

ORGANIZING FOR DIGITAL MARKETING EXCELLENCE



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the last few years, marketers have had to adapt to the increasing demands of their businesses and customers alike. Customers now demand compelling, personalized content and experiences to be delivered to them on an ever-increasing list of digital channels, while CEOs now expect marketers to deliver results that go beyond brand awareness and ring the cash register. As a result, marketers, especially digital marketers have had to learn new skills, adopt innovative new technologies, and fundamentally reassess the role they play in driving the business.

While learning new skills and deploying sophisticated technology are key drivers of digital marketing excellence, their effectiveness is limited if the digital marketing teams aren't structured or organized in the best way possible. Many businesses struggle with this crucial step as it could mean breaking legacy hierarchies and defying embedded cultures.

In our research report, we've defined four essential steps to help marketing leaders understand the key elements of a modern digital marketing organization, and the choices they have in positioning them to best deliver on the needs of the business and its customers.

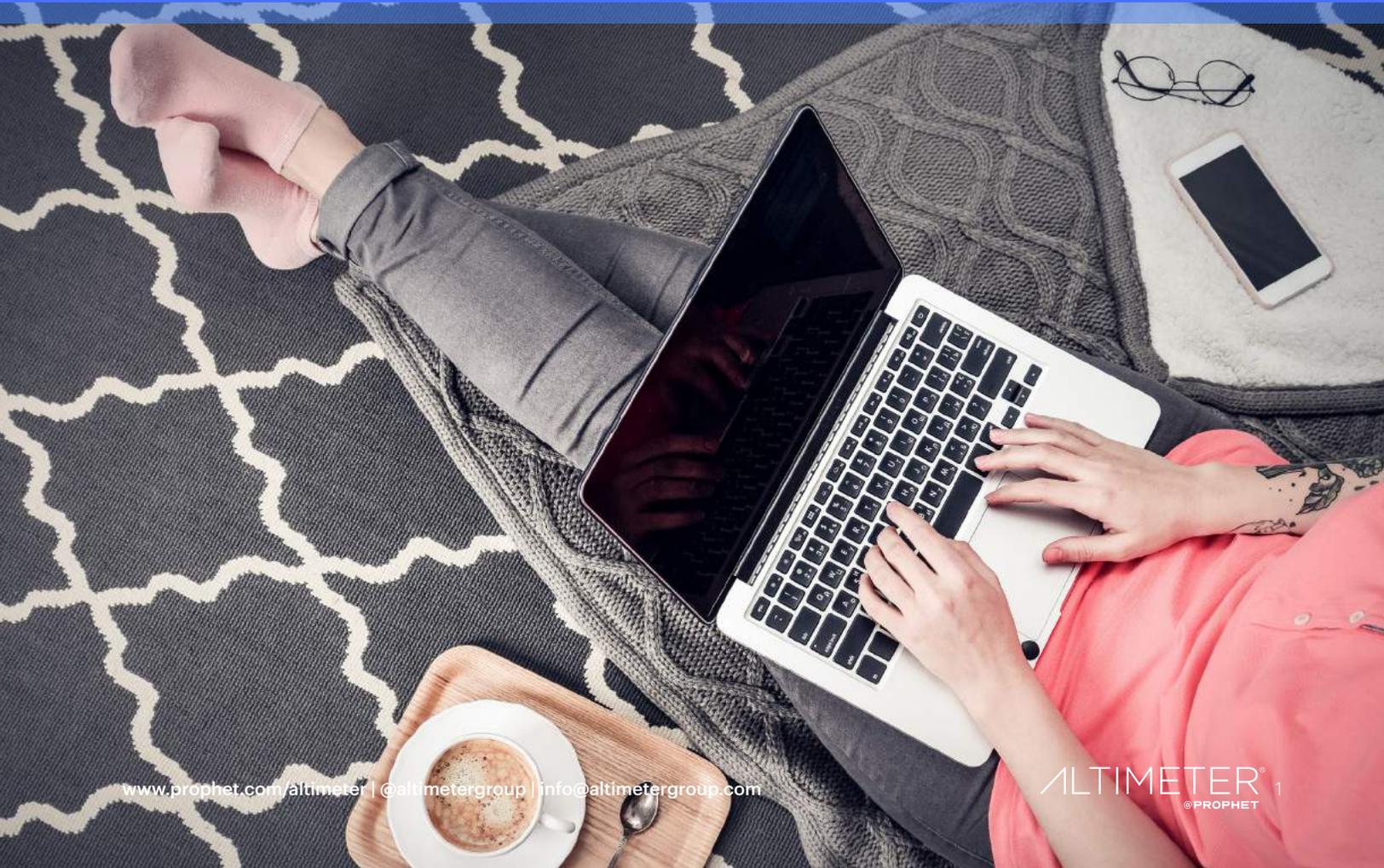


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INTRODUCTION: THE EVOLUTION OF THE DIGITAL MARKETING ORGANIZATION

The evolution of digital marketing can best be understood as two shifts, one from advertising to personalizing, and another from personalizing to integrating. This tracks the progression of the digital marketing function from delivering mass messages at scale, to delivering winning personalized digital experiences that move customers towards (and beyond) purchase.

In other words, digital marketing is no longer a loudspeaker, but a conversationalist, and one that increasingly must serve as a mouthpiece for many other parts of the organization, such as sales, service, customer loyalty, product marketing, and e-commerce.

There have been many drivers of this shift, but some have had a particularly large impact on the way digital marketing teams are set up internally, and positioned within the organization:

- **Shifts in channel ownership.** In the past, it was common for the digital marketing team to only manage programmatic advertising such as search or display advertising, while the website was managed by another team (likely IT) and social media by another (likely PR or comms). As digital marketing goals have expanded beyond top-of-the-funnel brand awareness, new strategies require the integrated use of all the channels. This means a consolidation of most, if not all digital channels under marketing.
- **Communication beyond brand building.** Digital marketing has always had two very valuable assets at its disposal, compelling digital content, and access to customer data (both behavioral and demographic). While these assets were initially used for top-of-the funnel marketing tactics, they are increasingly used for communication across every stage of the funnel. As a result, digital marketing can be used by multiple customer-facing parts of the organization, which impacts its skill set, and its rules of engagement with other departments.

- **Adapting to continuous innovation.**

In the last five years, we've seen audiences move from web to mobile, blogs to social media and screens to voice-activated devices. And every time, digital marketing has had to figure out how to engage audiences on the new innovative channel, which has made it one of the first places where innovation happens within an organization. Hence, the modern digital marketing organization must now be structured to incubate innovation, test it, and ultimately socialize it to the rest of the organization.

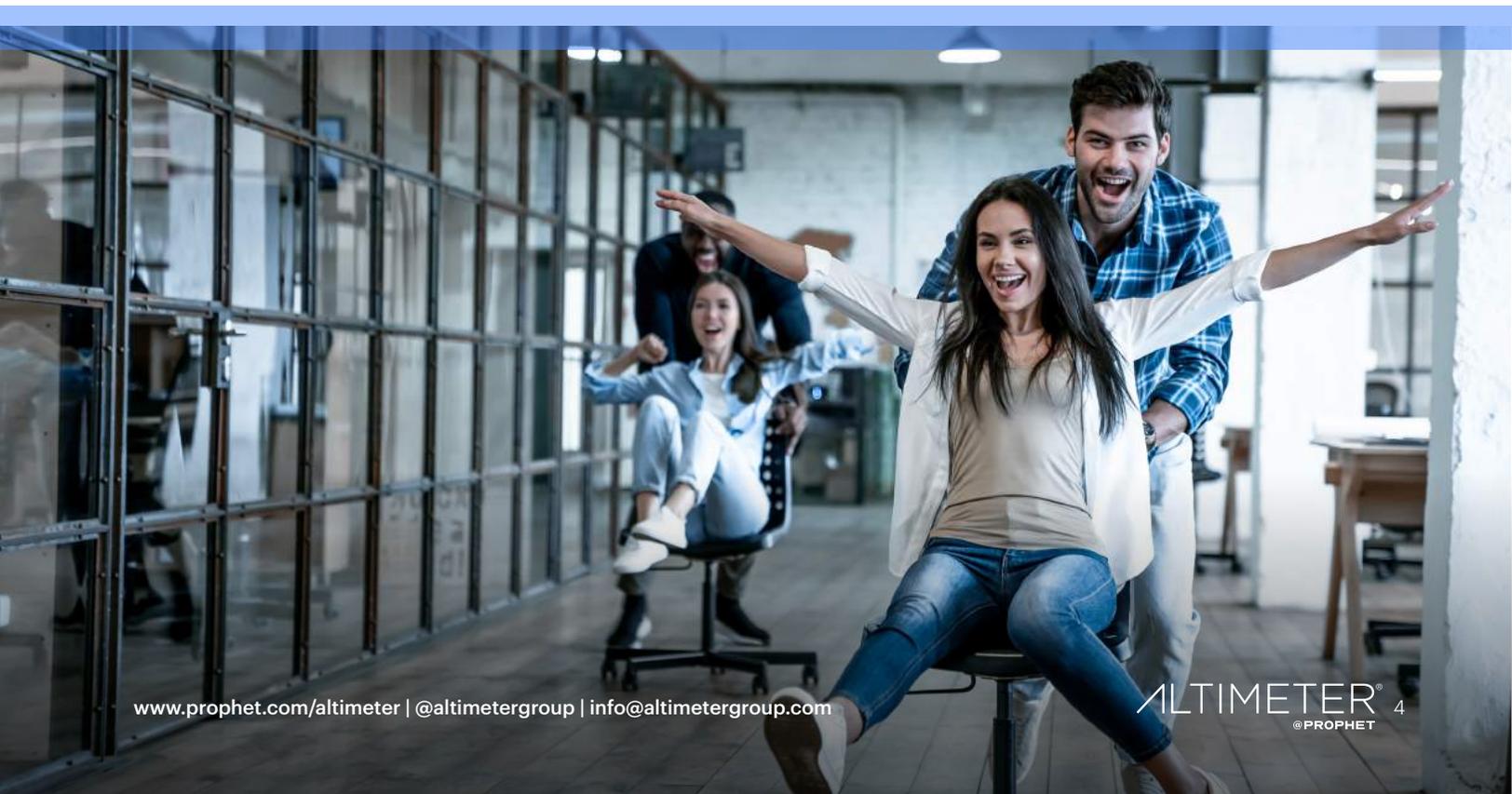
- **Customer experience expectations.**

Today's customers don't care if they are interacting with a marketing, sales or service department, they only see a single brand, and they expect to be recognized and given consistent, compelling experiences across every interaction. This means that digital marketing, which is responsible for an outsize amount of digital channel interactions, must ensure that it is capturing the right customer

information, storing it, and accessing it to deliver a personalized, relevant message or experience at any given touchpoint. This requires a multi-functional data and analytics team, with the right software, and processes to share data, glean insights and create relevant content all in a harmonious loop.

- **The rise of "performance" marketers.**

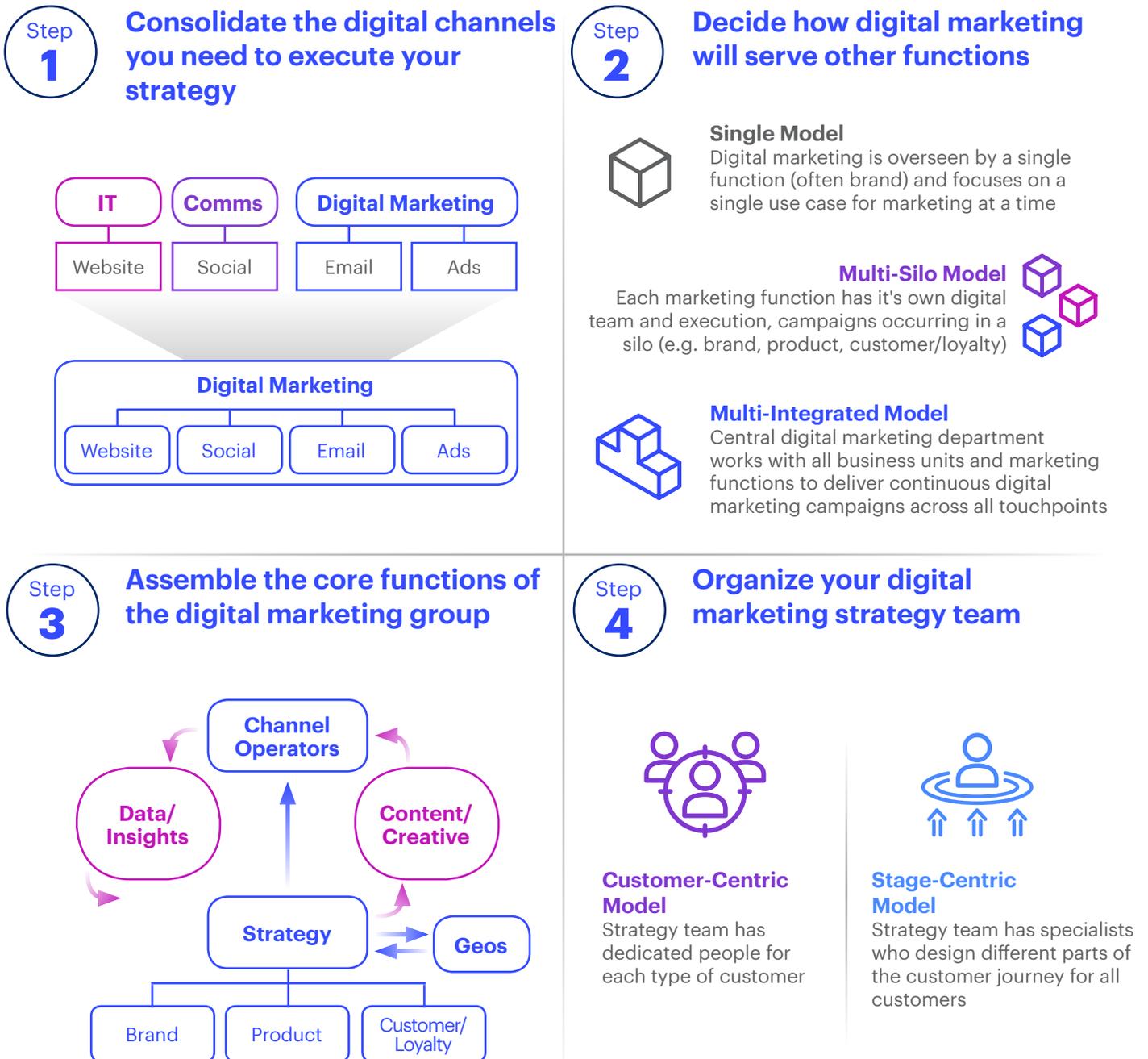
In the past, brand marketers had to be content with tracking the reach of their messaging, while today, we can measure reach, engagement rates, conversion rates and even direct revenue generation. This impacts the way the digital marketing function is organized, in the sense that teams may now be grouped by the metrics they are responsible for delivering. For example, one team focuses only on reach, while another on conversion, and another on customer lifetime value.



CREATING THE MODERN DIGITAL MARKETING ORGANIZATION

The best way to organize the digital marketing function is to do it according to the digital marketing strategy, rather than create the strategy after building the organization. This is the best way to ensure that the digital marketing function has the right set of skills, access to technology, and a clear idea of its responsibilities. To do this, we recommend a four-step “outside-in” approach (Figure 1) that determines the scope of digital marketing’s responsibilities, the nature of its relationship with other marketing functions, and the organizing principal for its internal resources.

Figure 1. The Four-Step Process for Organizing Digital Marketing Teams





Step
1

CONSOLIDATE DIGITAL CHANNEL OWNERSHIP

The word “digital” can mean different things to different companies. For one company, digital marketing may only have control of digital advertising, whereas another company might have digital marketing only managing email and social media. These channel allocations are usually the result of outdated thinking, or arbitrary hierarchies, desperately in need of a relevant update. That’s why the first step in building the digital marketing organization is to make sure digital marketing actually has control of the channels it needs to deliver on its goals and strategy.

For example, if a company decides its primary goal for digital marketing is to generate new leads, the digital marketing team needs to have oversight over the company’s social media advertising, email marketing, CRM management and content publishing platforms. That might mean reclaiming the social media budget from an outside agency, taking over the website from IT, and sharing the CRM platform with the sales and service teams. This is no easy task, and it requires diplomacy, along with a clearly articulated vision to help bring all parties on board.

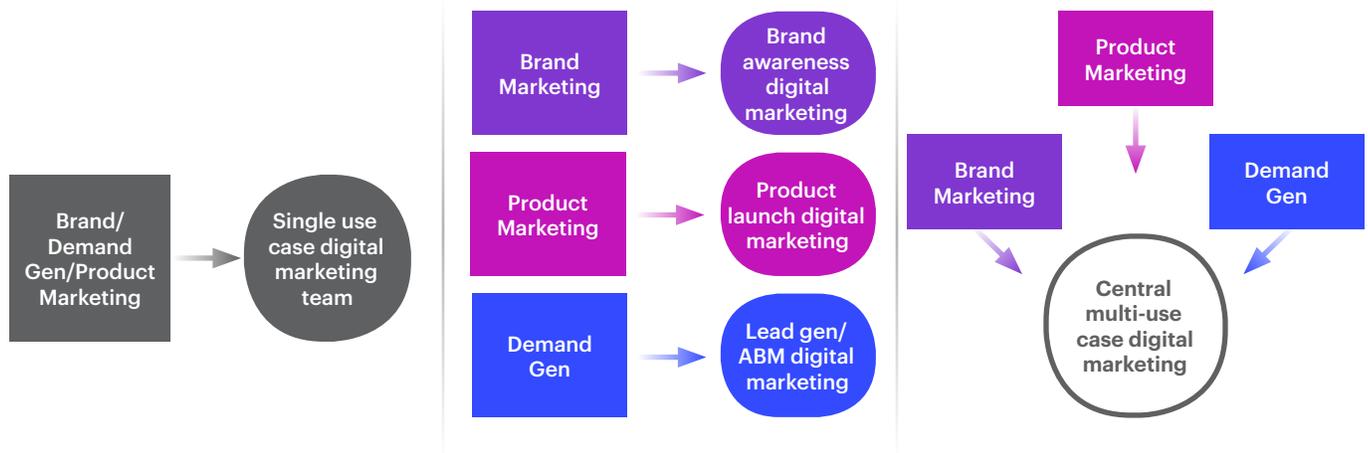
Step
2

DECIDE HOW "DIGITAL" WILL SERVE OTHER MARKETING FUNCTIONS

After the digital marketing team has ownership of all the channels and/or tools it needs to execute its strategy, it has to determine how it will interact with or serve other parts of the business. This is a problem especially relevant for large, global companies who have brand marketers, product marketers and customer lifecycle marketers all competing to use the same digital channels to deliver on their goals. These goals can be shared, but are often disparate, and it creates a major organizational, and operational challenge for the head of the digital marketing team. Should digital marketing serve only one type of marketing function? Or should the digital marketing team serve all?

Figure 2 shows the 3 models of interaction that a digital marketing team can adopt.

Figure 2. Three Models for Setting Up Digital Marketing Within an Organization



Single-Function Model

- Digital marketing is overseen by a single function (usually brand) and focuses primarily on a single use case for marketing at a time
- Typical for smaller companies, or companies that heavily depend on one type of marketing e.g. Coca-Cola's predominantly brand-focused marketing strategy

Multi-Silo Model

- Each type of marketing function has its own digital team and execution, campaigns occurring in a silo (e.g. brand, product, demand gen or loyalty)
- Typical for very large companies where focusing teams on single use cases or products/business units makes sense
- More efficient to execute, but can be costly and inefficient when it comes to sharing data or content

Multi-Integrated Model

- Central digital marketing department works with all business units and marketing functions to deliver continuous digital marketing campaigns across all touchpoints
- Able to shift focus and optimize in a dynamic/agile way according to needs of business
- Difficult to execute, but better for delivering a unified customer experience across multiple interactions



The Single-Function Model

In this model, digital marketing primarily serves the needs of a single use case or marketing function. Traditionally, this function was usually brand marketing, and digital was used to further the goals of brand awareness and brand health. However, depending on the type of business or campaign, the lead function could be product marketing, or customer lifecycle marketing.

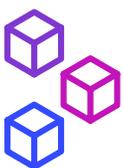
The defining feature of the single function model is the entire digital marketing team focuses primarily on one digital marketing use case, and it is owned by one marketing function. In terms of hierarchy, it might have a head of digital marketing who reports into the head of brand/product/customer marketing, who then reports into the CMO.

This model works well for small companies, who may not be big enough to have separate marketing functions, and just have a single

catch-all “marketing” function. Indeed newer companies may find the word “digital” to be superfluous, since they don’t have the size or resources to have specialized areas for marketing, and the head of digital is likely to be the CMO themselves.

The model is also suitable for large companies who only really do one type of marketing. For example, a mid-size B2B software company may decide that digital marketing is best used for generating and converting leads, and hence, it’s placed under the customer lifecycle or sales enablement function of the marketing team. This ensures clarity of goals, and the prioritization of tools and skills that are most relevant to that digital marketing use case.

However, the model isn’t great for companies who merely adopted it because one marketing function was historically better at understanding/utilizing digital than the others. In the past, digital marketing tended to be owned by brand teams because it was a great tool for spreading brand awareness and advertising, and there was an incentive for brand teams to use it well. Today however, digital can provide equal benefit, if used correctly, by other marketing functions. To restrict digital to a single marketing function simply for historic or traditional reasons would be a major underutilization of digital’s capabilities.



The Multi-Silo Model

In this model, every marketing function gets its own digital team.

For example, the brand team has its own digital marketing group, as does product marketing and customer lifecycle marketing. Even non-marketing functions such as sales and service might get their own version of a digital marketing platform for communicating and engaging with customers through digital channels.

This model allows each digital marketing team within an organization to be highly specialized and deliver on many different digital marketing goals/use cases at the same time. It’s an especially effective model for large global companies, who not only have several separate marketing functions, but also have regional marketing teams who need to have their own distinct digital capabilities. In this way, each marketing team gets the specific platforms, skills and budget allocations for its goals, and can operate independently without worrying about serving the needs of other functions in the organization.

The downside of the model is that it can be expensive, resource intensive, and potentially disruptive to the customer experience. When there are that many digital marketing teams operating and communicating with a common set of customers, it becomes difficult to coordinate messaging, creative elements and best moves. Additionally, each digital marketing team might choose to have its own marketing tools, potentially leading to many different instances of the same software, and a vendor management headache for IT.

It’s also a challenge for the different teams to share customer data between them, which can lead to a customer not being recognized across different types of interactions, increasing the chances of a bad customer experience. It also becomes harder to share learnings and insights about the digital marketing processes from one group to another, making it harder to scale innovation and improvement. One way to resolve this is to maintain some shared services such as data and analytics between silos to ensure there is a way to share learnings and data.



Multi-Silo Model Case Study

The Multi-Silo model is used at global energy company Shell, where separate marketing divisions, (for example, retail marketing, brand marketing and individual product marketing) all have their own digital teams. These teams operate independently for the most part, but share some significant key digital resources and infrastructures.

As Shell's Global Head of Integrated Brand and Communications, America Silva is responsible for the company's global brand advertising and marketing communications at the corporate level. His team has dedicated resources for digital marketing that focus solely on brand awareness and brand building. This gives them a unique audience, and a singular goal to achieve. Across Shell, other teams have been set up to focus on singular audiences, geographies, products, or marketing functions that operate mostly independently, with some significant points of collaboration and shared services.

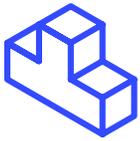
According to Silva, this siloed approach was the best way to cope with the immense size of the company. "When you have one brand that cuts across multiple businesses and audiences, integration and data-sharing can be quite complex and difficult," Silva said. "The scale of the company pushes you naturally into a silo." Despite that, Silva said the level of collaboration between different businesses across the enterprise is the

highest it had ever been and major progress has been achieved over the last year from a collaboration perspective.

Within Silva's small team, there are dedicated roles for strategy, insights, global productions and local deployment. The insights role liaises with Shell's global research group to gain actionable customer insights, while the strategy team maps the customer journey and digital touchpoints, and create the communications strategy for the channels based on those customer insights.

Silva's brand and communications specialists also receive help from several shared services that operate across teams in Shell. "There are pockets of excellence across the organization that we rely on for very specific pieces of work," said Silva. These shared services include paid media, a digital and social media center of excellence (for best practices and social media listening), web services, market research (quantitative and qualitative analysis) and data and analytics. The latter has assigned a data analyst to Silva's team who is responsible for monitoring campaign performance metrics.

Although Shell has a dedicated group of data and insights specialists that serve a central function, in the last few years it has tried to make data and insights more embedded into all parts of the organization. As a result, the company created a network of people across Shell at a corporate level called the Insights Network who serve as a data and insights focal point within their respective units. These people are not necessarily data specialists, but they know enough to leverage the data that is made available by the central data and insights team. "This allows us to make not only better decisions, but faster decisions, when running a campaign, or developing new content" said Silva.



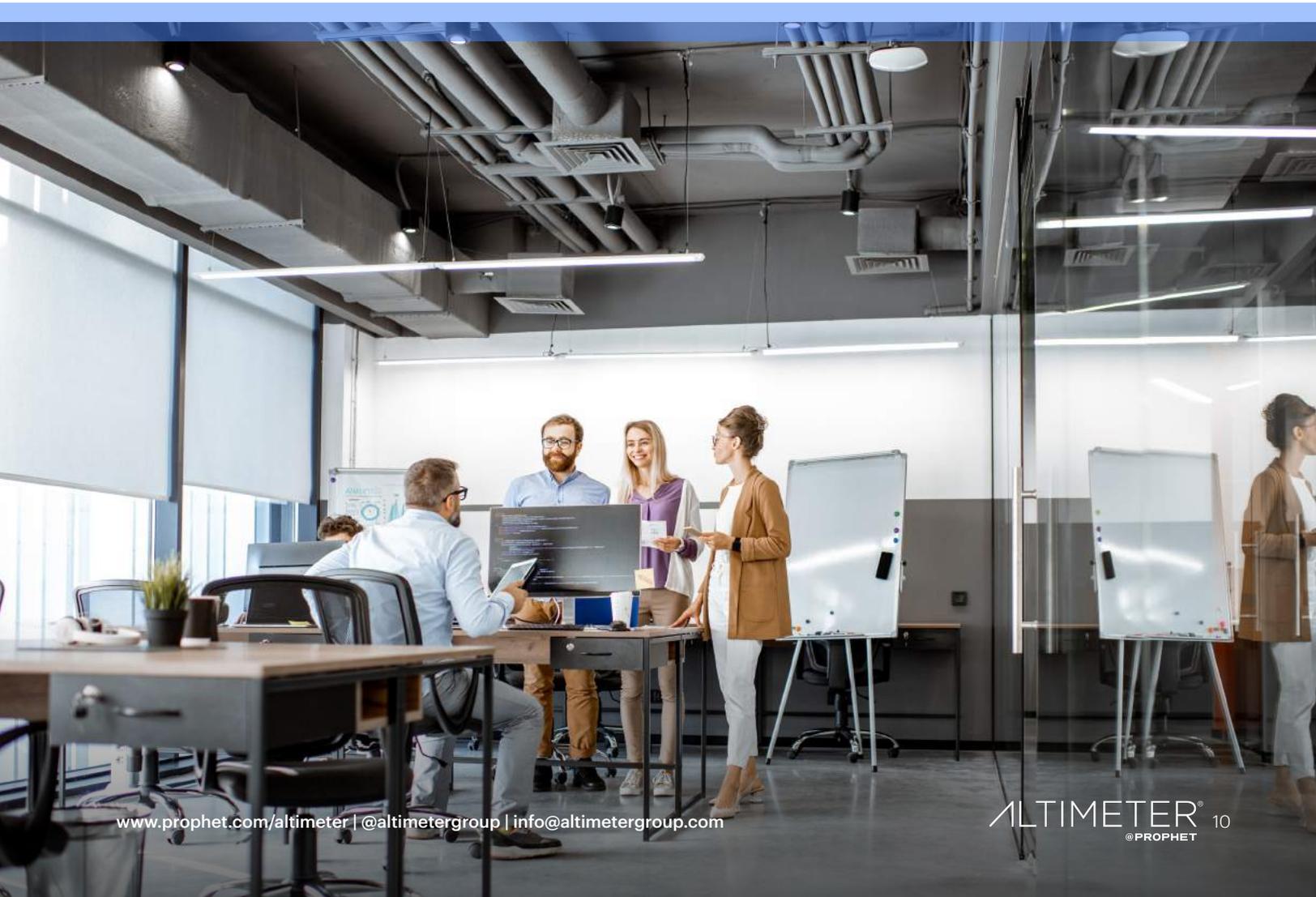
The Multi-Integrated Model

The most complex model is the Multi-Integrated model, where an independent digital marketing team acts as a central hub, delivering on the needs of multiple marketing functions in an agile, dynamic way. This means that at any given time, the digital marketing team might be delivering traditional awareness campaigns for the brand team, lead gen for the customer lifecycle team, and a new launch for the product team, all on the same digital channels.

This model requires an extremely high level of coordination, as the digital marketing team is essentially playing traffic cop for multiple campaigns.

However, it is also the most evolved model, as it utilizes a single integrated martech tools stack, a central customer data repository, and many automated processes in order to continuously deliver on the goals of disparate functions. It's far better suited to delivering a unified customer experience, and it also forces the company to prioritize selected campaigns over others at any given point in time. This makes the digital marketing operations much more focused and efficient, instead of running all of the campaigns all of the time.

In the Multi-Integrated setup, the head of digital marketing is an elevated position, at par with the heads of brand, product and customer lifecycle marketing, reporting directly to the CMO.





Multi-Integrated Model Case Study

Illinois-based Zebra Technologies is a global manufacturer of digital hardware, which include barcode readers and printers, markers, trackers and other devices used in logistic services. In the wake of customer feedback on disparate or complex digital experiences, Zebra reorganized its digital marketing team with the express goals of improving its customer experiences and driving new opportunities for growth within existing customers and reselling/retailing partners.

Zebra's head of digital marketing, Tim McCarran said this reorganization was predicated on four workstreams:

- Integrate tools and processes to build a 360-degree view of the customer
- Use that 360-degree view to inform the next-best marketing moves in the buying and ownership cycles
- Use ownership cycle to create a loyalty loop with customers
- Generate actionable insights to give to partners and re-sellers

The first step in the reorganization was to consolidate and redefine the role and responsibilities of Zebra's major marketing groups. The company first created a Go-To-Market group that is responsible for creating all content and messaging on behalf of multiple stakeholders, including brand and product.

Zebra then consolidated two previously separate groups; the digital experiences team (responsible for digital channels such as web and social media) and the demand center team (responsible for demand generation and marketing automation) under a single digital marketing organization headed by McCarran. This team is responsible for delivering the content, messaging and campaigns created by the Go-to-Market team, including new product launches, awareness and prospecting campaigns, and customer loyalty efforts.

"My team has nothing to say without the Go-to-Market team, and they can't deliver anything to an audience without my team," said McCarran. "Their focus is aligning the content and messaging with the brand, and goals of the product team, while we focus on the right tactics to reach target audiences and key accounts."

The digital marketing team alternates between delivering "campaigns" and "content." "Content" is product information that needs to be made available on the digital properties, while campaigns push messages that tie Zebra's products to industry trends or customer needs. In this way, the digital marketing team balances the needs of multiple marketing functions such as brand, product and loyalty. "It's less a calendar model, and more of a capacity model," said McCarran, referring to the dynamic way his team determines what messaging to send and when.

Within the digital marketing team, teams are aligned by customer journey stage, with one group focusing on prospect marketing (generating awareness, converting leads) with another focusing on current customers (creating customer loyalty).

Both these teams are supported by a martech team that focused purely on the tools and technologies needed to execute the digital marketing strategy. Their duties include procurement, integration and optimization of the software to meet the team's requirements.

Additionally, within the digital experiences team, there is a Cross-Functional Special Projects group who is responsible for executing on a single project for the duration of a year. For example, in one year, the team's focus was on the digital configuration and quoting of all Zebra's products, and in another year, the team's focus was on reframing the end-customer's digital experience.

When it comes to data and analytics, Zebra has a hub and spoke model, with a central data and analytics group that serves all the different marketing groups as a shared service. McCarran described the digital marketing group as "the closest spoke to that hub" since it generates so much of the data that is used and turned into insights by the central data team.

Finally, each region has its own marketing team which customizes messages and strategies for its region. However, anytime a digital activation needs to happen, it goes through the digital marketing team.

"My team doesn't generate every idea," said McCarran. "But if an ad is going to be placed, or an email is going to be sent, or a website is going to be stood up, it is going to happen through my team."

In terms of best practices, one of the key recommendations from McCarran is to consolidate and standardize digital marketing platforms and channels into a single integrated stack. That means cracking down on multiple software instances, bringing disparate web pages onto a single CMS, and consolidating social media accounts.

"Every time you don't use the core system, you're hurting yourself," said McCarran. "We created standardized processes so that everyone looking to create digital experience had to use this team, this tool, and this approach."

As a result of this standardization, the Zebra team dramatically reduced its expenditure on content creation, which had been almost triple the amount of its activation spend 5-6 years ago. Today, the content spend is less than the spending on activation, highlighting the efficiency caused by the standardization.

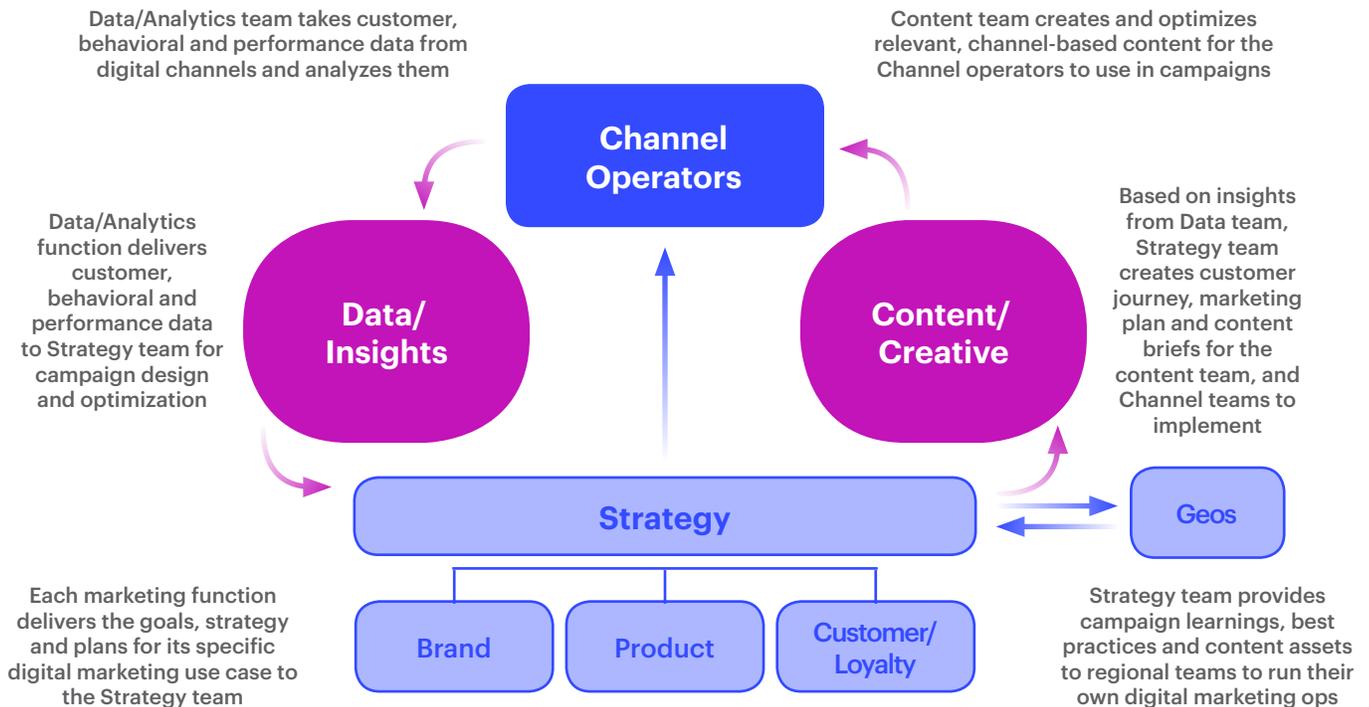
Step
3

BUILD THE CORE ELEMENTS OF THE DIGITAL MARKETING TEAM

Once the rules of engagement with the rest of the org have been set, we can shift focus internally to setup the most essential components of a modern digital marketing team. There are four key functions that every digital marketing team must have, however there can be some variation in the way they are grouped or governed.

Figure 3 maps out these four key functions and the processes that connect them.

Figure 3. Key Components of a Digital Marketing Operation



Strategy

The strategy function acts as the “brain” of the digital marketing team. This group is responsible for doing the groundwork that creates the digital marketing strategy, creating the plans to implement it, and continually monitors the operations to optimize and improve them. This team is also the center of communication with other marketing functions that may be adjacent to, or above the digital marketing team, such as

brand, customer loyalty or product marketing. Put simply, it is the team that decides what goes on each channel, and when.

The strategy team receives insights and analytics from the data team. These insights can be on customer profiles, performance metrics, or behavioral analysis across digital channels. The strategy team then takes these insights to create a digital customer journey, identify the moments that matter, and design a “best-move” framework that anticipates a

response for every customer interaction, in order to get them closer to purchase.

The team then communicates these plans to the channel operators and content creators, in order to activate the digital marketing strategy/campaign.

Channel Operators

These are the teams that operate the digital channels, and are responsible for activating the campaigns/best-move plans designed by the strategy team. These channels typically include web, email, social media, mobile app and digital advertising, but increasingly, they are also the first people to test and use newer innovations such as IoT or voice devices.

Channel operators used to operate in a siloed way, but that is changing as more channels share data, coordinate engagement tactics and recognize the customer as they move across different touchpoints. As a result, we now see channel operators who all operate off the same blueprints and goals, even if they might not be in one, centralized team.

In order to activate campaigns, or ongoing engagement, the channel operators work with the creative teams by developing briefs for the content they need, specific to the channels they are on.

Additionally, channel operators usually have ownership of the martech stack, since this is the software they need to activate campaigns on their channels. Some teams might have a separate martech group, but increasingly, they are being lumped together with the channel operators under an "activation" or "digital team" label.

Creative Team

The creative team creates all the media assets needed for the digital marketing activations. This includes all manner of

media, such as text, images, video and audio. Creative teams were traditionally agencies, but increasingly, companies are choosing to host this function in-house as it's cheaper, and quicker to respond to channel needs with an in-house team.

The creative team usually gets its marching orders in the form of creative briefs from the channel team. They can also receive data-based creation requests from the strategy team, especially in the age of personalization and optimization. By providing the creative team with insights about customer preferences and behavioral differences, the strategy team can help them create more relevant, customized content, and give them ideas about variations to test.

Data/Analytics

The data team is responsible for aggregating digital marketing data from multiple sources, analyzing it for insights, and delivering it to the strategy team in an actionable way. This team has control over the central customer data platform, or multiple data platforms such as web analytics, social media metrics, advertising data and CRMs. In some cases, it might even have access to marketing-adjacent functions such as customer service records or product usage information.

The data/analytics function can exist as a separate team, or as a subset within the strategy group. Regardless of where it sits, the data team must be able to provide three types of data to the strategy team; customer profile data (who are our customers?), Behavioral information (how do they behave on our digital platforms?) and performance data (how well are our digital marketing tactics working?) Evaluating these three sets of data enables the strategy team to continually design and optimize marketing campaigns, as well as inform their master marketing strategy as a whole.

Step
4

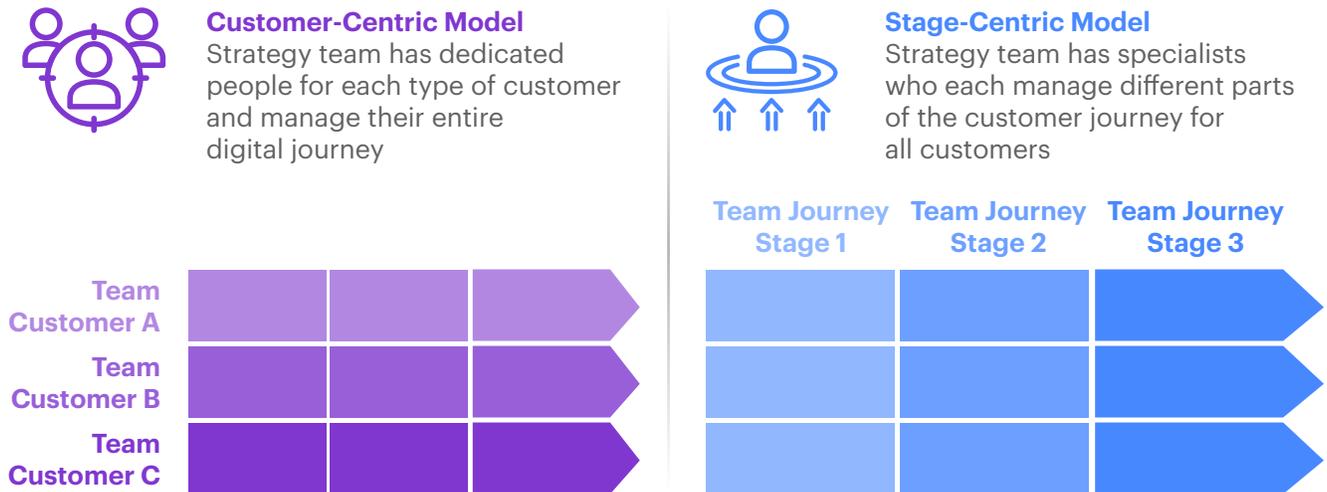
SPECIALIZE THE DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY TEAM

In the past, digital marketing strategy teams were internally siloed by channel. That meant that there were separate strategies for the website, social media, or the mobile app.

Today, in the age of customer-centricity, digital teams are grouping their efforts around specific customers, or specific parts of the journey. This allows more lateral, cross-channel thinking when it comes to designing campaigns or on-going engagement. It also allows strategy teams to be more focused, and accommodating of the unique demands of different customer types, or stages of interaction.

There are two types of setups to consider (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Two Ways to Organize a Digital Marketing Strategy Team



Customer-Centric

In this setup, the strategy team has dedicated people for each type of customer segment. This is a useful approach for marketing teams who have to deal with customer segments that might be radically different in terms of their needs and behavior. Grouping marketing strategists by customer allows them to design experiences that take into consideration the entire customer experience, rather than focus on only one point. It also helps them get a richer understanding of their assigned customer segment, leading to better-designed, more relevant marketing interactions overall.

Here's a simplistic example; within a single strategy group for a software company, one person would design customer journeys and interaction maps only for B2B customers, while another would manage regular consumers. Both these people would work within the strategy groups, and interact with other groups such as channels, data and content in the same way. However, they would communicate and coordinate marketing plans for their specific audiences, sharing the real estate on the same set of digital marketing channels.



Opendoor

Customer-Centric Case Study

Real estate startup Opendoor aims to reduce friction for both home buyers and sellers by connecting them to its digital platform. Its mobile app allows rapid listing, offer-making and selling of homes.

Although the bulk of Opendoor's customer engagement happens through a primary digital channel (its mobile app) it has to serve two separate audiences – buyers and sellers. Each customer group has very distinct needs, and digital pathways in their interaction with the company. As a result, the digital marketing team has dedicated teams of marketers for each audience, who are matrixed against channel specialists.

"A matrix structure works best for us, because it allows us to balance deep industry and channel knowledge with customer understanding," said Sheila Vashee, Opendoor's VP of Growth and Marketing.

On the channel side, Opendoor has specialist teams for Facebook, Google, direct mail, radio, TV and mobile. Each of those teams has performance goals they are responsible for. These teams are

matrixed against a product marketing team that is responsible for owning the customer and the customer journey. Each customer segment (buyer, seller, agent) has its own team of specialists who are responsible for customer insights, being the voice of the customer and aligning the channel strategy behind the goals of that particular customer.

"When you have channel level goals, the job of the performance team is to be wholly focused on them," Vashee said. "But there needs to be some tension between achieving those performance goals while also preserving the customer experience."

Vashee also recommended the addition of a dedicated group to ensure consistency of the brand, and customer experience across many different channels. This role can be played by a team with any number of titles, including brand, customer experience, or even corporate marketing.

"Inherent tension also exists between these teams. For example, what might be best for a specific audience, is not always in-line with where the larger brand is going. However, you must maintain a balance between both to do what's best for the company overall."

Stage-Centric

In the Stage-Centric model, the strategy team has dedicated people to manage each part of the customer journey. This works well for companies where the digital behavior, and chosen platforms of interaction vary greatly depending on which stage of the purchase journey the customer is in. Grouping marketing strategists in this way allows them to concentrate on a limited set of goals and practices, helping them focus and quantify success in a simpler way.

For example, in the early stages of the journey, where building brand awareness is key, marketing teams are much more likely to use digital and search advertising to engage customers, whereas in the post-purchase stage, marketers are more likely to communicate with customers via email, social media, or through connected devices, in order to up-sell or cross-sell them other products. This allows them to create more specialized messages, optimized for specific platforms and metrics.





Stage-Centric Case Study

Luxury vehicle maker Jaguar Land Rover deploys its digital agency Spark44 to operate a digital marketing creative team that is divided into two groups. The first manages the customer journey from awareness to consideration and purchase, while the second is responsible for engaging the customer post purchase.

“You want to have a single team that works to move you from consider to explore, from explore to select, and from select to purchase because you need the right messaging at the right time for every part of the journey,” said Ahmed Hasan, Spark44’s head of digital marketing. “Once you are a customer, you immediately move into loyalty, and then a different team is responsible for customer service, upselling or cross selling accessory products, and really making you feel like part of a community, so that there’s a greater chance you’ll be an advocate or a re-purchaser in a few year’s time.”

This division of teams continues into other groups with the digital marketing organization. The strategy team has dedicated sub-teams for prospects and customers, and channels are also used differently by different journey stage teams. For example, for the prospect team, social channels are used to create awareness and drive people to the website,

but for the customer team, social is more about making the customer feel part of a community, with a greater focus on the product and how to use it.

This highlights the shift in moving away from a channel-centric model to a customer-centric model. “We look at channels as just being a place to deliver the strategy, or communicate the message,” said Hasan. “They’re no longer how we organize our teams or campaign strategies”

According to Hasan, this model division of teams by journey works particularly well for the auto industry, where there is a longer purchase cycle. The model makes less sense for fast-moving consumer goods, where there is less of a post-purchase loyalty effort, and more of a focus on driving from awareness to purchase.

Although the central digital marketing team creates the customer campaign strategy, all the execution is done by regional teams. This allows local marketing teams to tweak campaigns, creative assets and copy to their specific markets, while still benefiting from the data-driven strategies delivered by the center.

“We look at channels as just being a place to deliver the strategy, or communicate the message. They’re no longer how we organize our teams or campaign strategies”

— Ahmed Hasan

GETTING STARTED: KEY QUESTIONS FOR EVALUATING YOUR DIGITAL MARKETING ORGANIZATION

Re-organizing a digital marketing team can be a prohibitively challenging exercise, regardless of the size of the company. Any company considering it should have a clear mandate for change, as well as an accurate assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of its existing setup. Below, we've compiled a list of key questions that any team considering a digital marketing reorganization should answer.

What are the most important digital marketing use cases to prioritize?

The way a digital marketing organization is set up should be dictated by the digital marketing strategy, which in turn should be dictated by the most important digital marketing use cases for the company. A digital marketing team whose primary focus is brand awareness will have a very different setup compared to one that is focused on lead generation. And in some cases, the digital marketing organization has to do both. Having a clear idea of the team's goals is the first step to creating the most effective setup for delivering on those goals.

How is data being shared within the organization?

In most organizations, data tends to be siloed, because it tends to stay in the department where it is created (marketing, sales, service etc.). In order to deliver an exceptional customer experience, customer data, and performance data needs to be shared freely across many different parts of the organization. This can often be the catalyst towards a marketing re-org. If the digital marketing team can't access the data it needs to deliver on the use case goals it has been assigned, a reorg might be the best way to solve the problem.

How is content being created for the digital marketing team?

Similar to data, creating and using content in a silo can lead to inefficiencies, as well as a disjointed experience for the customer. For a lot of companies, assessing their content creation, delivery and measurement processes means evaluating whether they are better off with a centralized content team, a distributed content model, or simply outsourcing it all to an agency. The right combination should serve the digital marketing use case goals, rather than an arbitrary grouping of creative skills by department.

Who currently “owns” digital marketing, and why?

In most large companies, the digital marketing team still reports into another marketing function, such as brand marketing, or product marketing. It's worth evaluating whether these hierarchies should continue to exist. Should one function own the entire digital marketing organization (and its channels)? Or should it be a shared service for several functions? Whatever the final answer, the decision should be on the basis of current strategy, rather than any legacy or cultural reasons.

Where do you see the most differentiation in customer experience?

This question has the greatest impact on how a digital marketing strategy team is set up. For some companies, different customer segments may have different preferences when it comes to messaging and imagery, but they generally behave the same in terms of journey. For other companies, each customer segment might have a very different digital journey, with completely different touchpoints, sales cycles and motivations. By evaluating where the greatest differentiation happens in its audiences and digital journeys, companies can set up their digital marketing teams to specialize accordingly.

What is marketing's role in specialized use cases e.g e-commerce?

E-commerce can be a gray area for many digital marketing teams. On the one hand, the website/mobile app is a key digital marketing channel, but on the other hand, e-commerce is technically a sales function. However, in today's world, companies don't have to choose, or draw strict lines between which department owns e-commerce. The digital marketing

team can still manage the e-commerce experience, while partnering with the sales or product teams to share data, create messaging and enhance the experience. As long as the team is set up to operate in this way, such specialized use cases can be accommodated seamlessly into the marketing mandate.

How will global marketing benefit from the setup?

As companies become larger and more global, the level of customization for marketing in every region it operates starts to increase. This has a direct impact on the way the digital marketing organization is set up. If the regional marketing campaigns are highly customized, does it make sense to have a central digital marketing team executing campaigns across the globe? On the other hand, is there too much cost and risk involved with giving each region its own digital marketing function? Evaluating these tradeoffs leads to the creation of a marketing org that strikes the right balance between efficiently creating assets and coordinating a global brand, while still allowing the efficiency and speed of regional campaigns and customization.

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Ted began consulting at Corporate Decisions, a growth strategy specialist spun off from Bain and Co. When Corporate Decisions sold to Mercer Management Consulting, Ted led Mercer's US West Coast practice and chaired its global platform investment committee.

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