

# MARKETING' S CONTINUOUS RISE AND SHINE

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## **Abstract**

The face of the marketing function is struggling to keep pace with major changes, by assuming its strategic and systemic leading role. Being considered the corporate equivalent of a central nervous system, an art and also a management science calling for the implementation of rigorous processes and metrics, marketing is challenged to be more and more creative and accountable, more real-time offering personalized, content delivered across channels, and to engage CEOs and the top leadership to valorize the ability of the marketing function to help drive organizational change, focusing on what is important to customers, consumers and users, within the rise of social media, big-data analytics, and smart mobile devices, differentiating social media marketing from social business. There is no doubt about the importance of reinforcing and embedding ROI thinking in the daily marketing approach, the struggling of marketing managers for new rules and measurements to use in the new world of measurable performance, while the purpose of measuring must extend beyond just collecting metrics, focusing on demonstrating how marketing is creating and capturing customer value, taking into account both, the opportunity to measure customer value, and the power that has shifted from sellers to buyers. Marketers need to know what exactly they should measure and if their analytics are actionable, balancing their inbound and outbound marketing, mastering the latest technology, assimilating vast quantities of data, engaging and delighting their more connected and empowered than ever before customers, and delivering products and services that surpass their expectations, combining technology and teamwork and using technology and teamwork to listen accordingly, creating a vision for an exceptional customer experience and connecting everyone in the organization to the delivery of that seamless experience, stimulating a more collaborative working relationship between CMOs and CIOs, and a vision to anticipate new digital channels, and considering digital marketing makeover as the number one transformational project. Marketers also need a good understanding of the fact that the content is the fuel for company lead generation and nurturing programs, driving leads through the marketing funnel to become customers, and in order to implement buyer journey marketing from a lead generation perspective there are crucial guidelines for organizations. There is also a real need for marketers of not relying too heavily on analytics, but on the so-called “both-brain” approach, by making the right balance between creativity and analytics, and also to constantly reevaluate the marketing strategies, by acting with speed and agility in addressing key customer needs and expectations. Marketing has to take responsibility, and confirm that innovation is its best friend, not forgetting that the integration of looking both inward and outward is the most powerful formula for creating long-term, high-impact Marketing Thinking change.

**Key words:** Marketing function; Creative, Accountable, and Real-Time Marketing; Marketing ROI Thinking;

Balanced Inbound and Outbound marketing; Customer-Centricity; Lean Content Marketing; Buyer's

Journey; “Both-Brain” Approach

**JEL Classification:** M31, M14, M15, D83, D03

## **Major changes that promised in the sixties, the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to transform future marketing efforts, and marketing in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

Forty-eight years ago, (Louth, 1966 ) John D. Louth (a principal in McKinsey's San Francisco office and specialized in problems of organization, marketing, and sales management) attracted our attention that *the face of the marketing function will have to keep pace with six*

*major changes that promised to transform future marketing efforts: the dominance of the customer; the spread of marketing research; the rise of the computer; expanded use of test marketing (more controlled experimentation to narrow the odds of an error in making marketing changes); metamorphosis of field selling (tomorrow's salespeople will be "sophisticated marketers": planning oriented, service oriented, and technically skilled); global market planning (but, according to Louth, without unduly restricting initiative and responsibility within each national segment). On July 23, 2014 (Verdino, 2014), Greg Verdino (a leading digital strategist and popular keynote speaker who helps leaders build thriving 21st century organizations – according to gregverdino.com/), went beyond simply praising John D. Louth („for his prescience, although his ability to foresee a decades-long evolution of the marketing function is indeed impressive”), highlighting „the importance of taking the long view — in marketing and in business in general.” Verdino listed the six trends underlined by Louth, followed by his modern-day take on each theme, concluding, after some actual references, including a reference to his article „Strategy is change” (Verdino, 2013), that: „The smart business leader might make serious work of understanding how the things happening right now and the things that may happen 40 years from now are merely two points on a continuum of constant change.”*

This opinion expressed by Verdino reminded me of an article published in McKinsey Quarterly, March 2014, by Nate Boaz (a principal in McKinsey's Atlanta office) and Erica Ariel Fox (a founding partner at Mobius Executive Leadership, a lecturer in negotiation at Harvard Law School, and a senior adviser to McKinsey Leadership Development; Fox is the author of “Winning from Within: A Breakthrough Method for Leading, Living, and Lasting Change,” HarperBusiness, 2013).(Boaz & Fox, 2014) According to the authors, *organizations don't change - people do, anyone who pulls the organization in new directions must look inward as well as outward*, organizational change being inseparable from individual change, because: despite the stated change goals, people on the ground tend to behave as they did before; individuals learn to align what they intend with what they actually say and do to influence others (“closing your performance gap”, according to the mentioned book). The article concluded: *“Learning to lead yourself requires you to question some core assumptions too, about yourself and the way things work ... This integration of looking both inward and outward is the most powerful formula we know for creating long-term, high-impact organizational change.”*

It is well known that marketing's object of study is a result of the economists' research (from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) referring to the nature of distribution process.(Purcarea & Ratiu) Being in Bucharest for the first time, in May 2005, Philip Kotler highlighted the imperative of “the development of better abilities in innovation, differentiation, branding and service, in a word marketing”, recommending the development of a stronger marketing: holistic, strategic, technological, financially oriented. The “father of marketing” emphasized, among other things, the need to resort to a lateral marketing, conceiving new product and service ideas. In Kotler's opinion, marketing is the art of brand building. He also showed that one of the shortest definitions of marketing is the profitable fulfillment of needs. The commercial space is no longer what it was, more and more marketing people acknowledge the need to have a more complete,

cohesive approach which goes beyond traditional applications of the marketing concept. An approach that attempts to acknowledge and reconcile the sphere and complexity of marketing activities is represented by holistic marketing (development, design and implementation of programs, processes and marketing activities which acknowledge content and interdependencies) whose components are: relational marketing, integrated marketing, internal marketing and marketing of social responsibilities. Marketing management is - according to the same acknowledged opinion - the art and science of choosing target markets and winning, preserving and increasing the client base by creating, delivering and communicating a superior value to the client. He - the client - has, in many cases, undefined preferences, which are ambiguous or even conflicting. On the other hand, Kotler's mentor - Peter Drucker - says that the purpose of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well that the product or service is perfectly suited to him and sells by itself. But customers respond differently to the company's image and the company's brand; the identity - the way in which a company identifies itself, self-positions itself or positions its products - and the image - the way in which the public perceives the company or its products/services - require a distinction.

Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (Kotler & Keller, 2005) emphasized, in 2005, the need to build a creative marketing organization, the capacity for strategic innovation and imagination coming from the assembly of instruments, processes, abilities and measures which will allow the company to generate more and better ideas than their competition. And this requires also assuming social responsibility because the business success and the client's continuous satisfaction are closely related to the implementation of high leadership standards of a business and marketing. The key to branding - emphasized Kotler and Keller - is the customers' perception of the differences between the brands belonging to a category of products. A branding strategy identifies which elements of a brand (name, term, sign, symbol, design, a combination of the previous) the company chooses to apply to the different products it sells. In order to serve multiple market segments, often, multiple brands are required (the basic principle in designing a brand portfolio is the maximization of market coverage, so that no potential customer is ignored).

In the same year, 2005, Vincent Grimaldi (Grimaldi, 2005) argued that resistance to change - which is ingrained in human nature - makes good marketing difficult in practice, adding that marketing must be given a role that is both strategic and systemic (in order to maintain company's competitiveness), managing to live in a symbiosis with the increasingly demanding customers and the changing environment, going beyond marketing's support role and penetrating most aspects of the organization. According to Grimaldi, marketing is the corporate equivalent of a central nervous system, being an art and also a management science calling for the implementation of rigorous processes and metrics, and it should be both creative and accountable. Grimaldi insisted further that: the Baldrige criteria for performance excellence puts marketing in a leading role, together with leadership and strategic planning; because the customer is at the core of the problem, great strategies are developed around him; the corporate

strategy ends up being totally customer-driven ensuring that every step of the process is developed with a market quick feedback and... obtaining the customers' "Wow".

A year before, in 2004, Nirmalya Kumar (Kumar, 2004) drew the attention to the fact that: *"management has forgotten, or never realized, the ability of the marketing function to help drive organizational change"* (Nirmalya Kumar - *Marketing as Strategy: Understanding the CEO's Agenda for Driving Growth and Innovation*, Harvard Business School Press, May 5, 2004). To improve the company's value, marketers must engage CEOs and the top leadership in meeting the two marketplace challenges that all companies face (enhancing customer loyalty and reducing downward pressure on prices), in looking for growth-related initiatives (like expanding to new and growing channels of distribution, selling solutions instead of products, and pursuing radical rather than incremental innovation), and in finding which aspects of marketing are really scale-sensitive versus those elements where local adaptation truly increases value for customers.

In the "next-generation marketing", customer experience is going behind the lines, "audience is king" so, let's "learn more about the customers and how they think". First of all, a company has to see if it is possible to integrate this customer orientation and how can this be made possible. According to the opinion expressed in 2006 by the well-known Professor Don E. Schultz (Schulz, 2006), the first thing is to stop thinking about products (ensuring the transition from product to service) and start thinking about customers as income flows, then think about all of the ways customers touch you, or you touch them. This customer alignment and integration presumes having good customer data and using it efficiently, customers always appreciating the manner in which the company and its partners deal with dissatisfaction, inefficiency and opportunity. The "machinery" made up of the employees' engagement and the clients' engagement can significantly influence the company's performance, the difficulty consisting in the fact that the recognition of the customer engagement's need and the actual measurement of the real engagement are two different things (the real engagement being the consequence of the marketing/communication programme which produces an increased level of brand perception as meeting and overwhelming customer expectations/"brand equity", while customer expectations are generally based on emotions).

Professor Schultz considered that: marketers' training must be focused on what is important to customers, not to the company (because, for example, in the case of the FMCG, the manufacturer has to start thinking about how to become a better partner for the retailers in terms of capturing, sharing and using information and data); marketing is what the organization does, the marketing department ought to be the one that is aligning the organization, taking into account that there are lots of tools, tactics, techniques that can be outsourced - including strategy - rather than having those done by employees. Within this framework, Schultz's company has proposed a "media consumption model", because every developed approach is based on distributing messages through the media and what is measured is distribution: every consumer today is creating his or her own internal information network, having an internal model for how he evaluates information sources and how he solves his problems (internal networks created for themselves). Consumers have created the ability to not only give advice, but also to get advice

from multiple sources and, that is why marketers need to look at how customers and consumers and users communicate with each other, by going back to the consumer-created media.

And coming back to a pragmatic question: how do we get customer insight? The future's marketing organization is going to have employees who can deal with both push and pull forms of marketing, by recognizing that today's real challenge is to be very responsive, and to give feedback (the responses generated by the marketing come back to customer service, sales, technical support), so that the marketing people have relevance and view of what the responses are. Brand experiences - according to the same Don E. Schultz - are the responsibility of part-time marketers - employees, retailers, customer service people who are not trained as marketing people but they are doing most of the marketing for the organization, being on the ground responding to people – and not of marketers. That is why one of the challenges is to get budget starting by thinking about customers as flows of income, aggregating those customers up and, building a financial calculation so that it is an investment and a return (beyond the actual marketing department as a cost center that can't measure, financially, the returns the marketing organization is generating).

Just remember that on April 2006, the well-known Al Ries (Ries, 2006) wrote that marketing study starts with psychology study, and if psychology is the systematic study of human behaviour, then marketing is the systematic study of human behaviour on the market. In order to discover how the company can better satisfy customers' needs, marketing people have to work together with the company's clients, offering assistance and trying to understand their preferences. That is why Kotler considers "participation marketing" as a more appropriate concept, compared to "permission marketing".

The next year, 2007, Jonah Bloom (Bloom, 2007) showed that "we now live in a culture of instantly disseminated opinion", everything in the public domain being instantly spread and dissected and in such a world marketers have to accept that they won't please all the people all the time: consumers are in control and messages are reinterpreted and criticized".

As we all know, in our world of continuous change, where the boundary between the organizations becomes even more complex, reacting (besides being proactive) to the marketplace's challenges means to build architecture that will flexibly integrate corporate information. And as this world of continuous change is a "marketing world" governed more by perceptions, marketers need: an adequate marketing roadmap to arrive at the best positioning on the targeted market, knowing how customers perceive them, having the ability of being perceived as they really are, trying to offer their customers expertise and insights because they really need to have someone buy, so they must help their customers to decide how to buy; to be value driven (so as to understand what customers expect), implementing the knowledge obtained, overcoming the barriers to communications, translating each value proposition into the customer's language, thinking of expertise as an abundant resource and time to respond as a scarce one, enabling the future; to renew organizational knowledge continuously - developing a knowledge culture – and within this framework to improve communication between internal suppliers and customers, by supporting a cross-functional process and adopting an interactive

value perspective, according to a relationship value management, working in a way that enables the relationship marketing process to deliver on key stakeholder expectation.

As we underlined in 2008, there was a continuous debate within the academic marketing community about the so-called “critical marketing” and providing critical understanding: of the organization and impact of marketing operations; of the factors that are shaping marketing activities; of marketing professions and morality on the marketplace; of the mechanisms used by marketers for creating and supporting customer values; of consumer culture and the impact of brands; of the development and implementation of marketing strategies and programs; of the impacts of the marketing concepts’ and techniques’ application in a competitive environment; of marketing’s interpretation within the framework of the relationship marketing; of redefining markets and marketing.

Marketers or not, we are all consumers and cannot escape the market, but we are not passive recipients of what marketers do, that is why – as the well-known Professor Michael Saren sustained in 2007 (Saren, 2007) – marketers must look at the marketing phenomenon as consumers experience it, as active participants in it, by achieving a broader perspective on marketing. And, the key to achieving such a new perspective is building of customer relationships, by understanding that customer relationships are the most important company’s asset needing to be managed. This “interaction approach” (Industrial Marketing and Purchasing-IMP), whose essential aim is to create value for both parties, is based on the idea that this process of interactivity takes place between active buyers and sellers that are individually significant to each other. According to Professor Saren: the “critical marketing” extends its domain and gives a specific example to demonstrate the necessity that the academic discipline of marketing must encompass the wide range of activities and effects that it manifests in practice today; the problematic issue of relevance in marketing, considering the fact that in management and marketing relevance itself has often been defined in a restricted manner to imply usefulness as measured by a sub-group of either practitioners or self-selected intermediaries.

Next year, 2008, there were interesting opinions expressed by David Armano who has insisted on the followings: there is a problem with marketing, because many times it doesn’t allow marketers to gain an intimate understanding of human behavior, (Armano, 2008) and we have to take into account that “the real action happens in the comments” (Armano, 2008); “unconventional times call for unconventional tactics” (speaking on his personal blog experience as one of the most effective manifestations of “marketing”) (Armano, 2008) and we have to consider the so-called “*marketing spiral*” (introduced during his conversation with Gary Cohen and Jay Ehret - Armano, 2008): awareness - interaction, engagement, participation, conversation, affinity - community.

Allow us to remember that in 2006 we noticed (Theodor Purcarea, REBE-FA06-A7.pdf) that the “machinery” made up of the engagement of the enterprise worker and the engagement of his clients can significantly influence the performance of the company, the “engagement” (Passikoff, 2006) having already entered the list of traditional marketing activities and having already proved an increase in demand for evaluations connected to Return on Investment (ROI).

The latter in the context in which engagement – defined as the result of marketing activities and advertising which substantially increase the power of the brand in the eyes of the client (if it has been measured adequately in can really forecast sales and profitability) – is used more and more to allocate marketing budgets. Three years after, in 2009, we underlined (Theodor Purcarea, REBE-SU09-A4.pdf) the importance of a long term relationship between marketers and customers on the road to “the next society” (a road dotted with many signs / phrases: “new society”, “new reality”, “new economy”, “the new organization”...

It is also worth to remember in this framework that in the same year, 2009, in a White Paper entitled „*The Future of Marketing*”, published by the Chartered Institute of Marketing (Evmorfia Argyriou, Peter Leeftang, John Saunders, Peter Verhoeff), it was argued that marketers have a key role to play in better business performance, but marketing can be hampered by short-term thinking by the business and a lack of accountability, creativity and courage on the part of marketers themselves... By having respect for the marketing department activities, recognizing the strategic importance for marketing (there is a well-known agreement on marketing’s important contribution to strategy, the exceptional importance of branding, and the need for businesses to be customer centered), *top management can win by backing marketing* (in both B2B and B2C markets, marketing being more developed in its B2C birthplace) *which has the unique ability to add value in the market place and constitutes the facilitator helping the whole organization to survive and thrive by serving customers* (customer proximity being a marketing strength), conveying customer needs across the company and converting best marketers knowledge into product ideas, considering the ingredients of high corporate returns: product quality, innovation and strong brands. As *marketing accountability* is considered being tough intellectually and spiritually, this involves, in the opinion of the mentioned authors, the followings: a) projecting and living with financial outcomes of plans and strategies; b) developing several skills (forecasting outcomes; dynamic forecasting showing the impact of marketing activities on sales: profits and return on investment); c) having courage (this being bundled with analytical skills that are central to market accountability), the courage being considered the greatest of the highlighted trifecta (accountability, creativity and courage); d) being creative (engaging not only the left hemisphere of the brain for the sequential and analytical processes necessary for accountability, but also engaging the holistic and intuitive strengths of the right hemisphere that help creative marketing).

A year later, during the spring of 2010, Tim Parker (Parker, 2010) began to underline the importance of “*the new rules of thought leadership marketing*” (<< the customer has become the hunter, the marketer the hunted; an author’s admirers now do the promoting; influencers have become critical marketing targets; online columns are potential new channels etc. >>), arguing that: marketers can’t control the new channels (influencers and quality online publications, viewed by readers as more credible); buyers are moving from biased to unbiased channels, the major cost in working the unbiased channels being the time. It has been observed that the new marketing reality implies a growing engagement in accepting the creative thinking challenge, progressing through knowledge and understanding towards mutual confidence, converting

emotions into agreements and *the relation* based on these agreements into a loyal and emotionally connected one, for a certain period of time.

Next year (July 2011), in the prestigious McKinsey Quarterly (Marketing & Sales Practice), Tom French, Laura LaBerge, and Paul Magill emphasized that „*We’re all marketers now*”, (French, LaBerge & Magill, 2011) challenged to redefine the traditional marketing organization, while intensively collaborating to adapt the organizations to the way customers now behave, marketing being the company (and the company being the marketing vehicle) in the era of engagement, but not any kind of marketing, but an accountable one. In other words, a thorough understanding of the difference between being responsible (in a general sense; you can delegate it) for something and being held *accountable* (more measurable; you can’t delegate it to anyone) if it goes wrong, McKinsey representatives are pledging for *the need for the marketing organization to become the customer-engagement engine* (a customer engagement going beyond pure communication to include the product or service experience itself), *while considering all related interactions with customers that make up the customer experience* (challenged in turn by the multiplication of the customers renewed touch points used to interact with companies) within the reality that the buying process has become collaborative, and must ensure critical touch points that drive engagement. According to Tom French, Laura LaBerge, and Paul Magill, *a new kind of marketing organization must evolve along four critical dimensions*: distribute more activities; more councils and partnerships; elevate the role of customer insights; more data rich and analytically intense. There is a real pressure of quickly responding to the signs of customers’ changing needs, focusing on problem-solving and strategic-marketing skills, stimulating cross-functional collaboration and a clear delineation of roles, entering into creative arrangements with outside parties, and raising the organizational barrier to engagement and avoiding the risk of being overtaken by competitors.

**Avoiding being guilty of marketing deadly sins, and measuring marketing, among a company’ top priorities. Real-time marketing and the balance between inbound marketing and outbound marketing**

In the first quarter of 2013, Ben Straley (Straley, 2013), VP of social technologies at Rio SEO and lead instructor of interactive marketing at University of Washington’s Continuing Education Program, attracted our attention, in the well-known “Forbes”, to the paradox revealed by the difficulty of reaching real-time information about the target audiences and customers of marketing organizations and engaging them in despite of the rise of social media, big-data analytics, and smart mobile devices. Within this context, he recommended *six “must-dos”*: strive to master all digital media; lead the charge on attribution; re-think and then re-invent lifetime value; think and act like a publisher; get your arms around your audience data; think “serendipity,” not “stalking.”

On the other hand, we saw that in the opinion of Cory Treffiletti (Treffiletti, 2013), SVP of Marketing, BlueKay, the same year, 2013, was considered as being critical junction for ROI, the 2013 channels talking to each other: search, video, social, display, and mobile. Within the same framework, other opinions showed that: *customer profiles become the DNA for real-time customer engagement* (Joe Cordo, CMO Extraprise), *driven by the rapid shift to cloud-based services and solutions buyer behavior has shifted* (Michael Ni, CMO/SVP of Marketing and Products, Avangate), *marketers begin to make serious strides in using listening data, check-ins, photos, and other online behaviors to figure out social signals, including purchasing intent* (Michael Della Penna, Senior Vice President of Emerging Channels, Responsys), *the older half of Gen C will understand the repercussions of the over-sharing they engaged in as teens* (Richard Pasewark, CEO, Visible Technologies), *marketers understanding customer needs and preferences on mobile will be successful in tapping the potential of this channel* (Michael Della Penna, Senior Vice President of Emerging Channels, Responsys).

In the same period of time Rob Carpenter (Carpenter, 2013) demonstrated that “*today’s belle of the ball*” is the “*real-time marketing*” (“*the practice of brands engaging their audience via content, advertising, and product placement that is relevant to a specific current event or cultural happening*”), which sprung up in marketing nomenclature at the beginning of 2005, before “social media marketing” (the first major channel for brands to monitor and engage in real-time conversations), which was starting to be used heavily in 2006. Carpenter made reference to the study released in July 2013 by Neolane (Neolane, 2013) and the Direct Marketing Association (235 North American marketers): the majority of the participants (43%) think of real-time marketing as “dynamic, personalized content delivered across channels”; 64% of participants believe real-time marketing revolves around some kind of *dynamic personalization*; only 23% believe real-time marketing is about making quick responses to mainstream events or injecting your business in social media conversations; only 49% of the participants believe providing real-time marketing within social media channels is highly important; while 69% believe that providing dynamic, personalized content is highly important on the web channel; 43% of respondents say that their biggest marketing challenge (3rd in votes) is how they can increase business metrics like customer retention; 57% of respondents say that their biggest marketing challenge are the conversion rates (2nd in votes); real-time marketing is the potential cure to these challenges, real-time marketing’s greatest benefits being “marketing effectiveness” (higher conversion), and customer satisfaction and retention. Carpenter showed that the first and only real-time web personalization platform that covers every point that marketers have been waiting for in a web personalization solution was created by Evergage. Finally, Carpenter stated that the real-time marketing means: “*truly relevant, compelling engagement happens when you take into account the full picture of who someone is (past and current behavior) specifically with your business (not with what’s currently on TV).*”

Next year, in May 2014, Michael A. Stelzner (Founder, Social Media Examiner, and Host, Social Media Marketing podcast) presented *the 6th annual study of Social Media*

*Marketing Industry*. Let's take a look at the *primary findings revealed by Stelzner* (Stelzner, 2014): marketers place very high value on social media (a significant 92% of marketers indicate that social media is important for their business, up from 86% in 2013); tactics and engagement are top areas marketers want to master (at least 89% of marketers want to know the most effective social tactics and the best ways to engage their audience with social media); blogging holds the top spot for future plans (a significant 68% of marketers plan on increasing their use of blogging, making it the top area marketers will invest in for 2014); marketers want to learn most about Google+ (while 54% of marketers are using Google+, 65% want to learn more about it and 61% plan on increasing Google+ activities in 2014); podcasting on growth trajectory (only 6% of marketers are involved with podcasting, yet 21% plan on increasing their podcasting activities in 2014 – a more than three-fold increase - and 28% of marketers want to learn more about it); Facebook and LinkedIn are the two most important social networks for marketers (when forced to only select one platform, 54% of marketers selected Facebook, followed by LinkedIn at 17%); most marketers aren't sure their Facebook marketing is effective (only 34% of marketers - slightly more than one in three - think that their Facebook efforts are effective); original written content is most important for social media marketing (a significant 58% of marketers stated that original written content is the single most important form of content, followed by original visual assets - 19%).

On the other hand, on August 19, 2014, *eMarketer* attracted the attention that (according to *April 2014* polling by Useful Social Media, “The State of Corporate Social Media 2014”) (eMarketer, 2014) half of corporate execs can measure social's ROI, fewer than 34% of respondents of the mentioned study saying that they were accurately measuring social media's effect, and the majority listed had dropped in usage of key performance indicators (KPIs) in 2014 than previously over the past few years. According to this study, in the last two years: the top KPI, *engagement*, had jumped 32%; *sentiment* tracking showed year-over-year growth of 38%; *sales conversions* and *brand ambassadors* (previously popular) dropped by 38% and 58%; *web traffic* as well as *followers*, *fans* and *group size* (simple and relatively useless figures) ranked second and third, was “slightly disconcerting.” But we also have to take into account that *more than 50% of organizations do not differentiate Social Media Marketing* (the use of social media spaces for marketing) *from Social Business* (using the elements above to enable more efficient, effective, and net-new connections between people, information, and assets to drive business decision, action, and outcome across the enterprise). (DiMauro, 2014) Another definition used in this context (adapted by Vanessa DiMauro from a Deloitte's study: The Social Business Initiative) was for *Social Media* (the spaces where we interact with one another over the web, including public, private and semi-private spaces defined within, and by certain contexts). Within the same context, the following aspect was underlined: *marketing typically leads their organizations' social media strategy 50% of the time, and but chart the social business strategy course in only 32% of firms*.

A month before, on July 21, 2014, Hana Abaza (director of marketing at Toronto-based content marketing and lead nurturing platform provider Uberflip), underlined *seven marketing*

*deadly sins* (Abaza, 2014): *marketing without metrics* (not combining a metrics-driven approach with the creativity); *marketing in a silo* (not communicating internally within the marketing team and to other departments, and not talking to potential and existing customers so as to keep a pulse on them); *no audience segmentation* (not understanding each segment and not speaking directly to the individuals in the specific segment); *no process for experimentation* (not understanding that testing is often the missing ingredient); *“spray & pray” marketing* (not focusing on how your content is actually converting customers); *too much “selling”, not enough “nurturing”* (not creating valuable content around the target audiences' interests); *“set it and forget it” marketing* (not having a process in place for iteration and optimization, and not focusing on optimizing conversion rates across emails or landing pages). It is also worth to mention (and compare), within this context, the “seven deadly sins of mobile marketing” (Jarsky, 2014) underlined in the infographic of TextMarketer (a provider of business SMS services <http://www.textmarketer.co.uk/>): *forgetting a call to action* (CTA; customers need to know what you expect them to do); *forgetting to test and check for errors* (readability, contact details, website addresses, spelling, grammar, phone numbers); *no option to unsubscribe*; *treat everyone the same*; *overloading customers* (spamming customers); *focus only on selling*; *develop a pointless app*.

As we all know, within the context of organizations developing purchase funnel models (that show how marketing and advertising efforts affect consumer attitudes and behavior) in order to make effective marketing decisions, there is a real need to quantify results, and “one of the major ways results can be measured are by looking at *Return on Investment* (ROI), which measures the relative efficiency of various marketing tactics (such as advertising/promotion mix, media mix, scheduling options, etc.) against marketplace performance (typically reported as sales results)”. (The Association of Magazine Media) CMO can respond to the complex challenges they actually face only by thoughtfully and systematically applying investment fundamentals to marketing, being necessary to boost marketing’s ROI. (Court, Gordon & Perrey, 2005) There is no doubt about the importance of reinforcing and embedding ROI thinking in the daily marketing approach.

Peter Rosenwald (Rosenwald, 2004), an industry leader with broad experience ([accountablemarketing.info/author.htm](http://accountablemarketing.info/author.htm)) in every aspect of the application of direct and data-driven marketing to a wide range of businesses (well-known for his constant pledge for the necessity of accountability in marketing and CRM), highlighted the struggling of marketing managers for new rules and measurements to use in the new world of measurable performance: understanding the economics of the marketing continuum and where begins the accountability, determining the allowable cost per name for a customer database, localizing the most effective and efficient integrated marketing database, knowing where marketing managers want to go and what is the best and most economical way of getting there, thinking of “contribution and/or profit” as a “cost”, understanding that good content is the most important churn reducer, that incentives come in all forms and sizes, and that testing and archiving are the foundation stone for

marketing improvement, considering the most likely prospects are almost always better and less expensive and that the “household” is a better marketing unit than the “individual”, establishing the right balance between catalog customers and prospects, moving the customer up the value ladder and selling a variety of goods, understanding that the prospect is almost always multidimensional.

On May 20, 2013 Laura Ramos attracted the attention that (according to the research study launched by Forrester together with the ITSMA and VisionEdge Marketing – VEM, in April, the 12th year that VEM has undertaken this research): *“B2B marketers continue to struggle to prove marketing's contribution to the business instead of using metrics and performance management to improve it ... Marketers say just 9% of CEOs and 6% of CFOs use marketing data to help set corporate direction... the vast majority of marketing dashboards... report marketing activity rather than business outcomes, which are metrics executives can't use to chart a business strategy. Instead, marketing measures and analysis should show how marketing moves the needle on topline growth or profitability.”* (Ramos, 2013)

On July 31, 2014, Laura Patterson (Patterson, 2014) attracted our attention that *the purpose of measuring must extend beyond just collecting metrics* (budget-to-expense ratios, on-time delivery, people-to-budget ratios, response rates, click-through rates, website traffic and activity, media mentions, article views and shares, fans, followers etc.), avoiding a time-consuming, meaningless exercise, and focusing on to demonstrate *how marketing is creating* (customers believe they received at least what they expected, if not more, for the price they paid) *and capturing* (the value of the customer exceeds the cost to acquire or retain the customer) *customer value*, taking into account both, the opportunity to measure customer value, and the power that has shifted from sellers to buyers (thanks to the increased pricing transparency, product commoditization, product/service customization capabilities, and the Internet). As *tips for measuring value*, Patterson recommends the followings: *define the data* (the types of data we collect); *focus on customer intelligence* (a quick assessment of customer supplier, touch point and channel preferences, buying criteria, buying processes, and buyer personas etc.); *establish the right metrics* (so as to fine-tune your initiatives and ensure you invest your limited resources the best way).

Next month, on August 25, 2014, Laura Patterson came back and showed *some findings* of the 2014 VisionEdge Marketing/ITSMA study, such as: *“Best-in-class (BIC) marketers can be characterized as value creators because their primary focus is on using data to make market, customer, and product/service decisions that create value for customers and shareholders. Accordingly, the following are top roles for marketing ops function among the value creators, in priority order: Customer, market, competitive intelligence, research, and insights; Analytics and predictive modeling; Data management; Campaign analysis and reporting; Budgeting and planning; financial governance and reporting; Organization benchmarking and assessments... With the pressure increasing on Marketing to measure its value and contribution, Marketing Ops is the logical entity to champion and orchestrate the six A's of marketing performance*

*management: alignment, accountability, analytics, automation, alliances and assessment.*” (Patterson, 2014)

On August 13, 2014, Scott Vaughan (CMO at Scottsdale, Ariz.-based marketing software and media services provider Integrate) recommended a strategy that will generate improvements in defined areas of marketing performance and increase credibility with stakeholders by delivering measurable business results (Vaughan, 2014). He started from the fact that analytics involves in marketing, more specifically, the studying of historical data to research potential trends, analyze the effects of certain decisions or events, or evaluate the performance of a given tool or program. According to Vaughan, *in order to properly measure marketing and business outcomes, marketers must ask themselves three fundamental questions: Who are we developing/adopting the analytics for* (marketing managers may need more real-time or frequent data while business leaders/analysts may only require a monthly or quarterly summary)? *What exactly do we need to measure* (to start with the end-game and work backward is one of the best ways to develop an analytics program)? *Are our analytics actionable* (you need to know why you got generated clicks or which content performed best)?

On August 14, 2014, Heather Fletcher mentioned a few statistics (Fletcher, 2014) about content marketing (according to HubSpot’s “2013 State of Inbound Marketing” research: content marketing yields positive ROI – 41% of marketers; positive ROI for their inbound marketing – 82% of blogging marketers; *inbound marketing delivers 54% more leads into the marketing funnel than outbound marketing.*

As relationships today are built with information, it is very important to understand the process of inbound marketing as a way of looking at the customer relationship that parallels any other, by determining whether there is a mutual attraction, and by building a relationship based on shared interests and values, taking into account that according to Forrester *buyers are 60% of the way to a decision before they contact sales.* (MarketingProfs.com) According to other opinions (Nickerson, 2014), *it is worth to evaluate the balance between inbound marketing* (which build communities and relationships with company’ customers and prospects by authoring books or eBooks, sponsoring events, writing articles, public relations, blogging, public speaking, content creation, SEO, video content, social media marketing and anything else that’s not commonly associated with direct marketing - Nickerson, 2014) *and outbound marketing* (“interruption marketing”, traditional forms of marketing: print ads, online display ads, TV commercials, radio commercials, billboards, trade show booths, cold calls, sales letters and bulk email blasts to purchased or rented lists etc. - Nickerson, 2014) currently done in the company, because, for example: if the sales pipeline is thin or needs a boost, could be necessary putting more into outbound marketing; if the pipeline is doing okay right now, could be necessary putting more towards inbound marketing. But in both cases it is necessary, according to Nickerson, spending at least some portion of company’ resources towards building up the inbound marketing as a lifestyle choice.

## **The superpowers of marketing, and major hindrances to marketing automation success**

At the end of 2013, we find out, thanks to the well-known Harvard Business Review Blog Network, that in order (Bonchek & France, 2014): to win customers' hearts and minds marketers need to master the latest technology, assimilate vast quantities of data, engage and delight their more connected and empowered than ever before customers, and deliver products and services that surpass their expectations; to generate extraordinary results today's top marketers are combining technology and teamwork. Following their talk with dozens of chief marketing officers (CMOs) in Silicon Valley about the qualities that define extraordinary marketing, Mark Bonchek and Cara France identified *five marketing capabilities that in their most refined form border on superpowers: to hear what no one else can hear* (using technology and teamwork to listen accordingly); *to be part of the conversation, even when you're not in the room* (the exponentially explosion of the conversations about products and companies thanks to social media); *to leap tall piles of data in a single bound* (finding meaningful insights, making split-second decisions, and creating truly relevant experiences thanks to digital devices which generate a mountain of information); *to make silos disappear* (creating a vision for an exceptional customer experience and connecting everyone in the organization to the delivery of that seamless experience); *to bring out the superpowers in others* (recognizing the importance of building great teams and cultivate a superpower of bringing out the superpowers in others).

In an interview (Wenig, 2014) with eBay's Devin Wenig (president of eBay Marketplaces) conducted by McKinsey Publishing's Simon London in April 2014, it was underlined from the very beginning that technology is enabling the creation of a single global online marketplace, Internet (fuelled by the availability of information and electronic financial flows) enabling truly global commerce. Wenig showed that 20 percent of eBay's (one of the world's largest online markets) overall business is cross-border, and everywhere in cross-border trade there are both, friction (in currency, payment, trust, government rules and regulations, language - which inhibits the global trade), and opportunities (created by solving the mentioned problems, working with partners to fulfill, to deliver at the last mile, and using the sharing economy (services-based marketplaces that help balance supply and demand)).

On July 28, 2014, Ayaz Nanji made reference to a recent report of Ascend 2 and Research Partners (Marketing Automation Benchmark, July 2014, based on data from a survey of 291 global marketing, sales, and business professionals) showing *major hindrances to marketing automation success* (Nanji, 2014): the lack of an effective strategy (45% of global marketers); budget limitations (44% of marketers cite as a challenging obstacle); lack of skilled staff (40%); insufficient data quality (34%); lack of management buy-in (23%); the difficult-to-use interfaces of marketing automation software tools (22%). Additional key findings concerned: *satisfaction and goals* (current marketing automation efforts are somewhat successful - 69%, very successful - 24%, not successful - 7%; improving productivity is one of their top goals for marketing automation - 45%; increasing sales revenue is a top goal - 44%); *resources and tools*

(company handles all of its marketing automation efforts in-house - 52%, use a combo of in-house and outsourced resources - 41%, fully outsource - 7%; the quality of analytics and reporting tools is a top factor in choosing a marketing automation system - 41%; ease of use as a top factor - 40%; look for an all-in-one solution - 34%); *metrics* (say knowing the rate at which leads are converted is one of the most useful metrics to measure marketing automation performance - 57%, revenue generated is a key metric - 42%, cite lead generation ROI - 40%) .

### **A more collaborative working relationship between CMOs and CIOs, and the optimism of CMOs about the current business environment**

On July 30, 2014, a recent report (based on data from a survey of 1,147 senior marketing and IT executives from around the world: 37% working for B2C-focused companies; 28%, B2B; and 35%, hybrid) of Accenture, highlighted that (Nanji, 2014): some 43% of CMOs and 50% of CIOs say their relationship with the other has improved over the past year, while 23% of respondents say collaboration between the two groups is currently at the right level, up substantially from the 10% of respondents who last year said collaboration was at the right level. But there are considerable differences concerning various issues such as the speed at which new digital initiatives are being implemented. Other key findings of the report pointed to: *alignment* (more than half of CMOs -52%, and CIOs - 53%, say keeping marketing and IT departments aligned is a top priority; most respondents agree on the top five marketing-IT priorities: customer experience, customer analytics, social media, corporate website, and other Web development); *digital divide* (company's IT team doesn't understand the urgency of integrating new data sources into campaigns - 40% of CMOs; technology development process is too slow for the speed required for digital marketing - 43% of CMOs; marketing requirements and priorities change too often for them to keep up - 43% of CIOs; CMOs lack the vision to anticipate new digital channels , compared with just 11% who expressed that view last year - according to 25% of CIOs).

A month later, in August 2014, another recent report (based on data from a survey of 525 CMO Council members around the world; 41% of respondents focused on B2B markets, 23% on B2C, and 35% hybrid) from the CMO Council displayed the following opinions of the respondents (Nanji, 2014): management mandates for top-line revenue growth and market share in 2014 are realistic and attainable - 81%; 55% plan headcount additions in 2014, compared with 22% who expect reductions; their own jobs are at risk - 10%; 54% have increased budgets in 2014 compared with 2013. Additional key findings from this recent report from the CMO Council highlighted *three directions: digital focus and spend* (59% of chief marketers list “digital marketing makeover” - involving platforms, programs, and people - as the number one transformational project in 2014; top areas of digital marketing investment include email marketing, website performance optimization, mobile applications, lead management, website design and development, and search marketing; the top reason for deploying new digital solutions and cloud-based services: improved efficiency and campaign effectiveness ; between

10% and 30% of their budgets allocated to digital marketing in 2014 - > 70% of respondents ); *effectiveness and performance* (gave themselves an A+ in digital marketing performance - 6%; “getting better by growing capabilities and improving measurement” - 54%; planning to maximize the impact and value of marketing through improved customer segmentation and targeting in 2014 - 63%, but only 6% see themselves as leaders in big data management, compared with 62% who view themselves as just keeping pace or lagging behind competitors etc.); *relationships with peers* (today's CMO is equal to other C-level peers - nearly 30%, while 45% say that is sometimes the case; CMOs are most inclined to partner and interact with chief financial officers - 58% do so, chief information officers - 53%, and chief sales officers - 51%; while as the top professional objective for the majority of respondents in 2014 is seen the increasing collaboration with Sales and/or channel organizations was listed).

### **Strategies for Transforming Customer Experience, and Customer-Centricity, a focused strategy**

In May 2014, Ernan Roman (one of the “2014 Top 40 Digital Luminaries” according to Online Marketing Institute; one of the “100 most influential people in Business Marketing” according to Crain’s BtoB Magazine), President of Ernan Roman Direct Marketing, approached the proper strategies for transforming the customer experience. Ernan Roman (author of both, “Voice of the Customer Marketing”, and well-known Huffington Post published blog “Ernan’s Insights on Marketing Best Practices”) is considered an industry thought leader, being inducted into the Marketing Hall of Fame thanks to the three Customer Experience methodologies he created: Voice of Customer Relationship Research, Integrated Direct Marketing, and Opt-in Marketing. Based on insights from industry thought leaders and research findings from thousands of hours of Voice of Customer (VoC) research, Roman recommended – in what concerns helping to engage customers and prospects in a competitively differentiating, multichannel experience (Roman, 2014) - *five strategies for transforming the customer experience*: 1) Understand How Customers Define “Customer Experience”; (2) Satisfaction Has Become a Given. Engagement is Now the Critical Competitive Differentiator; (3) Rethink How You Engage With Customers; the Reciprocity of Value Equation; (4) Provide Personalized Experiences and Communication; (5) Achieve a Multichannel Experience. Roman also identified 12 action items to help transform your customer experience, the final one being this: “***Deliver high quality customer service in every channel. Marketing has to take responsibility!***”

As not all the prospects or customers are the same, in today time of the competitive advantage derived from remarkable customer experience, customer-centricity (Henderson & Weber, 2014) can be defined as *helping the prospects and customers achieve their goals in a way that makes sense for the company*, and as *agility, relentlessly pursuing improvement and innovation* by: prioritizing the efforts on those customer needs and desires that the company can serve well and profitably, while operating in a place of shared value, integrating and analyzing

the customer data so that the company can predict the customer lifetime and referral values of its customers, and defining accordingly the markets and pursuing more focused and profitable value propositions; treating each of the prospects and customers the company choose to serve personally, by taking customer understanding to the level of the individual and differentiating company' products, services, and experiences accordingly; involving constant iteration, testing the effectiveness of the content and experiences, learning what works, and then scaling as appropriate, by staying close to the customers to uncover emerging and latent needs and testing hypotheses (quickly and at a low cost) about demand with small-scale experiments that replace speculation with reality, and make pivots to company strategy as necessary.

On August 11, 2014, Andrew Rudin (a BS in marketing and an MS in information technology, both from the University of Virginia; successful background as a technology sales strategist, marketer, account executive, and product manager), Managing Principal of Contrary Domino Partners approached an interesting topic (Rudin, 2014): *“CapitalOne Digital’s New Architecture of Customer Centricity: People, Process, and an Awesome High-Tech Office”*. Rudin stated that yesterday’s office is dead, and the office of the future will inspire life, creativity, and innovation. His guided tour (by Tom Poole, CapitalOne Digital’s Managing Vice President for Mobile Payments and Commerce) provided a glimpse into some exciting resources that CapitalOne Digital has developed: Device bar; Social media command center; Design Studio; Usability Lab; Large galley and game room area; Room for outside groups to meet and congregate. He concluded that: *“CapitalOne Digital... places paramount importance on knowing its customers, fostering effective collaboration inside the office, and, by joining these two, enhancing ability for developers to create something valuable for people to use”*.

### **Marketing tactics from the 2014 World Cup, lean content marketing, the buyer’s journey, and the constant need to reevaluate the marketing strategies**

On July 22, 2014, Josh Haynam highlighted 10 marketing plays that helped the 2014 World Cup become the most watched in history, considering that similar tactics can be used in most every marketer’s plan (Haynam, 2014): use controversy to your advantage; highlight personal stories; categorize/segment your audience; have a clear goal; understand the public perception of your product; remove barriers, but set boundaries; create snippets worth remembering; *create content tailored for your audience*; use what you have in various ways; partner up with complementary people.

Yes, indeed, content is king, is tough for any marketer, it is the fuel for company lead generation and nurturing programs, driving leads through the marketing funnel to become customers, because today’s buyer is different taking into account that due to the abundance of information on the internet, *66–90% of the buyer’s journey is complete before he even reaches out to a sales person*. In order to master lean content marketing, it is necessary to assign the right

roles, mapping content to buyer personas and buying journeys, and becoming experts at repurposing the existing assets.

Allow us to remember that in August 2013 (Jacobs, 2013), Tom Jacobs (founder and president of Jacobs Agency, a Chicago-based agency that helps companies untangle their business problems through marketing communications) recommended - *in order to implement buyer journey marketing from a lead generation perspective* - five crucial guidelines for organizations: *prepare your marketing and sales organizations for a shift* (from the organization's need to roll out new offerings or increase market share) to the customer's desire to resolve a business issue (marketing and sales processes and metrics need to be aligned to support the buyer-focused approach); *don't guess at buyer needs* (the expectation of all marketing communications today is that the customers' behavior should dictate what comes next); *step up your segmentation* (every organization should try to find an aggregation of behaviors or buyers in various stages); *commit to content* (conduct a content audit and organize all previously developed content by the various phases of the buying cycle); *get ready to manage multichannel execution* (multichannel communications and marketing automation are essential, but these are not the only hallmarks of becoming buyer-journey-oriented, it starts in the organization's processes for innovation, product/solution management, customer segmentation and marketing strategies).

Coming back to the well-known Harvard Business Review Blog Network, this time looking at the month of August 2014 posts (Joshi, 2014), we remarked the pledge for inspiring and effective marketing, by underlining of the necessity for marketers of not relying too heavily on analytics, but on the so-called the "*both-brain*" approach (which now is gathering speed and will become essential to future marketing success), by making the right balance between creativity and analytics. And this requires a change in mindset and organizational culture, a concerted effort involving at least *four steps*: *set the right tone at the top* (leaders have to acknowledge and champion the change that's needed and model the necessary behavior, refining and perfecting the creative content based on a data-driven analysis of live feedback from the marketplace); *integrate both approaches into the production cycle* (moving to shorter creative cycles punctuated by frequent testing, analysis and revision; marketing that is more engaging, better targeted, and much more effective at driving results); *design clear decision-making processes* (identifying the specific decisions that could benefit from analytic insights, clarifying the criteria used to make each decision, and only then gathering the required data and perform the needed analyses; clear roles to both analytic and creative team members for each of these key decisions); *nourish both-brain skills with thoughtful training and incentives* (seeking out, hiring, and promoting both creative and analytic talent; cross-training team members on the importance of both left-brain and right-brain skills; co-locating the two groups and creating both-brain teamlets that work together on multiple campaigns over time, rewarding the individuals involved).

And as a *conclusion at the level of the month of August 2014 posts* (Roman, 2014), and in accordance with the actuality of *the constant need to reevaluate the marketing strategies* (a critical priority for marketers) it is worth coming back to *Ernan Roman* (who is considering that ***innovation is marketing's best friend***) recommendations to *act with speed and agility in addressing key customer needs and expectations*: empowering the buyer to become an active participant in their experience; increasing relevance; increasing differentiation and engagement; solving problems and needs. As a critical priority for marketers is the reevaluation of the current marketing strategies to determine if they are achieving key objectives (competitively differentiating the brand and engaging customers across the multichannel mix), Roman highlighted *7 game changing marketing trends* (which can transform the quality, relevance and ROI of your marketing) *you need to consider as you reevaluate your strategies*: Extreme Creativity (to help you achieve competitive differentiation in an increasingly cluttered and distracted market); New Technology (to enhance user experiences at every touch point, by understanding how your specific customers want to use technology to improve their experience with your brand); True Personalization (83% of consumers see value in being recognized with personalized experiences across channels. - according to the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Personalization Consumer Survey); Leveraging the Power of Community (turning passive buyers into active brand contributors, by giving brands relevant consumer insights about market preferences); Embracing the real customer journey (making it simple and easy for people to do business with you, by understanding the path to purchase lets); Multiscreen communication (68% of consumers engage in “content grazing,” multi-tasking using several devices at once - according to Microsoft Advertising’s Cross-Screen Engagement study); Location based marketing (the ability to use location to target consumers with messages based on where they are).

Yes, indeed, Marketing has to take responsibility, and confirm that innovation is its best friend, not forgetting that anyone who pulls Marketing in new directions must look inward as well as outward... This integration of looking both inward and outward is the most powerful formula for creating long-term, high-impact Marketing Thinking change!”

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