

The Marketing Transformation: From Managing Campaigns to Orchestrating Experiences


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What Year Are You Marketing In?

What consumers value most is changing. There's no secret about that. Digital disruption has brought with it market realities that have changed how customers become aware, browse, investigate, purchase, use, complain and/or become loyal to a brand. And, if content has been king for the last decade, it is now dethroned. *Contextual* customer experiences — the merging of digital content, interfaces, technology and even physical spaces — now have reign. These experiences are becoming the differentiating aspect of marketing a product or service. In fact, in a recent study, 86% of consumers said they'd be willing to pay more for a better customer experience.¹

We, as customers, have changed.

But although consumer values and buying habits have changed, the reality is that, in most cases, marketing processes and strategies haven't changed. Many businesses are still organizing and scaling their marketing processes in the same way that has been around for 80 years. Marketing departments still operate in short-term, product-centered "campaigns," but consumers don't care about campaigns. Instead, consumers simply expect an always-on 24/7/365 consistency through any channel they desire to interact on.



In short, businesses that will succeed in the future will fundamentally evolve the structure of their marketing strategy and process. They will manage a cohesive, connected and consistent portfolio of customer experiences that integrates everything the brand does (physical or otherwise) to help create the total customer experience. This means that the *practice of marketing* has a much wider remit than ever before. Multiple departments including creative teams, brand managers, logistics managers, customer service, IT people and even the C-Suite will now create content, interact with consumers, and must be aligned, managed and measured within a broader strategy.

Connecting Digital Customer Experiences

Digital content, including text, video, images and, really, all manner of communications that drive content-driven experiences, will be at the heart of this broader marketing strategy. As initiatives such as content marketing and inbound marketing meet the processes of direct marketing, customer service and even overall product/service experience, businesses need to look at content as an asset — rather than a byproduct of a communications campaign.

Content, managed well, is now part of a digital supply chain that is orchestrated across the enterprise. The process of content creation increasingly resembles a product development process rather than a campaign-centric one. Some attributes of this digital supply chain include:

- **Systems of engagement will need to be managed as a portfolio of experiences.** With the increasing usage of owned media properties across multiple channels (mobile, web, kiosk etc.), successful brands will begin to manage media properties as assets. A key to this, however, will be that the individual elements of these assets will need to be tracked and managed from their inception


through to production and even publishing.

This evolution goes beyond simple governance-based workflows. It focuses on both the collaborative nature of content and digital asset contribution, as well as the increasingly non-linear paths those elements take from the creative process to their arrival at multiple destinations. For example, an infographic might be assembled from multiple approved creative image assets, but then re-purposed to also appear in a product video that resides on the website, a thought leadership blog and the customer community.

In this case, all kinds of data may need to be tracked, including usage rights by channel, but also persona targeting, buyer's journey stage, author, etc. The keys to success will lie in the flexibility of the tools to utilize this data to provide insight into the supply chain of assets.

- **Accounting methods will be tied all the way back to creation.** The ultimate cost of digital assets created is not only the sum of their parts, but of each contribution, as well. Successful brands will measure the value of an evergreen digital content asset — not only for one particular campaign, but for a lifecycle that will be measured over quarters or even years. This means that the business must understand both the total value of the assembled asset, the asset's individual components, and its (hopefully) *increasing* value over time.

Many times a business will know the finished, bundled, costs of a piece of content. But even with a successful asset, that cost doesn't fully inform the business how to extract more value from a similar asset-creation project in the future. To understand this, the cost of



each component — from the images, to the videos and text, to any number of parts of a finished content-driven experience — must be well understood. In this way, content creation can begin to look much more like a product development process than a campaign assembly, where only the finished assets are measured.

- **New workflows and processes will be created.** The focus will be collaboration over governance and adaptable over static processes. Increasingly, these processes and workflows will be managed by teams that are not only separated physically, but consist of independent freelancers, agencies, third-party content providers and even consumer-generated content. And these assets will, increasingly, not only be managed on desktops and laptops, but on tablets, smartphones and other interfaces.

In order to scale, businesses will have to automate the ongoing lifecycle of many of these content assets. This means that successful businesses will revisit static approval processes and content flows and replace them with adaptable, collaborative workspaces that can automate many of the fundamental tasks.


In short: In tomorrow's marketing organization, teams not only create digital assets that *describe and persuade* the consumer of the value of the company's product or service, they create and deliver valuable content-driven experiences that are *separate and discrete* from the product or service for sale. A multi-departmental team and process brings these content-driven experiences to market and manages them as a portfolio of products within a broader marketing strategy.

Three Actionable Ideas

- **Content-driven experiences are products, not campaigns.** The fundamental transformation here should move from “*medium first, content second*” to “*content first, medium second*.” In an omni-channel world, the marketing department simply can't chase every channel that comes online. Instead, the content and experience comes first, followed by how it can be supported across any expression or channel that may benefit it.

A great example of this is Starwood Hotels. It has allowed guests to use their mobile phone as a room key since November of last year. But, as of April of this year, the company enables the same experience on the Apple Watch. The app, of course, has more than just the room unlock function. It has information on when your room is ready and other content. This new experience was launched simultaneously with the launch of the watch itself. An iteration this quick is only available when we look at content as a product — and think how it can iterate and be responsive to any channel that may come along.

- **The evolution of marketing teams.** Marketing teams will become much more fluid and have a much wider and cross-functional focus. For example, they will act as editorial teams, driving the fluid use of content for content marketing. They may also act within the customer service organization, helping to create consistent responses and engagement across social, mobile and other engagement channels. They may also be in the technical documentation group, where digital manuals, apps, how-to's and other



content-driven experiences will help create a better total customer experience.

One key to this will be re-organizing teams based on the fluid use of content through intelligent deployments of content management and digital asset management technology. To be clear, this is a new idea. Today, most businesses organize their management processes around external channels and/or content types. This approach doesn't scale in an omnichannel world.

Instead, digital channels themselves become simple expressions of the content that can be stood up or dismantled based on their net present value to the business. This prioritization informs and enables the scalability, adaptability and re-usability of individual assets. And, it enables a cross-functional business process, in which teams can be re-assigned based on content strategy priorities, rather than the emergence of trendy new channels or platforms.


- **The evolution of optimization and measurement.** A content-as-asset strategy will require new forms of optimization and measurement. Marketing will have to evolve its measurement strategy beyond looking at only campaign-oriented measurement, and instead include an asset-based measurement strategy. For example, a thought leadership white paper, with accompanying infographics, blog posts and webinar series, may be extended and utilized over the course of a year. Some assets may support direct marketing campaigns. The assets, as a portfolio, may be re-introduced and featured as part of multiple product-oriented launch efforts.

The point is that, together, these assets represent one content-driven thought-leadership experience managed within a portfolio. They need to be measured separately, of course, in order to determine the performance of each during different campaign-focused applications. But they also need to be managed as a balanced portfolio to understand the relevance of all the experiences contextually — and the total customer experience as it relates to contribution to the business.

Similarly, their deployment will require an evolution in optimization. In the above example, the business may decide to promote, using paid methods, the launch of the white paper. The team may decide to syndicate the infographics to other thought leadership blogs in order to promote the webinar. They may decide to then create multiple versions of the white paper, targeted to different personas, and deliver them via highly targeted and dynamic blog posts or emails to the attendees of the webinar. It will not only be important that these assets are able to be measured separately to determine their success, but these measurements will also help to create predictive strategies about how to automatically display content in the future.

As content-driven experiences become a focus, building audiences — and optimizing the content for those audiences — will become as (or sometimes more) important than advertising or direct marketing conversion and clicks.

For successful marketing operations, new business processes will emerge for planning contextual display of assets across multiple channels. For



example, we've been working with a large B2B manufacturing organization that has deployed a content management and display solution that first "listens" to the traffic on its various web properties. From this, the software begins to create groupings of visitors into recommended "personas." These recommendations are reviewed and compared to the planned optimization of the content, and changes to the personas, the targets and the editorial strategy are informed by this. This kind of planning is what will enable technology to scale the effort of distribution of content — and deliver the proverbial *"right message to the right person at the right time."*

In fact, as we've seen, the more forward-leaning version of this is if the business can truly begin to orchestrate a portfolio of contextual content-driven experiences, the value is in the team's ability to actually reduce the amount of content. This enables the content creators to focus on quality rather than the quantity and broadcast mentality of "reach," which helps to realize the new goal of guiding the customer and delivering the *right message to the right person in **their** time.*

The Next Steps

The real challenge is how to take some of the first bold steps and answer the provocative question:

Can you transform marketing from simply managing campaigns to a cross-functional organization that orchestrates experiences?

Here are three questions that can perhaps start that process:

Can we technically unify the marketing silos and centralize our content-driven experiences into an orchestrated digital content supply chain? In other words, instead of each marketing group trying to create granular campaign-focused assets for every micro-decision in a buyer's journey, can we begin to create and manage a portfolio of contextually connected experiences that help to

orchestrate the *major steps* of that journey? Can we then begin to look at a digital supply-chain of content that is connected across marketing, customer service, social and other silos — which enable better accountability for our content — and understand how they are working together to create an optimal customer experience?

Can we address the skills gap, and organize ourselves around content instead channels or technology? It is no longer adequate to separate out teams by channels or platforms. The business simply cannot be everywhere — but must be able to move quickly to *anywhere* they need to be. By evolving into an organization that scales based on its ability to use content in a fluid manner, rather than one that manages channels, marketing fundamentally changes its purpose.

Can we begin to unify marketing and technology with a goal to create addressable audiences? An audience, and the data associated with that audience can, in some cases, be as valuable as a lead or a sales conversion. Marketing must look beyond simple conversion rates and start focusing on the value that comes from having an engaged, addressable audience that can be monetized in multiple ways. A key to this evolution will be marketing technologists and marketing content practitioners working together. In the early stages the changes may not be earth shattering, like merging marketing and IT together, for example. But, ultimately, data is only as meaningful as it is helpful to improving our digital content supply chain. As I said in *The Three Graces of the Digital Experience* paper earlier this year:

In order for data to have value beyond the information the business already has, marketers will need to get beyond using analytics as a method to "prove" success or ROI. Instead, they should use data and measurement as a method to improve the ongoing process of deriving more meaningful insight and developing fewer, but more powerful (and beautiful), experiences for customers.²



Conclusion: Simplicity in the Complexity

At its surface, this idea of adding more cross-functional and connected points between content assets seems like it would add, rather than reduce, complexity.

Simplification means a stronger ability to better leverage content creators throughout a complex

organization. It can start to provide for real-time visibility into what's being created, and for more re-use and adaptability of rich-media assets, rather than a strategy of “always re-creating the wheel.”

But it means blurring the lines of those silos — and creating a new purpose for marketing. It's a big idea. It's transformational. And it's certainly going to cause discomfort. But imagine the possibilities that can unfold.

Notes

1. 2011 Customer Experience Impact Report conducted by Harris Interactive
2. <http://www.digitalclaritygroup.com/delivering-digital-experiences/>



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Digital Clarity Group

Digital Clarity Group is a research-based advisory firm focused on the content, technologies, and practices that drive world-class customer experience. Global organizations depend on our insight, reports, and consulting services to help them turn digital disruption into digital advantage. As analysts, we cover the customer experience management (CEM) footprint — those organizational capabilities and competencies that impact the experience delivered to customers and prospects. In our view, the CEM footprint overlays content management, marketing automation, e-commerce, social media management, collaboration, customer relationship management, localization, business process management, analytics, and search. As consultants, we believe that education and advice leading to successful CEM is only possible by actively engaging with all participants in the CEM solutions ecosystem. In keeping with this philosophy, we work with enterprise adopters of CEM solutions, technology vendors that develop and market CEM systems and tools, and service providers who implement solutions, including systems integrators and digital agencies. For more information about DCG, visit www.digitalclaritygroup.com or email info@digitalclaritygroup.com.

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