



THE MARKETING TECHNOLOGIST:

A New Role For The Modern B2B
Marketing Organization

A closer look at the drivers behind this emerging role and how B2B marketers can use it to position their companies for long-term success.

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Most B2B marketers are aware of Gartner analyst Laura McClellan's widely cited prediction that by 2017, CMOs will spend more money on technology than CIOs.¹ It's a provocative forecast, and a debate continues to rage over when, or if, McClellan's prediction will come to pass.

The prediction itself, however, is just a prediction. What is more interesting are the trends driving it. Marketing organizations today find themselves at the center of a perfect storm that combines the development of new cloud-based technologies with radical changes in the B2B buying process. Marketers are being asked to play an increasingly prominent (but drastically different) role in converting prospects into customers, largely in the face of growing pressure to track, measure and validate their methods. These changes and others lead inevitably to more investments in a much wider range of marketing-focused technology.

In order to keep up with these changes, B2B marketing organizations must also evolve. Specifically, these organizations must create new job roles and cultivate skill sets that combine technology, analytics and business intelligence knowledge with a solid grasp of traditional marketing operations, campaign and revenue concepts.

Various organizations will describe this new role in different ways, but we will refer to it here by a representative job title: the marketing technologist.

Many marketing organizations are just getting acquainted with the concept of this new role, but others already have this new resource in place: According to Gartner, among U.S. high-tech firms with \$500 million or more in revenue, 72% have a "chief marketing technologist" role today, and 87% expect to have such a role within two years.² As this trend spreads from the tech industry into the B2B marketing mainstream, companies that understand how and why to use the marketing technologist role will have an important edge over their competitors.

The following paper will describe the B2B marketing challenges that have established the need for dedicated marketing technologists. It will also look at the role that technology plays in addressing these challenges, and it will describe the skills — both technical and non-technical — that a marketing technologist will require in order to succeed.

MARKETING ORGANIZATIONS TODAY FIND THEMSELVES AT THE CENTER OF A PERFECT STORM.

THE B2B MARKETING CHALLENGE: FACING THE PERFECT STORM

To understand why the marketing technologist role is so important today, it's necessary to understand the changing role of technology in the modern B2B marketing organization. Yet, this isn't just a technology story — it's also about converging trends in buyer behavior, the growth of new media platforms and channels, the rise of engagement metrics and account-based marketing, an explosion in marketing data, and a growing emphasis on ROI and accountability.

Separately, any of these trends would challenge a B2B marketing organization. Together, they represent a convergence of events that will challenge marketers to adapt and survive.

Solving the 'Buyer 2.0' enigma. Today, B2B buyers are waiting longer to engage with a company's sales organization. Instead, they are turning to a variety of other sources, including the Internet, to research and validate their purchasing decisions. According to the *2012 Demand Gen Report B2B Buyer Survey*, 67% of buyers say they use more sources to research their vendor options, and 55% say they spend more time researching purchases than they did in the past.

In addition, according to *Demand Gen Report* research, buyers now wait longer to have direct contact with vendors, they tend to involve more people in buying decisions, and once they do establish contact with a preferred vendor, more than 30% required eight or more contacts to close a deal.³

According to marketing expert Ardath Albee, these changes define what she calls the "Buyer 2.0" model. "Buyer 2.0 is the informed customer," Albee wrote in a white paper on the topic. "They spend most of their buying process independently searching for and accessing information to learn more about the potential impact of their priorities and how best to go about addressing them."⁴

For B2B marketers, the challenge is to develop new thinking — and to leverage new technologies — to identify, attract and engage with Buyer 2.0 on his or her own terms. Or on *their* own terms, as Buyer 2.0 is often actually a committee of buyers, each doing research independently and discretely. Each person at the buying company will have different motivations and requirements, but they all work for the same company.

Marketers must also develop new methods for tracking the impact and ROI of their campaigns in this challenging economic environment, and they must create the

infrastructure for managing the customer lifecycle seamlessly, even after buyers have successfully engaged with a company's sales and customer service organizations.

Managing a multichannel environment.

Finding these new buyers in their early buying stages and on their "home turf" — the Internet — can be an extremely difficult task. Many B2B marketing organizations struggle to identify anonymous prospects and to discern their pain points or business needs. Prospect accounts may seek information across multiple channels, conduct research over the course of many weeks or months, and exhibit different levels of interest at different times.

Consider two issues that a typical B2B marketing organization faces when it attempts to engage with prospects across multiple channels, including web, mobile, email and social media:

- **Is the corporate web site optimized for lead generation activity?**

According to a survey conducted by Demandbase and Focus.com in 2011, the company web site is now the top online source of new leads — second overall only to personal referrals. Yet 80% of the respondents to the same study said their corporate web site is not performing to its maximum lead generation potential. Solving this problem requires a grasp


of multiple disciplines, including user experience, web analytics, data management and integration with other lead generation sources.

- **Can marketers identify a prospect across multiple channels?**

The ability to track and analyze a prospective customer account's behavior across web sites, display advertising, email, social media and other channels can yield a gold mine of intelligence about their needs and buying intentions — especially when there are multiple individuals from each account engaged in the research and educational stages of the funnel. This is impossible without the technology infrastructure to identify anonymous prospects and analyze their "digital body language" across multiple platforms, channels and content types.

Surviving the data deluge. Of course, tracking accounts across more channels and analyzing their online behavior generates data — a lot of data. According to IBM, one out of 10 companies now manages and stores more than a petabyte of data. That's an amount of data 1,000 times larger than the world's most massive databases a decade ago, and it's a number that continues to increase.⁵

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It's also a trend that disproportionately impacts marketing organizations that find they're managing a disproportionate share of this data.

Marketing organizations that develop appropriate expertise in business analytics and data management, as well as the emerging field of "Big Data" analytical tools, will find themselves able to make highly informed decisions about everything from campaign performance to brand perception and product development. Those that fail to develop these capabilities will find themselves at a disadvantage.

Addressing calls for greater accountability. The Buyer 2.0 phenomenon demands the ability to identify and engage with accounts long before they come to the notice of a traditional sales organization. Even as marketers play a vital role in this task, they also face a widening credibility gap within their own companies.

According to a 2012 Fournaise Group study of CEOs, 80% said they don't really trust the work done by marketers, 78% believe marketers lose sight of generating quantifiable customer demand, and 74% want marketers to become 100% ROI-focused. Yet, according to the same study, less than one third of B2B firms properly measure ROI for marketing activity.⁶

Digital marketing campaigns give marketers an unprecedented ability to track, measure, analyze and document every move they make. While this should, in theory, make it easier to measure marketing ROI and justify investments, the reality is that too many organizations still struggle to put the right attribution systems into place. If marketers want to win the full confidence of their CEOs, they must learn how to apply the right mix of technology and business processes to close this gap.

THE STATE OF MARKETING TECHNOLOGY: NEW TOOLS, NEW RULES, NEW CHALLENGES

The good news for B2B marketers is that the technology already exists to solve most of these challenges, and the current pace of technology innovation bodes well for the future. There are four reasons why this is the case:

- Money, talent and entrepreneurial attention is shifting rapidly away from old media (such as print and broadcasting) and towards new media (including the Web, social media and mobile);
- Cloud computing and Software as a Service (SaaS) delivery models make it easier and cheaper to adopt cutting-edge technology without up-front investments or significant IT involvement;

- Digital initiatives, as noted previously, are inherently easier to measure and track, and thus more suitable for organizations under pressure to demonstrate ROI;
- New companies and solution providers are streaming into emerging marketing technology product categories, pushing the pace of innovation and investment.

Over the past decade, these trends have transformed the marketing technology landscape. Not long ago, marketing organizations might have invested in CRM, email marketing and perhaps a (free) web analytics solution. Later came marketing automation and content management systems, usually as part of a broader shift towards SaaS applications and a need to put more of the tactical execution into the hands of marketers. Today, more B2B marketers are either considering or implementing a long list of additional applications related to:

- Content strategy and editorial management;
- Campaign management;
- Multivariate testing and conversion optimization;
- Attribution management;
- Social media monitoring;
- Targeting and personalization;

- Business intelligence and analytics;
- Webcasting;
- Video hosting and analytics;
- Big Data; and
- Many others.

Shifting the emphasis from IT to Marketing. Most of these tasks sound like they should be part of the IT organization's to-do list, and in many cases that's where marketing technology projects currently sit. This can be an uncomfortable situation for marketing and IT stakeholders for several reasons:

- **Marketing technology can't be separated from marketing as a discipline.**
- **Marketing technology includes critical customer-facing capabilities.**

The process of configuring and optimizing a marketing automation system, for example, requires intimate knowledge of campaign workflows, lead scoring and other marketing-specific specialties.

A typical IT organization can certainly develop a custom landing page or mobile app, but it's another matter to craft sites or apps based on established marketing best practices.

MORE B2B FIRMS TODAY ARE DISCOVERING THAT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO SEPARATE MARKETING TECHNOLOGY FROM MARKETING AS A DISCIPLINE.

- **Marketing technology demands speed and flexibility.**

Modern marketing organizations thrive on an “experiment, test, adjust” mentality that seeks to improve campaigns and business processes based on constant feedback and iterative adjustments.

- **Modern marketing is an inherently data-driven activity.**

As noted previously, B2B marketing organizations now gather, manage and analyze immense quantities of data. Just as many enterprises employ teams of business intelligence specialists to handle analytics tasks, a growing number of marketing organizations require specialized expertise to make the best possible use of this data. More B2B marketers, for example, are now using data-driven B2C techniques to evaluate buying behavior and create more relevant personalized messaging to drive loyalty, retention and upsell initiatives.

- **Marketing technology is a strategic concern.**

Technology isn't just an infrastructure issue for modern marketing organizations; it's intimately tied to other, strategic decisions. A multichannel marketing campaign, for example,

is defined and implemented at least partially in terms of the capabilities of an organization's content management, marketing automation, social media, CRM and other relevant systems.

Given the nature of this relationship between technology and marketing performance, and the extent to which a marketing organization is now held accountable for the technology decisions it makes, it's clear that marketing organizations can benefit from a job role dedicated specifically to addressing these issues.

THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MARKETING TECHNOLOGIST

This brings us to the next question: How, exactly should an organization define the marketing technologist position? The answer to this question must reflect the functional and organizational duties associated with the job:

1. Defining the business requirements for marketing technology investments.

Buying marketing automation or other technology solutions without first defining an organization's business requirements is a recipe for confusion, waste and inefficiency. A marketing technologist understands how to map business

requirements to technology capabilities and not get distracted by bells and whistles — and, if necessary, how to adjust existing business processes to take full advantage of these capabilities.

2. Taking a strategic view of technology investments and marketing activities.

Too many companies tie long-term technology investments to short-term priorities, and marketing is no exception. A skilled marketing technologist can work with the CMO and other stakeholders to plan long-term marketing objectives and select the appropriate technology to achieve those goals.

3. Serve as a technology liaison to the IT organization, sales, finance, product, customer service and other internal stakeholders.

A modern B2B marketing organization isn't an island; it must work with — and align with — other internal teams. On a strategic level, this means identifying common organizational, business process, data management and technology integration issues (CRM and e-commerce systems are two common examples). On a tactical level, it means marshaling the front-line development and systems integration resources to

make a cross-organizational technology plan happen.

4. Work with the CMO and other executives to define management, measurement, accountability and ROI objectives.

A marketing technologist can speak a business leader's language and understand a CMO or CEO's priorities when it comes to tracking and measuring marketing performance. At the same time, the marketing technologist understands the technology capabilities required to act upon these priorities.

5. Serve as an internal champion for marketing technology initiatives.

It's not enough for a marketing organization to invest in technology — it must also make technology a part of its DNA. Marketers must learn how to take advantage of new tools; embrace data-driven marketing; and adopt a culture that puts experimentation, measurement and analysis at the center of every campaign. In some ways, the marketing technologist's role as an evangelist and teacher may be the most important part of the position, since it can undermine even the smartest technology investments if it's treated as an afterthought. Given these skill requirements and

A MARKETING TECHNOLOGIST CAN SPEAK A BUSINESS LEADER'S LANGUAGE AND UNDERSTAND A CMO OR CEO'S PRIORITIES.

priorities, we suggest defining the marketing technologist job description using the example provided below, with appropriate modifications to suit your company's marketing organization, business requirements and technical needs.

CONCLUSION: SETTING UP YOUR MARKETING TECHNOLOGIST FOR SUCCESS

Business leaders are well aware of the risks associated with any new job role – especially one charged with managing transformational change. Yet that's exactly what marketing technologists are expected to do: Use technology to manage the profound changes sweeping today's B2B marketing organizations.

As we discuss above, success depends in part on a marketing technologist's own skills as a leader, evangelist and educator. Yet, it's just as important that other key leaders, including the CMO, CEO and CIO, understand and support the marketing technologist's work. If marketing expects to meet the challenges of Buyer(s) 2.0, navigate a changing technology landscape and prove its ability to deliver ROI, it must position the marketing technology position correctly (see sidebar).

The difficulties involved are considerable, but so are the benefits. It's a new world for understanding, engaging with and converting B2B buyers, and the marketing technologist can show your organization how to make the most of it.

WHERE SHOULD THE MARKETING TECHNOLOGIST SIT IN YOUR ORG CHART?

According to Gartner, 63% of chief marketing technologists currently report to the marketing organization – typically to either the CMO or a VP-level marketing executive. Most of the other respondents say their chief marketing technologist reports to the CIO or another IT executive.⁷

It's not necessarily a bad move to have a marketing technologist report to a CIO rather than a CMO; a lot depends upon an organization's size, industry vertical, technical sophistication, marketing priorities and other variables. Keep in mind, however, that a marketing technologist isn't simply an IT expert who spends time with the marketing team — they must combine a unique mix of technology expertise, analytical skills and practical marketing experience.

One role and department that has really helped blaze the trail for the marketing technologist is marketing operations, or marketing ops. Illustrating the growth of marketing ops roles, there is an association of marketing operations professionals, called MOCCA, that has quickly grown to over 1,000 members from 300 organizations.

In most organizations that have a marketing ops person or team of people, the role usually reports in to marketing, but works closely with IT on:

- selection and implementation of new technologies and applications;
- integration of systems;
- campaign execution;
- campaign reporting; and
- database management.

THE MARKETING TECHNOLOGIST: A SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION

KEY DUTIES:

- Data and Analytics: Managing, measuring and manipulating digital marketing initiatives;
- Marketing Applications: Configuring, operating and integrating a wide range of in-house and SaaS applications;
- IT Operations: Understanding cloud computing, including the integration of public, private and hybrid clouds, and liaising with IT staff to direct shared resources and capabilities;
- Software development: General knowledge of relevant application frameworks, programming languages and development methodologies, including Agile;
- Web Mechanics: Thorough and up-to-date understanding of web publishing systems, web development and related capabilities;
- Content Marketing: Understanding the content marketing lifecycle, as well as related lead nurturing, lead scoring, content management and content delivery activities;
- Digital Marketing: Experience with email, mobile, web and other digital media, including marketing campaign best practices;
- Social and Mobile Platforms: Understanding relevant APIs, mobile apps, advertising and business capabilities, and monitoring/management tools;
- Advertising Networks: Managing and optimizing the complete digital advertising ecosystem; and
- Technology Selection: Documenting business requirements and expected outcomes, and mapping these to appropriate technology through a vendor/solution approval process.

KEY QUALIFICATIONS:

- 5+ years managing marketing technology including, but not limited to, CRM, marketing automation, content management and marketing resource management applications;
- Experience integrating marketing applications with other enterprise applications, as well as internal and external data sources;
- Outstanding data analysis and presentation skills, including experience deploying self-service capabilities in campaign management and reporting/BI tools;
- Ability to manage multiple projects and deadlines;
- Demonstrated ability to combine strategic thinking with effective tactical execution;
- Team leadership and project management experience, especially cross-disciplinary and cross-organizational teams;
- Familiarity with the latest marketing technology trends, as well as established marketing/technology best practices;
- A well-rounded background that includes marketing planning and strategy; business process design and review; marketing workflows; and behavioral marketing principles;
- Comfortable working with multiple enterprise stakeholders, including senior business, finance, marketing, IT and operations executives.

SOURCES

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About Demandbase

Demandbase is the first targeting and personalization platform for B2B, transforming the effectiveness of marketing programs and marketing's ability to impact revenue. While personalization tools have long existed for B2C, until now, none were geared specifically to enable B2B marketers to make online interactions more effective, delivering the right message at the right time. Without the use of cookies, Demandbase's patented identification technology bridges the gap between known and anonymous web visitors by identifying and segmenting the companies visiting a website, and providing detailed, targetable business attributes in real-time. Demandbase integrates with other sales and marketing technologies to deliver unique intelligence about web visitors, and better attract, convert and retain the right customers. Enterprise leaders and high-growth companies alike use Demandbase to drive better marketing performance. For more information, visit www.demandbase.com.

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About Demand Gen

Demand Gen Report is a targeted e-media publication spotlighting the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multi-channel demand generation efforts. For more information visit www.demandgenreport.com.



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