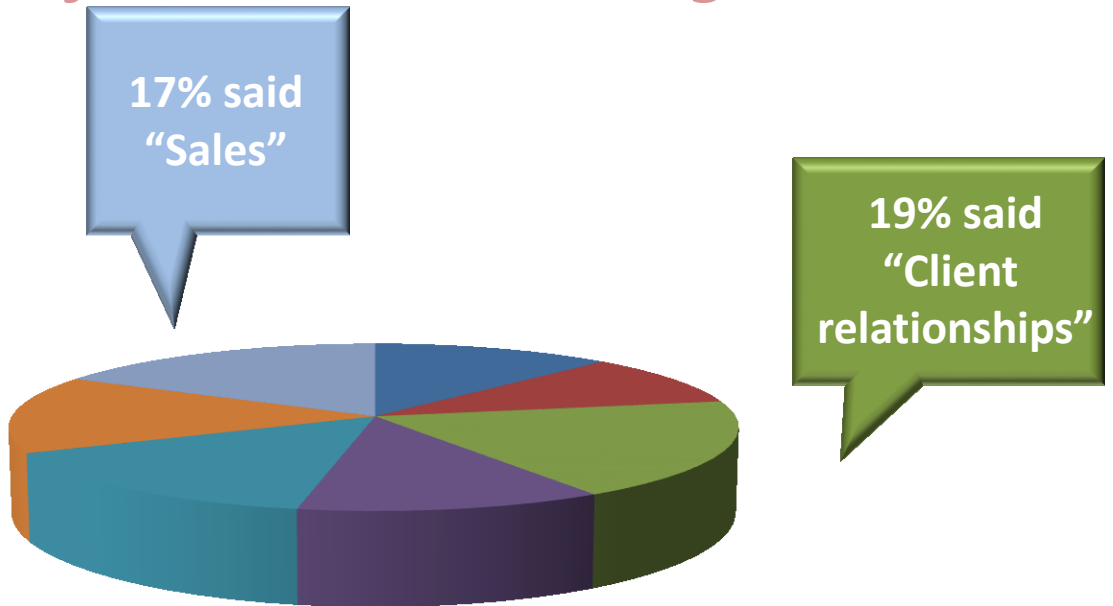


# Marketing Guide to Success

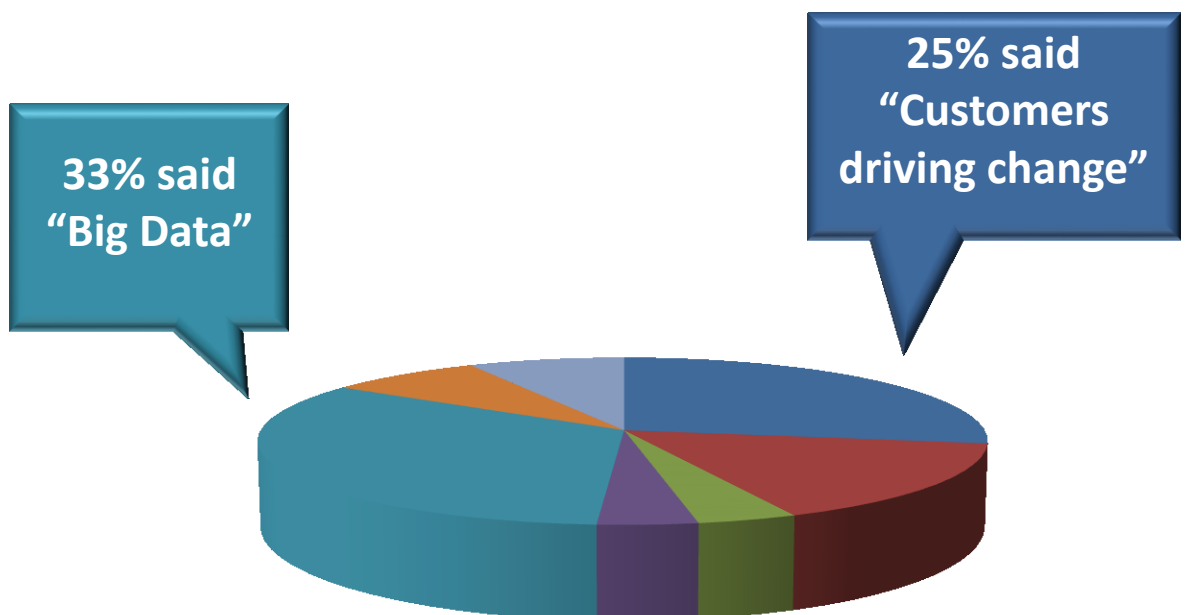
What your business needs to be thinking about to succeed



## Results from 2014 Marketing Trends Survey



What are the marketing priorities for 2014?



What is the next big consideration for marketing?

# Marketing Guide to Success

## What your business needs to be thinking about

### Developing a Marketing Advantage

The results of the 2014 Marketing Trends Survey gave some astonishing findings. Business is seeing a blurring of the boundaries between sales and marketing, resulting in an expectation that marketing prioritises its efforts on those areas of the marketing mix which will help directly generate sales.

Over a third of the organisations who responded felt that the emphasis needed to be on customer relations (retaining and winning) and achieving sales. This may well be as a result of increasing confidence in the economic climate; the majority of companies are willing to retain or increase marketing spend this year presumably in order to win more work, starting a virtuous growth cycle.

The rise of the social-consumer means marketing rethinking its approach. The organisation needs to become customer-centric, recognising that customers are its most valuable asset. How to use the information held on customers to create an enhanced buying experience remains one of the elusive marketing tests. While recognising that big data has real value to a company, the difficulty remains in how to translate data into insights which

deliver tangible results.

As customers become more selective in the way they choose to interact with companies, marketing has to work harder to create compelling marketing material which is appealing and compelling.

For the Marketing Director the greatest challenge comes from the destruction of the traditional marketing mix. The strategy for 2014 has to be targeted and focused, concentrating its resources and budget on those activities which will deliver sales.

Developing strong 'personal' relationships based on trust and respect between the customer and the company maintains real-time, proactive interaction, whether this is face-to-face or online. It is all about establishing trust and integrity.

Success therefore is a marketing strategy which is trust-based. By acting as the customers' advocate, the company can enjoy improved customer retention and stable revenue streams.

**Anna Hutton-North**  
**The Marketing Centre**

## Considerations

- The three critical components of successful client relationship management are people, process and technology.
- To achieve effective relationship management ensure that the company has the right relationships at every level. Mapping these out also allows the status of the relationship to be shown.
- Introducing a client relationship management programme can help to reduce costs and increase profitability.
- Make individuals accountable for developing relationships; monitor progress and share insights with others.
- Develop marketing material suitable for use by anyone in the company. Everyone interacting with the client is a sales advocate and should understand the company's offerings fully.





# Client Relationships

## The value of investing in clients

### Increasing opportunities through reduced marketing effort

Clients are the most valuable asset to any company. They are the literal life-blood.

Developing a successful client relationship programme means creating a customer-centric organisation. Achieving this requires aligning three areas: people, process and technology.

Client relationship management has to be adopted throughout the company to be truly effective. This means that within customers and targets there are the right relationships at very level, taking in decision makers, purchasers and influencers. Often these are grouped together to form client-service teams.

Mapping out the relationships held between the team and the customer's organisation allows the status of individual relationships to be shown (ie strong, intermittent to weak). It also highlights gaps where relationships have to be formed.

All those involved with a client organisation need to be accountable for developing the relationships, monitoring not only the individual progress but also

collecting and sharing insights with the wider team.

Marketing plays a key role in communicating to these client-service teams; translating the product/service offering into usable client conversation material. This means that the client-service team are equipped as sales advocates.

Close collaboration between the client-service team and marketing helps with this. In return marketing is able to take the big data collected and turn into valuable buying insights.

A formalised process shares this information throughout the company in an understandable format and improves future interaction. The most common way is through a CRM system which helps with the forecasting and analysis of customer trends and behaviour.

Introducing an effective client relationship management programme, particularly for those in the B2B arena, can help to reduce marketing costs and increase profitability for the company.

## Considerations

- Decide which is the most appropriate measure for growing sales; is the strategy to increase sales figures, improve revenues or enhance profit levels.
- Ensure that the customers' sales experience is attractive at every touch point; whether it is merchandise, digital or marketing communications.
- Establish relationships with complementary service advocates to act as sales promoters; review distribution channels to identify the best performers.
- Examine previous customers. Renewing old contacts is one way to develop sales.
- Understanding the profile of customers means it is easier to target people or businesses who are likely to buy.
- Look at bundling opportunities for products/services.



# Increasing Sales

## Aligning marketing to generation of sales

### Blurring the boundaries between sales and marketing

The traditional company structure has seen sales and marketing run as very different teams.

Now as the improving economic situation sees an increase in confidence, organisations are shifting away from cost-cutting and resource constraints. There is a recognition of the need to invest in marketing in order for the company to grow.

Closer collaboration between sales and marketing means sharing objectives and plans of action. This includes defining what is meant by 'increasing sales'. A strategy should clearly state whether it is to increase the number of sales, to improve overall revenues or to enhance the company's profit levels. This will have a direct impact on the marketing strategy.

The marketing strategy should also assess the current product/service portfolio. Developing bundled offerings reduces marketing effort while increasing the value of a sale.

Shifting the marketing team's focus to help generate sales means reassessing the way marketing works. Disassembling the marketing mix is essential in order to

establish which areas have the greatest influence over the sales journey.

Plotting out a customer's sales experience allows marketing to ensure every touch point is seen as attractive and valuable. Customers are becoming more discerning, so marketing needs to ensure consistent high-quality information is available over all channels.

Assessing usage of the channels will give marketing a better insight into customers' buying preferences. As consumers adopt new buying channels (particularly digital), marketing needs to respond quickly.

Use these channels to gather big data information on consumers. Monitoring and understanding the profile of customers helps with focused targeting. These insights can also give access to one channel which is often overlooked. Establishing strong relationships or partnerships with complimentary service/product providers can give immediate access to a new pool of targets. It also creates another advocate for the company and an additional proactive voice.



## Considerations

- To effectively convert customer data into a tangible value to the company it needs to form part of the strategic decision making. The company needs to move from channel marketing to adopt a big data led strategy.
- Big data can enable a truly enhanced consumer experience which makes more efficient use of marketing effort.
- To effectively establish what data can be collected, create a roadmap showing the channels, touch points and interactions of the customer journey.
- Direct customer relationships generate massive amounts of data; identify a unified way of collating, handling and computing the information across marketing and the rest of the company.
- Use heatmaps to gauge the quality of data collated from current data sources.





# Big Data

## Unlocking the value of client information

### Why Channel Marketing is now dead

The rise in customer-adoption of technology and social media means marketing is having to develop contact and content strategies that not only profile the customer, but also generates buying insights that provide competitive advantage.

Putting the customer at the centre of the organisation is the first step; however turning the focus of the company towards the consumer is not enough.

The increasing touch points with customers means an increased volume of data is available. Each touch point represents an immense opportunity for insight. This needs to be collected, collated and shared not only within marketing but also throughout the organisation; meaning a common adoption and understanding of the data collected and available.

For the Marketing Director this means developing a strategy which effectively converts the insights from the customer data into a marketing strategy. This strategy should address the different paths taken by groups of clients, based on their buying priorities and preferences and

giving a more pleasing consumer experience which develops into a longer-life customer.

The quality of the data being collected should be plotted on a heatmap, demonstrating which touch points are generating the most relevant data sources.

One of the ways of establishing what data can be collected from customers is to create a roadmap illustrating the current channels the company uses to go to market. Along these highlight the touch points and types of interaction. This ensures the data collection does not become onerous or over-bureaucratic.

The challenge for the Marketing Director is keeping abreast in a multi-channel world. Every new technology adoption by customers means an additional facet in the big data strategy to monitor.

However the ability to turn consumer data into customer insights provides marketing with a key differential which leads to personalisation, insights-driven marketing and a recognition of the customer as a major company asset.

## Considerations

- There are three principle reasons why customers are driving the change agenda: more choice, more information and easier transactions.
- As customers compare offerings and shifting is simpler, customer loyalty is becoming more transient.
- The internet has given customers the ability to come together and form larger buying groups who have increased bargaining power.
- Technology has shifted the power towards consumers. Mobile technology means customers can select and buy from anywhere.
- Customers are becoming more sophisticated in deciding who they want to communicate with. Marketing material therefore has to be appealing and seen as valuable.



# Customers driving change

## The rise of trust-based marketing

### How the balance of power has shifted to the consumer

Business is seeing a rise in the power of the customer impacting on sales and client retention.

There are three reasons why the balance of power has shifted to the customer; access to more choice, ability to retrieve information and the ease of transactions.

The breakdown of traditional buying methods is having a dramatic effect on marketing. Customers are becoming more sophisticated in their interaction with companies. They are taking control of the communications, sifting through and being more selective. They are now able to eliminate television adverts, screen telephone calls, block pop-ups, stop telemarketing and consign emails direct to spam.

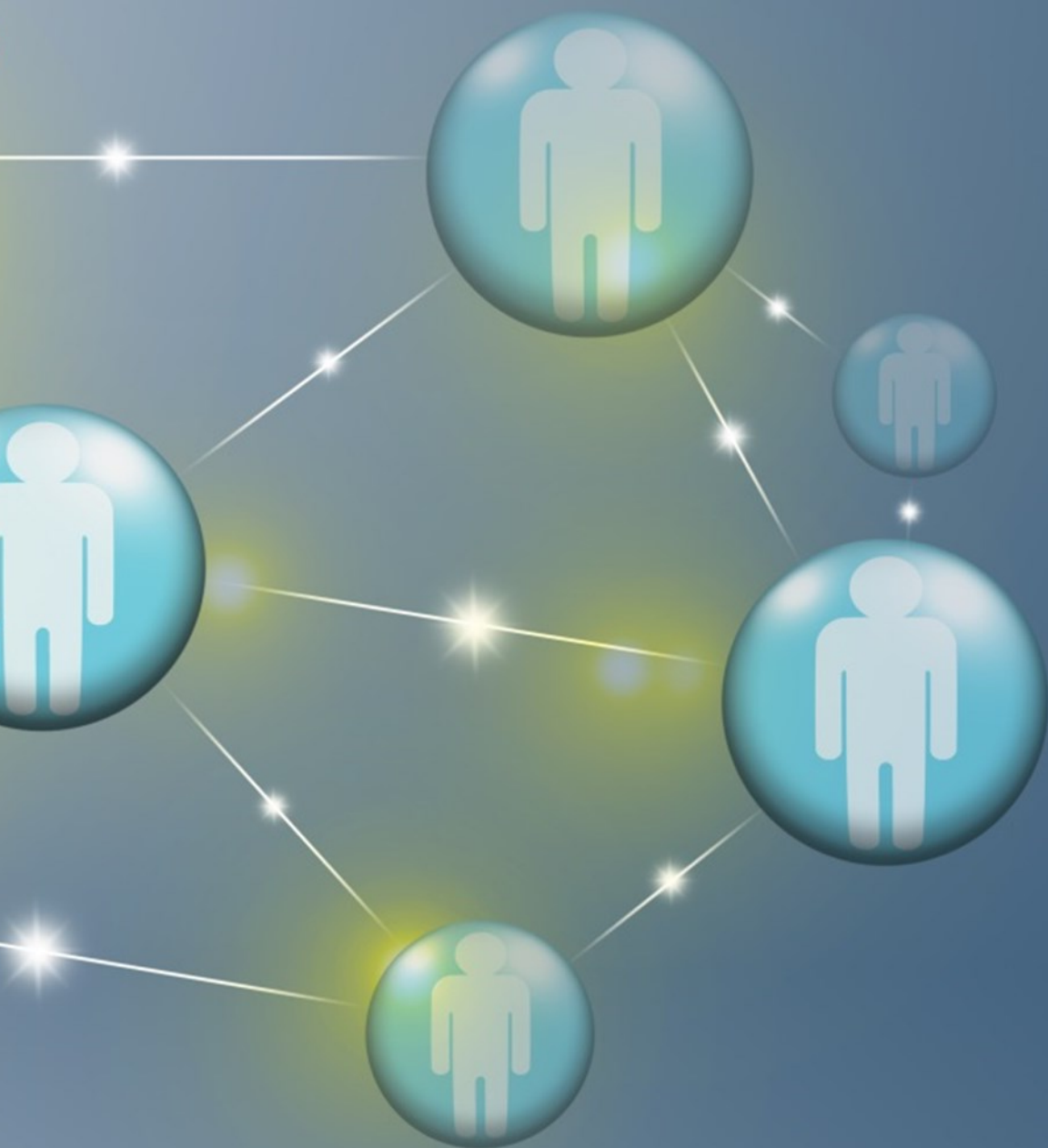
This makes communication with customers more difficult. The marketing material therefore has to be both appealing and seen as valuable to the consumer. Traditional sales-push communication is no longer seen as attractive; consumers expect the information to be informative, allowing them to compare and contrast before

making a purchase. This means the marketing professional needs to be providing information in a pleasing format across all their channels.

As customers adopt new technology, so too must the marketing team. The increase of mobile technology means customers are now selecting and buying from anywhere. They want to find information on the product/service instantly.

This has already led to the rise of the social customer, listening to third party evaluations and reviews. The use of the star ratings in Ebay is the ultimate in ranking companies.

The answer is to move to trust-based marketing; putting the customer at the centre of the business. When this is combined with an effective big data programme it means the marketing acts as the customers' advocate. It actively provides information, even competitive data for the good of the consumer. The consequence is higher customer retention and more stable revenue streams.



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