

The Emergence of Marketing Operations and MarTech Management

Management of MarTech and the MarTech stack is an enormous undertaking – even for a small to medium sized business. As we have learned thus far, there are a plethora of technologies out there and it's critically important to begin with how Marketing Technologies can enable strategies that help a firm achieve its business goals.

Most business goals are growth oriented.... How do the company become more profitable, increase volume, top line revenue or market share? Therefore, Marketing Technology enables a firm to grow more efficiently and effectively.

With the emergence and growing importance of MarTech in most modern marketing organizations today, the Marketing Operations function has emerged as one of the most critical roles and functions in the enterprise. The function is part of a new model for marketing that is driven by data and technology.

Sirius Decisions defines Marketing Operations as *“marketing’s API”*. *Its job is to simplify processes and infrastructure for marketers and marketing stakeholders, enabling integration and alignment across the entire marketing ecosystem as well as functions that intersect with it. Marketing Operations professionals strive to enable faster, more intelligent, more aligned and more precise marketing.*

If we try to unpack the definition a bit and look under the hood so to speak, the new MarTech enabled Marketing Operations function can be quite extensive and either directly managed - or have a strong hand in (1) Strategic Planning, (2) the Marketing budget, (3) Managing MarTech vendors, (4) Data and Analytics (if not its own centralized function), (5) Digital Marketing, (6) Performance Measurement, (7) Media, (8) Lead Generation, (9) Loyalty Marketing and even (10) Brand Awareness – as more and more brands are being built through customer engagement.

Marketing Operations does not typically include PR, Corporate Communications, Market Research, Product Marketing, Customer Marketing, Investor Relations, Event Marketing, or Partner Marketing. Therefore, there is still a need for an office of the CMO to manage the overall marketing capability and vision of Marketing for the enterprise.

If we break these down into the core functions of a MarTech- enabled Marketing Operations function, we're looking at seven key areas of potential responsibility and impact:

1. Strategic Planning and Budget/Resource Management that goes with it
2. Digital Marketing & Media Optimization
3. Analytics & Performance Optimization
4. Demand Generation and Sales Enablement
5. Brand Engagement
6. Customer Experience and Digital Content Strategy
7. MarTech Vendor Management

First, Marketing Operations has a strong hand in developing the go-to-market strategies that it primarily needs to help design, execute and measure or optimize. The strategies support business goals and need

to be enabled by the right technologies for real time reporting and ROI analysis. Therefore, Marketing Operations usually works very closely with Finance to manage the budget and allocations of assets to achieve the desired business outcomes.

Marketing Operations is inextricably linked to the company's investment in digital marketing and media as media is constantly being optimized – often in real time – to maximize ROI and provide the best customer experience.

A large firm can often have a centralized Data and Analytics function but that function is usually tasked with multiple requests from across the organization and Marketing Analytics can often be lower on the list of priorities for a centralized organization. This is why we see an uptick in marketing agencies handling more data and analytics for their clients. It is optimal for a Marketing data and analytics capability to reside within the Marketing Operations function.

Perhaps one of the key benefits of a Marketing Operations function is the facilitation of better integration between marketing and sales; especially if there is an inside sales capability. Overall, one of the primary reasons most firms adopt any marketing technology to begin with – is to quickly and more effectively generate qualified leads that can convert into customers. The goal is to free outside sales people to be more productive and to better track and score progress of prospects in the pipeline, etc.

As we are now in the digital age, a modern marketing organization understands that brand awareness and brand equity is driven more and more by positive and consistent customer engagement. MarTech enables that to happen with a degree of personalization and relevance that can create differentiation and value for the brand in the marketplace.

A MarTech enabled Marketing Operations function is also interconnected with the Customer Experience and Digital Content Strategy capabilities of the firm. If not directly managed by Marketing Operations, the function manages all of the technology that is necessary to drive the type of customer experiences that we have covered in this course and that are delivered by relevant content reaching the customer at the right time within the right channel and context.

Finally, none of this is possible without the core capability within the function – the Marketing Technology itself. For the most part, companies have discovered that Marketing should pay for - and manage- many of the key Marketing Technology vendor relationships. In fact, according to Gartner's most recent research, MarTech now accounts for over one-third of the entire marketing budget.

As brands were primarily built through general advertising just a little over a decade ago, the CMO's primary skill was managing and growing brand awareness through big ad agencies with big media advertising budgets. As the entire marketing construct has changed and brands are now being built through customer engagement across multiple channels and devices, etc., the person running Marketing Operations today might just have the relevant skills to be the CMO of tomorrow.