

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR MARKETING OPERATIONS AND WHAT THIS MEANS FOR SALES & IT



From a standing start just a handful of years ago, Marketing Operations is now helping marketing show that it is not just a department where leads are generated, but a strategic resource that can help organisations find new ways to attract, understand and engage customers.

A reminder of the progress already made comes from digital marketing and research agency, [SiriusDecisions](#). Its research shows that previously a Marketing Operations team would have accounted for less than 1% of Marketing's headcount and received just 1%-2% of the department's budget – and that's in a department that overall would only put 1% of its total budget into new technology.

Come 2015 and Marketing Operations typically accounts for 4%-5% of Marketing's headcount and receives between 3%-5% of its budget. At the same time, around 3% of Marketing's overall budget is now being spent on technology.



SALES MUST STEP UP TO THE PLATE

While these figures demonstrate that it is still relatively early days for Marketing Operations, its growth in importance to an enterprise is only set to rise. In the beginning, it was a function that started out as a means for equipping marketing teams with the tools needed to handle the shift to digital and to become more accountable for ROI, with budgetary and analysis tools that can turn data into insight.

Now, though, the way Marketing Operations is carving out a strategic role in organisations is leading marketing experts to sum it up as [‘eating into’](#) the roles of the Sales Operation team. When you think of the latter function, the key areas of data-driven activity would be analytics, forecasting, CRM implementation and optimisation. When you look at the areas where Marketing Operations is starting to be used strategically across an organisation, it is these very areas where Marketing Operations and Sales Operations are bound to meet.


With Sales and Marketing aligned alongside a Marketing Operations team that is increasingly the powerhouse for finding new and improved ways of understanding customers, it is Sales who will need to deal with the rising importance placed on Marketing.



THE CUSTOMER REALLY MUST COME FIRST

Two related developments will force this home to Sales. This summer, Ofcom reported that a tipping point had been reached as the smartphone became the main means of accessing the internet. Organisations, then, are having to devise 'mobile first' strategies which offer customers simple messaging with ordering systems that require little input and, preferably, just a click of a button to purchase.

This is all part of an ongoing trend for customers to be self-serving. Recent research from [Gartner suggests](#) that by 2020, 85% of the relationship a customer has with any enterprise will not involve interacting with a human. As ever, Amazon is a great example; a purchase can be researched, customer reviews checked, an order placed, a delivery rescheduled or goods can be returned and refunded at the click of a button - without a call or an email needing to be sent.



According to [Amanda Jobbins](#), CMO at Sage, this is already happening with 70% of any purchase process already being completed before a B2B customer talks to the company.

The impact for Sales, she suggests, is that Marketing can never again be seen as the department which "makes the phone ring for Sales".

MARKETING OPERATIONS IS THE KEY TO RETENTION

The accelerating rise of the Marketing Operations team has clear implications for customer-centric business strategies that rely heavily on the IT department.

IT will increasingly become the link between Marketing and Sales as technology allows them to become closer aligned around a single view of customers. It is down to the IT team, then, to ensure that systems are interoperable and that customer data can flow freely. They will also need to have insight drawn at every stage of the customer journey – from awareness to consideration and purchase to advocacy.

Modern self-serving customers will prompt a focus on Marketing Operations teams, and their increasing need for IT support in using data to retain - rather than just win - new customers. The outcome is that IT will need to move into the new territory of customer retention and that will likely be achieved through cloud marketing platforms.



Forrester has made some interesting
research-based observations.

While 60% of CMOs and CIOs revealed they have a good relationship based on mutual trust, only 46% of marketers reveal they have a single view of the customer across all touchpoints - a crucial goal on which forward-thinking Marketing Operations teams are focused.

MARKETING IS CENTRAL TO LONG-TERM ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The ultimate impact of the Marketing Operations team becoming increasingly central to earning and retaining new customers is that Sales has to work more closely with other departments, and IT has to accept that marketing will become its biggest customer. In fact, Gartner estimates the CMO will be the CIO's biggest customers as early as 2017.

These developments have led [McKinsey](#) to point out that the biggest change impacting other departments is that Marketing Operations will no longer be "overshadowed". In fact, if the research company is correct, the continued rise of Marketing Operations is going to ensure it is rightfully seen as a leading strategic business function.

However, before marketers get too carried away by the seemingly unstoppable rise of Marketing Operations, it is worth taking a step back.

A recent survey from recruitment firm, [Randstad](#), showed that two fifths of companies have no current plans to align Marketing and Sales, let alone form a central Marketing Operations team to innovate new customer experiences.

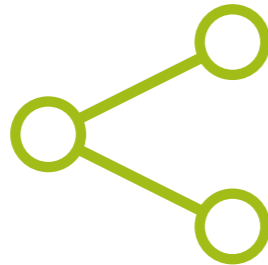


For such companies, then, the future impact of Marketing Operations could be to show the benefits of Marketing working closely with Sales, with the help of IT. Continued success stories are bound to get more companies started on encouraging Marketing, Sales and IT to collaborate on projects which will likely form the start of the Marketing Operations team.

TAKEAWAYS



Marketing Operations will bring Sales and Marketing closer together with a single view of customer insight.



As Marketing Operations comes to the forefront, IT will increasingly become the link between departments.



Sales, IT and Marketing will start working collaboratively as Marketing Operations deliver clearer insights.

Contact CRMT, the marketing operations experts, to discover how we can help you strategise, execute and transform your marketing activities.

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