



# The Challenges B2B Marketers Face Internally in 2021 (And What They're Doing About It)

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**A SPECIAL REPORT FEATURING INTERVIEWS  
FROM LEADING B2B MARKETERS FROM**

Graphite, BombBomb, Kuder, SAS, Quorso, Adlib, LaunchPad Lab, Tatsoft, NGD Systems, LiquidSpace, Accelevents, Vizrt Group, Fulcrum Manufacturing Cloud, Simple Strat, TRC Companies, TrustSphere, Bombora, Veritone, and Hubspot.

By Scott McKinney

## Executive Overview

There are thousands of podcasts and blogs about B2B marketing, and almost all of them deal around external marketing. As a professional freelance copywriter specializing in B2B software, I habitually listen to and read many of these blogs and podcasts like DGMG Podcast, the Official SaaStr Podcast, and the Copywriters Podcast. While the topics are almost exclusively centered around external marketing, I started noticing marketers mention hints about internal challenges they face:

- How can marketers work closely with sales so their efforts combine in a fruitful way?
- Attribution: how can marketers accurately track the ROI of their efforts, given how they're typically only responsible for early-to-mid funnel tasks?
- How can marketers work effectively with colleagues that see marketing as a distraction from their main work?
- What can marketers do to encourage colleagues to share updates on social media, learn the right messaging for an elevator pitch, or otherwise participate in marketing efforts?

It's a common topic of interest among marketing professionals, so I interviewed 22 B2B marketing industry leaders to learn more about their challenges around internal marketing - and what they're doing in response.

**"It's great to work in an industry with such brilliant and dedicated people."**

- Scott McKinney

The report is organized into one page for each industry leader I interviewed. I went through the transcript of our interview and picked out the key challenges and solutions each leader identified. The challenges and solutions each leader brought up were unique. It's great to work in an industry with such brilliant and dedicated people. Hope you find a few useful takeaways in this report.

Sincerely,  
Scott



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**Karthik Nair,**  
Director of Marketing

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/karthiknair/>

**Company:**  
Graphite, a technology platform for on-demand business expertise.

**Size of Company:**  
35 Employees

### CHALLENGES:

- Achieving marketing, sales and product alignment: “Achieving this goal is tough but not unimaginable, and is critical to the success of each department and the company at large. It’s never the lack of intent or skill, but the lack of timely communication that gets in the way.”
- Sufficient lead time for product or feature launches: “Ideal lead times could range between 2 - 4 weeks depending on the extent of the change and the number of stakeholders involved. Marketing needs to build an effective go-to-market plan which involves creating awareness among analysts, partners and press, building a promotional plan, and equipping business development and customer success teams to communicate updates with customers and prospects.”

### SOLUTIONS:

- Adopting a proactive approach centered around metrics, providing context to goals, and showcasing empathy for your counterpart’s challenges: “I’ve joined Graphite to launch the marketing function, and I’ve been rather lucky to start off with a clean slate. It’s rather simplistic, but from the very beginning I instituted a process of marketing taking the lead of facilitating weekly meetings with sales and product leadership, to make sure we’re all aligned.
- “Sales and marketing meetings are centered around quality and quantity of marketing leads, effectiveness of outreach efforts to marketing leads, how marketing can help support revenue generation efforts, insights from sales conversations to help us identify any emerging opportunities or challenges, and how to effectively use marketing content to nurture leads.”
- “Product and marketing meetings are all about staying aware of what’s being built and why, sharing how marketing efforts are helping to drive increased product adoption, identifying new opportunities to effectively communicate product capabilities”

### **“Before every meeting, go in with what requests both sides have communicated. Make sure both sides are invested in the process.”**

- Create an agenda document before every meeting: “Before every meeting, go in with what requests both sides have communicated. Make sure both sides are invested in the process. Make it as easy as possible for your counterpart to collaborate with you, then track progress to show there’s momentum. That way both sides come to the table excited to work together.”
- Create healthy feedback loops: “If I know what kind of companies the sales team is targeting, I can invest in building tailored marketing content (case studies, social posts, email drip campaigns, etc.) to align with their target segments. The next step is to collect feedback on the impact on meetings generated and revenue. Likewise with the product team, it’s important to know product feature investments to drive increased adoption through marketing campaigns.”
- Marketing tech: “Make sure your marketing automation platform speaks with the CRM — without that integration you don’t know whether leads you’re sending are converting to revenue. In the long run you want to pull that dashboard every meeting to make sure you know whether you need to tweak your content or scoring model.”



**Kyle Boyd,**  
Marketing  
Communications  
Manager

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kyle-boyd-co/>

**Company:**  
BombBomb — Build  
Better Business  
Relationships With  
Video Messaging

**Size of Company:**  
160 Employees

### CHALLENGES:

- Working with other team members to drive their efforts: “I work with our product team, our project marketing managers, to drive some of their KPIs within product usage, as well as the content and lead generation teams to make sure our messaging is consistent across the board.”
- A disconnect in messaging: “As it was six months ago, our messaging on our website, versus what the customer support or sales were saying sometimes was different. It was important that our messaging be consistent as we were transitioning so we had a solid foundation.”

**“It was important that our messaging be consistent as we were transitioning so we had a solid foundation.”**

- Rethinking how the company differentiates itself: “There are many video messaging tools out there. We can’t just say we’re the best out there. We’re trying to differentiate ourselves by being different, not just better: to zig when the competition’s zagging, so we’re perceived as the king of our category.”
- Making sure everyone’s on board with the new big picture: “We’ve had to have a collective thought process about the problem we solve. Our ICP has so many problems, you can’t just stick your finger on one.”

### SOLUTIONS:

- Learning about messaging from customer-facing people: “I spoke with our own salespeople and customer service managers, as well as new and existing customers, to gain insights from those roles so I could learn what messaging works.”
- Creating an internally-facing messaging document: “This messaging framework allows our sales, CS, and product teams to see how we talk about ourselves and the problem we solve. We can’t just say we’re the best video messaging tool out there. It’s not just about our product, and not just about sending videos. It’s about how that message sparks a conversation with people.”
- Launching the document to anyone who’s customer-facing: “We’ve launched the document to the company. It’s something they can go back and reference, so the way they give their elevator pitch is something they can become familiar with.”
- An impetus from above: “The bigger picture we’re trying to accomplish is category creation, being the leader in our own category. It’s not a marketing function, It’s a company function. And it’s something our CEO got behind from the start. It wasn’t like there was any forcing function. Everyone was on board.”



**Thomas Douty,**  
Senior Vice President,  
Brand and Experience

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/thomasdouty/>

**Company:**  
Kuder, Inc. —  
Customizable career  
guidance solutions  
provider helps people  
at all life stages  
discover and achieve  
what they want to be

**Size of Company:**  
84 Employees

### CHALLENGES:

- Getting situated in a new role: “I’m getting my feet wet thinking about how we operate more efficiently, make a bigger impact. First step is evaluating every touchpoint, every marketing tool and resource we have, plus the content and experience we’re creating around the brand and the product.”
- Martech adoption: “We’re exploring a consolidation of our marketing automation toolsets. Ensuring our teams have the understanding and capacity to operate these tools with high performance is a challenge, especially with a lean team.”
- Finding content-minded people who are tech-savvy: “We’ve got a highly skilled, but lean marketing team of 5 or 6 people who play pretty wide in their scope. That crew not only needs to be flexible and creative in creating content, messaging, strategy, positioning, and customization to audiences. We also need to have a layer of technology acumen. Our marketing is content-driven, so having data-driven content-minded people who are well-versed in marketing automation tools and processes has been a challenging blend to bring to the team in a single person.

**“Having data-driven content-minded people who are well-versed in marketing automation tools and processes has been a challenging blend to bring to the team in a single person.”**

- Being proactive with content: “We’re refreshing our content, and creating a process and flow that’s proactive and consistent. We want to position our organization as a thought leader and solution provider in this space, versus being sporadic and sales reactionary.”
- Creating a strong response to RFPs: “B2B companies deal with this a ton, B2G almost exclusively.”

### SOLUTIONS:

- Hiring and Training: “It’s a Tetris map. You’re trying to find complementary skill sets, not just replicating one archetype 5 times. You need more creative-focused people, strategic people, hands on technical people. We’re focused on both recruiting new people to the team and investing in the current team members.”
- Creating a proactive content system: “This consists of identifying the right content, identifying subject matter experts, creating different formats, such as podcasts, interviews, articles, white papers. To be able to create and test different formats efficiently in a small organization takes resourcefulness and focus.”
- Defining and optimizing a system for evaluating and pursuing RFP’s: “You almost treat it like its own marketing channel, so you can optimize and scale it appropriately. It’s a skillset you can hone and get good at as an organization, but it’s gotta be its own initiative with the right talent to lead it and the right resources invested.”



**John Balla,**  
Principal Marketing  
Strategist - Digital  
Content

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/johnballa/>

**Company:**  
SAS, the largest  
independent  
business analytics  
software in the world

**Size of Company:**  
13,000+ Employees

### CHALLENGES:

- Responding to COVID-19: “When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, we had a responsibility to communicate with all our external stakeholders regarding changes we were making for the sake of everyone’s safety. We also wanted to help as many people as we could, knowing that analytics and AI would be used across industries to find answers to all the tough questions raised by the pandemic. So a cross-departmental team was formed to connect those searching for answers to resources for effective responses and recovery options.”
- Developing an empathetic message: “With customers around the globe in different 147 countries, all touching the lives of millions of people, we also knew our approach could not lack empathy. We could not possibly tout the successes of some customers’ supply chain applications holding up beautifully, while others’ saw their once-robust business models dry up overnight and hospitals began running out of bed capacity and patient care staff amid unspeakable suffering and devastation. To rise to the occasion, we’d need to be informative very quickly, while striking an empathetic tone on a global scale.”
- Doing this while working remotely: “All that came just as our own organization had to move our own entire global workforce of 13,000 employees out of our offices worldwide and into our home offices.”

### SOLUTIONS:

- Creating resources on a public dashboard: “Our immediate goal was to activate a microsite at [www.sas.com/covid19](http://www.sas.com/covid19) centered on a [free public dashboard](#) we developed with Cleveland Clinic and grew it from there. Now it’s a constellation of resources across 10 industry-specialized microsites that act as hubs all made possible by technology-enabled coordination.”
- Developing guidelines, not micromanaging: “The core team focused on creating key pieces of content, based on approved messaging, and then we developed the guidelines for producing content by format and type. We then posted these guidelines to our [Brand site](#) for all our global content creators to use the same parameters. The point being that in a global organization, we need to empower teams in Stockholm, Shanghai, or São Paulo to create content that’s complete, thorough, useful — and empathetic, all using internal communications and working from home.”

**“In a global organization, we need to empower teams in Stockholm, Shanghai, or São Paulo to create content that’s complete, thorough, useful — and empathetic, all using internal communications and working from home.”**

- Infrastructure was key: “Having infrastructure in place was key because we went on lockdown practically with a flip-of-a-switch, and continued working without skipping a beat. The infrastructure we rely on for internal communications became instrumental for our ability to form a response and continue in a work from home environment. For me, that meant being able to do on-camera work, with a highly intense, difficult project — entirely by Teams, OneNote, webcams, my Bluetooth headset, and a speakerphone. Of course, it always depends on the last mile broadband. Once, AT&T did work on our street without warning and turned off internet access without telling us, and we had to turn on mobile hotspots, but beyond that, the challenges were few and far between for me working from home.”



**Sophie Slowe,**  
CMO

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sophieslowe>

**Company:**  
Quorso, an agile, simple, human platform for retail operations

**Size of Company:**  
23 Employees

### CHALLENGES:

- Quorso is not simply another retail tool, doing the same thing, just slightly differently. It is first-to-market in a whole new category of retail tech: “What’s tricky is Quorso solves a problem that’s not clearly defined, so we have to articulate the problem, then bring in the technology. We also need to use different tactics depending on which stage our prospects are, so it’s important that sales, marketing, product, and customer success teams work closely together at all times.”

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- Staying in sync while working remotely: “When we all worked in the same office it was easy to stay in sync, but having been remote for 12 months, we have to carve out time and put in the effort to work as a team. Everyone at Quorso recognises this, so it has happened organically.”

### SOLUTIONS:

- Two-pronged approach with marketing strategy: “First we need to clearly articulate the challenge of Retail Store Agility. We use co-created pieces of thought-leadership content — podcasts, webinars, panels, blogs — to explain the problem and show that we understand why Agile Retail Ops is complicated, and why it is critical. Second we use product marketing — demos, case studies, business case calculators and how-to guides — to bring the features, functionality and benefits of the Quorso product to life.”
- Each of these two prongs requires partnering with different members of the organization: “For the thought leadership, we work with founders and cofounders talking about the problem — endless data, struggles to prioritize Store Manager workload, lack of visibility and control at the center. And for the product marketing we work with Quorso’s customer success, product, and engineering teams — they have detailed data on how our customers are using Quorso and in-depth knowledge about the capabilities of the tool.”
- Frequent, organized communication: “We have 23 people, and the marketing team is only two people, so staying in sync internally requires proactive effort, but is relatively easy. I have a daily standup meeting with my marketing colleague and our Head of Sales to talk about who’s doing what. The whole company has an All Hands every Monday to share what they’re working on that week, and then once a month we have a bigger, more strategic meeting. We have a load of internal Slack channels where everyone can engage on different work streams, and ones for sharing sales, product, customer and marketing updates as well. We save all documents on the cloud for security and easy access.”
- Attitude comes from the leadership: “Our founders are highly motivated and motivating, and the company has hired well, so we all truly believe in what we’re doing. It’s been a tough year for small business, but we’ve maintained and in fact accelerated our momentum and kept a good team attitude along the way as well.”





**Marc Fuentes,**  
Sr. Director  
Growth Marketing,  
Communications and  
Sales Development

**LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/marcfuentes/>

**Company:**  
Adlib, which  
transforms  
unstructured data  
into intelligent data

**Size of Company:**  
107 Employees

### CHALLENGES:

- Keeping everyone informed is marketing’s job: “At large organizations where teams are dispersed, it’s marketing’s job to talk with product development, product marketing, SDRs, customer success, finance, and HR. These teams need to know what’s happening in the marketplace, brand positioning, go-to-market strategy and any campaigns that marketing is doing.”
- It’s hard to communicate that information effectively, since people are already overwhelmed: “If they used to get 100 emails before the pandemic, I’m sure they’re getting 200 now.”
- Arming teammates with information on prospects and competitors: “In software I’ve been selling to F500 clients, typically to a buying committee. There’s always a champion you’re influencing, but the buying committee is diverse and requires different information at different points in the buying cycle. On the SMB side the way you sell is a little different, since it’s the owner’s pride, their joy, it’s a very emotional sell since he/she knows the wrong technology could damage the company. There’s a need to arm teammates with this type of information, sometimes referred to as buyer personas, ideal customer profiles or market segments.”

### SOLUTIONS:

- Marketing needs to find a way to give a digest on what they’re doing, be that the GTM approach, innovation, product marketing, PR work, or campaigns, in a way people can consume quickly: “At one organization I launched a weekly digest as a podcast. That’s very different from email, since when they have a chance, they can listen. As companies scale and grow, podcasting is a new way of disseminating information.”

**“At one organization I launched a weekly digest as a podcast. That’s very different from email, since when they have a chance, they can listen. As companies scale and grow, podcasting is a new way of disseminating information.”**

- Delivering competitive information to have better conversations: “We’ve prepared these battlecards to communicate information about our unique value proposition, messaging/positioning, competitors strengths and weaknesses — ‘they do this, they do that’ — along with competitive information about the particular market and how to communicate with them. We also include information about where the product doesn’t work, if the value proposition isn’t selling, and if there’s price elasticity.”



**Rebecca Jasch,**  
Marketing Manager

**LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/rebeccajasch>

**Company:**  
LaunchPad Lab:  
Develop custom software that moves your business forward.

**Size of Company:**  
40 Employees

### CHALLENGES:

- Lack of visibility on how marketing materials performed: “In previous companies, our marketing automation tool and CRM weren’t integrated, so it was difficult to see changes to contact lifecycle stages or revenue generated from specific activities. This left a gap in our metrics and made it hard to evaluate the effectiveness of what we were doing.”
- Creating a company mindset that gets marketing: “In most of the companies that I’ve worked at, I was either the very first marketer or joined in really early stages of building a marketing team. So on one hand those are great opportunities career-wise, but you also need to find a way to make your voice heard.”
- Being a one person team: “Prioritization is crucial. It’s important to focus on things that will move the needle forward for the business and choose the marketing activities that will make the most impact, while not getting stuck in the weeds.”

### SOLUTIONS:

- Creating close alignment between sales and marketing based on shared goals: “Sales and marketing are one and the same here. We regularly bounce ideas off of each other on what could make the most impact, and it’s easy to create that alignment because we have the same goals for the company. I don’t see marketing as successful if sales doesn’t meet its goals.”
- Helping create a marketing mentality at the company-level: “It’s important for marketing to have a presence in company updates or quarterly reviews. Updating the company on marketing efforts and the strategies we were using to support sales was one helpful way to ensure our voices were heard.”
- Go-getter mindset: “It’s my job to rally the troops, manage projects, and keep things on track. Our team is relatively young, with lots of high energy and excitement around what we do. They understand marketing, and everyone’s problem-solving oriented, so I don’t have to pull teeth to get them on board.”
- Weekly marketing workshops: “We talk about what’s going on, and don’t restrict ideas. I’m able to ask people to participate in different marketing activities, and the engagement I’m seeing is really strong. Everyone writes at least something each year, if not more. It has to be a company effort to represent who you want to be.”

### “It has to be a company effort to represent who you want to be.”

- Close teamwork using Asana as the internal project management system: “I use Asana to manage our marketing projects, such as working with our design team when we need to make changes to the website and work closely with client project managers to explore case studies or testimonials.”



**Tolgar Alpagut,**  
Vice President  
Marketing

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/tolgaralpagut>

**Company:**  
Tatsoft, “The Affordable Platform With Limitless Possibilities For Enabling Industrial Applications”

**Size of Company:**  
28 Employees

### CHALLENGES:

- Speaking the same language. “I joined Tatsoft in March 2020, and we just went through a rebranding process. When you think of it systematically, it’s about what our vision and mission is, and how we get our organization to speak the same language and have the right vernacular. To read it sounds great, but it’s another thing to fully grasp it.”
- Building internal alignment in terms of objective and beliefs: “At the end of the day, business is solving problems. It’s people to people. Internally, it’s also people to people. The people part is what I’m trying to solve first. We live in a time where authenticity is key. You are who you are, even in business, so the faster you can build credibility and trust, the faster you can get to your objective of solving a problem for the customer.”

**“At the end of the day, business is solving problems. It’s people to people. Internally, it’s also people to people. The people part is what I’m trying to solve first.”**

- Breaking down silos, so when we market it’s not top-down, there’s a feedback loop: “Our people are the face of the company, so we need our people to present themselves within the core values of our company, even those who don’t serve in a function where they’re talking directly to customers. They’re out there championing the company, not because the CEO says to take an initiative, but because it’s a genuine effort. This helps in the customer journey, sales cycle, customer lifetime value with the bond they build.”

### SOLUTIONS:

- Employee Operating System: “When we share a story in a meeting, whether success or loss, we relate it to the core vision and mission of the company, our near-term and long-term objectives, while trying to contextualize so we can get better information through the data. We use a system called the Employee Operating System to get visibility into pain points and problems faster, with better clarity. It’s done in a specific format, where you maximize meeting time on a trust basis through objective truths, working to make each meeting better, and then we rate meetings at the end honestly. This allows us to optimize on a weekly basis, and builds affinity within the company culture.”
- Specific meetings for each team: “Engineers have their own specific meeting for engineering, same with the sales team and marketing. There’s always a representative from each team at the meeting, then a group meeting. It’s not technical, more about the company processes.”
- Creating real-time feedback among the group: “For example, the engineers who take our software and physically install it. When they’re on site with the customer, they’re straight to the point, matter of fact. The customer takes affinity faster than with a sales person, and as that happens, the engineer hears customer feedback we never would have heard, then shares it with the rest of our team, to help improve in all relevant facets.”



**Scott Shadley,**  
VP Marketing

**LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/scottshadley>

**Company:**  
NGD Systems, Inc.:  
rugged, high-capacity  
computational  
storage solutions

**Size of Company:**  
49 Employees

### CHALLENGES:

- From a very large organization to a small startup is very different: “I spent almost 2 decades at Micron, with more than 50,000 employees. Being a marketer there, I had to do regular internal marketing — we were reinvigorating our company, so it was needed to encourage engineers, operators and others to take part in the projects. At the startup, it is small enough that it doesn’t require a lot of internal conversations as to what we do on a daily basis.”
- Work is around productizing, shaping the product being sold. “I spend most of my time trying to get traction in the marketplace with the company name as much as the products. I have done many virtual, live events, and social media, trying to get the word out in the marketplace.”
- Need to keep other employees informed enough to give a good elevator pitch: “There’s a need to pay attention to interactions and discussion taking place around what the company is doing. Realistically, everyone in the company is in marketing. When someone asks them what they do with their day job, we have to make sure they have been given the talking points, that you’re sharing enough information where they can give a 30 second elevator pitch.”

**“Realistically, everyone in the company is in marketing. When someone asks them what they do with their day job, we have to make sure they have been given the talking points, that you’re sharing enough information where they can give a 30 second elevator pitch.”**

### SOLUTIONS:

- Hallways chats: “I did spend a lot of time on this, pre Covid. It’s all-hands conversations, hallways chats, and other conversations. It’s not quite so much a dedicated position as far as internal marketing. It’s more focused on visibility externally.”
- Share information, but don’t overshare: “Make sure you’re giving them talking points. For example, we recently received notice of a very positively-framed article written by an industry analyst. I sent an email to my entire team. If you feel like seeing it, it is on the NGD Website. Before, at Micron, we had unexpected customers come from a friend of a friend talking over beers. Even here that happens, but not at the same level due to our scale and size.”
- Monitor and educate: “If I share information and people ask a question about how it was worded, I make sure to correct them. It’s almost an educational marketing capacity, to make sure the visibility of the company is portrayed correctly.”



KC Cox,  
Vice President of  
Marketing

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kcdekorte/>

**Company:**  
LiquidSpace, real-time office space digital marketplace

**Size of Company:**  
25 Employees

### CHALLENGES:

- Making sure everyone is aligned on the company strategy: “You may have a product that was designed and built, and sales has to sell that product. You need to unify that go-to-market strategy, that product-market fit, the message you’ll go to market with, the value you bring to customers.”
- Some departments may think marketing is fluff: “Let’s face it — no product developer wants to sit through a marketing workshop. They really don’t care.”
- Smaller companies tend not to have an internal communications plan: “At larger companies there’s usually an internal communications plan to make sure everyone is on the same page — that involves how we’re impacting product, sales, what the market landscape looks like, making sure everyone is aware of any industry trends that may impact them. At smaller companies, you’re so busy all the time with external marketing, you may not put enough emphasis on how the entire team understands what you’re doing and why you’re doing it. If you’re not careful, you’re going to lose that alignment you need to be successful.”

### SOLUTIONS:

- Marketing is a unifier on that strategy: “Marketing is that center point for sales, product, finance — it’s the only department that has a hand reaching in all areas of the business. It has to unify the message that goes along the entire customer journey. If you do it right, it goes from when they’re first aware of you, to product experience, to whether they’ll continue to purchase from you. Marketing’s job is to ensure everything about that has unity.”

**“Product developers and other team members will care as long as it’s focused on the customer. Just like in external marketing, you need to know your audience, be it engineers or product developers.”**

- Keep internal marketing conversations focused on the customer: “Product developers and other team members will care as long as it’s focused on the customer. Just like in external marketing, you need to know your audience, be it engineers or product developers. They want to see what it means for them in terms of results. If we’re rolling out new messaging, why are we rolling it out, what we hope to gain from it in terms of revenue or market share. Keep it short, simple, and focused on what individual team members need to know.”
- At smaller companies, communication can be more organic, but still needs planning: “At LiquidSpace, we’re working closely together, communicating regularly on Slack. It’s more of a real time as you know, who needs to know basis. When more stakeholders are involved you risk it slipping through the cracks, but for us it’s more in the moment.”



**Allen Yesilevich,**  
Head of Marketing &  
Growth

**LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/allenyesilevich/>

**Company:**  
Accelevents, a virtual  
and hybrid events  
platform

**Size of Company:**  
41 Employees

#### CHALLENGES:

- Facilitating a novel approach to marketing: “Our industry is increasingly competitive, so cutting through the noise is critical. We’re placing a big investment in fostering a community for event and marketing professionals, in the form of a Facebook group, monthly series, and annual conference. We ultimately want to create demand for our product, but we’re starting by fostering this community, defining what events will look like in the future.”
- Building the foundation of the community: “Our purpose is to give our target audience a platform to interact with other event professionals. We’re focusing on fostering an active community, so we’re facilitating conversations without interjecting with them. At the same time we want to get inside our customer’s mind and understand what they want and need, and as a result we can improve our product to deliver better value.”

#### SOLUTIONS:

- Working behind the scenes to facilitate the community: “Our job was to build out the core values of the community. If there’s a specific question pertaining to our product, we can conduct that conversation in the group or most likely take it offline in a separate conversation in order to maintain the focus of the group. We communicate behind the scenes on Slack, and if there’s any kind of ambiguity we’ll circle back offline with a representative from every team — sales, customer success, marketing, leadership.”

**“We communicate behind the scenes on Slack, and if there’s any kind of ambiguity we’ll circle back offline with a representative from every team — sales, customer success, marketing, leadership.”**

- Biweekly meetings: “We talk about the community. Our community manager schedules out topics or posts. The purpose is to make sure there’s consistent content being published in the community, and fostering an active community so the members are taking it upon themselves to generate useful content.”
- Product isn’t core to the community: “It’s giving us a focus group — when someone asks a question about how platforms compare, we get inside their minds to learn what they want. It gives us the targeted ideas to figure out how to best deliver value to our customers. During our monthly event series there might be some sessions dedicated to major product releases.”
- Launching to happy customers: “We launched the beta version of our community to about 100 people, and invited them to our community as an initial cohort. We gave them about a month to warm up to the idea. There were active conversations already occurring, so new members were more prone to join and be active.”



**Matthew Allard,**  
Senior Product  
Marketing Manager

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/matthew-allard-media-technology-marketing/>

**Company:**  
Vizrt Group, provides visual storytelling software tools for media content creators in broadcast, sports, digital, and esports industries

**Size of Company:**  
832 Employees

#### CHALLENGES:

- Need for an internal content strategy: “I was hired as the first product marketing person in the organization, and realized we needed an internal content strategy, then realized it had to be curated, managed, and limited from how many people can write into it. We needed a way for sales to come into one place and see the entire ecosystem of all the customer-facing content we have.”

**“We needed a way for sales to come into one place and see the entire ecosystem of all the customer-facing content we have.”**

- Need a single point of information: “We used to place information on a bunch of different platforms, so if you were a salesperson, you didn’t always have the most up to date information. No matter what tool we used, we really needed to have one central repository we can point teams to.”

#### SOLUTIONS:

- Technology: “We use Teams and Sharepoint. We’ve created our own internal section where we post a monthly update that gives everyone in the company a snapshot of everything we’ve done — our campaigns, how many SQLs/MQLs we’ve generated, and any presentations, videos, or documents we’ve created.”
- Created an environment within Sharepoint branded “Stories” with pages for various teams: “We created one central place where different parts of the company can put up their own pages. We put content in there that’s customer-facing — briefs, guides, presentations, videos, diagrams, sales playbooks, things like that — so the salesperson can take those documents forward to customers or cut and paste into proposals, and they have the same consistent messaging. We try to give them the entire ecosystem around a solution — not just features, but value, benefits, messaging, positioning, also about customer support and professional services. Basically when you navigate to the pages on that particular solution, the salesperson walks in and gets the entire ecosystem.”
- Monthly snapshots: “It’s a sort of monthly dashboard that tells what the marketing organization in all its incarnations has been up to, such as campaigns, case studies, or TV episodes that have been created.”
- Individual dedicated to internal communications: “Most organizations have a marcom function. We have one individual responsible for internal communications. Product marketing bridges between product management and sales to build the stories out around solutions, and deliver the created content, messaging, value propositions functions, capabilities about them.”



**Nick Wassenberg,**  
Vice President of  
Marketing

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nickwassenberg/>

**Company:**  
Fulcrum  
Manufacturing  
Cloud: SaaS ERP for  
forward-thinking  
manufacturers  
[www.fulcrumpro.com](http://www.fulcrumpro.com)

**Size of Company:**  
37 Employees and  
growing

### CHALLENGES:

- Small but fast growing company needs to be intentional about working together, “We’re in a position where we’re growing super fast, so we need to be in sync.”
- Developing a feedback loop with the product team: “We could do better there, to share what we’re seeing in the market, and what we’re seeing on a broader scale, what features are coming down the roadmap.”
- Fast-growing team: “We’ve hired up across departments, so we’re onboarding SDRs and developers who need to be aligned.”

### SOLUTIONS:

- Daily stand ups, weekly long form meetings: “In our current setting we need to be in sync daily, then set weekly longer form meetings and separate meetings as needed for deeper topics”
- Weekly meetings with the product team: “Sometimes we demo software, share videos from prospect conversations, and then we share insights we get back to the product team so they can set the product roadmap and deliver those insights to developers.”
- Helping new team members understand the mission and ways of working together: “A lot of people are new, so we make sure everyone’s aligned on the mission and vision of how we solve problems for our manufacturer customers. As we onboard new people, we give them an overview of our industry, give them the big picture of manufacturing, what our product is and how we go to market. It’s relatively straightforward to keep everyone on track, and this helps keep on track with what the market wants and what the customers need.”
- Learning on the go, but with intention: “We’re relatively new to market with our SaaS offering (especially compared to legacy system competitors that were built decades ago), and we have to learn from each other every day. We’re half distributed, half local, so we have to be intentional about being in sync using tools like Zoom and Slack.”
- Final note: “This topic of internal marketing doesn’t need reinvention, it needs attention.”

**“This topic of internal marketing doesn’t need reinvention, it needs attention.”**





Ali Schwanke,  
CEO & Founder

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/simple-strat/>

**Company:**  
A boutique content multi-media marketing agency focused on B2B tech, with a specialization in HubSpot services

**Size of Company:**  
8 Employees

### CHALLENGES:

- Understanding the internal dynamics of the company: “As an external partner to our clients, we rely on this cross-functional system inside their company to get content from the front lines. We need to know what questions people are asking in sales meetings. The marketers might think the audience knows these things, but sales says no.”

**“As an external partner to our clients, we rely on this cross-functional system inside their company to get content from the front lines. We need to know what questions people are asking in sales meetings. The marketers might think the audience knows these things, but sales says no.”**

- Understanding customer behavior: “One important piece, especially around SaaS products, is understanding where people are having trouble onboarding. What types of behaviors do you see with people who don’t onboard readily? Asking this question helps us figure out how content can help.”
- A marketer isn’t a Swiss Army Knife: “There are really smart marketing leaders, but they need to find people with the right skills and tech know-how to execute on strategy. Just because you have a digital marketer doesn’t mean they’re well equipped to do Facebook Ads.”

### SOLUTIONS:

- Talking to CEOs: “We want to know why their company exists, what the voice should be, how to remove friction from that B2B process. It’s essential that we learn what’s involved in operations and engineering and how to make it a better experience for that end customer.”
- Everyone needs to think of themselves as a marketing representative: “Something engineers can do is spend time observing users in places they talk about the product or use the product. This might be forums, groups, Twitter, or webinars/tutorials. Learn what makes them think this way. When marketers understand what engineering is doing and vice versa, that’s how the best products are created.”
- Understanding the gaps in a team: “Resources are going to be part of anyone’s ability to properly execute. Great VPs understand and fill the gaps in their team appropriately. They don’t expect marketing ninjas to do everything.”
- Sell your ideas throughout the organization. “Marketing is about communicating value until someone takes action. However, people often forget they need to convince coworkers and speak a language that matters to them. Marketing needs to think about what motivates engineers, sales, executives and think of them as their audience. If you’re trying to get salespeople to share a post, think about what would make them comfortable sharing it. They’ll only share it if they feel they can support what it says.”



**Casey Novak,**  
**Director of Integrated**  
**Marketing**

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/caseynovak/>

**Company:**  
TRC Companies,  
a global firm with  
environmentally  
focused and digitally  
powered solutions  
for consulting,  
construction,  
engineering and  
management  
services.

**Size of Company:**  
~6000 Employees

### CHALLENGES:

- People have preconceived notions about marketing: “Marketing and communications is an area where everybody thinks they are an expert already. They already feel like they know marketing, just because it touches everyone’s life already. Some people think marketing is sending an email, some people think it’s press releases. Even in job descriptions, marketing means different things at different companies, so we need to be clear what we mean by marketing when we want to bring a product or service to market. Otherwise we may end up in a situation where not everyone is expecting the same outcomes and results from marketing efforts.”

**“Even in job descriptions, marketing means different things at different companies, so we need to be clear what we mean by marketing when we want to bring a product or service to market. Otherwise we may end up in a situation where not everyone is expecting the same outcomes and results from marketing efforts.”**

- Educating the entire business on each other: “TRC in particular is made up of lots of different services we provide our customers. The fact that our company spans such a large array of services means sometimes the people over here doing Service A don’t necessarily know anything about people doing Service B and C. So we need to create opportunities for them to learn about all the things the company does. Otherwise, you’re missing out at opportunities for cross-sells, up-sells, missing opportunities to expand the footprint. It’s not just sales enablement — the more people within your company who know what your company does, the better off you’re going to be.”

### SOLUTIONS:

- Taking a step back and being clear about what is true good marketing: “Figure out what tools and things we need in place to have effective marketing as an organization — all the way from have we identified our business case based on research and market trends, to have we identified who within those companies we’re targeting? Then we make sure we have a clear and differentiated message, and only once we have those strategic items in place can we move to the tactical things people typically think of: like the website, the LinkedIn post, the white paper, and so on.”
- Educating the entire business on each other: “Our internal marketing group has been hosting a lot more opportunities for learning, such as a biweekly lunch and learns, where people can log in and learn about a specific service line. It lets people know what services we offer, and lets people in the organization put a face on the people behind those services. It lets them know who they should contact about those services. This internal education should be a big priority, because in order for us to be strategic as an organization, we have to have chances for cross-collaboration. But ‘educating the business on the business’ could be a full-time job — it’s in the realm of sales enablement, company enablement, and strategic enablement.”



**Kunal Thukral,**  
VP & Head of  
Marketing &  
Partnerships

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kunalthukral/>

**Company:**  
TrustSphere, a  
pioneer and leading  
player in Relationship  
Analytics

**Size of Company:**  
~20 Employees

### CHALLENGES:

- “This topic of internal marketing is a challenge I’ve always faced.”
- Previous role, huge company: “I’ve been with TrustSphere for over 5 years, and have played multiple roles from strategy, partnerships, to marketing leadership. Previously I led marketing for the emerging geographies for HCL Technologies, an Indian IT outsourcing firm, where there were approximately 100,000 employees (2014). It’s difficult to get engagement from internal teams and influencers, a challenge I’ve always faced.”
- Internal engagement is a recurring challenge: “I’ve seen a lot of spending on social media, digital marketing, all that stuff. The challenge we’ve faced is how to get engagement from internal people. Salespeople and other team members have big networks on LinkedIn. They can be a channel to build awareness or engagement, and that’s one of the key challenges.”
- There’s a need to target internally: “Sales people are meant to be out in the field talking to customers and selling, so getting their attention is at times very challenging. Whatever efforts we make have to be in line with what helps them sell. They’re generally more interested in what happens within this quarter, and what we need to target internally: what do I send to a sales leader, and what do I need to share with an account executive who is handling 4-5 accounts?”

### SOLUTIONS:

- Enable salespeople rather than give tactical instructions. “We’ve focused on building relationships for salespeople. It’s about how you enable them with data and insights to build Account Based Engagement (ABE).”

### **“We’ve focused on building relationships for salespeople. It’s about how you enable them with data and insights to build Account Based Engagement (ABE).”**

- Give sales insights to help them get better results on LinkedIn: “We analyzed which kinds of posts attract engagement, or territory-specific analysis about what kinds of posts are getting traction in certain regions, then shared it so they could use it. We also created an internal newsletter showing which posts are gaining engagement from which kinds of buyer personas or companies. If we’re trying to prospect XY company and someone from there comments on the post, it provides a powerful nudge to those field people to engage with the post and their contacts in those accounts.”
- Show your team the value relationship analytics and engagement gets for them: “Salespeople have to see the value it gives for personal branding, and also getting more inquiries about products and services.”
- Help them understand how to leverage LinkedIn: “We’ve identified some internal champions who could help the other sales audience understand this powerful tool called LinkedIn, and how network effects could help build their audience and market. We show them the value of tags, hashtags, and help them craft simple messages when they’re sharing an article, give them insights from their own posts to help build engagement, and help them use the channel in the right way.”



**Scott Wilder,**  
Global Head  
of Customer  
Engagement,  
Advocacy, and  
Community

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/wilder/>

**Company:**  
Hubspot — CRM  
platform for scaling  
companies

**Size of Company:**  
5,140 Employees

### CHALLENGES:

- Overlap of works: “Sometimes you have a situation where one team started to work on a product and then find out another team has already started working on an idea for a similar product. So, you need to join forces and say one plus one is three, but you have to be sensitive to how they’re building out their business within the company. You don’t want to interfere with their success.”
- Building consistency: “Many companies have different groups that own events, user groups, and communities. The key is to get aligned -- alignment is a key strategy -- and agree on branding, messaging, user experience, to make it seamless.”
- Need for clarity: “At a company like Hubspot, you need to be clear about what, why and how.”

### SOLUTIONS:

- People skills: “You need to internally sell your idea or approach and understand that different groups are trying to solve for different things. Part of this depends on whether you are adding a new initiative or if you are dealing with an initiative that has been around for a while. They could be far down the path and have a lot of success, then you come in with a new idea. You have to come in and find the right solution for everybody. When we approach a project we think about collaborators inside and outside the project.”

### **“You need to internally sell your idea or approach and understand that different groups are trying to solve for different things.”**

- Building ways for people to collaborate: “Hubspot puts a lot of emphasis on personal and professional growth, to help you be more effective in your work, learn new crafts, new areas, awareness around diversity. You can do it on your own but they try to get groups to work together. The type of people they hire helps with this. We have a lot of all-hand meetings that are reinforcing how we work together and stay consistent with how we talk about things.”
- Documenting ideas: “Everything at HubSpot gets documented, and that is how you get aligned with other internal stakeholders and bring them on board. It’s different to Amazon’s approach with 6 page documents. Here you present an idea, get people to comment, and try to build a business case and tie it to revenue.”
- DNA of CEOs and founders: “The founders are approachable, knowledgeable, open to suggestions. I’ve been in other companies where the CEOs are real drivers and don’t have a lot of empathy. You can debate which one is better in the long run, but Hubspot creates an encouraging, collaborative environment. ”
- Show by doing: “Hubspot provides a lot of consistent information. It’s learning by doing, absorbing on their own terms. They’re educating us on how they’re going to market a product, they’re not saying this is how they talk about it. It’s less forced. There’s a lot of opportunity to hear about the product, and you learn by participating. That comes from the CEO.”



**Yelena Osin,**  
Vice President of  
Marketing

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/yelenaosin/>

**Company:**  
Fireblocks, FinTech  
company helping  
institutions securely  
store and transfer  
assets

**Size of Company:**  
100 Employees

### CHALLENGES:

- Building relationships while working remotely: “We have teams in our Israel and New York offices, then others working from home in APAC and Europe. Every individual has a different working style, and what people might be missing is relationship building.”
- Maintaining pace with Fireblocks’ rapid scaling: “We’ve gone from a handful of customers when we launched around June 2019, to today over 180 accounts. We’re scaling at a rapid pace, and investing heavily into R&D, sales, and now we’re expanding the customer experience team.”
- Making sure marketing and sales are growing at the same pace: “If you don’t have enough BDRs or marketing folks to support that there’s going to be friction. For example, we had more reps in EMEA and APAC, but only one BDR, which meant they couldn’t fully support any one territory.”

### SOLUTIONS:

- Cross-functional collaboration with accountability to revenue: “I work closely with sales, product, and the CEO, to understand where the product-market fit is, and double down on what’s working. We are held to a revenue number and are responsible for a portion of revenue. A big part of our job is demand generation. We’ve scaled from 1 BDR to a team of 5, for us it’s not only coming up with messaging and mission, it’s working with the BDR team to nurture and qualify so sales has really good conversations.”
- Close alignment with sales: “Today more than 60-70% of our sales pipeline is from marketing sourced activities. We all work towards the same revenue goal, so we have to be well aligned with the sales teams. We understand the hiring plan, when reps are going to be joining and their sales targets so we can ensure there is enough pipeline creation for each rep to hit their goal.”
- Alignment across marketing roles: “You have your traditional marketing roles and BDRs, and once the demo has been set, the product marketing role becomes important. Product marketing also feeds top of funnel messaging and helps the team understand the audience segmentation.”
- Results-oriented environment: “Working and hiring remotely has actually been smoother than expected. I’ve hired 5-6 people through the pandemic, and was expecting it to be more painful to hire without meeting in person. We have aggressive goals, and that keeps everyone focused on that. There’s a lot of collaboration, not a ton of hierarchy.”

“We have aggressive goals, and that keeps everyone focused on that.”



King Hill,  
Senior Vice President

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kinghill/>

**Company:**  
Marcus Thomas.  
Founder and  
President of  
DigiKnow, which  
Marcus Thomas  
acquired in 2011.

**Size of Company:**  
240 Employees

#### CHALLENGES:

- **Companies have specific needs they can't handle internally:** "One of the main reasons companies look to agencies for help is when they have specific, intermittent challenges they can't handle, an annual sales meeting might be one example of this."

#### **"One of the main reasons companies look to agencies for help is when they have specific, intermittent challenges they can't handle."**

These meetings are big, they need a lot of people to plan, execute and staff them; and they're often nationwide in scale. In some cases a sales team might be thousands of people, but it's a one off event, so staffing up doesn't make sense."

Here, an agency with script-writers, presentation specialists, video crews, producers, etc., can step in and deliver great value."

- **Different businesses have different gaps in their strengths:** "This challenge is very common, especially given the velocity of change in technology today. Some companies might have expertise and resources in one area, but lack it in others. Or, they may be focused on one solution set and lack the objectivity to see beyond their skillset. Here, an agency can either broaden capability or bring objectivity to the strategic planning effort."
- **Companies hiring an outside firm need to find the right one:** "If a company is looking outside for specific help, be sure to look for a firm with proven expertise in that area (rather than just as a listed capability within a big mix). For example, if your company brings in an outside firm to write an annual report, because it's a highly specialized once a year thing, look to investor relations firms or those with deep expertise not just in the writing/design, but in the strategy behind the document."
- **Carrying internal employees through acquisitions:** "There's no question, a merger or acquisition creates short-term (and long-term) challenges that can be addressed with outside agency help. When one company acquires another company, there's a whole effort that needs to happen to make people feel they're part of something big, something important, something new. This will involve a variety of resources, from human relations to marketing, training, logistics and beyond. There's no question that the size, specialty and experience of some agency (or groups of them) could add value to the organization and its culture."

#### SOLUTIONS:

- **Bring in an agency to handle specific capabilities that can't be handled internally:** "Some companies have an internal agency to handle everything from employee communications to brand work. But every now and then a specific challenge pops up that doesn't fit their internal resources. An agency can assist here, and even help the internal team get up to speed over time."
- **Find the right size and type of agency:** "The search for an agency partner will be influenced by need, timing, budget, specificity of the need and cost/benefit analysis of the challenge. Make sure you have clearly identified and documented the opportunity or challenge you face. Agencies you approach for help will use this "brief" to determine whether the challenge is a fit for them -- and you'll have a clearer view of whether they're a fit for you."



**Nirosha Methananda,**  
VP of Marketing

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nirosham/>

**Company:**  
Bombora, leading provider of intent data, Gartner "Cool Vendor"

**Size of Company:**  
177 Employees

### CHALLENGES:

- Managing complexity in a fast-growing business: "When I started with Bombora we had 20 people, now it's 170+. Given that our CMO is also the GM, early on, the marketing team got pulled into a number of different things. We needed to prioritize and focus on the activities that mattered. "

**"When I started with Bombora we had 20 people, now it's 170+. Given that our CMO is also the GM, early on, the marketing team got pulled into a number of different things. We needed to prioritize and focus on the activities that mattered."**

- Building alignment between functions: "We'll work on specific projects, for example, on product packaging. This requires product and product marketing to drive strategy, revops and finance to be involved from pricing, sales and marketing more broadly for go-to-market strategy and activity. Each of these teams need to understand priorities and how they're aligned."
- Need someone who can set strategy: "While brand is to some degree everyone's responsibility, you still need a subject matter expert who can set strategies holistically, to give everyone the direction they need."
- Need for dedicated marketing functions, like demand generation: "Early on our demand generation was more organically focused, and we didn't really need a dedicated resource for this. However as the business has matured and our target market has expanded, that need has grown."

### SOLUTIONS:

- Building processes: "We've gone from working ad hoc to putting in place processes to manage and prioritize work. For example, our design team uses Jira to triage requests and manage their workload. That's a way in which we've structured the organization and processes."
- Project management and structure are key: "While there are always a barrage of great ideas, execution is tough without a dedicated lead to keep us on track. This is a direction that the business had adopted more recently to set agendas, manage an action list and hold key team members accountable."
- Hiring dedicated people for specific functions: "As mentioned Bombora's need for demand generation has accelerated in the past couple of years. It was at this point we brought in a specialist to set up the program. It's important to be able identify your gaps as a business, acknowledge what your strengths and weaknesses are to bridge these gaps and build a stronger business."



**Kristen Ortwerth,**  
Fractional CMO for  
B2B Software & Hi-  
Tech Organizations

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kristenortwerth/>

### CHALLENGES:

- Pressure to show immediate ROI has pulled focus away from taking time to work on fundamentals: “One of the things I’ve been seeing is this environment where marketing becomes a subset of sales, tasked with generating leads in the short-term at the expense of everything else. The pressure to create pipeline has become intense. As martech has evolved, the ability to quantify ROI has become more possible, so executives start to only invest in things where it’s possible to measure immediate ROI. That myopia and shortsightedness can make it difficult to build out the fundamental aspects of good marketing — a strong brand, good messaging & positioning — not just generating leads for the sales team.”
- Some common lead generation techniques are going to have to change as well: “Gathering personal information, tracking prospects’ online behavior & retargeting via cookies, is getting a lot of pushback from customers, regulators, and advertisers. Even Google is making the move to disallow cookies. How are you going to adapt your lead acquisition strategy when people won’t fill out a form any more?”
- A labor pool crisis: “I see lots of organizations posting roles requiring 3 years of experience, or even worse, an MBA for roles that simply need someone with empathy, communication skills, creative energy, and critical thinking skills they can apply to helping educate prospects & customers along the buyer journey. One of the major things we complain about is not having enough qualified help, but whose fault is that? We have a responsibility to start hiring people with zero experience and transferring knowledge & leadership skills. We need to budget for personnel accordingly and set expectations at the executive level that this is part of future-proofing our marketing organization.”

### SOLUTIONS:

- Reframe leads as an indicator of pipeline creation, not the purpose or outcome of marketing: “Marketing is about educating customers. There has to be a shift away from this devotion to activities that generate short-term yields toward long-term investments in creating good quality messaging and building a strong brand: These things are fundamental, and they have to evolve with your audience. This isn’t a one-time exercise that you finish & then focus on lead gen. These things require care and feeding, but ultimately future-proof your ability to generate and retain customers & revenue.”

**“There has to be a shift away from this devotion to activities that generate short-term yields toward long-term investments in creating good quality messaging and building a strong brand”**

- Executives and internal marketers have to build expectations around the changes that are coming: “Being able to quantify brand, positioning, and messaging is difficult. We have to give clear timelines for when the organization can expect results, and what those results look like. For example, ‘By x date, the sales team will report prospects saying they’ve seen us around.’ We have to proactively communicate what they can expect in terms of results, so they can recognize wins.”
- Creating mentorship or internships: “We have these college grads coming on the market, so we need to make the space and budget for junior level marketing roles. Pay them a good wage, and have them shadow existing marketing personnel and sales executives. Be okay with having someone that junior on your team. Take that ethical and moral responsibility on yourself as a marketing professional and become someone’s mentor.”





**Scott Leatherman,**  
Chief Marketing  
Officer

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/scottleatherman/>

**Company:**  
Veritone, which  
applies AI to  
transform data into  
intelligence

**Size of Company:**  
300+ Employees

### CHALLENGES:

- Everyone has to feel the burden of marketing: “After overseeing startups and serving as Global VP of Marketing at SAP Labs, for the past 20+ years my opinion and strategy is it takes everybody in a company, whether a small startup or a major goliath like SAP, to take the internal message and create external momentum. Therein lies the challenge.”
- People outside marketing don’t think of themselves as marketers: “The average developer, the average finance person, doesn’t think of themselves as a brand or thought leader, but ultimately that’s the way the market is trending and is required for companies or disruptive solutions to stand above the general market noise.”

**The average developer, the average finance person, doesn’t think of themselves as a brand or thought leader, but ultimately that’s the way the market is trending and is required for companies or disruptive solutions to stand above the general market noise.”**

- Companies are hesitant to give employees free reins to post: “Any company has two primary worries: Someone may say something inappropriate or leak out intellectual property. And someone may end up getting recruited out of the company.”

### SOLUTIONS:

- Get people to focus on news internally: “You have to lower the threshold for people to post, to tell their story out of the company, whether that’s recruiting, innovation, or success. You have to find a way to incentivize them, whether it’s gamification, or applications like Sociable. Growing up in marketing, the first 15 years of my career, my job was to make management look and sound as best as they can in the marketplace. That hasn’t changed, but what has changed is I too need to be in the marketplace, with my own brand, with thought leadership that supports the company.”
- Encourage team members to tell their story: “When a developer is doing super-cool stuff, they may not understand they have a unique viewpoint, but it needs to be pushed in the marketplace, to support herself, support her boss, support the go-to-market strategy. Don’t worry about them building a profile and getting recruited out of the company based on their brand building. That’s going to happen anyway. Amplifying the story is far more valuable than having a quiet person. And don’t forget to recognize your internal rockstars and external partners on social media—all boats rise when authentic praise is given.”
- Develop constraints, but keep them simple: “Social media guidelines need to be taught, managed, and reviewed - no different than security training or password management. For example, we don’t talk about politics, religions, or aliens — as a company we don’t do that. And give simple guidelines for how you tell a story, what people engage with most. Also be careful about attacking a brand that’s a customer. The big point is not to split hairs on training: if you have their attention for 15 minutes a year, keep it simple. Everybody needs to feel responsible for elevating the brand and telling its story.”



## About Scott McKinney

Scott McKinney is a freelance copywriter and consultant specializing in B2B software. He has written for more than 30 clients and publications, including IBM Systems magazine, Power Systems edition, Training, and Today's Veterinary Practice.

Scott holds a B.A. in mathematics from Cornell University. Before becoming a full-time freelance writer in 2020, he was an award-winning math teacher and tutor for Tutor.com, Duke University TIP, Ohio State University, and Cornell University.

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### He can be reached at:

Scott McKinney

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