



The 4S's of experience marketing

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Brand Learning

For marketing that creates outstanding customer experiences, change is needed from within by reorganising around the 4S Marketers approach – integrating the roles of Scientists, Strategists, Storybuilders and Socialisers – to drive growth in the connected world.

Organisational focus on the customer experience is proven to lower churn and drive repeat purchase, word of mouth and ultimately revenue. Yet, while customer-centricity is a familiar rallying cry, the reality is that a lot of companies still aren't doing it very well – 89% of customers say they have switched brands due to a bad customer experience.

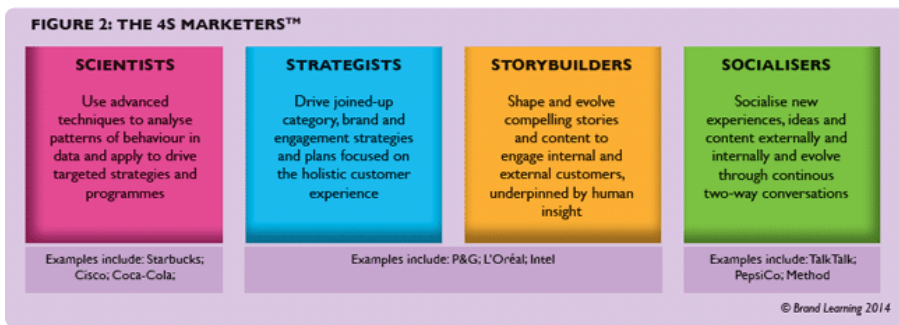
A powerful barrier is that while the world is better connected than ever before, organisations are not. Outdated functional structures, capabilities and siloed behaviours are preventing the agile approach needed to continuously uncover human insights and apply them across the customer experience.

As the customer champion, marketing must take charge of driving this change from within. The key to success is to reorganise around the 4S Marketers™ model – to utilise Scientists, Strategists, Storybuilders and Socialisers (Figure 1).



The 4S Marketers aren't distinct roles, they are the blend of capabilities to build into your marketing function. Different types of roles will require different combinations, but all 4S's need to be represented in your overall team (Figure 2).

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The scientists

As 'Scientists', marketers use advanced techniques to analyse patterns of behaviour in data and apply them to drive targeted strategies and programmes that engage customers with the right content at the right time. All marketers need data-driven skills, but there are also specific capabilities that need to be built into Marketing Analytics and Insight groups.

While analysts are typically focused on interpreting a limited data set retrospectively, the data scientist is focused on predicting customer behaviour using algorithms, computer science and predictive models.

Data scientists are already recruited by organisations across sectors (not just Google, Microsoft and IBM). For example, Starbucks uses data science to determine the best locations for its new stores and to drive marketing automation programmes for 'My Starbucks Rewards', delivering tailored content and offers at the right time based on purchasing behaviour through the mobile app. Next time you receive a timely offer for your favourite Frappuccino®, remember a mathematic algorithm sits behind it.

Demand for data scientists currently outstrips supply, but it is estimated that 70% of their time is spent assembling the data which can be handled by data integration specialists. Therefore a good short-term solution is to focus on establishing a core group of data scientists who can fulfil the algorithm work and predictive modelling, and build the broader in-house data science capabilities over time. General electric has done this with its leadingedge software and analytics centre.

Neuroscience is also involved. Our senses take in 11 million bits of information every second and only 40 are conscious, yet we have been focusing on the 40 – not good odds for influencing purchasing decisions. Neuroscience techniques (e.g. EEG, fMRI, facial coding) can help us understand these unarticulated thoughts and feelings and their influence on marketing has increased significantly over the past few years.

Leading companies such as Coca-Cola have established neuroscience labs in-house and demonstrated its impact – for example, the award-winning VW 'The Force' ad that failed standard market research but achieved industry high neuro-engagement scores. However, neuroscience should be applied in conjunction with more 'traditional' techniques, not as a catch-all solution, so it needs to be built into the broad skillset of all Insight roles.

Social media analytics is becoming increasingly sophisticated. The focus is shifting from analysis of volume to a deeper analysis of the topic, themes and customer sentiment in the conversations. In an H&M campaign featuring David Beckham and Beyoncé, the analytics showed more social mentions (volume) for Beckham, but it was actually the conversations about Beyoncé that were most likely to drive purchase intent.

Organisations need the capabilities to not only mine social media but also quickly disperse the insight. Agile social media centres are a key enabler, both in driving the flow of quality insight across the business and also as a cultural symbol for the importance of social within it.

For example, Cisco Systems set up its Social media listening Centre in 2012, built around six touchscreens that showcase data from social media conversations around Cisco's brands. Mentions and conversations are continuously dispersed from the Centre to functions across the business, with a ranking (on a 1-3 scale) to identify how rapidly a response is needed. Not all organisations will require centres of this scale, but at minimum, an agile social analytics team needs to be integrated into the Insight function.

Strategists and storybuilders

Brand development roles need to be refocused on driving every aspect of the customer experience across the organisation. This requires a mindset change from product, price, promotion and place to innovation, engagement, pricing and channel strategies focused on the holistic customer experience.

Equally there needs to be a shift from 'command and control brand management' to brand storybuilding. The focus should be on creating purpose-driven brands with inspiring brand stories that engage human needs and are evolved in collaboration with customers over time.

At the centre of great stories is great content, as marketing organisations increasingly become publishing organisations. Content marketing skills need to be core to the brand developer role supported by content creators and editing teams in-house and through external partners.

There are organisations doing content marketing well – for example, L'Oréal with makeup.com or the branded issue of the *Captain America* comic created for kiehls – but there's also a lot of content that is still focused on promoting a product and not providing value (through utility or entertainment) to customers. Unfortunately, this cannot be achieved if marketing continues to operate as a siloed function. Brand leaders need to take the lead in establishing joined-up, agile ways of working with other functions (Sales, Operations, R&D) as part of a 'Customer Experience Engine' creating brilliant customer experiences that drive business growth.

This means mapping all the processes and activities needed for this experience, and then together clarifying which functional groups will do what, how they will interact at key points, and how and when they'll make decisions. The focus needs to shift from siloed brand planning to joined-up customer experience strategy and planning.

To fulfil this remit, brand developers need to develop a broader understanding of the organisation, the goals of cross-functional partners and a more commercial mindset to demonstrate value. Sales teams aren't interested in brand equity, but they might be if you demonstrate how it has improved sales performance. For example, look at P&G. There were sensationalist headlines last year about the 'end of marketing' when P&G renamed its marketing directors and associate marketing directors as brand directors and associate brand directors.

But this reorganisation was actually intended to reflect an increased influence and scope for marketing as joined-up brand strategists and storybuilders focused on the customer experience. P&G integrated four disciplines (brand management, consumer and market knowledge, communications and design) into one department to "deliver better brand and business results, clarify roles and responsibilities to make faster decisions, and simplify our structure to free up time for creativity and

better execution".

P&G brand managers have a clear focus to collaborate as 'multifunctional business teams' including Operations, R&D, and Market Sales and Planning to drive commercial brand performance. A key responsibility of the P&G brand manager role profile is 'co-operating with key internal experts across all functions'.

P&G brand teams equally have a relentless focus on the consumer experience 'starting with the store back' – coined back in 2005 as the first moment of truth (shelf) followed by the second moment of truth (experience), and now preceded by Google's zero moment of truth. This is an equal focus on retail customers as well as consumers, with brand managers expected to have clarity on the 'sweet spot' for what their brand will achieve for key customer accounts.

It is also renowned for its portfolio of purpose-driven brands with compelling stories that enrich their customers' lives. For example, the Always brand purpose 'to help women embrace womanhood positively' was brought to life through compelling storybuilding for the 'Like A Girl' campaign. It challenged gender preconceptions and resulted in an ongoing weekly 6% sales uplift.

Yet for all the opportunities that science and technology present, engaging the people behind the devices at a human level remains a fundamental goal of great marketing. This requires teams and people with the skillsets to collate, distil and apply human insight to create new experiences that will resonate culturally. For example, cultural anthropologists are now being recruited by companies such as Intel, Aegis and Microsoft, who study culture and future trends to generate this human insight. Genevieve Bell, the cultural anthropologist at Intel Labs, runs a team of about 100 researchers and explains: "My mandate at Intel has always been to bring the stories of everyone outside the building inside the building – and make them count." For example, her team's discovery about how little drivers used their in-built car technologies drove a new Intel collaboration with Jaguar to develop better ways for customers to sync their personal devices in their cars.

Similarly, insight strategists work with data scientists and cultural storybuilders to synthesise the human insight and data into new propositions and experiences for customers. Stan Sthanunathan, senior VP consumer & market insights at Unilever, articulates the new mindset and capabilities needed by these insight strategists: "We need to go from insight providers to creative problem solvers, storytellers, disruptive thinkers and visionaries, acting to shape, change and light the way."

Socialisers

Brand activation roles need to be reframed as 'Socialisers' with responsibility for socialising experiences in their customers' worlds. For example, brand or retail activation managers responsible for delivering winning in-store programmes need to create a customer experience that fulfils the brand ideal rather than simply executing promotional materials.

The mindset needs to become that of cleaning products brand Method, which is relentless in delivering a customer experience behind its purpose to lead a 'Happy Healthy Home Revolution'. The Method team want to position Method as a master lifestyle brand and will only work with retailers who will enable them to achieve this – for example, stocking Method in the same shelf space as handwash brands.

Beyond this, organisations also need brand activators to shift from one-way communications to an approach that nurtures customer relationships through the customer journey, enabled by marketing automation programmes. Currently these automation programmes are not always delivering the desired results because the software is seen as the solution in itself – or they are limited to specific channels (e.g. email), rather than a dynamic multichannel approach focused on the customer.

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For example, TalkTalk Business brought together online, CRM and data, channel management and communications/content teams for its 'What's Your Business Grade' campaign. This initiative provided genuine utility to its business customers through an industry survey and app that enabled benchmarking of its technological capabilities.

Using five separate pathways based on the respondent score, marketing automation programmes were deployed to maximise customer conversations. It drove a 40% increase in sales opportunities in the small business segment with a 25% reduction in costs, and 25% increase in sales qualified leads for mid-market, corporate and enterprise.

In addition, many organisations already utilise community managers (either in-house or through external partners) to shape and optimise how their brand is engaging customers in two-way dialogue across social forums. Their role now needs to be expanded so they adopt agile working practices to identify key opportunities or issues from conversations, socialise the ideas quickly with the relevant internal teams and then work with them to create evolving content to enrich the conversations taking place.

For example, PepsiCo embraced social media as part of its business strategy. It develops community managers who are responsible for "developing original multimedia content, engaging with consumer and stakeholder audiences to share positive news and conversation supporting PepsiCo's business goals" and are expected to possess "strong networking and cross-functional working relationship building" skills.

Case study: Pernod Ricard

Pernod Ricard is the world's co-leader in the wines and spirits industry with a large portfolio of international brands, including Absolut, Jameson and Chivas Regal, and has a high-end premiumisation strategy. It has a clear ambition, articulated by the CEO, Alexandre Ricard: "We want to become number one in the industry."

The global alcoholic drinks market is predicted to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 1.49% and 3.16% over the period 2013-2018. However, there are industry challenges facing Pernod Ricard such as fierce competition, government regulation and increasing raw material prices. As in other industries, digital is also driving a key change in consumer behaviour and the channels through which to engage them. The challenge was how marketing could be redefined to drive customer-centred, sustainable growth in this changing consumer landscape.



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The starting point was to define the role of marketing and commercial in Pernod Ricard in driving business growth through 'building passion brands that engage communities to drive advocacy' by 'creating *convivialité* experiences'. Critically, this role is not only consumer focused, it is also completely aligned with Pernod Ricard's overall business purpose as '*créateurs de convivialité*'.

The team mapped out Pernod Ricard consumer experiences from the shelf/bar backwards to gain deeper insights into what their consumers think, feel and do at key moments. There was recognition that advocacy was the key driver of how their brands grow and that they sold *convivialité* experiences, not just physical bottles. This insight was used to determine how marketing and commercial could build and sustain 'passion brands': create brands that demand loyalty and advocacy; build and sustain systems that feed ongoing advocacy; and convert advocacy into commercial success in the last three feet.

In order to deliver these capabilities in practice, Pernod Ricard recognised the need to build-in future-facing marketing roles across its business. In practice, this meant establishing the right blend of Scientists, Strategists, Storybuilders and Socialisers in a number of new and existing roles.

- **Scientists:** Social Listeners and Consumer Intelligence teams are responsible for driving the strategic application of human insight driven by a scientific approach to data. Specifically, Consumer Intelligence teams are tasked with detecting and decoding cultural trends by synthesising and packaging all types of data – from qualitative, quantitative, trends and social listening – into actionable insights.
- **Strategists and Storybuilders:** Brand team roles focus on the Strategist and Storybuilder aspects, with responsibility for 'shaping the long-term experience to drive engagement, dialogue, participation and activation'. This focus can be seen in recent campaigns for Jameson whiskey – The Jameson Works. 'The Jameson Works is about sharing the stories behind modern craft, and spreading the knowledge of how great work is made today.'

It needed a new cross-functional operating model, defining how marketing and commercial teams work together and with other functional partners to create *convivialité* experiences that drive business growth. The expectation for marketing and commercial teams to work much more closely and in a joined-up way is driven from the CEO down. The most senior marketing and commercial leaders meet regularly.

Cultural storybuilding based on real human insight about consumers' lives is now a part of the role of all Pernod Ricard marketers. For example, teams participate in 'Magic Tuesdays' in which they visit bars to talk directly to people and understand why they drink different brands.

- **Socialisers:** Going forward, retail activation will be reframed as co-ordinating and delivering outstanding experiences through prioritised retail channels. For example, the pop-up 'Absolut Warhol' experiences delivered through travel retail accounts used facial recognition technology to help consumers create their own unique Warhol-style selfies that could be personalised and shared on social media.

In-house community managers were established to animate vibrant on- and offline communities for 'creating moments of *convivialité*'. They act as 'consultants' to the brand teams to ensure digital activation is fully integrated into their relevant brand activities and are required to be 'inclusive decision makers' who 'manage upwards, share information and work collaboratively'. Jeremie Moritz, digital content & media manager at Pernod Ricard, describes the role as like "running an orchestra".

There is also a strong internal focus with Pernod Ricard Chatter, the company's enterprise social network, which seeks to drive innovation through continuous dialogue between employees, real-time data-sharing, mobile collaboration and instant messaging.

In conclusion

Marketers need to take the lead in driving rapid change and ensuring the whole organisation is focused on the customer experience. This won't be achieved through traditional marketing structures and roles, but through building organisations around the 4S Marketers approach.

That means you need to redefine the role marketing plays in your organisation, reframe how it works with cross-functional partners and reorganise your marketing function around the type of 4S marketers your company needs. By making these changes now, you can set up marketing to create outstanding customer experiences that will drive future growth in this connected world.

About the Author

Rich Bryson is group client director and the organisation design thought leader at Brand Learning, a global consultancy in customer-centred capability development. He has helped organisations, including Mars, Diageo, M&S and AstraZeneca, to drive growth by creating better value for customers.

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