

Built to Change: New Models for Managing Consumer Engagement

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Executive Summary

Developing long-term relationships with today's consumers is more complex than ever before. Today's powerful web search, social publishing, and social network filtering capabilities place powerful new tools in the hands of consumers. Today's buyer's journey is much more non-linear – as consumers can easily find information, comparative pricing, and social recommendations about a large number of competing solutions.

As a result, consumers are now savvier; becoming simultaneously researcher, publisher, reviewer, influencer, and ultimately expert on any manner of product or service. This “ease” by which information can be shared across the web, including mobile and social touch points, has required enterprises to try to influence consumer behavior by *increasing* the amount of content. The result of all this content production: In 2012, 1.8 zettabytes of data will be created on the internet. That's more than 7 million times the totality of digital assets stored by the Library of Congress today.¹

So, in actuality, the process of Content Marketing is not a new marketing tactic. **Rather, it is a way to infuse a new type of content *management* process into existing marketing and customer service engagement strategies.**

Among Europeans, a recent report revealed that more than 80% of internet users aged 16-24 are likely to use the internet to watch TV and listen to the radio.² The average American consumer will spend almost every waking hour – more than 11 hours per day – consuming media.³ Attention, or more precisely “engagement,” is now a valuable commodity for any brand attempting to influence behavior.

In order to investigate the creation of new models for consumer attention and engagement, Digital Clarity Group has interviewed more than three dozen senior marketers across a broad range of competitive global enterprises. These interviews provide rich, anecdotal evidence of new trends in the practice of marketing and communications. One overriding



theme to these interviews is that these marketers find themselves undergoing urgent, seismic shifts in addressing this emerging “attention economy.” This shift has three major characteristics:

- **The new business case for content at the center of marketing.** Whether placed within the context of a lead nurturing program, a Content Marketing process, or even a social media engagement team, savvy enterprises are looking beyond traditional models of ascribing incremental revenue to digital “visitors.” New models for consumer engagement offer more adept, comprehensive views into the value of engagement strategies.
- **Marketers are simultaneously frustrated and overwhelmed with marketing technology.** Marketers are currently using legacy enterprise systems that cannot move fast enough to meet the real time, conversational nature of new “engagement” processes. Yet new, disruptive technology solutions don’t provide the depth to meet the existing global enterprise needs. The result is a tangled maze of cobbled-together systems patched together by an already over-stressed IT group.
- **The new blending of marketing and communication teams.** Over the last 6 years, enterprises often have met the challenges of web, social, mobile, and local digital marketing by simply increasing the number of siloed teams in the mix. The results are sometimes disharmonious voices from the company, conflicting metrics, and “turf wars” between brand marketing, product marketing, PR, and the social teams.

Insightful enterprises are now creating new team and technology architectures to infuse these processes cross-functionally and to create much more quality content and collaboration.

Change Fast Or Be Left In The Dust

For marketers, it’s simple: business as usual isn’t. Certainly the old maxim “adapt or die” remains true. Historically, however, this maxim has been linked to a known goal – We need to adapt to X.



In today's marketplace the question for the visionary CMO isn't "What must we evolve into?" Rather, it's how can we build an agile marketing organization that can rapidly adapt to . . . *the unknown and unpredictable?*

Marketing departments can and should re-align themselves into more fluid, organic organizations. The new marketing department is one that embraces complexity and is highly adaptive to changing conditions. It resembles more of a "newsroom" or media outlet than it does the traditional process and campaign-focused departmental hierarchy.

Concerning the software solutions used to facilitate these new, more complex processes, the new model for marketing technology has three distinct layers:

- **Core Data Management.** This is the foundation and storage of consumer, content, and transactional data and it serves the global enterprise. It is supported by large databases and very close adherence to standards so that data can be extracted and utilized with ease.
- **Engagement Management.** This middle layer of technology should be capable of interfacing with the layers above and below it. It provides the interface into, and out of, the Core Data Management layer and provides optimization based on business rules that can be applied to display content contextually.
- **Content Channel and Experience Management.** This top layer should be as flexible, portable, and/or disposable as any media strategy used to be. Content channels such as YouTube, Facebook, or blogs are the marketer's new "media buy." They are important only so long as they are useful. This layer will be constantly expanding, changing, and morphing – and it should have as close to zero-friction as possible in order to quickly add or dispose of elements.



This new adaptive system will be staffed by teams that will be similarly flexible and easily reshuffled. These de-siloed teams should ultimately work together in the marketing department to evolve into something that scientists call “emergence,” in which relatively simple and separate interactions will develop into productive patterns. In this very real development, the whole becomes much greater than the sum of its parts.

It is in the capacity to learn and the capability to adapt and adopt systems of engagement that tomorrow’s enterprise marketing and communication will embrace the unknown – and be prepared to change. By building to change, tomorrow’s marketing department builds to succeed.

“ Tomorrow’s competitive advantage will not be in adopting Content Marketing as a practice. It will be in successfully deploying a process to manage it well. ”

Marketer's New Rallying Cry

In *The Attention Economy*, authors Thomas H. Davenport and John C. Beck note that “today, attention is the real currency of businesses and individuals.”⁴ Even though this book was written more than 10 years ago, it is just beginning to have significant impact in 2012.

Businesses both large and small are scrambling for attention from consumers, employees, partners, and even vendors. While the new ecosphere of digital content consumption creates much more efficient techniques to reach constituencies, it simultaneously does so for everyone. This means that the level of media and content “noise” that the average person encounters is overwhelming. Today’s average consumer is oversaturated with information.

As consumers become savvier about their information consumption, their attention will simultaneously become less available and accessible and increasingly precious and rare.

Attention is earned, not purchased

For marketers, or anyone in the business of influencing consumer interest, engaging a consumer’s attention is an increasingly difficult challenge. Marketers have historically paid for attention; renting space in areas where their target market aggregated. The premise of traditional advertising is that the marketer presents a creative and relevant message to an audience that is present for an entirely different purpose. The advertiser’s

gamble is that some percentage of that audience will be influenced by that message.

Undoubtedly, this approach can still be effective today. While print and radio advertising have seen declines over the last few years, television and online advertising are still growing. In fact, despite the global economic challenges, according to Nielsen’s quarterly Global AdView Pulse report, global advertising spending in the first quarter of 2012 was up 3% over the same period last year.⁵

The nature of advertising is shifting fundamentally, with the lines between advertising and content beginning to blur. Calls to action in advertising are increasingly being used to deepen the relationship with consumers or draw them into an experience. Today’s marketing gamble is less about immediately drawing consumers into a purchasing mindset, and more about creating a group of engaged, attentive audiences that share a valuable experience. Perhaps no brand represents this trend as well as Coca-Cola’s Content 2020 project. This project is the brainchild of Coca-Cola’s VP Global Advertising Strategy and Creative Excellence Jonathan Mildenhall, who recently said:

“All advertisers need a lot more content so that they can keep the engagement with consumers fresh and relevant because of the 24/7 connectivity. If you’re going to be successful around the world, you have to have fat and fertile ideas at the core.”⁶



Most prominent in this strategy is what the company says as part of its 70/20/10 investment model. Mildenhall explained this model as:

“providing a way of looking at all our communication plans across the business. The first segment relates to 70% of our communications spend. This goes on low risk, ‘bread and butter’ content. It pays the rent. It’s our passport to the 20% or the 10%. Developing content for this segment should consume proportionately less time, perhaps as little as 50% of our hours.”

They state that they can “no longer rely on being 30-Second-TV-Centric.” Rather, they plan to invest heavily in content that engages and entertains consumers – and then use traditional advertising techniques to promote it.

The practices of web experience management (WEM) and Content Marketing (both online and offline) are predicated on the idea of utilizing organically created or curated content to enhance or change a consumer’s behavior.

As consumers become more discretionary about their information consumption, marketers must work harder to simply earn the privilege of engaging the customer’s attention long enough for their message to be consumed. It is not enough for marketers to purchase advertising space – they must now create content that engages, entertains, informs, retains, and ultimately influences consumer behavior. Consider:

- **92% of global consumers say they trust “earned media”** such as word-of-mouth and recommendations across social networks above all forms of advertising.⁷
- **Less than half of global consumers say they trust paid advertising.** This number has decreased by more than 20% per year for the last 3 years in a row.⁸
- **Almost 60% (and rising each year) of global consumers trust “owned media”** such as company web sites and email messages.⁹

So, again, while the means for businesses to create, edit, manage, and distribute content has become easier and more efficient, the playing field has now been leveled. This ease and power comes with the increased difficulty of rising above the “noise” and creating something of value. The marketer must earn consumers’ attention and the technology systems that support that effort must be laser focused to enable them to do exactly that.

Consumer Engagement Curve

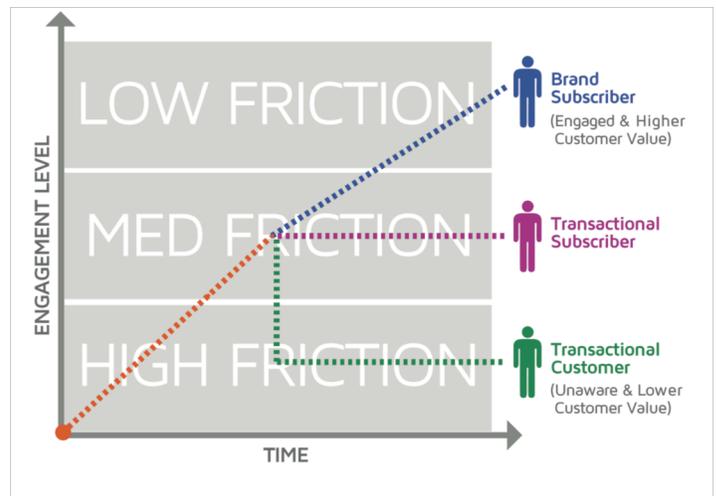
One of the major questions business managers have had to answer in developing investment strategies for consumer engagement is getting beyond traditional Return on Investment (ROI) models. Whether placed within the context of a lead nurturing program, a Content Marketing process, or even a social media engagement team, progressive enterprises are looking beyond the traditional models of directly ascribing revenue to digital “visitors.” New business case models for creating consumer experiences are offering for more adept, comprehensive views into the value of “attention.”

Instead of correlating the ROI of Web Experience Management directly to traditional bottom line revenue, the new business model may include considering the increased value of the more engaged consumer, and the associated network with which those consumers may share their experiences and stories. It focuses, especially, on the greater value and ease with which a more valuable consumer is created if high levels of engagement are developed early and nurtured over time. In short: An effective engagement/experiential strategy has the potential to not only create more consumers, it makes it easier to create a more valuable consumer over time.

A visualization of this model can be built across time over two major axes:

1. Quality of Engagement

Starting at zero awareness on the low side – and building to a brand evangelist. As consumer engagement increases, the resistance to moving further up the scale decreases. In other words, it is



much easier to move an already engaged consumer to higher levels of engagement than it is to move a consumer from “unaware” to a medium level of engagement. This is perhaps best exemplified by the business maxim of “it’s more expensive to acquire a new customer, than to retain an existing one.” Similarly, today it is much more expensive to awaken awareness of a product or service in an unaware consumer than to develop a deeper relationship with an already engaged consumer.

2. Lifetime Value of the Consumer

As time passes, a more engaged consumer is a more valuable consumer. In fact:

- a. Chadwick Martin and Bailey’s consumer research found that more than 60% of consumers that have been engaged with a brand through social channels prior to purchasing (to the point of a follow or “like”) are significantly more likely to recommend and/or purchase from that brand than they were prior to the engagement.¹⁰

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- b. The Gallup organization's global Consumer Engagement Studies have shown that consumers who are fully engaged represent an average 23% premium in terms of "share of wallet, profitability, revenue and relationship growth" than the average consumers. On the other hand, actively disengaged consumers represent a 13% discount in this same measure.¹¹

Next, three different types of consumer transactions can be plotted on this model:

The Transactional Consumer

A very short, intense engagement effort is followed by a steep decline in engagement once the transaction is complete. An example of this might be one where a consumer is enticed with a coupon. The consumer engages – and is influenced into a transaction – but is quickly uninterested in having any further engagement with the brand. This process is repeated again with new and repeat consumers in order to keep them consuming, but this type of transaction creates no long-term loyalty, nor any expectation of a relationship with the brand – the fast fade of the "Groupon phenomenon" is a prime example.

The Transactional Subscriber

Similar to the transactional consumer, the subscriber is initially engaged at varying levels, and then is kept "just engaged enough" as the subscription moves forward over time. At this point, some constant level of effort must be sustained to keep the subscriber's attention at a flat-line level. But unless the engagement is

deepened, no additional loyalty or engagement to the brand is created – and may actually be lost over time. Examples include cable television subscribers or cellular service consumers. In fact, recent research startled the wireless industry when it showed that the average consumer relationship with cell phone carriers is at an all-time low.¹² No engagement beyond the initial transaction is created, and therefore other than maintenance of that consumer there is no increased value.

The Brand Subscriber

In the book *Managing Content Marketing*, my co-author Joe Pulizzi and I explain that the ultimate goal of marketing today is to create a "brand subscriber."¹³ Marketers are now in the business of delivering value through content "from the first time we meet consumers, and throughout the entire customer lifecycle."¹⁴ This is the new model of how marketers can begin to analyze at the business case for engagement and experiential strategies – an increased level of effort is spent engaging the subscriber early and a focused effort is made to create and deepen the level of engagement over time. A brand subscriber (whether or not the initial transaction is a subscription-based product) is engaged with the brand at a much deeper level. The initial effort is increased compared to simply creating a Transactional Consumer or Transactional Subscriber, but results in a decreased level of effort over time to retain and increase the Brand Subscriber's engagement at a high level. In the long run, the Brand Subscriber is destined to be more loyal, buy more products and services, and evangelize the brand to other consumers.



Consider a few examples of this model of consumer types:

- A recent study conducted by Dunnhumby, a leader in personalizing experiences for retailers, found that advocacy programs that leverage social network data drive increased sales by an average of 8%.¹⁵
- CareOne, a debt-relief service, found that having a personal, emotional connection with consumers prior to purchase (e.g., more engagement) actually led to a slightly longer buying cycle than those without any social relationship. However, those that had the emotional connection prior to purchase were 217% more likely to make their first payment to the service - creating an exponentially more valuable consumer to the company.¹⁶

Certainly, some elements of this model are not new, but analyzing the total value of engaged consumers over time - along with the value of their ability to share and influence their network - is useful for framing a new approach to building a business case for consumer engagement over the long haul. The value of today's consumer is directly related to how much attention we can garner, and the relationship we develop.

This new model prescribes, then, that no single consumer interaction can be taken lightly. A consumer's social networks, their influence, their ability to be engaged and create value - all of this exposes new possibilities for marketers. But the crucial question then becomes the logical question

of whether or not the marketer can leverage technology to manage this engagement.

Supporting Technology

Frustrations with technology

The new requirements for deepening consumer engagement are accompanied by the need for new technologies to facilitate these processes.

Simultaneously frustrated and overwhelmed with technology, today's enterprise marketers utilize legacy systems that cannot move fast enough to meet the conversational nature of new "engagement" processes. However, new disruptive technology solutions do not provide the depth to meet global enterprise needs. The result is a tangled maze of cobbled-together systems patched together by an already over-stressed IT group.

It is only within the last 6 years that the enterprise has had to manage the explosion of digital content channels. Even up until the mid-2000's the term "web content management" (WCM) described a system that would enable the organization to create, edit, publish, and deliver content to a singular (or in some cases multiple) web sites. This was simply making the organization more efficient at doing something it was already doing - managing content. However, as marketing and content have become much more important, enterprise-class solutions for WCM, marketing campaign management, web analytics, and CRM have all been evolving to offer new "engagement" features.

Simultaneously, disruptive marketing tools that facilitated higher levels of content relevance, social conversation, and engagement began to emerge in the mid 2000's and over the last 6 years have been maturing and finding their way into the marketer's toolbox. Software solutions for marketing automation, content testing and optimization, and

social publishing, and sentiment analysis have sprung up as disruptive replacements for old processes. These systems are simultaneously offering marketers new capabilities, while providing technology teams with even more systems to tie together and integrate into a cohesive new strategy.

And, while software vendors race to keep up with all of the different consumer channels, methods, and interfaces that they must enable marketers to manage and monitor, marketing departments struggle to avoid technology overload. As one frustrated CMO exclaimed at the Forrester CIO-CMO Summit last year "I feel more like a CIO than a CMO! I have marketing automation, CRM, listening platforms - I'm up to my eyeballs in technology."¹⁷

This confusion has led to many years of genuine chaos in terms of the deployment of web content, marketing, content optimization, social, and measurement systems across the enterprise. To address this, enterprises have usually adopted one of two strategies:

- **Rely on a rock-solid enterprise content management/digital marketing backbone technology.** Usually this project is a consolidation of smaller web content management systems, multiple marketing solutions, and perhaps early forays into social publishing and analytics. This global, enterprise system provides the core functions to the marketing teams to allow them to manage content, create campaigns, monitor success, and build out functionality - but prevents them from innovating quickly.

- **Deploy ad hoc “point solution” systems.** These technologies separately handle web sites, blogging, content optimization, marketing automation, social media management, etc. More typical in mid-sized organizations, this is usually the result of organic technology acquisition and the solutions may be small, cobbled-together integrations. This is the situation where the “CMO as CIO” feeling is most pronounced. While change can theoretically happen more quickly, these organizations have typically over-purchased technology. Many systems go underused or even forgotten, and are typically replaced as each new marketing requirement dictates.

The challenges with the Enterprise “backbone” technology strategy are that the marketing team is usually:

- Frustrated with the speed at which they can move
- Unsatisfied with the upgrades that the vendor is making (usually well behind the curve) and the agility that they have shown
- Extremely dependent on their internal (or agency side) technology group for any new capabilities, publishing channels, or new processes they must facilitate

The challenges with the ad hoc Point Solution system, however, are just as pronounced. In this case, the marketing team is:

- Frustrated at the lack of consistency between any two systems that they’ve adopted
- Always behind the curve when it comes to adoption among the wider team across the enterprise
- Seemingly in a constant state of design/re-design/implementation for new systems
- Usually over budget in technology – and challenged with finding consistent measurability across a longer time frame

To address these challenges and enable new engagement strategies, it is time for a new technology model for marketing teams. This new model of enterprise marketing technology provides scalability and sustainability – as well as the agility and flexibility required of today’s constantly changing landscape.

New marketing technology model: Built to change

In “*Systems Of Engagement and The Future of Enterprise IT*” author Geoffrey Moore explains that we are in a “new era of IT.” What he calls “systems of record” (the large backbone IT systems) are now being supplemented and extended by “systems of engagement,” solutions that are built to facilitate communication and collaboration. In describing the importance of this “sea change” Moore says:

“Amidst the texting and Twittering and Facebooking of a generation of digital natives, the fundamentals of next-generation communication and collaboration are being worked out. For them it is clear, there is no going back. So at a minimum, if you expect these folks to be your customers, your employees, and your citizens . . . then you need to apply THEIR expectations to the next generation of enterprise IT systems.”¹⁸

Moore specifically analyzes content management and business intelligence applications and points out that the focus must be “*on empowering the middle of the enterprise to communicate and collaborate across business boundaries, global time zones and language and cultural barriers, using next-generation IT applications and infrastructure adapted from the consumer space.*”

Moore is certainly right about the needed changes, but his is a long-term view of the transformation. Today, the requirement for marketing to adapt

immediately means that this new technology adoption model must be adjusted quickly for the new and evolving realities.

The new engagement technology stack: A backbone with room to flex

A new model to facilitate the Attention Economy and create powerful web experiences (or rather, digital content experiences) is starting to emerge from a few forward-looking technology vendors. This new model accounts for the need for large enterprises to scale and provide consistent experiences across a large employee base – as well as the conversational, flexible, and chaotic nature of today’s marketing organization.

This model can be delivered by one vendor offering a suite of products, or multiple vendors integrated together seamlessly. The key is that this is a marketing technology stack approach designed to be optimized for today’s Content Marketing and engagement processes. It comprises three discrete layers that at the lower end are made up of systems of record and become systems of engagement as they move closer to the consumer on the front end. In every case they must be flexible and interchangeable.

This is not a physical architecture of a specific technology solution. Rather, it is a model for marketers to develop their business requirements for the technology solutions they require.

- **Core Data Management.** This is the foundation and storage of consumer, content, and transactional data and it serves the global

enterprise. It is supported by large databases and closely adheres to standards so that data can be easily extracted and used. Whether cloud-based or closely held within the organization, it should enable information as a service.

- **Engagement Management.** This middle layer of technology should be able to interface with anything above and below it. It provides the interface into, and out of, the Core Data Management layer and provides optimization based on business rules that can be applied to display content contextually.
- **Content Channel/Experience Management.** This top layer should be as flexible, portable, and/or disposable as any media strategy used to be. Content channels such as YouTube, Facebook, or blogs are the marketer’s new “media buy.” They are important only so long as they are useful. This layer will be constantly changing and morphing – and it should have

as close to zero-friction as possible in order to add or dispose elements easily.

The following is an example of this engagement technology model:

A large consumer hotel company has re-structured the management of their web sites for web experience management. With more than 600 web sites to manage across multiple devices, the company has deployed a solid backbone for web content management and measurement. The company utilizes an enterprise-wide web content management solution with integrated analytics to deliver everything in a standardized format to hotel staff – from web visitor information to brand marketers to per-hotel revenue information. This standardized content store gives them the flexibility to easily create and deliver content across web, mobile, and social channels – and remain more nimble across numerous social media. By deploying channel-specific strategies, they can react quickly and conversationally to consumers that may have issues while on the property, and store that information globally. Recent “wins” include having the ability to immediately provide a guest with a free breakfast after the guest tweeted that there was a problem with their room.



Conclusion

One of the biggest dangers for enterprise marketing groups today is the temptation to repeat the mistakes made during “Web 1.0.” Just as the “e-business team” was often separated from the core business in the late 1990’s, so too are social and web experience teams often isolated from both corporate marketing and IT today.

Content Marketing and the function of delivering rich digital experiences across any channel requires that these teams collaborate along one cohesive strategy. Equally, the experience management technologies facilitating those processes will converge effectively to integrate and manage all three layers: Core Data Management, Engagement Management, and Content Channel and Experience Management.

Currently, as myriad channels become popular, teams and technology are being connected like additional arms to the already burgeoning octopus. Social Marketing, Social CRM, and Web Marketing Teams may already be separated by mobile and/or local or search functions. This results in a siloed approach where teams are literally competing for digital “real estate” to create their own, segmented experiences. The Facebook Team starts and stops with addressing engagement on their channel – and so focuses only on the content that generates the most “likes.” The same holds true for the Blog Team, which is only focused on gaining subscribers and re-tweets. They add analytics technology that proves that they are “moving the needle” only to discourage the direct marketing team from adding any content into their channel, lest they appear to be too “salesy,” which ultimately results in a lost

opportunity to target and more fully engage the consumer.

The result of all of this is too much technology, supporting siloed processes, competing agendas, ineffective quantification capabilities, telling an ineffective story, and an engagement program that is destined to fail the organization.

Rather, building a successful web experience system that gains attention, and more importantly holds and deepens that attention over time – building a brand subscriber – is built on five key components:

- 1. Provide flexible models of data management.** Tomorrow’s Core Data Management is built on the ability to create new information and knowledge schemas and store them so they can be accessed as a service. New types of data (e.g., conversations, ratings, mobile device, etc.) will enter the “vocabulary” of the enterprise, creating new, normalized ways of storing and accessing these data will be critical.
- 2. Meet the need of massive scale across any interface.** An effective engagement system will have the ability to draw intelligence and optimize from the backbone of content and transactional data. For example, a Facebook channel should be treated initially as a simple channel where engagement will be attempted. As it proves successful, systems should be in place at the Engagement Management layer to provide for optimized content that can draw from the Core Data Management.



3. **Design for conversation.** Engagement systems are built to both talk *and* listen. From a listening perspective, these systems should be capable of pulling content and transactional data and feed that back into the Core Data Management layer. This can then be used to foster both “human” conversations and automated content optimization on other channels.

4. **Deliver content in context in real-time.**

Tomorrow’s engagement systems are built to deliver content in a contextual way, accounting for geography, device, persona, environmental, and even behavioral data to allow for an optimized consumer experience.

5. **Provide for new models of measurement.** The marketer does not lack for data. In fact, the flood of data is only going to increase. Tomorrow’s engagement marketer will have the capability to measure everything, but will adapt and change to create hierarchies of metrics that meet business goals.

This new adaptive system will be staffed by flexible teams that will also be challenged to change and rearrange based on new strategies deployed by the enterprise. These de-siloed teams should ultimately work together in the marketing department to evolve into a phenomenon that scientists call “emergence,” where relatively simple and separate interactions will develop into productive patterns. In this very real development, the whole becomes much greater than the sum of its parts.

Tomorrow’s marketing and communications teams succeed by learning to adapt – and by deploying

systems of engagement that facilitate adaption. By building to change, the marketing department builds to succeed.

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