attract and convert leads. Strategy helps with this by quantifying the ultimate value of marketing to an organisation. It also creates a platform for thought leadership, which can often be the vital currency in terms of tangibly differentiating your offer.

Ensuring that your B2B marketing strategy is as robust as possible ultimately centres on eight core 'moves of B2B.' Move one establishes the marketing landscape, including macro environmental, buyer insight and segmentation factors. Moves two and three focus on competitor analysis and brand/positioning deep dives in order to help companies find smarter sources of competitive advantage in an often overcrowded marketplace.

Moves four and five compare and determine the optimal media and martech with which to establish a dialogue in which to communicate propositions. Moves six and seven unlock calculated action through setting crystal clear objectives, budgets and timescales that provide an ongoing barometer for growth. Finally, move eight sets the reporting loop for tactical adjustments and optimisation. Covering these eight moves will give you a comprehensive platform from which to implement and later evolve your strategy.

Applying a framework such as this sets the baseline and foundation from which you can consequently bolt-on individual campaign plans that may be developed for a specific product group, geographic region or business unit. To use a sporting analogy, think of the overall strategy as the team's overall playing style, philosophy and approach, while creativity provides the thrust, and the bolt-on campaigns are the more granular tactics employed on a game by game basis according to the specific opposition and state of play in the season.

In an era where most games are being played behind closed doors, the ability to act with confidence in your B2B marketing strategy and every move that you make on the pitch is more valuable than ever.

Great CX starts with brand EQ

Kate Howe,
executive director,
MSQ Partners



Kate Howe explains why emotional intelligence is at the heart of great CX

Customer experience has been near the top of marketers' to-do lists for some time – with many CMOs having anointed this the 'age of experience.'

Interestingly, though, a global study conducted in 2020 shows that IT is twice as likely to lead CX than any other function. Why IT rather than marketing?

According to the study, two-thirds of respondents cited 'enabling elegant, painless interactions' as their most important CX objective, along with 'providing speedy service' and 'making relevant information easy to find.'

Worthy objectives all, but highly functional and reliant on enabling technology. They reveal much about the tilt to IT as CX's 'owner.'

Another recent report from Gartner states that "to succeed in the digital experience economy, organisations must intertwine strategies around four disciplines: multi-experience (MX), user experience (UX), customer experience (CX) and employee experience (EX)."¹

Lots of 'Xs' to wrap one's head around – and again suggestive of an emphasis on technology.

But Gartner makes another point that is the real key to unlocking great CX. "In the experience economy," Gartner writes, "the memories, emotions and feelings that customers take away are ultimately what matters most."

Memories, emotions and feelings.

MSQ B2B has industry-leading capabilities in data and digital transformation – CX prerequisites. Yet, as Gartner does, we believe that emotions and feelings are ultimately what matter most.

In fact, the only way to deliver great CX now and guarantee success in the long-term is through forensic honesty about a brand and the world it inhabits. Further to this point, a brand today has no choice but to put emotional intelligence – the emotional equivalent of IQ – at the heart of the customer experience by:

- ▶ Knowing your real strengths and facing up to your weaknesses.
- ▶ Genuinely understanding your audience and how it feels about life, the world, your category and your brand.
- ▶ Building relationships through consistent, coherent, engaging communication – interacting with real people in the real world rather than speaking at them from your 'marketer bubble.'
- ▶ Ultimately, developing consistency, integrity and coherence in all that your brand does – extending across an end-to-end CX.

The high EQ brand experience

At MSQ B2B, we've harnessed state-of-the-art learnings from data science, AI, behavioural economics and neuroscience to design B2B's first high EQ brand system. Through it, we can draw upon new and powerful insights to truly understand customers' values and expectations.

We can determine where and how to improve their experiences, what their pain points are and what creates real engagement. We can help drive emotionally intelligent excellence into all the component parts of great customer experience: sharper differentiation through emotional as well as functional drivers; empathetic customer journey mapping; and cohesive communications from top-of-the-funnel through in-life. Very importantly, we also can pull the CX thread through it all by intertwining agile digital marketing with agile digital infrastructure.

Every brand is on a necessary journey to better CX. The brands that will break through to great will do so with emotional intelligence as their true north.

¹WONG, J., TAY, G., CHIU, M. and STEWART, B., 'Success in the Digital Experience Economy Requires Connecting MX, UX, CX and EX', Gartner, (26 May 2020).

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Low cost, high impact, more sales... in the pursuit of sustainable success

Fame. Admiration. Belief. Mark Lethbridge introduces Gravity's new formula for sustainable success in B2B marketing

The title of this piece is the rallying cry of marketing briefs, but when searching for this state of high performance with your marketing activities, how truly convinced are you from the outset that you will achieve the business ambition? How sure are you that you have the most efficient marketing plan that will deliver the business case? Do you have the complete data to support, or are there gaps? Are you completely sure the marketing activity will return a positive ROI?

Below are actual soundbites that I keep in my little black book in the hope that one day I will write an exposé on the billions of dollars that marketing has squandered.

- › "It should work, but we will certainly test and learn..."
- › "It's really disruptive so will work well..."
- › "Amazingly creative and customers will love it..."
- › "This is so much better than the last campaign..."
- › "It's really very strong and connects right across the customer journey."

My response to the above is: would you stake your life on it?! What other function in your business evaluates activity so subjectively and with such little evidence?

(If you have any additional stonkers I can include in my book, please send and I promise to give you credit).

This lack of certainty is because the formula for achieving sustainable success is constantly subject to opinion and debate.

Mark Lethbridge,
CEO, Gravity Global



Time for all this to change.

At Gravity, we have developed an approach that aims to remove the debate by studying what marketing levers brands can pull to achieve growth. This strategic development process has been developed from extensive research into identifying what makes some companies grow faster than others.

And it simplifies the complex:

The findings show that there are three main levers brands can manipulate to achieve sustainable success. We named them Fame, Admiration and Belief. FAB for short.

- › Fame is a measure of how well people know your brand and understand what you do.
- › Admiration is the strength of how people feel emotionally predisposed towards your brand.
- › Belief measures the strength of people willing to engage and commit to your brand and recommend you to others.

No single attribute can deliver success on its own, and all three need to be in balance for a business to maximise success from brand-to-demand

Each lever has 12 critical success measures that provide hard data for better decision making and provide a blueprint for which levers need to be pulled to achieve the desired outcome.

Applying FAB enables us to benchmark our clients' current brand and market performance, define their future go-to-market programmes, and measure, track and enhance the marketing activities across all the critical factors for success.

We have seen by using FAB that we are able to deliver a share of attention disproportionate to market share and marketing investment that accelerates market growth, delivers sustainable success and provides a return on every pound, dollar or euro greater than the industry benchmark.

FAB is the methodology we used to develop the 'Profit Hunter' brand-to-demand programme for Embraer, now famously described as the world's most successful B2B programme with over 50 awards for excellence across all marketing activities and delivering \$15.3 billion in orders.



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Which emerging trends will impact B2B channels in 2021?

Steve Chambers outlines what will impact B2B channels in 2021, and how marketers will adapt

Three key themes will have a major impact on B2B marketing channels in 2021: privacy and data; Covid-19; contraction of ad spend.

These factors mean businesses will need to be better prepared for the further adoption of digital channels. They will need to drive innovation, with technology, sales and marketing functions becoming more blurred in terms of roles and responsibilities.

With more and more publishers discontinuing or reducing the frequency of their print editions, they will be looking for new ways to monetise their audience data by hooking into programmatic trading desks. We will also see an accelerated transition to digital and AV advertising formats. Podcasts, especially, are starting to filter into B2B media planners' armoury, making broader targeted B2B campaigns possible. Think targeting SMEs, sole traders and business start-ups/entrepreneurs. And while listenership for many niche podcasts are currently small, we see increasing opportunities – particularly around co-branded partnerships with publishers.

Digital experiences – from virtual events to virtual meetings – will become bigger and slicker throughout 2021, with a myriad of ways for advertisers to engage. There will also be new media opportunities as trade publications try to replace the lost revenue from running events.

Focus areas for 2021

Privacy and security marketing

The ICO will be opening more investigations into how businesses handle and use data, which means more fines issued and headlines generated, so compliance with new and upcoming data laws should be front of mind.

Steve Chambers,
media director,
Bray Leino



DMPs and predictive analysis

Looking at separate analytics of individual channels will become a thing of the past as data management platforms (DMPs) ensure data can be collected from all of a businesses' digital touch points and held in one central pot.

Predictive analytics tools will allow businesses to use past campaign data to reliably forecast trends and behaviours days, weeks or even years into the future. Predictive models can help businesses attract, retain and nurture clients, and marketing campaigns can be optimised to generate more leads and conversions, as well as to promote cross-sell opportunities.

AI

As the amount of data collected and transferred grows, artificial intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly important. Businesses should leverage this technology to improve the customer journey, or boost the ROI of marketing campaigns through the implementation of machine learning and other processes to gain audience insight. AI can also be used to automate processes once dependent on humans, like powering chatbots or personalising the digital experience.

Omnichannel marketing

It is vital for businesses to present a consistent voice and message across all mediums, but the majority of businesses still rely heavily on a multi-channel approach. Whether communicating your proposition through analogue or digital channels, prospects expect a seamless experience, regardless of the channel or device used.

ABM

Recent events are accelerating this virtuality and 'invisibility' of work and process that goes on behind the scenes, so human interactions will be key, putting ABM at the sharp end of businesses.

Of course, brand building is still fundamental. It's not just about how you reach people; building saleability is key – think desire, appeal, salience, credibility. B2C brands know all about this and, in 2021, successful B2B businesses will also focus on brand building – the what and the why alongside the how.

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How do you maintain the right skill sets to maximise opportunities from each channel?

Michael McLaren outlines Merkle B2B's approach to providing 'never before' solutions

In less than a year, the global pandemic has put an accelerant on B2B marketing trendlines that were already underway, such as digital transformation, enabling buyer journeys – all the way through to ecommerce. When Covid-19 came along, it created distanced engagement, lack of salesforce contact and the temporary elimination of events – a key pillar in most B2B businesses.

There is now a compelling need to build more integrated digital ecosystems, especially for brands that have hesitated to enable differentiated experiences. Approaching business challenges from a digital-first, integrated perspective and having the ability to execute your ideas in an omnichannel world is dramatically reshaping the narrative around what B2B marketing needs to be. The experience a customer has with a brand is almost as important as (or more important than) the products themselves.

Developing modern B2B solutions requires the integration of a number of solutions: strategy, customer strategy, media, creative, technology, and data. However, few companies have that rich skill set available to them. It starts with bringing experts together in a way that allows them to play well together, where they can leverage the best of what each of them brings to the table and deliver unique solutions to the client.

To better service the needs of our clients and our clients' customers, we are busy transforming our

Michael McLaren,
global CEO,
Merkle B2B



specialists into omnichannel generalists through exposure to different disciplines and capabilities outside of their immediate purview. Doing so enhances their individual specialties, for it allows them to consider the totality of the B2B puzzle. New hires immediately begin working on omnichannel-based solutions as opposed to single point solutions.

Fostering a culture of collaboration and open teaming allows everybody – whether you come from a media, creative, technology or data background – to break down client business challenges, get the best perspective from the collective, and come up with unique, 'never before' solutions.

We are lucky to have a real, powerful capability around the emerging marketing clouds. We are working towards cloud-based CDP enabled, SaaS enabled marketing ecosystems by leveraging the power of Adobe, Salesforce and Amazon Web Services (AWS) on behalf of our clients, helping them to extract the most value possible through our knowledge and understanding of these platforms.

The experience a customer has with a brand is almost as important as (or more important than) the products themselves

Iterative improvement is an important substrate of our DNA that allows us to come up with solutions quickly and validate those solutions both cost-effectively and efficiently.

Increasingly, I expect B2B to be the leading engine of innovation for our industry as we see rapid movement towards a more digital, more mobile and more immersive future. Through the power of data and technology, with the ubiquitous availability of broadband, we can deliver individual communications to a known person based on their interests and their needs and bring them along in the journey in a way that delights, adds value, and drives a bigger share of their lifetime value.

**Three in five Britons say that
they'll stop using a business
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radley yeldar.

Winning trust through content: How to balance paid, owned and earned media in 2021

The importance of content in building trust should not be underestimated in a post-digital world. When determining content strategy, it's useful to consider three commonly-used categories, says Dan Marsh

As 2021 gets underway, businesses everywhere are reflecting on Covid-19's impact and preparing as best they can for what comes next.

Trust has always been paramount for brands. Edelman's 2020 Trust Barometer suggested that up to 53% of consumers placed trust second only to price as to whether they do business or not. But as Covid-19 has continued to take its toll, factors that determine trust (such as honesty, integrity and transparency) are being increasingly valued in an ever more divided, weary society.

Trust, of course, can only be gained through action – delivering on promises and acting responsibly – but communication also plays its part. In a post-digital world, the influence all your content can have shouldn't be underestimated. Here's a brief look at how to use the three commonly-used content categories to drive trust.

Owned: a place to truly personify your brand

Considering your social channels as 'owned' is somewhat outdated – most platforms are engineered so that paying to reach your audience is essential. Today, the term really refers to those channels you curate yourself, such as your website, video or CRM. Most visitors may be existing customers, but their trust shouldn't be taken for granted, and your content

Dan Marsh,
brand director,
Radley Yeldar



will also be seen by those considering you or seeking final validation.

Whatever the channel, there's a huge opportunity to foster trust among audiences looking for a new type of relationship with corporates. Offer a glimpse of your culture, what makes you different and the contributions you're making to society.

Earned: gain endorsement by being relatable

Earned content isn't easy – you're appealing to publishers, influencers or news outlets, 'pitching' something that aligns with their audience's time or values. It doesn't always have to be headline-making – consider modest promotion of random acts of kindness or the social good you or your employees have achieved.

Most visitors may be existing customers, but their trust shouldn't be taken or granted

Paid: elevate your most salient content

People are becoming savvier and more cynical about paid content promotion. There's nothing worse than seeing content masquerading as organic only to notice a 'promoted' stamp – it can appear insincere.

Instead, consider elevating the content that represents you in the most-single minded way. This doesn't always mean reverting to ads, but there's a clear overlap. Good content should start a journey with a stakeholder by following up a hook with an engaging story – people will follow the breadcrumbs and, more often than not, be left with a positive impression.

It's all in the blend

Much is made of 'content', but in reality it's just a label for an old practice. Today there are simply new types of content, and new ways to distribute them. There's no silver bullet, but the most successful strategies find the right mix. When you find it, it can be incredibly effective in helping people feel like they know you better.

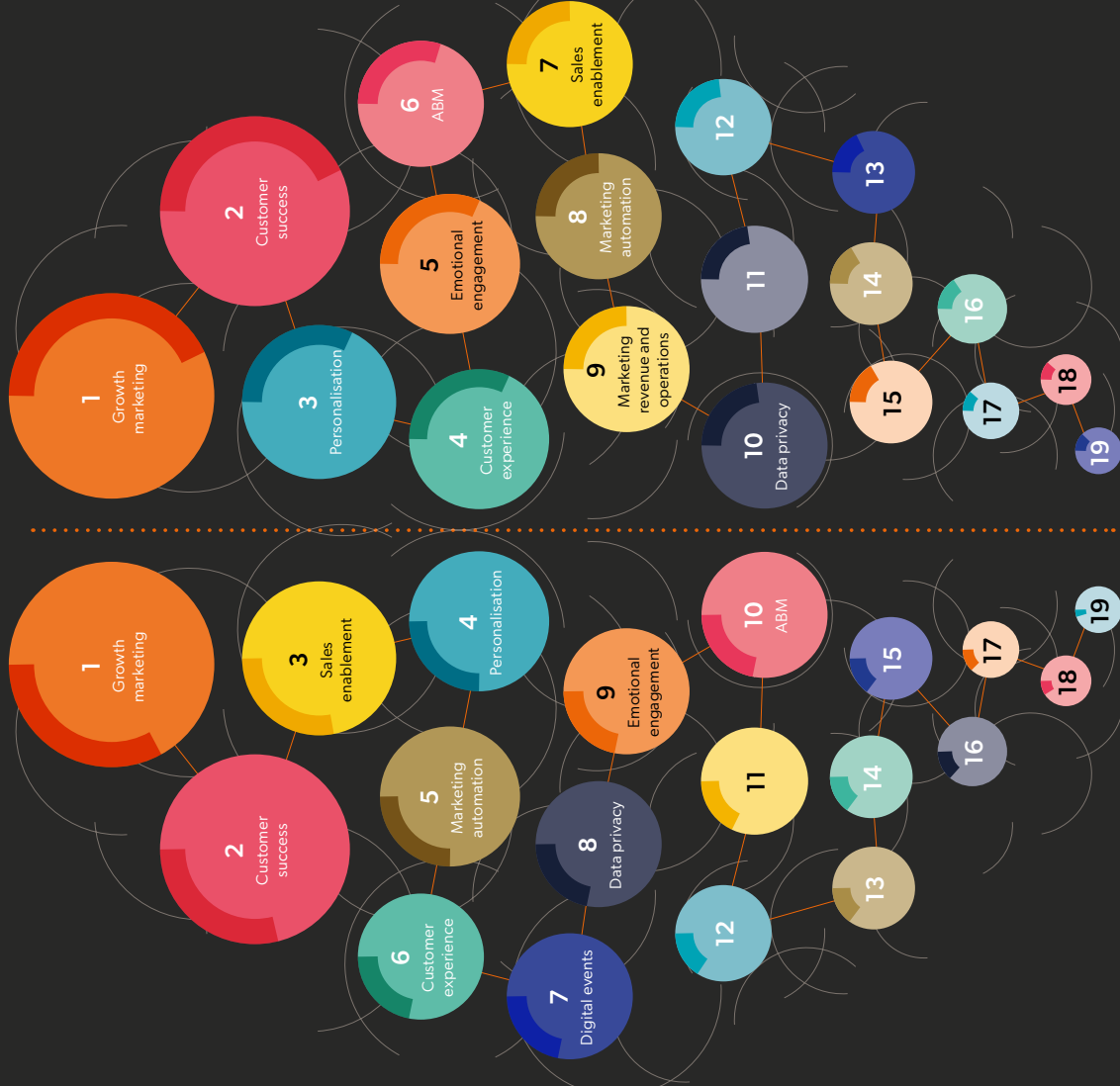
The 2021 B2B Marketing Trend Tracker: The B2B mind

Client-side

1. Growth marketing 33.1%
2. Customer success 28.9%
3. Sales enablement 27.7%
4. Personalisation 25%
5. Marketing automation 24.7%
6. Customer experience 22.3%
7. Digital events 22.3%
8. Data privacy/data governance 22%
9. Emotional engagement 21.7%
10. ABM 21.7%
11. Marketing and revenue operations ... 17.5%
12. Performance marketing 16.3%
13. Transformation 15%
14. Martech stack 14.5%
15. Channel marketing 14.5%
16. Brand purpose 13.9%
17. Agile marketing 12.7%
18. Customer data platforms 9%
19. Influencer marketing 5.4%

Agency-side

1. Growth marketing 42.8%
2. Customer success 42.8%
3. Personalisation 32%
4. Customer experience 32%
5. Emotional engagement 31.9%
6. ABM 30.4%
7. Sales enablement 28.3%
8. Marketing automation 24.6%
9. Marketing and revenue operations ... 24.6%
10. Data privacy/data governance 24%
11. Brand purpose 23.2%
12. Performance marketing 22.5%
13. Digital events 23%
14. Transformation 18.1%
15. Agile marketing 16.7%
16. Martech stack 15.9%
17. Influencer marketing 12.3%
18. Customer data platforms 11.6%
19. Channel marketing 10.9%



The 2021 Trend Tracker

What's at the front of clients' and agencies' minds this year? **David Rowlands** looks at the trends set to dominate the conversation in 2021

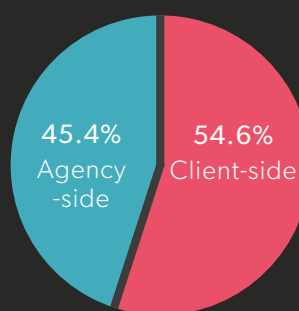
Each year, B2B Marketing conducts a survey to understand what marketers will be focusing on for the year ahead. Conducted with Cogniclick, the survey presented 19 topics to participants, and asked them to consider how focused they will be on each one in 2021.

For each topic, the participant could select one of the following: very highly focused; highly focused; somewhat focused; slightly focused; or not at all focused.

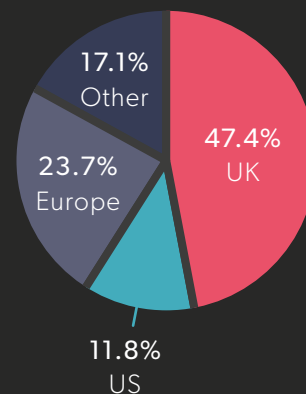
For the purposes of this feature, we will be looking at those that replied 'very highly focused' to gauge what's really got the attention of B2B marketers this year.

With more than 300 client and agency-side respondents, we can see which areas are grabbing the limelight, and which are fading into the background.

Percentage of agency versus client respondents



Geographic location of respondents



How have the trends changed from last year's report?

Last year, the top four trends were: customer experience (CX); growth marketing; account-based marketing (ABM); and revenue operations.

This year, growth marketing has jumped into first place, with 37.5% of our audience saying they are very highly focused on it this year. As many of us will know, the exact definition of growth marketing is not always clear, so, for clarity, we defined growth marketing in our survey as: "strategies and positioning of marketing as the engine-room of business growth." It appears, therefore, that marketers are continuing to assert themselves

as a driver of real business goals, and totally distance themselves from the 'colouring in department' of yesteryear.

CX, meanwhile, has fallen to fifth place, with 26.6% of our survey participants claiming it's something they are going to be very highly focused on this year. However, it is interesting to note that customer success – a new entry into the Trend Tracker – has taken second place, with 35.2% very highly focused on it. Ultimately, customer success and CX are closely linked, so, despite CX's slight decrease in share of attention, the focus on the customer first remains front and centre of marketers' minds.

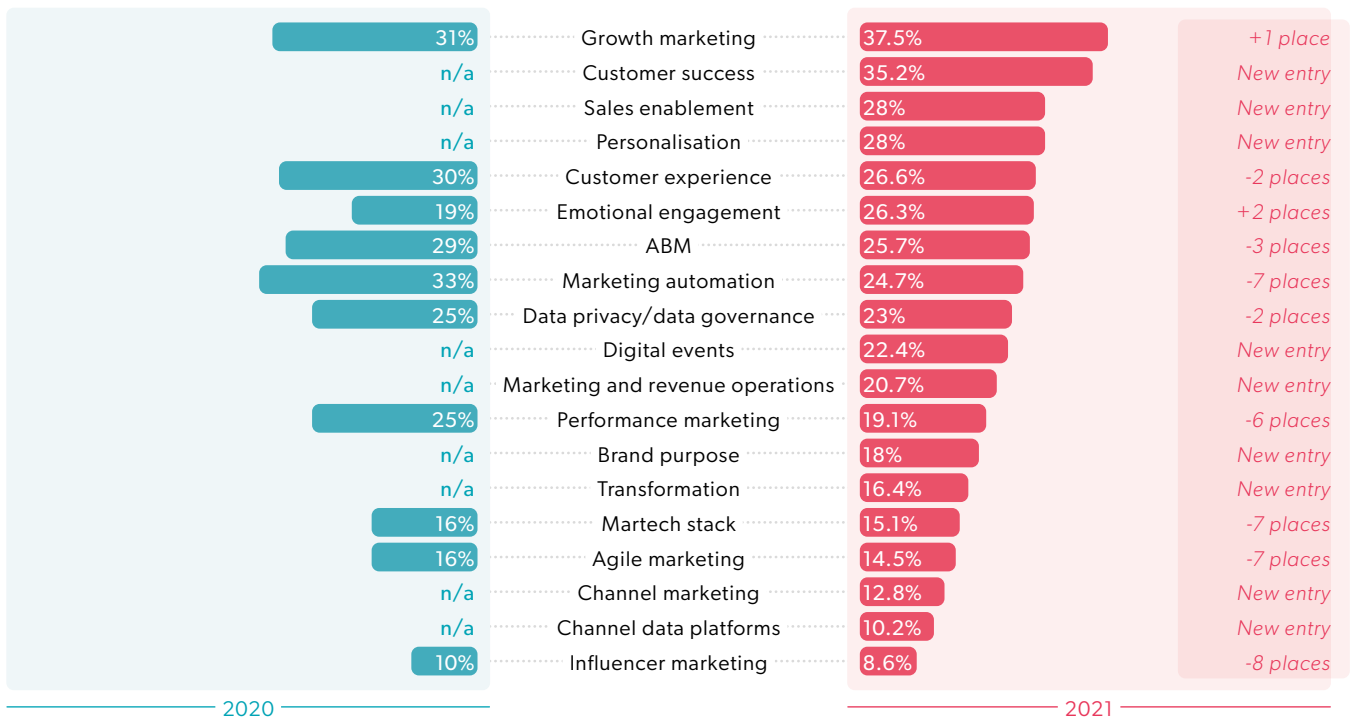
To add to this point, sales enablement and personalisation

– both of which are new entries – came joint third place (28%). Despite having the word 'sales' in the terminology, at the heart of sales enablement is a need for marketing to understand what the customer requires, and then provide sales with the tools they need to win their continued business. Personalisation, of course, also necessitates a deep understanding of what the customer is interested in.

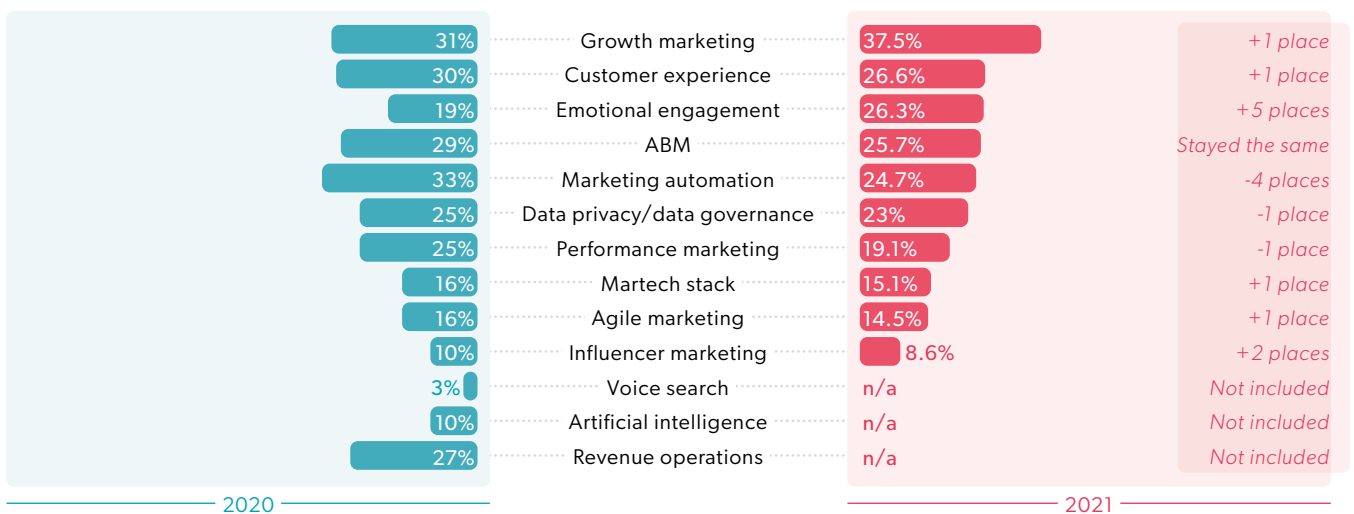
With this in mind, it's interesting to see that three of top four trends for 2021 include a much greater focus on the customer than the product, channel or martech.

Revenue operations has, of course, dropped out of the top spots. Although we did not include

Topics in order of how many people selected 'very highly focused' for 2021 (agency and client-side combined)



Comparison of data with last year's trends only (agency and client-side combined)



this exact trend this year, we did include 'marketing and revenue operations', which now sits at 11th place. It is also crucial to note that ABM, although sitting in seventh place in this year's report, would be fourth place, were it not for the new entries. It's also worth noting that sales enablement, growth marketing and personalisation are core tenets of ABM, and so, although the term itself may have dipped in popularity, its

key marketing DNA remains as fundamental as ever. Perhaps we are simply seeing a shift away from account-based marketing, and towards account-based everything.

Do agencies and clients share the same priorities?

Unsurprisingly, agencies – who's bread and butter is the ability to deliver world-class marketing campaigns – were more highly

focused on nearly trends, with two exceptions: marketing automation and channel marketing.

However, due to the fact that agencies will undoubtedly be more focused on each of the trends, the key thing to compare is positioning.

Growth marketing remains in number one spot for both client-side and agency-side, suggesting a sincere desire to position marketing as a business driver on both sides of the coin. Interestingly, sales

enablement, for all of the hype, is seventh place amongst agencies, but third amongst clients.

Customer success, however, remains in second place among both agencies and clients, so customers, rejoice! There's even more reason for buyers to celebrate, as CX is fourth among agencies and sixth among clients.

It is also interesting to note the rise of emotional engagement in our Trend Tracker. It has risen two places overall since last year's report, ranking fifth amongst agencies, but still ninth amongst clients. Either way, it is not a stretch to suggest that 2020, a year in which striking the right tone with your customers was even more crucial than ever,

has led to B2B marketers thinking in a more emotionally intelligent way. Regardless, it appears agencies are leading the way on this front, with client-side marketers needing to play catch-up.

Unsurprisingly, influencer marketing has continued its descent amongst both client side and agency-side marketers, ranking bottom for both.

It's interesting to see that three of top four trends for 2021 include a much greater focus on the customer than the product, channel or martech

Top three trends this year

First place:

Growth marketing (+1 place YoY)

As discussed earlier, growth marketing is the concept that marketing should be positioned as a key driver of business growth. It is more philosophical than, say, performance marketing, which focuses more on the methodology to drive conversion (and typically on a short-term basis).

As with anything philosophical, it is broad by nature, and arguably encompasses many of the other topics listed in the survey.

Regardless, its rise indicates a continued perspective-shift among marketers.

Whilst marketers of 20 years ago may have received a marketing budget from a siloed member of the leadership team, and considered what interesting and engaging campaigns they could run with it, growth marketers put the business first, and ask themselves: 'how can marketing position itself to deliver business growth?'

The fact that both client-side and agency-side marketers have seen growth marketing as the thing they're most focused on 2021 is fascinating, especially when compared to something more conventional like, say, the martech stack (15th place in the combined agency/client results).

Second place:

Customer success (new entry)

Although it would be interesting to see how every topic compares YoY ad infinitum, it makes sense to simply remove some topics and enter new ones each year. After all, I doubt anyone would be all that surprised to see fax machines at the bottom of any marketer's priority list.

With that in mind, the award for second place in this year's Trend Tracker goes to customer success – another new entry.

We defined customer success as: "Ensuring your customers achieve desired outcomes when using your products or solutions, and are less likely to churn."

In short, there is not much fun to be had generating 10 new customers each year, if you also lose 10 existing customers. With prospective buyers often carrying out their own research online for weeks or months before revealing themselves to an organisation, making the sale can be difficult. Ensuring existing customers are happy is, therefore, crucial to long-term success.

It is not rocket science to understand that if a customer doesn't get what they paid for, or is underwhelmed with the product or service, they're unlikely to renew or recommend your solution. Fortunately, marketers are in the perfect position to ensure customer success, and so it's reassuring to see this topic has landed in second place.

Third place:

Sales enablement (new entry)

Although sales enablement is by no means a new topic, it took real strides forward in 2020. As the number of martech solutions tailored for sales enablement has grown steadily, marketers now have a host of tools at their disposal to implement this optimised approach to marketing and sales.

In addition to this, Covid-19 ruled out face-to-face events and meetings, and generally made prospective buyers harder to reach. As a result of this, marketers – armed with banks upon banks of data – have had to step forward with solutions to help their sales colleagues get deals across the line.

Given that it was not even deemed a worthy entry in last year's report (and yet voice search was, would you believe), the fact sales enablement now sits boldly at third place suggests it has now broken through from 'interesting background topic' to 'serious marketing strategy'.

Of course, whether or not sales enablement will become a widespread marketing strategy remains to be seen. There's reason to be optimistic, however, as our report on sales enablement last year indicated 28% of marketers already had an agreed and documented sales enablement programme, and 45% were in the process of developing one.



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How to build robust and effective marketing plans in an age of uncertainty

With Covid-19 turning the world on its head, Jodie Williams offer her top tips for building a more robust and effective plan right now

The events of 2020 have probably made many marketers think about throwing all strategies out of the window. For professionals who like to pin plans firmly to customer behaviour patterns and marketplace trends, the world seemed suddenly tipped upside down by the unpredictable influence of Covid-19. And with changes to our professional and personal lives coming so thick and fast, it may be tempting to rely on short-term tactics and quick-wins.

But any experienced marketer knows that a well-honed strategy is the only real route to ongoing success. While reactive tactics are an important part of any plan, and can buoy up your business for the short-term, only a carefully-considered strategy that has your broader objectives at its core will help you build customer loyalty and brand equity – crucial assets for organisations facing the economic downturn we all expect during 2021.

Adapting to change

At The Marketing Pod, we've helped businesses from a range of sectors adapt to a world where the only real constant seems to be change. Here are our top tips for building a more robust and effective plan right now:

Jodie Williams,
co-founder and director,
The Marketing Pod



1: Check your position

With the landscape constantly changing, many marketers are finding their tried-and-tested techniques are no longer working. If some of your competitors have left the marketplace, or if they're trying something different themselves, it's worth checking that your brand still occupies a distinctive position in the market. If you can no longer differentiate yourself and offer customers something your competition can't, it's time to adjust your positioning and rethink your brand proposition. This will lay the strongest possible foundation for your new marketing plan.

2: Build in flexibility

Ongoing uncertainty means that the plan you create for 2021 must be both innovative and agile, with enough structure to guide activity, but enough flexibility to adapt quickly and seamlessly when needed. As always, the best plans will be informed by reliable insight, but with customer insight more complex right now, it will be important to focus on what you do know. So stay close to your data, and be prepared to pause, modify or pivot your activity if necessary. Clear sign-off processes and good lines of communication will make this all more achievable, so do take the time to get those things in place too.

3. Make good use of martech

Used well, martech can be a marketer's best friend – and an invaluable tool for building your adaptable, data-driven marketing plan. Be sure to maximise on martech that keeps all activity visible and measurable, so that you can easily track your contribution towards wider business objectives, stop activity that isn't working, and refocus your effort and budget in the right places. And with marketplaces evolving so quickly, I can't overstate the importance of incorporating A/B or iterative 'test and learn' into your strategy, and of having the right tools at your disposal to make this an efficient process for your teams. It's something we're fierce proponents of here at the Pod, especially when our clients need to optimise the value of their activity during these challenging and uncertain times.

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Why companies struggle to make martech a great success story in their organisations

Raffaele Apostoliti outlines the number one hurdle that organisations face in their quest to benefit from their martech investment

Recent articles show that there are more than 7000 martech applications in the market, signifying an incredible growth over the last 10 years.

This is undoubtedly a sure sign that martech plays a growing and essential role in marketing. However, it can also open up a challenge for marketing departments to understand which applications are most useful, along with how to successfully integrate them to maximise demand generation results.

Martech applications play a role in three key steps of the process – market analysis and planning, campaign execution, and ROI assessment – that cannot be replaced by any other resource or asset.

In step one, martech enables you to size your total addressable market and segment it. You can enrich data, understand your target audience (including understanding the overall sentiment towards your offering and your competitors'), recognise key influencers by topic, and identify the best channels to drive your messages to the right audience, etc.

What's more, you can detect 'signals' from companies or individual decision-makers about their intent or preference in buying a category of products or a specific brand offering.

In step two, the execution phase, martech delivers an even higher number of applications. These empower content management, personalised

Raffaele Apostoliti,
president and CEO,
Expandi Group



delivery (emails, videos, chatbox, etc), individualised offerings (upselling, cross-selling, renewal, win-back promotions, etc), real-time reporting, media management, tracking of target-audience behaviour, build scoring, and trigger actions.

In step three, you can also assess campaign performance, utilising capabilities like multi-touch attribution models to gather intelligence and form an understanding of what worked and why, gaining insights for better planning of future campaigns.

By bringing all this together to boost your predictive analytics capabilities, you can build the right offer (what) for the right audience (who) at the right time (when).

What is the greatest hurdle marketers face to ensure that they will fully benefit from their investment in martech? Ultimately, it is the acquisition and retention of talent who will get the most out of the technology, who can be very hard to find and keep, as they are highly demanded in the market.

First of all, the landscape is very complex and continually changing. Your tech department is not necessarily focused on marketing apps, and it can be an ongoing challenge and investment for your marketing department to keep up in such a fast-moving discipline. It is essential to employ skilled resources proficient in both marketing and technology, who are able to 'live and breathe' the martech world, and provide you with the right insights.

Secondly, it can be very challenging to integrate several vendors and modules in an end-to-end software stack, to include all three steps above. All vendors would claim 'smooth integration' and 'automatic data transfer' within their apps, but the reality is that perfect systems integration and seamless data transfer simply do not exist. You need smart engineers who can continually work to minimise issues and mitigate any loss of efficiency.

Finally, faced with ever increasing volumes of data, you need data scientists who are able to understand and generate a concrete impact on your marketing operations.

Agencies need to play a key role in helping clients mitigate all of these challenges, and maximise the power of martech for their business.

Forget internal versus external: dynamic 'consortiums' are key to B2B marketing resources in 2021



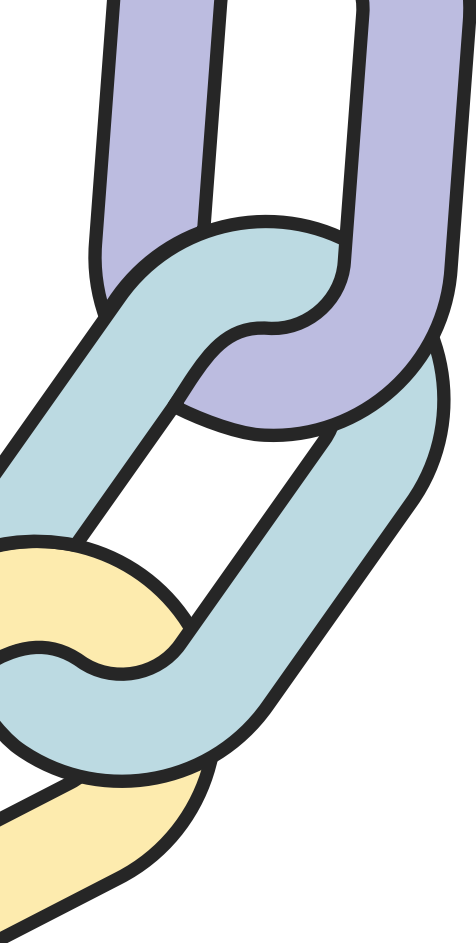
If you want to understand how the relationship between clients and agencies functioned historically, arguably the best way to do this is watch an episode from the first series of *Mad Men*. Alongside and intertwined with the main narrative, you'll glimpse a world where agencies (once briefed) operated from behind closed doors, with the creative solution dependant entirely on a flash of inspiration from the creative director. The resulting

creative was then delivered as a fait accompli to the enraptured client, who promptly scurried off gratefully, eager to see their ad in the press.

These days, it couldn't be more different. Boundaries between client and agency teams significantly blurred, plus the proliferation of freelancing, consulting and an apparent growing trend for 'insourcing' via internal agencies (operating from within the client's marketing function) result in a highly

fluid situation regarding marketing resources. This can be great for CMOs requiring flexibility, but, for those with different priorities, it can make it extremely difficult for marketing leaders to work out what their optimum resource deployment looks like, given their needs and the bewildering and nuanced range of options.

So far, so potentially confusing. So, what impact would the turmoil of 2020 have on marketing team



B2B marketing leaders have increasingly been relying on a sophisticated and fluid network of internal and external resources to deliver on objectives, with agencies, freelancers and consultants fitting as required, and scaled up and down as necessary. Covid-19, as with so many things, has only served to accelerate and exacerbate that process – so said attendees to our recent B2B Marketing Leaders virtual roundtable. **Joel Harrison** provides a summary of the standout conclusions

resources in general (both internal and external) and use of agencies in particular? Would it help clarify the situation, or only make it more complex? Given that inclusions in our annual agencies league table look set to be stronger than ever, we can say with confidence that the B2B agency sector, has, if anything, thrived under Covid-19. But what impact has it had on B2B marketing leaders and their resource strategies? That's what we sought to discover in our latest B2B Marketing Leaders virtual roundtable, which, as ever, was attended by a mix of senior B2B marketers, from a range of client organisations in various sectors. Here's what I learned:

1. Changing circumstances = changing expectations

The decision regarding which marketing team functions to outsource and which to insource has always been pertinent,

but never more so than today, following the year that was 2020, when tough decisions had to be made, priorities shifted, and expectations about what the future might look like were reshaped. Both for better and for worse.

2. Has the insourcing bandwagon run out of momentum?

The growth of specialist insourcing recruiter Oliver and others has made insourcing a prominent trend in recent years, but its relevance seems far less clear in the context of Covid-19, with many marketers being required to cut headcount and place flexibility at the top of their list of priorities. By contrast, working with a completely separate agency, which is a resource that can be

turned up or down as required, or even turned off altogether, feels much more appropriate. That's not to say that internal agencies have become irrelevant overnight – far from it. But there seems to have been a noticeable and significant shift towards flexibility.

3. Two 'P's that are critical to overall resource management

Partnership and pragmatism are the watchwords of great internal and external team creation and management. Partnership is a pretty hackneyed word, but the days of 'us and them' between client and agency teams are ancient history. It's not just that chemistry creates good work – that's always been true, but that the nature and structure of work going into 2021 demands a more integrated, flexible and collaborative approach.

4. It's not just a budgeting challenge: it's a leadership challenge

Management of internal resources has become an increasingly critical part of B2B marketers' skillset and competency, but external team members (i.e. agencies, freelancers or consultants) require a different approach and set of competencies. Whilst the CFO might boil it down to being all about budgets, and getting the cheapest resource solution, effective delivery is a leadership challenge, and keeping this combined mix of internal and external individuals pulling together and thinking and acting cohesively is a more significant determinant of success.

5. A tyranny of choice?

Any discussion around internal and external teams is broader than it used to be, with a significantly expanded universe of options to choose from, beyond the traditional marketing agency... if such a thing exists. It increasingly includes tactical execution specialists, with deep knowledge about a particular channel, tool or technique (such as video), strategy agencies (who won't get involved in execution at all), very high value freelancers (borderline consultants), who can offer high level advice at a lower cost than an agency might, and right down to operational freelancers, available via online platforms. This bewildering array of options creates a tyranny of choice for marketers.

6. Why the safe, procurement-friendly partner may actually be high risk

Even when marketers are looking for a relatively traditional

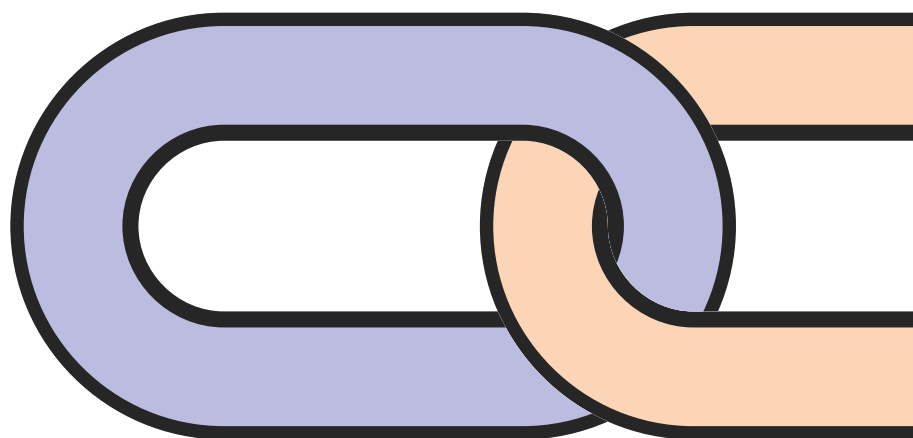
For larger corporates, larger agency groups are seen as 'safer' by procurement teams, but that belies the flexibility, dedication and sector knowledge that can be gleaned from working with smaller outfits

integrated creative agency, the problem is how to choose. There are so many out there, all of whom are good, and could probably do a good job. So, how do you find the right one for you, particularly in B2B? Matchmaking services are available, but they tend to lean towards B2C. For larger corporates, larger agency groups are seen as 'safer' by procurement teams, but that belies the flexibility, dedication and sector knowledge that can be gleaned from working with smaller outfits. The battle to convince these gatekeepers of the benefits of taking a perceived risk can be prohibitive.

7. Global resourcing is exponentially more complex

It's logical and obvious that making the best out of internal resources is key to determining the right approach to outsourcing. But that's easier said than done, and the situation is complicated for global organisations, and strategies often fluctuate over time as different priorities come to the fore. For example, one attendee said that her organisation had migrated from centres of excellence in a specific geographical location, which often resulted in a failure to understand cultural nuances for campaigns. Learning from this, they are now seeking to establish centres of excellence based on virtual principles and using agile techniques, pulling in members from around the world as requirements demand. This should overcome challenges of cultural relevance, but will also present its own set of management and leadership challenges. Conversely, it was felt it was particularly hard to find an agency that could deliver

Clients and agencies should define the nature and limitations of the engagement, but also provide permission to challenge briefs or thinking, in order to push the boundaries in a way that's comfortable for both sides, and ultimately likely to lead to greater success



consistently internationally at a price that was reasonable.

8. Skin in the game

The shift in relationships between client and agency is a two-way street, and there's a growing opportunity for agencies to demonstrate willingness to put some 'skin in the game.' This is by no means standard practice, but we're starting to see examples of it emerging, including, at a basic level, an 'incentives versus penalties' approach to outsourcing specific functions (rather than a more static retainer), or, at a more extreme level, some kind of profit share, or even equity stake for marketing delivered as a payment in kind. This is obviously most appropriate for start-ups or fast-growing

agencies, but it also underpins the onus on partnership, rather than supplier/contractor.

9. Success demands boundaries be pushed

Even great relationships require management and sometimes boundaries. Clients and agencies should define the nature and limitations of the engagement, but also provide permission to challenge briefs or thinking, in order to push the boundaries in a way that's comfortable for both sides, and ultimately likely to lead to greater success.

10. Tectonic shifts in the agency landscape

The agency landscape is changing, and there seems to

be a background consensus that the big agency groups may have had their day. The agency of the future is likely to be more footloose and flexible, and more responsive to changing client requirements and consequent opportunities. This suits the B2B agency sector well.

Today, B2B marketers are probably more reliant than ever on external resources to ensure effective delivery of all marketing responsibilities. However, the range of options available is bewildering and, consequently, management challenges have never been more acute. If it ever were the case that all marketers need to do is manage one strong agency relationship, plus a small internal team, and the rest will take care of itself, that certainly isn't the case today!

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and accelerate demand. See our work at: torpedogroup.com

Brand creation

Integrated campaigns

Digital experiences

Growth strategy

Using creativity to unite disparate buyers

Used correctly, creativity can bring your disparate buyers together around a shared vision, explains Ben Hodge

Today, buying committees are more physically disparate than ever before, but, as marketers, we've become very adept at getting our messages in front of the right people at the right time, regardless of location. It's widely acknowledged that around two-thirds of a typical B2B buying journey takes place online – with the remainder being predominantly sales-led activity.

So, the reality is that today's 'new normal' poses a much greater challenge for sales teams than it does for marketers. Now, more than ever, as marketers we need to step-up, share our skills and help to empower our sales counterparts as they redefine the way they sell.

Tackling disparate buyer perspectives is a significantly greater challenge. But, it's the complexity of multi-stakeholder buying journeys that makes B2B arguably the most interesting marketing discipline. It gives us the opportunity to flex strategic and creative muscles that don't come into play elsewhere.

And while buying committees are getting bigger and therefore more fragmented, the fundamental basis for creating effective messaging remains the same. The key is and always will be, understanding your audience. A larger buying committee just means there's more groundwork to do.

Most marketing teams tend to consider two to three personas in their planning. These are the roles that typically engage mid-journey – the ones that

Ben Hodge,
strategy director,
Torpedo



make the enquiries that become leads. But what about those other stakeholders? In 2019, Gartner reported the average B2B buying committee includes seven people.¹ 'Invisible' stakeholders can stop a deal in its tracks or halt the journey before you even know it's begun.

If you've not mapped your customer buying journey from end-to-end, then you really should. It'll be one of the most enlightening exercises you do as a B2B marketer. Strive to understand the role of every stakeholder along the way. Consider their individual motivations, challenges and objectives, and the questions and concerns they'll have at every stage. You can then create content that answers your buyers' specific needs and leaves them confident your product or service is the right solution.

There's often a temptation to create one-size-fits-all content, but this usually isn't a good fit for anyone. Marketers who invest in really understanding the multi-stakeholder journey will know exactly what they need to communicate to overcome the obstacles and take their buyers further along the journey. Seeing the whole picture is the first step to bringing buyers together around a single shared idea.

There's often a temptation to create one-size-fits-all content, but this usually isn't a good fit for anyone

That's where creativity comes into play. Where content converts, creativity unites.

The most effective creative ideas are based on shared truths. They tap into a common motivation or belief that exists across your audience. That big creative idea is the catalyst for action. It will get everyone heading in the right direction and bring buyers together around a shared vision for their business – a vision in which your brand plays a positive, enabling role.

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AGENCY

2021 – another big year for digital and content creation?

While 2020 saw a momentous shift to all things digital, what does 2021 have in store for B2B?

As 2019 drew to a close, we headed into 2020 focused on what was in store for the year ahead. There was the usual chat about emerging trends and innovation, with the smart money backing bigger things in digital-first innovations such as VR, AR, AI and automation. It was clear that digital would continue to play a big role in B2B, but little did we know that we were standing on the edge of a huge year for digital across all areas of marketing.

2020 saw marketers and buyers alike experiencing a forced transition to all things digital, from the fast adoption and widespread use of virtual meetings and collaborative remote working platforms, through to the sudden mass demand for content transformation, martech and digital engagement tools.

The need for business to be carried out digitally, remotely and virtually will remain, but 2021 will see a rise in expectations. Businesses are looking to maximise the effectiveness of their marketing: creating communications that actually work, and driving measurable value from the activities they undertake.

With our teams from strategy, creative and client services working with client challenges and their inherent pressures, we have addressed the topics we believe will continue to keep our clients awake at night, and where we will see the emergence of new strategies and marketing development.

Content is a constant

In an area that historically soaks up huge chunks of marketing budget, marketers are being put

Simon Moon,
*director of marketing
and business development,
Purple Agency*



under more pressure to demonstrate returns on content performance.

Driven by this need for performance, we anticipate a greying of the lines between content marketing and media. Previously working as two separate entities, the development of combined strategies offers up more creative content that drives an improvement on ROI – a push and pull strategy utilising traditional inbound marketing methodologies alongside media and content syndication practices is key.

Data-driven marketing also remains a focus. Building relevant and purposeful content and messaging for all stages of the customer journey is essential, whether that be for sales and marketing aligned ABM, or wider brand and product campaigns. In all instances, the emphasis is firmly on demand generation and performance.

Digital experience

Digital continues to be driven by a customer-first perspective, with a need for all forms of digital communications to become less passive, and more immersive. With everything from meetings to events moving to virtual platforms, the need for enhanced customer engagement tools has increased. Ultimately, we need to take a real-time read of the room – virtually.

AI will bring new levels of performance to customer experience in the areas of search, lead management and automation, enabling tailored digital interactions and enhanced content navigation. Data will continue to build in importance in this area – in its ability to inform all stages of the customer lifecycle and the development of creative messaging, end-to-end personalisation and more relevant and engaging customer content, campaigns, applications and experiences.

In summary

This year, digital will dominate once again. Enhanced performance in each of the two areas above is key, so, in our opinion, keep a firm eye on the emerging technologies and strategies in both content creation and digital experience. It's set to be an interesting year.



AND THEY SAID BIG WOULD NEVER GO OUT OF FASHION

Back in the day, big was beautiful. The larger the agency network, the better.

Today, international clients still need an agency with a global footprint, but they're also looking for speed and great marketing ideas.

BBN, with over 50 international offices, is a global B2B powerhouse that puts flexibility and agility at the heart of our approach.

The agency group was built from the bottom up. Each local office shares in the ownership of BBN (not the other way around). The result is a more entrepreneurial culture with a diversity of perspective.

Our agile teams are built around you, and your specific B2B marketing needs.

Our matrix structure gives you access to the best talent. From country experts and culturally sensitive creatives to world-beating production and data-driven media buying – all without the cost associated with more bureaucratic structures or the monoculture of other networks and groups.

If you'd like to know more about agile B2B marketing solutions that scale, visit bbn-international.com or contact Annette on annette@bbn-international.com

How to cut through ad tech jargon to connect with B2B audiences and execute integrated comms

Zoe Elmore explains how using the right ad tech can transform how you reach your target B2B audiences

DSP, PMP, DMP, ABA... WTF!? With so many acronyms and platforms with the ever-alluring promise of unlocking a single-view on key B2B prospects and automating marketing campaigns, it can be next to impossible to discern how tech can support your marketing efforts.

However, all is not lost. Embracing the power of a truly integrated ad tech stack allows B2B marketers to seamlessly integrate, automate and execute multi-channel and data-driven marketing campaigns, from a single view, all with the click of a button (ok, a few buttons).

So how do we define an ad stack? At its core, an ad stack is a streamlined, cohesive approach to maximise the efficiency of campaigns across all points of the funnel, providing an end-to-end solution from audience identification and profiling to media planning, buying to evaluation and financial reconciliation – all personalised for your business. Simply put, ad stacks are a series of digital technology platforms that get your message in front of the right business prospect, so they will take a desired action, such as buying a product, or contacting a sales rep.

It's no secret that B2B audiences are extremely difficult to accurately identify and target. These audiences are, by nature, dynamic, diverse and fragmented. Traditional B2B audience creation techniques identify a fraction of the total population and are static – not taking into

Zoe Elmore,
head of media,
BBN International



account continual movement across companies, sectors and geographies. Additionally, traditional methods are not able to refine these audiences with business intent signals to identify those currently in market for specific products and services.

By leveraging a comprehensive ad stack, B2B audiences can be built on a foundation of high-quality online signals and firmographic data, and provide a unique, scalable and accurate method to reach the right business audiences at the right time. Ultimately, they can be seamlessly and directly targeted via digital media amplification with personalised, sequential messaging across multiple channels.

So where do you start building your own ad stack?

- ▶ Clearly define your target audiences and business objectives, as this will determine the right technology partners to make up your ad stack.
- ▶ Learn the digital ecosystem (and yes, this includes acronyms) and understand how tech platforms work together to power both on and offline marketing campaigns.
- ▶ Invest in an ad stack that meets your individual business needs, not based solely on price. A cheap platform that doesn't support you in meeting your business objectives will cost you more in the long run. In the same vein, do not feel obligated to use multiple platforms from the same vendor. The beauty of technology is that all platforms – no matter who built them – can generally speak to each other and share information.
- ▶ Lean on your agency. We're here to support you in navigating the murky world of ad tech. Most agencies also invest (or should!) in their own stack, which in many cases can be utilised to support client planning and execution of integrated marketing campaigns.

When it's all said and done, while complex, learning and investing in the right ad technology can radically transform how you identify and engage your target B2B audiences – effectively, efficiently, and ultimately, driving ROI for your business.

Services selector

Agencies were asked to select three options that best reflect their primary services

	BBN International	Big Ideas Machine	Bray Leino	Expandi Group	Gravity Global	Kingpin	Merkle B2B	Miramar	MOI Global	Move Marketing	MSQ B2B	Napier	Purple Agency	Radley Yeldar	The Marketing Pod	Torpedo	twogether
ABM				✓					✓				✓				✓
Branding	✓		✓		✓						✓			✓			
Campaign and creative execution	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Channel marketing				✓		✓		✓									
Content marketing services <i>(including video)</i>		✓										✓	✓			✓	
Demand generation <i>(including telemarketing)</i>				✓		✓		✓									
Digital <i>(e.g. mobile, social media, SEO/PPC, web design/development, etc)</i>			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	
Employee experience														✓			
Marketing planning/strategy					✓					✓					✓		
Martech <i>(deployment and/or management)</i>	✓																
Media planning/buying						✓	✓										✓
PR		✓										✓					

Section 2:

Agency profiles

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MOI	92		

BBN International

Philosophy

The best agencies are built on the entrepreneurial spirit of their founders and senior agency executives. They are leaders who put the client and the quality of their work first – not the requirement to meet holding company profit targets by reducing agency costs.

With more than a thousand B2B specialists working in over 50 offices across 30 countries, our entrepreneurial approach is principal led. The result? Better work that generates significantly improved economic value for our clients – fostering a longer-term client-agency relationship that is built on mutual trust, value and respect.

Our matrix structure provides delivery teams that consist of in-depth industry experience, technical and creative expertise and extensive geographic coverage. Together, we are adept at responding to client challenges – providing insightful, effective strategies that are carefully tailored to the regions in which they operate. This unparalleled access to a variety of highly specialised skill sets is critically important in delivering end-to-end solutions and results which connect with all target audiences, wherever and whenever required, while giving our clients a one-agency experience.

Awards

Gold, Content marketing: video (short form) *B2 Awards 2020*

Winner, Creative agency of the year *Ace 2020*

Gold, Online video for Mitsubishi Electric *Communicator Awards 2020*

Sectors



Energy and utilities



Financial services



Pharmaceuticals and life sciences



Technology and telecoms

Clients

Adobe

Corteva
Agriscience

EY

Microsoft

Nestlé

Shawcor

Year founded:
1987

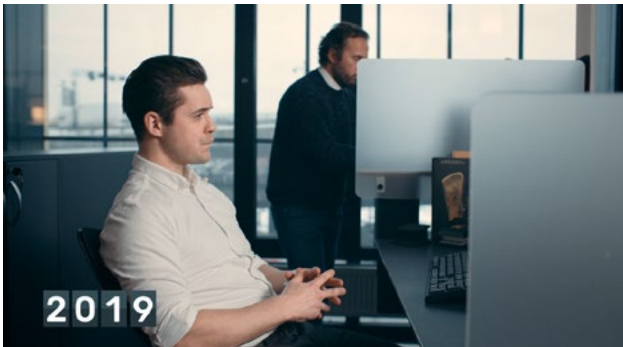
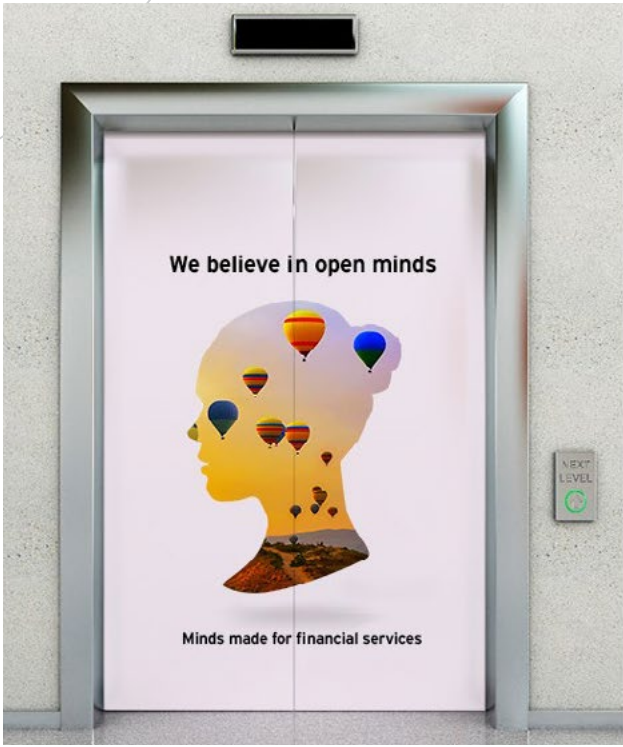
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Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 7QW



A selection of BBN success stories, from top: EY Financial Services: Minds made for financial services, A brand proposition and creative platform; Microsoft/Amesto: Moving Day, Norwegian campaign for moving to cloud solutions; Adobe: Come up to the cloud and get a new perspective, Latin American campaign; Janssen (Johnson & Johnson), new identity and communications.

Big Ideas Machine

Philosophy

Big Ideas Machine is a progressive B2B PR agency which brings creativity and innovation together with inbound marketing expertise, designed to make a real difference to our clients' businesses and bottom lines.

We believe that the way B2B PR is currently done is not in line with the way the world works, and we exist to show we all deserve better.

That's why we're all about inbound PR – a combination of PR and inbound marketing. The result? The clout that great content and writing delivers, coupled with an all-important metrics and insight-driven approach.

We are Big Ideas Machine and we stand for PR. Made better.

Awards

Shortlisted, Small PR consultancy of the year	<i>CIPR Excellence Awards 2020</i>
---	------------------------------------

Shortlisted, Best UK agency	<i>MCV Awards 2018 and 2019</i>
-----------------------------	---------------------------------

Winner, Best low budget B2B campaign	<i>SABRE EMEA Awards 2018</i>
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Sectors



Media and marketing



Technology and telecoms

Clients

Game Refinery

Mintegral

Mobvista

Year founded:
2014

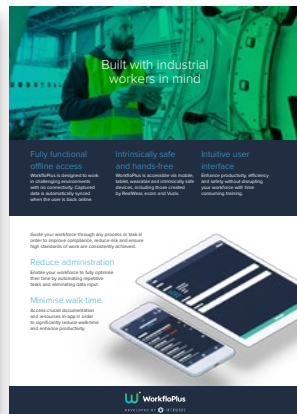
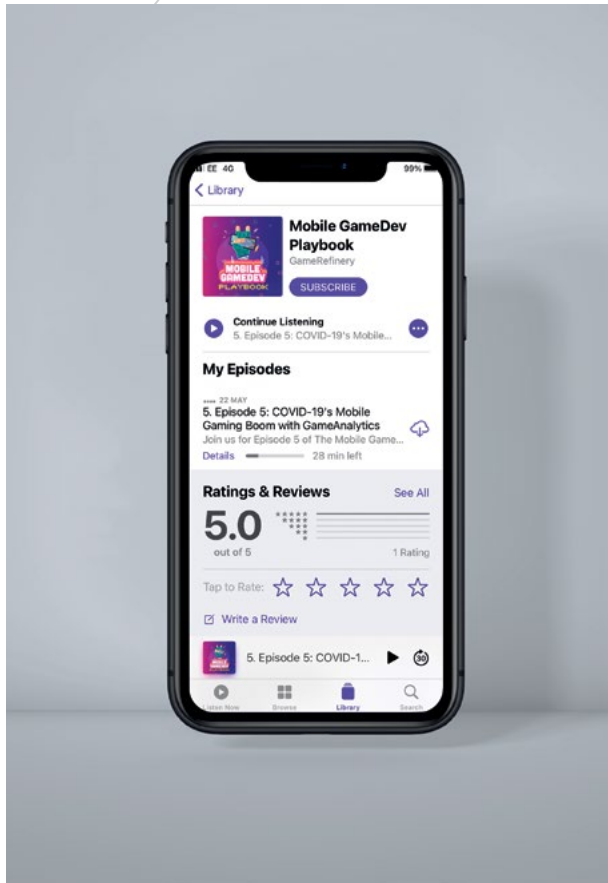
Website:
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Phone number:
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Twitter: @bigideasmachine

Address:
UK-based
virtual agency



Big Ideas Machine works with clients who know that traditional PR techniques don't work anymore. Like-minded folks who want to do things differently. And that makes for some pretty awesome results.

Bray Leino

Philosophy

Here at Bray Leino, we've spent 47 years building our capabilities around the ever-growing global needs of our B2B clients and the ever-changing B2B landscape. Now, no matter how complex the challenges, we have everything it takes to drive clients' brand and business performance in creatively exciting and commercially effective ways.

It's how we used simple, powerful messaging to prove the answer for a decarbonised future is elementary; and turned unbelievable insight into irresistible incentive, selling a software trial in a pizza box. It's also how we handled the unexpected demands of Covid-19, providing consistent support and flexible solutions based on individual client needs. It's why we consistently rank among the UK's top B2B agencies, and why our clients stay with us for four times the industry average. Our integrated offering, from innovative digital teams to creative experiential specialists and award-winning media planners, means we have all the solutions under one roof, whatever the problem. We find a way, whatever it takes.

Awards

Platinum	<i>IPA Continuous Professional Development 2020</i>
Gold, Best stand at an energy and mining event	<i>World Exhibition Stand Awards 2020</i>

Sectors



Energy and utilities



Financial services



Industrial, manufacturing, engineering



Maritime

Clients

BP

Castrol

Cummins

Fleetcor

Marlink

Siemens

Year founded:
1974

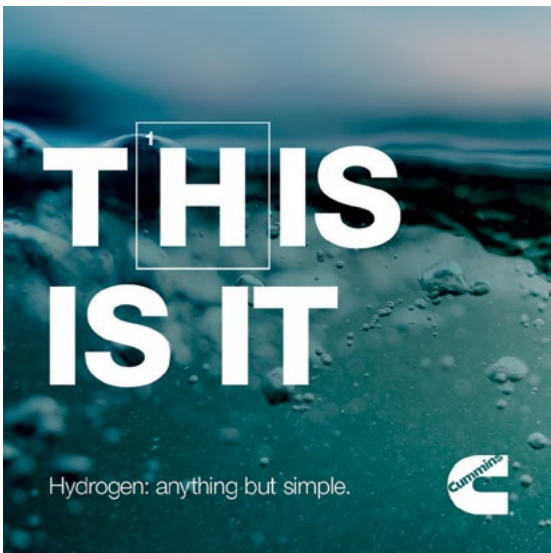
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Phone number:
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Contact email:
hello@brayleino.co.uk

Twitter: @brayleino

Address:
Old Rectory, Filleigh,
Barnstaple, Devon, EX32 0RX



Clockwise from top: Event stand for BP at E World Energy and Water; software trial incentivisation for Autino; sales-boosting promotional campaign for Castrol; awareness-raising ads for Cummins Hydrogen Day.

Expandi Group

Philosophy

The Expandi Group, founded in 2000, is made up of specialist agencies whose mission is to empower every B2B organisation and individual in achieving their growth through marketing innovation and effective ecosystems. Our dynamic team of international specialists help businesses reach their marketing objectives, bridging the gap between marketing and sales, and supporting organisations throughout the 'last mile'.

Thanks to a fully integrated set of services, we support the digital transformation of sales and marketing organisations; we build and enhance ecosystems of partners and alliances to optimise production offering and distribution coverage; and we can build the most compelling, ROI-based, and digitally-driven marketing and sales.

Our talented people scattered across 10 offices on four continents apply the group's 'glocal' approach, acknowledging the importance of a global strategy and programme framework, but placing equal importance on local insights, cultural differences and geographically specific layers of complexity to create the most successful programmes.

Sectors



Business services



Industrial, manufacturing, engineering



Technology and telecoms

Clients

HP

IBM

Kaspersky

Lenovo

Schneider

VMware

Year founded:
2000

Website:
expandigroup.com

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contactus@expandigroup.com

Twitter: @expandigroup

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38 Craven Street,
London, WC2N 5NG

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IBM Analytics' reassuringly effective business partner programme

The digital data being created will grow from a current 40 zettabytes to 175 zettabytes in 2025.*

40 Zettabytes 2019

175 Zettabytes 2025

Extracting valuable insights and predictions from it will only be achievable through business partners providing an ever-increasing portfolio of innovative solutions, expertise and insight.

IBM has access across:

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- MULTIPLE LANGUAGES
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An IBM partnership comes with resources that can't be found anywhere else:

- Leverage new technology
- Benefit from advice given by domain and industry experts
- Access scalability and reach
- Tap into helpful financing resource
- Accelerate marketplace readiness
- Innovate, differentiate, monetise opportunities, invest, and reduce costs

IBM Analytics – the difference

Whereas Business Intelligence (BI) solutions generally fail to integrate the Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning powering an unparalleled competitive edge, AI-embedded IBM Analytics don't just tell you WHAT'S happening but also WHY.

Along with advanced analytics, IBM Cognos Analytics includes an AI conversational assistant, AI-recommended visualisations and insights, Machine Learning, and user-centric data preparation and modelling.

CIOs see BI/analytics as the #1 differentiating technology

Discover its remarkable capabilities for yourself

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Examples of creative material and marketing campaigns executed for Expandi Group's clients.

Gravity Global

Philosophy

Gravity Global is a brand-to-demand consultancy that works with B2B businesses on a global scale, whether start-up or multinational. We transform the commercial success of our clients through the power of marketing performance. As the world's most awarded B2B network, Gravity Global is recognised for making a transformational impact on brand strength that creatively disrupts how businesses go to market and sell through digitally focused channels.

We help build successful brands through our data-driven brand-to-demand performance methodology: Fame, Admiration and Belief (FAB).





Applying FAB enables us to benchmark our clients' current brand and market performance, define their future go-to-market programmes, and measure, track and optimise marketing activities across all the critical factors for their success.

Gravity Global takes an integrated approach when creating global brand-to-demand programmes that enable brands to outperform their rivals. We have demonstrated that using FAB optimises the critical performance levers to deliver a 'disproportionate share of attention' for brands – compared to their actual market share and marketing investment – ultimately accelerating their market growth.

Awards

Gold, Best brand initiative	<i>The B2B Marketing Awards 2020</i>
Gold, Best use of digital techniques or technology	<i>The B2B Marketing Awards 2020</i>
Winner, Best multichannel campaign	<i>The Drum B2B Awards 2020</i>

Sectors

-  Aerospace and defence
-  Automotive
-  Financial services
-  Technology and telecoms

Clients

- CFM
- Embraer
- MAN Truck & Bus
- Sage
- Santander

Year founded:

1989 as A.G.A Group, 2010 as Gravity

Website:

gravityglobal.com

Phone number:

+44 (0) 207 330 8810

Contact email:

comotosho@gravityglobal.com

Twitter: @Gravity_Global

Address:

69 Wilson Street,
London, EC2A 2BB

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WRINGS
MAN

Superhuman
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Reflecting on the past. Looking to the future.

Our CEO: all the customers have helped CFM define the power of flight and these relationships have been the very heart of our business for more than four decades. Today, we have the power to lead from the future. Extraordinary together.

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FAB

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Just some examples of Gravity Global's award-winning work.

Kingpin

Philosophy

Kingpin accelerates growth for B2B technology brands through data-driven marketing programmes that reach, engage, influence and convert business customers. Everything we do is underpinned by data, insights and actionable intelligence into how B2B customers behave, research and purchase.

Understanding the complex journeys, buyer groups and business challenges and priorities is the key for delivering measurable results.

We are more than just a service provider. We are partners, consultants and friends, working with our clients day-in, day-out to produce exceptional campaigns that deliver exceptional results.

Awards

Grand prix	<i>The Drum Digital Advertising Awards Europe 2020</i>
B2B	<i>The Drum Digital Advertising Awards Europe 2020</i>
Best use of data and insights	<i>The Drum Recommends Awards 2019</i>

Sectors



Technology and telecoms

Clients

Microsoft
Quest Software
Salesforce
SonicWall
Slack
Trend Micro

Year founded:
1997

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Phone number:
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Twitter: @kingpincomms

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Actionable Intelligence.

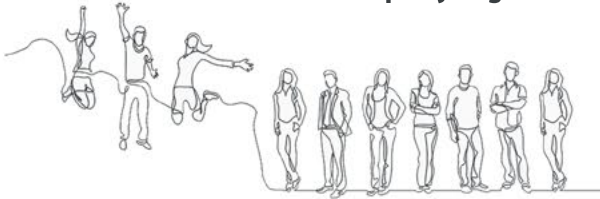
Measurable Results.

How are **decision makers** researching in lockdown?

In the absence of live events, which of the following would be your preferred information sources for when you are researching new technology solutions and services for your business?



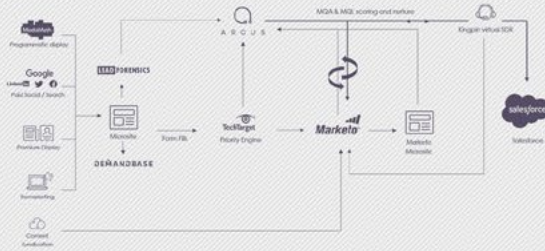
Only 3 in 10 sales / marketing professionals think their departments are completely aligned



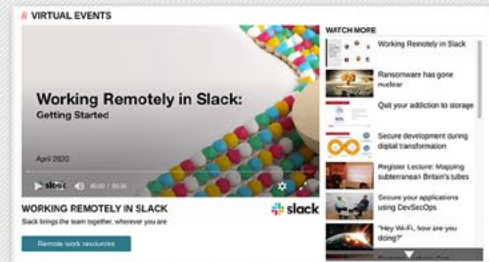
How are **IT decision makers** engaging with virtual events since lockdown?



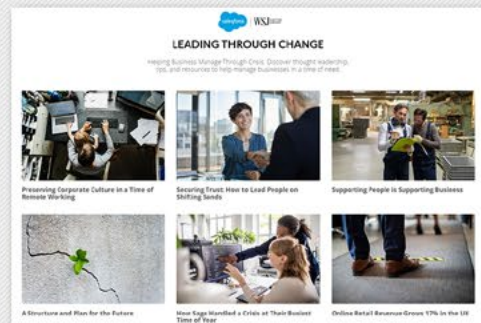
An account-based demand engine that drove **613% ROI** for BAE Systems



A global ABM demand gen programme that reached and engaged **67% of the target account list** for Slack



A highly-targeted UK brand awareness campaign, delivering a **6.5x above benchmark CTR** for Salesforce



A small selection of the actionable intelligence and measurable results that Kingpin has delivered for its clients over the past 12 months

Merkle B2B

Philosophy

B2B marketing is in the middle of a profound transformation. The old playbook isn't going to work anymore. The customer, the marketing environment, and the competitive landscape are changing. B2B marketers have to think differently in this new environment.

Today's B2B customers expect it to be easy to access the information they want. They expect brands to know who they are and where they are in the journey, for conversations to be picked up cross-channel, and for experiences to be anticipatory.

We believe the future of B2B marketing will be increasingly personal, informed by data, enabled by technology and powered by creativity, which is why we have created a new agency – Merkle B2B.

A global, purpose-built agency to deliver the world's first end-to-end, fully integrated B2B solution, Merkle B2B combines the strengths of Merkle, DWA, gyro, B2B International and Digital Pi, uniting capabilities across data, technology, research, media, creative and marketing automation.

Our vision is to architect the ultimate B2B customer experience and be an indispensable growth partner to the world's leading B2B brands.

Awards

Winner, Integrated marketing communications brand strategy *ANA B2 2019*

Recognised B2B marketing agency *Forrester 2019*

Emerging solutions partner of the year *Adobe 2020*

Sectors



Financial services



Professional services



Property and construction



Technology/IT

Clients

Cisco

Fujitsu

Genpact

JLL

World Courier

Year founded:
2020

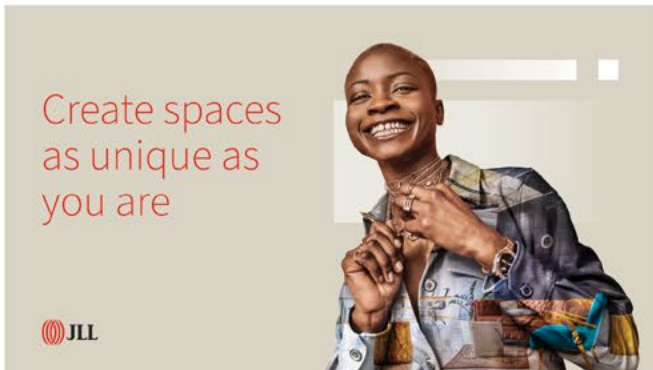
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Merkle B2B creates compelling brand narratives through strategic power, and brings them to life through humanly relevant creative ideas.

Miramar

Philosophy

At Miramar, we're passionate about putting our clients ahead. We maintain a razor-sharp focus on your ROI, so our digital and creative prowess always serves a clear purpose. We don't do marketing for marketing's sake. Results come first. How do we get those results? By taking a solution-driven and client-first approach to every campaign.

Finding the right solution for ROI starts with strategy. We harness our expert knowledge of B2B audiences to identify the best approach for each client and project. It's not about rushing into whatever's trendy or pitching the same tactics over and over. We're not afraid to experiment for the best returns. And our proactive, can-do attitude allows us to keep adapting to the ever-evolving world of marketing. We're also committed to our clients. We've built our success on forging strong personal connections with the people we work with, because the greatest partnerships yield the best results.





And the way we connect in-house matters too. All our people share the same passion for what we do. We enjoy it. Life's too short not to.

Finally, we're proud to be independently owned, meaning we don't compromise on our belief that good work leads to more work.

Awards

Silver, Best use of direct mail	<i>The B2B Marketing Awards 2019</i>
Finalist, Client services	<i>The Drum Agency Business Awards 2019</i>
Finalist, Best ROI campaign	<i>The Drum B2B Awards 2020</i>

Sectors

-  Financial services
-  Pharmaceuticals and life sciences
-  Professional services
-  Technology and telecoms

Clients

- BAE Systems
- Broadcom
- Fujitsu
- Hitachi
- SAP Concur
- Snow

Year founded:
2008

Website:
miramar-group.co.uk

Phone number:
+44 (0) 1491 825 288

Contact email:
hello@miramar-group.co.uk

Twitter: @MiramarAgency

Address:
Kestrel House, Howbery Park,
Wallingford, Oxfordshire

Softcat

DELLEMC

47,700%
ROI

Partner incentive campaign yielded exceptional results.



SALESFLOOR
Mayhem



HISCOX
EVER ONWARDS

243
meetings
achieved
2,486%
ROI

Exhibitor event stand design and supporting campaign.

Panasonic
BUSINESS

779%
increase
in value

Channel incentive that increased the value of deal registrations.

RACE INTO THE LAP OF
LUXURY



MOI Global

Philosophy

When today's always-on world means buyers can research, reject, or shortlist your brand without even talking to you, we'll get you involved in the conversation.

MOI Global is a B2B creative agency that'll connect you with a new breed of buyer, ask the questions that reveal the truth behind their needs, and re-engineer your marketing ecosystem to target where they hang out and who they take notice of.

With offices around the world, including Dubai, Munich, London, San Francisco, Singapore, Sydney and New York, MOI's global presence is responsible for delivering some of the world's most commercially successful marketing strategies in the technology sector.

We're a growing agency, with 100+ marketing experts and creative thinkers who have already delivered 400+ head-turning projects across our four core capabilities: account-based marketing (ABM), creative, digital, and experiential.

Awards

Gold, B2B agency of the year	<i>Marketing Magazine 2019</i>
Gold, Independent agency of the year	<i>Marketing Magazine 2019</i>
Gold, Best lead generation or nurturing campaign	<i>The B2B Marketing Awards 2019</i>

Sectors



Technology and telecoms

Clients

Ciena
 DXC
 Google Cloud
 Oracle
 Red Hat
 ServiceNow

Year founded:
1987

Website:
moi-global.com

Phone number:
+44 (0) 1932 826 600

Contact email:
turningheads@moi-global.com

Twitter: @MOIGlobal

Address:
Waterloo House, 40 Baker Street,
Weybridge, Surrey, KT13 8AF

MOI

TURNING THE HEADS THAT COUNT IN B2B

LONDON | MUNICH | NEW YORK | DUBAI | SINGAPORE



RIDING THE DIGITAL WAVE

Capturing Southeast Asia's digital consumer in the Discovery Generation

facebook.

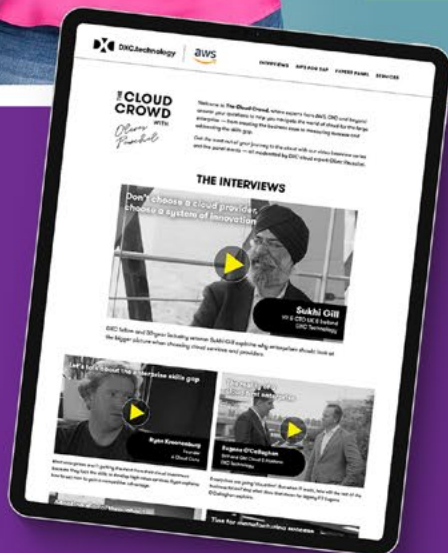


servicenow.

See workflows present your business from one viewpoint.

Reimagine your service experience with ITSM and ITOM.

Get the Ebook



TRUATA.

WANT TO DO MORE WITH YOUR DATA?

REVEAL HIDDEN RISKS | RENDER DATA SAFE | REAP THE REWARDS



MOI Global transforms relationships between customers and B2B technology brands, with head-turning marketing and advertising for the likes of Facebook, ServiceNow, Amazon Web Services, DXC Technology and Truata.

Move Marketing

Philosophy

Established in 2017, Manchester and Cambridge-based Move Marketing is an integrated B2B marketing agency. We help science-based companies and industrial manufacturers articulate complex technical messages and communicate better with their customers and prospects across a variety of channels both in the UK and on an international scale.




Our clients typically export 80% of their product sales, so cross-border fluency is a key element of the expertise we provide. Fundamentally, we help drive thought leadership positions for our clients using a unique strategic planning framework developed over the course of 20 years and more than 200 marketing audit and planning processes for industrial and scientific SMEs.

Clients generally come to us with clear business objectives and marketing problems. Our unique 'eight moves of B2B' planning framework provides an audit, strategy preparation and review solution. Move then manages the entire process of defining the message, how it's articulated and which marketing channels are used, as well as the purchasing of media space. We then use the latest martech tools to interpret campaign data in order to optimise our clients' ongoing B2B marketing tactics.

Awards

Highly commended, Agency of the year	<i>The Drum B2B Awards 2020</i>
Winner, Best small agency of the year	<i>Northern Marketing Awards 2019</i>
Winner, Small integrated agency of the year	<i>Prolific North Awards 2019</i>

Sectors

-  Industrial, manufacturing, engineering
-  Pharmaceuticals and life sciences
-  Technology and telecoms

Clients

- Cambridge Vacuum Engineering
- Delta Scientific
- EIZO
- Goodfellow
- SSE Energy Solutions

Year founded:
2017

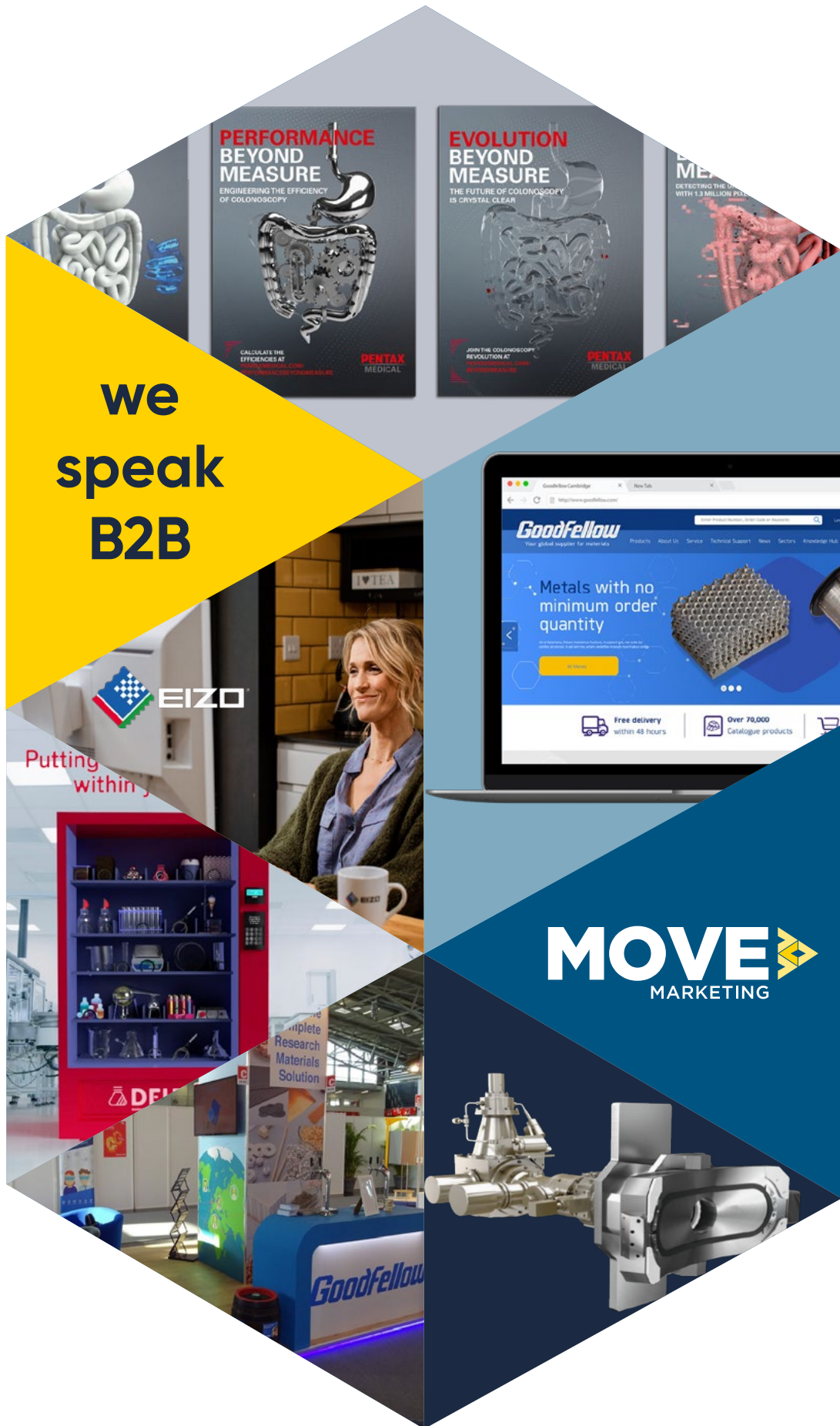
Website:
movemarketing.co.uk

Phone number:
+44 (0) 1613 594 363

Contact email:
info@movemarketing.co.uk

Twitter: @move_b2b

Address:
53 King Street,
Manchester, M2 4LQ



**we
speak
B2B**

MOVE 
MARKETING

Examples of Move's creative work, including digital advertising, animation and websites.

MSQ B2B

Philosophy

At a time of transformative change, the challenge and opportunity for B2B brands are the same. Engage buyers emotionally and rationally through creativity and innovation. Sharpen competitive advantage through data and technology. Put purpose at the heart of sustainable growth. Provide consistent and connected brand experiences at every touch point in the customer journey. Do so with empathy and integrity. In doing so, become a trusted partner. Said succinctly, become a high-EQ business brand.

MSQ B2B believes that's what B2B brands need to be. And that's what we're uniquely suited to help your brand become. MSQ B2B provides the most advanced brand-to-demand offering in the world. Agile. Adaptable. A joined-up community of best-in-class agencies with best-of-breed capabilities to meet any need across every geography.

Our nearly 800 people across eight agencies and 12 offices give B2B marketers scale and intimacy, breadth of capability and depth of expertise – together with an agile approach to configuring and delivering exactly what's needed.

Awards

Agency of the year	ANA 2020 B2B
Martech strategy agency of the year	B2B Marketing Martech Awards 2020
Agency of the year	The Drum 2020 Agency Business Awards

Sectors

-  Financial services
-  Industrial, manufacturing, engineering
-  Pharmaceuticals and life sciences
-  Technology and telecoms

Clients

- BP
- Duracell/Procell
- Elanco
- Ingredion
- LabCorp/Covance
- Vodafone

Year founded:
1973

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Contact email:
kate.howe@msqpartners.com

Twitter: @MSQpartners

Address:
90 Tottenham Court Road,
London, W1T 4TJ



Engage your audiences emotionally and rationally. Create advantage through data and technology. Connect brand to demand, insights to outcomes. Become a high EQ brand with MSQ B2B.

Napier B2B

Philosophy

Napier is a B2B technology PR and marketing agency based in Chichester. Having been at the heart of marketing technology in Europe since 1984, we help our clients achieve their business goals sooner. Our unique four-step process means we have the ability to identify what's important and strip away the irrelevant.

Our campaigns are built based on content generation and content distribution – the yin and yang of modern marketing, ensuring we optimise content reuse and build campaigns that deliver the best possible ROI. Napier helps clients in a range of B2B technology sectors. From electronics and IT to industrial technology, we are specialists in the markets that we target. We pride ourselves on planning and executing campaigns that excite, engage and enthral, using our proven expertise to focus on speed through the funnel, helping our clients move their customers quickly from awareness to opportunity.

By combining extensive experience with a vast amount of market intelligence and an energetic, creative and responsive team, our clients understand the benefits of our approach, as we always deliver results.

Awards

Most outstanding PR agency	<i>The Electronics Industry Awards 2020</i>
PRCA Communications management standard	<i>PRCA 2020</i>
Most outstanding PR agency	<i>The Electronics Industry Awards 2018</i>

Sectors



Electronic components and software



Industrial, manufacturing, engineering

Clients

ABB

Farnell

Microchip

NTT Data

Semtech

Vicor

Year founded:
1984

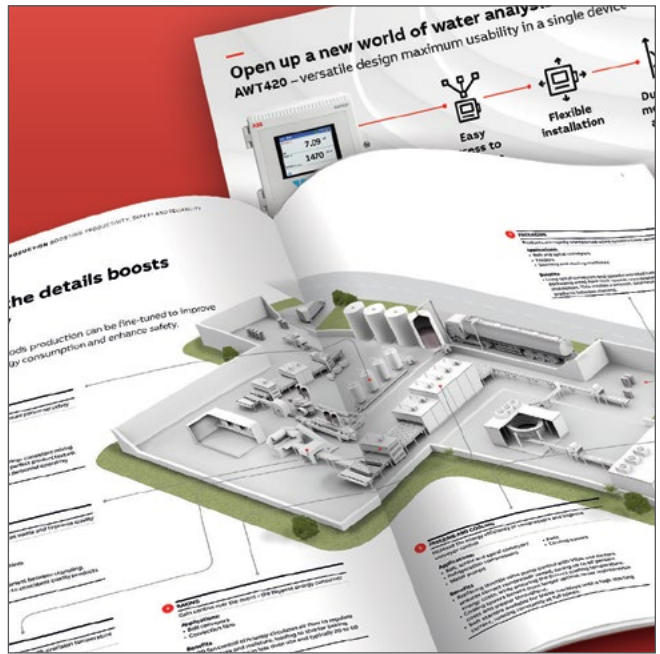
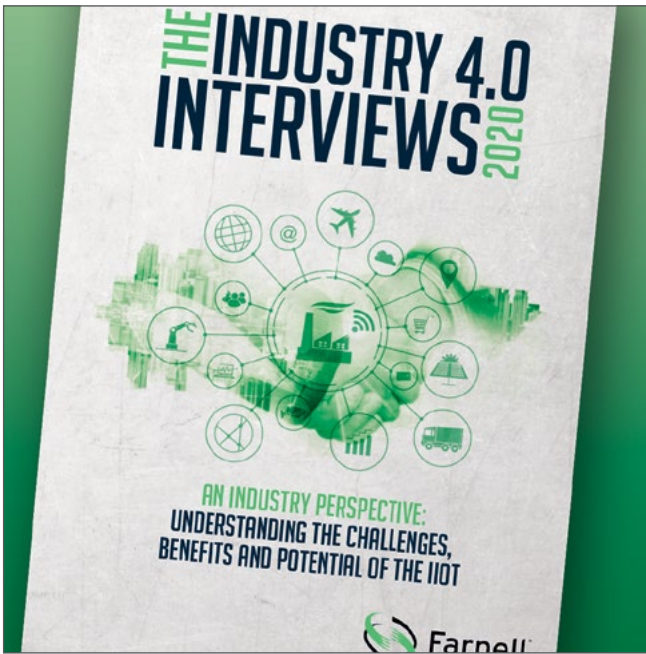
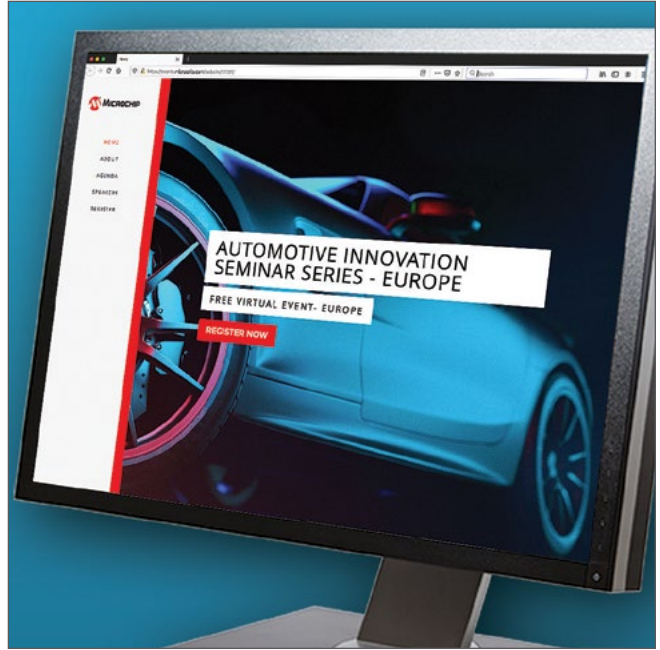
Website:
napierb2b.com

Phone number:
+44 (0) 1243 531123

Contact email:
info@napierb2b.com

Twitter: @NapierPR

Address: Donnington Park House,
Birdham Road, Chichester, West
Sussex, PO20 7DU



As an integrated agency, Napier works with a range of clients, supporting them with services including content generation, media relations, marketing automation and ABM.

Purple Agency

Philosophy

Purple is a multi-award-winning international agency with a strong worldwide presence, including offices in eight countries.

Using our extensive experience and expertise in the B2B market, we imagine, develop and create brands and campaigns, and have several long-term contracts with trusted brands such as IBM, Honeywell and Körber. We have a long history of bringing brands of all sizes and specialisms to new international audiences.

We offer a dynamic mix of multi-channel creative and strategy, campaign development and creative production solutions, all focused on engaging with the decision makers within business. Everything we do is reinforced with insights and support from our international network and other specialist departments, including health and B2C. We are perfectly placed to deliver unique and successful global campaigns of every size, shape and type. To us, if it's business, it's still personal. Our passionate and highly specialised team thrives in every stage of the brand journey. We know when to act, and when to wait. We know when to create from scratch, when to build on what already exists, and when to step back. This is how we make business communications that work.

Awards

Winner, Content strategy and creation	<i>The Drum Recommends Digital Awards 2020</i>
Winner, Best use of martech for live events	<i>The B2B Marketing Martech Awards 2020</i>
Winner, Content strategy and creation	<i>The Drum Recommends Digital Awards 2019</i>

Sectors

-  Business services (e.g. post, logistics, etc)
-  Industrial, manufacturing, engineering
-  Information services (i.e. publishing)
-  Technology and telecoms

Clients

- Honeywell
- IBM
- John Wiley & Sons
- Körber
- Resideo
- Xsens

Year founded:
2008

Website:
purple.agency/b2b

Phone number:
+44 (0) 1256 631 660

Contact email:
hello@purple.agency

Twitter: @ThePurpleAgency

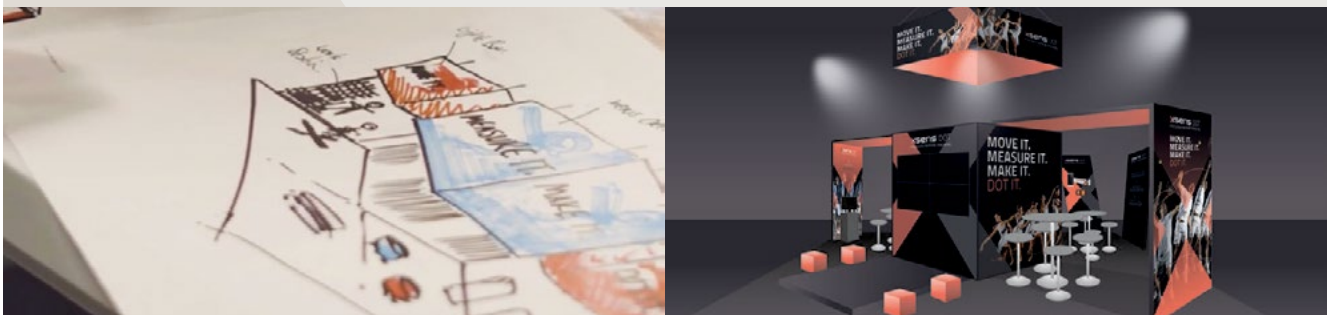
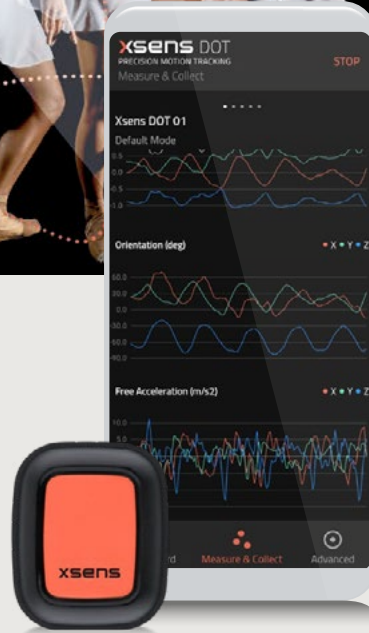
Address:
Lilly House, Priestley Road,
Basingstoke, RG24 9LZ

MOVE IT.
MEASURE IT.
MAKE IT.
DOT IT.

XSENS

Innovation is an area we specialise in, and Xsens is a leader in 3D motion tracking.

We joined forces and expertise to create a dynamic launch for [Xsens' new product DOT](#), at CES 2020.



THE RESULTS

500+

leads from CES launch

15,000

web visits

50%

of annual sales target hit in first 3 months

PURPLE
AGENCY

A selection of assets created for the dynamic launch of Purple Agency's client Xsens' new product, DOT, at CES 2020.

Radley Yeldar

Philosophy

Radley Yeldar is an award-winning, independent, London and Birmingham-based creative consultancy. Our 200-strong team of specialists has been helping to create a world that believes in business for more than 30 years.

We do this through a unique blend of services, including sustainability strategy, stakeholder and employee engagement, corporate reporting, brand identity, purpose and much more. It's all brought to life through films, campaigns, digital platforms, content and experiences. In a changing world, evidence x inspiration is the new formula for success. Why? Because, three in five people will stop using a business they don't believe in.

Awards

Gold, Public relations and social engagement	<i>New York Festivals TV & Film Awards 2020</i>
Gold, Film: Environment	<i>EVCOM Clarions 2020</i>
Winner, Corporate comms	<i>The Drum B2B Awards</i>

Sectors

-  Energy and utilities
-  Industrial, manufacturing, engineering
-  Pharmaceuticals and life sciences
-  Professional services

Clients

- ArcelorMittal
- BP
- Google
- GSK
- Microsoft
- Syngenta

Year founded:
1986

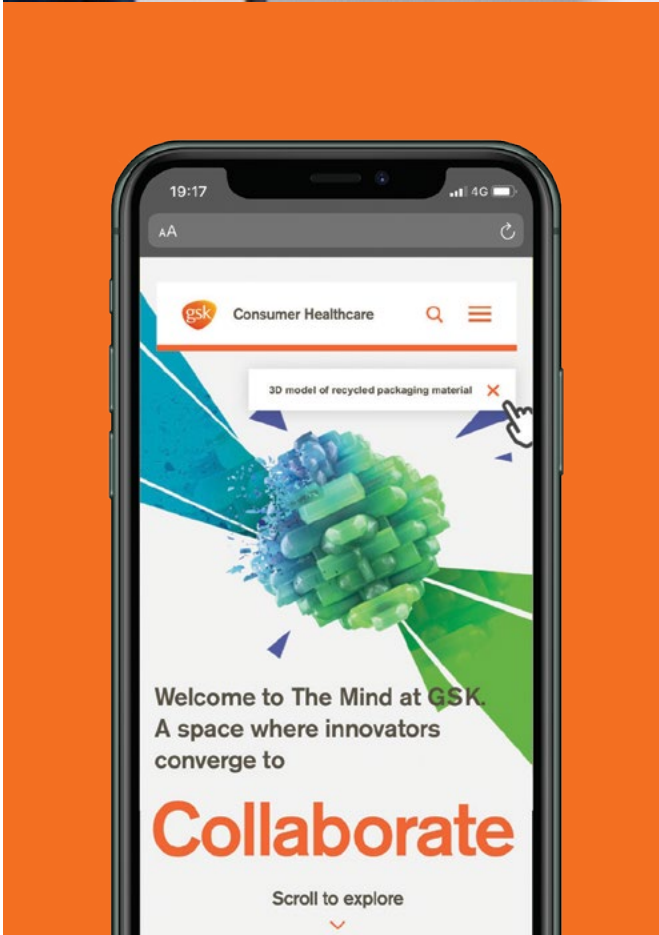
Website:
ry.com

Phone number:
+44 (0) 20 7033 0700

Contact email:
hello@ry.com

Twitter: @RadleyYeldar

Address:
24-27 Charlotte Road,
London, EC2A 3PB



(Clockwise from top left) Recent work for BP 'Mindset', GVC 'Challenging for the Bettor', WRAP Cymru '2020 Recycling Campaign' and GSK Consumer Healthcare 'The Mind'.

The Marketing Pod

Philosophy

The Marketing Pod provides strategic marketing for ambitious businesses. As a team of senior B2B marketing specialists, we've all held in-house marketing positions, so we truly understand the challenges our clients face.





We offer a full suite of marketing services, meaning we can support you at every step, as you imagine, build and execute your B2B marketing strategy. Our in-house experience means we're better equipped than your average agency to challenge assumptions and get to grips with business objectives, before helping you create a robust strategy that is fit to face future challenges. Individually, each member of our team is an experienced professional with a passion for their specialism. Together, our five centres of excellence – strategy, content, PR, digital and design – work in harmony to provide you with seamless support for all your marketing needs.

And when you work with The Pod, the people who help you to plan your marketing campaign will be the people who help you to develop and execute it, meaning you'll always feel completely supported by people who understand your goals and have the skills to help you achieve them.

Awards

Gold, Best integrated campaign (B2B)	PRIDE Awards (CIPR) 2018
Small consultancy of the year	PRCA DARE Awards 2018
Gold, Best publication	PRIDE Awards (CIPR) 2017

Sectors

-  Business services (e.g. post, logistics, etc)
-  Electronic components and software
-  Professional services
-  Technology and telecoms

Clients

- AMP Clean Energy
- Duco
- GEFCO
- Inspired Energy
- Npower Business Solutions
- Xoserve

Year founded:
2013

Website:
themarketingpod.co.uk

Phone number:
+44 (0) 1564 742 848

Contact email:
team@themarketingpod.co.uk

Twitter: @wegrowideas

Address: Unit 1-4 Umberslade Business Centre, Pound House Lane, Hockley Heath, West Midlands, B94 5DF

Energy HQ YOUR BUSINESS BLUEPRINT - THE ROAD TO NET ZERO

01 Businesses are optimistic about achieving net zero by 2050

78% believe that net zero emissions by 2050 is an achievable target

Nearly two thirds (64%) already have a clear and realistic plan to hit the target sometime ahead of 2050

02 Businesses are calling for a clear roadmap to net zero

Only a third (37%) feel confident that the government will develop a realistic plan to achieve net zero emissions by 2050

Businesses are already planning to invest in decarbonisation, smart energy management systems and electric vehicles as part of their emissions reduction strategy

03 Businesses need support to fund net zero

Almost 50% of businesses are concerned about the potential additional cost to their business associated with the net zero transition

83% believe net zero is a benefit that will deliver:

- greater operational efficiency
- cost savings
- reduced carbon emissions
- a positive impact on reputation

Your Business Blueprint
The road to Net Zero

To read the full report visit energy-hq.co.uk/businessblueprint

LEADERSHIP SUPPORT MAKES A POSITIVE IMPACT ON EMPLOYEES' MENTAL WELLBEING

ENERGY MIND 10 #TAKETEN

ENERGY MIND 10 #TAKETEN

THE ENERGY MIND PODCAST

STARTING THE CONVERSATION ABOUT MENTAL WELLBEING IN THE ENERGY INDUSTRY

Bryt By Nature

OUR SUSTAINABILITY JOURNEY, OUR RESPONSIBILITY.

OUR PROMISE

WE ARE GOING CARBON NEUTRAL

WHY IS SUSTAINABILITY SO IMPORTANT?

WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER, JOIN OUR JOURNEY.

BRYT BY NATURE

PIONEERING BY NATURE

PASSIONATE BY NATURE

DUCO

5 PRACTICAL STEPS TO RECONCILIATION MATURITY

DOWNLOAD THE WHITEPAPER

DUCO

GETTING RECONCILIATION RIGHT IN THE 'DECADE OF DATA'

REGISTER FOR OUR WEBINAR

6TH MAY 2020 | 3-4PM BST/10-11AM EDT

INSPIRED ON DEMAND

Catch up on the Inspired Energy On-Demand Event

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

PROF. SAM FANKHAUSER
Director, Grantham Research Institute at London School of Economics

Brexit, Covid and Net Zero – The next phase in UK climate policy

09:30 - WEDNESDAY 13TH MAY 2020

INSPIRED ON DEMAND

DE

Grow your talent

An Employer's Guide

Your role as employer

Let the character building begin

Let the character building begin

DoFE Gold is open to employees aged up to 25. Find out more by getting a DoFE today.

Introduction: their skills, your future.

Last year over 287,000 young people embarked on their DoFE journey.

DoFE Gold Awards are still recognised as the highest non-academic Award a person can achieve.

Introduction: their skills, your future.

Last year over 287,000 young people embarked on their DoFE journey.

DoFE Gold Awards are still recognised as the highest non-academic Award a person can achieve.

The Marketing Pod's in-house design studio works closely with its copy and content specialists and account directors, to be sure that clients' brand personality shines through every piece of content the Pod creates.

Torpedo

Philosophy

Torpedo is a full-service B2B creative agency.

We give B2B marketers the creative firepower to captivate customers, build brand trust and accelerate business growth.

We believe creativity has never been more important for B2B brands. In a world overloaded with content and dominated by fragmented communication channels, creativity is the hook that demands attention.

We champion your brand, think like your customers and see the world through their eyes. By creating ideas, propositions and stories that resonate with your audience, we persuade them to give you some of their valuable time. Compelling them to stop, look, listen, engage and believe.

Our in-house team blends strategy, design, content, UX and technology to deliver effective multichannel marketing campaigns, ABM programmes, brand communications and digital experiences that bring your brand vision to life.

Torpedo. Creative firepower for B2B brands.

Awards

Finalists, Corporate communications	<i>The Drum Recommends Awards 2020</i>
Shortlisted, Best use of direct mail	<i>The B2B Marketing Awards 2020</i>
Finalists, Best demand generation campaign	<i>The Drum Awards B2B 2020</i>

Sectors



Industrial, manufacturing, engineering



Technology and telecoms

Clients

Adobe

Autodesk

Epson

NTT Data

Petronas

Three

Year founded:
2003

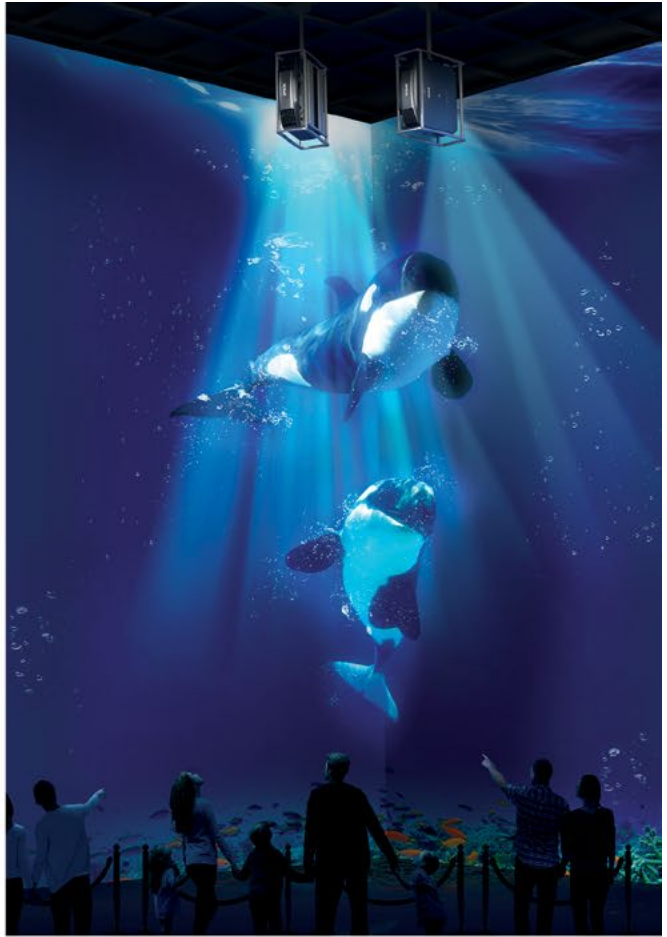
Website:
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theteam@torpedogroup.com

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Address:
The Long Barn, Worton Park,
Cassington, Oxon, OX29 4SX



Torpedo blends creativity, technology and strategic thinking to solve business problems and grow brands. It creates integrated campaigns and digital experiences that captivate customers at every touchpoint.

twogether

Philosophy

The multi award-winning, global, B2B technology marketing agency. And the only one able to deliver a total service, fully-integrated, in-house.

100% focused on technology, we're passionate about the difference it can make to people's lives. Our immersion and investment in all things B2B tech mean that we already speak your language.

That fluency allows us to ask questions – and find the answers – no-one else can. To grasp even the most complex solutions quickly, and ensure your audiences do too. We look beyond how your technology works, and bring to life what it does more imaginatively than anyone else.

Because it all starts with where you're aiming, not what we offer. So, you'll get the resource you need precisely where you need it. That means no silos. Only joined-up thinking and delivery.

Whether you choose just one or two of our specialisms or the whole lot, you'll get the experience and expertise of the entire agency behind your project.

twogether, bringing technology to life.

Awards

Finalist, Agency of the year *CIM Marketing Excellence Awards 2020*

Gold, B2B marketing communications agency of the year *The B2B Marketing Awards 2019*

Silver, Account-based marketing *ANA B2 Awards 2020*

Sectors



Technology and telecoms

Clients

Dell EMC

Hitachi Vantara

Lenovo

O2

Salesforce

Samsung

Year founded:
2012

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Globe House, Third Avenue,
Globe Park, Marlow, SL7 1EY

O₂
business

Adapt today. Be ready for tomorrow.

Give your business the adaptability to handle whatever the world throws at it. Our flexible solutions are designed to keep your data, networks and devices safe and sound. Allowing you and your team to do the job wherever you need to do it. With O₂, you're ready for anything.

Telefónica

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ellucian.

SAMSUNG One

Samsung One: one vision, one connection.

One connection to every opportunity

하나

Make sense of every Thing.

End-to-end solutions to scale your IoT.

There are 86 billion neurons in the human brain and each one has a specific function. Complex is one way of looking at it. IoT helps you understand every element of your business from edge-to-core. Generating smart input on a micro scale and delivering insight at a higher level. Solving problems is easier when every Thing works together.

Smarter technology for all
Lenovo

twogether's passion for technology is matched by its passion for creativity. Every one of twogether's projects is unique in its objectives, and so is the creative approach.

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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Want to feature
in the 2022
B2B Marketing
UK Agencies
Benchmarking
Report?

Make sure you're
in the industry's go-to
guide covering the
top agencies

Register your interest
bit.ly/UKABMR2022reg





B2B Marketing

Insight · Intelligence · Connection

Contact us

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Tel: +44 (0)20 7014 4920
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UK

2021