

*“Robert and Carla show how marketing professionals have to put their purpose – building audiences and creating differentiating experiences – at the forefront of everything they do.”*

**Eduardo Conrado**  
**Senior Vice President, Marketing & IT, Motorola Solutions**



# experiences:

## THE 7TH ERA OF MARKETING

By  
**Robert Rose & Carla Johnson**

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# EXPERIENCES: THE 7TH ERA OF MARKETING

*How marketers must lead business into a new era and how the discipline of Content Creation Management will transform marketing both inside and out*

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## Authors' Note

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The book, *Experiences: The 7th Era of Marketing*, challenges everything we know about marketing's role within an organization and shows you how to organize a marketing department in order to create and deliver content-driven brand experiences. Released exclusively at Content Marketing World, this eBook contains excerpts from the full edition, which will be available in December 2014. Because these are excerpts, you'll see references to other chapters that aren't included. Our intention isn't to give you a summary of the full work, but rather whet your appetite by setting the stage for why marketing is in the midst of transformative change and how to use Content Creation Management (CCM) to create experiences that delight, inspire, and engage your audiences.

Rock on.

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*Note: These are the contents of the full-length version of the book, which will be released in December 2014.*

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# Introduction

## Inventing the Future of Marketing

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*“Life is the art of drawing without an eraser.”*

—John W. Gardner

It was a good day. It didn't matter that March 5, 1999, was rainy, overcast, and one of those cold, spring mornings that gives San Francisco its reputation. For Trevor Traina it was an experience he'd never forget.

He was standing on a stage next to the richest man in the world—Bill Gates—who had just bought his company, Compare.Net, for \$100 million and was now announcing that to the world. Microsoft was launching a transformative initiative around ecommerce, and Compare.Net was a key piece of it. As Gates would say: “The Internet has forever changed the way that business is conducted. With these tools, our hope is that the ecommerce opportunity is opened up for everyone.”<sup>1</sup> There's no doubt that it opened up opportunity for Trevor.

Compare.Net was the first of what would eventually be five successful companies that Trevor would start over the next 15 years. Three others also were sold: SchemaLogic (to Smart Logic), StepUp Commerce (to Intuit) and DriverSide.com (to Advance Auto Parts). But it just may be the fifth, and latest, that captures the true essence of Trevor's passion.

### **The world's first experience emporium**

Following the great recession of 2008–2010, Trevor recognized that there was a true evolution underway in how consumers looked at the collection of physical goods. As he said to us, *“I observed that the portfolio of physical things available was no longer differentiated or enticing—and that people were really looking to refocus their dollars on more meaningful expenditures.”*

Trevor's high-level observation turned out to be substantiated by data. In a 2013 study of more than 1,000 adults in the United States

and the U.K., researchers found that in today’s “constantly connected” world, people now crave sensory experiences over products. In fact, 81% of Millennials, 79% of Gen Xers, and 78% of Baby Boomers value experiences more than they do material items. Additionally, 64% would rather spend their money on an experience than a product.<sup>2</sup>

Trevor’s new company is called IfOnly.com. According to Trevor, it’s the “*world’s first emporium for experiences rather than things.*” He calls it “IfOnly” because, as he says, “everyone has his own ‘if-only’. Your ‘if-only’ will almost certainly be different than mine—but whatever it is, it can and should be fulfilled.”

IfOnly offers highly curated and customized experiences that range from something as simple as a VIP pass and backstage experience at this year’s Farm Aid concert, to much more intricate adventures such as a two-day trip with acclaimed photographer Russell James to get an “immersive tour” of Jacmel, the artist’s enclave on the coast of Haiti.

Each of the experiences on IfOnly.com also supports a charity. For example, if a buyer chooses the two-day trip to Haiti, part of the proceeds goes to benefit Nomad Two Worlds, which supports and promotes artists from indigenous and marginalized communities around the world. But Trevor sees the company quickly growing beyond even the bounds of the socially connected marketplace. “I view IfOnly as a mass-market technology platform,” he says. “Ultimately, all of the world’s top talents in hundreds of different categories can be connected to their natural audiences.”

So where do brands, and their marketing strategies, fit into all of this? Trevor’s answer: “*I predict all smart brand marketers will begin to re-craft their message into an experiential one. The experiential part of the brand will actually become a secondary source of revenue for the brand.*”

As of the writing of this book, IfOnly is one of the fastest growing companies in San Francisco. It has delivered more than 2,000 experiences in its approximately one year of existence, has raised more than \$1 million for partner charities, and is adding new global brands, non-profits, and customers daily. This rapid growth and interest is a sign, as Trevor points out, that “the entire marketing industry is moving to an experience-based economy.”<sup>3</sup>

## Share of experience: the future of marketing

There's a wonderful quote by the Nobel Prize-winning physicist Niels Bohr that goes: "Prediction is very difficult, especially if it is about the future." Indeed, as we look at the future of marketing, the only thing that is certain is that "change" is at our doorstep.

In a recent (and ongoing) study titled "Marketing2020," Effective-Brands (now Millward Brown Vermeer), in concert with the Association of National Advertisers and others, asked senior-level marketers to predict what the marketing organization structure will look like in 2020. So far, the study has included in-depth interviews with more than "350 CEOs, CMOs, and agency heads, and over a dozen CMO roundtables in cities worldwide."<sup>4</sup>

In a July 2014 *Harvard Business Review* article about the study, titled "The Ultimate Marketing Machine," three of the contributors to the research—Marc de Swaan Arons, Frank van den Driest, and Keith Weed—conclude (among other things) that to meet this change, marketing organizations must evolve to meet what they call the "total experience." They say:

*"Companies are increasingly enhancing the value of their products by creating customer experiences. Some deepen the customer relationship by leveraging what they know about [customers] to personalize offerings. Others focus on the breadth of the relationship by adding touchpoints. Our research shows that high-performing brands do both—providing what we call 'total experience.' In fact, we believe that the most important marketing metric will soon change from 'share of wallet' or 'share of voice' to 'share of experience.'"*<sup>5</sup>

Content will certainly be at the heart of many, if not most, of these experiences for brands. This is the key. We believe that the new goal of marketing will not be to simply "create a customer." No, the creation of a customer will simply be table stakes for most marketing organizations. The new objective for marketing will be to *evolve a customer*—utilizing differentiating content-driven experiences. As the authors of the Marketing2020 study conclude at the end of their *Harvard Business Review* article: "Marketers must leverage customer insight, imbue their



brands with a brand purpose, and **deliver a rich customer experience.**”  
[emphasis by Robert and Carla]

In short, marketers must not only *describe the value* that has already been theoretically created in the product or service for sale, but also begin to *create differentiated experiential value* that is separate and distinct from that product or service.

### **Marketers create value through content-driven experiences**

When Trevor started Compare.Net in 1996, it was essentially an online comparison shopping portal. Back then, the Internet was this brand new phenomenon, and Trevor was excited about how the Web could enable brands to turn information about their products from some forced advertisement into what he called a “welcome briefing,” by simply pairing brands (and their content) with the people who were truly looking for a “match.”

Ironically, what struck us is that Trevor’s new business isn’t terribly different from the one he started nearly 20 years ago. Today, as he explained to us, his company is talking to “premium automotive brands with very, very expensive vehicles.” IfOnly is offering these brands the opportunity to create experiences to test drive high-end cars, visit the factory, and/or consume exclusive content about particular vehicles, reasoning that passionate consumers will happily pay for such experiences. “These people are, paradoxically, your highest-value prospects, because they are the ones who are most serious about ultimately purchasing,” Trevor says.

You don’t have to look far to see examples of this cropping up everywhere. A B2B financial services company client that we worked with has created a “book club” for its time-strapped, main customer, the financial analyst. Each month, the company mails the analysts a book, along with a beautifully designed, curated write-up of two additional recommended books.

There is an online discussion—where those who are passionate can discuss the book of the month—as well as a form to order (for free) any of the books that are recommended. These books don’t have anything to

do with financial planning or stock analysis. They are all kinds of books—fiction, comedy, how-to's, biographies—with one design: how to be a better person. This program is consistently rated as one of the top five reasons why all of this company's 300 clients renew year after year.

### **Marketing is changing – we haven't**

Fifteen years ago, just as Trevor was selling Compare.Net and the dot-com boom was in full swing, world-renowned marketing professor Philip Kotler published *Kotler on Marketing*. In it he discussed the late 1990s—the period that fueled most of the thinking for his book—as a time of tumultuous change. But Kotler knew that this was merely the beginning.

Kotler concluded the book with a section called “Transformational Marketing,” in which he discussed how the field would change with the “new age of electronic marketing.” In the coming decade, Kotler wrote, “marketing will be re-engineered from A to Z. Marketing will need to rethink fundamentally the processes by which they identify, communicate, and deliver customer value.”<sup>6</sup>

There's only one problem: 15 years have passed, and this vital transformation hasn't happened yet.

In case you haven't noticed, almost every session at the marketing conferences you attend these days starts with the same four or five requisite slides. Consumers are now empowered by digital technology ... they are becoming more aware ... they are researching, engaging, buying, and staying loyal to brands in ways that have fundamentally changed. Yes, we get it. Customer behavior in the age of the social and mobile web is different now.

In fact, maybe it's actually more accurate to say “is changing” and “will continue to fundamentally change,” as content's continual evolution shows no sign of slowing down. The challenge is that marketing operations in enterprise companies have largely remained just as they were when Kotler wrote his book—i.e., they are still working from mid- to late-20th century hierarchies, strategies, and processes.

### **Content in marketing isn't new, but content marketing is**

We often talk about how the use of content-driven experiences for

marketing purposes isn't a new practice—and we still believe that. For hundreds of years, businesses have been using content in pockets to affect some kind of profitable outcome. But the reality is this: Whether it was John Deere's *The Furrow* from the 1800s, Michelin's guide to car maintenance in the early 1900s, or even Hasbro's GI-Joe partnership with Marvel in the 1980s, content was not—and is not—a scalable, repeatable practice within the function of marketing. In short, content marketing was historically (and still is almost exclusively) treated as a project, not a process.

That's the part that *has* changed. Whether it's due to the digital disruption and ease by which we now publish and distribute content and experiences to aggregate our own audiences or just the natural evolution of marketing itself doesn't matter as much as the ultimate outcome. There can be no argument, as we roll into the next five years and approach 2020, that content—and the exponentially increasing quantities of it that every organization produces—affects our marketing strategy, and should be dealt with as a component of that strategy throughout the enterprise.

Forrester Research predicts that unstructured enterprise content volume is growing at a rate of 200% annually.<sup>7</sup> Enterprises are now functioning as content factories, producing massive mountains of digital files that spew forth from marketing—like a giant Dr. Seuss machine—and land squarely on the back of the content wagon being towed. How much that wagon acts as a differentiator—or as a weight that hinders forward progress—depends on how well the content is managed.

Content *will affect business*—it's just a matter of “how,” not “if”—so enterprises must make a choice: Content can be managed as the strategic asset that it has (or can) become, or it can be an expensive by-product that ultimately weighs down a company as it tries to navigate the broader disruption taking place.

### **Experiences: the 7th era of marketing**

Most marketing textbooks generally agree that marketing as a discipline has evolved over five distinct eras, each lasting about 20 to 30 years. A sixth era of marketing, the “relationship era,” is generally accepted—though not in all the textbooks—as the era in which we've been operating

in for the last 20 years. It started with one-to-one marketing in the mid-1990s, moved into personalization in the early 2000s, and for the last seven years or so has been squarely focused on “engagement” and becoming “friends” or “liked” across social channels.

Developing relationships may still play a key role (and perhaps forever will), as many of the attributes of the previous eras also have stuck around. It’s not some binary switch that gets “turned on.” As Harvard Business School professor Clayton Christensen said, in defense of the concept of digital disruption, “this is a process, not an event.”<sup>8</sup> The fact of the matter is that every brand’s relationship with customers is (to borrow a term from Facebook) “complicated” at best.

Consider a few data points—namely, that despite the huge and in some cases extraordinary efforts over the last 10 years to “know” the customer better through data, that:

- More than half of U.S. customers switched service providers in the last year due to poor customer service experiences—up five percent from 2012.<sup>9</sup>
- The rate of loyalty has barely budged among U.S. consumers, rising just one percent since 2012, and their willingness to recommend a company rose by just two percent.<sup>10</sup>
- Only 23% of consumers say they have any relationship with a brand.<sup>11</sup>
- 75% of adult Americans say they prefer that their data not be collected or used at all by companies.<sup>12</sup>

A study conducted by the Corporate Executive Board in 2012 concluded that there is no linear correlation between the number of interactions with customers and the depth of relationship with that customer. Nevertheless, most marketing strategies center on this metric: the more interactions we have, the more data we glean, then the deeper our relationship must be—and it’s simply not true.

As the Corporate Executive Board study noted:

*“In reality, that linear relationship flattens much more quickly than most marketers think; soon, helpful interactions become an overwhelming*

*torrent. Without realizing it, many marketers are only adding to the information bombardment consumers feel as they shop a category, reducing stickiness rather than enhancing it.*"<sup>13</sup>

Now, to be clear, relationships have been struck. There are many examples of best-in-class marketing organizations using social channels, content, data, and the mix of very smart, creative processes to develop deeper and more meaningful relationships with their customers. Some have reached that “evangelistic” stage of marketing.

In contrast, there is still an extraordinarily large number of companies behind the curve here—companies that, even 15 years in, haven’t begun to figure out the process for developing these types of relationships. There’s much they can learn by understanding how critical it is to shift into content-driven experiences from those who already have the process in place and are achieving success. Those who have already started paving the way can serve as encouragement to move forward.

Content, and creating content-driven experiences, has proven to be an extraordinarily powerful new way for marketers to create value for business. Content marketing and the idea of providing education, delight, and general usefulness (as a brand’s approach to engage its customers) provides a new way to enrich interactions with customers at every stage of the buying journey. The challenge is how to transform marketing from a subservient department that creates content-only to describe the value of a product or service—into a department that knows how to create, manage, and lead the creation of valuable experiences over the next decade.

Today, it’s time to reclaim marketing’s ability to create value. Marketing can still be the “unique, distinguishing function of the business,” as Peter Drucker said 60 years ago—but only if its goal is to create the value that evolves customers from aware, to interested, to engaged, to sold—and then onward to loyal and evangelistic. The ability to deliver content-driven experiences will be the single most important key to marketing’s evolution along this trajectory.

## **Experiencing the creation of experiences**

This book has been one year in the writing and five years in the making. Over the last five years, we've both been working with large enterprises, both from the B2C and B2B space. After more than 100 workshops, advisory engagements, and in-depth meetings with businesses of all shapes and sizes, we've personally seen what is working and what isn't. We've also watched as others in this space are doing some terrifically productive thinking to help businesses scale the idea of content and marketing and the creation of customer-centric experiences. Their contributions are noted here, as well as imbued into the suggested methods. What follows is a suggested framework—a “better practice” (if you will), instead of a “best practice”—for creating an active, functioning, and scalable way for marketing to use content-driven experiences to differentiate and create value. We call the process Content Creation Management (CCM) because, as is true with any initiative (and in honor of William Deming), if we “can't describe what we're doing as a process, then we have no idea what we're doing.” In this book, we'll explore both the “why” and the “how” of navigating this new landscape. We'll put strategy before structure, function before form, and insight and creativity before action and activity.

To map our experience journey together, we've split this book into two distinct halves. In the first half, we introduce you to this new era and discuss WHY it's so important for marketing to lead this new initiative and EARN its strategic seat at the table. In the second half, we provide a detailed look at the process of CCM and present an approach for how you might roll it out, how you'll need to communicate it, how you can build a measurement plan for it, and how you can ultimately build a process that is adaptable and scalable.

It's a journey for sure, and one that we readily admit we don't have all the answers for yet. This is as much an exploration for us, as it will be for you. Thank you for coming along for the ride as we chart this new map. As Confucius once said, “Study the past if you would define the future.”

Let's go create the future together.

**Robert Rose & Carla Johnson** | September 2014

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.v3.co.uk/v3-uk/news/1979635/microsoft-boosts-msn-portal-strategy-ecommerce-framework>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.jwtintelligence.com/2013/01/data-point-constantly-connected-millennials-crave-sensory-experiences/#axzz39Be89ntb>

<sup>3</sup><http://www.adweek.com/news/technology/ifonly-sells-2000-experiences-its-first-year-158766>

<sup>4</sup><http://hbr.org/2014/07/the-ultimate-marketing-machine/ar/1>

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Kotler, Philip. *Kotler on Marketing: How to Create, Win, and Dominate Markets*. Part Four, Transformational Marketing. Free Press, 1999.

<sup>7</sup>[http://www.workforce.com/ext/resources/archive\\_mediafiles/Google\\_GSA\\_ROI\\_WP.pdf](http://www.workforce.com/ext/resources/archive_mediafiles/Google_GSA_ROI_WP.pdf)

<sup>8</sup><http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2014-06-20/clayton-christensen-responds-to-new-yorker-takedown-of-disruptive-innovation#p2>

<sup>9</sup><http://newsroom.accenture.com/news/us-switching-economy-puts-up-to-1-3-trillion-of-revenue-up-for-grabs-for-companies-offering-superior-customer-experiences-accenture-research-finds.htm>

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup><http://blogs.hbr.org/2012/05/three-myths-about-customer-eng/>

<sup>12</sup><http://www.marketingprofs.com/charts/2014/25456/when-are-consumers-ok-with-brands-collecting-personal-data>

<sup>13</sup><http://blogs.hbr.org/2012/05/three-myths-about-customer-eng/>

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## Chapter 2

# Marketing With a Capital “M”

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*“We keep moving forward, opening new doors and doing new things, because we’re curious ... and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.”*

—Walt Disney

**D**id you know that the CMO is a modern invention? Just five years ago, only 23 of the Fortune 100 companies even had a CMO as the head of marketing.<sup>1</sup> Compare that to the title of CIO, a function that has been around since the early 1980s. As computers made their first appearances on the desktops of the modern business, executives quickly recognized the CIO as an overall business strategist.

The CMO title itself seems mostly to be an invention that grew out of the mid- and late-1990s and the dot-com exuberance that kicked off the relationship era. Many of the new marketers that joined these startup technology and media companies gave themselves this title. In fact, you might argue that it was the dot-com era that really launched the idea of “marketer as business strategist” and the resulting implosion is something that the practice is still living down. Walk into any engineering-driven technology company and the scorn that older engineers have for marketing “weasels” can be palpable.

But, arguably more than any other business function, both marketing and technology have changed the go-to-market approach for every single business. From the marketing perspective, the responsibility to connect with customers is harder and more competitive than ever, meaning that the strategic vision and tactical skill sets that marketers need are dramatically different from even just a few years ago.

Social media, the empowerment of customers, and the demand for corporate transparency are re-defining brands and threatening the



control (if control even exists any longer) of brand messaging. If you think about who does what within today's business, marketing and sales serve as the “promise makers” of customer experiences, and the rest of the employees serve as the “promise keepers”—the ones who then have to personally interact with customers, and somehow influence whether customers believe we have kept our promises or not. This means that as marketers we have to expand the scope of what we do and who we influence, while we also make sure that we align internally and externally.

In short: it's no longer good enough for marketers to simply generate leads. The function of marketing has to evolve a customer from the first time we meet him or her; we have to turn curious browsers into engaged prospects, then qualified buyers, then satisfied customers, and ultimately, loyal brand subscribers. If we don't, we risk the financial consequences of confused, disappointed, and frustrated customers.

### **The new marketer—experience creator inside and out**

For the last decade, people have talked about changing buyer behavior. Yet, little has changed in the marketing department's behavior or how we view our role in creating customer experiences. We're the people who should orchestrate the entire customer journey—creating the experiences that companies have with customers and the employees who serve them—but we don't.

We inherently understand that the days when marketing simply served as a brand steward (or cop, depending on your point of view), created fluffy awareness campaigns, and put on events are over. Now, beyond the legacy functions of making every communication effective for selling, *marketing must help lead the transformation of how business is done*. But, we have to do more than just understand this transformation because it requires marketers—from CMOs to young professionals—to develop new competencies and mindsets to thrive and lead in new and expanded roles.

The changes in buyer behavior have forced changes in how we think and act as marketers. Those marketers who thrive in uncertainty feel like kids on summer vacation, leaping at the variety of opportunities, ideas, and inspiration. Apprehensive marketers hold onto traditional practices,

thinking that if they ignore the disruption, they won't have to address it; fear of the unknown freezes their openness. In between are those just trying to keep their heads above water, or searching for "permission" from their C-suite to try something more strategic. Yes, we marketers still yearn for influence within our organizations and scrape for dollars and resources. But, it's a catch-22. We have to prove ROI on every investment we make and continually push for the value we think we deliver, while we beg for the power to innovate to do just that.

It's time to step forward and assert our authority. In order to gain influence and earn our seat at the "big kid" strategy table, we need to quit thinking like marketers and transition into becoming business leaders who understand the view and strategy of the entire organization; because, if we continue to limit our role to one of "mere" communication or as a "service agency" to sales, we won't be able to transform organizations or the way marketing operates within them.

Research by The Fournaise Marketing Group found that 73% of CEOs think marketing lacks credibility. In contrast, 69% of marketers think their strategies and campaigns have an impact—they just don't know how to prove it.<sup>2</sup> They aren't equipped to have a marketing conversation in the context of what impact they can have on business performance. So much of this disconnect between marketing and CEOs comes from marketers not understanding the strategic and leadership roles we need to take on.

This struggle doesn't apply purely to marketers in the trenches. In its research report, *The Transformative CMO*, The Korn Ferry Institute points out that to become "transformative," marketing executives must understand how the marketing function intertwines with every other function within the company.<sup>3</sup> To be successful, these executives need to drive enterprise-wide change in an increasingly complex and unpredictable *business* environment.

### **Living in beta**

Here's something to consider. Analytics by its very nature means we are looking in the rear view mirror to see where we are going. Now while it's great to have context of where we've been, and learn from our failures

and successes—we're also charting new roads here. By the time we've witnessed, experienced, and documented a best practice, our customers often have moved on. Our nemesis isn't our perceived competitors—it's our customers' short attention spans. In order to think creatively about how we capture and keep their attention, we have to think differently about the role we have within our organizations.

Modern marketers face incredible change, and the pressure is only getting greater. In 2013, Forrester Research and the Business Marketing Association released their findings about the expanding role of marketing. Ninety-seven percent of marketers said they expect the pace of change in marketing to accelerate, and 76% felt their leadership evaluates success or failure more rapidly than ever before. Other findings included:

- 21% say the skills for which they were hired are now obsolete
- 97% see a dramatic increase in the breadth of marketing skills needed
- 97% are doing things they've never done before
- 45% can't find marketing candidates with the right skills.<sup>4</sup>

Tim Kopp, then CMO of ExactTarget, summed this up well in a 2013 CMO.com interview when he said that the successful CMO of the future will “not only be chief marketing officer, but chief customer officer, head of strategy, and change agent in chief.”<sup>5</sup>

There is a constant demand for new skills and added resources. But if CEOs aren't seeing our worth, and we're not able to prove that worth, how do we function in a new landscape? The only way to “prove” worth in this context is for us to expand our leadership roles and influence at the same pace as our levels of responsibility increase within an organization.

We need to lean in. We need to become strategically bold about our capabilities and our responsibilities. We need to become comfortable living and working in beta because that's where our growth lies—trying new ideas, testing new approaches, and thinking unconventionally. When marketers can elegantly move into these strategic shifts, ambiguity and uncertainty will be seen as opportunities, rather than liabilities.

It's time we become more innovative with how we think. That requires us to examine our perceptions about marketing's role and how we can lead change. But here's the kicker: we can't convince executive leadership of the value we deliver to an organization unless we believe it ourselves and walk the walk, i.e., demonstrate that value.

Rather than take the safe route, new marketers need to be able to sit at the executive table and lead strategic conversations about the growth of their organizations. They need to become comfortable with both accountability and change, becoming more agile in the process.

Great marketers step beyond their areas of responsibility and transform their organizations. They spend a great deal of time understanding the operational and financial details of their company, while immersing themselves in the world of their customer, gaining insights and perspectives. They're perpetually curious, which makes it easier to transition from a tactical marketing role to that of a trusted advisor, and strategic partner at the executive level.

### **Marketers as growth drivers**

So, yes, we agree—marketing *should be* a vital growth function that takes any company to new places, connecting the dots in valuable ways, creating a thread between legacy thinking and innovative insights going forward.

To do that, marketers must insert themselves into the overall corporate strategy. We need to make it clear that we're not just the idea people; we have to be part of the group of people that stays in the room to get the work done—the ones who can have intelligent, strategic conversations with IT, sales, product development, human resources, finance, and the rest of the organization. It's hard, but in order to lead transformation, we have to put our heads down, roll up our sleeves, and be willing to hold ourselves accountable alongside everyone else.

For marketers to truly transform organizations, we have to go beyond asking, "What's the role that marketing *could* have?" to ask ourselves, "What in OUR organization is the role that marketing *will* have?"

For a time, Antonio Lucio, CMO of Visa, managed human resources,

where he tightened the relationship between the company's strategy and how employees were recruited, developed, retained, and rewarded. Motorola Solutions' Senior Vice President – Marketing and IT, Eduardo Conrado, now holds responsibility for both marketing and IT, so he's able to move IT from back-office support to an integrated approach to creating systems of engagement with marketing.

Marketers have a set of tools and skills that allow us to drive change. We also have a front-row seat from which we can watch the continually changing landscape of customer expectations and monitor the need for driving outcomes. By stepping beyond what our peers see as our traditional functions, we can become valued advisors and trusted leaders within the company.

### **Marketers as unifiers**

As we look at marketing's role outside the wall of "just marketing," there's opportunity for us to bring people together by building non-traditional teams that collaborate to solve customer problems. This means we'll have to learn what motivates each group and then develop a compelling vision, and superb communication and integration skills. In order to unify, we have to serve as advocates of innovation; we have to help people understand the greater vision and then serve as the point-people when those people go to execute the work. Change can't be addressed from the tactical level; we have to think strategically about how we create and lead experiences that fascinate and inspire others to take action.

By thinking of ourselves as unifiers, we'll gain a holistic view of what needs to be done and see how to integrate processes to drive growth. It's important to understand the key relationships for marketing, but it's also important to understand how everyone is interconnected throughout the organization. Thinking like a unifier will demonstrate real business results that align across the enterprise, and marketers will take on a measurable role in generating revenue, and creating new and different customer experiences.

Too often, when talk turns to the details of how to get the work done, marketing stands up and leaves the room. We don't know what to do, we're uncomfortable, and there's plenty of work waiting back at our desks. That has to change.

The classic scenario works like this: human resources asks us to give a public-relations spiel to new employees. Great ... we show up, give our 15-minute talk, and we're done.

Here's how it should work: marketing sits down with human resources and talks about what human resources is *really* trying to accomplish with new employees. People who work in human resources aren't communicators; marketers *should* be. So how do we unify the message and the experience between brand and new employee on-boarding—and ask how we extend the brand story through human resources so that the people who we recruit fit our culture, believe in our purpose, and seamlessly step in and begin creating purposeful experiences for our customers? How do we reach them in new and meaningful ways based on their generational preferences? How and when do we need to bring IT into the picture so that the experience that candidates have is easy and skips the typical online frustrations and black hole of bureaucracy?

We must be willing to stay in conversations longer, dive deeper into what needs to be accomplished, and bring our unique skills to the table. It's our ability to set a vision and close the gap between that and the current reality of what actually "is" that adds value. By helping people understand what *could* be, how all the puzzle pieces fit together, we're taking off the blinders and helping groups understand how to work together to create new and different experiences. It's our opportunity to use diplomacy and stellar interpersonal skills to help bring ideas to the table and build confidence in how we approach old challenges in new ways. We can facilitate collaboration while still owning part of the process and the outcomes.

### **Marketers as innovators**

One of the newest responsibilities for marketers is that of spearheading inspiration. It is our responsibility to see where the world is going and help our companies get there before the world does. We have to look for opportunities to incubate ideas in small ways. We should feel empowered to understand where our world is headed, and translate that understanding into practical direction, inspiration, and executable actions.

The marketing environment has changed so dramatically in just the last

few years that many people are fearful, and therefore take the safe route with their careers and their corporate initiatives. The result is that professionals who struggle to function in a new changed environment end up delivering uninspired ideas. This squanders opportunities and fuels the perception that customers have of “noise in the marketplace.” Instead, we should be thinking “future forward,” and lead from the future. If we know what we want our organizations to look like by 2020, how do we back that into today and start laying the groundwork for that change?

In his book, *Escape Velocity: Free Your Company's Future from the Pull of the Past*, Geoffrey Moore explains how the things that made a company successful in the past can be the same things that hold it back from going forward in the present.<sup>6</sup> Marketing's history of task-oriented roles, product launches, lead generation, and media hits are often the culprits that can hold that past in place, frustrating forward progress. We have to reconsider how we can serve as a seamless conduit through all parts of the organization to take responsibility for setting the strategic direction required to free companies from what holds them back.

Our impact on the business is “difference”—difference in how marketing is organized and functions, how we integrate with and lead others, and how we get customers to view us. We have to take responsibility for building our credibility. It's important that we shed the idea that growth comes only with perfection, because perfection is impossible to achieve; so we must give ourselves permission to fail while in the process of innovating. As long as failure scares us and keeps us from trying new ideas, we'll never be able to unleash the energy, passion, and contagious enthusiasm that organizations need in order to transform.

As marketers learn how to lead with inspiration, we'll strengthen our ability to generate new breakthroughs, and help others develop more creative vision. We'll be able to push boundaries and be willing to lean into creativity, mental agility, and liquid processes.

### **Moving from products to experiences**

For us to truly grasp the concept of moving from products to experiences, we have to understand purpose. By understanding and infusing the experiences that we create for customers with a shared brand purpose, we

create critical moments of truth about what our brand truly stands for, rather than what we're trying to sell. Don't tell me about the soap that you sell, tell me how I can have real beauty (Dove). Don't tell me about the gas mileage and the power windows, tell me how I can experience the ultimate driving machine (BMW). Marketers who first focus on "purpose" ultimately engage, delight, and inspire customers.

Newton's first law of motion states that an object at rest will stay at rest until an external force acts upon it. It also says that an object in motion will not change its velocity unless an external force acts upon it.

Our customers' changing behavior and expectations are big forces that are only now beginning to move us off dead center—but we're still behind. It's time to change the vector and velocity. Beth Comstock, CMO of General Electric, talks about the need for perpetual motion marketing—marketing that's continually moving and evolving, rather than the "one-and-done" mentality. What does vector, velocity, and perpetual motion have to do with our behavior?

In a *Harvard Business Review* article titled "Rethinking The 4 P's", Richard Ettenson, Eduardo Conrado, and Jonathan Knowles discuss how to refine the four principles of marketing: product, place, price, and promotion. Developed in 1960 by Edmund Jerome McCarthy, a marketing professor at Michigan State University, the 4 P's no longer reflect today's customer behavior, particularly in the B2B world.

During a five-year study (which they describe in the article), the authors found that the 4 P's model fell short in three important ways: it stressed product quality and technology (even though these are now table stakes for doing business); it spotlighted the value of solutions; and it distracted from taking advantage of opportunities to serve as trusted advisors and strategic partners.

In contrast to the 4 P's, the authors introduced a new framework, SAVE (solution, access, value, and education), that looks like this:

- Instead of product, the focus is on solution. Define offerings by the needs they meet, not by their features, functions, or technological superiority.



- Instead of place, the focus is on access. Develop an integrated cross-channel presence that fits customers' entire purchase journey, instead of individual purchase locations and channels.
- Instead of price, the focus is on value. Talk about the benefits relative to price, rather than stress how price relates to production costs, profit margins, or competitors' prices.
- Instead of promotion, the focus is on education. Provide information relevant to specific needs at each touchpoint, rather than rely on generic advertising, public relations, and personal selling.<sup>7</sup>

In order to SAVE ourselves and evolve our marketing mindset, we must let go of how we've always approached marketing. We need to take the business objectives we're trying to move forward and think about different frameworks and approaches that might get us there. It's clear that our traditional product structure isn't working to move our business strategies forward; consequently, we must re-evaluate how we function because structure should always follow strategy.

### **Marketing forward**

The only continuum that we're on is one of change. But constant change creates fear because we don't have a "normal" to use as a baseline reference. However, without someone, or something, to compare ourselves against, how can we know if we measure up? The old measuring devices no longer work, so we have to look at what we do as a form of perpetual motion. We have to evolve every day: learn, iterate, and repeat. Technology certainly helps us do this faster. However, marketers aren't keeping up at the same speed as the tools we use. There's a wealth of information about the problem facing us, but only a trickle of insights from companies who actually have gotten the ball in motion and have momentum behind it. To get there, we need a proactive mindset: a willingness to learn, get uncomfortable, and accept that "normal" no longer exists.

To elevate marketing to the leadership position it deserves within our organizations, we must develop our own opinions and points of view. Until we're able to elevate the dialogue about what we do and how we can

impact the business—i.e., how we can maneuver the new environment—we're doomed to remain order takers, tacticians, and undervalued overhead.

Now is the time to look to the horizon and discuss what could be. What's our story as a marketing profession? Knowing that story is the only way we will be able to prepare—today—for the skillsets, demands, and expectations of what companies need to create agile environments capable of shifting with changing customer expectations.

In order to lead companies and industries, marketers must first understand how to lead our own profession. How will traditional processes hold up under this time of transition? Without the willingness to have these conversations, we're perpetuating a hidden force that undermines our work: legacy thinking. It is easy, when under pressure, to default to what is comfortable. The pull of the past is hard to resist. This pull is so strong that it makes it hard to change thinking, processes, and outcomes. If we're ever to come into our own as a profession and leaders within organizations, though, it's time that we step out of our comfort zones.

This is an incredibly exciting time to be in marketing. You may find your company waking up and welcoming the ideas you bring to the table, encouraging you to think bigger and broader. Or you may realize that now's the time to move on and find a situation that better fits your style. Regardless, we encourage you to be brave, have fun, and, most importantly, embrace the change.

This is *our* time. Make it remarkable.

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<sup>1</sup><http://blogs.hbr.org/2012/05/three-myths-about-customer-eng/>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.fournaisigroup.com/Marketers-Lack-Credibility/>

<sup>3</sup><http://www.kornferryinstitute.com/reports-insights/transformational-cmo-three-must-have-competencies-meet-growing-demands-placed>

<sup>4</sup> [http://solutions.forrester.com/Global/FileLib/Reports/B2B\\_CMOs\\_Must\\_Evolve\\_Or\\_Move\\_On.pdf](http://solutions.forrester.com/Global/FileLib/Reports/B2B_CMOs_Must_Evolve_Or_Move_On.pdf)

<sup>5</sup>[http://www.cmo.com/articles/2013/4/30/the\\_future\\_of\\_marketing.html](http://www.cmo.com/articles/2013/4/30/the_future_of_marketing.html)

<sup>6</sup>Moore, Geoffrey A. *Escape Velocity: Free Your Company's Future from the Pull of the Past*. HarperBusiness, September 2011.

<sup>7</sup><http://hbr.org/2013/01/rethinking-the-4-ps/ar/1>

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## Chapter 6

# Content Creation Management: A Framework for Change

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*“The crucial variable in the process of turning knowledge into value is creativity.”*

—John Kao

It’s been roughly 15 years since the first content management systems were introduced into enterprise companies as a way to create digital experiences for customers. In those days, it was pretty simple. There was one channel, the website, and everyone focused on how to empower marketing people to easily publish digital content to the corporate website.

However, as we roll into 2015, it’s a very different story. The enterprise now manages innumerable mobile, social, and web platforms. One global technology company we worked with celebrated the last day of a six-month process, where they knocked themselves down from managing 360 campaign microsites to fewer than 50.

According to an Association for Information and Image Management study conducted in 2013, more than 80% of companies of varying size lacked an enterprise solution to manage content across different channels.<sup>1</sup> However, we would argue that perhaps even more important is the lack of a process behind the creation of content.

As we discussed in Chapter 4, “The Business Case for CCM”, as the enterprise adds more “owned-media properties” (e.g., blogs, websites, print magazines, communities, etc.) to its portfolio, the more critical it becomes to develop a framework to create, manage, and measure these properties. Content Creation Management is that framework.

## Content Creation Management (CCM) defined

Here is our simple definition of CCM:

*Content Creation Management (CCM) is a conceptual framework to facilitate the organization, creation, development, and management of owned content/media platforms for marketing purposes. Its goal is to inform an active, functioning, and scalable process for marketing departments to create content-driven experiences that differentiate and create value.*

Every organization knows how to create content; however, very few understand CCM as a strategic, repeatable process.

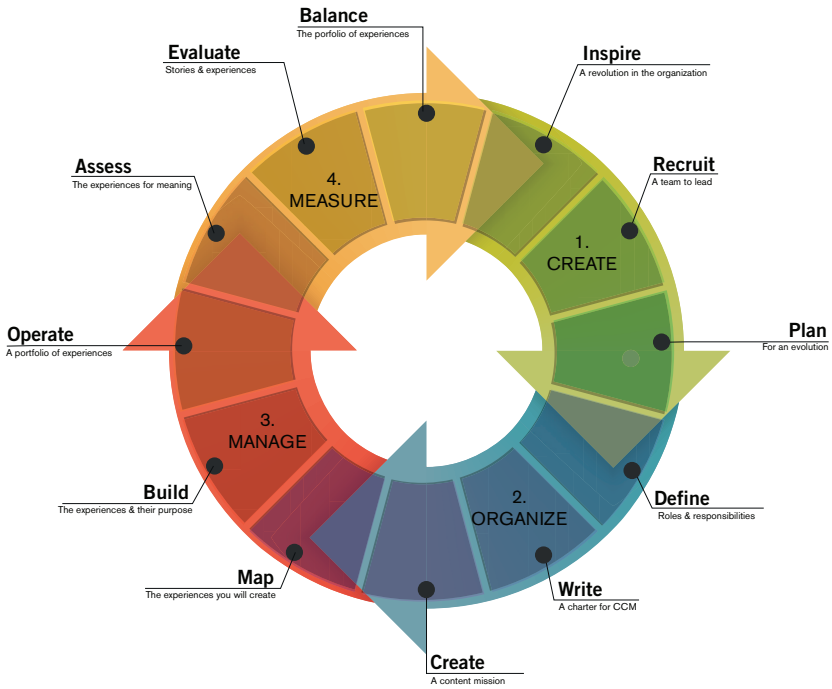
As we have discovered in our research and interviews with more than 100 companies, both large and small, there currently is no one right way to construct a CCM function within a business. Just as there are myriad ways to structure a newsroom, movie studio, television network, production house, or creative media agency, the way that each company structures the CCM function will be unique to its individual culture and goals.

The process of building CCM into your organization will be a journey—one that can, and will, be populated with any number of practitioners within the business. Success will depend on creating a culture that conforms to new and innovative best practices. While undertaking this marketing process journey, the winners will replace the busy work around “value creation,” *with processes that value the quality of ideas and their execution*. In fact, CCM is all about *re-using innovative ideas* to continuously evolve the company’s skill at operating like a media company, versus operating in a “campaign-creation” mentality, where there’s a constant *re-forming* of the idea of “value creation,” rinse, and repeat.

In short, the CCM framework is about transforming ad-hoc sets of disconnected experiments into a measurable marketing function. CCM is an idea-creation factory—one that manages a portfolio of experience-driven ideas. It is a factory that is ultimately built to create a profitable business result. However, its *function* is to create delightful experiences for the customer—through education, entertainment, or general usefulness—pure and simple. It is innovative in nature, and built to differentiate the business.

Prior to developing the CCM framework, we studied organizations

that are already gaining traction in this area. Some of these companies share commonalities—a finding that suggests a clear way forward. We also pulled best practices from methodologies that center on product development and media management, and incorporated ways that media companies operate and manage digital assets. The result is a 12-step framework, segmented into four main activities:



### 1. CREATE CCM

- Inspire a Revolution in the Organization
- Recruit a Team to Lead
- Plan for an Evolution

### 2. ORGANIZE CCM

- Define Roles and Responsibilities
- Write a Charter for CCM
- Create a Content Mission

### 3. MANAGE CCM

- Map the Experiences You Will Create
- Build the Experiences and Their Purpose
- Operate a Portfolio of Experiences

### 4. MEASURE CCM

- Assess the Experiences for Meaning
- Evaluate Stories and Experiences
- Balance the Portfolio of Experiences

As content-driven experiences become an increasingly important way to propel our businesses forward, we find that the strategy for creating these experiences, ironically, is rarely driven from the top down. Rather, it usually has roots deep within the business, where a manager is achieving “pockets of success” with a series of ad hoc projects. Eventually, the modus operandi of “that’s the way it’s always been done” gets broken by proof that developing content-driven experiences will provide value to the existing marketing efforts.

Changing long-held beliefs within an enterprise is, obviously, more difficult in some organizations than others. In some engineering-driven B2B companies, for example, simply getting buy-in to try something that isn’t sales-enablement focused can be a huge task. Yet, fundamentally changing these long-held beliefs is the essential first step that content practitioners within enterprise organizations must take in order for content-driven experiences to gain acceptance as a viable, successful approach.

So why doesn’t this happen more often? Why is it so difficult for people to make this change?

To get a point of view on this question, we recently talked with innovation expert Thomas Asacker, author of the fantastic book, *The Business of Belief*. One of the stories he shared was that of meeting with a CEO client whom he had worked with a year prior. The CEO was lamenting the devastatingly poor results of his company. Tom asked, “*What did I do*

*wrong the last time I was out there?”* The CEO replied, *“Tom, you didn’t do anything wrong. It was great information. But you have to understand, when you left here, everybody had to go back to their jobs.”*

These people understood what Tom had said and agreed with it. Unfortunately, that understanding didn’t drive change. “That’s not what drives action,” Tom told us. “People do what they do because they want to do it. And that’s it.”

In our view, this is just like the classic Homer Simpson quote from *The Simpsons* when Homer tells Lisa, “Oh, honey—just because I understand doesn’t mean I care.”

So what’s the answer? How do businesses actually change and create the actions that will drive new approaches such as building customer experiences? Tom summed it up well in our conversation when he said:

*“Where I’ve seen success is where there’s been some outside force—just someone who has figured out how to push a particular leader. It could literally be a brand manager. They lead this leader down, if you will, that bridge of belief, making them comfortable the whole time until they actually release something that’s powerful.*

*“The interesting thing is that once they get recognition for actually releasing this creative endeavor, they can then use it as an example for everyone else, saying, ‘See, we can do it.’”*

We couldn’t agree more with Tom, as this is how we’ve seen the process unfold time and time again.

Over the last few years, content marketers have been so focused on building a business case and the facts that support their efforts. And while we need to have logical arguments for WHY the experiences we create can be justified as investments, we also must INSPIRE people to act. If the last few years have been focused on how we can actually *build* the business case to use content as a means to engage, help, inform, and change beliefs in customers, the next few years should be dedicated to learning how to actually create a strategic, repeatable process to do just that. This book shows you how.



*Stay tuned for a more detailed description of the entire 12-step framework and process when we release **Experiences: The 7th Era of Marketing** in December 2014. If you would like to receive notifications and updates, go to [www.7thEraOfMarketing.com](http://www.7thEraOfMarketing.com) and sign up.*

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<sup>1</sup><http://techwhirl.com/aiim-study-82-percent-of-companies-lack-enterprise-content-management/>

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## About the Authors

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**Robert Rose** is in the business of helping marketers become stellar storytellers. As chief strategy officer for the Content Marketing Institute, and senior contributing analyst for Digital Clarity Group, Robert develops content marketing and customer experience strategies for large companies such as Oracle, 3M, Abbott Laboratories, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Allstate Insurance, Staples, and Petco—helping them tell their stories more effectively.

Robert was recently named number six of the top 50 influencers in content marketing. He is a regular columnist for *EContent Magazine*, and a contributor to *Chief Content Officer* magazine, iMedia Connection, and CMSWire. Robert co-hosts the podcast This Old Marketing with Joe Pulizzi, and is co-author with Joe of *Managing Content Marketing*, widely considered the “owner’s manual” for the content marketing process. *Managing Content Marketing* has been translated into multiple languages and spent two weeks as a Top 10 marketing book on Amazon since its debut in 2011.



**Carla Johnson** helps companies infuse storytelling within their organizations so they can create purpose-driven brands. She seamlessly intertwines business goals with relevant brand storytelling to engage customers, prospects, employees, and communities to add topline revenue. Carla has worked with big brands that include Emerson, VMware, Motorola Solutions, Western Union, Cameron, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Recognized as one of the top 50 influencers in content marketing, Carla is a consultant to the Content Marketing Institute and serves as vice president of thought leadership for the Business Marketing Association. A frequent speaker, Carla also writes about the power of storytelling, the future of marketing, and leading through innovation for the Content Marketing Institute, *Chief Content Officer* magazine, CMSWire, and other high-tech, industry and business audiences.