



MRM in the Age of Intelligence

Research Report

Contents

Introduction..... 2

Section 1: Marketers and the Customer Experience

Marketing: Guardians of the customer experience..... 4
Marketers and the brand experience..... 5
Are marketers’ tools fit for purpose in a complex world?..... 6

Section 2: Planning, Reviewing, Optimising

The problem with planning..... 8
Clarity the key to efficient creation and review..... 12
Optimisation: First things first..... 16
Conclusion 18
Contact Us 18

Introduction

Marketing Resource Management is being reinvented in the era of artificial intelligence to enable marketers to make better use of their own data to be more effective, productive marketers. But to take full advantage of the new capabilities of MRM, marketing teams must be willing to capture the information that can enable them to work smarter.

There are a number of factors driving a renewed interest in MRM technology globally at present, including:

- Increasing brand governance requirements, coupled with the responsibility falling on many marketing teams to go beyond the brand and manage the customer experience;
- Growing complexity in marketing, which is driving the need to find efficiencies, improve productivity and create agility through the smarter use of marketing tools, people, partners and processes; and
- An increased focus on data and growing demands for marketers to demonstrate an improved return on marketing investment.

Many marketing teams have already introduced MRM technology. But a new generation of digital-native marketers is now taking an interest in next-generation MRM technology, with 41% of chief marketing officers expected to [invest in MRM](#) over the next 2 years. As a result, MRM is tipped to grow at 15% a year to be worth [\\$9bn by 2020](#), with some estimates putting growth at closer to 30%.

Marketers nominate [enhancing the customer experience](#) as the top priority driving their marketing strategy -- but a lack of organisational readiness is hampering their efforts, bringing into sharp relief the need for a modern control centre for marketing.

In this report, we discuss the findings of Marketing Resource Management in the Age of Intelligence -- a study of how marketing teams are faring as they work through the key marketing phases of planning, review and optimisation using a complex arrangement of technology, partners and channels to deliver consistent customer experiences, create efficiencies, drive agility and improve ROI.

Methodology

We conducted quantitative research and interviews with more than 300 marketers on managing the customer experience through better Marketing Resource Management.



In order to remain agile, process optimisation should be a priority for marketers. It's essential to take a disciplined approach to marketing resource management as marketers broaden their remit to managing the customer experience. Lee Tonitto - CEO, Australian Marketing Institute

Section 1

Marketers and the Customer Experience

Marketing: Guardians of the customer experience

The prediction that marketers' remit would [expand beyond marketing](#) to include responsibility for managing the end-to-end customer experience is becoming a reality, according to respondents to Marketing Resource Management in the Age of Intelligence.

- Marketing is generally in charge of managing the customer experience, with the chief marketing officer or marketing team responsible in 59% of organisations, respondents to the study indicated.
- A designated chief experience officer or chief customer officer is responsible in 13% of cases.
- The chief executive or executive team takes that mantle in a further 7% of organisations.

In line with these findings, the study shows marketers rate brand consistency as being very important but they are not so confident about their ability to achieve it.

In addition, it shows that marketing teams often rely on static processes to manage fluid and evolving brand and customer experiences. This limits their ability to manage brand governance and the customer experience effectively as marketing complexity increases and organisations look to grow and scale.

Who is responsible for managing the customer experience?

59%

CMO or Marketing Team

13%

Chief Experience/Customer Officer

7%

CEO or Executive Team



Many experienced marketers are being charged with managing the entire customer experience, including call centres and potentially shopfronts. I don't think it's easy, but I do think it's desirable. Pat Duffy - Former CMO, Defence Force Recruiting, Telstra

Marketers and the brand experience

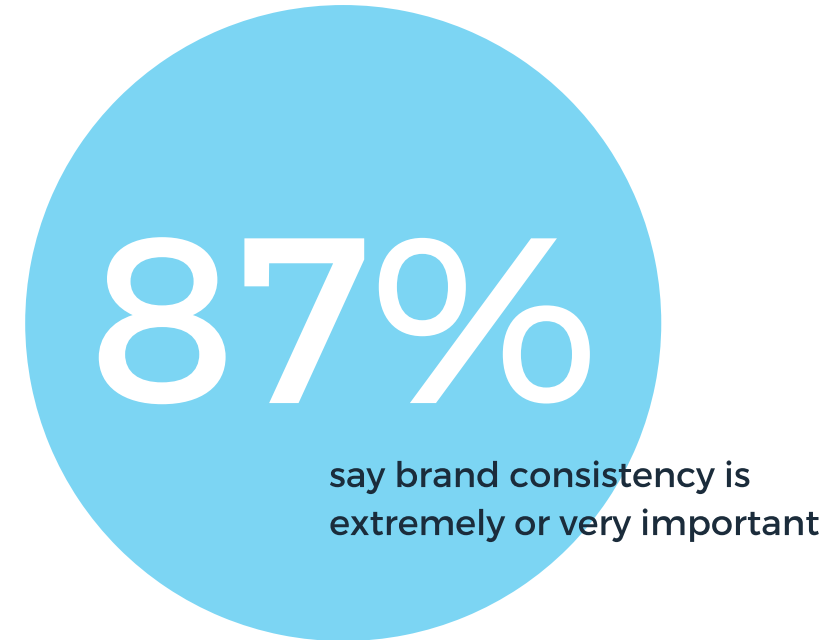
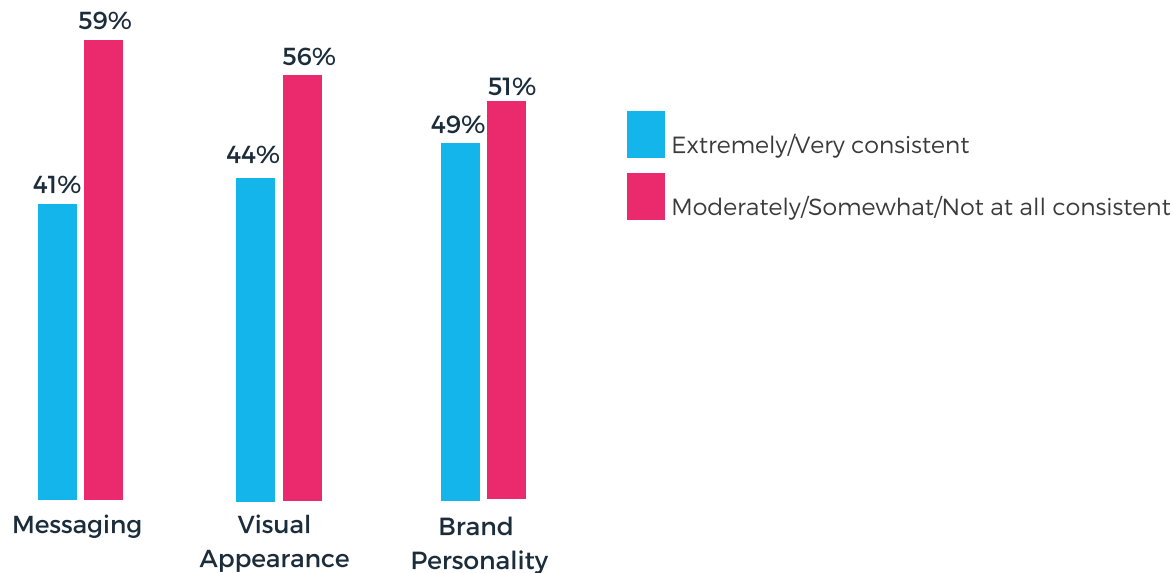
We asked marketers to rate the importance of brand consistency across all customer touch points and found it remains a high priority: 87% say brand consistency is either extremely important or very important.

But marketers are unsure they are achieving the brand consistency they so value.

When we asked respondents to rate their brand's marketing communications for consistency, less than half described their messaging, visual appearance, brand personality and alignment to business objectives as being very or extremely consistent.

- 41% describe their messaging as extremely or very consistent
- 44% rate their marketing as very or extremely consistent for visual appearance
- 49% describe their marketing very or extremely consistent for brand personality.

Rate your brand consistency for the following attributes:



Are marketers' tools fit for purpose in a complex world?

The ambivalence marketers' feel over their own brand consistency raises the issue of whether the current marketing tool set is sufficient for managing the brand and broader customer experience in a complex world.

There is little argument about the increasing complexity of marketing today from the study's respondents.

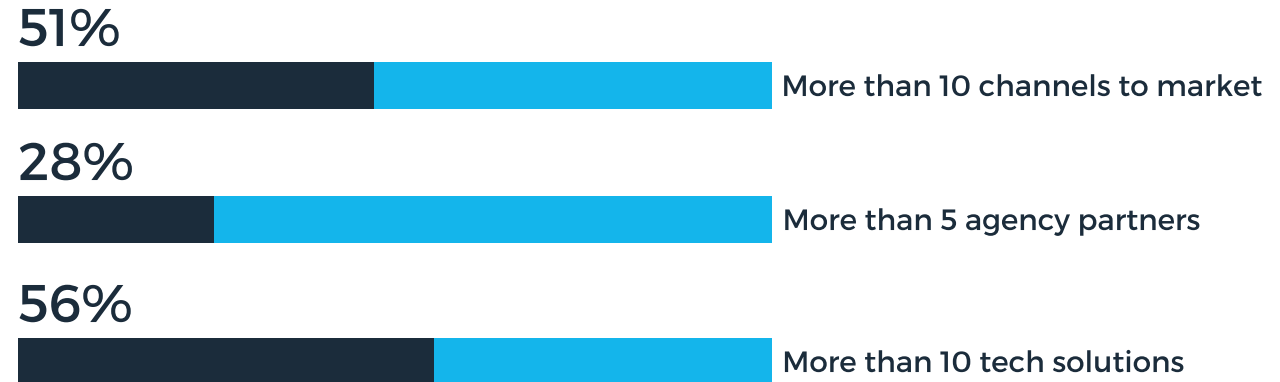
- 51% use more than 10 channels to market
- 28% have more than 5 agency partners
- 56% use more than 10 technology solutions

But it appears the approach many marketing teams take to managing that experience has not kept up with this complexity. Most teams enforce a consistent customer experience through the use of static mechanisms or leave it to the in-house creative team.

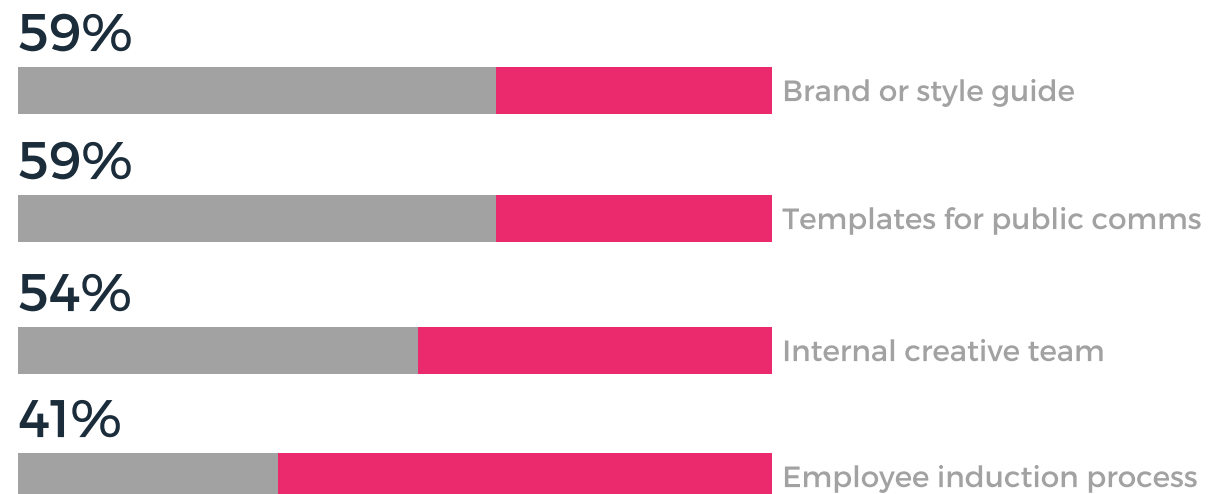
- 59% of marketers use a brand or style guide
- 59% use templates for public communications
- 54% say an internal creative team manages it
- 41% cover it during the employee induction process

This begs the question: if marketers continue to struggle to maintain brand consistency, can they successfully tackle the critical, broader responsibility of managing the customer experience?

Level of marketing complexity: channels, partners and tools



How is a consistent customer experience enforced?



Section 2

Planning, Reviewing, Optimising

The problem with planning

Marketing Resource Management in its entirety encompasses the key marketing functions of planning and budgeting, creative review and execution, and reporting and optimisation.

In this section, we examine in more detail how well-served marketing teams are by their current tools and processes governing the planning, review and optimisation functions, beginning with alignment to overarching business objectives.

1. Alignment

There is a disconnect for a significant proportion of marketers at the very beginning of the marketing process, responses to the study suggest. Almost two in three marketers (62%) say their marketing activity is at best moderately aligned with their organisation's business objectives.

Just 38% say their marketing is very or extremely consistent with those business objectives.

How well-aligned is marketing to business objectives?

38%



62%



When it comes to communicating the marketing objectives that result from those business objectives to the marketing team, most teams rely on static or ad-hoc mechanisms that are unconnected with marketing projects, such as marketing presentations. Worse still, 13% don't communicate them at all!

How are marketing objectives conveyed to the wider team?

69%



54%



46%



13%



The problem with planning

2. Budgeting

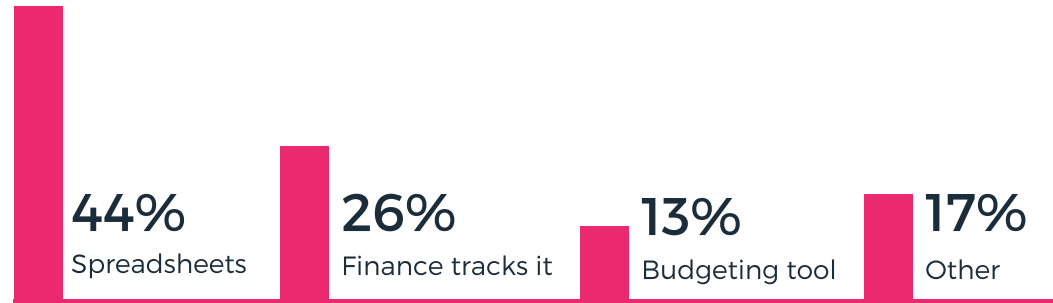
Unfortunately, it doesn't get much better when it comes to budgeting. Most marketers either manually track their spend using spreadsheets, or have it tracked by the finance department.

- Only 13% easily monitor their spending
- A further 21% painstakingly track it manually
- A majority of marketers (62%) only know approximate expenditure or must rely on finance to update them
- Of those, 21% don't know how much they've spent until it's reconciled months later.

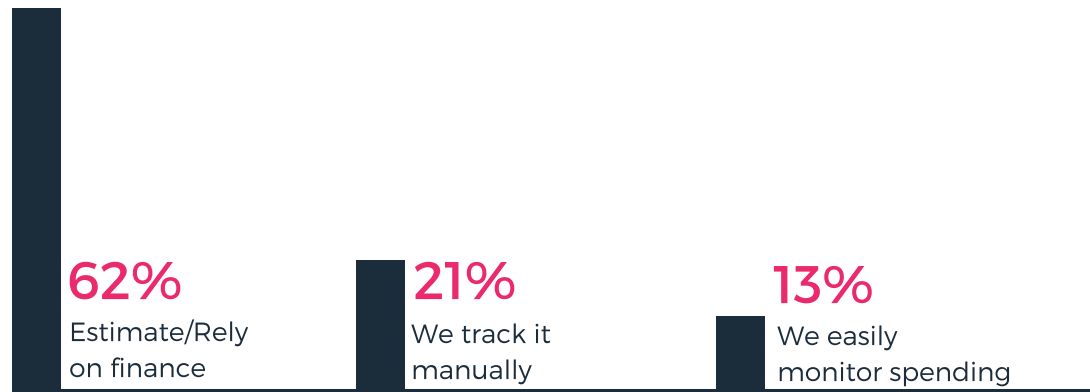


As a marketer, being able to track and manage your budget is essential. You need to continuously manage your spend and tie it back to your plan and revenue so you know the return on your marketing investment and you've got the data to backup your decisions. There's way too much room for error with spreadsheets. Mitchell Mackey, Marketing Director, Ansell

How does marketing track spend against budget?



Describe your team's relationship with your marketing budget...



The problem with planning

3. Marketing planning

When it comes to planning marketing activity, how do most marketers do it? With difficulty, using tools that are not fit for purpose and show irrelevant or out-of-date information.

The most common tools used for marketing planning are spreadsheets, which are used by 52% of respondents, and shared documents, which are used by 15%.

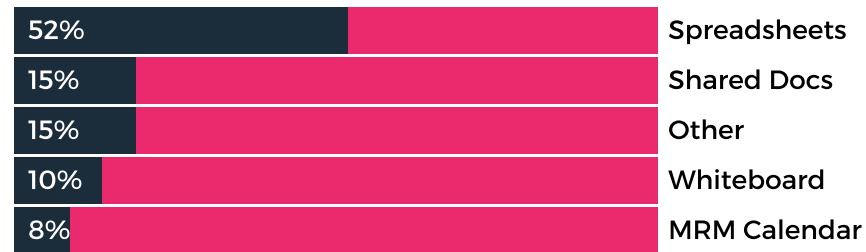
We asked marketers to rate how well their planning tool suited their needs in terms of providing an up-to-date view of their marketing plan.

- Only 10% say their planning tool is very suitable.
- Almost two in three (64%) say their planning tool is 'somewhat' suitable or not at all.

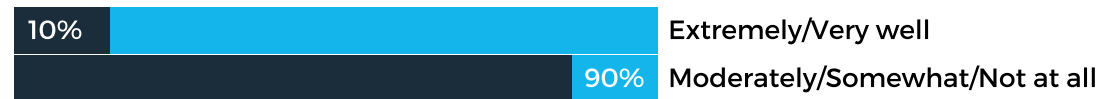
It was a similar story when marketers were asked to rate their planning tool for its ability to show a segmented view of marketing activity -- such as by channel, by customer segment or by geographic territory -- or by tailoring information to particular stakeholders, such as product divisions, business units or the executive team.

And only 5% say their marketing plan captures results very well to enable marketing to improve its performance over time; 43% say it captures results moderately well or somewhat; and 52% say it doesn't capture results at all.

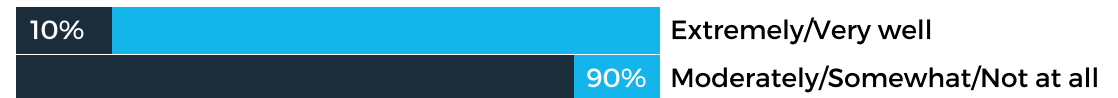
What is your primary tool for marketing planning?



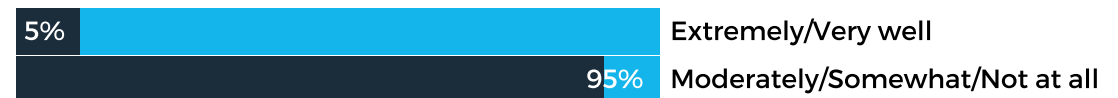
How well does your primary planning tool provide a segmented view of marketing activity?



How well does your primary planning tool provide a tailored view to different stakeholders?



How well does your primary planning tool capture results to improve marketing activity?



The problem with planning

4. Briefing

Writing a marketing brief or creative brief to provide direction to creative teams about the work required gives marketers trouble across the board, but despite this, one in four organisations don't take any action to improve the standard of briefing.

The most common difficulty, nominated by 44% of respondents, is writing inspirational and creative briefs that get the best work from their agencies. But providing insight and inspiration to agency partners is not the only problem area.

- Two in five (41%) struggle to write consistent briefs aligned to strategic goals
- One in three (36%) find it hard to find all the necessary information to include
- 41% find consistency across the organisation hard to achieve
- One in five (23%) say they struggle with all of the above.

With which aspects of briefing do you or team sometimes struggle?



These difficulties are surprisingly costly in terms of the number of times briefs to agencies are revised: among those who tracked it, 28% reported averaging more than 3 revisions to a brief. A further 31% didn't keep track of revisions at all.

Average number of revisions to creative briefs to agencies:



Despite these troubles, 28% take no action to ensure briefs are of an acceptable standard. When they do, the most common form is to provide static written instructions (41%) and rely on the marketer to keep them on hand.

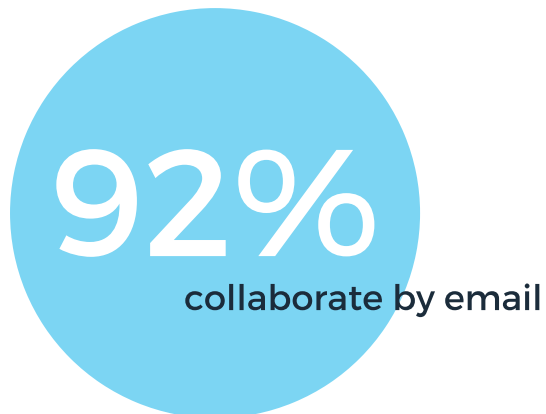
- 31% require internal approvals for briefs
- 15% rely on the agency to write the brief.

Clarity the key to efficient creation and review

Traditionally, many marketing teams relied solely on external creative agencies to create their marketing and communications materials, which required them to review, amend and approve that work prior to distribution.

That balance is shifting, according to the US Association of National Advertisers, which has found [more than two-thirds \(67%\) of marketers now use in-house creative agencies](#) or a combination of in-house and external agencies -- which means marketers now often work with internal creative teams and content creators.

Regardless, a clear understanding of roles, requirements and a commitment by all participants to meeting timelines during the review process remains critical for the efficient creation of marketing materials, according to respondents to the study. But despite that, a majority of marketing teams take an ad-hoc approach to marketing process.

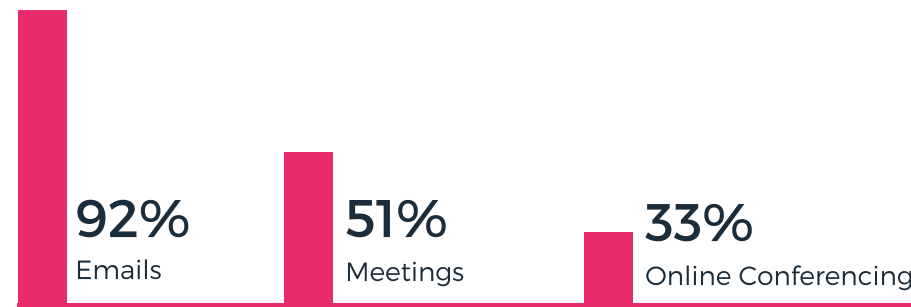


1. Collaboration

Despite the proliferation of modern collaboration technology, most marketers rely on email and in-person meetings to manage the collaboration and review process.

- 92% nominate email as a primary collaboration tool
- 51% collaborate in meetings
- 33% use online conferencing technology.

How does your marketing team collaborate and manage approvals?



Clarity the key to efficient creation and review

2. Marketing process

Marketers are conscious of the need to improve their marketing process but a majority are working in the dark. More than half don't know how much time process inefficiencies are costing them because they don't measure it.

- 51% don't track their marketing processes at all.

The most commonly tracked metric is campaign turnaround times, recorded by just one in three teams (36%), followed by the number of revisions to briefs (23%).

What marketing process data do you collect?

51%

Do not track processes

36%

Track turnaround times

23%

Track revisions to briefs

Despite a failure to monitor process, however, most teams include some focus on process improvement. When steps are taken to improve marketing process, most commonly this happens in meetings or by email.

How does your team improve its processes?

59%

WIP Meetings

46%

Emails/Shared docs

44%

Documented workflows



Much of the value in introducing an MRM was to shake up and streamline our marketing processes, get greater clarity on who is approving, what the timelines are, and understanding where, when and why an activity is taking place.

Kerry-Ann Benton, senior marketing planner, Australia Post

Clarity the key to efficient creation and review

3. Compliance

Marketing compliance and risk management is another area in which marketing teams often appear to cross their fingers and hope for the best despite increasing governance and privacy burdens that marketing teams must carry.

One in 10 marketers admitted to experiencing one or more compliance breaches in the past 3 years -- although that figure may be higher as 23% of respondents opted not to disclose that information.

Despite that, a large majority of teams follow no official compliance procedures. One in five marketers meets their compliance obligations by generating physical copies of the material in question and having them manually approved.

How does your team manage compliance and governance issues?

We have no formal process

41%

We manually send for sign-off

23%

We use an MRM system

23%

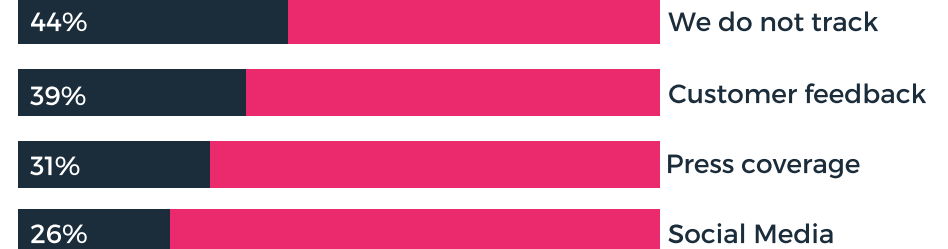
We mark it off in a spreadsheet

13%



Customer feedback (39%), press coverage (31%) and social (26%) are the most popular ways of tracking the impact of compliance breaches. Two in five marketing teams (44%) don't measure the impact of breaches on their brand at all.

How does your team track the impact of compliance breaches?



Clarity the key to efficient creation and review

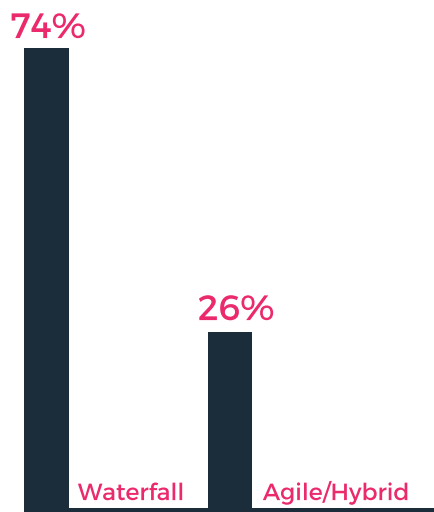
4. Agile Marketing

The big news in marketing process is undoubtedly the increasing popularity of agile marketing -- the adaptation of the agile frameworks and philosophy that originated in software development for the creation of marketing work.

But while there remains a lot of hype around agile marketing, a large majority of marketing teams are so far sticking with traditional -- or waterfall -- project management techniques. Only 8% are agile marketing purists.

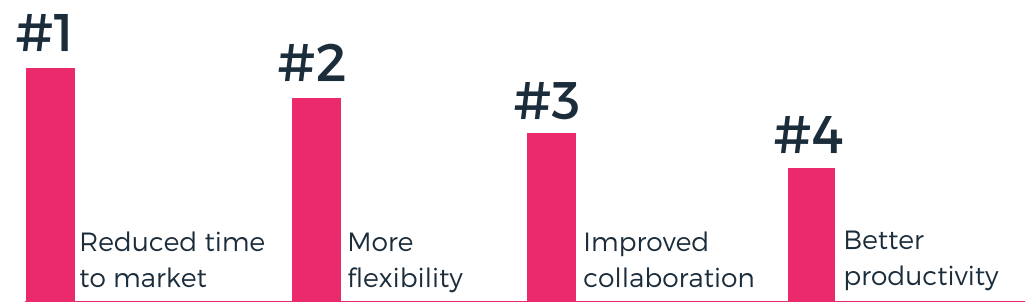
- 74% of respondents use waterfall processes
- 26% use some agile marketing processes.

Best descriptor for your marketing process...



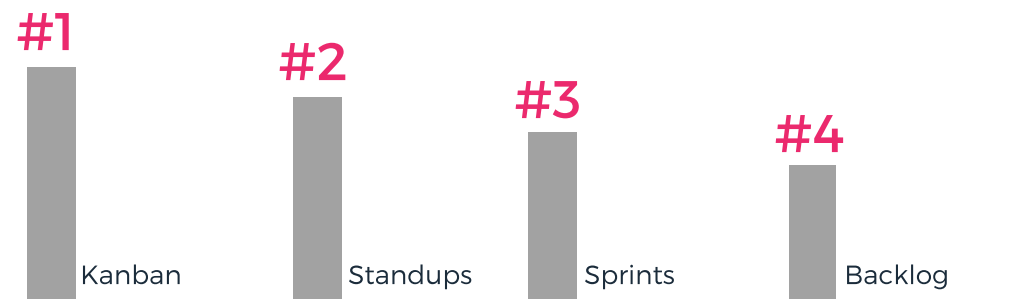
Interestingly, process improvement rather than more effective marketing topped the reasons marketers cited for adopting agile marketing. Speed was the most popular objective, followed by greater internal flexibility, improved collaboration and better productivity.

What are you hoping to achieve by being more agile?



Of those marketers using agile marketing processes, 70% began to use it in the past 2 years. Lean is the most popular process, adopted by 40% of respondents. And the most commonly used agile marketing features are kanban boards to manage workflow, standups to report progress, sprints and a prioritised backlog of work.

Which features of agile marketing do you use?



Optimisation: First things first

The most difficult part of the marketing process when it comes to Marketing Resource Management is optimisation, both for more efficient use of resources internally and in terms of maximising marketing effectiveness.

Essential to the continual improvement of outcomes in both cases is measurement, which respondents to the study have already revealed to be an area in need of improvement.

So while capturing the data in question is currently a challenge, there is undoubtedly a willingness to use both internal data and marketing activity results to improve outcomes.

1. Process Optimisation

Taking process optimisation first, we asked marketers to nominate the scenarios that would make their team more efficient.

Simply completing work and approvals on time was cited as the biggest potential time-saver to marketing teams, together nominated by one in two (52%) respondents, revealing the pervasive impact of deadline slippage.

Next most popular was a centralised collaboration workspace (18%), followed by the proper completion of marketing briefs and creative briefs (13%).

Which scenario would save your team the most time?

52%



18%



13%



2. Reporting

But marketing teams still face significant hurdles when it comes to optimising campaign results through Marketing Resource Management.

We asked marketers to rate how well their planning tool captured marketing activity results to improve performance.

- Only 5% said very well.
- 43% said moderately well or somewhat.
- One in two (52%) said their results were not captured within the same tool.

How does your planning tool capture marketing activity results to improve performance?



Optimisation: First things first

3. Artificial Intelligence

Marketers are excited by the possibility of using their own marketing results and marketing process data to improve outcomes via the application of artificial intelligence.

We surveyed marketers about how they would like to see AI applied to improve their marketing process. The responses show the difficulty marketing leaders have getting a complete picture of marketing activity. Three in four respondents (74%) would use it to suggest the most effective insights based on previous campaigns.

- 72% would use AI to improve the return on marketing investment
- Two in three (69%) would use it to recommend streamlined workflows.

How would you like to see AI applied to improve your marketing?

Suggest the most effective insights based on previous campaigns

74%

Improve return on marketing investment

72%

Recommend streamlined workflows

69%

Recommend a more effective use of marketing budget based on past results

56%

Recommend more effective allocation of team resources to improve productivity

54%

Automatically generate briefs, or large parts of briefs

54%

Recommend next best actions to improve the customer experience

51%

Improve media mix based on previous results

49%

Generate a more effective top-line marketing plan based on past results

44%

Automatically plan specific campaigns based on best practice

41%

● Conclusion

With a majority of marketers now in control of the customer experience, governance issues have never been more important for brands. But while the remit of marketers has never been so broad, many marketing teams say they are not yet meeting expectations when it comes to brand consistency in traditional areas such as messaging and visual appearance.

The use of static tools to manage fluid situations and a failure to monitor key data sets to enable those marketing processes, results and return on marketing investment to be improved is a recurring theme.

A back-to-basics approach that would see an active, rather than an ad-hoc approach to monitoring and improving marketing process is the first hurdle for marketing teams looking to use Marketing Resource Management to improve productivity.

And while there is considerable interest in the possible benefits of using artificial intelligence to improve marketing effectiveness, some key steps need to take place first -- such as capturing marketing activity results in a way that is accessible to modern marketing planning tools.

Only then can Marketing Resource Management apply the insights gleaned from customers' own internal and activity-based results to help make marketing teams more effective, more efficient and better able to generate an improved return on marketing investment.

Watch

9 Ways to Modernise your Marketing Plan [Webinar]

Download

5 Essential Workflows for Time-Poor Marketers [Templates]

Learn

Hack Agile Marketing in 8 Simple Steps [eBook]

Want to see Simple in action?

Book a demo to see how Simple can help your team streamline, manage and automate your marketing workflows so you can reduce complexity and create more effective marketing.