

Bridging the CMO-CIO Chasm

BLUEPRINT FOR A NEXT-GENERATION MARKETING TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM

It's time to fix the CMO-CIO relationship.

For too long, these two critical enterprise roles have been divided by objectives that at times have seemed mutually exclusive. Now, as CMOs find themselves in a struggle to keep up with a fast-changing digital marketing landscape distinguished by an ever-expanding array of new channels, the chasm has become wider. While CMOs often fail to fully consider how their technology decisions might impact CIOs' domains, CIOs have tended to underestimate — and thus under-serve — CMOs' rapidly evolving needs.

Given this lay of the land, it's no surprise that CMOs, lacking sufficient support from IT, find themselves struggling with a hodge-podge of rogue marketing applications that are either poorly integrated with critical enterprise data stores or not integrated at all. It's a situation that further alienates CIOs while also underscoring their potential importance to the marketing department.

There is hope, however. The current data-intensive marketing environment — characterized by increasingly savvy customers who expect every interaction, regardless of channel, to be laced with context from previous interactions — presents a real opportunity for CMOs and CIOs to bridge the gap.

It gives CMOs plenty of justification to reach out to their CIOs and include them in the process of identifying and deploying a marketing platform that best meshes with existing enterprise systems. The resulting flow

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of data would provide CMOs with what they need to deliver highly-contextual marketing campaigns while minimizing the integration headaches they're currently experiencing.

CIOs, meanwhile, can help forge a true partnership — one that will deliver bottom-line benefits — by striving to understand CMOs' rapidly evolving needs and, ultimately, help them to deliver powerful, customized marketing messages to an increasingly mobile and data-conscious customer base.

In a recent research article on the topic, Brian Whipple and Baiju Shaw, managing directors at global consultancy Accenture, found that only one in 10 CMOs and CIOs believe they collaborate sufficiently, so clearly both groups are aware of the need for them to forge a stronger strategic partnership.

The stakes are high for them do so, as achieving this vision of a tighter CMO-CIO bond will greatly increase the odds that an organization ends up with a digital marketing platform that not only leverages existing IT investments, but also delivers truly contextual multi-channel messages.

CMO and CIO challenges

To understand how the CMO-CIO relationship is failing, one must first understand the respective landscapes they are facing. A closer look at the numerous issues confronting each reveals that while CMOs and CIOs have many conflicting interests, they also have an underlying set of shared challenges related to the fast-changing landscapes in which they operate.

CMOs, in particular, find themselves in a time of immense contradiction. Growing consumer demand for highly-personalized and contextual messaging represents one of the greatest marketing opportunities of modern times. Companies that can effectively tie together the various touchpoints at which they interact with customers — from websites and transactional systems to emails and purchase histories to mobile apps and social media — are that much closer to delivering on customer expectations. Doing so, however, is proving to be a tricky undertaking, as a gauntlet of obstacles is blocking CMOs' efforts to capitalize on the opportunity.

It starts with getting the message delivered. Not only has increasingly sophisticated email filtering made it harder to get messages to recipients, CMOs also struggle to effectively customize email service provider (ESP) platforms. What's more, getting customers to engage with the messages that do get through is a growing challenge, as consumers have grown ever-more mobile and savvy, and are thus less likely to read anything that either isn't formatted correctly for their device of choice or doesn't cater to them enough personally.

Even those companies that are able to deliver a sufficiently customized message to the right device and somehow grab the customer's attention typically lack the ability to tie all of that effort together when the chance to convert a sale appears. Whether that occurs in a store, over the phone, via a mobile application, or on a website, it's rare that a company can effectively weave the context of previous interactions and offers into each step of the purchasing process, often leading customers to abandon purchases unnecessarily.

Much of this can be tied to the numerous shortcomings of existing digital marketing platforms. Ask just about any CMOs to give you a rundown of their technologies, and you'll have to pull up a chair because it will probably take a while. The portfolio is likely to include CRM, Web analytics, social media management, marketing automation, email marketing, and the list goes on and on. And naturally, all of these systems require integration, with each other and with various data stores throughout the enterprise, in order to deliver the level of personalization customers demand.

To make matters worse, because these stitched-together technologies rarely deliver the desired results, CMOs find themselves issuing RFPs every two to four years and starting the whole painful cycle over again.

Tasked with supporting the entire enterprise, CIOs obviously face some different challenges. Prominent among those is the ongoing mandate to reduce IT costs, a pressure that's confronted CIOs steadily since the U.S. economy tanked in 2008. Frankly, it's a mandate that has kept CIOs from eagerly jumping in to help in the selection of digital marketing platforms. Additionally, the always-on nature of today's enterprise, which calls for employees to have access to applications and data around the clock from any device, has compelled CIOs to devote large chunks of their resources to ensuring maximum availability and minimum downtime.

That said, the CIO challenge that's most pertinent to this discussion is the ongoing struggles with integration, especially connecting critical enterprise apps with business intelligence and analytics platforms. The sheer volume of work CIOs must manage on this front has rendered the integration needs of CMOs a lower priority.

The common thread between these CMO and CIO paradigms is that both roles have been somewhat hamstrung by a constant need to keep up with the relentless pace of change in their respective domains.

The opportunity for improved CMO-CIO collaboration

Much of why CMOs and CIOs traditionally haven't collaborated effectively can be traced to poor communication. Quite simply, neither role has done a very good job of really grasping the needs — and challenges — of the other. By getting better at articulating needs, developing a level of empathy, and working to understand the larger needs of the business, CMOs and CIOs can take significant steps toward developing a valuable and strategic partnership.

There are a number of things CMOs can do to address these issues and foster closer relationships with their CIOs. For starters, they must expand their understanding of the organization's technology stack, a critical step toward developing digital marketing strategies that fully leverage a company's existing IT investments. They also must get more familiar with the changing needs of the business, such as the way the rapidly evolving consumer landscape affects every functional area. In doing so, they're far more likely to identify ways that their marketing objectives can mesh with other initiatives — for example, dovetailing their social media marketing strategy with other social media outreach best practices being established elsewhere in the company.

Perhaps most important, however, CMOs must do a better job of looping CIOs into their technology purchase decisions. CIOs are palpably concerned about being marginalized by the rogue use of software-as-a-service (SaaS) applications among business units and even individuals. By involving CIOs in technology evaluations rather than bypassing them, CMOs can engender significant goodwill that will only help when future technology needs arise. Even something as simple as asking vendors better questions that get at CIOs' potential concern would represent a huge step in the right direction. (Moreover, CMOs will be doing themselves a huge favor, as more effectively looping in CIOs will also reduce the odds that they'll have to look for a new platform in two to four years.)

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Meanwhile, CIOs must also do their part to bridge the gap, starting with developing a better understanding of the fast-changing marketing landscape through which CMOs are navigating. For example, Pinterest, an image-based social platform that's quickly rising on CMOs' priority lists, was barely a blip on the radar just two years ago.

Additionally, CIOs can build trust with CMOs — who have traditionally looked upon IT as a slow-moving service bureau rather than a partner — by offering their input in vendor evaluation and selection without insisting on final approval of those selections. Giving up a measure of control in this fashion would demonstrate faith in CMOs' abilities to make smart technology purchase decisions while also ensuring that those decisions are more likely to mesh effectively with existing IT stacks.

More specifically, CIOs also would be well advised to prioritize integration of enterprise applications and data stores with digital marketing applications. This would help to address one of CMOs' top challenges and push the enterprise closer to the 360-degree view of the customer that many CMOs consider a sort of Holy Grail.

By taking some of these steps to strengthen their interdependence, CMOs and CIOs can move closer to becoming the strategic business partners they need to be, and put their history of conflicting goals and non-communication to rest.

The role of technology (and the Lyris solution)

The question underlying much of this discussion is, of course, this: What would the ideal digital marketing platform look like? It's an important question given that so few companies have in place marketing technology environments that can be considered as anything approaching ideal.

CMOs struggle with technology portfolios that are bursting with disconnected apps. They've tried to stitch together a monolithic marketing platform using best-of-breed applications, only to discover that the monolith is inflexible. In the meantime, they've been so focused on fighting with technology that they've failed to put foundational best practices into place.

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CIOs, meanwhile, are focused on cost-cutting and availability of applications and data, and are overtaxed on the integration front, with constantly growing demands to tie pretty much every part of the enterprise to business intelligence and analytics engines.

With these two apparently conflicting sets of stimuli, it's apparent that a new kind of digital marketing platform is needed, one that puts the customer at its center rather than the technology. To effectively address the needs of both CMOs and CIOs, the platform must be modular in nature, enabling marketing services delivered via an enterprise services bus to be easily configured and customized to meet the evolving needs of the enterprise.

In other words, it must be the opposite of a siloed application built on an aging code base. It must simultaneously deliver the services CMOs need to effectively deliver messages, engage with customers,

and convert purchases while fitting within the CIO's environment and minimizing IT's integration burden.

Having been on the frontlines of this emerging digital marketing challenge, Lyris has re-imagined its entire product suite as just such a platform. Specifically, Lyris applications have been deconstructed and combined under an enterprise services bus in an effort to transform the landscape for both CMOs and CIOs.

The new Lyris Digital Marketing Platform has been architected to let enterprises orchestrate interactions across every customer touchpoint while protecting and extending the value of existing technology investments. It provides complete control over the design of marketing workflows and integration of customer data in a graphically oriented and flexible development environment designed to meet the unique needs of the modern enterprise. What's more, it includes out-of-the-box integration with major SaaS marketing platforms such as Salesforce.com and Oracle Eloqua, thus protecting companies' existing cloud-computing investments.

The intent of this endeavor was to change the story enterprises have been getting from marketing technology vendors; to get off the buzzword treadmill that's had vendors scrambling to roll out new features and functions in response to hyped trends such as big data and real-time market segmentation. The Lyris technology cuts through the noise to help bridge the gap between CMOs and CIOs.

Conclusion

Technology is not the answer to what ails the CMO-CIO dynamic, but it's an important component. In order for CMOs and CIOs to repair their organizational relationship, they must not only look closely at what they need in order to meet the unique challenges facing each of them today, but they must also do a better job at understanding the needs of, and demands on, the other. They must work to develop a partnership that, in the end, is likely to result in CMOs getting the technology arsenal they need to confront a fast-changing customer interaction landscape, while CIOs can ensure that those technologies fit logically into

their existing environments without expanding their integration workloads.

Ultimately, by taking the necessary steps to establish a true strategic partnership with each other, CMOs and CIOs will ensure that enterprises have the marketing platforms they need to operate at the speed of 21st century business. What's more, they'll be equipped to guide enterprises through the fast-moving transitions they're likely to face as the multi-channel customer landscape continues to evolve.

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About Lyris, Inc.

Lyris is a leading global provider of digital marketing solutions that help companies engage with customers in more meaningful ways. Lyris products and services empower marketers to design, automate, and optimize data-driven interactive marketing campaigns that facilitate superior engagement, increase conversions, and deliver measurable business value. Lyris' high-performance, secure, and flexible digital marketing platforms improve marketing efficiency by providing automated digital message delivery, robust segmentation, and real-time digital channel analytics. The Lyris solutions portfolio is comprised of both in-the-cloud and on-premises offerings – Lyris HQ and Lyris LM – combined with customer-focused services and support, and delivered on a powerful integration platform that connects data and marketing workflows across the enterprise. More than 5,000 companies worldwide partner with Lyris to manage and execute sophisticated digital marketing campaigns across email, social, Web, and mobile channels. Learn more at www.lyris.com.