

Building a high-performing marketing team

By [Joseph Neusu](#)

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Most modern successful companies have one thing in common - they have put the marketing function at the centre of their business processes. Companies like Coca-Cola, Starbucks and Apple are top examples. These companies know which goose lays the golden eggs and their budget allocations to marketing functions and the adoption of marketing software attests to this.

So why is it important to have a high-performing marketing team? In my opinion, the proliferation of digital devices has transformed the marketing landscape beyond recognition, making it ultra-competitive.

Things have changed so much that even the blue-ocean strategy now demands a rethink. Whilst it was possible erstwhile to steer away from the red oceans of brand wars by creating a niche, the opening up of markets to new players without borders has exported the battles to those niches as well. The grazing land is becoming smaller and smaller by the day.

To survive, marketers need to be savvy and spot on in their go-to-market strategies. It's a clear case of 'you snooze you lose' and this can lead to serious relegation in the food chain.



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A key pillar to successful marketing is data. Modern marketing is driven by an in-depth knowledge of the science and art of consumer intelligence. Crucial data is readily available as digital tools record every user's online behaviour and transactions. Consumer metrics are a very lucrative gold mine for brands who can subsequently architect highly targeted, over-achieving campaigns. Business intelligence tools like Pinpoint provided by DataMentors enables marketers to navigate the complex world of analytics with ease.

For a marketing team to consistently produce great results, it must have a data nerd or a measurement lead who has a head for numbers and literally feeds off them for survival. Data analysis is an asset that must be treated with respect. Its potential is great as it leads to laser-guided campaigns at the right time and right context.

Most importantly, conversion potential is very high as consumers' needs are satisfied in a manner that matches their needs.

Why is it important to have such a granular and complex understanding of customer and prospect behaviour? It is because the customer is no longer king in the new dispensation. He is now the Kingdom itself. Really? Of course. This status epitomises the core values of the creators of digital revolution, young high-tech rebels with a cause. They don't believe in a lone voice of the voiceless. They know that a lone one ton elephant produces minimal effort as compared to a herd of a thousand buffaloes. Anyone can put their opinion in the public domain and "news" is being reported first and faster on social media platforms by ordinary eye witnesses.

Naturally, big media lost its grip on society and it can no longer set the agenda like it used to. Pushy and noisy marketers have also felt the effects of the changes. Their megaphone approach to marketing is no longer effective as customers prefer conversations to elevator pitches.

Enter content marketing, the new sexy.

The effectiveness of content marketing can be seen in the context of the zero moment of truth (ZMOT). This describes how customers use their mobile devices to search for information about a product or service, compare prices, the ethics of the providers and location.

Smartphones have enabled the instant availability of information, making them an incredible game changer. Almost in all cases, the customers require that information in a particular context and they expect their needs to be satisfied immediately. Brands which provide solutions on demand are preferred over the rest.



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High performance marketing teams enable their brands to be found in the ZMOT and satisfy the customer's immediate needs in the expected context and time. This calls for the application of SEO-driven content strategies. To those in the dark, SEO or search engine optimisation in full is a science and art of tweaking elements of a website so that it will rank high in search results. Search engines consider engaging and most liked content as a ranking signal.

Another area for excellence is visual content marketing. Digital media and visual content marketing is a match made in heaven. The reason is simple. Digital tools offer an audio-visual high-definition environment that is second to none and human beings are programmed to be stimulated by visual content. Unsurprisingly, photo and video hosting platforms like Instagram, YouTube, Vimeo, Pinterest and Tumblr have become massively popular.

The ability to create engaging visual content that is native to platforms increases the goal-conversion potential of marketing campaigns. The Impatience Economy has given visual content an efficacy that has shifted the borders of marketing. Visual content makes marketing strategies more effective as it is emotionally binding and it also delivers the message clearly. A

picture paints a thousand words and a one-second video, 1.8 million words after all.

90% of information that reaches the brain is visual.

'Social media is about sociology and psychology more than technology' is a quote that has found premium space on my desk. Many a time I have met people who think that in order for them to create great campaigns, they have to be geeks or any other similar green-haired person. Great campaigns are based on understanding the mechanics and dynamics of basic human behaviour. Psychology principles give insights into how purchase decisions are made and marketing strategists can then craft campaigns that resonate with the audience.

One of the biggest killers of marketing teams is management that insists on thinking in straight lines and is bureaucratic in its operations. Marketing rain-makers are freaks of nature, they are so fickle that if their habitat is disturbed they don't produce the results. Management should know how to manage creative professionals.

ABOUT JOSEPH NEUSU

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