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# MARKETING MATTERS MORE THAN EVER BEFORE

**In Touch caught up with Marianne Hewitt to discuss the need for an agile approach to one of the most important areas of any modern business.**

Marketing has evolved from a supporting non-strategic department to one of the most important actors in today's businesses, driving profitable growth, retention, loyalty and advocacy and has transformed from a product-pushing entity to a customer focused activity, striving to build value based customer relationships.

Inbound and outbound marketing processes require many different skills and areas of expertise. There are over 15 areas of specialization for marketers to understand and select as a career focus. While technology has spurred on the need for specialization, our organizations, processes and practices have not kept pace.

The level of confusion increases in a segregated environment with loosely defined roles and responsibilities and disjointed marketing processes. As a by-product of organizational fragmentation, data silos have resulted in exacerbating challenges in delivering a

timely, relevant and contextual experience.

Integrating inbound and outbound marketers is a first step organizationally in achieving an effective omni-channel program.

We turn to the inbound and outbound marketers in the Demand Centre (marketers with expertise in direct marketing, event marketing, search marketing, email marketing, web marketing, social marketing, mobile marketing, ABM and lead management) to work with the marketing strategist to design the omni-channel program that achieves program objectives and complements the buyer's journey.

## **Core program team**

The program is ultimately launched by these marketers with marketing operations at the controls. The tactics are led by a marketing program manager with oversight by the marketing strategist.

The core program team includes the marketing strategist, marketing specialists from the Demand Centre, marketing operations, content marketers and creative and user experience designers.

Information Technology specialists and data analysts are also part of the core team. As marketing is data driven, insights would have been a key input at program inception and design.

In the second tier, around the core team and internal to the business, we have brand, product, sales, service and finance. The third and final tier is external to the business and include agencies, platform providers and data providers.

With all the relevant marketing specialists (internal and external) represented in the cross-discipline team, each specialist can provide a point of view about how best to approach the work and contribute to problem resolution as problems



inevitably arise. With the deep expertise of multiple disciplines coming together in a cross-functional team, the quality of the CX and the content, messaging, imagery and delivery will yield much higher conversion rates.

However, the team structure is only part of the formula for success. Collaboration among marketing disciplines will move us toward a more agile and innovative marketing culture. Marketing needs a systems mindset to maximize its effectiveness using the technologies it has at its fingertips today

### **Agile marketing**

A collaborative ecosystem moves us toward a more agile and innovative workplace. Assets and deliverables are produced in smaller units allowing us to fail fast and learn faster.

We design programs in incremental fashion to more effectively promote and test customer engagement and revenue generation. This approach is referred to as agile marketing; high growth companies are very mature in their adoption of agile marketing.

A single project collaboration tool intended for projects and managing workflow, approvals, communication and status is a good alternative. Examples of this type of tool are Percolate, Monday or Adobe Experience Manager.

The tool can be configured to reflect the common practices and processes that have been agreed to for all marketing programs. Passing deliverables on to the next step in the process and gathering approvals as they move, results in faster, more

accurate and less costly asset production. Going to one source or tool to get program status and providing full transparency to management and all stakeholders results in higher levels of confidence for all.

All in all, elimination of the people, technology, and data silos will remove many of the barriers to achieving excellence in marketing, realising productivity improvements and generating revenue.

### **4 Benefits of eliminating marketing's digital divide**

As we bring the key solution components together, we have the foundation for a high performing marketing ecosystem. That ecosystem results in:

- 1.** Marketers more fully appreciating the value of omnichannel programs and a deepened understanding of the power and role of individual channels
- 2.** A scalable approach to work that delivers assets and programs which can be enhanced quickly and easily
- 3.** A spirit of continuous learning, improvement and innovation in a deeply collaborative environment
- 4.** Marketing influenced revenue with more profitable growth and retention.

By eliminating marketing's digital divide, marketing transforms itself from a rigid, isolated hierarchy to an integrated and aligned ecosystem of internal and external marketers that deliver profitable growth and retention.

Using an agile marketing approach, we're failing fast



and learning faster to drive innovation. Our programs are designed better, yielding more effective marketing. With the high level of team interaction, we're reducing the probability of confusion and waste. And through the synergies of teaming, we're achieving better results.

### **About the author**

Marianne S. Hewitt has held senior marketing and technology leadership positions in industry and practice leadership roles in the global consulting environment.