

# MARKETING OPERATIONS, IT'S YOUR TIME TO SHINE

THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR  
MARKETING OPERATIONS  
TO RAISE THEIR HEADS  
ABOVE THE PARAPET AND  
FOR ORGANIZATIONS TO  
RECOGNIZE ITS VALUE.



**CRMT DIGITAL**

GLOBAL ENABLEMENT | SMART ENGAGEMENT

# CONTENTS

3	<b>A NEW ERA IN MARKETING</b>
4	<b>UNSTOPPABLE MOVEMENTS IMPACTING MARKETING</b>
6	<b>THE ROADBLOCKS</b> Four big issues bubbling away for today's Global Marketers
10	<b>THE RISE OF MARKETING OPERATIONS</b> The Hybrid Skills of a Marketing Operations Leader
13	<b>KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE MARKETING OPERATIONS</b>
18	<b>IT'S YOUR TIME TO SHINE</b>
20	<b>ABOUT CRMT</b>

# A NEW ERA OF MARKETING

Every industry evolves. But is marketing really entering a new era — or are we at an inflexion point where reality is setting in?

According to Gartner's 2017-18 CMO spend survey, changes are afoot.

Spend on technology dipped by 15% between 2017-2018 in favor of more effective output from existing platforms; hiring the right resources and keeping them is still a panacea; and spend on customer marketing is set to outstrip acquisition by a factor of 2:1.<sup>1</sup>

It's no wonder that marketing has found it a real challenge to keep up because of the speed of change in the industry and elevated customer expectations. Having to adapt to new skills and ways of thinking and above all, deliver much more with the same and sometimes far less budget, keeps the merry-go-round spinning.

Marketing Operations is quickly becoming the agent of change at this inflexion point, enabling efficient global marketing execution; industrializing shared marketing services; empowering demand teams to excel; taming the technology and standardizing process. If you're in marketing operations, step-up! You are the enabler and it's your time to shine. Don't have marketing operations in place? What are you waiting for, get it now as it will change everything.

With spending power potentially reverting back to the Chief Information Officer and with marketing operations stepping up and bridging the turf war between the powerhouses of the Chief Technology Officer and Chief Marketing Officer (some say Marketing Operations leaders are the CMOs in waiting), this whitepaper explores how we see marketing operations playing a critical role in the future of global marketing success.

# UNSTOPPABLE MOVEMENTS IMPACTING MARKETING

Let's face it (and it's been well-documented) the role of marketing has changed rapidly over the past decade. The adoption of technology to help marketing rise to the challenge has been exponential. Just six years ago there were less than 150 marketing technologies available; today there are over 5000<sup>2</sup>.

Facebook, Google and LinkedIn were in their ascent and, as marketers, we were just starting to compliment new channels with our more traditional routes, such as direct mail, events and published advertising. Back then email response rates were far higher – it was easy, right?

Today's new breed of modern marketers and the job of marketing are very different - see our infographic on the [Changing Face of Today's Modern CMO](#). Customer purchasing behavior has changed massively, loyalty can vanish in an instant, competition has widened and we're now operating in a global market (whether we like it or not). As a result of all this, the ability for marketers to perform efficiently, effectively and at scale is experiencing a paradigm shift.



## IT'S GOT PERSONAL

Over time, customers have demanded to be treated as individuals to maintain affinity and loyalty with a brand.

Most marketers know the rewards that a well-conceived personalized marketing approach can deliver. Many have built personalization into campaign strategy and planning — and with the promise of marketing automation platforms enabling delivery at scale — we hear of only a few success stories.

Poor data quality, low data completeness of key personalization fields as well as the increased use of ad blockers and higher levels of email filtering, mean that personalization at scale has been problematic.

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<sup>2</sup>"Marketing Technology Landscape Supergraphic 2017", chiefmartec.com



## THE RISE OF OMNI-CHANNEL

Customer expectations of a seamless experience across multiple devices and channels has added further complexity to a marketer's skill-set. It has demanded a wider and deeper understanding of the customer and buyer journey, combined with technology to support messaging across coordinated channels – a process made more difficult to facilitate at scale – for global audiences.

In 2017, 80% of marketers chose 'Customer journey' as their most important trend for 2017.<sup>3</sup>



## THE CUSTOMER-LED SALE

Gradually, marketing and sales have lost the power to directly influence buyer behavior. Today they sit further away from the buying decision than ever before.

To this end, the role of the CMO has evolved and they are now expected to be at the forefront of customer experience initiatives and at the same time understand how technology can be deployed to drive closer aligned with their peers in sales.

"There won't be CMOs in the future; there will be Chief Experience Officers who are responsible for the overall customer journey," said Mohamed AlTajer, Head of Marketing, Commercial Bank International.<sup>4</sup>

Lagging behind the buying journey, CMOs have graduated from being custodians of branding and story-telling to being advocates of analytics and customer intelligence to drive revenue and sales.

The big challenge is to use insight and analytics to market at a scale that's cognizant of each buyer's purchase journey. This is no mean feat!

<sup>3</sup> "Data IQ Omni Channel Trend Report"

<sup>4</sup> "IBM Institute for Business Value CMO Study", IBM, 2016



# THE ROADBLOCKS

Whilst we hear of many small wins across marketing and sales, few can really say they've nailed modern marketing as a whole. Let's be honest, with so many moving parts, bright shining new technologies being invented, cultural change and people movement, we doubt it's in sight yet. Those are the three big roadblocks inhibiting progression.



## CHANGING CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

Customers expect the same experience across all your channels. Interactions must move seamlessly from offline to online, to contact center, across the web, apps, mobile and more and it must be a personalized experience. Tweaks to back-end systems are not enough.

Omni-channel marketing challenges the status quo and it's hard to achieve. Fast changes to operational processes, structures and cultures are essential.

### Top Priorities

- Marketing strategy
- Marketing transformation
- Marketing impact
- Organizational design & development

### Top Influences on Strategy

- Enhancing the customer experience
- Addressing changing buyer behaviors
- Adapting to changing economic conditions

### Top Biggest Challenges

- Organizational readiness
- Insufficient data
- Developing content that satisfies buyer needs
- Lack of by insights
- Prioritizing growth opportunities
- Generating high quality leads

\* CMO Study, SiriusDecisions, 2017



## THE FINANCIAL CRUNCH - DELIVER MORE WITH LESS

Over the years, poorly selected or under-used technology has made it a tough job to convince the Board of the value that marketing technology can offer. As such, budgets for marketing activity are in decline and yet departments are continually pressed to deliver more.

A lack of understanding of platform capabilities, little process optimization, low levels of standardization and huge repetition and wasted resources have further eroded efficiency.

The rise of centralized shared service centers has helped to streamline operations and had a positive impact on efficiency at scale. Yet the balance of rigor (brought by close attention on marketing operations) together with the agility and insight required to drive innovation is a balance many have struggled with.



## THE TECH EXPLOSION AND LACK OF SKILLS

Technology vendors have done a successful job convincing many companies that their platform will solve many of today's marketing challenges, including our other two movements.

However, a lack of skilled resources and training have meant marketers have been slow and even stalled in realizing the benefits that technology can offer in a reasonable amount of time. In today's super-fast, ever-changing world, the skills gap and accessing the skills easily, wherever they reside, must be made easier.

Aside from a few agencies and systems integrators, most have also failed to comprehend and keep pace with technology for marketing.

Encouragingly, this scenario is changing. According to Gartner's report, 52% of budgets are being allocated to training and supporting internal staff as well as purchasing services from third-party providers.

The breadth of knowledge and experience of third parties, coupled with the intimate knowledge of the business that internal resources bring to the table, is another balance we have to strike.



# FOUR BIG ISSUES BUBBLING AWAY FOR TODAY'S GLOBAL MARKETERS

1

## RELENTLESS TECH INNOVATION

This sounds like a nice problem to have. After all, who doesn't want a quiver full of the latest platforms, apps and other marketing tools? But where should global marketing directors spend their limited budget when hundreds of newly-released software promise the earth?

The abundance of marketing technology investments has led to more silos within the marketing functions, and data is now more disjointed than ever.

2

## GROWING MARKETING BUT POOR MEASUREMENTS

Another barrier to overcome is measuring marketing's effectiveness quickly. Too often, marketers fall into the trap of reporting what is easy to measure and not what is actually useful. What is needed are the right metrics, represented in an understandable format and easily interpreted in CEO-talk! Simply reporting on clicks, open rates and form completions do not provide the right insight into marketing's contribution to revenue. New technology exists that allows marketers to escalate their visibility. However, they are trapped by poor processes and low-levels of data, lacking the campaign governance so crucial to delivering great reporting at scale.



The ability to achieve effective marketing at scale remains the greatest challenge for marketers. But four big issues are making today's global environment even more challenging.

With increasing pressure to drive change in a shorter time, and to demonstrate marketing's business contribution, the industry has seen its first decline in average CMO tenure in 10 years, dropping from 44 months to 18 months.<sup>5</sup>

However, organizations are adapting the way they view marketing, from being seen as a cost centre to a strategic partner.

3

### **MASSIVE LACK OF PROCESSES & GOVERNANCE**

How can you bring governance and process to marketing without throttling creativity and innovation? Hello, marketing operations. The key to driving efficiency and optimizing performance is aligning marketing delivery and the departments reliant on it on a common set of standardized processes. These include requests, approvals, SLAs, campaign design formats, data management, reporting metrics and technology platforms. Without standardization, efficiency gains are impossible.

4

### **LOOMING COMPLIANCE DISASTERS**

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is an example of how marketers may soon be caught out by far-reaching legislation. Enforced from May 2018, GDPR threatens eye-watering fines for those that break its data privacy rules. Unless marketing takes decisive steps quickly, it could end up being the department that gets a global organization into deep water.

Put simply there are many, many factors influencing marketing's ability to get the job done. So how do we fix this? Marketing operations to the rescue?

<sup>5</sup> "CMO Evolution", SiriusDecisions, 2018

# THE RISE OF MARKETING OPERATIONS

Marketing operations has emerged as a key strategic investment due to the need for more effective, transparent, efficient and agile delivery of marketing programmes; to demonstrate the value marketing contributes to an organization; and to align marketing, sales and IT.

## THE HYBRID SKILLS OF A MARKETING OPERATIONS LEADER

The Marketing Operations leader is a hybrid mix of multiple cross-discipline skills that supports the ever-changing marketing technology space. The Marketing Operations leader requires cross-organizational skills including marketing and sales, project management, data, reporting and the knowledge to implement and manage complex marketing technology stacks.



### MARKETING OPERATIONS

John Donlan, Research Director for Marketing Operations Strategies at Sirius Decisions, revealed that the essential competency for Marketing Ops pros is a bridge of business strategy, data, analytics and technology.

“The most effective marketing operations professionals that I know are able to wear the strategic hat of a Chief of Staff, but then also understand the very real operational and technical implications behind business-driven initiatives.”<sup>6</sup>

- Project management
- Supporting skills development
- Marketing
- Team leader
- Operations
- Technology & automation
- Data management
- Reporting
- Campaign Analysis
- Strategy



## TECHNOLOGY & AUTOMATION

Marketing operations have a responsibility to integrate the right CRM and marketing automation systems and tools that will scale together to support business growth.

The knowledge and experience in implementation, configuration and integration of these systems is invaluable in facilitating sales and marketing alignment. You also need the ability to continually optimize a technology stack, from analyzing to selecting the right additional automation tools, without blindly adding the latest shiny tool.



## MEASUREMENT & ANALYTICS

As businesses become more customer-centric, the ability to capture and measure throughout the buyer journey is key in building an understanding of buyer behavior.

Setting up tracking as far down the funnel as possible will provide insights on marketing's contribution to revenue and how to optimize strategies for revenue.

A marketing operations leader must be able to communicate marketing performance measurement with other departments and different stakeholders to support better decision making.

“A marketing operations leader should have a strong background in the discipline of marketing, but people with strong operations experience and a propensity to develop their skills in marketing can also fulfill many roles within the team.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> SiriusDecisions, 2017



## MANAGEMENT

The ideal marketing operations practitioner comes from a project management/ operations background and can manage budget, knowledge, change and skills transfer, as well as having experience in marketing and technical aptitude.

You should be capable of leading a team, managing people who own and operate the marketing processes and oversee its governance. This includes collaboration with all teams and alignment across the organization to succeed.

- **Execute like a scientist. Be a leader in gathering, analyzing and governing data to help marketing teams reach marketing goals aligned with sales to drive growth.**
- **Provide knowledge and skills in building effective marketing technology stacks to build a strong foundation and continue to optimize.**
- **Manage change, knowledge, skills transfer and communication between sales, marketing and other departments in your organization.**

# KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE MARKETING OPERATIONS

There are many elements that influence the effectiveness of a MOPs function. Below are some considerations. Also take a look at our [10-Step Guide to Global Marketing Efficiency](#).

## INDUSTRIALIZE REPEATABLE PROCESSES

Is using a standardized ‘factory’ model the best way to meet all the pressures faced by marketing? Are we coming to the age of industrialized marketing to manage scale?

The challenge might not be so tough when marketing a single product or service line business. But for a global manufacturer who would typically sell multiple products across many sectors, the job of marketing is complex and expensive and hence it can seem that the only way to scale marketing, is to industrialize and standardize as much of the process and delivery as possible. Cutting-edge marketing organizations decide to centralize factory operations within a demand center or marketing-shared service center.

### Critical components for a shared marketing service center

- Align Corporate, Field & Product Marketing to maximize gains from marketing tech investments & activities.
- Align Marketing & Marketing Ops strategy, tactical deployment & processes for global effectiveness & efficiency.
- Improve strategic & tactical decision making through shared insights.



- Enable agile global programme delivery & management.
- Improve programme production quality, effectiveness & efficiency - industrialize demand operations where possible.
- Bring structure, discipline & rigor to demand operations.
- Encourage continuous improvement.



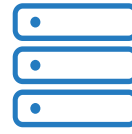
## Marketing Operations Interlock



**Alignment:**  
Cross business alignment & strategy development.



**Agility:**  
Multiple (global) programme management.



**Process:**  
Standardization & governance.



**Accountability:**  
Strategic & tactical decision making.



**Technology:**  
Solutions consulting.

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**10% of the CMO's budget is earmarked for innovation.**<sup>8</sup>

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We're of the opinion that a total standardized approach to marketing (specifically the production of content and campaigns) is not necessarily right. It's true, many economies of scale and savings can be achieved. However, this could stifle regional innovation particularly when marketing into Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia Pacific regions. Here, localization is everything and the key component to success or failure of communication programmes.

According to the 2017 IDG Research Survey, 98% of marketers already localize content for new markets or plan to do so. More than 80% said that content localization is essential to entering new markets, and that this activity is becoming increasingly important to their businesses.<sup>9</sup>

It is important to appreciate that localization can improve regional campaigns and promote innovation, as long as local field teams have access to standardized tools & processes (asset templates and workflows for examples).

<sup>8</sup> "CMO Spend Survey", Gartner, 2017-2018

<sup>9</sup> "Catalyzing Growth and Revenue Opportunities with Content Localization", IDG & Smartling, 2017

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**50%** of companies believe localization is too complex to manage, with **37%** saying the top challenge with content localization is slow time to market.<sup>9</sup>

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## A DEMOCRATIC DICTATORSHIP OR LEADING FROM THE FRONT?

Marketing operations are quickly evolving from back-room technology experts to front-of-house visionaries specializing in how to effectively and efficiently market.

Much like aligning sales and marketing on a common understanding around the demand management process, marketing operations (alongside the CMO) is stepping-up the unification of technology, marketing and management.

However, it's not just management, it's leadership. Challenging the status quo and correctly leading teams through change is critical, and important when marketing operations ascend from technology fixers to "this is what needs to be done differently" leaders. The strategic Marketing Operations leader does much more than selecting the right technology, optimizing integrations and effective tactical delivery. He/she is a transformational agent, leading from the front, mediating, getting teams to collaborate across usually siloed functions.

Strategic Marketing Operations leaders have the right to challenge the status quo and those organizations that are recognizing this value, out-pace and out-perform their competitors.

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Enterprise CMOs are still allocating **22%** of their budget to marketing technology, and that is a large investment.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> "CMO Spend Survey", Gartner, 2017-2018



## **SUPPORT THE CMO - HOW TO ENABLE MARKETING**

As the role of the CMO evolves it creates new expectations. Today's modern marketer is a cross-functional leader driving alignment. They drive decision-making with insight, balancing long and short-term strategies; balance buyer and customer investment strategies; steward customer experience; execute integrated audience-centric campaigns; and focus on outputs, derived value and the impact on business.

As the role of the CMO transforms it's an ideal opportunity for Marketing Operations to step-up, lead change, drive business impact and carve a career path.

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**Win often, show value, fail fast, be agile.**

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## **EMPOWER THE TEAM**

“Surround yourself with talented people that are smarter than you”  
Jack Ma, Chairman of Alibaba recently said. <sup>11</sup>

Talented as a Marketing Operations leader must be, it's the ability to find, blend, enable and lead the right talent and collaborate across different business functions that is critical to this function's success.

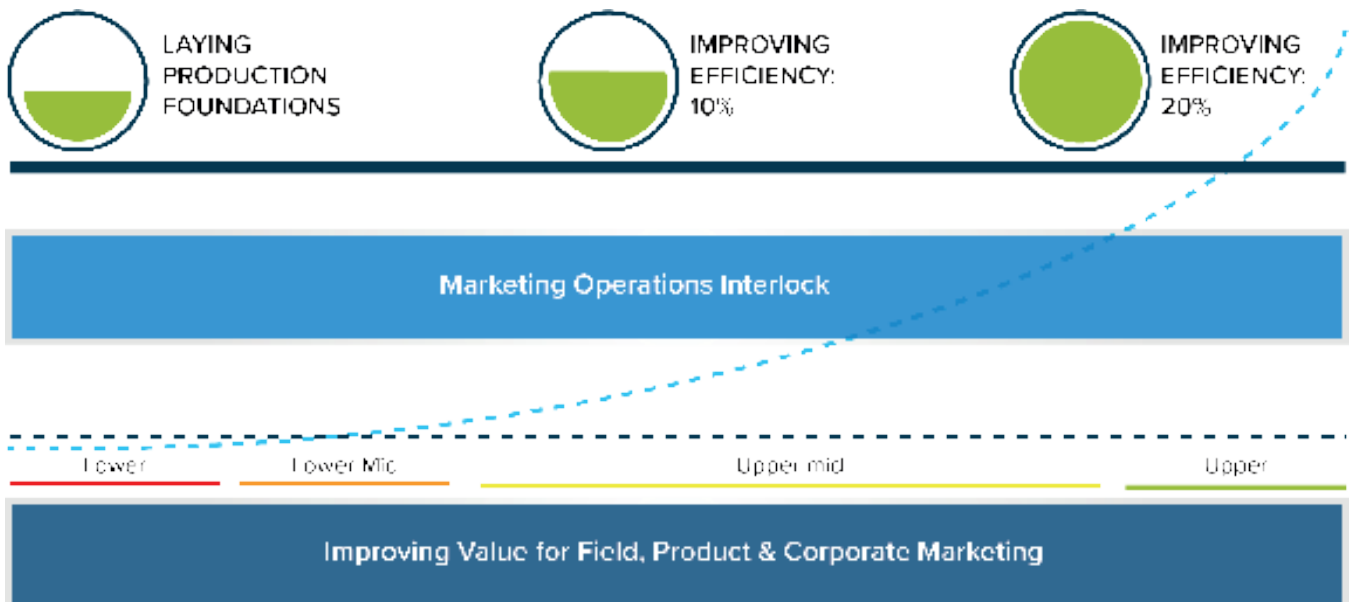
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<sup>11</sup> “Alibaba Founder Jack Ma...”, inc.com, 2018



## ROADMAP TO SUCCESS

As marketing operations, marketing, sales and IT start to collaborate, it's essential there's an underlying roadmap upon which to plan, evolve, measure impact and facilitate enablement. A roadmap should start from the ground-up, laying the foundational elements to tackle efficiency and effectiveness where quick wins are essential outcomes yet expectations on real value delivery are low.



As experience and capabilities develop, more advanced elements are introduced to optimize the foundations and improvements in efficiency start to take shape. As the roadmap develops over time and confidence grows through introducing new technology, new processes, roles and people's skills start to advance, the greater the potential impact. Ultimately the roadmap underpins the journey towards a marketing operations Center of Excellence.



## **IT'S YOUR TIME TO SHINE!**

A new era of marketing brings with it fresh challenges, but also a wealth of new opportunities. Marketing operations need no longer relegate itself to the back room of business, but can shine as change agents, bridging the global and the local, managing teams and technology to create an experience that benefits both the organization and the customer. So, step up and step forward into marketing's future because this is your time to shine. Today's MOS leader is tomorrow's CMO!





Marketing operations professionals and the hybrid skills they offer demand generation specialists can provide a key competitive advantage.



Global marketers are facing historic and seismic challenges, marketing operations is the key function to help navigate choppy waters.



Marketing operations is a key influencer contributing to marketing at scale and driving operational agility.

[Discover more...](#)

## Where to find expertise and resources

CRMT Digital can help you with the strategy, execution and transformation of your marketing operations function to deliver efficiency at scale.

We work in partnership with global organizations at various stages of marketing maturity. Our experts combine 15 years of experience at the forefront of marketing and sales technology with strategic consulting knowledge to help drive your organization towards excellence.

Get in touch today - we'll be glad to help.  
Contact us at [info@crmtdigital.com](mailto:info@crmtdigital.com)  
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