Marketing Teams of The Future

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A letter from
our Co-Founder

I'm a 22 y.o. marketer who grew up with the internet. I'm a millennial. You know the species that older generation hates and who apparently can't afford a house because of too many avocado toasts. Like it or not, internet is shaping the world we live in, how we communicate, interact with others & businesses, consume content, and pay attention to things happening around us.

Facebook users spend an average of 1.7 seconds per piece of content on mobile and 2.5 seconds on desktop. In that lovely scenery of an on-the-go generation I will actually try to earn your undiverted attention for the next few hours. I'll be telling you a story ABOUT content, digital, and essentially how to survive as a marketing team in the close future.

I don't have any academic background, I'm actually a dropout. Millenials, right? Nevertheless, I've been working with digital agencies and brands since I was 17 years old. Even in the early years of my career, I was looking to answer one question - what's standing in the way of a more seamless way of working within the creative & marketing industry? Through this ebook I want to share my answer with the world. Now I'm not a scientist and this is not an academic study. But it is a result of over 5 year of observing and analyzing hundreds of teams struggling with the same problem. And it's what I do best.

The first team that I analyzed was, evidently, my own. This question came to mind while I was trying to build and grow a nonprofit organization - AoM. An academy meant to help young men between 16 and 19 y.o. learn more about manly ethics, manners, and real men behavious. We started this as a mission to solve many problems we've seen on the streets of a post-soviet country. It was exactly like starting a company: I thought of people, budget, promotion, media, logistics. All the bits and pieces without a clear focus & strategy in mind.

Calling what we did a process, would be a stretch in itself. All our ways were manual and old-school. But a bunch of high schoolers being inefficient isn't the concerning part, it's the fact that I've seen so many brands choosing the EXACR same processes. I used Excel together with pieces of paper, sticky notes, and endless Word documents. I was sharing them through Facebook Messenger. Sending them on my email to find it later on another computer. I had notes everywhere, with dozens of ideas that were lost under hundreds of lists, papers, post-its, agendas, emails, and calendar invites. It was complete chaos.

I remember that the concept of collaboration was strictly limited to "partnership" instead of teamwork, union, synergy, and generally working together as a team with everyone aligned.

The way the marketing industry works now

If you look at the way marketers plan, organize & collaborate on content (social media, blog posts, banners, podcasts, newsletters, email campaigns) it's all old school. One of the most innovative industries bows to the "almighty" Excel that Microsoft released back in '85.

Don't get me wrong. I myself love Excel. It is certainly a powerful tool that helps you build great charts, organize, plan, analyze, and bring data together. The fact remains that it's not designed for creative marketing professionals. We're the people with just a tab more creativity in our minds than normal. And we're all stuck and limited by cells. Excel documents are limiting creatives in all possible ways, instead of enabling them to focus on what they do best - creating beautiful & inspiring content.

For a clearer idea of the magnitude of this situation, The Harvard Business Review showed that people are wasting 21.8 hours each week on tasks that add little to no value to their company. That includes non-productive or wasteful meetings, low-value requests from co-workers, interruptions, back-and-forth emails, and low-value business activities which could easily be outsourced.

A recent survey was conducted among business owners, geared toward assessing the efficiency of their marketing strategy. The survey found that about 90 percent of managers spend time on administrative tasks that were independent of their ascribed workplace functions. About 80 percent reported that they were relying on inefficient, manual methods for conquering basic marketing tasks. It's these manual processes that take over workdays and provide businesses with little value in return. Yet, surprisingly, many companies still rely heavily on manual processes, even for the most mundane and simplistic tasks.

Imagine how much time you've lost over the years because of these disrupted workflows and how you could've spent it productively? Less time spent on tedious tasks means more time spent on strategy, development, creative, and work that makes your brand great. That's what we'll tackle in the book.

What we fight for

Content creation and approvals happen across borders and time zones. Marketers spend two hours a day gathering information as a result of being isolated. Marketing channels are expanding and brands are creating more content than ever which leads to professionals being overworked. By 2020 content will become marketer's biggest bottleneck. And the tools they currently use are not going to help them make this easier. Today, content production happens across a mishmash of spreadsheets, powerpoints, and endless email threads. This process is slow and frustrating for those on the frontlines. It is also very expensive for those who are paying the extra hours of tedious work.

If we continue wasting time we will never evolve as an industry and will just fortify the bottleneck.

A brief marketing history

from a Marketer's Perspective

In a way, marketing is one of the first "jobs" ever created by humanity. Wait, hear me out! People were exchanging goods and services since forever. Bartering became the norm and so people needed innovative tactics to showcase a product, promote it, and present its value to a potential "customer", right? Commerce has been around for thousands of years so ancient people used many tactics that we recognize in marketing nowadays in order to conduct their business.

Scientists found cave paintings that were used to communicate with others, cc 40,000 BC. Archeologists found political campaign displays and commercial messages among the ruins of Pompeii. Not to mention the town criers who used to make public announcements on the streets. They represented the main means of "mass" communication prior to widespread literacy since many people could not read or write.

In 1440, Gutenberg fine-tuned the concept of the printing press and it was introduced to the world. It allowed people to print everything faster and on-demand which, in itself, created many industries in the next following centuries. Think print advertising, newspapers, magazines, posters, banners, billboards and much more.

Print advertising made it possible for retailers to pass out brochures and fliers to potential customers. In 1704, Boston Newsletter posted its first advertisement in Oyster Bay and the 1730s brought the first magazines and with them, a new way to market a product.

And then it all began.

The 1.0 of marketing

The earliest recorded use of mass unsolicited spam in 1864 was an advertisement coming in the form of a telegram. Not long after that, posters appeared in France. They gained immediate popularity and even more so after becoming affordable to produce. However, their use on private properties was quickly banned in both London and France. Turns out Adblock has been a thing for a while. From posters on walls we quickly got to billboards on buildings in 1867.

Radio Advertising came next in 1922. Businesses began purchasing advertising time to be the main topic in families gathered around the new device. And in 1941 consumers got the joy of television and with it the pain of commercial breaks. We've come a long way, haven't we?

Mad Men, start your engines

The Golden Era of Advertising is portrayed in AMC's Mad Men show in a popularised and romanticised fashion. The life of advertising agencies in the '60s was indeed quite cool, but Don Draper wouldn't even recognize much of today's advertising business. The world of advertising driven by technology, clicks, conversion, "growth hacks", and personalized marketing.

The 60s were advertising's golden age when the industry mastered the means of TV, photography, creativity, and copywriting to produce some of the worlds best ads. Ads that are still thresholds of innovation and creativity today. Ads that lived in the world where the industry was highly influenced by cultural changes, political events, innovation, and sophistication. The age of consumption through which advertising's purpose was to keep that trend at an all-time high.

Starting in 1959, Doyle Dane Bernbach (DDB) created one of the best campaigns in advertising history for Volkswagen's Beetle in the US. DDB decided to embrace the car's liabilities and advertise it exactly as it is - "Lemon" & "Ugly". No changes, no "Photoshop" or tricks - just the plain truth.

Not long after that, we've seen the print series of 1962 - "We Try Harder" campaign by Avis in the United States. The runner-up used its position and disadvantage as their best argument. In a world that accepts only Nr. 1's, it was a fantastic campaign followed by a masterclass copy and strategic audacity.

The same age was marked by the memorable Pepsi Generation, an advertising campaign for Pepsi-Cola that launched in 1963 as the result of a slogan contest. The winning writer got a new car as a result of Alan Pottasch's brainchild, a PepsiCo advertising executive.

come alive!
You're in the Pepsi generation!

Who is the Pepsi generation? Everyone with a young view of things! Livelier people with a liking for Pepsi Cola. Famous regular Pepsi—with the bold, clean taste and energy to liven your pace. Or new Diet Pepsi—with that same honest-to-Pepsi taste and less than a calorie a bottle. The Pepsi generation? It's a whole lot of people like you!

IF DIET PEPSI IS NOT AVAILABLE IN YOUR AREA, IT WILL BE SOON !

"PEPSI-COLA" AND "PEPSI" ARE TRADEMARKS OF PEPSI-COLA COMPANY, REG. U. S. PAT. OFF. © 1964, PEPSI-COLA COMPANY

PEPSI-COLA

All these amazing campaigns that we still gasp at were created in meetings and through phone calls - the only collaboration tools available at the time. Creatives, copywriters, designers and account managers were gathering up in one room to brainstorm, smoke, drink and discuss the next campaigns they were working on. The winning idea was sent to the design team where it was crafted manually by hand and sent to the team for review. After the Marketing Director's approval, it got pitched to the client.

All the ideas were presented directly in the room with the client & team, feedback sessions followed and then execution on TV, Radio, and Newspapers happened. Sounds familiar?

We still have the phone calls, emails, meetings. Considering 60 years have passed, our processes definitely didn't keep up.

Marketing 3.0 - the World Wide Web & WYSIWYG

It wasn't that long ago when typewriters were the go-to-tool. They were vital before word processors like your favorite Microsoft Word, Google Docs, or Dropbox Paper. Some of them we're still doing this on paper but the word processors change deverything, thanks to WordStar.

WordStar was one of the first commercially successful word processing software programs for personal computers. It was launched by Micropro International in 1978.

WYSIWYG is an editor system in which content (text and graphics) is be displayed precisely as it will be seed by the end-user depending on screen display, and other settings. WYSIWYG helps creators visualize what they're producing. Instead of typing the HTML code for a new font & color you would easily use WYSIWYG. Almost all the current website building solutions have this, including Magento, Shopify, Wordpress, Squarespace and many more. It's helpful for speed and efficiency, as they work much faster than coding a page from scratch, especially if it's a non-technical marketer. There's no need to switch screens and wait for the preview to generate.

It was one of the most revolutionary things people have seen until then. There were also mini-computers like the Xerox Alto, but in the early days of the PC world, they used character-based interfaces. A few years later Steve Jobs would invent the mouse-based, bit-mapped graphics that lead to the Macintosh, Excel, Word, and Adobe. But at the time, everyone was happy with this.

> It was also the first popular What You See is What You Get (WYSIWYG) word processor. So long as you didn't want fonts. Fonts were pretty much beyond us in these days of daisy-wheel and dot-matrix printers
>
> — Steven J. Vaughan-Nichols

Here's how the SF writer Robert J. Sawyer describes the experience using WordStar:

> ... as a creative writer, I am convinced that the long-hand page is the better metaphor.
>
> Consider: On a long-hand page, you can jump back and forth in your document with ease. You can put in bookmarks, either actual paper ones, or just fingers slipped into the middle of the manuscript stack. You can annotate the manuscript for yourself with comments like "Fix this!" or "Don't forget to check these facts" without there being any possibility of you missing them when you next work on the document. And you can mark a block, either by circling it with your pen or by physically cutting it out, without necessarily having to do anything with it right away. The entire document is your workspace...
>
> That's clearly more powerful, more intuitive, and more flexible than any other method of text manipulation I've yet seen implemented in a word processor. That WordStar lets me have separate marked blocks in each of its editing windows multiplies that power substantially: imagine doing a cut and paste job between two versions of a paper document, but being told that you could only have one piece cut out at a time. Madness! Yet that's what WordPerfect, Microsoft Word, and others would force you to do. (In WordStar 7.0, you can even, in essence, have two marked blocks per window, toggling between them with the "mark previous block" command, ^KU.)

It was the first generation that contributed to WYSIWYG, an acronym for "what you see is what you get" and something we take for granted in any product today.

Which sparked the new era of digital products

1978. Spreadsheets.

A Harvard Business School student, Dan Bricklin, came up in spring 1978 with the idea for an interactive visible calculator which will be later called the First Killer App of the Computer Era.

Bricklin was not, however, the inventor of the electronic spreadsheet. First known ideas for such a program dated back to 1961 when professor Richard Mattessich pioneered the development of computerized spreadsheets for use in business accounting. Then in 1969 Rene Pardo and Remy Landau co-invented "LANPAR" LANguage for Programming Arrays at Random. It was an electronic spreadsheet type application used for budgeting at Bell Canada, AT&T, Bell operating companies, and General Motors.

Mattessich, Pardo, and Landau's work on spreadsheets probably had a lot of influence on Bricklin's work. But the history of the modern era of microcomputer-based electronic spreadsheets should begin with the VisiCalc.

And today, the spreadsheet is one of the tools marketers use every single day for basically anything - planning, collaboration, feedback, budgeting, social media, ads, invoicing, to do lists.

I said this before, and I'll say it again - I love spreadsheets myself. For content however? They're too cluttered and complicated for our creative minds. That's why there are tools today dedicated to marketers.

1982. Adobe Suite.

It's no surprise that Photoshop became a verb itself as Google, Xerox or Skype did. The entire Adobe Suite has changed marketers' world, skills, and workflow - our next protagonist of this chapter.

Adobe has made a series of savvy business decisions to stay competitive and successful. The software company is best known for products like PostScript and Photoshop that shaped the visual design industry we know today.

Their first product, the printing language PostScript was a program that allowed users to print from personal computers to external printers. Adobe was literally at the forefront of mass digital image production.

1985, a partnership between Adobe, Apple, and Aldus created a trifecta of software and hardware: PageMaker. A program that launched the desktop publishing revolution because it gave users a complete set of tools to do their own printing. The combination took off because it created an end-to-end experience right at the desk: users could input words and images, see them on a screen, and print them on paper. It was Adobe's version of contributing to the WYSIWYG Generation.

The PageMaker program on a Macintosh interface. Users could print what they created through PostScript. [Source]
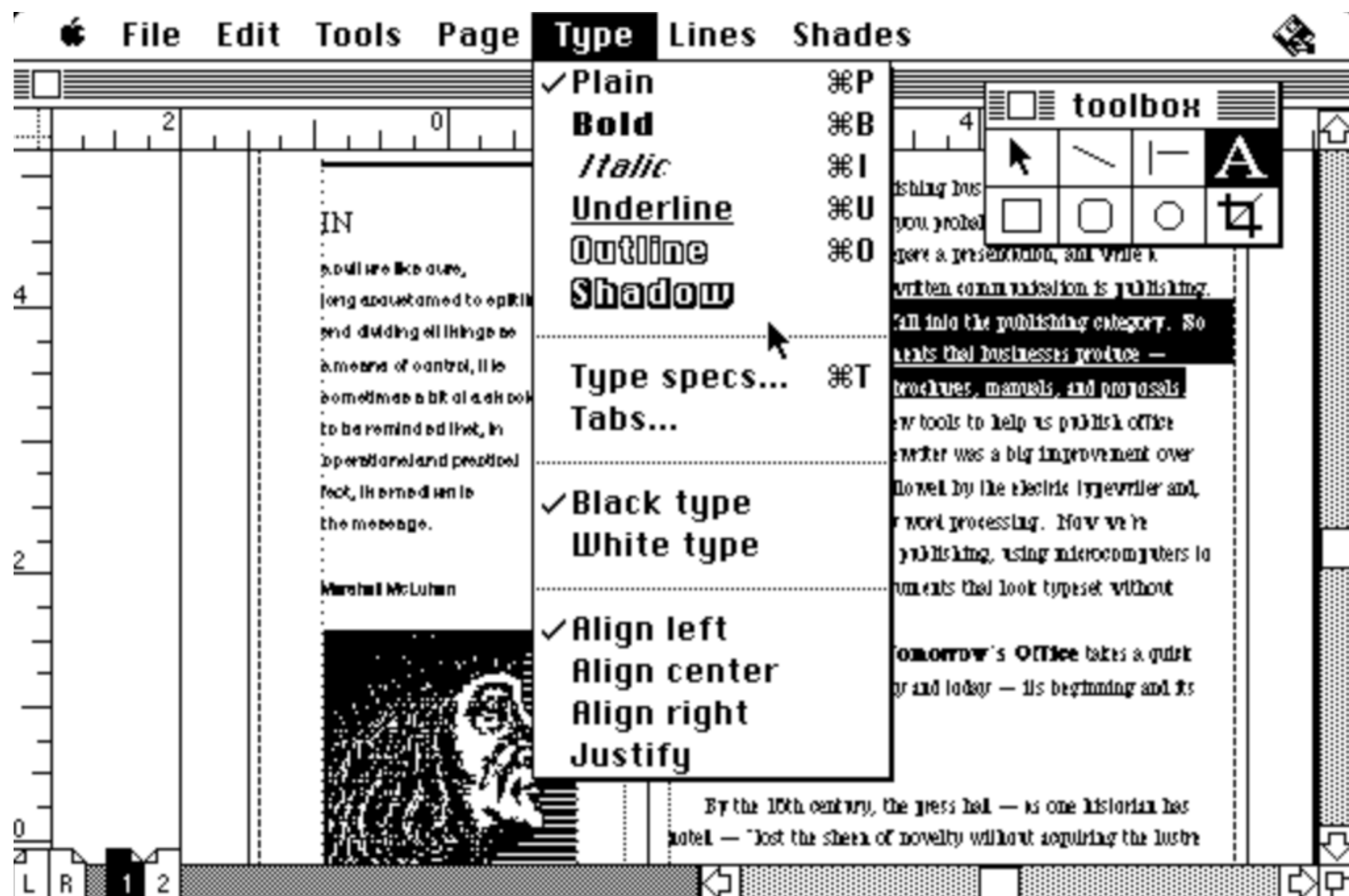
1987. PowerPoint.

Something we never really loved, but always had to use. When I was in school PPTs were there for students to hide behind when holding a presentation.

As good as it was when it came to introverts staying introverts, PowerPoint is more than that and had a big role in our profession. It was launched on April 20, 1987, initially for Macintosh computers only. Then Microsoft acquired PowerPoint for $14 million three months after it appeared. It offers users many ways to display information from simple presentations to complex multimedia decks. I like to think PPTs are a test of multiple marketing skills - design, branding, content, and good copy.

The 90's. Email & Conversations.

Yahoo! ruled the early days of the Internet. By 1998, it was the most popular web portal for Internet users. As history goes, though, their popularity met a steep decline starting with 2000 but it remains one of the most-read news and media websites.

America Online (AOL), the world's most popular online service in the 90' gets a website address and drops its monthly fee of $19.95, providing Internet users with free access to mail, news and more.
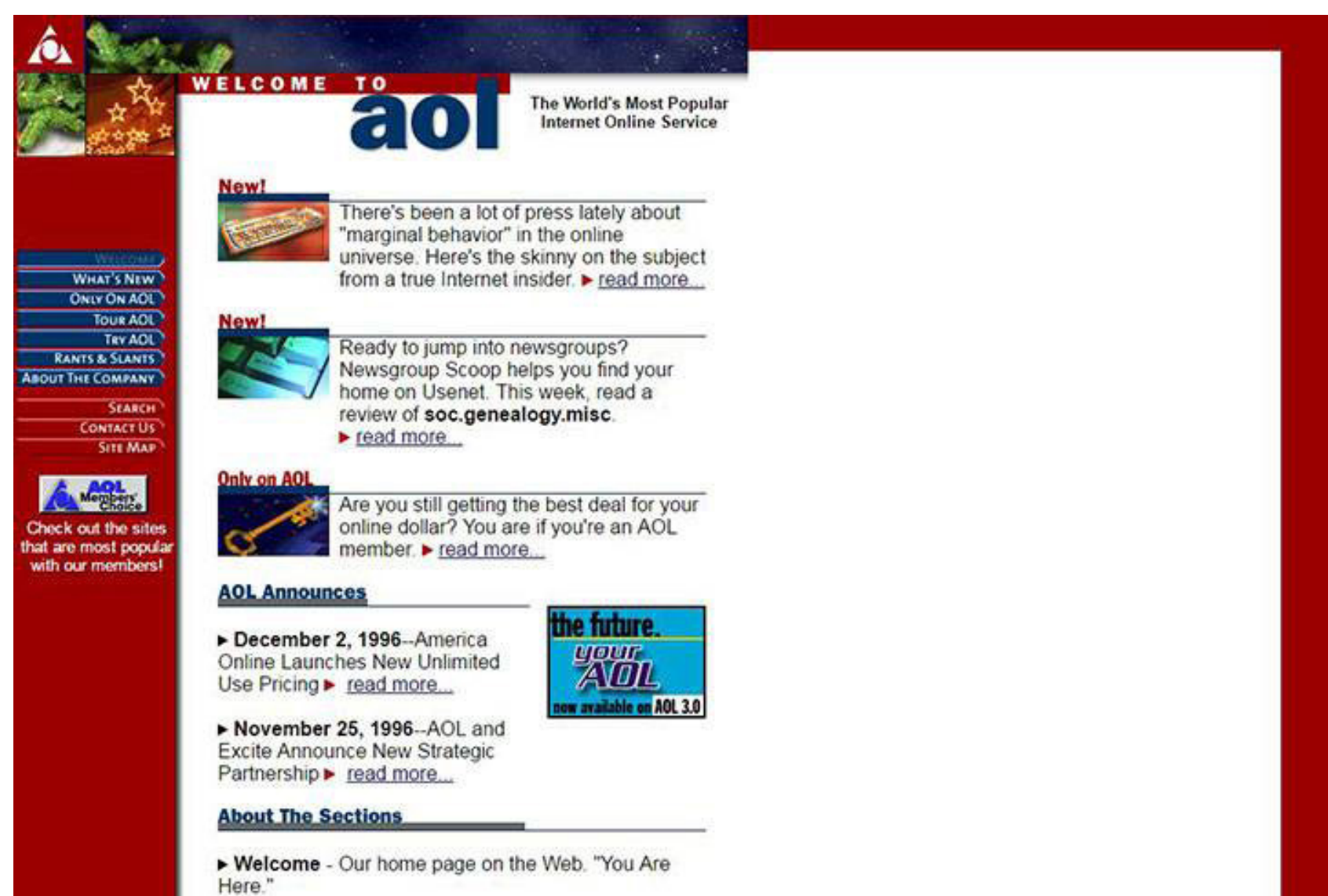
> We were creating documents in Microsoft Office and the biggest problem was having the latest version of the document that you were trying to access. We were quite a modern team, however we were constantly traveling and communicating with clients almost all the time. But all the content was created in Microsoft Docs, or Powerpoints. And then we had to save the documents, email it to them and then wait for back-and-forth emails.

> —Zoe Cox, Social, Brand and Creative Strategy Consultant

However, in terms of processes things were not robust at all. I sat with Christine Candell, an experienced executive and marketing strategist for Fortune 500 companies in rapidly changing markets. She witnessed the last few decades of marketing like nobody else did. As Christine puts it: "*the last 30 years have been very much the years of extreme change*".

> In the 80s and 90s sales and marketing were loosely related. They might've talked to each other but there was very much a wall in between the two teams and many thought that marketing was mostly about branding "stuff". Marketing would go out to sales with all the collateral, but sales wouldn't use or even care about it. Forget about personalization, it didn't even exist back then except for tweaking the language to be industry-specific.

That speaks a lot to how disorganised marketing teams were back then. It can be very damaging when stakeholders lack a full overview.

> The friction between sales and marketing didn't really become intense until the late 80s and mid 90s when marketing teams started saying - "We're responsible for the demand generation". From a branding house to focusing on driving leads since there was this new thing called "the internet". As opposed to direct mail only.

> It made marketing move into the realm of today - a complete understanding of the market, strategy, PR, content, print. All into one epicenter to inspire, encourage, and motivate the buyer to reach out. These were the early days of CRM. Still, things were complicated between marketing & sales.

This discontinuity between marketing and other team has been damaging the industry for too long. We'll dive deeper during the second chapter to see how the industry evolved after the dotcom crash.

For a clearer overview, I asked Yael Galberger to take us through the way marketers worked during the same timeline in Europe, specifically Israel.

> Marketing was a lot about inventory storage of giveaways, brochures, printouts, a lot of hard copies, meetings, papers.

> I remember people around events - we used to send out a tender for vending booths, and they would come to our office with physical prototypes, print

outs, and sketches of the booth. There were actually face to face meetings to show printouts.

I started working at the trade shows mainly because this is was one of the main marketing platforms. Trading was a big deal and most marketing efforts happened at events. They were the biggest platforms to showcase products to the industry.

Trade show organisers used to send us manuals by mail. It was like two Yellow Pages with folders and papers that we needed to sign to rent a TV or a table. Signed forms had to be faxed - more than 100 documents for each trade show.

It was all done manually - and it all needed to be filed up and stored. If something went wrong, we had to go back and see if it was sent, signed, confirmed. So a lot of very low-level and time-consuming work. Now it all happens online.

Marketing 4.0 - Social Media & Web
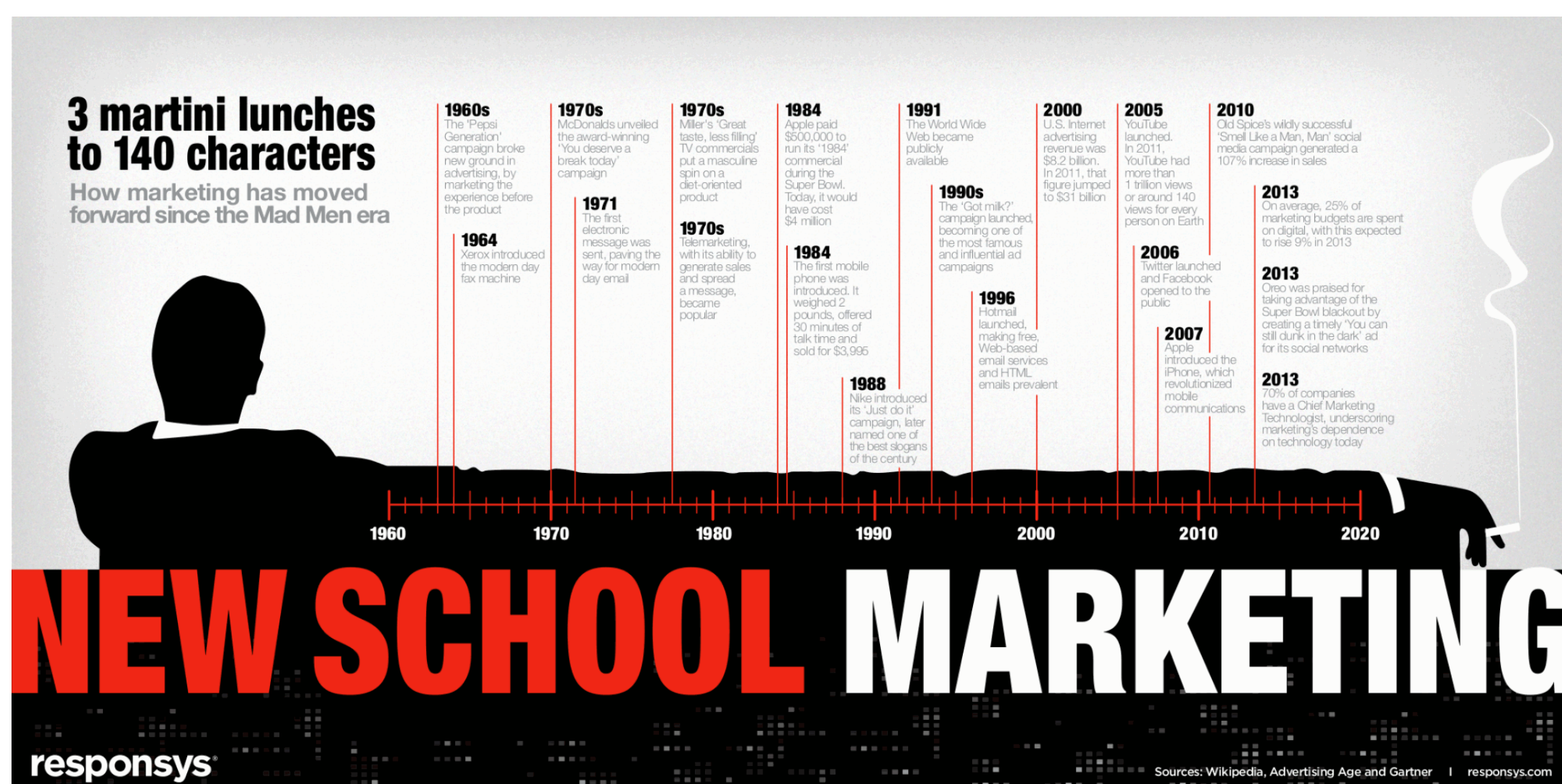
The rise of high-speed internet connection, web-enabled cell phones, and digital transformation created opportunities none of us would've ever expected. Today, more people turn to social media for news instead of newspapers or magazines. If it's breaking news, you'll find out about it on Twitter or Reddit. If you're looking for a restaurant nearby, you'll open Google Maps or TripAdvisor. If you're looking for inspiration to decorate your home, you'll go to Pinterest or Instagram.

Social media's impact and importance can't be ignored when talking about marketers' work in 2019. A big chunk of our time is about making the brand successful on social media, creating buzz, starting online conversations, or making those posts viral with millions of views.

97% of marketers are using social media and 78% of salespeople outsell their peers by using social media for their business. I believe there are three main platforms that got us to where we are today.

Google. 2000.

Billions of people were already searching for products online but the experience was poorly designed. Larry Page and Sergey Brin knew it immediately. With AdWords, Google was able to give advertisers the ability to place their product in front of everyone. It was the first time advertising leveraged behavioral targeting. Then, Google started AdSense as a self-service product that made advertising accessible to any marketer & creative. This opened up the platform to every business owner, marketer, creative, or curious students. In time, Google introduced many other products that we use daily, such as Chrome, Drive, Gmail, Android, and Analytics.

Robert Scoble reminds us

> before Google there was a search engine called Altavista and Yahoo. Yahoo! was popular and Altavista was pop - the most popular back then". However blogging came along and on his first week, Robert had 3000+ visitors. "There were only 200 other blogs back then but we all knew each other.

Sujan Patel says that during the early days of Google

> It was a lot simpler to create content as it was much shorter. 600-800 words was kind of good content and this was five years ago. Shorter content needed two-three people involved: the writer, the designer, and the distributor. But things are completely different right now.

TheFacebook. 2004.

Initially created by 23-year-old Mark Zuckerberg, the platform powers more than 1B daily active users today. There's no doubt that Facebook had an enormous impact on the social, political, cultural, and economic context around the world. As for marketing? It opened up an entire universe. Facebook created 4.5 million jobs around the world and added $227 billion to the global economy in 2014, according to Delloite. That includes social media marketers, developers, and even indirect jobs like people who make Internet equipment.

Facebook forced brands to rethink the way they behave online and act towards their customers. Now, if someone's unhappy with a brand, they'll share this experience on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. News travels REALLY fast on social and brands have learned how to react. They're sharing the latest updates & news directly on social media because that's where their audience is.

But as more and more people and brands joined the party, Facebook had to evolve. And so came the concept of efficient content. Before that, brands' social strategy pretty much revolved around posting what they had to say at the moment - a day in the office, good morning, how are you and bs bs. Since 2011, many of them understood, or were forced to understand that they should behave differently.

Facebook has invested a significant amount of resources into its newsfeed algorithm so that only good content will pass. That, combined with the continuous decrease of organic reach, makes the battle for visibility fiercer each year. Content standards are raising, Facebook's more and more customer focused, and the algorithm is unbeatable. Simply put, if users don't like your content, you'll underperform.

Facebook has made it its top priority to encourage you to make better content because that's the only one that will succeed in the long run. And if you don't collaborate, ask feedback and make sure everyone from your team is happy with the content, your chances will drop dramatically.

And then there was **Instagram**.

It's the first platform that made brands more human and approachable. It forced them to put the beautiful back in content. Brands embraced it and now are using it to their best benefit. With Instagram, the connection with brands became even tighter. Through Instagram Stories brands were able to share behind the scenes and internal events.

Then they introduced Live Video and so pushed out stagnant content. If you were reposting the same or similar content, Facebook & Instagram scanned it and downgraded you in the feed thus again pushing for new engaging & great content.

Besides that, Facebook introduced Facebook Ads - it's own advertising platform. Over 5 million businesses are using Facebook ads to reach their target audiences. In April 2017, they reported 5 million advertisers on their platform. Facebook Messenger also met great success with more than 8 billion messages sent monthly between users and businesses.

Twitter. 2006.

Twitter became the Columbus of micro-blogging. In 2000s blogging was on the rise, but while everyone was creating long-form content, Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams launched Twitter. A new way to communicate - with only 140 characters. It's been the home of debates, groundbreaking stories, breaking news, laughs, and the best moments of the internet.

Twitter changed the way marketers create content through the character limit - short & on-point was the quintessence. It still is all about real-time interaction. Like the war room created by the Oreo team in 2013.

The legendary campaign happened as a result of an 11-member team from 360i, MediaVest, and Oreo. All in one room at 360i's New York offices showed the world the power of "real-time marketing". During the SuperBowl powercut, the brand quickly tweeted: "Power out? No problem. You can still dunk in the dark," which became one of the most viral phenomena in digital marketing.

Oreo Cookie
@Oreo
Follow

Power out? No problem.

YOU CAN STILL DUNK IN THE DARK

3:48 AM - 4 Feb 2013

14,658 Retweets 6,797 Likes

Marketing media is not about tweeting at the right time or plying the algorithm with growth hacks. It's about teams working together and having the right people, plans, workflow and thought processes in one single epicenter.

LinkedIn. 2003.

A social network for business employment launched on May 5, 2003, with a simple concept of connecting people with your other connections. It's mainly used today for professional networking, building a personal brand, employee branding and easy recruiting.

Since 2017, LinkedIn has become even more popular around the world by improving their newsfeed algorithm so that people could start a conversation and reach millions of likes in just a few hours. It has created many opportunities for B2B content, whereas Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook is not necessarily the best place for that. It added what others lacked and became stronger and stronger over the years.

But 2007 was the year that changed marketing forever. The iPhone was introduced that January, followed by a bunch of technological improvements that changed the world. And marketing was the industry that was reshaped the most and the fastest. Facebook introduces Ads, Google buys DoubleClick and launches Android, and Twitter's popularity skyrockets.

Here's Chitra Iyer, Editor-in-Chief @ MarTech Advisor with over 18 years of experience in strategic marketing, communications & business development.

> When I just started my career, digital marketing had just begun, too. There was no Facebook or 'social media' as we know it today. As young management trainees, we were ingrained in the classic marketing fundamentals –Brand Management concepts like positioning, pricing, segmentation and targeting. Today, of course, it's all very digitally driven, but I do believe the essential fundamentals still apply – only the delivery, execution, and perhaps the playing field has become digitally driven and enabled.
>
> The biggest difference in my opinion is 'micro' marketing – hyper-personalization, segments of one, versus the large macro-level.
>
> And the second biggest change is the organized two-way flow of insight and feedback – the ability for brands to hear directly what customers think and the technology to directly track how they actually behave, versus the 'few speaking for many' system we had in the days before digital media.

Donald Chan in his 20 years of experience has also witnessed the industry rapidly changing. As he perfectly says "***the entire creative process has been injected with steroids, vitamins, pumped up and broke down in multiple parts since I just started***"

Nowadays there are so many millions variations of text, images, channels, for every piece of content we do. That wasn't really the case in the old days. It was mostly about the big idea of the campaign we were building. We've gone from big ideas of campaigns like Apple '84 that was heavily focused on television to focused initiatives of viral content, short stories, streaming - all digital. It may look the same, but for people that worked in the digital industry, the entire paradigm is different.

Back in the day, once you've mastered the big channels and ideas, you could easily become a creative director. Today there's campaign planner, strategy planner, digital planner, media buyer, programmatic buyer, programmatic advertising, and marketing automation director. Because really - how much can a person know? Everybody has their own thing to say. Everybody is shouting and tries to get their voice heard.

Marketing 5.0 - Cloud

When social media appeared, marketers had to move into a completely uncharted territory. Nobody knew what was happening. Some considered it was going to flop and social media would never work. Others confidently knew it's just the beginning. Regardless, marketers were running around trying to understand how it all worked and how to up their game.

Social media may have changed the way businesses interact with their customers, but the late 2000s brought continuous chanhes that upgraded digital marketing & content creation. Many marketers started to feel the need of being able to check their information anywhere, including e-mails, files, contacts, documents, presentations, spreadsheets, and many more. Laptops were still very expensive, smartphones were just getting started, and internet was simply slow. The only way to access their content was on their PC at that fixed desk.

The physical world moved to the cloud. It enabled marketers and anyone else to information on the go and that's how products like Salesforce, Gmail, Dropbox, Drive, Wordpress, Wix and Adobe Creative Cloud started.

It started a chain of events in the technology & marketing industry. Instead of selling software through licenses and on CDs, many companies started selling software over the cloud on a subscription plan. To survive, many brands had to unlock a subscription model too as Adobe did.

> We always had the right motivation, which is - how can we innovate at a faster pace?"
>
> —Shantanu Narayen, Adobe CEO, on why they moved Adobe to the cloud

Similarly, Dropbox was on the rise. The tool that started because Drew Houston kept forgetting his USB memory stick. He needed a solution to be able to have his documents anywhere, including music, files, presentation, and so he built it.

The same for Gmail. Its success is mainly because of being the first one to offer 1GB of space for documents kept in emails. A highly useful feature when a gigabyte felt like 1000.

Benioff started Salesforce with just one idea - a software available 24/7 to people in the cloud. Sales Salesforce was the first company to do this. This was happening in the late 1990s while companies like Oracle and SAP were selling software that had to be installed and updated on-premise. Now everyone has integrated into the cloud thanks to Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure and Digital Ocean.

> This [cloud delivery] model made software similar to a utility, akin to paying a monthly electric bill. Why couldn't customers pay a monthly bill for a service that would run business applications whenever and wherever?
>
> — Marc Benioff

As digital marketing matured, a move towards Facebook, Twitter, and Google made complete sense. There simply wasn't enough time for marketers to shake hands and have conversations with each potential customer. Messages were starting to get highly targeted, for high-value audiences. Personas were being built for each type of customers to understand where's best to target them. And add to the fact that customers were not making their buying decisions instantly, but after multiple engagements. Custom messages to granular audiences based on recent interests in real time were the new norm. Creative was the king, but the assets were getting more specialized, more customized, and delivering targeted. Marketers started to optimize the system to deliver the best results and then capitalize on patterns, trends, and other opportunities.

> If you look at a large legacy brand, the transformation doesn't happen if you just slap a piece of technology into it. You need to transform the business model and the skill set of the organization and how you think about the products you are building out, as well as the culture within the organization and what gets measured.
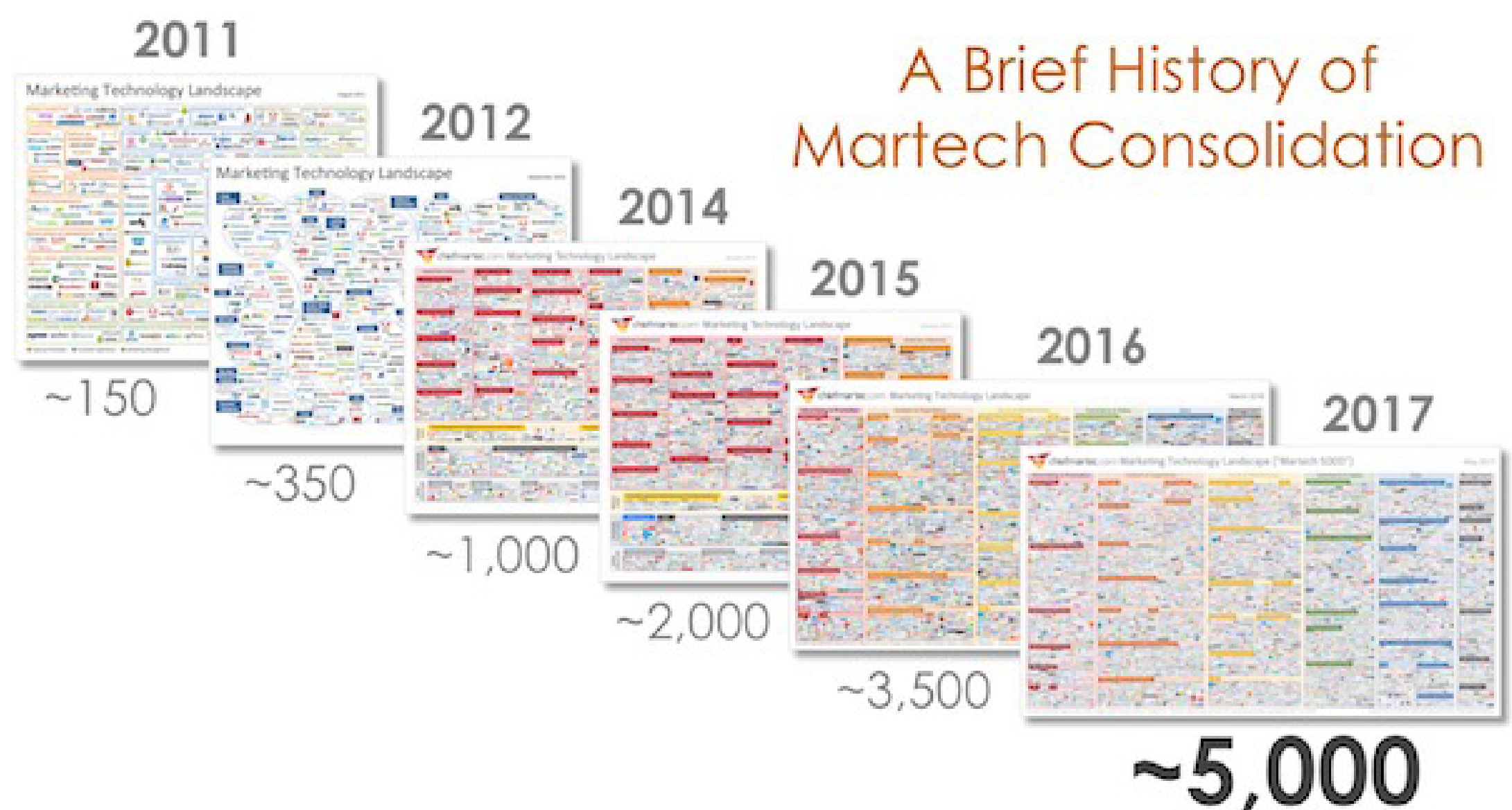>
> — Suresh Vittal, VP-platforms and products at Adobe Marketing Cloud

Chapter 2

The Present

Cloud enabled marketers to become more powerful, but it also made them even more confused. It's no wonder marketers are completely overwhelmed. Just think about the complexity and the number of tools and ways they need to work with today for content only. From spreadsheets, to emails, slack channels, Google Drive, phone calls and so much more.

A Brief History of Martech Consolidation

2011 ~150
2012 ~350
2014 ~1,000
2015 ~2,000
2016 ~3,500
2017 ~5,000

By the end of the current decade, the marketing technology landscape mushroomed. Just in 2010, marketers had software solutions available for social, mobile, search, and analytics. But this proliferation of choices just continued to grow exponentially in search, social, and mobile. And many entrepreneurs like Mark Zuckerberg or Steve Jobs created new tools for communication, brand development, design, and others. Google, Facebook, and Apple revolutionized the digital marketing industry along the way.

Over time marketers needed more and more tools to track individuals, to personalize messages, send them, schedule content, review marketing materials, leave feedback, act in real-time and hopefully stay sane. Each of these transitions in the technology landscape - from lists to databases, from static messages to dynamic personalized content, from collective-level data to individual predictions, from batch updates to real-time knowledge, enabled marketers to create better content.

> 10 years ago it was a lot harder for remote teams to work effectively. It was much more difficult because of the lack of technology and sophistication. From talking to customers to getting data. If you wanted data, you would spend a lot more time trying to find it and understand it.
>
> — Sujan Patel, Founder @ Ramp Ventures, Single Grain and Mailkshake

However, marketers are suffering from the paradox of choice. Despite having all the available solutions that Don Draper would've never dreamt of, they're more confused than ever.

The State of Marketers Now.

Exhausted & overwhelmed. That general state creates so many problems for brands:

- An enormous amount of wasted time & effort which results in lost billable hours
- Multiple PR Crises due to lack of an established approval, feedback and communication process
- Campaigns that damaged the brands and should've never been launched (I'm looking at you Pepsi)
- Customers losing the sense of trust, confidence, and safety of brands
- Consumers' willingness to purchase significantly dropping
- It gets exponentially harder to manage all the stakeholders as the organisation grows

Let's dive deeper into some examples that showcase what broken collaboration can lead to.

H&M The Hoodie

Just last year, H&M advertised a hoodie with the phrase, "COOLEST MONKEY IN THE JUNGLE" by modeling it on an African-American kid and drew charges of racism. Many expressed outrage over this, describing as "irresponsible" and "racist".
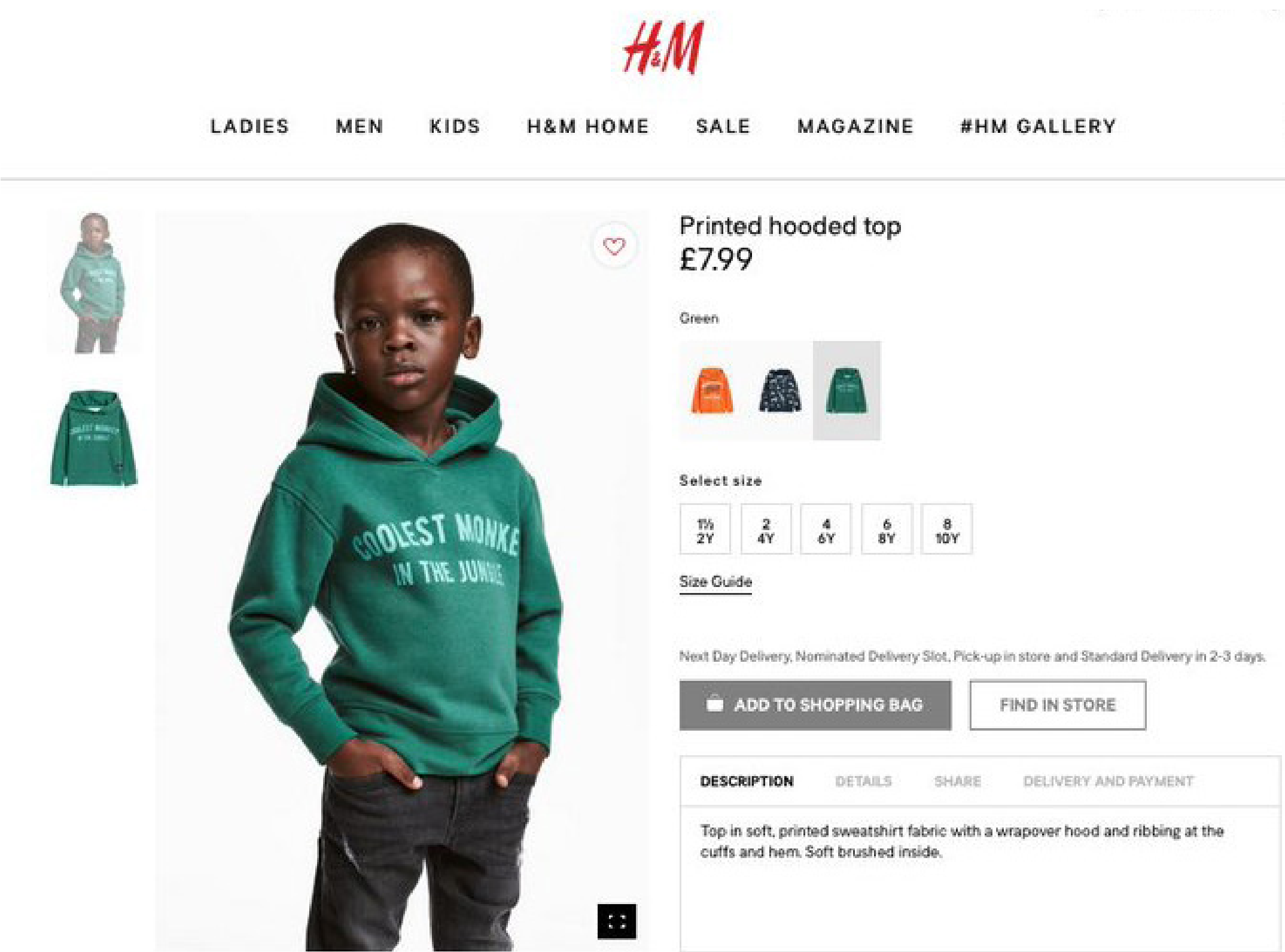
At the time of the hoodie controversy, H&M released a statement that said:

> We agree with all the criticism that this has generated – we have got this wrong and we agree that, even if unintentional, passive or casual racism needs to be eradicated wherever it exists. This incident is accidental in nature, but this doesn't mean we don't take it extremely seriously or understand the upset and discomfort it has caused.

The image advertising the £7.99 jumper was removed from H&M's US and UK websites shortly after the outrage broke. However, a PR Crisis was already imminent.

Some activists trashed H&M stores in South Africa where the backlash started. And many have already pledged to boycott the store. Musicians such as The Weeknd and G-Eazy have each cancelled partnerships with H&M after the incident.
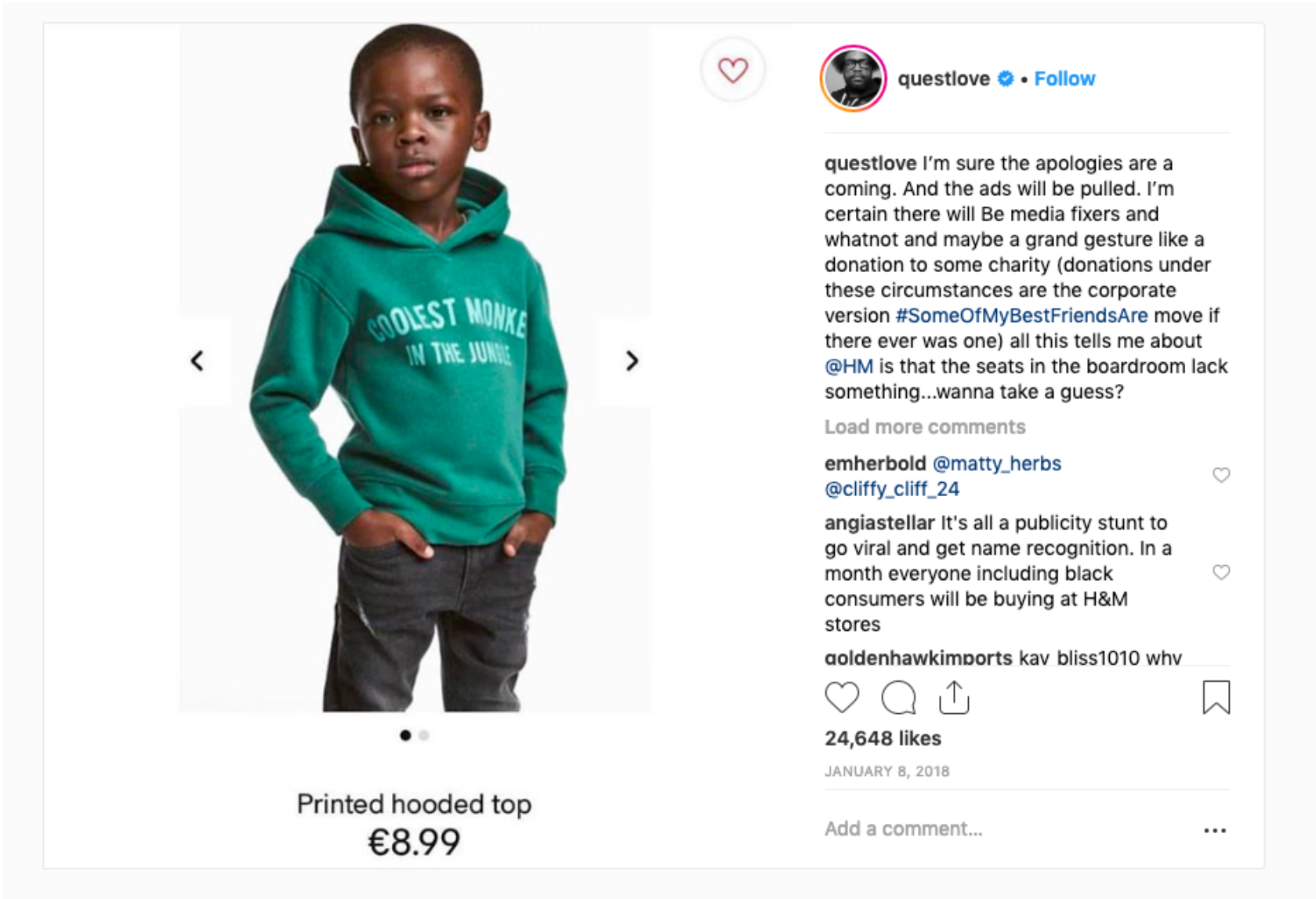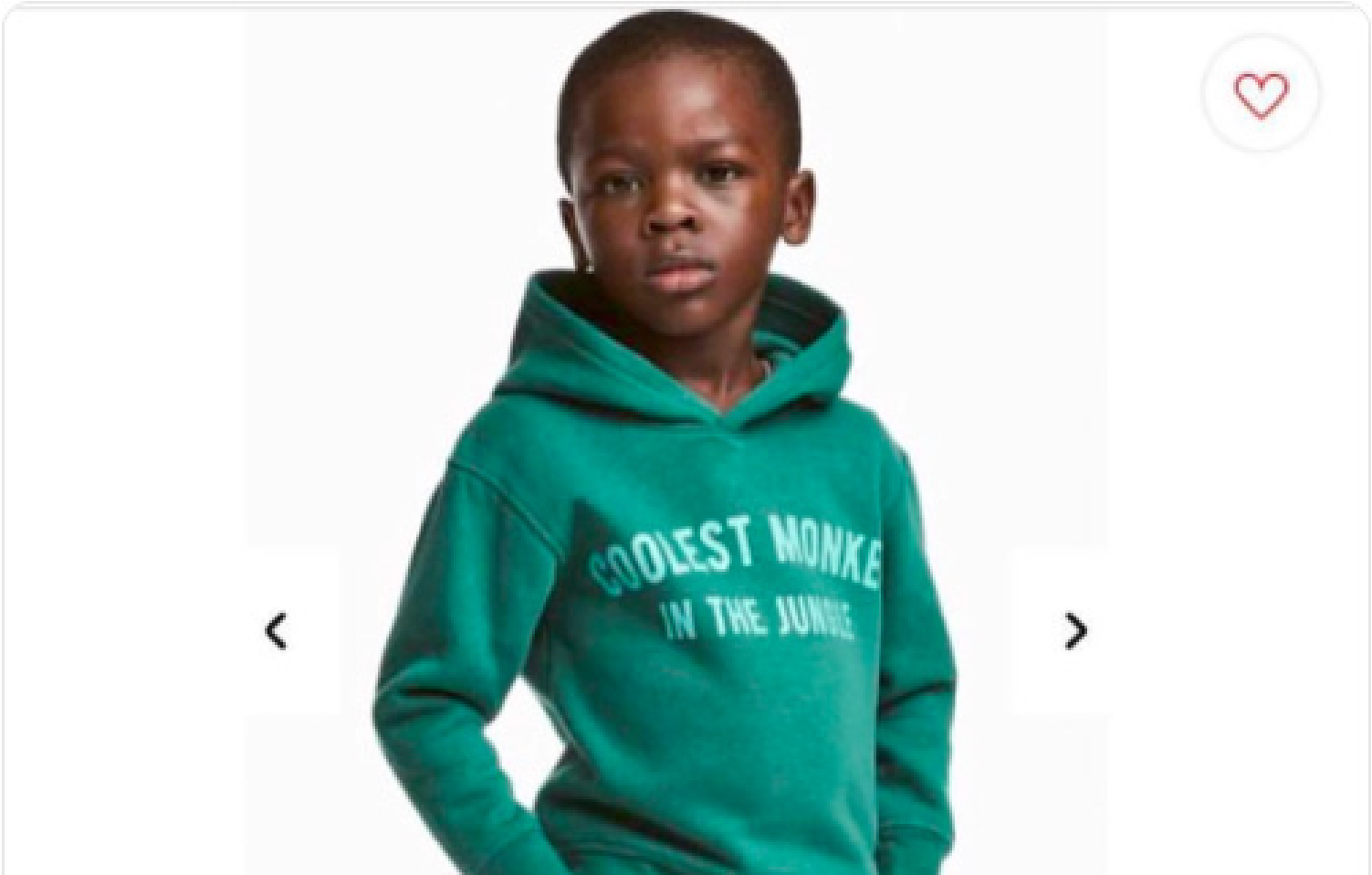
The rapper G-Eazy, meanwhile, whose album The Beautiful & Damned is currently in the US top five, had collaborated with H&M on a clothing line that was due to launch in March 2019. He wrote on Instagram:

> After seeing the disturbing image yesterday, my excitement over our global campaign quickly evaporated, and I've decided at this time our partnership needs to end. Whether an oblivious oversight or not, it's truly sad and disturbing that in 2018, something so racially and culturally insensitive could pass by the eyes of so many (stylist, photographer, creative and marketing teams) and be deemed acceptable.

And G-Eazy has made an excellent point. Such companies have or should have dozens of layers of approval in place. Usually, there is an enormous amount of stakeholders involved in the process including designers, photographers, stylists, creatives, project managers, marketing managers, social media team, web team, directors etc. These people go through dozens of emails, phone calls, meetings, photos, screenshots before reaching the final "*yes, it's good to go*" on the website.

Is there anyone to blame? Maybe, I'm not sure. However, it's a marketer's responsibility to keep the brand safe and everyone has to keep that in mind, no matter what department are they working in.

WTH? The key to modern marketing success is staying agile, focused and adaptable through a simple but clear planning and approval process. A well designed workflow that's sustained by the right tools to make sure the content is streamlined, everyone is on the same page, and no misunderstandings can happen.

Dove Has Some Skin in The Game

It's not a secret that we all might feel insecure about the way our body looks like and most of the time we don't want to talk about that. However, Dove thought women needed it. The brand went viral with multiple campaigns, but not always in a good light. In its latest attempt to try and make women more comfortable with their bodies, the team decided to redesign their shampoo bottles to reflect different body types, which in turn had the complete opposite effect that it was meant to.

"*Beauty comes in all shapes and sizes*" a commercial declares. "*There is no one perfect shape.*" As evidence, the ad rolls out six different shapes of Dove-branded plastic body-wash bottles. Each roughly correlates with a (woman's) body type. There's an hourglass bottle. A tall, thin bottle with smaller curves. A pear-shaped bottle. An even squatter pear-shaped bottle. "*Real beauty breaks molds*" the ad quips, before revealing that the six bottles are available as a limited-edition run.

And the backlash started with hundreds of tweets. Consumers were quick to weigh in on social media, too: "*Like, I just want to [use] my body wash, not be reminded that I'm pear-shaped*" a woman named Julie Daniel tweeted. "*Women don't need to be categorized all the time.*"

Perhaps it wasn't such a big deal, and the customers moved on quickly, you may think. Well, not really because they did it again.

But just a few months later, another ad received major backlash. The GIF featuring a black woman removing her shirt to reveal a white woman, was pulled after being widely shared on social media and covered in national news outlets. Dove owned the tone-deaf nature of the ad in a statement.

Dove declined to explain how the ad was produced and approved. It mentioned it was "*re-evaluating our internal processes for creating and approving content.*"

On Twitter, posts including the hashtag #BoycottDove, which started among U.S. users, were appearing in multiple European languages. "In short, racism is back in fashion and brands are looking to benefit," wrote user @Beatrix B. in French.

Keith Boykin ✓
@keithboykin

Follow ⌄

Okay, Dove...
One racist ad makes you suspect.
Two racist ads makes you kinda guilty.

6:27 PM - 8 Oct 2017

23,217 Retweets   32,360 Likes

💬 1.2K   ↻ 23K   ♡ 32K   ✉

Here's an overview of what happened:

- More than 30.000 posts (shares not included) discussed the ad between October 6 – October 13.

- 44.55 percent of mentions had a negative sentiment.

- More than 12.000 (!) mentioned Dove with a variant of the word "racist"

- The Unilever brand was mentioned in context with the Dove brand 32% of all of its total mentions in the last week, in comparison with the week before, when the "Dove + Unilever" mentions were a total of just 1.69% of all of Unilever's mentions.

It was not the first time the brand has found itself in a tough situation with its marketing campaigns. In 2011, a Dove campaign provoked criticism after appearing to show women become cleaner as the color of their skin changes from dark to white.
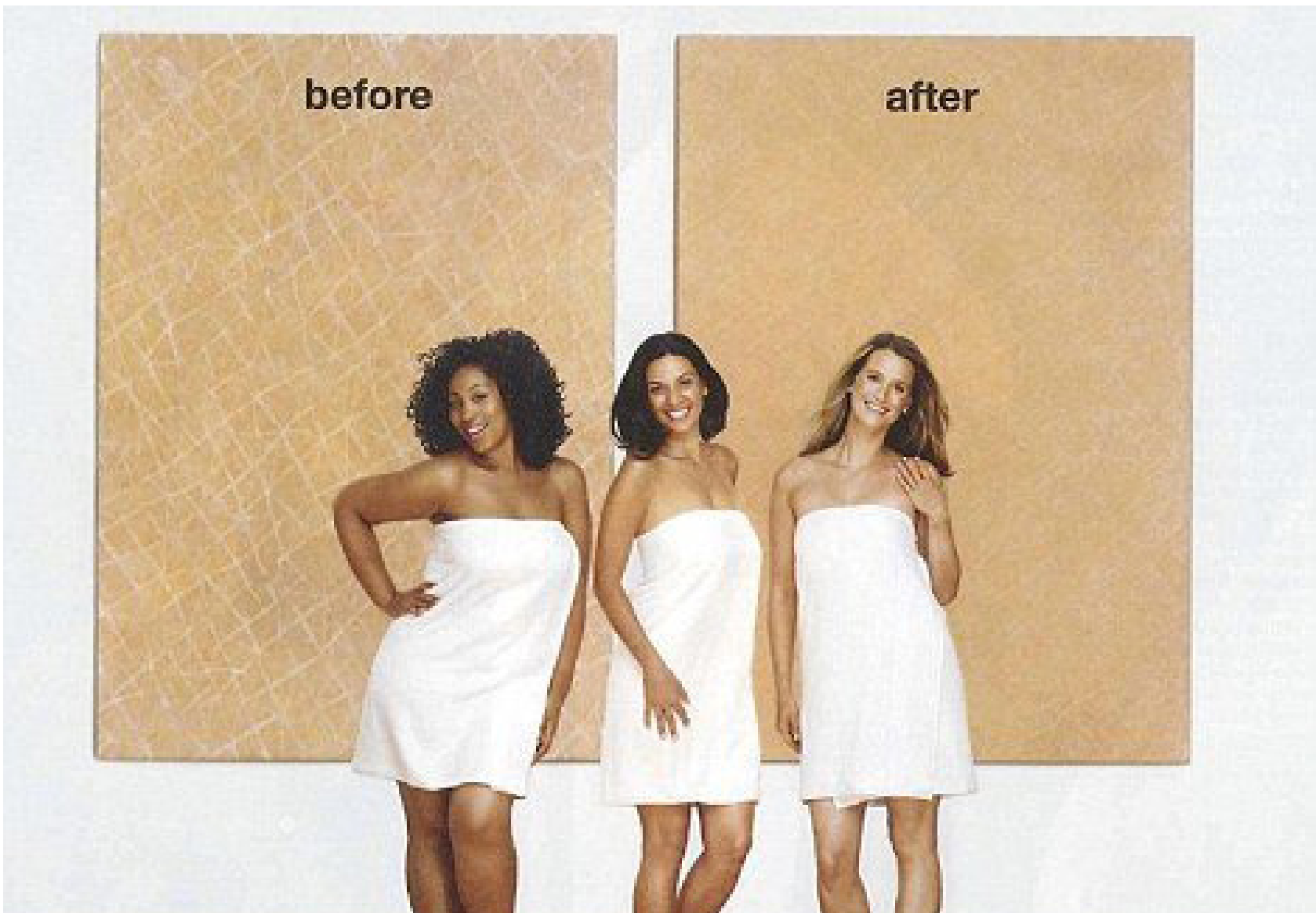
So many brands fumble in getting across respectful messaging around race and diversity. It's now more crucial than ever for all marketers to ensure their brands have an internal review process for all content, always. An employee culture that nixes off-mark messaging long before it reaches the public is vital. Take a look at the Compose.ly team.

> We believe in a strong peer review system, so nothing gets published without a close review and an editing/proofreading round.
>
> — Joyce Chou @ Compose.ly

Behind every piece of offensive content is a team of dozens of people that generated that content and burried it under multiple unclear and chaotic layers of approval. Besides the processes themselves, you have to ensure the right culture and values are in place. Especially if you're a big corporation with thousands of employees in various departments. Try performing regular audits and diversity training to establish the right processes and mindset across brand efforts.

> One of the biggest challenges when launching a new marketing initiative is making sure everyone is on the same page in terms of what the goal of the project is, and then having the content marketing leadership team properly communicate our knowledge down to new hires and specialists.
>
> — Levi Olmstead at G2 Crowd

Pepsi ad with Kendall Jenner

The backlash for Kendall Jenner's ad exploded on the internet the second she opened that can of Pepsi. "*Was this a joke?*" some people tweeted, or did Pepsi just show another example of miscommunication and misalignment of going south fast.

The two and a half minute ad features Kendall being photographed during a multiracial protest, with banners featuring love hearts and peace signs. She's inspired to take off her wig, wipe off her lipstick and head into the crowd like any other casual protester. She then ends the protest by handing a police office a can of Pepsi. She has reminded the world that differences don't matter when Pepsi is involved! Or has she?

Allen Adamson, a long-time brand consultant and founder of Brand Simple Consulting, doesn't seem to think so:

> It's trivializing the seriousness of the issue, that merely a can of Pepsi could solve all of the problems on the streets of our country. To some extent, it's polarizing to the Black Lives Matter movement because it makes it seem like much ado about nothing if you just passed something out at your demonstrations and this wouldn't happen.

A bad judgment call provoked infinite accusations that the brand was simply tone deaf.

"*Ridiculous ad*" said Edward Boches, professor of advertising at Boston University and a former partner, CCO at Mullen Lowe. "*Shows no awareness of the protesters' mindset or the environment. Feels completely dishonest and contrived. Was clearly done by people who have not attended a protest or spent time on the streets and have no understanding of the pent-up anger*."

After the rage dimmed and the advert was removed, Pepsi has apologized online saying that they clearly missed the mark.

However, the damage was done and the creative team didn't forsee the level of offense this ad might bring. And there are many more examples that we debate here. But we want to focus on avoiding these types of situations rather than debate the ones that already happened. The repercussions can be huge and the risk is simply not worth it.

What Are The Key Takeaways?

1. Marketing is moving at a rocket pace, and all the changes in the industry have a profound impact on the way we work. Sadly, most marketers struggle to understand the constantly changing landscape and feel confused or overworked. That's why the key to modern marketing success is becoming agile and adapt in real-time to what's happening in the space. Instead of planning campaigns for one year in advance, marketers should simplify their planning and approval process with six-week cycles and get comfortable with changes. Today, the answer is to set shorter term goals, have regular, simplified reporting in place, and be comfortable with failing fast so that adjustments and pivots can be made based on learnings, in real-time.

2. Prioritize your efforts. No matter the size of your team, it's hard to balance the drive to do everything with the resources you have. I believe that 80% of your results will come from 20% of your efforts. By focusing on nailing the basics

such as establishing clear goals, roadmaps, and processes, you will significantly higher up your chances for success. And since the content is something that marketers do daily, focus on quality rather than quantity.

3. Don't be afraid to invest in technology that can help you automate and track tedious tasks and processes. It will improve the focus of your team so you can concentrate on actual work. The ability to work in the cloud and on the web can save time, money, and resources that can be better spent on scaling the business and driving growth.

4. Sometimes technology isn't the only solution. That's when small teams need partners, vendors, freelancers, and other stakeholders to become part of the collaboration process. But again, with more people involved, chaos becomes a higher risk. So it's imperative to have everything and everyone in one common space. Inviting everyone to contribute with ideas and feedback will improve both the content and the relationships between the teammates.

And That's How Collaboration Comes in The Game

Marketing technologies are intended to be used by marketing teams, no matter the size or location. And it's irrelevant how shiny or sophisticated the platform is. If a team doesn't have the bandwidth to fill in the gaps, they're not gonna succeed. In order to overcome this hurdle marketers must look for robust processes, procedures, tools that combine multiple aspects of their workflow and strategy into one single epicenter. It's about everything that marketers do: create, communicate, review, schedule, or publish. That way marketing team members aren't alone when things go south.

> In my experience, the biggest challenge is getting everyone on the same page with processes and staying on top of the content creation, versus coming up with ideas or new content ideas. Content affects so many different teams within an organization; it's a great area of marketing that lends itself to collaborating with — and learning from — others. Any decision you make around content marketing should be informed by your business and team goals, and then creating content to support that.
>
> — Emily Gover, Content Marketing Manager @ Vimeo

Instead of implementing products, marketers should be implementing solutions to complement their team & creativity. Collaboration is one of the biggest necessities for marketers. Here's what a few experts have to say about it:

> Everyone talks about collaboration. So often, I've worked with teams where it's an issue: people have trouble communicating and getting on the same page. Being able to see the bigger picture and understand your role in a marketing team is absolutely crucial.
>
> — Kevin Keith, Orangetheory Fitness

> Marketing teams need to be multidisciplinary, and they need to communicate super effectively – not just in terms of how they express themselves, but also in how they think about the ramifications of what they're doing and how it'll affect the rest of the team, making sure everyone's on the same page, and keeping it all moving in the right direction.
>
> — Robert Brown, Nissan North America

Sadly, today's collaboration is a challenger in many workplaces with everyone minding their business instead of working as a team. Marketers especially feel the pressure. According to a report on the state of marketing work by Workfront, 98% of marketers experience some kind of conflict with other departments, groups, and teams. The most commonly cited causes include conflicting priorities (39%), lack of communication (31%), and a lack of understanding about urgency (14%).

It's tough for marketers to stay coordinated with the teams and themselves considering a mountain of deadlines, specifications, responsibilities, and functions to create top-level work.

> Our news cycles are incredibly fast, so for your campaigns to break through and actually be relevant across multiple channels, you have to tell an authentic story that's true to your brand and on-tone with what's happening around the world. You really have to be turned into key events and your brand message to really make those stories shine through.
>
> — Jenny Leahy, Microsoft

> I think the biggest challenge facing today's marketers is how do you stay relevant (and on-brand) when so many things are happening both politically and socially in the world? You have to find ways to meet your audience where they are, keep things timely, and avoid alienating anyone in the process.
>
> — Samra Brouk, dosomething.org

To understand the state of marketing collaboration today - the success stories, the bottlenecks, and things to improve - here's the latest data on the topic:

42% of content marketers point to staying organized as a top challenge. Another 36% say they struggle to gather multiple team members for planning sessions. (Content Planning Challenges, Trends & Opportunities)

More than half of marketers (58%) say they're "too busy" for content collaboration. Another 15% say they don't have a culture that supports it. (Content Planning Challenges, Trends & Opportunities)

> Being a fully remote team, our main challenges always relates to two things - communication and synchronization. In our daily communication, we use Slack. However, to coordinate the launch of a new article or a new marketing project, this often isn't enough.

> Being in various time zones makes it harder to be synchronized. Often challenges and misunderstandings will cost us time which could be used in a more productive way.
>
> — Kas Szatylowicz @ Nightwatch

The majority of polled professionals said lack of alignment and collaboration between sales and marketing leads to weaker financial performance (60%), poorer customer experience (59%), and reduced customer retention (58%). (The Payoffs of Improved Sales & Marketing Alignment)

62% of marketers say wasteful meetings get in the way of their work. The second most prevalent culprit is excessive oversight (51%), followed by excessive emails (48%) and a lack of standard processes for workflow (33%). (2016–17 U.S. State of Marketing Work Report)

45% of employees generally feel overwhelmed by the number of meetings they have to attend every month, which adds up to more than 60 meetings per month on average, or about two per day. 47% of employees complain that meeting volume is the number one time-waster at the office. (You Waste a Lot of Time at Work [Infographic]).

> Our content marketing team is roughly 25 people within a marketing team of 50, compared to 7 and 25 respectively a year ago. On a typical day I'm managing a department of 20+ with a lot of meetings with team leads or individual contributors and helping them solve their problems and ensuring they're on pace to their individual goals
>
> — Jakub Rudnik, Head of Content Marketing at G2 Crowd

It's clear that compared to the previous era of marketing professionals, we now understand the value of collaboration. Unfortunately, other priorities, an abundance of meetings, and streams of information are making it hard to collaborate efficienlty.

However, There Are Few Teams That Are Making Significant Progress in This Direction

The average company loses more than 20% of its productive power to organization drag, says Slack. It includes all the time teams spend on searching for information, coordinating internally on the status of the project, managing approval flows, and other processes that affect the success of a campaign, project or company.

> Steve Jobs in his first stint at Apple, was such a perfectionist that he held up shipping the original Macintosh because he didn't think the circuit board inside is pretty enough. Even though nobody will ever see it. And after a while, he got fired from Apple because he's such a perfectionist. And he would say, "Well, real artists sign their work," meaning they have to wait until they are perfect before they ship. When he comes back to Apple at the end of the 1990s, they give him a new motto, which is, "Real artists ship."
>
> Freakonomics, A Good Idea Is Not Good Enough Ep. 369

Marketers feel challenged when trying to come up with original ideas. And there's something that every creator needs constantly, whether you're working in the arts, in science, in business, whatever — feedback. Without good execution, ideas don't mean that much and a key component to getting better at anything is feedback.

> Content from 10 years ago to now has evolved because there's more mediums: videos, gifs, you can do live video, or short phone video. You can do podcasts, and because the Internet is faster, you can have a «How To» with a thousand screenshots. You can have a PDF, and other files. I think there are plenty ways of creating content now. Before, it was just writing. Now, if you create a video it will be a whole other format.
>
> —Sujan Patel, co-founder @ Mailshake & Ramp Ventures

Marketers spend a lot of time trying to make their content feel genuine while being entertaining and loved by their audience. Some brands have upgraded their marketing team with original ideas, compelling storytelling and a lot of engagement with their audience. Airbnb is a great example of innovation, collaboration, and storytelling in a new form with Airbnb community stories.

G2 Crowd.

To write this ebook, I decided to speak with Jakub and Levi to understand how world-class marketing teams are functioning today to create performing content. Their entire marketing team is around 50 people made up of writers, promoters, link builders, email marketers, social media marketers, SEO optimizers, CTA optimizers and more. It's a fully fleshed out team. It's a very relaxed, yet highly motivated team. A normal workday sometimes doesn't feel like work at all.

G2 Crowd has three writing "pods", each with 4-5 writers with a focus on a specific topic.

> Let me give you an example. Our growth pod includes email marketing, business development, PR, etc. Our content managers and pod leaders research those high-level topics and find all the different spokes that will need to be included in a pod. It's the golden "wheel and spoke" content method, and it works very well for us.

Then the writer researches what currently ranks highly for their keyword and answers similar questions those articles tacke, along with adding additional content to help not only beat those articles but make it more linkable for their link builders. They push it through their project management tool to each team member, one to add CTAs, one to edit, one to optimize for on-page SEO and interlink properly, one to publish, and then one to promote/build links.

Also, an individual piece of content is written by the assigned writer, copied, edited, then sent to an SEO specialist for on-page optimizations. In the meantime, the writers facilitate visual assets with our internal team or an agency or create their own images with Canva. It is published after all these checks. Our offsite SEO team looks for external content that might be good to reference our content, and reach out for inclusion.

The writer and team lead work together to select the articles that makeup chapters like an intro to email marketing, email marketing tactics, email marketing software, and so on. They're looking to create a package that tells a cohesive story while also ensuring there is search volume to justify the topics.

In terms of tech stack, they use primarily HubSpot as it powers their CMS and Asana, Ahrefs, Canva, HARO, Google Analytics, Google, Quuu, LinkedIn Premium, Domo, Slack, Guru.

GetResponse.

Content ideas come in from the product marketing or strategy teams that are asking them (marketers) to develop content to support a new product feature launch. Then one of the following analyzes the existing content, does a content gap analysis in comparison to the competitors or creates a mind map of ideas around the core topics they want to cover.

Sometimes developing one idea requires several meetings to help them identify ways in which the content will be promoted and linked with other campaigns the team is currently running. The development process length varies between all the different types of content but it usually lasts for several weeks, mostly because they've got a list of tasks lined up several weeks ahead. When it comes to the people who'd normally be involved in this process, it'd be the:

- Blog post – Content Writer + Blog Editor

- Video – Video Manager + Speaker/Content Creator

- Infographic – Content Writer + Blog Editor + Designer

MarTech Advisor.

A gamut of sources helps them decide what would be most useful and relevant to their audience of marketers as discussed with Chitra Iyer, Editor-in-Chief. It specializes in the marketing technology niche, there is no marketing without technology today, so they have to balance the fuzzy line between what constitutes 'marketing technology' and what is more mainstream marketing; and ensure their readers, who come to them for very specialized kind of information, find what they are looking for.

MarTech Advisor follows the discipline of an editorial calendar, and do a lot of research as well as data-driven analytics to understand the subjects they should write about. Once they agree the themes for the month, they try and develop content that would be useful for marketers at both - different stages of their martech buying cycle; as well as at different stages of their careers as marketers.

They also follow the principle of adding as many rich perspectives as possible to any feature or story, and that means including different voices into the features, be their vendors, users, or other stakeholders in the ecosystem.

Nightwatch.

The team at Nightwatch really cares about the efficiency of all processes, including content creation for blog posts and social media. The idea was to build a system where information, such as feedback, flow with ease, and any possible roadblocks

are taken care of immediately. For example, to create content for their blog, they've adopted several steps which can be divided into phases such as:

Ideation - Writing - Revising - Launching - Distributing - Monitoring

Firstly, each person from the marketing team brainstorms ideas that they could write about. They are categorized in Airtable depending on the topic. Then, the blog editor proposes the topics they should be focusing on first and the team votes to push them down the pipeline into "in progress". The person responsible for the article writes outlines, gets approval from the blog editor, and continues writing the first draft.

The finished draft is revised by the editor first, then the CEO, and the rest of the marketing team. The article is then adjusted depending on the comments and published on the blog. Once done, the distribution process starts where they promote it on social media, via outreach and free submission websites. They monitor and analyze traffic and start the second round of promotion on social media (re-cycling). If the article should be edited with add up-to-date information, they plan the launch in the upcoming months / years.

Yet other content marketing teams prefer to keep it simple by establishing a content workflow from the very beginning.

> Our day starts with reading digital news. It's important to keep up with trends and know what's happening in order to implement successful strategies. We also dedicate time to competitor analysis as it's important to know the pros and cons of your campaign. And, obviously, I write a lot daily - brainstorm topics, read relevant articles, do research, and writtteeee. Everything starts with research. It's important to understand what type of content will work best this time. In short, the process is the following: research-analyze-write-edit-proofread-launch.
>
> —Hugh Beaulac @ Bid4Papers

The same with Lesley J. Vos, professional copywriter and guest contributor with 7+ years in data research, web text writing, and content promotion as well as alumni at the University of Chicago. Here's Lesley's content creation process.

> Brainstorm: competitor analysis (examining their content that went viral) - generate a sequel (the skyscraper technique comes in handy here) - check the idea validity (ask the audience and experts in the niche).
>
> Content creation: data research - outline - write - format - proofread - 3 circles of editing (for yourself, for readers, for haters).
>
> Publication: submit - revision (if needed) after editorial feedback - promotion via social media, guest posts, and so on.

InVisionApp

I sat for a chat with Scott Porter, Copy & Content Manager at InVision to discover the way a completely remote team reaches excellence in content marketing today.

Everybody on Scott's team lives somewhere else in different timezones.

> I can't run down the office to double check on someone else's work. Our content creation process is defined by 100% clarity.

At InVisionApp, each month starts with a call of 20 people, including social & content marketing teams as well as video production.

> We have a theme each month, let's say this month would be collaboration. We'll get together and brainstorm with a spreadsheet and a timer, every collaboration idea you can come up from cartoons to festivals or anything else. Brainstorm, brainstorm, and brainstorm. Just list them all.

Then everybody goes and votes for 5 of them. Afterwards they go to Asana or Trello and add them. Each piece is assigned to a creator that needs to find all the resources they need, and then get it done. "*That might not be as sexy as it needs to be, but it works*", says Scott.

Later, they stick it into Wordpress. Also, InVisionApp has a social team that makes sure they have a steady pace on this, too. Social teams are watching the calendars and make sure they keep the presence on all the channels. Everyone needs to be quoted, mentioned and the social teams lets everyone know they're part of the piece so they can share it on their social channels.

The future of marketing teams

We believe that scaling content marketing is the problem. And it doesn't get solved just by throwing more people, money, and tools at the situation. It's an over increasing complexity that needs a new resolution, mindset, strategies, and processes to be solved.

Before Planable, all of us worked in social media agencies managing strategies and content for global brands. During this time, we learned first-hand about the challenges of marketing teams on a daily basis. It was frustrating to lose this much time every day due to inefficient collaboration. We would work on content via back-and-forth emails and showcase it through spreadsheets. We knew there should be a better way to do it, but couldn't find any. So we decided to develop one. Since launching a year ago, we helped hundreds of marketing teams around the world automate their workflows and be more productive.

And we're here to share what we learned. The marketing mindset has to change and we believe there are 3 main pillars you should build if you want to succeed in the next decade.

People

It's no wonder that people are the essence of the content marketing process. We've already seen that the marketing profession has exponentially evolved in the past 20 years because of all the rapid developments in the industry. Internet, social media, digital marketing, programmatic advertising, podcasts, blogs, video blogs, stories, and hundreds of rich media formats have changed the way marketers think, work, create.

Instead of creating a campaign for offline only, such as banners, trade shows, flyers, marketers now think WAY beyond that. With that, we see the debut of a new type of experts - Hybrid Marketers (HM).

The HM's have been born from a need to adapt to the new era of marketing. Nowadays, things are changing so fast that marketers need to constantly learn new techniques, strategies, tools, acquisition techniques, or changes in platforms where marketers work (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.), and most importantly - needs of the market.

> In just 7 years of my marketing experience, our team has expanded, and many roles have specialized. Before, you could be responsible for the email campaigns, the blog, webinars, and other things. Now every element is handled by someone else. The product we offer has developed, too. Which means you have to know so much more these days and constantly educate yourself to keep up with the pace. You don't ever feel bored, which is what I like most in the online marketing world.
> — Michael Leszczynski @ Get Response

Today, the needs of any brand go way beyond online or offline. It's morphing into integrated strategies where you have to be visible everywhere and plan for cross-channel promotions.

I believe that an ideal size of a team is five people and for most brands, you'll need a team with an advanced set of skills, abilities, and roles. From the product, marketing, engineering, data, ops, finance, you have to have it covered. It's hard to define the ideal team, but the Growth Team Structure created by Andrew Chen gets pretty close.

Marketing Project Manager

The Marketing Project Manager is the head of operations in your marketing team who ensures everything works as planned, KPIs are in place, communication between team members works flawlessly.

Marketing Engineer

An engineer is focused on getting sh*t done and implementing marketing campaigns. That's it.

Growth Marketer

This is the marketing guru who knows how a specific channel or platform works and that's their only focus.

Marketing Designer

A designer with an eye for style & brand, but also conversion, optimization, A/B testing, and user acquisition.

And if you build such a team at your organization you'll see the exponential growth happening. That's because such teams are focused on numbers, growth, results, feedback iteration, and idea implementation. No fluff and bullshit. Hard work only.

The marketing team of the future is a hybrid of skills fitting perfectly for their organization and where everybody knows what they are doing. However, don't worry if you don't have a full expertise in-house as you can always hire other external stakeholders. Virtual assistants freelancers, or agencies can be add-ons to your team per project or campaign. You can regularly outsource specific tasks, such as:

- Video & Audio Production

- Design & Branding

- Website Building

- Conversion Optimisation

- Content Distribution and Link Building

- Data Scraping

- Webinars

- Legal

- PR

- Events Management

- SEO

- Paid Marketing

- Viral Marketing

Don't be afraid to hire new people and experts in fields that you feel less comfortable or confident to deliver. Usually, it will be cheaper to hire a freelancer than bring someone in-house as it's resource consuming (time, effort, money). With evolving hybrid roles, marketers are no longer focused on one specific field of marketing (SEO, Paid, Content, Social, Analytics etc.). It's a machine ready to grow a brand from zero to success in just a few weeks. Marketing is evolving fast and brands that don't adapt quickly are bound to fail.

Process

It's obviously not only about people alone, but how those people work together. Bringing on the best people doesn't guarantee anything if they come in chaotic processes and don't work together. The way you manage the team and ensure everyone is on the same page is vital. Today's world however, is a world of distractions that has no mercy on marketers. It's hard to catch and keep someone's attention without losing them to notifications on their phone, smartwatch, laptop, computer, tablet or any other screen. That's why it's critical to set up the right processes that follow 5 main aspects.

Transparency

Start by placing transparency at the core of your entire workflow. It's an all-in

experience of strategy, consistency, visibility, and clarity. The marketing team of the future can simply access all the information they need in one single epicenter.

> Getting your team on board with the same tools, providing autonomy to them when you can, and having a strong leader on your team will make all the difference. I've learned that launching any kind of new marketing initiative is almost always going to take longer than you expect. I think there is some value, to a degree, of the "under promise, over deliver" concept, especially with managing one's times (and other people's expectations).
>
> — Emily Gover, Content Marketing Manager @ Vimeo

Transparency means that, firstly, everyone has access to the same information. A lot of confusion and miscommunication comes from exactly that - different sources and levels of information. We'll talk next about consistency and I have to mention it now - a lack of consistency is highly influenced by the level of transparency in the team.

The most modern and growth-oriented companies trust their employees with information. Because if you hire the best of the best, it's your responsibility to give them everything they need to help your company. Information is one of the most valuable assets an employee can have and it's key to creating amazing content.

So as you can see there are two aspects to ensure transparency:

1. Give **access to information** that can help

2. Give everyone access to the **same information**

With that in mind, you should understand that transparency limited to a team only, will not suffice. Transparency has to be placed at the heart of your organization. It has to spread across teams and between teams. Picture a spiderweb in which every thread links in one way or another to a different thread. That's how communication in your company should look like.

This is all hypothetical and may sound too vague or high-level, but I can tell you that I've met and talked to companies that fully lacked communication between the content team and social media team. Whether that sounds familiar or absurd to you, it's happening and my advice is to burn that habit from the roots.

Consistency

Marketers success is an effort built over time. Building a viral marketing campaign can be called luck, but building a brand everyone admires takes time, dedication, and most importantly, consistency.

Consistency is more than a business concept. It originates from how we are as humans. We don't like anything that doesn't make sense. We want to be able to understand and draw the people around us, the concepts, the politics, and the brands. If something sends mixed messages, and isn't easily understandable or relatable, we close down. It's our brains' survival mode. It's most of the times too complicated to try and understand each other, why would someone make an active effort to try to understand a brand.

As a result, it is your responsibility, as a marketer, to make your brand relatable and easy to grasp. Your identity has to be clear and before you even think it, no - a good "About us" page is not enough. Once you define and fully understand who your brand is, the next step is to ensure everything it says and does going forward reflects and originates from that identity. Consistency. Consistency in how and what you speak with your audience, in every piece of content, in every social media post, image published, presentation you deliver, podcast you record, and video you upload online.

Now again, messages going out of your organization can come from any department or team member. And if those teams don't work closely together, don't share their work, and collaborate on creatives, your brand becomes confusing. So you need a tool and system that helps you label, organize, and visualize content. It should make it easy to be on the same page. 82% of Gen Zers and 77 percent of millennials are more likely to purchase from a company that provides consistent, relevant content.

Alignment & Feedback

Efficient processes have to ensure alignment. It's important to note that alignment goes beyond transparency. Alignment starts with a clear strategy and ends with consistent deliverables. It means that everyone understands the vision and strategy, the action plans, and how that vision will be reflected in the final outcome.

Alignment is not limited to a specific part of the process or between particular team members. It, again, has to stand at the roots of your processes. To ensure a high level of alignment you have to firstly make sure that everyone involved knows the overall strategy, understands the decided upon action plan, the workflow, and expectations when it comes to the final deliverables.

But being aware and understanding something, does not necessarily imply grasping the respective concepts which is the second thing you have to strive for. Don't focus on communicating your vision only but make sure it's a dialog and see to it that the vision is shared and believed in cumulatively.

Now if everyone is aware of the team's plans and vision, relate to them and understand them, the next step is to make sure they don't get lost in execution. On paper everything can sound lean and clear. This is the strategy, here are the deliverables, bring them to life and that's that. But execution almost always turns into a madhouse and the first one to go is the alignment.

The way to keep the red line and clear direction throughout execution is a solid feedback process along the way. Feedback is essential to quality and progress. Feedback is also one of the processes that can get the messiest. Whilst feedback is the mother of progress, inefficient feedback processes can stand in the way of getting things done at all. So I strongly recommend you to not take feedback processes lightly. One quick phone call to talk about a WIP Facebook post is a slippery slope.

So design a feedback workflow that is not prone to miscommunication, wasted time, or distractions. A workflow that ensures feedback is relevant, in context, timely, and easy to give.

I would again like to highlight how far efficient feedback can go. I've seen and worked with companies that had a hub of over 20 stakeholders. They would share thoughts and approve posts via an email thread with over 25 people in CC.

Just take a second to imagine how chaotic this thread would become. Now change your perspective to those poor social media managers that had to take each row, each email, combine it in a logical output, implement changes, and start everything over again.

Marketing moves fast, most of the time people don't. That's because you need a way to make approvals fast and clear. Going through hundreds of emails, searching for the right feedback, waiting weeks to hear from your stakeholders is the wrong way. The future relies on real-time collaboration and communication of teams with tools such as Slack, Dropbox, and Planable.

Integration

I believe one of the main problems that's standing in the way of content excellence today is that it's still being viewed as "one of the initiatives". The truth is that content is the heart of marketing and marketing should be the heart of an organization.

Content marketing should be tightly connected to each and every part of the organization for three main reasons:

1. Firstly, there's nothing irrelevant to content marketers. Anything can be turned into a story.

2. Secondly, content marketers should be up to date with everything happening in the company because good content reflects reality. You don't want to be facing a personnel crisis in the company and promoting a zen culture in the middle of it. The risks are high.

3. But this goes both ways. It's not only your content team who should be close to the entire company. Ideally, other departments feel comfortable to suggest content, promote content, and even create content.

Try finding a functional workflow and technology that can support all this communication and collaboration. And don't expect it to happen overnight.

The organization of the future will have all its important stakeholders participating in the content creation process and helping the content team. Here are some examples:

- ***Distribution and Support.*** Sharing the best examples and success stories of customer support when a customer had excellent service delivered and shared this experience with their peers.

- ***Corporate Communication*** and Risk Mitigation. By involving key stakeholders, your organization might identify big issues and crisis coming and prevent or nip them in the bud. These are issues that can significantly affect your company in the following weeks, months, or even years as we saw in the examples in Chapter 2.

- ***R&D.*** By involving all the major stakeholders in the content creation process, you'll see how new ideas and projects will appear, initiatives, and opportunities to promote your product & service.

- ***Employee Advocacy.*** I'm 100% sure you have tons of incredible employees doing an awesome job and who'd love to help promote your brand. Training opportunities, corporate events, or simply company content.

Iteration

A clear flow has input, output and easy process of feedback iteration. It all starts with an idea, the business ambition integrated with customer journey, content strategy, objectives combined with the editorial & content calendar. When content is being created, it will be shared with the team mates in an open space enabled by collaboration, then approved, published, distributed, amplified, and measured. Afterward, the content cycle will start over again.
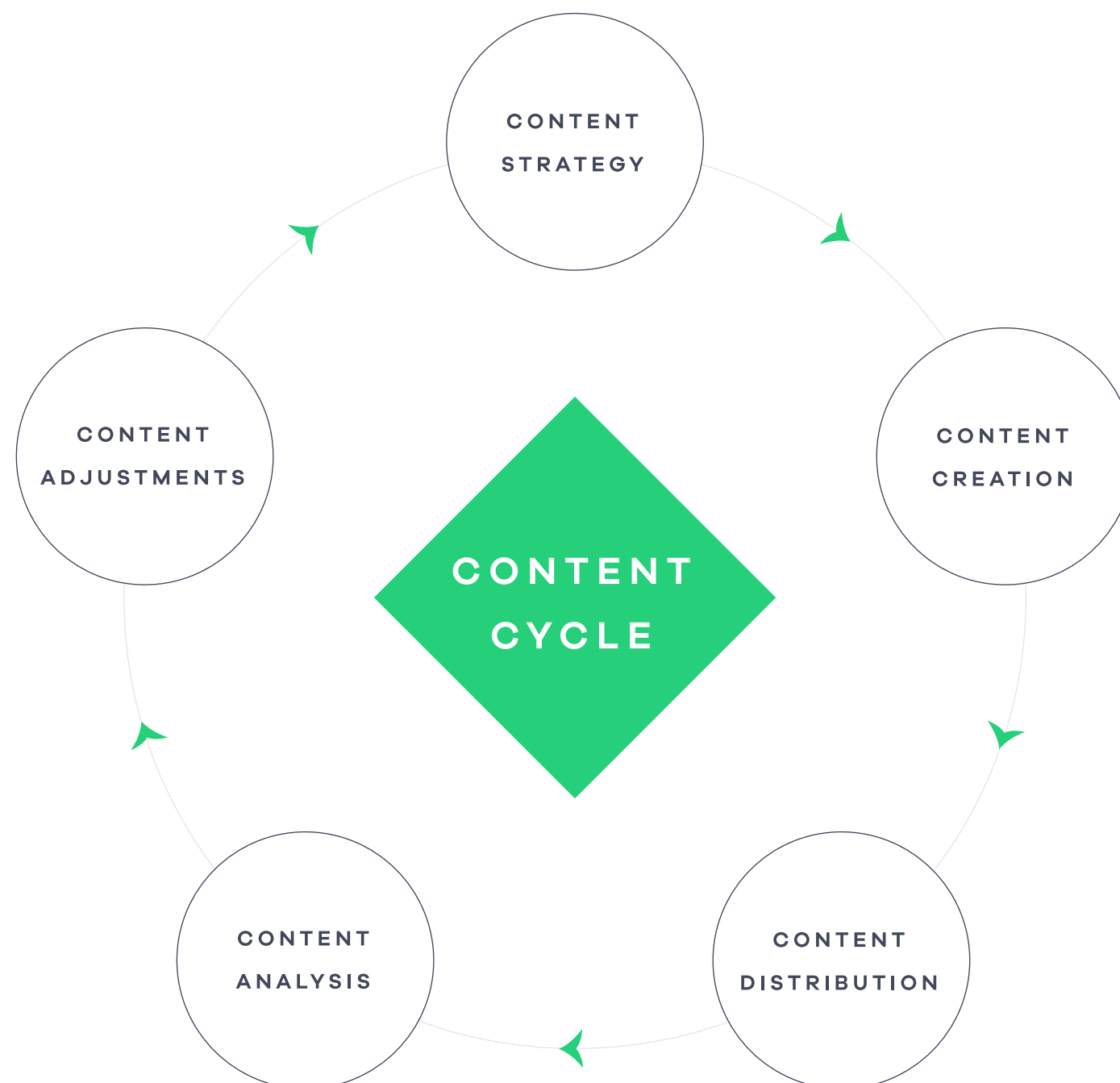
While iteration is essential in a good content marketing workflow, it has to be supported by smooth collaboration. Otherwise you risk brand reputation.

Tools

If I haven't been quite clear or precise yet, the way marketing teams communicate and collaborate will define how the future will affect the brand. So communication with all of your teammates, clients, partners, and external vendors simply can no longer happen through emails, calls, and unnecessary meetings.

A new way to collaborate is in town and you have to adapt. The way to ensure seamless communication is through tools. Tools that can streamline your work and make external partners feel like part of your team.

Now depending on your needs and requirements, there are many platforms to help you, here's my personal list

- *Planable* for content management creation
- *InVision App* for prototyping
- *Frame* for creating video content
- *ConvertKit* for email marketing tools you need to grow your blog and business
- *Slack* for the transparent environment
- *Front App* to simply collaborate on email support

- *Zoom.us* to connect with anyone anywhere

- *Airtable* for spreadsheets on steroids.

- *Asana* for task management

- *Dropbox* for assets management

Obviously, no automation tool can or should replace the creative force of your team. However such tools can provide measurements and instruments to empower marketers with more creative time. When time-consuming and repetitive tedious tasks are taken care of, those valuable hours can be spent on creative work.

My advice is to start with emails. They take time and can become a mess. You need a collaborative space for your marketing organization no matter the size. Stop losing time on email and move to collaborative, visual, efficient space to iterate on content.

What's next in the world of content marketing?

A newsroom, command center, social hub, content studio, war room, digital engagement center. More specific? All signals point to the same fact: that the future will be even more demanding, content needs will increase, and you need a future-proof team that can build on whatever the world will bring you.

Consumers will change, customers will come, tools will be upgraded, teams will be switched, new technology will develop, and disruption will constantly happen. And if the marketing mindset remains the same, you won't be able to keep up. Marketers need to step up their game. Instead of chasing campaigns without a clear purpose, build a community around your brand and create differentiated value.

> Companies are increasingly enhancing the value of their products by creating customer experiences. Some deepen the customer relationship by leveraging what they know about a given customer to personalize offerings. Others focus on the breadth of the relationship by adding touchpoints. Our research shows that high-performing brands do both—providing what we call "total experience." In fact, we believe that the most important marketing metric will soon change from "share of wallet" or "share of voice" to "share of experience"
>
> —HBR in "The Ultimate Marketing Machine"

More content generated for more channels

We already live in an abundance of information, knowledge, and content. The amount of data we produce every day is mind-blowing. "Over 2.5 quintillion bytes of data are created every single day, and it's only going to grow from there. By 2020, it's estimated that 1.7MB of data will be created every second for every person on earth." The last two years alone are actually responsible for 90% of the data in the world. According to Domo's Data Never Sleeps 5.0 report, this is what's being generated every minute of the day:

- Snapchat users share 527,760 photos

- More than 120 professionals join LinkedIn

The fact is brands & consumers are creating *a lot of content today*. As technology keeps evolving, marketing becomes better, smarter, more creative and personalized. Brands will only use technology and content more to win over their audience.

We will see brands having more success when there's a clear process defined for creating a consistent and integrated experience. That way, brands create delight, desire, and attachment at every stage of their customers' journey. This can be achieved only with high-quality content in unprecedented volumes.

Marketers will not only have to focus on creating new content but quality content. And of course, they'll have to become more and more creative into leveraging that content. A marketing team ready for the future is agile, fast, adaptable, and works as one to maximize their efforts.

> The opportunity here is huge, as only 9 percent of marketers say they have developed a completely systematic approach to producing, managing and distributing content. The other 91 percent lament that they're still doing a lot of manual work, or even doing everything on an ad-hoc basis.
>
> —John Dalziel, Client Director, SGK in Ad Asia Online

The marketers of the future will be creatives first and marketers second. Together in our last piece, we'll explore the most important features to make you prepared for what happens next.

From advertising to branded content

Be a writer first and marketer second by exploring the importance of writing stories and connecting with your audience on a personal level. Humans think with logic and feel with emotions and as a marketer, you need to keep that in mind.

> Branded content is content produced by an advertiser with the objective to connect with its audience - to consume and enjoy it. Native advertising is a way to distribute that content, adding depth and visibility. For this reason, branded content and content marketing differ in both form and function.
>
> —The Mission

People creating stories for other people - that's a simple definition of branded content marketing. Nielsen discovered that brand recall was 86% for branded content, and only 65% for regular ads such as commercials, banner ads, social media ads, etc. Branded content entertains, teaches, inspires, and creates brand engagement, rather than just promoting a product or service.

It has become popular due to the advertising great invasion of our online and offline lives. Advertising is everywhere. It's on our Facebook feeds, Spotify accounts, Kindles, phones, and websites. However, people are much more likely to share many times branded content on social media and with their friends as it's less obvious brings genuine value. You've seen it in your favorite Netflix Series, TV Shows, Youtube Channels or favorite Photographer. It's the art of invisible advertorials.

Branded content is more consumer-focused and that's why it will help you get more brand recognition. It doesn't feel like a pitch or pushy sales message at your door.

It's just there to create a better environment. Remember, people consume content but they don't "consume" an ad.

Authenticity and transparency

Almost 86% of consumers say that authenticity is important when deciding whether they like a brand and choose to support it in the future, according to Stackla. More than half of consumers think brands aren't creating content that feels authentic. Fifty-seven percent said less than half of brands create content that resonates as authentic.

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>
> —The Mission

As consumers, we tend to be inspired and become emotionally invested in authentic brands. That easily turns us into buyers of that brand, even though there are many other better alternatives available. Companies that manage to create an authentic brand will build brand loyalty and become more profitable.

> Encourage, don't dictate, social conversations and personal stories and videos. Don't sell your product - make it stand out and let it run. Let everyday people, professional creators and experts communicate their love or need for your brand in their words and style. Be willing to be criticized or attacked. There's real value in finding out things you may or may not want to hear.
>
> —Jill Byron on Brand Authenticity

> I think the future of content marketing is LESS about marketing. It's about creating. The best content today documents what's really happening in the world and what real people are doing. I love the motto of documents don't create, and that's where I think the future of content will be.
>
> — Dave Gerhardt, VP of Marketing, Drift

Personalization to the tiniest detail of your life

The age of generic, spammy, and ultimately lazy marketing efforts is coming to an end. That's why I so strongly believe in personalized marketing. It will change the way brands interact with customers once and for all. And, once again, marketers will have to adapt quickly. The future will be even more demanding for digital marketers around the world.

A personalized piece of content is any content that's customized and relevant to multiple segments of your customer persona or audience, including age, location, device, company, profession, etc. Personalization is key to creating a full digital experience for your potential customers and drive more sales to your business. It will help you create prospect-specific news feeds, web pages, content collections, posts, videos, stories, and campaigns.

> The future, for us as marketers, will continue to be about understanding our customers or audiences best. Whether we do that based on data, or gut feel, or AI or whatever, may change. But the core of marketing will always be to help the Brand best understand who it is serving, what problem it is solving, and to be able to communicate that in the most effective and compelling way possible. Whatever new skillset or mindsets are needed to do that successfully is what marketers need to be aware of and adapt to on an ongoing basis.
>
> — Chitra Iyer, Editor-in-Chief @ MarTech Advisor

78% of consumers say that personally-relevant content is a determining factor in their purchasing decision and better personalization can lead to a 500% increase in consumer spending. 2019 is just the beginning of personalization but it will become a lot more powerful in the following years. We believe that personalization will become highly relevant for every interaction, conversation, user, customer, and organization to target your unique needs.

Cross-Teams

Everyone in your organization, from the CEO to the ground-level employees will become involved with some input at some point in the content creation process. It's marketing at the heart of every organization. Content creation will become more integrated into the company as a whole to make sure it involves every department and everyone has their voice heard. And this will happen for many reasons such as developing employee advocacy, sharing behind-the-scenes from multiple offices around the world, exchanging feedback between organizations of the same brand etc.

Each of your company employees engage customers in different ways. This can help provide different perspectives on the needs and expectations prospects have. Similarly, a band playing music with different instruments needs the input from every player to write a good album. That's exactly the same process. Putting two departments together will result in combining the best forces into one and this means more:

- behind the scenes Stories on your Instagram
- Facebook Live of presenting the team
- showcasing your organization's successful initiatives
- meet the team blog posts
- podcast interviews

More brands collaborating

A strategic alliance between two or more brands can create a unique product or service and bring a competitive advantage. It's a crazy, interesting, funny, or beautiful thing created for online buzz. A prime example of such collaborative content is Red Bull and GoPro's "Stratos" project, in which the companies presented Felix Baumgartner's 24-mile plunge from a space pod down to Earth.

By working together, more brands can achieve increased market share, exchange knowledge, widen their pool of customers, and get bigger brand reach. See a few examples below:

- Pottery Barn & Sherwin-Williams

- Casper & West Elm

- Bonne Belle & Dr. Pepper

- BMW & Louis Vuitton

- Uber & Spotify

Don't worry if you think that some of these collaborations are almost impossible to get done. There are many ways to start small, such as:

- Podcast or Video Blog interviews in which hosts of different companies interview one another on their respective channels

- Collaborate on a bigger piece of content like an industry report or case study

- Social media takeovers on Instagram, Snapchat, or Twitter

The latest campaign that created millions in reach and social media buzz featured Emilia Clark. It consisted in spending an evening with her as a VIP at the Game of Thrones Season 8 Premiere with flights and hotel covered. The campaign was in partnership with Omaze, and Charities Aid Foundation of America.

Earnings from this campaign will benefit a cause very close to Emilia Clarke's heart: helping young adults recover from the impact of major medical trauma. Donations will be distributed through the Charities Aid Foundation of America to organizations working in this area of interest.

As a consumer, I'd love to see more collaborations like these.

Influencers as an ad hoc content creation team

Marketing should feel like a 1:1 conversation between two like-minded people. Perhaps the most beneficial aspect of partnering with influencers is reaching a wide variety of customer personas with a new vision, content, and ideas.

Capitalize on micro moments

Long-form content will remain the dominant acquisition tactic as it dives deep into the nuances of a given topic. But it doesn't mean that content can't take other forms too. In other words, don't neglect the power of micro-content that answers your

audience's questions and gives them the reason-why to keep following you.

Content. Content. Content.

Gary Vaynerchuk has created a content strategy machine that generates micro-content by distributing and adapting the content you already have with little to no additional effort. By creating one long-form piece of content you can repurpose it into dozens of smaller and platform-specific content pieces. For example, you can turn a long video into a podcast, a short presentation, upload short videos to Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and others. And then continue to publish all this into Facebook Watch Page, Youtube Channel, IGTV, Snapchat, Quora, Instagram Stories, and many more.

What's happening right now

Last, but not least, focus on the present moment. Since the moment Periscope started the live video, everyone hopped on this train and introduced live content to their platform, including Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, and LinkedIn. Live streaming is only going to keep expanding.

- 47% of live streaming video viewers around the world are streaming more live video compared to one year ago (*eMarketer*)

- The World Cup hit a peak of 7.9M concurrent plays of its live streams this summer (*StreamingMedia*)

- Four of esports' biggest events garnered 190.1M hours (a cool 21,700 years, if you're counting) of live streams in 2018 (*SportsPro*)

- 42% of the U.S. population has now live-streamed online content— compared to 25% just last year (*Vanguard*)

While independent creators and influencers already started using live videos on full speed, brands are still behind showing a lack of creativity when it comes to this. However, there are many ways to win in your industry if you capitalize on live video marketing. Share your office, the current event you're organizing, a cool interview. Go crazy. That's my advice.

Conclusion

We made it ,dear reader. Made it together through this entire ebook. I feel like we're quite connected by now. We've reminisced together through the beautiful and troubled years of advertising. We've traveled through the history of technology. We've looked at the problems of today. And we've figured out a way to prepare for tomorrow.

It is something. And as much as I've ranted on and on throughout so many pages, I would like to draw up some key things to remember. Bottom line is that I am trying to help marketing teams be efficient today and ready for tomorrow. We're all running in this neverending marathon to produce content every day. We're so afraid of getting tired or of letting a day pass by without saying something to the world, that we forget about the helicopter view.

My biggest goal was to stop you from running for a second and help you reflect about where your team stands, how you collaborate, and how much time you could be getting back. An objective glance at a content marketing team usually generates the same picture: a chaotic race towards a blurry destination. Marketers can do better, we can be more effective, and we should.

My purpose however isn't to change marketing teams starting from tomorrow. I'm looking to help prepare for what's coming. Because if today seems like madness, tomorrow will just add clutter to the picture. Grab a piece of paper, and start a mindmap. Draw everyone involved and all the content initiatives you have (include everything from blog posts, to newsletters, to social media, whitepapers, everything). Now start connecting the dots. Who collaborates with whom and for what? Those connections have a support, a way for the messages to travel. What is it now? Phone, text, messages, emails, chats? Ask them and write it down. After everything is included in the mindmap, take a look and grasp the helicopter view.

Now it's time to declutter using all the information in this ebook.

Remember: transparency, consistency, alignment, integration, iteration.

The future of marketing with Planable

Now that I've created and provided what I consider to be valuable content for you with the *seamless collaboration* of my teammates, I can move on to shameless sales. Because I believe I now deserve to tell you about the product that I've built. And of course, I've left it at the end because it has to be clear that there are no strings attached. Don't want to know about Planable? Close this ebook and call it read. If you do, however, want to improve your social media collaboration, it'd be plain old stupid from me to not try and close the deal. Or at least get a qualified lead from it. Now let's get to it.

The problems that I highlighted throughout so many pages, represent the reason we built Planable - a collaboration platform marketers will love.

Today, production of content happens across a mishmash of spreadsheets, powerpoints and endless email threads. This is inefficient and too much like the processes that used to happen decades ago.

Planable solves this problem.

We are replacing Dropbox for asset management, cluttered spreadsheets for content review, back-and-forth emails for approval, and legacy systems like Hootsuite for publishing. Planable is a radically reimagined way to coordinate, produce and control your social media output.

The platform works like a central hub for content, people, and feedback. Teams can build and preview social media posts and see exactly how they would look after publishing. No more screenshots, Photoshop mockups, or guessing how a post will look like from a spreadsheet.

When everyone is on the same page and sees the same things, no misunderstandings can happen.

In your *company dashboard*, you can see all the brands that you manage. They are completely private from one another so you can group brands and people according to each account you have.

You can always *add new team members* or edit existing ones while defining their roles or assigning granular permissions. For a seamless workflow, you can mark them as a client or as part of the internal team which will later allow you to set the visibility of posts and comments within the workspace.

And once your team is all set up, everyone can see exactly how the content will look like once it's live. Our *previews* are pixel perfect and always up to date regardless the format: from thumbnail links, to images, carousels, videos, or even gifs. You'll find no difference between how the posts look like drafted in Planable or live on any social network. The same goes for Twitter, Linkedin, and Instagram.

These previews are created instantly while working on a post. You can add images,

videos, or simply paste a link and get the generated preview. You can create posts for multiple pages at once. Before saving the post, you can apply different settings like its visibility. If it's only a draft, you can choose to show it to your internal team only which allows you to hide the content from other stakeholders unless it's ready to go.

After you save the post, it will be added to your feed along with all its details such as the **labels applied**. Labels can be used to organize your content per campaign, pillars or topics. They can also help you filter or sort through your posts later on. Also, you can export the content into a CSV & PDF document.

After creating posts, collaboration can begin. The **feedback loops and comments** will appear on the right of each post and everyone involved is notified. You can add comments or internal notes depending on who you want to address. Internal notes can only be viewed by your teammates while comments can be seen by clients and stakeholders as well. When you add a new comment or note, you can tag other users to notify them specifically or attach images to share examples for your content.

As for editing posts, it all happens real time. And don't worry about consequences, we treat each post as a separate asset and save all actions from the moment it is created. That means that you can view its entire **version history** at any time, know when and who made edits and simply restore a previous version.

Stakeholders can approve a post with only one click. And for when they're on the go - they can easily preview, collaborate, and approve content directly from the **Mobile app.**

Once a post has greenlight, it can be **scheduled** just as easily from the office or on the go. To make sure that no mistakes can happen, you can set the workspace to **require approvals** before anyone can schedule a post.

But visualizing content accurately is not the only great thing about Planable - besides the feed view, there are 3 more ways to plan and edit your content.

The **calendar view** is the best way to plan your campaigns whilst seeing everything at a glance for all your channels. If something's not right, rearrange content by dragging and dropping posts as you please. And to make your life easier, set up time slots according to your scheduling habits so planning.

For fast and bulk actions, we've got **List view**. Here you can select multiple posts and take any bulk actions that you need such as approving all at once, scheduling, deleting or even copying posts on other pages or in other workspaces.

With Instagram on the rise, you've got to ensure your grid looks perfect and for that, our **Grid view** is perfect. Plan your palette, think in advance, and make sure it will all come together.

And that's Planable in a nutshell, sign up here to start your 14 days free trial.