



**AM>** | 2018 STATE OF MARKETING  
**The Marketing Executive**

## The Marketing Executive whitepaper is part of the 2018 State of Marketing reporting.

On behalf of the San Diego Chapter of the American Marketing Association, Q2 Insights and FreshForm teamed up to produce a multi-year Qualitative Research study on the state of marketing in the U.S. from the San Diego perspective. In 2018 a total of 40 high-profile corporate marketing and non-profit executives from a broad spectrum of 35 small, medium, and large Business to Consumer (B2C) and Business to Business (B2B) organizations participated in the State of Marketing Study. A total of 38 interviews were conducted in 2017. In 2018 a small number of the interviews were conducted with agencies. The study is designed to describe inspiring marketing practices, trends in marketing and the state of marketing today.

The full version of the report can be downloaded at [www.sdama.org/report](http://www.sdama.org/report)

# Marketing Executive Concerns

Constant change in marketing is a struggle for almost all senior marketers interviewed in 2018. Across the board, most report feeling stressed by having to keep up with the ever-evolving world of digital marketing, marketing strategies and tactics, and data management.

Marketing is significantly more complex than it was in the past. Marketing leaders not only have to address all the traditional channels, but they must also address digital channels. Digital channels are changing faster than ever. Many large marketing departments need to have someone who is simply keeping up with all the changes (e.g. Facebook changing their algorithm). Marketing is a lot more fragmented and requires a lot of discipline and expertise. Organizations with small marketing staffs find it tough to keep up.

A marketing leader in a news and media organization shared concerns about the rapidity with which technology evolves. He finds it necessary to engage in constant learning to stay abreast of changes.

Others report that staying on top of all their various marketing tasks can be overwhelming. Between managing their different departments ranging from digital to traditional to marketing automation, many marketers voiced concern about juggling their responsibilities.

Many find it difficult to use their data to maximize effectiveness. One marketer feels that the world shifts so quickly that even when he makes the correct data driven decision, it is perhaps not 100% accurate due to the constantly evolving trends.

Other issues of concern to marketing executives include staff resources, growing the brand, marketing attribution, meeting revenue targets, financial exposure, having multiple areas of focus, customer insights, financial exposure, and job performance.

## Staff

Feeling overwhelmed with job responsibilities while simultaneously being understaffed is an issue for some.

**“If you don’t have the right people in place, you will not be successful.”**

**STEVEN MESNICK**  
VIASAT

- A high-tech industry marketer spends a lot of energy on hiring the “right” people and putting strategies and processes in place to ensure success. Even with great processes, automation, and artificial intelligence, if the right people are not in the right jobs, marketing will not be successful.
- A consumer goods brand marketer is concerned about having many marketing goals and ambitions but needing to be realistic about the resources available. She feels it is important to understand the bandwidth of the staff, allocate resources appropriately, and realize that you cannot do it all.
- One higher education institution runs many antiquated systems for lead generation and this results in a lot of work for the team around lead scoring particularly as they do not have a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform.

- From the e-commerce world there are challenges associated with “bringing everyone along for the ride.” The trick is getting everyone from new hires to long-term employees on the same page when implementing a strategy to reach goals within the time allotted.
- Being available to the team while also fulfilling internal and external duties is of concern to a marketer in the economic development space.

## Growing the Brand

Many marketers talked about feeling stressed about continuing to grow their brands.

- Coming up with new ways to progress potential customers through the sales funnel keeps some marketers up at night.
- In a fast-paced consumer goods organization the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) concentrates on continuing to generate demand for products. Critical to this endeavor is presenting products in a manner that creates demand, keeping customers and trade allies happy, and helping trade allies survive in business.
- At an academic institution, meeting new student targets are of concern. In particular, finding new students for new graduate programs keeps the marketing leader awake at night.
- At a biotech firm there is worry about focusing on the right things to drive success – technology, product, and people. Is marketing focusing on the right part of the funnel?
- An organization in the higher education industry has a strategic initiative to elevate the brand and they have a timetable to do so. The head marketer is concerned with adhering to the timeline and delivering on the promise.

- Maintaining a consistent brand is a challenge for one business advisory organization. Keeping multiple providers on the same page when they all have different ways of doing business is necessary in order to have a uniform brand presence.

## Meeting Revenue Targets

Meeting revenue targets causes some sleepless nights.

- Maximizing the top line revenue and keeping spending revenue at a certain level causes anxiety for an e-commerce executive.
- A senior marketer at an academic institution worries about hitting goals, pushing the envelope every year to try to increase private support, reach financial goals in record time, increase the number of alumni who are making gifts, and get more people to participate in investing.

## Marketing Attribution

Unlike the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who can use expense control, supply chain that can use cost reduction, sales than can use revenue, the CMO has a very difficult time quantifying marketing’s impact. Changes in Net Promoter Score (NPS) or winning awards is not sufficient for a CMO to justify his existence. It was suggested that this is the primary reason why CMOs have the shortest shelf-life in the C-suite.

Marketing attribution is required to quantify the impact of marketing but due to the complexities of integrated marketing it is difficult to assess how much impact should be assigned to each tactic much less to an entire marketing campaign.

**“There is no marketing hierarchy of revenue in most organizations’ P&Ls that you can look at easily and say this much of our revenue is driven by search, this much is by email, and this much is organic.”**

**ADAM FOX**  
TERADATA

- A marketer in an insurance organization worries about attribution. She can tell leadership which programs are generating the most revenue, but she cannot tell them how each program is doing so. Because they do not understand the whole cycle and buying journey, the organization may be missing insights into what is driving revenue.

## Multiple Areas of Focus

Having multiple areas of focus is a balancing act.

- Trying to make sure that she is consistently and accurately executing multiple tasks simultaneously is something one news and media marketing professional handles without the benefit of a master spreadsheet.
- Having to focus on many target audiences and multiple therapeutic areas is a new, exciting adventure for a marketing expert in the biotech industry.

## Customer Insights

Truly understanding the customer is a concern for some.

- Not having sufficient data and customer insights to share with the company and confidently make decisions in an unbiased manner is of concern. Insights on product, customer service, and sales are desired.

- The need to be “customer obsessed” keeps a direct marketing leader awake at night. Elements of being customer obsessed include understanding customer needs, staying relevant, and changing direction as needed.

## Everyone Having a Voice About Marketing

In the e-commerce world, one marketer struggles with everyone in the organization having a voice on what marketing is and is not. For example, “Why did this ad not come up when I typed this keyword?” Or, “Why is the color not here?”

## Desire for Change

A marketer in the financial industry does not like status quo so what keeps him awake at night is a focus on and a desire for change. “What is the next level of change?”

## Financial Exposure

The potential for having an employee make a costly mistake causes anxiety for at least one head of marketing.

- Being an in-house agency comes with much risk and one higher education organization feels that his company is financially exposed with millions of dollars in lines of credit. It is possible for a member of the team to make a six-figure mistake in a day. Additionally, because most of their budget is on auction-based platforms such as Facebook and Google, competitors actually control how much they spend. For example, competitors might bid on the organization’s trade name searches on Google resulting in an overnight cost increase of 15%.

## Job Performance

Job performance is a concern for some.

- People not responding to advertisements, making mistakes, missing opportunities, making technical errors, and not having sufficient time to think creatively about her role are all concerns for a marketer in the e-commerce industry.

## Agency Concerns

A lack of willingness to invest in marketing is an issue among agencies. Some clients dictate to agencies how much they are willing to spend (e.g. \$10,000). They are risk averse and sometimes do not trust their agency.

**“Execution is everything. That’s the only thing people ever see. Oftentimes marketing leaders and agencies forget. Always put as much love, care and value in the production of a marketing effort as you would in the product or service you are selling. There is nothing worse than a great product poorly advertised because of an irrelevant idea and shady production value.”**

**DANIEL ANDREANI**  
DO NOT DISTURB

- Trying to convince clients who think they have answers but are actually wrong and doing so in a tactful way is stressful for some agencies.
  - Due to the clutter of bad advertising pollution and to consumer attention deficit, it can be quite overwhelming to break through with messaging. Advertising has turned into a four-letter word, and some consumers see it as a manipulative tactic to sway their point of view.
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# Role of the CMO

Almost universally marketing executives stated that their role within their organization is increasing and expanding in importance. As was discovered in 2017, marketers continue to have a seat at the executive table in their organizations. Other departments also lean heavily on marketing to learn about customers, understand their needs, and understand how to communicate with them. Marketing represents the voice of the customer. For many organizations there is also increased competition and addressing these threats falls firmly in the hands of marketers.

## Organizational Growth

Many noted that their organizations are growing, and marketing is responsible for developing new audiences for products and services, growth of the target audience/s and for business performance to a much greater degree than ever before. Marketing is responsible for crafting where the brand will play and how the brand will win. This requires a clear strategy for each of the target markets.

## Responsibility for the Customer Journey or Lifecycle

Marketing plays a very important role in the customer experience whether this is through the lens of the customer journey or the customer lifecycle. Typically, the first encounter a customer has is via a marketing avenue or channel. Marketers

have a responsibility for the entire consumer lifecycle including, but not limited to, acquisition, billing, customer support, retention, and churn management.

To a much greater extent, technology is driving that customer experience and within organizations this is often master engineered by marketing.

## Marketing Complexity

The role of the marketer is gaining importance due to the increasing complexity of the marketing discipline. Considerable expertise is required to manage the marketing function as well as an understanding of the new strategies and tactics to get products and services positioned and in front of target customers across multiple platforms.

## Analytics

Marketing is not only a means to understand what is happening in business today, but it is also viewed as a window to the future. The marketing function has the ability to measure results, show return on investment (ROI), and perform predictive analytics.

## Product Development

As was discovered in 2017, marketing is also instrumental in product development.

## Conclusion

Peeking under the hood, it seems that marketing executives universally share some degree of stress associated with the complexities of marketing. The science and art of marketing is more complicated, more disciplined, and more fragmented, and a great deal of expertise, sheer grit and determination is required to keep up. Help does seem to be on the way in terms of marketing technology, especially in the form of AI, as well as the movement toward bringing marketing in-house with marketing teams of highly specialized employees. Having a clear view of what is coming next in marketing, the right people, and the right marketing technology will greatly aid marketers as it is unlikely that the current marketing environment is likely to slow down or stop evolving in the near or distant future.

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A comprehensive version of the 2018 State of Marketing Report from the San Diego Chapter of the American Marketing Association (AMA) can be downloaded at [www.sdama.org/report](http://www.sdama.org/report)



## Q2 Insights

Experts in marketing research, Q2 Insights delivers information vital to strategic and tactical brand decisions. We blend cutting-edge innovation work with a full-spectrum of research methodologies—all totally customized to your goals. From insights that help drive positioning and branding, brand assessments, advertising studies, customer experience studies to statistically driven studies such as marketing size and potential, pricing, satisfaction, and segmentation, we do it all across a wide range of categories.

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## FreshForm.

FreshForm is an experience design and innovation consultancy. We create, manage and measure customer and employee experiences. We use a people-centered approach to create personal connections and value for a wide array of innovative Fortune 500s, world-renowned universities, and growth-oriented businesses.

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## | San Diego

The San Diego Chapter of the American Marketing Association (AMA) is the organization for high-performing marketers who are serious about furthering their careers. AMA San Diego is the only education- and networking-focused organization that provides information, resources, international presence and valuable connections in a fun, approachable environment where its members can achieve their personal development goals.

### Contributor

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