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WHITEPAPER

THE MARKETING-DATA DIVIDE:

Bridging the Organisation and Skills Gap Between Marketing and Analytics

FOREWORD

Data has never been more available to marketing teams. Customer interactions, digital journeys, transactional histories, and real-time behavioural signals can be captured at a scale that would have seemed extraordinary a decade ago. And yet, across the B2C enterprise landscape, a frustrating and persistent pattern endures: marketing teams struggling to get the data and insight they actually need, when they need it, in a form they can act on.

This is not, primarily, a technology problem. Organisations have invested heavily in data infrastructure, analytics platforms, and marketing technology. The tools exist. The data exists. The challenge is organisational: a gap between the people who produce insight and the people who need to use it, rooted in structural misalignment, skills deficits, and cultural distance between two professional communities that have grown in parallel but rarely converged.

This whitepaper examines that gap. It does not offer a universal operating model prescription - the diversity of organisational structures, sectors, and data maturity levels makes any single model both impractical and unwise. Instead, it identifies six guiding principles that can help organisations begin to close the divide, drawing on current research, industry data, and the authors' direct experience of the challenges marketing and analytics teams face in practice.

The argument is straightforward: organisations that successfully align their marketing and data functions - structurally, culturally, and in terms of skills - will build durable competitive advantage. Those that do not will continue to invest in capability they cannot fully use.

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THE OPPORTUNITY IN THE GAP

Despite a decade of significant investment in data infrastructure, analytics capability, and marketing technology, the relationship between marketing and data functions in large B2C organisations remains structurally broken in most companies. The symptoms are familiar: marketing teams waiting weeks for reports that should take hours; customer data that exists in three different systems with three different definitions; analytical teams producing insight that never reaches the campaign briefing; technology stacks growing in size and cost while utilisation falls.

This is not a marginal problem. Marketing Week's 2024 Career and Salary Survey of more than 3,000 brand-side marketers found that data and analytics represents the single largest skills gap in marketing functions - cited by 36.9% of respondents, well ahead of performance marketing (19.6%) and content skills (18.1%). Gartner's longitudinal research on marketing technology shows that utilisation of martech stack capabilities has fallen from 58% in 2020 to just 33% in 2023, even as investment has grown. These are not isolated findings - they are consistent across multiple independent data sources over multiple years.

The root causes are organisational and cultural more than they are technological. Two professional communities - marketing and analytics - have developed distinct languages, incentives, and ways of working. The operating models that govern how they interact have often made the problem worse rather than better: centralised data functions that create bottlenecks, federated models that produce inconsistency, and governance frameworks that protect data but slow down its use.

This paper offers six guiding principles - grounded in evidence and direct experience of what works - that most organisations can adapt to their own circumstances. Together, they describe a direction of travel rather than a fixed destination: towards organisations where marketing and data genuinely collaborate, where insight reaches the people who need it, and where investment in data capability delivers proportionate commercial return.

36.9%

of marketers say data & analytics is their biggest skills gap

Marketing Week, 2024

33%

of martech capabilities are actually used - down from 58% in 2020

Gartner, 2023

1 in 4

marketing teams have an effective relationship with their IT/data counterparts

CMO Council, 2022

PART ONE

UNDERSTANDING THE DIVIDE

1.1 A Decade of Investment, a Persistent Gap

The profile of data within enterprise organisations has changed dramatically over the past decade. The Chief Data Officer role is now a standard fixture in larger organisations. Customer Data Platforms, cloud data warehouses, and sophisticated analytics layers represent billions of pounds of collective investment. The framing of data as a strategic enterprise asset - rather than an IT cost centre - has taken root at board.

And yet, at the working level, the experience of marketing teams has often not improved in proportion to this investment. The gap between what is theoretically possible with the data available and what marketing teams can practically access and use has remained stubbornly wide.

Marketing Week's annual tracking data shows data and analytics has ranked as the top skills gap in marketing for at least two consecutive years, with the 2024 figure of 36.9% slightly higher than 2023's 34.4%. This is something we see to a greater or lesser extent in most organisations we work with. Particularly in situations where analytics has been pulled into a centralised Data function.

As an example, in 2024 we spent time working with a travel brand, where a single customer view had been built at great expense and effort. However, while marketing had been consulted on what should be included, they lacked the ability to clearly articulate how data should be managed through the data architecture, and specifically what views needed to exist for marketing analytics and planning activity.

The upshot was a lack of customer level aggregated views to support exploratory analysis, opportunity sizing, and periodic performance tracking (monthly net adds, segment shifts, etc.). As a result, core analytical tasks were disproportionately demanding because of the data wrangling, cleaning, matching, and aggregation required before any analysis could take place. This coupled with a lack of dedicated resources meant these activities simply did not happen.

> **“ The ability to analyse data is the most commonly mentioned technical, skill and constitutes a major skills gap within contemporary marketing practice. Yet the technical skills traditionally taught - statistics, SPSS - were only mentioned in four of 21 studies analysed. The emphasis has shifted to deriving insights from existing data, often in real time, to improve firm performance. ”**
>
> Kurtzke & Setkute, Analytics Capability in Marketing Education, SAGE Journals, 2021

Situations like this provide an explanation for the Supermetrics 2025 Marketing Data Report finding that, between 2020 and 2024, the volume of data available to marketers doubled in terms of average query size, while 56% of marketers said they didn't have enough time to analyse their data properly.

The problem is not scarcity of data - it is the organisational and skills infrastructure needed to turn that data into usable insight.

1.2 The Language Problem

At the heart of the marketing-data divide is a communication failure that structural changes alone cannot fully resolve. Marketing professionals and data scientists have developed, over time, genuinely different professional languages - different vocabularies, different ways of framing problems, and different definitions of what a useful output looks like.

SAS Institute's 2025 research into innovation themes for marketing technology is unusually direct on this point. It notes that 'analytical jargon creates confusion, friction and inefficiency for those not trained in the discipline', and that marketers 'do not typically think in terms of algorithms'. The language of marketing is rooted in customer outcomes, campaign objectives, and commercial results. The language of data science is rooted in models, confidence intervals, training data, and feature engineering. Neither is wrong - they are adapted to different professional purposes. But when these communities need to collaborate - and they must - the translation cost is significant.

The consequences are practical and persistent. When a marketing strategist asks for 'a profile of our best customers,' they typically want something actionable: a description of who to target, with what message, through which channel. What they often receive is a statistical cluster analysis with seven segments, annotated with lift charts and silhouette scores. The insight may be technically excellent. It is not, in its raw form, usable by the person who requested it.

Conversely, when a marketing team specifies a data request, the precision required for analytical work is often absent. 'Lapsed customers who used to be high value' is not a data brief - it requires definition of lapse period, value metric, recency window, and exclusion criteria. In the absence of that precision, a data team either spends time clarifying (slowing delivery) or makes assumptions (risking irrelevance).

One response to this problem has been the emergence of 'data translator' roles - professionals able to operate in both worlds, framing business problems in terms an analytical team can work with, and translating outputs back into language a marketing team can act on. This is a valuable pattern, and Principle 5 of this paper addresses how to build this capability systematically rather than relying on the occasional individual who happens to span both domains. But the translator role can often end up becoming a workaround for a structural problem, not a solution to it.

The more durable answer is shared frameworks: common definitions of key metrics (what counts as an 'active customer'? how is 'response' measured?), agreed taxonomies for customer segments, and standing processes by which marketing briefs are converted into analytical specifications. These frameworks do not emerge spontaneously - they require deliberate investment in the operating model.

1.3 The Operating Model Trap

How an organisation structures its data and analytics function is one of the most consequential decisions it makes - and one that is rarely made with the marketing-data relationship explicitly in mind. Three structural archetypes dominate enterprise practice, each with characteristic strengths and failure modes.

The centralised model concentrates all data, analytics, and engineering capability in a single function, typically reporting to a Chief Data Officer or Chief Technology Officer. It offers genuine advantages: consistency of definitions and standards, governance clarity, economies of scale in tooling and infrastructure, and a single point of accountability for data quality. In theory, any part of the business that needs data capability submits a request, and teams within a central data function deliver.

In practice, for marketing teams in particular, the centralised model frequently produces a familiar experience: the request queue. Marketing needs to build a new customer segment for a campaign launching in two weeks. The data team, serving finance, operations, product, and compliance as well, has a backlog. The model arrives in week three. The campaign has already run. The insight that could have informed the targeting is available after the fact, not before.

The federated or decentralised model responds to this frustration by distributing data capability into business units - embedding analysts and data scientists within marketing, commercial, and operations teams. Marketing gains speed and responsiveness. The analysts understand the business context. But consistency suffers: the 'active customer' means something different to the marketing analyst than to the finance analyst, and when the numbers don't reconcile, trust in data erodes. Data silos multiply. The customer data picture fragments.

The hybrid or hub-and-spoke model attempts to combine the best of both: a central function that sets standards, maintains core infrastructure, and ensures governance, with embedded or closely aligned capability within business units. This is increasingly the industry consensus position for mature enterprises. Alation's research highlights The Very Group, a UK online retailer, as an example: a hub-and-spoke governance model that established central policy coordination while giving departments autonomy, 'strengthening data consistency without dampening innovation.'

But the hybrid model brings its own challenge: coordination. It requires clearly defined interfaces between central and business-unit data teams, shared definitions of accountability, and - critically - leadership on both sides that values the relationship. Where those conditions exist, the hybrid model works. Where they don't, it collapses into the worst of both worlds: the bottlenecks of centralisation plus the fragmentation of federation.

The marketing-data operating model tension is not primarily a technical architecture problem. It is a question of accountability: who owns what, who sets the standards, who has the final say on definitions, and whose priorities take precedence when there is a conflict. These are organisational and governance questions, and technology cannot answer them.

A further structural dynamic deserves attention. In many organisations, the re-centralisation of data and tech has gradually migrated ownership of marketing technology away from marketing and towards IT or data functions.

Gartner's 2024 CMO research notes explicitly that 'marketing continues to lose ownership of marketing technology activities, such as technology acquisition, configuration and management.' This is a live and contested process in many enterprises - and a direct contributor to the capability gap, because the people with marketing context are losing influence over the tools, while the people who control the tools lack marketing context.

1.4 The Martech Paradox

If the skills gap represents an under-investment problem, the martech paradox represents an over-investment one. Or more precisely: it represents the consequences of investing in tools without investing proportionately in the people and processes needed to use them.

14,106

unique martech solutions existed in 2024 - up 27.8% in a single year

Scott Brinker / ChiefMartec

33%

average utilisation of purchased martech capabilities

Gartner Martech Survey, 2023

61%

of CMOs said they lack in-house capabilities to deliver their strategy

Gartner, 2022

Gartner's tracking data on martech utilisation is one of the most significant datasets in this space. In 2020, organisations were using 58% of their purchased martech capabilities. By 2022 that had fallen to 42%. By 2023 it had fallen again to 33%. This reflects a sustained three-year trajectory of declining utilisation against rising investment. Organisations are simultaneously buying more technology, of increasing feature richness, whilst their ability to benefit from those extended features erodes.

Gartner identifies three principal causes: skills and training deficits (no one is adequately teaching marketing teams how to use the tools they have been given); governance failures (there is no clear 'voice of the stack' - a defined owner who understands all functions and interfaces, and is accountable for coherent use); and stack complexity and sprawl (overlapping tools create confusion about which platform to use for which purpose). A fourth cause - customer data fragmentation - is equally significant: as tools multiply, they create isolated data environments, and 70% of marketers report that identifying audiences across touchpoints has become harder than ever.

The consequences extend beyond wasted technology spend. When marketing teams cannot fully use their martech stack, they cannot deliver the personalised, data-driven experiences their customers expect.

Gartner's 2024 consumer survey found that 58% of consumers reported that companies trying to sell to them did not have a good understanding of their needs and preferences - even though marketing organisations have never had more access to data about those same consumers. More data, more tools, more investment, and yet a customer experience that feels less understood.

1.5 The Data Landscape Is Shifting Beneath Everyone's Feet

The structural and skills challenges described above are occurring against a backdrop of significant external change. The data landscape that B2C marketing teams depend on has been in flux for several years, driven by three intersecting forces: privacy regulation, the evolution of third-party tracking, and the maturation of first-party data strategies.

The shift is clear even if the precise timeline has been uncertain. Safari and Firefox have blocked third-party cookies by default for several years. Apple's iOS 14.5 App Tracking Transparency significantly disrupted mobile advertising attribution from 2021. Google's protracted deliberation over third-party cookies in Chrome - announcing deprecation in 2020, repeatedly delaying it, and finally confirming in April 2025 that cookies would remain enabled by default while users are given a choice over tracking - has created years of uncertainty but has not reversed the underlying direction of travel. Marketers are moving towards first-party data not because they have to, but because it is demonstrably better: more accurate, more durable, more privacy-compliant, and more commercially valuable.

McKinsey research estimates that organisations effectively using first-party data can increase revenue by up to 15% while reducing marketing spend by 20%. That is a compelling commercial case. But capturing it requires exactly what most organisations have not yet built: a functional marketing-data operating model in which customer data is well-governed, consistently defined, regularly enriched, and readily accessible to the marketing teams who need to activate it.

Customer data platform (CDP) adoption is accelerating in this context. Forrester's B2C CDP Wave (Q3 2024) highlights continued market maturation, with Adobe, Salesforce, and Treasure Data among the leading platforms. But the evidence on CDP performance is mixed: Forrester research found that 45% of organisations report their CDP underperformed against business objectives, citing difficulty finding actionable insights and limited analytics functionality as key complaints. The technology is available. The integration with people and process is not.

This landscape shift makes the marketing-data operating model question more urgent, not less. Organisations that resolve the structural and skills gap fastest will be best positioned to build and activate first-party data assets, personalise at scale, and measure their marketing accurately. Those that do not will find themselves continuing to rely on increasingly unreliable external data signals - or investing in first-party infrastructure that their marketing teams cannot use effectively.

PART TWO

SIX PRINCIPLES FOR CLOSING THE GAP

The following six principles are not a prescriptive operating model. They are a set of design parameters - guiding considerations that organisations can adapt to their own scale, structure, and starting point.

They share a common philosophy: that the marketing-data relationship works best when it is built on genuine partnership, shared ownership, and complementary rather than competing expertise. No single principle is independently sufficient. They work in combination.

Principle 1: Small, Cross-functional Teams That Can Move

Where possible, operating models should be designed to enable small multidisciplinary teams - bringing together CRM planning, customer data science, and where required customer data engineering - to form rapidly around specific insight projects and disband when complete.

The specific disciplines required for effective customer insight delivery are three:

- Someone who understands the marketing or commercial problem being solved (typically a CRM planner or marketing strategist).
- Someone who can work with the data to answer the question (a data scientist or customer analyst).
- For more complex or infrastructure-intensive projects, someone who can build and maintain the data pipelines that feed the analysis (a data engineer).

These three roles do not need to sit in the same team permanently - but the operating model must make it easy for them to come together quickly, work without excessive governance overhead, and deliver to a clear brief.

Regardless of how the individual teams are structured, creating the environment for planning/commercial, data science, and data engineering expertise to coalesce as a project team around a specific goal or set of requirements should be a focus. This both requires and incentivises the development of common language, understanding, and ways of working across commercial and technical teams, which in turn help to close many of the gaps in day-to-day and operational understanding.

The design implication is that organisations should assess their operating model not just on structural grounds but on velocity grounds: how long does it take, today, for a marketing team with a specific customer insight question to have a capable, aligned small team working on it? If the answer is weeks - because of approval processes, team structures, competing priorities, or unclear ownership - the operating model is impeding the commercial value of data, regardless of how technically excellent the underlying data infrastructure is.

Questions to ask yourself

Do our processes hinder or enable rapid formation / dissolution of small cross functional teams?

Can we manage time and effort to goal effectively?

Do we know how to prioritise projects and allocate appropriate time and expertise for the task?

Are our teams currently configured in a way which facilitates this approach? Workload/balance/budget split/etc.

How can we capture and disseminate learnings and positive ways of working across teams?

Principle 2: Marketing Ownership Within a Governed Framework

Marketing should have meaningful ownership of its own data and technology - including budget authority over both. This ownership should exist within architectural and governance standards set by IT and Data, not in opposition to them.

One of the biggest gaps we see opening up where marketing no longer has ownership of data or tech is a rapid degradation of the skills and knowledge required to adequately influence and guide the technical functions they rely on.

Left unresolved, this commonly results in platforms and data solutions which are guided more by what can be done technically – in a very broad sense – rather than what the business needs (something we deal with specifically in point 6). This is a key factor in the failure to adopt and maximise the benefits of technology discussed in 1.5.

Whether marketing owns any of the physical elements of its own data and tech – it should be responsible for the strategy and key decisions which manage them. This requires marketing to have significant influence over decisions, prioritisation, and spend/ROI calculations for its own data and tech. Which in turn requires having data and platform capability expertise within marketing.

One of the most consistent sources of frustration for marketing leaders is the experience of being accountable for outcomes - acquisition, retention, customer lifetime value, campaign ROI - while lacking control over the tools and data needed to deliver them. When the MarTech stack is owned by IT, when the customer data model is defined by the data team, and when analytical resources are allocated by a central function with competing priorities, marketing is in a position of responsibility without control.

This is not an argument for marketing to operate outside enterprise data governance or technology architecture.

Those frameworks exist for legitimate reasons: to ensure data quality, protect customer privacy, maintain compliance, and avoid the fragmentation and inconsistency that comes from every function building its own parallel data infrastructure. An organisation in which marketing has its own unconnected CRM, its own data definitions, and its own reporting that cannot be reconciled with finance or operations is a recipe for chaos and is, ultimately, self defeating.

However, ownership and governance should be separated.

Marketing should control the budget for its data and technology. It should make the decisions about which tools are adopted, which vendors are selected, and which projects are prioritised - because marketing has the domain expertise and the commercial accountability to make those decisions well.

IT and Data should set the standards within which those decisions are made: the architectural requirements a new tool must meet, the data governance principles that govern how customer data is handled, the security and compliance frameworks within which everything operates.

In practice, this means marketing leaders need to be sufficiently technically literate to engage as equals with IT and data counterparts - not to build the architecture themselves, but to understand what is being proposed, to challenge it where necessary, and to make informed investment decisions. It also means that IT and data functions need to recognise that frameworks which are technically rigorous but overly restrictive or onerous for marketing teams to work within are not successful governance - they are bureaucratic friction dressed as standards.

The test of a well-designed governance framework is not whether it prevents bad things from happening. It is whether it enables good things to happen - quickly, at scale, and with confidence. Governance that blocks marketing from using customer data effectively is not protecting the business; it is costing it.

Strong marketing capability experts blends commercial acumen with a hands-on understanding of what happens across the planning to decisioning to execution pipeline, and enough technical knowledge to act as the voice of the Marketing teams into vendor, IT, and Data audiences, ensuring costs, integrations, functionality, and governance are appropriately aligned to what the markets need to get done.

This begins with a clear understanding of marketing's core objectives - acquisition, retention, customer lifetime value, and ROI - and the role data, platforms and investment decisions have in delivering them. This commercial grounding is paired with a solid technical literacy: the ability to understand how systems work, how data flows, and how architectural choices either enable or constrain marketing outcomes.

Crucially the best marketing capability experts understand how the commercial and operation considerations of marketing translate into technical requirements, risks, and opportunities. They ensure governance and architecture remain pragmatic and value-creating rather than restrictive for their own sake. That means being able to influence vendor roadmaps, secure investment in the features that matter, and ensure that platforms evolve in line with marketing's strategic priorities.

These considerations, trade offs and plans are consolidated into the roadmap for marketing capability and enhancement delivery plan. Alongside this sits responsibility for building investment cases, managing budgets, and ensuring that spend on data and technology translates into measurable commercial impact

Principle 3: Customer as the Organising Axis

Marketing and Analytics should both have dedicated points of ownership organised around the customer - specifically:

- **Customer Analytics (commercial and operational insight),**
- **Customer Data Strategy & Governance (owning the tactical data roadmap and marketing data assets),**
- **Customer Marketing (in-life, retention, loyalty).**

One of the structural reasons the marketing-data relationship breaks down is that the two functions are organised around different pillars.

Marketing is typically organised by campaign type, channel, or product. Data teams are organised by technical function - engineering, analytics, data science - or by the enterprise systems they support. Neither organisation naturally produces dedicated ownership of the customer as a coherent commercial and analytical entity.

The principle proposed here is that both functions should have named ownership points aligned to the customer, and that these ownership points should form the primary interface between marketing and data. Three specific roles or functions are identified:

- **Customer Analytics** - Responsible for producing commercial and operational insight about the customer base - who customers are, how they behave, how their value is evolving, what is driving retention and lapse, and how marketing activity is performing. This is distinct from broader business intelligence or financial analytics. It is specifically concerned with customer understanding at the level of granularity that marketing teams need to make decisions.

- **Customer Data Strategy and Governance** - Owns the data roadmap concerning marketing and customer management. This person - or team - should have a genuine influence over the strategic data agenda: shaping what customer data is collected, maintained, and enriched; which data assets are built and prioritised; and how the evolving data strategy is executed. Critically, this function should own the tactical and evolving data assets that support marketing activity - the models, segments, audiences, and propensity scores that underpin campaign targeting - rather than those assets sitting in a central data catalogue with limited marketing accountability.

- **Customer Marketing** - Responsible for in-life customer relationships - retention, loyalty, lifecycle management, and the communications and offers that sustain and develop customer value over time. This is distinguished from acquisition marketing, and it is the function most dependent on data. It requires accurate customer profiles, behavioural signals, predictive models, and real-time or near-real-time activation capability.

The value of organising around these three customer-focused ownership points is the natural collaboration it creates.

Customer Analytics serves Customer Marketing with insight. Customer Data Strategy and Governance serves both, ensuring the data and models they need are built and maintained to appropriate standards and with appropriate marketing input. When the ownership is explicit and the interfaces are clear, the collaboration tends to work. When it is implicit - when marketing and analytics are each organised around their own internal logic and happen to interact on a project-by-project basis - it tends not to.

Customer data strategy & governance

Core Accountabilities:

- Customer Data Roadmap Influence
- Customer Data Product Ownership
- Data Governance Translation
- Marketing Data Literacy & Adoption
- Cross-Functional Alignment

Required skills:

- Marketing/Commercial Literacy
- Data & Analytics Literacy
- Governance & Risk Literacy
- Stakeholder Management
- Product Management Mindset

They are responsible for building the business cases that justify investment, influencing prioritisation decisions, and securing commitment from data leadership for enhancements that will deliver measurable value. Because this position is directly tied to commercial performance, it is often one of the most powerful levers marketing has to shape the wider enterprise data strategy.

The role is also accountable for the practical execution of the roadmap: ensuring that new data products, models and capabilities are delivered into the business in a way that drives adoption and delivers the anticipated benefits. These could include improved targeting, faster activation, greater efficiency, or stronger campaign performance. They act as the bridge between technical delivery teams and the commercial functions that rely on their outputs, holding delivery teams to account while representing the needs of customer and marketing stakeholders at key decision points.

To be effective, requires a person with multiple talents: commercially minded, technically literate, politically astute and resilient. They must be able to influence without alienating, challenge without creating friction, and advocate for marketing's needs. It is a role that demands conviction, clarity and the ability to navigate complex organisational dynamics while keeping the customer firmly centre stage.

Principle 4: Marketing-Owned Data Products

Analysts and data scientists responsible for designing, building, and optimising customer marketing data assets should sit within Marketing - but work in close partnership with the central data function. Marketing controls its data products; data sets the standards and infrastructure.

The concept of a 'data product' - a defined, governed, reusable data asset with a named owner accountable for its quality and relevance - has moved from the academic to the practical in recent years. Gartner's CDAO Agenda Survey (2024) found that 50% of organisations have already deployed data products, with a further 29% actively considering them. In the marketing context, data products include customer segment definitions, churn propensity models, customer lifetime value scores, campaign response predictors, and next-best-offer recommendations - the analytical assets that directly inform marketing decisions.

The question of where these data products should live - and who should own them - is one of the most contested in enterprise data operating model design. The centralised model places them in the data function: built to high standards, consistently defined, but dependent on central prioritisation and often disconnected from the marketing use cases that drive their value. The federated model places them in marketing: responsive to business needs, but potentially inconsistent with enterprise data standards and difficult to maintain over time.

The principle proposed here is a specific form of the hybrid model. Marketing-owned data products, designed, built, and tested by data scientists and analysts who sit within marketing – or are, at the least, permanently aligned to marketing. In turn these are refined, productionised, and maintained by Data Engineers operating within architectural and quality standards set by the central data function.

The commercial value of a customer churn model is determined by whether it accurately predicts churn in a way that enables marketing intervention. The people best placed to judge that are the marketing teams who use it - not a central data team whose accountability is to data quality in the abstract.

In practice, this means that the data scientists and modellers who build marketing data products should report into, or have their priorities set by, marketing leadership - not the central data function. But they should also be embedded within the data engineering and governance ecosystem: using the same infrastructure, meeting the same quality standards, contributing to the same data catalogue, and maintaining active relationships with their central data counterparts.

This is something we see frequently and a model we always like to use when delivering work on behalf of our clients. Marketing and data science working hand in glove to rapidly iterate through thinking, definitions, refinements to logic etc., with support from a named Data Engineer. This support is often fairly light touch advisory and guidance, but sometimes involves heavy lifting around the identification, cleansing, and creating of entirely new data sets.

This approach allows for the significantly faster creation and initial refinement of analytical assets than more structured agile processes. It ensures the commercial thinking and inputs evolve at a similar pace to the analytical work and develops a virtuous circle of refinement between marketing and data science.

Once the asset or prototype is ready for production, it is handed over to the data team. This ensures that marketing can continue to benefit from the Data Scientist's initial build while the Data Engineers optimise and rebuild the asset to production standards within an agreed timeframe.

Principle 5: Complementary Analytics Roles, Not Hybrid Unicorns

Organisations should resist seeking technical excellence and communication expertise in the same analytical hire. Analytics teams should instead be deliberately weighted across two complementary profiles: deep technical specialists and insight communicators - working in tandem.

One of the most persistent and counterproductive tendencies in analytical recruitment is the search for the hybrid professional: the data scientist who can also present compellingly to the board; the marketing analyst who both writes SQL communications and crafts business narratives.

This persona is, rare, and commands premium compensation. More commonly, organisations hire for technical skills and discover that communication is lacking or hire for communication skills and discover that the technical depth is insufficient.

The academic evidence supports a more deliberate approach. Kurtzke and Setkute's practice-informed model of marketing analytics capability identifies four distinct skill clusters: conceptual knowledge, technical skills, tool skills, and soft skills. The ability to communicate insight. These clusters do not naturally co-occur in the same individual. They represent genuinely different cognitive and professional orientations.

The principle proposed here is that analytics teams should be structured to accommodate both orientations explicitly, rather than seeking the rare individual who combines them.

At one end of the spectrum there are - highly skilled technical analysts and data scientists who are excellent at building models, writing complex code, designing experiments, and producing statistically rigorous analysis. These individuals may be poor at explaining their work to non-technical audiences, and that is acceptable, even desirable - their value lies in the depth and rigour of the analysis, not in its presentation.

At the other end there are analysts who have weaker technical skills but significantly stronger capabilities in translating insight into business language, structuring findings as recommendations, presenting to senior stakeholders, and working iteratively with marketing teams to understand what they actually need. These are the data translators described in Principle 1 and in recent practitioner literature - individuals who 'bridge the gap between data and business teams, protecting analysts' time from low-value tasks and ensuring insight reaches the people who need it.'

The two profiles should work in tandem across the projects and deliverables of the overall analytics function.

The technical specialists do the advanced data science, sophisticated coding and statistics. They build and refine the more complex models, make technical recommendations for improvement on live decisioning solutions etc. The less technical members of the team focus on delivering commercial analysis, translating and shaping the outputs from advanced analytics, shape and add context and narrative, and present it in terms which resonate with business stakeholders and provide the “so what?” needed to act.

This division of labour is more efficient than asking each individual to do both, and it produces better outcomes: deeper analysis and clearer communication than either profile alone can deliver.

The implications for recruitment and team design are significant. Job specifications should be explicit about which profile is being sought, rather than listing both technical and communication skills as equal requirements. Team structures should include both types explicitly, with clear interfaces between them. Development programmes should invest in technical depth for technical analysts and in influencing, storytelling, and business acumen for communicators - rather than attempting to make each person a generalist.

The question is not 'how do we find analysts who can do everything?' It is 'how do we build teams where the technical depth and the communication capability are both present, and are organised to work together effectively?' These are different problems with different solutions.

A common problem which can arise here is the short term/long term compensation and progression differences between both types of profile.

In the short term, a premium is often attached to the more technical skill set, due to higher competition for a smaller pool of people within the market. However, over time it is the more business facing profile which often has the aptitudes and influencing skills to progress into management type roles.

One solution to this longer term problem, and one that more organisations are starting to adopt, is the introduction of technical bandings in parallel to standard HR position bandings. This allows organisations to continue to reward and recognise the impact of technical staff and independent contributors outside of standard progression paths that take people from team member to manager to department head, etc..

Principle 6: Technology Driven by Need, Not by Sales

Martech platform ownership should work closely with marketing strategists and decisioning teams to identify realistic capability requirements. New functionality should be evaluated primarily on incremental commercial value, and secondarily on quantifiable customer experience impact. The roadmap should be built from actual need, not from vendor promises.

The martech utilisation crisis described in Part One is not accidental. It is partly the product of a procurement dynamic in which technology decisions have been driven by vendor demonstrations, analyst rankings, and competitive pressure rather than by a clear-eyed assessment of what a specific organisation actually needs to do with its data, at what scale, with the people and skills it actually has.

Martech vendors are, understandably, in the business of selling capability. They demonstrate best-case deployments, describe features that are technically available but require significant configuration, and present roadmaps of future functionality that may or may not materialise as described.

Enterprise procurement processes, often involving lengthy RFP exercises, tend to favour comprehensive feature lists over honest assessment of organisational readiness to use them. Inevitably this leads to organisations owning tools that exceed their current capability to deploy, wasting investment and demoralising the marketing teams expected to use them.

The principle proposed here is a different approach to martech governance: one that starts from commercial and customer requirements rather than from technology capability.

The process should begin with a clear articulation of what marketing needs to be able to do In particular, which customer interactions, decisions, and communications the organisation needs to be able to execute, personalise, and measure. It can then work backwards to the technology required to enable those capabilities.

New functionality should be evaluated against three explicit criteria, in sequence:

1. **What incremental commercial value does this capability unlock? Can that value be quantified - in revenue, margin, customer retention, or cost efficiency. And is it sufficient to justify the investment and the operational overhead of implementation?**

2. **What is the quantifiable impact on customer experience? Does this capability enable interactions that are meaningfully more relevant, timely, or valuable to the customer?**

3. **Are we in a position to be able to benefit from it? Do we have the data structures and systems in place? Are our teams and processes across commercial planning sophisticated enough to produce the required direction? If it requires significant departure from current ways of working or marketing is the business / exec ready? How far away from ready is it?**

The emphasis on 'quantifiable' is deliberate. Marketing technology investments that are justified by reference to capabilities that 'could' be useful, or that improve customer experience in ways that cannot be measured, should be viewed with scepticism. Not because they are necessarily wrong - some investments in customer experience are genuinely difficult to attribute - but because the absence of measurable criteria makes it impossible to learn from success or failure, and impossible to build a principled case for continued investment.

Martech platform ownership - whether that sits in marketing, IT, or a dedicated marketing operations function - should maintain an active roadmap of evolving capability that is visible to marketing strategists, decisioning teams, and data counterparts. This roadmap should be a living document: updated as commercial priorities change, as technology capabilities evolve, and as the organisation's analytical and operational maturity develops. It should be governed jointly by marketing and technology leadership, with clear decision rights about what gets prioritised and why.

PART THREE

PUTTING THE PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE

The six principles described in Part Two are individually meaningful. Their power, however, lies in combining them.

An organisation that builds small multidisciplinary teams but does not give marketing ownership of its data products will find those teams dependent on central prioritisation. An organisation that gives marketing technology ownership but does not build the communication-oriented analyst profile will find its technical output unused. The principles reinforce each other.

The starting point for any organisation seeking to apply these principles is an honest assessment of its current state across four dimensions:

- **Structure** - How are marketing and data organised relative to each other, and where does ownership of key interfaces sit?
- **Skills** - Does the marketing organisation have the analytical literacy it needs, and does the data organisation have the business and communication orientation to serve it?
- **Technology** - is the martech stack being used proportionately to its cost, and are the right governance processes in place?
- **Culture** - Is there genuine mutual respect and collaborative intent between marketing and data professionals, or is there competition, suspicion, or mutual condescension?

Structure and skills can be changed relatively quickly through deliberate organisational design and targeted recruitment or development. Technology governance is slower but not complex. Principally the will to simplify and the discipline to hold the line against vendor pressure.

Culture is the hardest to change and the most important. No structural redesign will sustain itself against a cultural current that runs in the opposite direction. The most effective organisations have leaders on both sides of the marketing-data divide who genuinely believe in the value of the other function, invest in shared understanding, and model the collaborative behaviour they want their teams to demonstrate.

How can you put these changes into practice?

Start with a conversation. What would it take for marketing and analytics leadership to sit down together and define, with precision, the three most commercially important insight questions that marketing cannot currently answer? And then to jointly design - not request and deliver, but jointly design - the operating model, resource, and process needed to answer them? This kind of focused, outcome-led collaboration is both the test of the current operating model and the foundation for improving it.

This is the jumping off point for more concrete steps:

Jointly defined goals to give decision makers targets to aim for and measures to track. For example the most important insight questions to answer, an agreed view of how quickly to move from data-to-insight-to-decision to enable marketing to deliver on its objectives (balanced with realistic resource and investment considerations)

Identify process and skills gaps which currently impede achieving these goals. Do the skills exist in an individual or group which is currently unable to bring them to bear in an effective way, or will the organisation need to buy or develop them? How far from the ideal are current processes? Do they require tweaking – a new set of sign off points and minor adjustments, or are the gaps such that a complete re-think is required?

What structural changes are likely to be required in order to facilitate these changes in skills and process? How might this impact budgets and the ability to deliver in other areas? Can gaps be resolved through a matrix type approach to alignment of resource?

Develop the RACI for critical data, analytics, and activation tasks:

- **Define enterprise data standards**
- **Define customer-specific standards**
- **Prioritise customer data products**
- **Build/deploy data products**
- **Approve access to sensitive data**
- **Resolve data quality issues**
- **Make technology investments**
- **Maintain data dictionary**
- **Ensure regulatory compliance**
- **Train marketing teams**

Are there any potential bottlenecks, imbalances, etc.? Do the decision-makers have the right skillset and/or knowledge base to be effective, how might this be addressed?

Assess the cultural changes required to facilitate success – both in terms of the openness to change and flexibility of in scope teams and management. Once through change and into the new world - are you moving from a very structured to a more collaborative approach? Where might changes be required to enable the right peer or manager level leadership to support teams with this? Is the business able to identify and nurture the right aptitudes and attitudes?

Agree KPIs to track success. These will largely draw on existing measures, with the expectation that they should show improvement over time. However, it is also valuable to define a small set of KPIs specific to the change process itself, along with regular feedback mechanisms for the teams in scope. This helps assess the impact on their ability to do their jobs, how sentiment is shifting, the benefits being realised and any emerging issues that need to be addressed.

As you move through change organisations should also be realistic about timescale and what success looks like. The marketing-data gap has been persistent since the days of 'database marketing', it won't be closed in a single reorganisation or recruitment cycle. In fact, it is unlikely to ever disappear entirely, because the underlying technologies and approaches will always evolve at different speeds depending on changing commercial pressures and customer expectations.

The principles in this paper describe a direction of travel - and organisations should expect to make progress incrementally, building trust and demonstrating value at each stage, rather than attempting to move from one structural extreme to another in a single transformation.

The organisations that are furthest ahead are those that have been consistently, patiently building the structural, skills, and cultural conditions for collaboration - not those that have made the largest single investment.

CONCLUSION

THE DIVIDE IS CLOSEABLE

The marketing-data divide is real, persistent, and commercially costly. The evidence surveyed in this paper consistently points to an organisation and skills problem - one that technology investment, and structural redesign cannot resolve alone.

The organisations that are closing the gap are those that have addressed it as a cultural and human problem, not a systems problem. They invest in genuine partnerships between marketing and analytics professionals, build teams that span the functional boundary, and create the structural conditions for fast, accountable, insight-driven marketing.

The six principles in this paper are not a prescription. They are a framework for diagnosis and design. A set of questions that any B2C enterprise can ask about its own operating model, and a set of directions in which change tends to generate value.

The specific answers will differ by sector, scale, data maturity, and organisational culture. What will not differ is the underlying challenge: to build organisations in which the people who understand the customer and the people who understand the data are genuinely working together, with shared purpose, shared metrics, and shared accountability for outcomes.

The commercial stakes are significant. McKinsey's estimate that effective first-party data strategy can increase revenue by 15% while reducing marketing spend by 20% describes an opportunity that is available - in principle - to every B2C enterprise with a substantial customer base. As does the BCG finding that companies excelling in personalisation deliver 15% higher total shareholder return.

These are not marginal gains. They are the commercial argument for investing, seriously and sustainably, in closing the divide between marketing and data.

The organisations that win the next decade of B2C marketing will not be those with the most data, or the most sophisticated technology, or the largest analytics function. They will be those that have built the organisational conditions for data and marketing to work as genuine partners - producing insight that reaches the people who need it, and action that is informed by the insight available.

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DIAGNOSTIC TOOL

MARKETING-DATA MATURITY ASSESSMENT

A self-assessment framework for CMOs and Marketing Directors

Appendix A to: The Marketing-Data Divide | April 2026

How to Use This Assessment

This diagnostic is designed for CMOs and Marketing Directors who want an honest picture of where their organisation sits on the marketing-data maturity spectrum - and what to focus on next.

Complete the 25 scored questions across five dimensions. Each dimension generates a score out of 20; your total score out of 100 maps to one of four maturity stages. The guidance that follows gives you a profile of what each stage typically looks like, and a priority action for each dimension at each stage.

Two practical notes before you start:

- Score your organisation as it actually is, not as you would like it to be or as it was described in the last strategy deck. The diagnostic is only useful if it reflects reality.
- If you can, complete this alongside your data or analytics counterpart, and compare scores. Differences in perception between marketing and data leadership are themselves diagnostic: they reveal where assumptions and misunderstandings are costing you.

How to use this assessment

For each of the 25 statements below, score your organisation honestly on a scale of 1 to 4:

1 - Not true of us. This does not describe how we currently operate.

2 - Partly true. We do this in some areas but not consistently.

3 - Largely true. This broadly reflects how we operate, with some gaps.

4 - Fully true. This accurately and consistently describes our organisation.

Be honest. This is a diagnostic, not a performance review. The value is in the gaps.

The Assessment

Structure & Operating Model

These questions assess how your organisation is structured to enable collaboration between marketing and data, and whether the operating model supports or impedes the flow of insight to action.

Q1	Marketing and data teams have a defined, documented operating model that sets out how they work together - including clear ownership of key interfaces.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one
Q2	When marketing needs a specific piece of customer insight or analysis, there is a clear and fast route to getting it - without navigating complex approval processes or competing priorities.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one
Q3	Small cross-functional teams (marketing, analytics, data engineering) can be assembled around specific projects quickly, without months of budget negotiation or restructuring.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one
Q4	There is no significant 'insight backlog' - requests from marketing to data are typically fulfilled within a timeframe that is commercially useful.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one
Q5	The operating model has been reviewed and updated in the past 18 months to reflect changes in how the business works and what it needs from data.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one

Dimension 1 total (add Q1–Q5):	_____ / 20

Skills & Talent

These questions assess whether your marketing organisation has the analytical literacy it needs, and whether your analytics function has the business and communication orientation to serve marketing effectively.

Q6	Marketing teams have sufficient data literacy to interpret analytical outputs, challenge assumptions, and make data-informed decisions without always needing an analyst in the room.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one
Q7	Analysts and data scientists supporting marketing are able to communicate insight clearly to non-technical stakeholders - not just produce technically correct analysis.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one
Q8	The marketing organisation has at least some individuals who can bridge the gap between marketing objectives and data requirements - translating business questions into analytical briefs.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one
Q9	Our analytics team is deliberately structured to include both deep technical specialists and more business-facing insight communicators - and these profiles work in tandem.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one
Q10	We invest in ongoing data and analytics skills development for marketing teams, not just for data professionals.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one

Dimension 2 total (add Q6–Q10):	_____ / 20

Technology & Martech Governance

These questions assess whether your technology investment is proportionate to your actual usage and capability, and whether governance is enabling or impeding effective marketing use of technology.

Q11	We have a realistic picture of which capabilities in our current martech stack are actively used, by whom, and to what commercial effect.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one
Q12	New technology investment decisions are driven primarily by clearly defined commercial or customer requirements - not by vendor demonstrations, peer pressure, or analyst rankings.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one
Q13	Marketing has meaningful ownership of its technology budget and vendor relationships, while operating within architectural standards set by IT.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one
Q14	There is a live, jointly owned roadmap of martech capability that is visible to both marketing and technology leadership and reviewed regularly against commercial priorities.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one
Q15	When we invest in new technology, we also invest in the training, process change, and governance needed to achieve the utilisation we planned for.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one

Dimension 3 total (add Q11–Q15):	_____ / 20

Culture & Collaboration

These questions assess the quality of the working relationship between marketing and data teams - including mutual respect, shared purpose, and the degree to which collaboration is genuinely embedded rather than transactional.

Q16	Marketing and data leaders have a genuine, trusting working relationship - not just a formal reporting or service arrangement.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one
Q17	There is a shared understanding of commercial priorities between marketing and analytics teams - data professionals understand what marketing is trying to achieve and why it matters.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one
Q18	When insight is delivered to marketing that challenges assumptions or contradicts expectations, it is engaged with constructively rather than dismissed or ignored.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one
Q19	Marketing and analytics teams regularly work together on problem framing - not just on delivery of pre-specified outputs.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one
Q20	Failure and experimentation are treated as learning opportunities in how marketing and data work together - there is psychological safety to try new approaches.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one

Dimension 4 total (add Q16–Q20):	_____ / 20

Data Ownership & Governance

These questions assess whether your organisation has appropriate and effective ownership of customer data, and whether governance frameworks enable or impede marketing's ability to use data effectively.

Q21	Marketing has a named point of ownership for its customer data strategy - someone who shapes the data roadmap, owns the evolution of marketing data assets, and has genuine influence over what gets built.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one
Q22	Key customer data definitions (active customer, high value, lapsed, segment membership) are agreed, documented, and used consistently across marketing and analytics.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one
Q23	Marketing owns its key data products - the models, segments, and predictive scores used in campaign targeting - with named accountability for quality and relevance.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one
Q24	Data governance frameworks in our organisation enable marketing teams to use customer data effectively, rather than primarily acting as constraints on what is possible.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one
Q25	We have a clear and current first-party data strategy - we know what data we collect, how it is maintained, and how it connects to commercial and marketing outcomes.	**1 2 3 4** Circle one

Dimension 5 total (add Q21–Q25):	_____ / 20

Your Score Summary

Transfer your dimension totals below, then add them for your overall score.

Dimension	Score /20	Stage (circle)
1 - Structure & Operating Model	___ / 20	1 - Reactive 2 - Developing 3 - Aligned 4 - Leading
2 - Skills & Talent	___ / 20	1 - Reactive 2 - Developing 3 - Aligned 4 - Leading
3 - Technology & Martech Governance	___ / 20	1 - Reactive 2 - Developing 3 - Aligned 4 - Leading
4 - Culture & Collaboration	___ / 20	1 - Reactive 2 - Developing 3 - Aligned 4 - Leading
5 - Data Ownership & Governance	___ / 20	1 - Reactive 2 - Developing 3 - Aligned 4 - Leading
OVERALL TOTAL	**___ / 100**	See scoring guide below

Overall Maturity Stages

Your overall score maps to one of four maturity stages. Read the description for your stage, but also look at where your individual dimensions diverged - a high overall score with one very low dimension often reveals the most important strategic priority.

Total Score	Maturity Stage	What this typically means	Primary focus area
25–44 Stage 1: Reactive	**Stage 1 Reactive**	The marketing-data relationship is largely ad hoc. Insight is hard to get, tools are underused, and there is limited shared language or trust between the two functions	Begin with structure and definitions. Establish clear ownership of key interfaces. Agree on core data definitions. Focus on one or two high-priority use cases where quick wins can build confidence.
45-64 Stage 2: Developing	**Stage 2 Developing**	Some foundations are in place, but they are inconsistent. Progress depends heavily on individual relationships and is fragile to personnel changes. Investment is being made, but not yet proportionate return.	Systematise what is working. Identify the informal collaboration patterns that generate value and build processes around them. Focus on skills development and cultural investment alongside structural improvements.
65–84 Stage 3: Aligned	**Stage 3 Aligned**	The operating model is broadly functional. Marketing can access insight reasonably effectively, data quality is largely trusted, and there is genuine collaboration on important problems. Some areas still have significant room for improvement.	Close the remaining gaps. Invest in the dimensions where you scored lowest. Move from reactive gap-filling to proactive capability building - particularly in first-party data strategy and data product ownership.
85–100 Stage 4: Leading	**Stage 4 Leading**	The marketing-data relationship is a source of genuine competitive advantage. Insight is fast, trusted, and commercially applied. Investment in data generates proportionate return. Culture supports experimentation and continuous improvement.	Protect and extend. The risk at this stage is complacency - particularly through leadership change or rapid growth. Focus on sustainability, on sharing the model across the wider organisation, and on the next frontier of capability.

Dimension-by-Dimension Guidance

For each dimension, find the column matching your stage score to understand what that score typically means in practice and where to focus your energy next.

DIMENSION 1

Structure & Operating Model

Stage 1 Reactive	Stage 2 Developing	Stage 3 Aligned	Stage 4 Leading
Score: 5–8	Score: 9–12	Score: 13–16	Score: 17–20
Ad hoc and reactive	**Process exists, but inconsistently**	**Structured and largely functional**	**Optimised and adaptive**
• Ineffective process for marketing-data collaboration • Insight arrives late or not at all • Teams work in separate silos	• Some defined routes exist • Bottlenecks frequent • Depends on personal relationships	• Clear model in most areas • Occasional delays • Model reviewed periodically	• Fast, flexible, well-governed • Cross-functional teams form easily • Model reviewed regularly
Priority action: Map current state: document every touchpoint between marketing and data, identify the three most common failure points, and set a 90-day target to resolve one.	**Priority action:** Formalise the most used collaboration pathways. Introduce a simple triage process for marketing insight requests with committed SLAs.	**Priority action:** Focus on the remaining friction points. Pilot a small embedded analytics team within a high-priority marketing workstream to test a more agile model.	**Priority action:** Document what is working and why. Consider whether your model can be shared as internal best practice, and look for the next frontier of collaboration (e.g., real-time decisioning).

DIMENSION 2

Skills & Talent

Stage 1 Reactive	Stage 2 Developing	Stage 3 Aligned	Stage 4 Leading
Score: 5–8	Score: 9–12	Score: 13–16	Score: 17–20
Significant skills gap on both sides	**Isolated pockets of capability**	**Capability present, not fully systematic**	**Complementary capability by design**
• Low data literacy in marketing • Analysts struggle to communicate • No structured development	• Some capable individuals • No systemic approach • Dependent on key people	• Good technical depth • Communication improving • Some structured development	• Deliberate team design • Strong communication culture • Ongoing development investment
Priority action: Start with a skills audit. Map current capability against what is actually needed for the top five marketing use cases. Use this to build the case for targeted investment.	**Priority action:** Identify your data translator(s) - the people who can bridge both worlds - and protect their time. Begin designing a more deliberate team structure around the two-profile model.	**Priority action:** Formalise the two-profile structure in analytics team design. Build marketing data literacy into onboarding and development frameworks, not just technical training.	**Priority action:** Focus on the next tier: how do you develop the next generation of data translators? Consider whether senior marketing roles should have explicit analytics literacy requirements.

DIMENSION 3

Technology & Martech Governance

Stage 1 Reactive	Stage 2 Developing	Stage 3 Aligned	Stage 4 Leading
Score: 5–8	Score: 9–12	Score: 13–16	Score: 17–20
Technology-led, under-utilised	**Some governance, inconsistent usage**	**Structured ownership, improving ROI**	**Commercial and customer-led by design**
• Purchases driven by vendors • Low utilisation of current stack • No clear ownership or roadmap	• Ownership partly defined • Usage varies by team • Roadmap informal or outdated	• Clear ownership model • Requirements-led investment • Usage tracked and improving	• Investment clearly justified • High utilisation • Roadmap actively managed
Priority action: Conduct a martech audit: document every tool, its cost, its owner, and the percentage of available capabilities currently used. The results will almost certainly make the case for consolidation.	**Priority action:** Assign a named owner to the martech stack with accountability for utilisation. Build a 12-month roadmap based on actual marketing requirements, not vendor roadmaps.	**Priority action:** Introduce formal utilisation targets for major platforms. Make training and capability development a standard component of every new technology deployment.	**Priority action:** Look ahead: as the martech landscape evolves (AI-native tools, composable architecture), does your governance model keep pace? Review roadmap horizon to 24–36 months.

DIMENSION 4

Culture & Collaboration

Stage 1 Reactive	Stage 2 Developing	Stage 3 Aligned	Stage 4 Leading
Score: 5–8	Score: 9–12	Score: 13–16	Score: 17–20
Transactional and siloed	**Functional but not truly collaborative**	**Genuinely collaborative in most areas**	**Partnership by default**
• Request-and-deliver dynamic • Limited mutual understanding • Trust issues present	• Professional working relationship • Limited joint problem-solving • Collaboration project-by-project	• Mutual respect evident • Some joint problem-solving • Constructive challenge culture developing	• Deep mutual trust • Shared commercial language • Experimentation culture embedded
Priority action: Start with listening. A structured set of conversations between marketing and analytics leadership - focused on what each needs from the other that it is not currently getting - is often more valuable than any structural change.	**Priority action:** Create opportunities for shared work on problem framing, not just delivery. Joint planning sessions at the start of major campaigns - where analytics shapes the brief, not just the output - tend to shift the dynamic.	**Priority action:** Extend collaborative ways of working across more of the organisation. Recognise and reward the behaviours that make collaboration work - both in marketing and data teams.	**Priority action:** This is a significant competitive advantage. Protect it as the organisation changes. Ensure it is resilient to leadership transitions - culture built on individuals is fragile.

DIMENSION 5

Data Ownership & Governance

Stage 1 Reactive	Stage 2 Developing	Stage 3 Aligned	Stage 4 Leading
Score: 5–8	Score: 9–12	Score: 13–16	Score: 17–20
Fragmented and ungoverned	**Governance exists, ownership unclear**	**Ownership defined, governance enabling**	**Strategically owned and commercially active**
• No clear data ownership • Inconsistent definitions • Governance absent or purely restrictive	• Some standards in place • Ownership contested or informal • First-party strategy embryonic	• Clear ownership model • Consistent key definitions • First-party strategy in development	• Data treated as a product • Governance enables speed • First-party strategy competitive
Priority action: Begin with definitions. Convene marketing and analytics leadership to agree on the five most commercially important customer data definitions. This single step has disproportionate impact on everything downstream.	**Priority action:** Establish a named Customer Data Strategy owner within or closely aligned to marketing. Give them a mandate and a budget. The role is more important than its title.	**Priority action:** Shift from owning data assets to actively evolving them. The most valuable data products are not static - they should be continuously improved as the business and its customers change.	**Priority action:** Push the frontier: how does your first-party data strategy evolve as the privacy landscape continues to shift? Is your governance model fast enough for real-time personalisation use cases?

What to Do with Your Results

A few principles for turning this diagnostic into action:

Start with the dimension where you scored lowest, not the one that feels most urgent. The lowest-scoring dimension is usually the binding constraint - the thing that limits progress everywhere else. In most organisations, this turns out to be Culture & Collaboration or Data Ownership & Governance, because these are the dimensions that receive the least formal investment.

Look for the dimension where your score and your data counterpart's score diverged most. This gap in perception is almost always more revealing than the scores themselves. It indicates where assumptions are going untested, where frustrations are building unseen, and where a direct conversation - informed by this framework - could unlock significant progress.

Resist the temptation to work on all five dimensions at once. The organisations that make the most progress are those that pick one or two specific improvements, deliver them visibly, and build momentum. The six principles in the white paper suggest a natural sequencing: structure and ownership first, then skills, then culture, then technology - because each layer enables the next.

Return to this assessment in 12 months. Maturity improvements in this area are real but slow. An annual re-score gives you a progress measure that is both honest and motivating, and it forces the ongoing conversation between marketing and data leadership that is, in itself, one of the most important drivers of improvement.