

Stop Working and Start Marketing: How to Break Out of the Box



Stop Working and Start Marketing: How to Break Out of the Box

Marketing was never about throwing spaghetti against a wall, hoping that something might stick. It's about proving what works and why — and the pressure is on. As budgets constrict and marketers are expected to do more with less, the C-suite continues to demand results. Executives are focused on ROI and scrutinizing spend like never before, seeking even greater transparency into these programs and their potential. Data from Hubspot indicates that **“39% of marketers say proving the ROI of their marketing activities is their top marketing challenge.”** And though the majority of CEOs believe in marketing's potential to drive revenue, nearly **23% percent don't think marketers are delivering**, according to McKinsey.

Today's marketers must compete for consumer attention at an unparalleled scale. They can't afford to rely on creaky, siloed processes.

39%

of marketers say proving the ROI of their marketing activities is their top marketing challenge.

Source: Hubspot



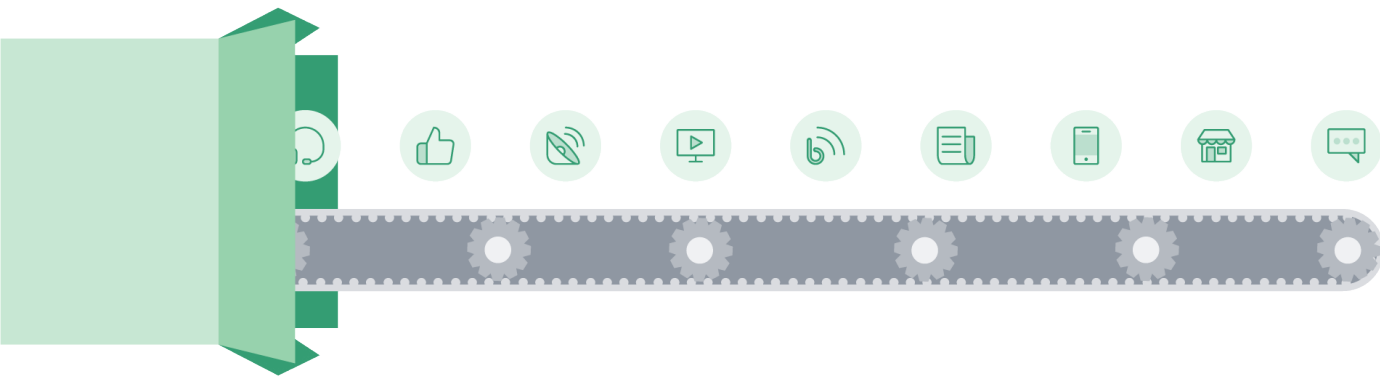
What the marketing landscape looks like today

Marketing is increasingly digital.

It's no secret that digital marketing is on the rise — and it's changing everything. For the first time ever, [digital marketing accounted for nearly half of the global ad market spend in 2019](#). In 2020, while [total ad spending decreased 8%](#), [digital marketing actually increased by 6%](#). That's a lot of money spent vying for eyeballs online.

The rise of digital hasn't only changed the way marketers advertise. It's changed how buyers make purchasing decisions — and how they interact with your brand. Digital is shifting the landscape by:

- **Introducing new touchpoints to manage:** 3.48 billion worldwide social media users exist today — and they're scattered across channels. ([Digital 2020 Global Overview Report](#))
- **Creating new ways and places to sell:** 87% of internet users in the U.S. go online with more than one device, and your user experience needs to be optimized for each of them. ([Global Web Index, U.S., Internet Users, Wave Q3 2018](#))
- **Meeting consumers where they are:** 90% of consumers want an omnichannel experience that offers seamless service no matter the method of communication. ([UC Today](#))



Marketers grapple with a complex buyer journey.

The proliferation of marketing channels means the buyer journey continues to evolve. The marketing funnel is no longer a linear, three-step process from awareness, to consideration, to purchase. Buyers might see ads in multiple places online, bounce from a brand's website to their Facebook page, watch a brand video on YouTube, or search for specific content they're interested in. And not only are brands expected to show up in all of these key channels, they must ensure these experiences are personalized based on the user and their interests.

All of these channels act like siloes, breeding complexity in the buying process. Buyers are looking everywhere, all the time, which means the brand is always on, and marketing must be, too. As much as marketers view this as their challenge to

solve, Gartner suggests thinking about it as a buyer problem. In a Gartner survey, [77% of B2B buyers noted their purchasing decision was either complex or difficult.](#)

By reframing this change in the journey as a buyer problem (and not a marketing challenge), marketers can focus on delivering better, clearer, and more relevant communications and guidance to their would-be buyers.

Brands face competition for mindshare.

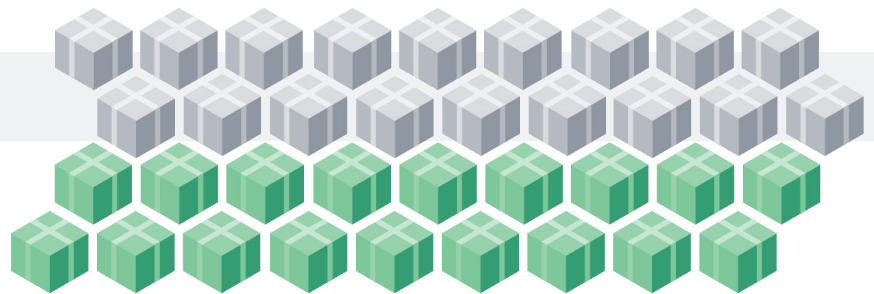
Marketers face pressure from the C-suite on one end while trying to stand out in a saturated media landscape on the other. Simply put, this has resulted in an increase in volume and scale: Marketers work on many more campaigns every year, with each one suitably tailored to multiple media platforms.

What's more, personalization of messaging, which has shown to [decrease acquisition costs by nearly half](#) and to increase revenue by 5-15%, continues to grow. These personalized marketing campaigns, with each metric customized for a single individual, have only exacerbated an already imposing challenge.

Already overwhelmed by these challenges? We can help.

[Let's talk >](#)

Acquisition costs
cut in half
by personalizing
messaging



Data is everywhere.

Because so much of modern marketing is digital, the analytics are more plentiful and readily available than ever before. Each component of marketing now has a flurry of data associated with it — impressions, clicks, engagement, downloads, page visits, website dwell time, form completions, the list goes on. And all these insights typically stay within the silo of each team that manages the program.

How are marketers supposed to understand the impact of holistic marketing efforts when it's disjointed and siloed? And how are they supposed to prove ROI?

Marketers must gather cross-program insights to truly understand how every channel influences the buyer journey. This not only helps marketers create more effective campaigns, but research from McKinsey shows there's a financial boon as well: companies that master this data integration [“grow their revenue at twice the average rate of S&P 500 companies.”](#)

What marketers really need

Given this pressure cooker environment, marketers need the right technology stack to manage their work. Marketing involves many stakeholders working, planning, and collaborating on projects. From creatives balancing workloads and reviews, to campaign managers tracking complex timelines, to event planners adapting to unexpected situations — marketers need a flexible system of record for their work, programs, and processes.

They need a solution that:

Drives accountability and a sense of ownership

A good marketing solution enables all stakeholders to collaborate, but an elite marketing platform holds stakeholders and all members across the marketing organization accountable and provides everyone with a sense of ownership.

In the reality of remote work, it's easy for employees to feel disconnected from processes or for communication to lag. But the right platform lets any team [effectively manage creative requests](#) and [drive campaigns](#), and connect all of your people and programs so you can get a clear picture of progress. No matter how or where your team prefers to work, the right platform for collaborative work management can help your team remain engaged throughout the process — from brainstorm to execution, and beyond.

Whether you're a CMO, a project or creative manager, or an intern, the right work management platform can allow anyone at any level to have an impact. You can build a solution that showcases campaign progress and ROI or simply automate time-consuming and repetitive processes; no matter the need, teams are able to drive real-time communication and transform how they work.

Aids project and campaign planning

Marketers working on several projects at a time can't afford a missed deadline or cost overrun. Juggling multiple timelines, along with varying project budgets and sizes, and numbers of stakeholders in the approval process, can further complicate things.

Short of cloning yourself, you need a platform that helps you manage these programs better, in a clear and more efficient way.

Marketing campaigns, [event management](#), and other major initiatives require the skills and contributions of multiple team members. If you're an in-house marketing organization, you're likely tapping into a variety of partners including creative and ad agencies, media buyers, branding firms, social media shops, and more. No one has time for weekly hour-long status meetings with each of these agencies to stay informed — and forget about coordinating schedules across time zones.

Instead, the power of a work management platform truly shines when you can make changes in a centralized place, and every stakeholder — internally or externally — can be notified of tasks and next steps with an alert, have on-demand

Give your creative team the space they need to dream up big ideas.

[Learn how >](#)

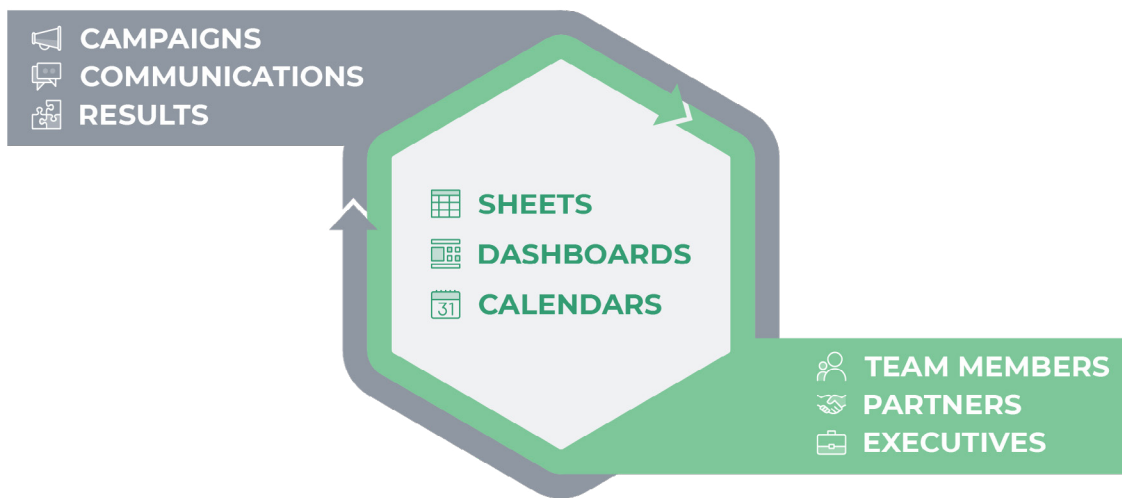
access to the program's timeline and status, or view a shared marketing calendar to identify dependencies and risks. This allows cross-functional marketing teams to coordinate, plan, execute, and report on programs with ease.

✓ Is easy to use

IT departments have their own projects and internal headaches to solve. The right solution provides marketers with the ability to get up and running without the handholding from technical experts. IT doesn't have to manage or troubleshoot the solution; with the right platform, everyone benefits from its ease of use and reliability.

The ideal platform provides structure without restrictions, workflows without developers, and insights without analysts — all while enabling true transparency across teams and functions. This allows marketers the space to work in the agile and creative ways they need. And it allows their partner teams — finance, legal, product, and more — the flexibility to work in the ways they need, too.

Because when you're planning six different campaigns in four different regions, you don't have time for 90-minute training sessions to learn a new system. And, when you're trying to connect myriad teams and stakeholders, you need a platform that is seamlessly adaptable and easy to use. As you scale programs, the right platform gives each person the ability to customize their experience and optimize how they work.



✓ Enhances speed of execution

Given the amount of content that marketing teams generate, the sheer number of campaigns launched, and the number of stakeholders involved, speed is important — especially if you want to be the leader in your competitive space. With the added pressure to maintain relevance in a quick-shifting consumer landscape, it's important to remember that what's hot today is old news tomorrow.

When there are many external and internal stakeholders involved, broken processes and a proliferation of software solutions create bottlenecks in approval. Creatives waste time finding and delivering files and images instead of actually spending their time creating brilliance. Stakeholders waste time digging through

emails to find the latest version to review. Context switching, when collaborators have to bounce between email and messaging apps and conferencing tools, also wastes time and leads to loss of information.

Whether you're managing an entire marketing organization, leading your creative team, or an individual contributor looking for a better way, you need a work management solution that is responsive and includes the latest updates in real time. From communicating an updated timeline to hitting the brakes on an entire campaign, you need a way to reliably cascade information without worrying about who you forgot to copy on an email thread.

✓ Enables secure access

The rise of remote work combined with international marketing efforts for global brands results in intensified urgency for your teams to be able to access information from anywhere at any time. From a late-night crisis to an early morning meeting with the Sydney office, you need a reliable solution that's ready when you are.

And given how much confidential information can be tied up in marketing campaigns — proprietary designs and prototypes, budget details, conversion rates, and more — it's imperative to have a secure solution you can trust. All of those details are more than enough to manage on their own; you don't need to stress about whether it's secure. And your IT and legal teams will demand it, so as you seek a solution, make sure to give them the information they need to sign off.

See a marketing solution in action.

[Watch now >](#)

✓ Provides an all-in-one package

The martech landscape is vast and complex. There's purpose-built software to address a variety of marketing challenges — advertising and promotion, content and experience, management of workflows, commerce and sales, and data — but marketers need a way to corral all these disparate tools and systems, and plan the programs that go into them.

Marketing frequently suffers because not everyone can see the entire landscape. Each part of the marketing team might have insights, but they work independently, preventing the ability to deliver a holistic picture. Worse, insights are available only when the campaigns are squarely in the rearview mirror. While analysis of completed campaign metrics can influence future campaigns, they don't help in the moment, when you need to adapt in real time.

The world of marketing is constantly evolving. To keep up, marketers need solutions to help them weave their people and processes together.



Future-proof your marketing

The pandemic accelerated the pace of digital transformation, spotlighting the need for agility. The entire world is working remotely, virtually, and across greater distances than ever before — and marketers are forced to work with greater urgency and under more pressure.

To future-proof your marketing organization, it's critical that you:



Trust your insights and prove measurable impact. Bring together the metrics that matter most — quantity, quality, performance, vanity, and more — into a single platform so everyone can effectively understand your data in context rather than piecing insights together. Understand the impact a single piece of content has on conversions, see how a suite of content affects results, and keep track of ROI.



Keep your finger on the pulse. Gain real-time visibility of organizational strategy, confidently forecast business needs, and monitor campaign status and performance. Real-time visibility keeps project schedules and budgets on track, giving you the ability to proactively spot and address issues and react in the moment.



Plan strategically. Proactively chart your vision, align myriad timelines, and empower your people to confidently share their perspective with an easy-to-use platform.



Unlock the potential of your teams. Assign the right people for every project while navigating the conflicts between top-down strategic planning and bottom-up work execution. Simplify resource allocation for accurate project planning and forecast staffing needs before your teams reach burnout.



Shape work your way. Every organization works differently, and so do humans. Create the workflows that work for you, and empower your teams to do the same. Automate workflows and proactively give managers real-time alerts and updates on the status of tasks and projects.



Integrate with the tools that matter the most to your business. Don't compromise on your needs to force-fit a piece of technology. Adopt a solution that integrates with the marketing tools you already know and love, so your team can work as one.

Let's talk about how Smartsheet can help you transform your department into a dynamic marketing team.

[Contact us >](#)

How marketers can move forward

According to [Gartner's latest annual CMO Spend Survey](#), CMOs noted that technology comprises 26% of their total marketing budgets, indicating it remains a priority even as nearly half of CMOs anticipate budget cuts.

And despite the strong links between technology and superior business outcomes, only 50% of employees who participated in a [Harvard Business Review Analytics Services survey](#) said that their company's technology stack was a match for employees' needs.

That means half of employees are struggling with tech that's too slow, doesn't integrate with other solutions, or lacks the functionality they need to be successful. And this breakdown was magnified in a global pandemic, forcing workers from the boardroom to their living rooms as organizations struggled to adapt seemingly overnight.

You simply can't afford to buy another piece of tech that adds complexity to your situation. To fix the dissonance between what marketers actually need and the inflexible solutions they have to work with, a robust collaborative work management (CWM) solution can close the gaps.

CWM enables marketers to integrate workflows, collaborate, and share and approve content through one dynamic platform. Rather than add more complexity, the right CWM platform weaves together your disparate tools across creative, digital asset management (DAM), CRM, analytics, and more. It will help your budget go further and liberate your teams from worrying about the work of work — so they can concentrate on driving results instead.

Here's how the right CWM platform provides a path forward:

Transforms work into dynamic work

The three most important functions of modern marketers are collaboration, workflow automation, and content management. But that work usually happens in silos.

Whether it's putting together the right team or identifying team members who are available to take on more assignments, you can better manage your resources and protect your people from burnout with realistic project allocations. Each of these assembled teams can transform teamwork into action, focus less on the work and get into the flow, and optimize how content is managed.

Adopting one dynamic platform brings together these central components of today's marketing work and allows marketing teams to work as a seamless, integrated whole.

Scales up or down depending on your needs

A flexible CWM platform can meet your precise needs with a little customization. If you're launching a handful of campaigns in small metros, or activating an experiential marketing campaign internationally and digitally, an ideal CWM solution can help you manage any size project, initiative, or campaign, no matter how complex.

Or if you prefer a little extra support, the right platform provider has experts ready to help you design an ultra-tailored solution.

Supports every stage and function of marketing

A great CWM solution covers all stages of marketing — from brainstorm to execution to metrics and analysis — so you don't have to rely on a piecemeal approach to get the job done. An ideal solution, however, becomes the connective fabric of your martech stack.

What's a DAM and why do you need one?

[Find out >](#)

Bring sanity to your kickoff meetings.

[See how >](#)

Doing more with less is a constant challenge, so you need to ensure your organization, your team, and your people have a platform that makes life easier. The right CWM solution integrates with the tools you already have (think Adobe Creative Cloud, Jira, Microsoft Teams, Tableau, Salesforce, and more) and provides you with capabilities you need to work effectively, like resource management and a DAM.

Provides a trusted, central source of truth

Teams are no longer confined to one office or even one country. The rise of remote work and digital nomads has changed the way we work.

Collaborative work management tools provide secure and easy access to authorized marketers and their partners, no matter where they're located or when they're working. And every stakeholder remains on the same page, with the same information, at the same time. No more wasted time spent emailing each other files and wondering who has what version and which one is the most current.

Allows people to focus on the work, not on the work about work

Too often marketers get wrapped up in the minutiae of project management details. Siloed marketing departments, remote work, and the speed and complexity of marketing campaigns increase the risk of poor communication, missed deadlines, and busted budgets — and accountability disappears.

In a robust CWM solution, workflows are more clearly defined thanks to simple automation, so it's easier for all stakeholders to tell who's responsible for what. Such accountability and transparency of data also helps information and analytics stay in-house instead of residing in experts' heads and leaving when the expert leaves.

Spartan Race uses Smartsheet to gain end-to-end visibility while managing global events.

[Hear their story >](#)

Need IT's approval for new technology? Give them the info they need to confidently approve your platform of choice.

[Speak IT's love language >](#)

Be ready for what's next

This future of work is dynamic and demands that you question every aspect of the way you work. New challenges require new solutions; no longer can you rely on old fixes. To gain an advantage, you need an ideal CWM solution. You need Smartsheet.

About Smartsheet

Smartsheet is the enterprise platform for dynamic work. A leading cloud-based platform for work execution, Smartsheet empowers organizations and teams to dynamically plan, execute, and report on work at scale, resulting in more efficient processes, innovative solutions, and better business outcomes. Today over 90% of Fortune 100 companies and over 75% of Fortune 500 companies rely on the secure, scalable Smartsheet platform to connect the entire enterprise. The single platform gives people a solution flexible enough to adapt to the changing needs of dynamic work across a broad array of departments and use cases. To learn more about Smartsheet, visit www.smartsheet.com.

