

chapter

1

Mind the Gaps

We have entered the age of content, context, and the customer experience.

■ THE MARKETING TALENT GAP

Digital marketing has revolutionized the industry, and the job market. Corporate marketing departments, small businesses, and marketing agencies struggle to recruit and retain qualified professionals for career paths that did not exist three years ago, while academic institutions are faced with the need to adapt curriculums to the real-time nature of business.

The majority of professionals gain their digital marketing knowledge on the job rather than through full-time school programs. This lack of training and formal education is affecting marketers' confidence in their ability to execute critical digital marketing functions, including ecommerce, personalization and targeting, marketing measurement, social marketing, digital advertising, and content marketing.

In Search of the Unicorns

The job of every marketer, from the copywriter to the chief marketing officer (CMO), is to connect actions to

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outcomes. However, according to the 2012 Marketing Skills Gap survey conducted by Focus (@Focus) and the Marketing Automation Institute, 75 percent of marketers say their lack of skills is impacting revenue in some way, and 74 percent say it is contributing to marketing and sales misalignment.¹

In the 2013 report “B2B CMOs Must Evolve or Move On,” Forrester (@forrester) and the Business Marketing Association (@BMANational) showed that 96 percent of marketing leaders believe the breadth of skills required to succeed in marketing has increased dramatically, and 44 percent say they cannot find the right combination of people and skills in the job market.²

Furthermore, Accenture (@accenture) found in its 2013 “Turbulence for the CMO” report that 39 percent of CMOs say they do not have the right people, tools, and resources to meet their marketing objectives.³

So, while marketers are charged with consistently producing meaningful results, including website visitors, subscribers, followers, leads, and sales, they often lack the fundamental skills, technologies, and strategies to unlock their company’s potential.

Modern marketers must have a clear understanding of how their actions impact organizational goals. They are expected to continually expand their digital knowledge and capabilities, manage increasingly complex technology integrations, and devise strategies and campaigns that directly affect the bottom line.

Forward-thinking organizations seek hybrid professionals who are highly proficient writers, analytical, creative, and tech savvy, with strong competencies in business management, information technology (IT), and human behavior.

These next-generation professionals excel in emerging core-marketing disciplines such as analytics, automation, content marketing, email, mobile, and social networking. They envision on a strategic level, building fully integrated campaigns, and they have the capabilities to

execute on the tactical level, performing activities that drive real business results.

But modern, hybrid marketers are a rare breed.

In his blog post “50% of All New Marketing Hires Will Be Technical,” Scott Brinker (@chiefmartec), president and CTO of ion interactive (@ioninteractive), states, “There’s a real scarcity of technical professionals, even more so for those with passion and aptitude for marketing.”⁴

Brinker says, “There will be enormous competition for those unicorns, not just from other marketing departments, but from marketing software vendors, consulting firms, agencies, and a whole new bumper crop of start-ups, all of whom need this talent in pursuit of their missions.”

Fill Marketing Talent Gaps

So, what can businesses do to fill marketing talent gaps and drive improved performance? Chapters 3 through 5 focus on marketing talent. We explore the evolution of the prototype marketer, the higher education story, internal academies, and the outsourcing option.

Here are examples of actions businesses can take to better attract, train, and retain modern marketers. We delve into each of these concepts in this book.

- Focus on culture and purpose as key factors to differentiate the company and attract top talent.
- Recruit professionals from nontraditional backgrounds, including economics, journalism, law, psychology, and statistics, and train them to be modern marketers. These individuals often possess critical core competencies, such as writing, strategic thinking, deductive reasoning, and understanding of human behavior, but are not marketers by trade.
- Capture applicants through website landing pages, which enable you to use analytics to monitor candidate engagement levels based on website interactions.

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- ▶ Activate marketing automation tools to nurture candidates with prescheduled email workflows. For example, send applicants a series of emails with links to relevant company blog posts and content downloads. Then monitor to see which applicants take the recommended actions.
- ▶ Apply the same marketing technology used for lead scoring to rate and prioritize candidates based on brand engagement levels, such as content downloads, pageviews, email click-throughs, following social brand pages, and blog subscribes.
- ▶ Offer formal internal training programs to continually educate and evolve your marketers' capabilities. Teach your marketing team to take a scientific approach to marketing strategy, campaign management, and measurement.
- ▶ Maintain a performance-based culture in which marketers are assessed and compensated based on achieving marketing metrics. Challenge your team to always connect actions to outcomes.
- ▶ Use an internal social network to improve the marketing team's efficiency, productivity, and performance.

■ THE MARKETING TECHNOLOGY GAP

Marketers are being called upon to take leading roles in the selection, activation, and management of marketing technology solutions. Gartner Inc. (@Gartner_inc) forecasts that by 2017, the CMO will spend more on IT than the chief information officer (CIO) does.⁵ This makes sense when you consider the array of marketing technologies required to build and measure business success:

- ▶ Analytics
- ▶ Call tracking

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- Content management systems (CMS)
- Customer experience management (CEM)
- Customer relationship management (CRM)
- Ecommerce
- Email marketing
- Internal social networks
- Marketing automation
- Project management
- Search engine optimization (SEO) management
- Social media monitoring/management

According to a joint study by *MIT Sloan Management Review* (@mitsmr) and Capgemini Consulting (@CapgeminiConsul), “The world is going through a kind of digital transformation as everything—customers and equipment alike—becomes connected. The connected world creates a digital imperative for companies. They must succeed in creating transformation through technology, or they’ll face destruction at the hands of their competitors that do.”⁶

Marketers are becoming technologists, and the traditional-minded professionals and businesses that fail to adapt will become irrelevant.

But are marketers ready to assume the role?

Marketing software is a burgeoning space, being fueled by venture capital funding, mergers, acquisitions, and initial public offerings (IPOs). While the money accelerates innovation, it also creates a complex and fluid matrix of players and possibilities for marketers to navigate.

As the number of devices, screens, and channels expands, it becomes more difficult for marketers to create a connected customer experience. Marketers are often faced with the difficult decisions of best-in-breed versus all-in-one solutions, and legacy systems versus the latest and greatest. Siloed platforms and processes only widen

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the gap. Marketing technology systems must be integrated, with the ability to share and interpret data.

A strong marketing technology foundation is critical to driving performance. Fully integrated core-marketing technologies improve efficiencies, maximize productivity and return on investment (ROI), and create competitive advantages. Yet, many businesses lack, or are underutilizing, fundamental marketing technologies. For example, PR 20/20's "2014 Marketing Score Report" tells us:

- ▶ 53 percent of organizations do not have call tracking, which enables organizations to monitor and report offline conversions and assign full value attribution to the proper marketing channels.
- ▶ 41 percent of organizations do not have internal social networks, which strengthen internal communications, corporate cultures, employee relationships, and employee retention rates.
- ▶ 20 percent of organizations do not have marketing analytics, which means they have zero insight into online behavior, including visits, referral sources, page views, time on site, and conversions.⁷

Fill Marketing Technology Gaps

Chapters 6 and 7 take a comprehensive look at marketing technology. We cover processes to improve efficiency, marketing in a multiscreen world, the impact of marketing automation software, contextual content, leading solution providers, and integration best practices.

As you continue through the book, consider the value of these actions to create more agile and effective marketing campaigns.

- ▶ Appoint a chief marketing technologist or similar leader who drives and manages the convergence of marketing and technology within the organization.

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- Assess your existing marketing technology infrastructure and identify steps to improve weaknesses.
- Build strong working relationships between IT and marketing teams to fully integrate critical technologies needed to run modern marketing campaigns.
- Develop processes to eliminate waste, such as underperforming programs and unproductive employee time.
- Invest time and money to move away from legacy marketing systems in favor of more agile software-as-a-service (SaaS) solutions.
- Use marketing software to create a connected experience throughout the customer journey.

■ THE MARKETING STRATEGY GAP

When Adobe asked more than 1,000 marketers, “What do you think will be most important to marketers in the next three years?” the most popular response out of 13 choices was social media marketing, at only 13 percent, with personalization and targeting second, at 12 percent. Content marketing, which is one of the hottest trends in marketing, came in 10th place at five percent.⁸

The lack of consensus could simply be attributed to variances in industry, budgets, company size, geographic region, or any number of factors, or it could be highlighting a growing strategy gap in which marketers lack the knowledge and capabilities needed to effectively prioritize activities and allocate resources.

B2C and B2B Consumers Take Control

We have entered the age of content, context, and the customer experience.

In what Google (@google) calls the “Zero Moment of Truth,” consumers increasingly tap into the wealth of data

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and information available to them and research products in advance of purchases. Gone are the days when a marketing stimulus, such as an advertisement, direct mail piece, or cold call, leads directly to a sale. Google found that shoppers reference an average of 10.4 sources before making a purchasing decision.⁹

On the business-to-business (B2B) side, Forrester reports that buyers may be up to 90 percent of the way through their journey before contacting a vendor. “Marketing now owns a much bigger piece of the lead-to-revenue cycle. And B2B marketers must take responsibility for engaging with the customer through most of the buying cycle.”¹⁰

Business-to-consumer (B2C) and B2B audiences crave knowledge, answers, and entertainment, while marketers strive to provide remarkable brand experiences that capture the hearts and minds of their prospects and customers.

Leading brands have become storytellers, seeking to engage and influence audiences in a real-time, multi-screen world, at all phases of the customer journey.

Marketers create videos, podcasts, blog posts, apps, webinars, newsletters, infographics, magazines, and events, all with the intention of connecting with audiences in more meaningful ways. They strive to create value, or, as author Jay Baer (@JayBaer) says in his *New York Times* bestselling book, *Youtility*, marketers aim to create content so useful, prospects and customers would want to pay for it.¹¹

The new marketing imperative is to create more value, for more people, more often, so when it is time for consumers to choose a product, service, or company, they choose yours. When done well, brand content answers questions, inspires, and motivates audiences to take action, helping marketers to stand out from the competition. So, as marketers, all we have to do is become

publishers, tell great stories, and give consumers the content they seek. Right?

Unfortunately, it is not that simple.

The marketing industry needs storytellers, but content creation and distribution is not enough. While content marketing gives us the ability to produce visitors, leads, and sales, marketers must go beyond storytelling to deliver personalized, highly relevant communications across all channels.

Next-generation marketers have a clear understanding of how their actions impact business goals. Closed-loop sales monitoring and analytics ensure marketers can tie activities to metrics that matter, accurately attribute customer conversions to the appropriate marketing channels, easily identify bottlenecks in marketing campaigns and sales processes, and continually improve over time.

Top marketers develop and activate assets at all phases of the marketing funnel. They build reach and brand at the top of the funnel, generate leads and convert sales in the middle, and retain customers and increase loyalty at the bottom.

Going Inbound

Inbound marketing is a term I use throughout the book. Made popular by HubSpot (@HubSpot), a Boston-based marketing software company with more than 10,000 customers worldwide, inbound marketing describes a more personalized and scientific approach to attracting, converting, and delighting consumers.

As consumers tune out traditional, interruption-based marketing methods and choose when and where to interact with brands, businesses must connect with consumers on their terms and create compelling customer experiences.

Inbound marketing takes a sophisticated, agile, and highly measurable approach to targeting consumers.

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Strategies are fueled by analytics, automation, content, email, social media, and search. The core concept is to turn your website into a magnet that uses content marketing to draw in visitors, and then engage them through dynamic website copy, landing pages, calls to action, and automated and personalized emails.

Inbound marketing is designed to adapt to individuals at specific stages of the customer journey. It is meant to be more human, more personal, more intelligent, and more effective.

Going inbound is a critical step in building a performance-driven organization.

Fill Marketing Strategy Gaps

Chapters 8 through 10 present processes, tools, and resources to take a full-funnel approach to marketing strategy, conduct marketing assessments, build marketing scorecards, and devise performance-driven inbound marketing game plans.

Marketing high performers have better talent, more advanced technologies, and more intelligent and integrated strategies. Here are some examples of what leading organizations do to accelerate success:

- ▶ Adapt strategies and campaigns in real time based on analytics.
- ▶ Break down internal marketing silos and focus on a personalized and consistent customer experience across all channels.
- ▶ Drive business results through an integrated approach to analytics, automation, content marketing, digital advertising, email, mobile, search, social, PR, and web.
- ▶ Maintain advanced project/marketing management systems that connect actions to outcomes and

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enable dynamic campaign management and resource allocation.

- Run highly effective marketing automation campaigns.
- Take a full-funnel approach using a balanced campaign mix designed to build brand, generate leads, convert leads into sales, and increase customer loyalty.
- Use tracking and automation software to create personalized customer experiences across multiple screens and marketing channels.

HOW PROFESSIONALS RATE THEIR POTENTIAL AND PERFORMANCE

PR 20/20's "2014 Marketing Score Report" takes an inside look at how 318 marketers, executives, and entrepreneurs rate their organizations, using 132 factors across 10 sections.¹² The factor ratings (on a 0–10 scale) are combined with 27 profile fields, including annual revenue, revenue goals, marketing budget, employee size, industry, and sales cycle length, to provide strategic insights and help drive change and improved performance.

Key findings from the report demonstrate the challenges businesses face in achieving performance goals:

- The majority of organizations have aggressive growth goals and conservative marketing budgets, creating a potential misalignment of expectations.
- Organizations lack confidence in their internal marketing teams, which are particularly weak in key digital marketing skills.

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- ▶ Many organizations lack, or are underutilizing, fundamental marketing technologies, including call tracking, marketing automation, and marketing analytics.
- ▶ Key performance indicator (KPI) weaknesses at every stage of the marketing funnel affect the ability of organizations to achieve business goals.

■ THE MARKETING PERFORMANCE GAP

Talent Gap + Technology Gap + Strategy Gap = Performance Gap

Gaps in marketing talent, technology, and strategy are leading to the most significant gap of all—the performance gap. Marketers believe measurement is important, but most are struggling to do it well. Reaching and influencing customers, measuring campaign performance, and proving marketing ROI are among the greatest concerns to marketers.

The problem is, CMOs struggle to quantify ROI. According to Accenture’s “Turbulence for the CMO” study, “nearly one in five score themselves as below average in multi-channel attribution, correlating advertising to sales, and measuring media buying effectiveness.”¹³

Fill the Marketing Performance Gap

So, if you feel overwhelmed, underprepared, understaffed, and under increasing pressure to perform despite the odds, you are not alone. Your peers and competitors face the same imposing marketing gaps.

Traditional talent, technologies, and strategies must evolve. This is your opportunity to reengineer your

approach and reimagine what is possible for your business.

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

- The majority of professionals gain their digital marketing knowledge on the job rather than through full-time school programs. This lack of training and formal education is affecting marketers' confidence in their abilities to execute critical digital marketing functions.
 - The job of every marketer, from the copywriter to the CMO, is to connect actions to outcomes.
 - Next-generation professionals excel in emerging core-marketing disciplines such as analytics, automation, content marketing, email, mobile, and social networking. They envision on a strategic level, building fully integrated campaigns, and they have the capabilities to execute on the tactical level, performing activities that drive real business results.
 - Marketers are being called upon to take leading roles in the selection, activation, and management of marketing technology solutions.
 - A strong marketing technology foundation is critical to driving performance. Fully integrated core-marketing technologies improve efficiencies, maximize productivity and ROI, and create competitive advantages.
 - We have entered the age of content, context, and the customer experience.
 - B2C and B2B consumers crave knowledge, answers, and entertainment, while marketers
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strive to provide remarkable brand experiences that capture the hearts and minds of their prospects and customers.

► The marketing industry needs storytellers, but content creation and distribution is not enough. While content marketing gives us the ability to produce visitors, leads, and sales, marketers must go beyond storytelling to deliver personalized, highly relevant communication across all channels.

► Inbound marketing is designed to adapt to individuals at specific stages of the customer journey. It is meant to be more human, more personal, more intelligent, and more effective.

► Gaps in marketing talent, technology, and strategy are leading to the most significant gap of all—the performance gap.