

Accelerating your digital marketing transformation: B2B leaders share their journeys



Contents

Introduction	3
Section 1 The importance of digital marketing transformation	5
Section 2 The benefits and barriers to successful transformation	7
Section 3 Digital transformation in action	11
Section 4 Tech needed for successful transformation	14
Section 5 10 key takeaways for a successful digital marketing transformation	16



Introduction

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

Key findings from the survey

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

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

But while the urgency for transformation has never been greater, most marketers are still at an early stage in their journey.

The results of Stein IAS' survey will inform our investigation into how senior marketing leaders have approached their own strategies, as we reveal the barriers and benefits to be won from such an undertaking. While there are considerable challenges in navigating complexity and realising the success transformation can bring, we'll offer actionable advice from leaders who have been through it and come out the other side. The full 2019 Digital Marketing Transformation Survey Report can be accessed at steinias.com/our-thinking.

Our contributors

- › **Emma Parker, digital marketing lead EMEA, Ingredion**
Emma has been integral in leading Ingredion's digital marketing transformation which started six years ago and now sees the company leading the way in the ingredients sector.
- › **Eric Andrews, VP, demand operations, cloud infrastructure group, Oracle**
Eric has worked on numerous digital marketing transformations, most recently modernising content and improving user experience at Oracle.
- › **Gary Hurry, VP marketing, Thomson Reuters**
Gary is leading a digital transformation strategy around customer experience at Thomson Reuters, where understanding marketing's value is top of his agenda.
- › **Paul Stevenson, marketing operations leader, O2**
Paul saw a complete overhaul of O2's martech strategy, starting in the B2B space, which enabled an agile, advanced marketing function.

Digital marketing transformation: Accelerating marketing maturity and business impact



Marc Keating,
chief innovation officer,
Stein IAS

Digital transformation of the enterprise has been at the top of the business agenda for a while, but when it comes to digital marketing transformation (DMT) most enterprises have barely started.

DMT is a staged journey now underway at many B2B enterprises that requires aligning marketing and business objectives through more integral utilisation of digital technologies. The fourth industrial revolution – underpinned by technology such as automation, AI, machine learning, blockchain, the internet of things and big data – is at the heart of this transformation.

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

Stein IAS has been a martech pioneer and leader since its earliest days. We view martech as an enabler of full-throated DMT. To better understand how senior enterprise marketers are approaching and managing their DMT journeys, we recently conducted the first large-scale quantitative [study of over 450 marketers globally](#). In conjunction with [B2B Marketing](#), we also conducted interviews with B2B marketing leaders to provide a rare glimpse into real DMT experiences and challenges.

Our study results strongly indicate that, along with intense interest in DMT, there are significant challenges in navigating complexity, prioritising investment and realising the benefits. In many instances, DMT has evolved in a more tactical and agile way, as opposed to starting with a prioritised roadmap aligned with business objectives and focus on the use cases that are going to drive the greatest value and return.

Importantly, it's evident the industry lacks solid frameworks and models to guide effective DMT maturity measurement, benchmarking and strategic vision setting.

Identifying this need and to help brands realise their digital marketing transformation vision, Stein IAS has created the Digital Marketing Transformation Framework (DMTF). The DMTF is a strategic planning system, designed to quickly and efficiently measure current marketing maturity levels and develop a high-level three-year roadmap and related action plans.

Our just-launched Post-Modernizer tool, an online version of Stein IAS' DMTF, can be found at postmodernizer.com. This is a unique web-based application which enables marketers to assess their current maturity level and build their transformation roadmap and action plans. Based on firmographic data provided by our study respondents, the use cases that best align with an organisation's profile and marketing goals, as well as an overall strategic roadmap, can be generated by the tool.

Digital marketing transformation is not easy, but it is both inevitable and essential to creating the kinds of customer experiences that drive revenue growth. We hope you find this qualitative report, our quantitative study and our online tool useful in your transformation journey.



Section 1

The importance of digital marketing transformation

1.1 What is digital marketing transformation (DMT)?

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

The pace of transformation depends on the commitment to transform marketing maturity

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

91% of large B2B companies rate digital marketing transformation as important or highly important



1.2 What digital marketing transformation means to marketing leaders

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

Gary Hurry, Thomson Reuters

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

Eric Andrews, Oracle

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

Emma Parker, Ingredient

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

Paul Stevenson, O2

1.3 How long should DMT take?

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

“I don’t think you can ever say you’re finished, but if you chip away each year, and you’re proud of the key elements in place, then you’re winning”

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

Paul Stevenson at O2 said its initial tech audit took only four months, but there is still work to be done. “Now we have a blueprint for the future, but it’s probably going to be a two or three-year journey.”

Similarly, Eric Andrews at Oracle spent two years adding features to its new sales enablement platform, but it’s just the beginning of the journey. “We’re going to continue to modernise our assets and improve user experience, so in a sense I don’t think we’re ever done.”

72% of marketers estimate implementation of DMT to take one to three years



Section 2

The benefits and barriers to successful transformation

2.1 Strategies to implement DMT

Given the complexity and all-encompassing nature of digital transformation, knowing where to begin and how to make steady progress are key. Next, our four leaders share the most important strategy that made their own transformation a success and how they overcame barriers.

Another way to gain senior advocates is through the recognition from award wins and nominations. “It’s very visible, motivational and the leadership team are always impressed by them,” Emma states.

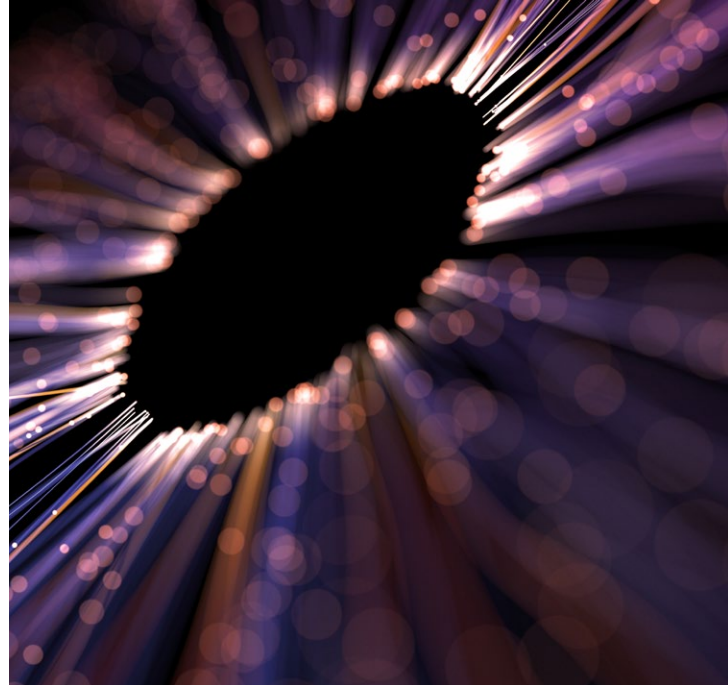
Even with buy-in, DMT is never smooth-sailing. “Take your time and plan, and whatever you think you can achieve, halve it and you might get it done,” she advises.

76% of B2B companies surveyed see DMT as a complex strategy to execute

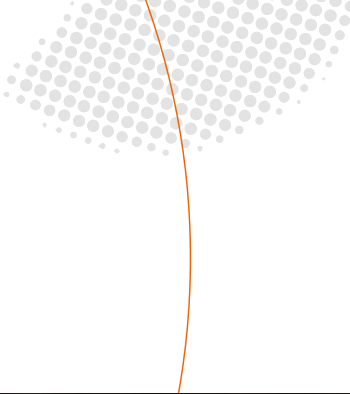
2.1.1 Take your leadership on the journey

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

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



More than two-thirds of all B2B companies rated aligning all stakeholders behind a single strategy as important



2.1.2 Create a culture shift

Getting support from the top is crucial, but so is buy-in from the rest of the organisation. Oracle's Eric Andrews had to do just that when overhauling and digitising the company's sales enablement strategy, platform and content for 35,000 global sellers as part of the tech giant's transformation.

Oracle implemented a new content platform called Sales Central, which sellers use to instantly find buyer-journey-aligned content relevant to each solution, build presentations on the fly, get industry and customer news updates, and easily share on social. Sales Central represented a wholesale transformation to a single digital platform and 'source of truth' as well as a transformation from transactional to value selling. Getting the product and sales teams onboard and engaged was crucial.

"Marketers tend to measure success by the volume, rather than quality, of content. It required a real cultural shift around product marketing," Eric explains. "We spent a lot of time listening to people complain about the content, but two years later no-one complains. We've made the shift: we've defined the Oracle way of doing enablement."

Aligning sales and marketing is among the top three DMT priorities

Eric wanted to "herd the cats with better cat food." Although marketing took a rigorous approach to ensure consistency of messaging and templates across all content, there was a lot of engagement with sales to make sure the new approach became ingrained.

"People are more willing to change when they've had a hand in it. Our goal is 80% agreement and 100% alignment – you're not going to get everything you want, but you can get pretty much everything you need!"

Eric says he would have adjusted expectations had he known the magnitude of the cultural shift necessary. "You can do a ton of work upfront, but there's a lot of work required over time to ensure new behaviours stick."

2.1.3 Make your budget work for you

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

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

Cost is the biggest barrier to pursuing DMT for 41% of B2B companies

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

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

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

2.1.4 Tackling the integration problem

The bigger the company, the bigger the complexity of the transformation.

For Thomson Reuters' Gary Hurry, the major challenge was integrating new technology with existing back office systems. "Out-of-the-box implementation of tech is simple, it's the integration that's a lot slower," he explains. "We have about 50 legacy systems we rolled into Salesforce. Categorising data and bringing that into one single view has been really challenging."

The real possibilities digital transformation unlocks lie in bringing business-wide data sources together for an interaction-driven, data-driven automated marketing programme. The next step for Gary is to resolve the integration of the huge volumes of customer data Thomson Reuters has with its automated platform.

Like his peers, cultural change has been a large part of the integration process, as has gaining buy-in and internal engagement. "We're very inclusive in how we bring these things in. We have regular working groups and input from the wider business in implementation is critical. It has to be seen as a business, rather than IT, implementation."

Integration of technologies is another major barrier to DMT



2.2 The quick wins and long-term benefits of DMT

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

36% of B2B companies see revenue growth as the main benefit of DMT



Marketing leaders' top 4 unexpected wins from digital transformation

1. *"We've seen our core demand generation metrics increase by up to 50%."*
– Gary Hurry, Thomson Reuters
2. *"From when I started, we have five times more of our total addressable market in our database."*
– Emma Parker, Ingredion
3. *"Martech has enabled us to be agile – in terms of data, content delivery and customer demands. We can respond to customer behaviours and triggers, delivering back to them what they are actually looking for, at any stage of the customer journey."*
– Paul Stevenson, O2
4. *"We no longer get called from field sellers saying 'you're not helping'. It really has made a difference in our relationship with sales."*
– Eric Andrews, Oracle

Additional benefits cited by respondents to the survey included the ability to deliver a connected customer experience, and closer alignment between marketing, sales and other key functions



Section 3

Digital transformation in action

The most popular driver for digital transformation among those surveyed is the ability to analyse and optimise their marketing. For larger businesses, the primary motivation was to more effectively reach and attract markets and audiences.

Here are the areas our leaders prioritised as part of their transformation efforts.

3.1 Boosting sales enablement and alignment

Given the criticality of sales and marketing alignment, and the frustrations that often prevent it, it's unsurprising that marketers see digital transformation as a solution. More than a third of marketers ranked integrating demand and sales enablement activity within their top three priorities.

At Oracle, sales staff were frustrated by the volume and complexity of the content they were given. Improving sales enablement was vital given the lack of a clear and consistent approach on how to progress and close deals.

To address this, a single online portal was created, where content was organised in the way sellers sell. Eric Andrews created a bill of digital materials of eight assets per product. Each product page has assets to help sales prepare, engage, discover, present and close opportunities.

A ruthless approach meant content templates couldn't be adapted, and enforcing consistency

meant a drastic improvement in quality. Sales could rate the content between one and five, meaning they felt more aligned to marketing and involved in the transformation process.

Content PDFs were turned into interactive digital content, suggesting solutions to sales for customer objections and how to respond. Sales presentation developments can now be automated, produced from spliced videos and slides from multiple existing decks.

The results were significant. Internal interactions with sales enablement content grew from 750,000 to 1.5 million with a run rate of two million a year. Plus, the content has an average rating of 4.5.

"Sales enablement is critical to continue the customer journey, so when you pass sellers a lead they know what to do," says Eric.

Internal interactions with sales enablement content grew from 750,000 to 1.5 million with a run rate of two million a year



3.2 Better balancing brand awareness and demand generation

Previously, Ingredion was 70% focused on driving brand awareness and 30% on demand generation. Now, the numbers are the other way around, although brand awareness has still increased. The CRM and website have been critical to this, as well as marketing automation for content marketing.

“Content marketing has been pivotal. It’s completely transformed the way we do things,” Emma Parker explains.

Using content to target emerging markets has been indispensable. “The ability for digital marketing to reach people that we wouldn’t be able to visit in a whole year, in just one campaign, is phenomenal and integral to getting where we want to be for our business.”

3.3 Radically overhauling demand generation

For Paul Stevenson at O2, reshaping the mid-market division’s approach to demand generation was a major part of its transformation. Before this, mid-market marketing campaigns and comms were mostly executed through partners and agencies, with little or no integration with O2’s systems. It was clear cost efficiencies would grant internal teams better access to data, with an end-to-end view of demand generation and sales, ultimately delivering a better customer experience.

O2 introduced a new lead management process, reporting from lead to opportunity with clear measures for success. In a matter of six months, O2 Business aligned Eloqua, Oracle sales tools (Engage and Profiler) and Salesforce. Huge volumes of mid-market customers were prioritised into calling lists, with instant insight into levels of engagement.

The sales teams immediately saw tangible improvements. Just one week after the launch, one contact went from lead to contract signing in just three days. In the second half of 2018, O2 was able to recognise more than £8 million in campaign-influenced revenue from three key campaigns.

3.4 Giving marketing a seat at the table through attribution

For Gary Hurry, the last piece of the puzzle when it comes to DMT is solving the 'attribution problem'. Gaining a better understanding of marketing's value by attributing marketing investment back to revenue has been his final hurdle. "In the digital age, that's become really difficult for marketers," he explains. "If I look at my dashboard, it will tell me marketing has driven 20% of the new sales in the business, when we know in reality if we look at broader attribution, it's in excess of 80%."

Underselling marketing's contribution to the wider business is a professional challenge that many face, and DMT can be a strategy to overcome this. "For me, it's heartbreaking to know we're very active in market in all channels, media, and marketing techniques, but because our business historically works on a last touchpoint attribution, we're only looking at the 20% causal link back to marketing.

"We have more data than ever before, more ways of influencing and engaging customers, but we've never had a poorer grip on our contribution to the business." This has historically meant it's harder for marketing to have a seat around the boardroom table, Gary underlines. But, in the world of DMT, buying from Thomson Reuters without being influenced by marketing is like dancing through raindrops and not getting wet," he says.

However, this omnipresent, always-on approach is just the start of the journey. "Until we solve the attribution problem to make it undisputed, accurate, and transparent, it's always going to be a challenge."



Section 4

Tech needed for successful transformation

Harnessing the power of the tech stack is vital to enable your digital marketing transformation. Understanding where new technology can accelerate your progress, and taking advantage of that was a common theme in the experience of the DMT experts. It's instructive that the four pieces of tech rated as the most important to transformation efforts – CRM, customer data platforms, social media management/monitoring and data management platforms – are all related to managing an aspect of the customer relationship.

Just as important as identifying and implementing new technology is maximising and getting full value from the platforms already in use. When Gary Hurry joined Thomson Reuters, the company was only using around 5% of Eloqua's capability. Until you embark on a digital transformation, maximising this investment just isn't seen as a priority. In this section our leaders advise how to make the most of new and existing tools.

A customer data platform is viewed as the second most important piece of technology in a digital marketing transformation strategy

4.1 4 Cs to make your tech work for you

1. Consolidate

Paul Stevenson from O2 says it's crucial to consolidate your tech stack. "There's probably duplication, and there's consolidation among vendors." Consolidation, he explains, will make it easier for people – working on one platform rather than four means fewer things can go wrong.

2. Collaborate

Paul recommends collaboration technology, which makes the delivery of content more effective, improves visibility, and allows multi-function teams to work harmoniously together. "If you can smooth out delivery, everyone benefits, right down to the customer."

3. Compose

Paul would focus more on the scoping exercise at the start of implementing Eloqua again. "We didn't understand enough about the potential impacts. I wish I had pushed vendors harder on where we should focus our efforts."

4. Create

Opening up new functionality from existing platforms is a quick and easy win, explains Paul. "For example, Salesforce was implemented for our sales team six years ago, and there was marketing functionality on it that they had never used. We were able to access this without having to pay for it."

4.2 Preparing for future technology

Part of Oracle's digital overhaul was to implement chatbots. Many in sales at the tech business are in their first role and they wanted more content that told them exactly what to do. A chatbot was developed to help inexperienced sellers by providing answers to challenges by customers. "When a customer asks a question, the chatbot will return an answer in a natural language you can then read back," says Eric Andrews.

He's now pivoting the marketing strategy towards improving the user experience through machine learning. "The next step is understanding how we can use AI to serve up the content we need, based on the data we have and what we know about sellers. We're going to continue to modernise our assets and improve user experience, so in a sense I don't think we're ever done," he says.

The next step is understanding how we can use AI to serve up the content we need, based on the data we have

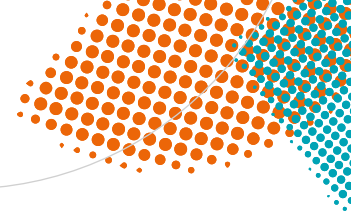
4.3 Don't bite off more than you can chew

Ingredion's Emma Parker says getting buy-in for new tools was a big challenge when it came to her transformation journey, but, it's crucial not to take on too much. "It was the right tool at the right time for us. It's so easy in the beginning to say we need this tool and that platform, but the reality is our team is small so we can only have so much tech."

She explains she's been putting off implementing more systems, such as Adobe Target for the CMS, because they can't cope with too much. "It's about managing expectations from the top, and knowing what you can handle."

Cost is critical too. People want to know if they're spending money, they're either saving it elsewhere or improving efficiency.





Section 5

10 key takeaways for a successful digital marketing transformation

1. Adjust your expectations

Although most marketers think the bulk of transformation can be done within three years, it's a never-ending process. Accept there will always be more to do.

DMT is undoubtedly complex. The only way to make it a business-wide strategy is to get the whole organisation on board

2. Understand your motivations

It's important to know why you're taking on the challenge of DMT. Are you looking to reach and attract or analyse and optimise customer behaviour, for example? Understanding your goals can help sharpen your plan.

3. Know the key use cases

Getting to grips with the key use cases that drive DMT is essential. Whether that's prioritising your website, shifting from static to interactive content, or a more personalised customer experience, understanding what you can achieve and how that increases the likelihood of true transformation success.

4. Get buy-in

DMT is undoubtedly complex. The only way to make it a business-wide strategy is to get the whole organisation on board. This can help build relationships with sales, prove marketing's worth to the board, and create collaboration with other teams. This might require a culture shift, and the best way to do that is get people involved at every stage of the journey – even if that's just making people feel they're involved.

5. Build a roadmap

A prioritised roadmap aligned with business objectives is essential to advance your organisation's digital marketing maturity and performance. Identifying strategic priorities that align with company goals, a roadmap with clear actions and stages, and a template for your journey will make the process a lot easier.

6. Beware of your budget

DMT is expensive. If you're part of a large company, budget may not be a problem, but that doesn't mean you won't have to justify every penny. Consolidating your existing stack is as important as investing in new tech. It's also worth implementing processes that increase efficiency and ultimately save time, resources, and money.

7. Focus on integration

Integration is a key challenge when it comes to DMT, especially when most companies are only using a small percentage of functionality from their systems. Bringing business-wide data together and taking the time to integrate new systems with legacy ones is crucial, otherwise you won't get the full value out of your investments.

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8. Establish robust attribution

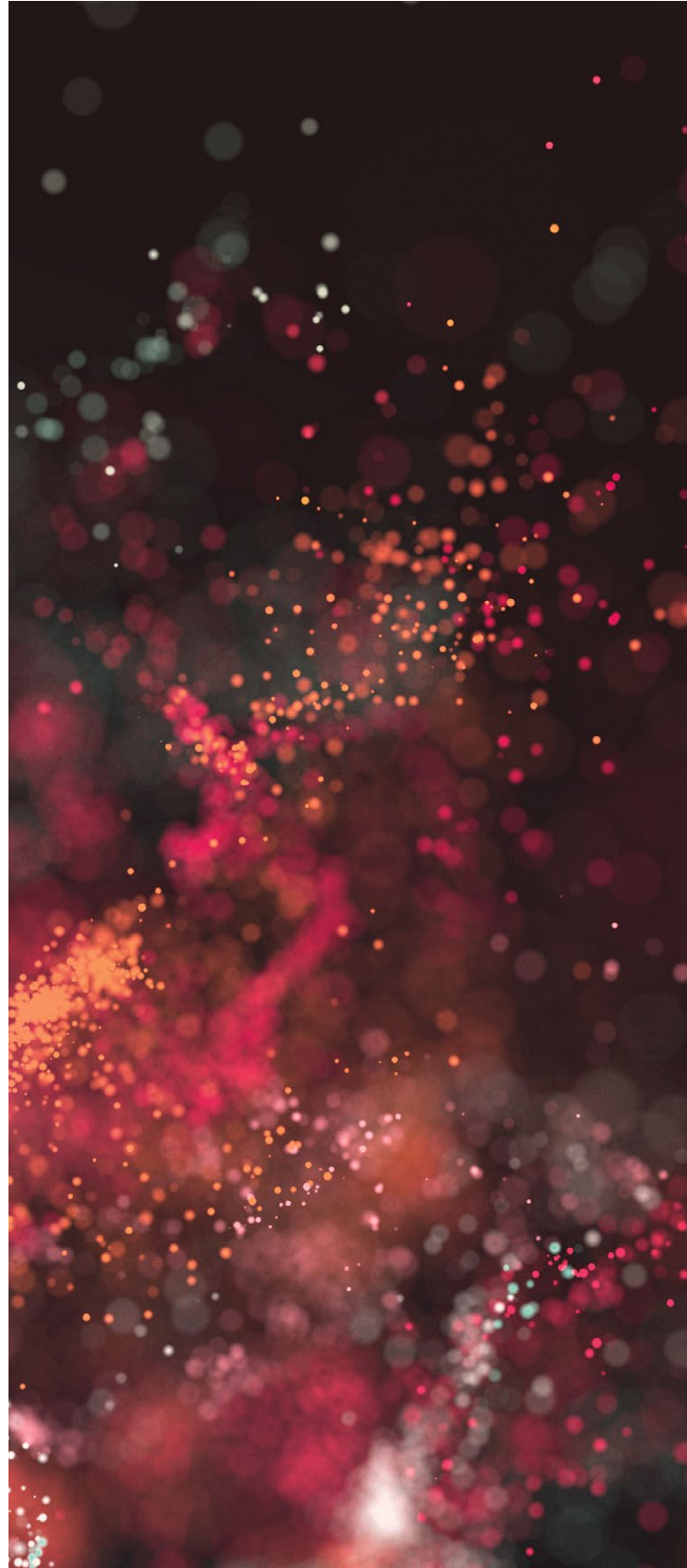
DMT has the power to change the perception of marketing internally. With improved tools and processes, as well as internal buy-in to a business-wide strategy, not only can you prove the impact marketing has on sales and the bottom line, but also on direct ROI.

9. Make value visible

If you're following your roadmap, your goals should be clear. With a clear focus on priorities, there should be some quick wins that will show value back to the rest of the business. Whether that's getting more value out of your current systems, or an initial boost from a new piece of tech, make sure it's communicated at regular intervals.

10. Tackle the tech

While the tech you'll need for DMT will vary from company to company, everyone agrees a CRM system is crucial, and marketing automation plays a big role in getting results. Roll out collaboration technology, focus on a scoping exercise at the start of new acquisitions, and open up new functionality from existing platforms first.



About

B2B Marketing

Established in 2004, we are the number one go-to resource for B2B marketers across the globe.

Through our content hub and professional development services – including events, training and networking – B2B Marketing users are empowered with the tools, insight and inspiration they need.

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About

Stein IAS

Martech meets MadMen

Stein IAS is the Post-Modern B2B Marketing Agency. We're also the ANA B2B Agency of the Year in 2019 for the fifth consecutive year – and the most-awarded agency at the inaugural B2B Marketing Martech Awards. None of this is coincidental.

A global B2B specialist agency, Stein IAS serves as strategic partner to brand leaders around the world. With our post-modernist mindset, we balance the twin engines of *creativity* and *technology* to create connected customer experiences – from brand to demand to business results. While each engine is extremely powerful in its own right, the two used together can accelerate both brand and demand. This is what Stein IAS is all about: the agency where *'martech meets MadMen'*.

Every day, martech is evolving and its benefits are being better realised. Just as businesses globally are undergoing wholesale digital transformation, B2B marketing is undergoing its own digital transformation that's every bit as profound. From consultation to strategic road-mapping to activation, Stein IAS works with clients using our Digital Marketing Transformation Framework, so they can lead in the digitally transforming world.

As important as that is, digital transformation in isolation is not enough. The other essential engine – creativity – needs just as much emphasis. That's why Stein IAS delivers *Ideas With Value* – creative and content experiences that rise above and without which digital transformation can have no material impact.

Today and tomorrow, it takes martech *and* MadMen to connect brand to demand to impact. That's Stein IAS, the Post-Modern B2B Marketing Agency.



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