



Getting your organization ready for the new world of marketing

In the new millennium, a storm of combining factors challenges the marketers' jobs and their organization.

The Internet and digital channels are deeply changing the relationship between brands and their audiences. Digital channels and social technologies offer marketers new opportunities to communicate and to interact with their audiences. At the same time, there is more noise, more fragmentation, and strong filtering by the recipients. Things actually get a lot more complex for marketers.

Further, the rise of digital natives or Generation Y in society and

in the workplace is changing standards and values in communications. Digital natives want more transparency, more interactivity, more authenticity, and they challenge brands on such values. They no longer buy pushy messages. They expect authentic and nurturing relationships; they want to participate on the basis of two-way communication. In this altered environment, marketers and their organizations face new challenges.

Today's marketers must handle a much more complex job. They need to master a much broader skillset than in the past.

That skillset begins with the technology itself. Marketers need to understand how the new Internet, social channels and mobile platforms work for them—instead of working against them. Marketers need to become technology strategists.

Measuring and analyzing everything

In the digital age everything becomes measurable and big data is the new thing. As a consequence, marketers are expected to be able to test new approaches and to measure the outcomes in order to invest scarce budgets into relevant campaigns that could translate into tangible business. Marketers need to become business analysts who experiment with the most interesting approaches, based on clear metrics.



Benchmarking

A first step in that process of testing new approaches is to establish a benchmark. For the existing online channels and campaigns, the most important metrics should be listed carefully. Metrics might include traffic (total visitors/returning visitors), conversion, cost of acquisition, return on ad spend, click through, etc. The historical values from each channel should be compared against the others, for example, in an Excel table with channels/metrics as columns and weeks or months as rows. As a second step, peaks and lows can be identified in the table and correlated with the campaigns and events that drove those figures. New channels can be added into the table, such as social media channels.

With these kinds of comparison tools, marketers can begin to figure out where to experiment. To generate useful and actionable insights, marketers can adopt A/B testing or more sophisticated approaches like multivariate testing.

Activities that should be tested and measured

1. Website and landing pages
2. New campaigns vs. prior ones
3. New channels vs. existing ones
4. New audiences
5. Promotions
6. Content attractiveness
7. Call-to-action buttons (i.e., **Click here, Register now** or **Download**)
8. Offline activities
9. Search engines
10. Up-selling and cross-selling to customers

Guidelines for measuring and analyzing

Big data may at first seem like an overwhelming mass of chaotic information. But there are several proven guidelines for how to measure and analyze it, as outlined below.

1. Integrate all analytics in one place

In the digital age, the number of analytics that need to be tracked in order to take relevant actions is huge. The variety of key performance indicators (KPIs) needed multiplies with the number of pages, channels, contents and permanent campaigns. At the same time, senior managers always expect more instantaneous insights. They know all those data are available and it will help rational decisions that they need to take. To respond to that challenge, marketers need to integrate all their data into one place.

2. Organize into collaborative dashboards

A best way to manage the previous challenge is to organize all KPIs into standard dashboards into a web portal. Set up standard reports that can be checked and commented upon anytime by the marketers and their managers who would log in to access. Marketers and their management might work collaboratively on a web modus to limit the up and down

reporting and conversation flows that hinder speed and reactivity. Company intranets or off-the-shelf cloud platforms (e.g. Netvibes) could help.

3. Set metric-driven goals

Any marketing project or activity should be tied to a clear and tangible goal. And any goal should be translated into clear metrics that can be tracked and improved. Use SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound).

4. Split key-metrics into sub-metrics

It is not enough to set key metrics. As far as possible these overall-metrics should be drilled down into smaller sub-metrics that can be acted upon through specific actions, with the overall goals in mind.

5. Track all relevant metrics

Relevant metrics might include visitors (unique/returning), most/least popular pages, conversion rates, bounce rates, click-through rate (CTR), average cost per click (CPC), cost per acquisition (CTA), return on ad spend, delivery rate, social audience reach and growth, social media engagement, social media likes and shares, emailing shares and forwarding rate, etc.

6. Use dedicated tools for each measurement

Major analytics can be monitored for free in generic and robust platforms such as Google Analytics or Moz. Additionally, some more specific tools could be used to track your social media activities (e.g. Hootsuite), blog articles (e.g. Wordpress), your Tweets (Twitter new analytics), your

Facebook activities (Facebook analytics), LinkedIn activities (LinkedIn analytics), your reputation (e.g. Klout), ranking (e.g. Alexa) etc. Many other tools—some of them free of charge—complete the list and would refine your intelligence. All tools should be aggregated in a single place.

7. Drill down major factors and comment

Once you get your metrics up and running, the most interesting part is to identify on a regular basis the major negative and positive variations, comment on how it impacts the business, submit rationales or hypothesis and which kind of activities should be tested as a counter measure. You might submit at least two or three options and indicate the preferred one. On each of the options lines, a column plus and minus would show the advantages / disadvantages of each option.

8. Establish benchmarks

In order to identify how your metrics influence the business, a first step as seen before is to have a clear view of what is the standard baseline for each of them. One way to do that could be either to compare

with industry standards or to record the internal history of these metrics for each product or campaign, etc. (by day, week or month).

9. Find ways to measure the immeasurable

Some things—like branding, for instance—might be much more difficult to measure. Nevertheless it's important to get a clear idea of their progress in order to understand how they contribute to the overall goals. In some cases, you may need to take another related dimension or sub-dimension that gives a clear metric. For example, you could count the number of time your brand appears in specific channels, such as search results or social sites.

10. Assign important metrics to individual marketers

A best way to focus on high-priority metrics is to assign them to some individuals, make them accountable, motivate, challenge them and ask them to report on a regular basis.



Content = Information your visitors want

Inbound marketing is about being found by potential buyers instead of going to them and trying to convince them to come to you. Various studies show that inbound marketing is an approach that pays off in most industries, whether B2B or B2C. A mindset that looks for inbound marketing tactics and opportunities should be promoted internally and backed by senior management in order to ensure dedicated resources.

Inbound marketing involves the production of interesting content for the various audiences and the use of enticing online channels. Here, marketers need to develop new skills as well, especially writing and social skills. First, they need to behave as chief editors, to develop relevant content roadmaps and to get others to contribute in the production process.

Marketers need to move from push to pull marketing or 'inbound marketing'

A first difficulty is the production of relevant content. Relevant means:

1. Interesting, informative or entertaining for the audience
2. Efficient for search engines
3. Beating the competition

A second difficulty is the regular flow of production to populate all the channels so that they can be found and considered.



Producing relevant content that gets found

1. Get everybody on board

The marketing team and the senior management should encourage and empower other employees to create content. Engineers, sales people, service managers etc. probably have a lot to tell about customer experiences and all the problems they and the products keep solving. That might interest a broader audience.

2. Use external writers

Guest bloggers or sponsored articles are interesting ways to highlight great content from others. Experts in your industry, especially independents, might enjoy your opening the channels to them. They could broaden their audience and you could benefit from their support, authority and networks.

3. Ask the salespeople what to write

Usually salespeople are exposed to many customer scenarios and they often know what appeals to them. Asking WHY questions as long as needed ("5 Whys" approach) can help you gain some very interesting insights

4. Answer common questions from prospects

A best way to produce content that appeals to your audience is to raise popular questions and answer them in detail. Google tools and internal people exposed to customers and prospects (sales, support, administration...) can be efficient sources of help in this process.

5. Recycle existing content

Usually, vast quantities of material are stagnating on intranets and desktops. Reviving and repurposing them into various formats (slides, infographics, short and long articles) and for various channels will be a good start for your content roadmap.

6. Repurpose third-party contents

Repurposing others' content is often the most effective way. Talking about others gives more credibility to your brand. Further, it highlights your topics from various viewing angles. In the end, it adds to your story telling

7. Target high-quality, low-competition, long-tail keywords

An effective strategy is to use Google's keyword tool to find new combinations of topics that people are looking for and that competitors are not properly addressing. This can be a good way to write with brand-new appealing content.

8. Write for your audience, optimize for the robots

To meet your audience and position your brand as trustworthy, be in the seat of the buyer and be authoritative, strategic, and passionate. At the same time optimize the keywords, title tags and meta-descriptions for the search robots.

9. Leverage technology to find and organize daily inspirations

Using tools like RSS feeds aggregators (e.g. Feedly), social media watch platforms (e.g. HootSuite, TweetDeck) and topic-centric platforms (e.g. Zite, Prismatic) will help find new sources of great inspiration

on a daily basis. Bookmarking and highlighting tools (e.g. Evernote, Diigo) will support the pre-qualification and filtering process. Such tools can be used collectively to make it a powerful collaborative process.

10. Ask others to like and share your content

Once your content is published, a key task is to ask your colleagues and networks to like and share them across their own networks. This will help things start to spread far and wide across the Internet.

Content production processes

To make it even more effective the whole content production can be organized into an efficient collaborative process with the use of combined tools in the cloud to enable research, intelligence, publishing, conversations and content planning. For inspiration, take a look at Feedly, Diigo, Wordpress, Buffer, Hootsuite, etc. You could designate junior researchers and writers who would have draft-writing rights. Senior managers would review and validate the content for the go-live.



Getting your content to your audience

On the distribution side, marketers need to **build consistent online architectures and tactics** that work for their content and enable them to use the content of other contributors productively and advantageously.

1. Open a presence in all relevant social channels

The more you connect with popular websites that are well-indexed by search robots, the more it will help raise your web exposure. Popular social channels are extremely good

supporters and they always receive more attention by the search engines' algorithms. Further, they can stimulate interaction with real people who share trustworthy insights and who might turn into interesting business prospects. Each person has his or her own preferred social channels, which is another reason to multiply.

2. Use each channel adequately

Each social channel should be used for its own purpose (what it is good at) and should not be given the same treatment,

especially where content is concerned. A technical reason for this is that search engines dislike duplicate content. Wordings and formats should be prepared specifically for each channel. A best way is to set up a gallery of content templates with attractive layouts and pictures that you can clone for new content campaigns.

3. Connect everything

You can facilitate visitors' workflows by utilizing all relevant cross-connections available. Things need to be thought through in

terms of visitor paths and in terms of cross- and up-selling.

4. Make your blog the hub for all content

If your website is your digital shop window, then your blog is your conversational channel. It needs to be the central repository that feeds your other digital channels and that feeds back to your landing pages and website. It is the channel that shows your authority and expertise. It should not be fed with self-centered product and company posts only, but with well-thought-through articles that engage and open discussions. The purpose of the blog is to nurture your online relationships and help prospects move down the conversion funnel.

A well-designed landing page should have a strong tagline, show a quick description of the value proposition, clear benefits and a strong call to action button as the central piece to push down the conversion funnel.

5. Use targeted landing pages

You will probably find that it is not useful to send your campaign audience to your homepage or any generic page. They could click anywhere, or they might be overwhelmed by too much information at once. Something might not appeal to them and they would bounce out. A better tactic for any marketing campaign or 1:1 commercial approach is to send each audience to a very specific and dedicated landing page that serves as a

filter to push the visitor down the conversion funnel. A well-designed landing page should have a strong tagline, show a quick description of the value proposition, clear benefits and a strong call to action button as the central piece to push down the conversion funnel. Diverting links should be limited and in smaller fonts to avoid visitor diversions.

6. Clean lean calls to action

Calls to action need to be a pivotal piece of your landing page. They should be well-thought-out with a clear and appealing message. They need to be well-designed to be eye-catching. On the other hand, they should not be too demanding or heavy. You need to find a good balance between appeal and sell. And they should be A/B tested to ensure that the most appealing message, color/font, position in the page is achieved.

7. Stop thinking in silos

Your web pages, social channels and sales efforts should work together and not be seen as disconnected and unrelated parts of your business. For instance, a prospect finds you on LinkedIn, clicks and reviews your website, then contacts a sales rep. The next day, that person checks your activities on YouTube and Facebook to get more insights. You need to provide a consistent and memorable experience across all the channels.

8. Give one face to all your channels

To support the previous point, all your online channels, including the social channels, need to be branded to offer a unique and seamless experience

to the visitor across his journey. All major social channels including YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc. offer the possibility of inserting banners, taglines, multimedia materials, etc. that can help build up your own consistent branding inside their channel.

9. Connect offline and online efforts

Your online efforts help your offline activities—such as events, sales visits and stores—and vice versa. You can think of it as a virtuous circle with mutual benefits. All online and offline activities should be worked in that sense to increase the synergetic effect. For example, landing pages' URL or QR codes might be included in your printed materials. Promotional codes might be included as well with a specific tracking (Google Analytics). Your landing pages might include calls to action that liaise back to your sales reps etc. Creativity is the limit for all such online/offline connections.

10. Drive them to share

Your best business allies are your colleagues, customers, friends, followers. Everything should be done to use them as amplifiers. Properly thought-through shares and likes are essential on any landing page.

7. Engage prospects

The final goal of the marketer as a community manager should be to engage in rich conversations with prospects in order to get interesting insights from them, answer questions or influence them to take actions. Actions might include downloading some material, testing a product, attending a demo or an event, checking testimonials, etc.

8. Connect with your customers

Your customers might be your best allies. Those with a positive experience of your brand

should be addressed in their online channels to nurture the relationship. And the game should be to get them to talk about you and recommend you further to their network.

9. Handle critical questions adequately

With every online conversation being transparent to others, critical points and questions addressed to a brand should be handled carefully. The role of answering such points should be in the hands of skilled employees who speak

for the brand and answer adequately, under others with a genuine, honest, gentle, polite approach. Further, the ability to react quickly and to coordinate internally is essential.

10. Cross-fertilize conversations

The good marketer as a community manager should have the role of an entertainer. He or she facilitates positive people with influence to come together in discussions in order to stimulate positive conversations around the brand.

Putting together the right media mix

In addition to everything above, marketers in the digital age need to handle a qualitative and balanced mix across a combination of owned media (websites, blog), paid media (TV, print) and shared media (social channels). They need to develop holistic campaigns that combine various tactics. These might include a combination

of emailing, social media, SEO, affiliates etc., depending on the target audience and goals.

To their already long skillset list, digital age marketers need to add strong campaign analytics and adequate reporting that translate into new proposals for their management. These skills are essential to get decisions and to move ahead.

This comprehensive marketing role points to the need for continuous training. After marketers have acquired the basics required to succeed in the role, they need to keep up-to-date with the fast-changing trends and technologies.

How MCE can help

Life-time learning and ongoing development are the new normal for digital age workers. This is especially true for those involved in Marketing and Sales.

MCE is constantly updating and adding to its curriculum of open-enrolment workshops for individual managers in Marketing and Sales. During these intensive 2-4 day sessions, you will exchange ideas and experiences with peers from other industries, countries and cultures in a supportive

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environment conducive to gaining new knowledge, skills and abilities.

Your expert MCE senior associate who facilitates the workshop will draw on his or her 20+ years of experience in senior marketing roles with international organizations. He or she will guide you through time-tested practices and the latest thinking and developments you need in order to stay competitive and productive. She or he will mentor you as you develop your

skills and gain new knowledge. Your fellow participants will support and encourage you in solving problems and creating new knowledge collaboratively. MCE also offers fully customized services for your organization in B2B and consumer markets. Whether your organization's need is best met by an off-the-shelf workshop for managers in your marketing department, or by a custom-designed workshop made specifically for your team, MCE can help.



The second major challenge: Aligning organizations and senior leaders with the new digital paradigms

In the current digital age, it isn't just the 5 Ps of marketing that need to be re-thought. In many cases, the organization and its senior leaders need to be re-invented to meet the new challenges they face in a digital marketplace.

Does Marketing & Sales have the right structure?

A new marketing approach means integration: prospects and online visitors need to be addressed all along their journey across the multiple points of interaction with the brand and products. The classic organization—sales, events, PR, online marketing, etc.—might not be the most suitable one anymore. Instead, new organizational functions

like outbound/inbound or retention/acquisition or even cold/hot prospect management might be more adequate, depending on the type of activity, on the level of online business and maturity.

Further, in the classic structures there might not be sufficient communications between the various marketing silos, such as PR, online, and social media.

Additionally, some competitive aspects between the silos or discrepancies in targets might not help the overall purpose, which is to convert cold prospects into leads, leads into clients, and clients into advocates, whatever the channels of interaction.

A first task for senior managers and marketing directors is to challenge and question

the existing organization, foster cross-fertilization and collaboration across the various marketing silos. This will help things move in the direction of a more integrated and audience-focused organization. In fact, management needs to build “de-layered” and “de-siloed” organizations that react fast and focus on customers.

A second task is about people enhancement: redefining the roles, putting together adequate

skills, consistent targets and building up the marketing collaborators with advanced marketing programmes. The goal is to bring new skillsets and help understand others’ roles across the various marketing disciplines.

A third task is about facilitating new marketing values and adopting new management styles. Senior managers need to move from the classic top-down/bottom up report-

based management style to a more innovation-focused and collaborative style if they want to attract and retain new marketing talents and move ahead of competition. Facilitating new ideas and new marketing approaches become crucial in the digital age. The test-fail-run process must become part of the marketing DNA. The senior management must facilitate that.

A different structure and culture for marketing

The future marketing organisation needs to achieve three major challenges if it wants to survive in the digital age. It needs to:

1. Offer an all-round, seamless, unique experience to each of the audiences, whatever their point of contact. It needs to be consistent across all touch points.
2. Be highly interactive with every single individual. It needs to be conversational.
3. Be **agile** to respond in speed and flexibility.

The consequences for the structure, its culture and the leaders are multiple.

An internal marketing strategy

The model with a single agency

that plans and books external media is outdated. The new marketing organisation needs to keep the marketing strategy internally, set up its very own media and develop across shared media.

Reducing complexity internally

The new marketing organisation needs to downscale its complexity and break down silos to achieve more agility. But foremost, it needs to act on project bases. The annual planning with fixed budgets is more and more something of the past. It is replaced by short-term “sprints”—on a three-month basis, for example—where marketers start small, try fast and learn fast before scaling up. The new marketing approach needs to

be incremental.

A leaner, scaled-down marketing organization

Agility is achieved by a leaner organisation with the core strategy and limited projects inside the company. Everything else involves specialized skills hired externally in accordance with the company’s immediate needs. This helps marketing remain flexible and adapt to the speed of change.

Conversing with customers

Marketing leaders need to be conversational leaders. They must embrace three characteristics: they are **reachable** for the audiences, they **invest in content**, they **share and interact** in conversations.

10 major characteristics of the new marketing organisation

In summary, the changes marketers will have to make as a consequence of new technologies and changing customer behaviours are numerous. For the marketing organization, the structures and ways of doing things from the past simply do not work in today’s world. What to do? An exercise in re-inventing

the marketing organization is the only answer that makes sense. And what does new organization need to look like? The 10 characteristics below provide some answers.

1. Extremely customer centric

After transitioning to the new digital era with adjustments in terms of practices (SEO, social

media, contents), organizations need to consolidate to enter the new age of customer engagement. Marketers need to shift from delivering campaigns to delivering business success.

2. Extremely agile and reactive

The new marketing organization needs to respond in quasi real-time to unexpected issues

blowing up online while providing operational support to the entire organization and developing engagement experiences and daily content that feed all the channels. This requires tremendous coordination and well-thought-through processes.

3. Conversational

With the speed of online channels—and the associated need to be responsive—and with the Generation Y onboard, the old internal communication approach based on meetings, hierarchical reporting and asynchronous documents (PowerPoint, Excel) need to be replaced with real-time conversations going across the various departments and across the hierarchy. That process needs to be facilitated with Enterprise 2.0 platforms that combine project management and collaboration-based conversations.



4. Selling without selling

Marketing is no longer about shouting messages at the market. Instead it is about getting people to love your content and ultimately engage with your brand and products and recommend you to others.

5. Data-driven

Organizations need constantly to watch and analyze infinite data across all touch-points, to identify patterns and quickly respond to new solicitations and changing needs.

6. Integrated marketing

All marketing disciplines need to work in tandem to offer seamless experiences to prospects or customers who navigate across their touch points. Further, they need to maximize the promotion of any campaign or special offer and embrace cross-selling approaches.

7. Automated

In the complex world of online marketing there is a clear need for automation. Identify resources that can monitor infinite data from a large number of online channels. Look for automated was to distribute your content and drive campaigns

across a high number of touch points and to detect the need for a response, etc.

8. Facilitated by software

Marketing software is here to facilitate all the automation that is needed with stand-

alone solutions dedicated to specific tasks (e.g. emailing, community management, social media watch, etc.). With new integrated software like HubSpot, you can accomplish all the major tasks, including the design of online elements, driving campaigns, engaging and monitoring.

9. Marketing belongs to all employees

Marketing should belong to everybody in the company. The marketing department itself needs to become the customer engagement engine that triggers conversations, set priorities, designs and builds up new engagement approaches.

10. Ecosystems instead of organization

The skills needed in the digital age become large and complex while technology accelerates, new approaches constantly arise and the workload and speed increase. The operations cannot be handled in tight silos as in the past. Flexible ecosystems of internal and external resources are the way to go. The new marketer needs strong coordination skills.

The strategic roles in the new marketing organisation

1. Data analyst
2. Customer insight manager
3. Community manager
4. Chief digital officer
5. Chief content officer
6. Creative designer
7. Marketing technology officer
8. Engagement manager / strategist

How MCE can help

Most changes that require new ways of doing things also imply a need to change the structure of the organization in order to achieve new goals. Technology and interactions with customers are producing the need for dramatic change in marketing organizations.

MCE's team of experienced and expert senior associate can work

with the leaders and managers of your marketing organization to help define and identify new structures, new ways of getting the job done, and new approaches for working with customers and making them the focus of the organization.

Individual managers may benefit from attending one of several open-enrolment

workshops in various aspects of marketing and the new practices that are needed to compete in the 21st Century. Groups of managers can increase their range of skills and abilities in customized workshops developed specifically for your organization. They are part of the fully customized services MCE provides for organizations B2B and consumer markets..

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