

In their words: B2B tech CMOs on what's next

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Atos
Avaloq
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Linedata
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Overview

2020 has not gone to plan. Our previous CMO study, conducted during the early months of the Covid-19 pandemic, revealed a set of leaders focused on steering their businesses and teams through uncharted waters with unbelievable agility, and who were also beginning to look to the future.

For our follow-up study, we focused more fully on the future, asking our community of CMOs to consider 'what's next?' – their professional priorities for the months to follow, their clarity as to their strategies and plans, and their confidence as they look ahead.

Whether it be working from home or banking and shopping online, the pace of digital transformation has picked up dramatically during the pandemic. B2B tech. companies are key enablers of this acceleration. So, this time around, we turned to brand and marketing leaders from the B2B tech. sector.

For these leaders, it's clear that business as unusual is the new business as usual. As customer needs continue to

shift dynamically, agility will remain the watchword, with purpose providing the light by which to navigate with empathy and responsibility.

Since 1969, Siegel+Gale has helped companies harness the transformative power of simplicity to battle complexity and build successful brands. We've had the privilege of partnering with some of the world's leading B2B and B2C organizations across sectors, from technology and financial services to healthcare, consumer goods and beyond.

When reading the words of our CMOs, we think you might draw the same conclusion as us – that while there is great uncertainty, the resolution and ingenuity on display give us greater comfort and confidence that what's next will be more virtual, more relevant, and more human than ever.

16 Marketing leaders

10 Countries



30 - 45 minute interviews

Topics covered

Priorities

Client needs

Role of brand

Marketing implications

Ways of working

Brand leaders

Amadeus



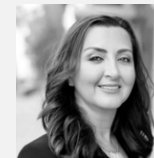
Jussi Wacklin
VP, Corporate Marketing

Linedata



Scott Greenwald
Chief Marketing Officer

SADA Systems



Narine Galstian
Chief Marketing Officer

Tata Consultancy Services



Rajashree Ramakrishnan
Chief Marketing Officer

Atos



Catherine Dutton
Global VP, Marketing

Microsoft



Peter DeBenedictis
Chief Marketing Officer,
Middle East and Africa

SAP



Kerstin Koeder
Head of Marketing EMEA

Visma Consulting AS



Line Hermansen Sulejewski
Marketing and
Communication Director

Avaloq



Orlando Werffeli
Head of Group Marketing

NTT



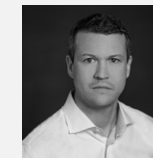
Ruth Rowan
Chief Marketing Officer

T-Systems



Christian Andersen
VP, Product and
Performance Marketing

VMware



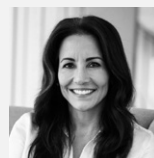
AJ Herrera
VP of Brand and
Advertising

HERE Technologies



Kristina Bohlmann
Senior VP and Head of
Brand Organization

Salesforce



Stephanie Buscemi
EVP and Chief
Marketing Officer

Schneider Electric



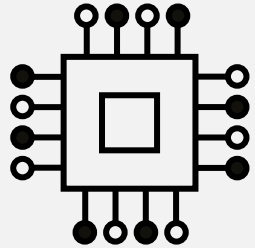
Steve Smith
Head of Global Marketing
Energy Management
Thought Leadership and
Communications

Wolters Kluwer

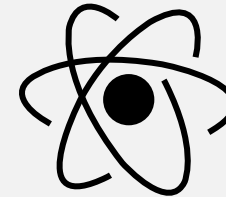


Sergio Liscia
Vice President, General
Manager Global Legal
Software

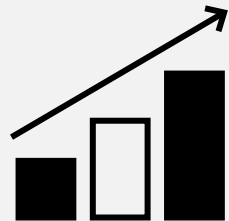
Themes



1. The impact of Covid-19 on B2B tech. firms is hugely varied.



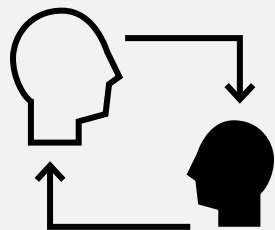
5. Purpose matters more than ever.



2. Firms know how critical a role they now play in keeping the economy going.



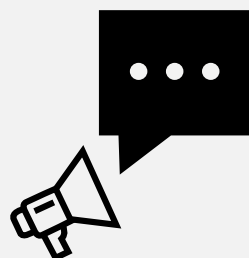
6. 2020 has taken leaders to places they've never been before.



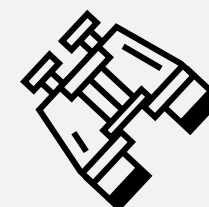
3. How firms market and sell is changing profoundly and likely permanently.



7. Leading with empathy deepens customer relationships and simplifies strategies.



4. Marketing is performing an increasingly integral role.

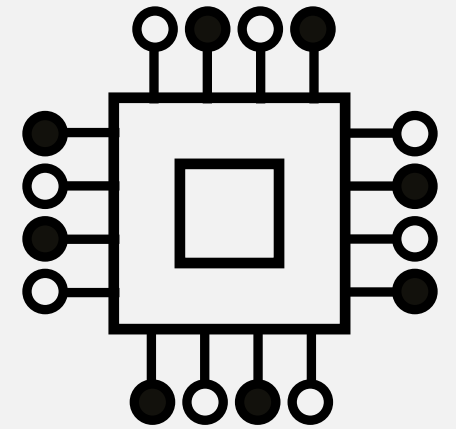


8. Persevering in the present, with one eye on the future

The impact of Covid-19 on B2B tech. firms is hugely varied.

Unlike some sectors, such as hospitality, which have been almost entirely negatively affected, some B2B tech. firms have seen significant growth, others significant challenge.

Theme 1



The variations in impact of the events of 2020 on the B2B tech. sector are driven by a range of factors, including the type of technology the firm provides, and how diverse its client base is. Businesses offering cloud-based technologies, or software that enables home working or logistics support to help transform supply chains have typically seen stronger demand.

For many firms, areas of negative impact have been offset by more positive commercial effects. A long-planned software migration might, for example, have been held up, with the impact of this offset by a new program to equip home working at greater scale. Some transformation programmes that might in other times have been planned to take months have been executed in a matter of days.



When Covid-19 hit in March, like most marketers, we had to pivot very quickly. We really took on the motion to 'serve don't sell'; how do we serve our customers and our community? We were able to step up and help customers and communities connect faster in a remote work environment, look at where the opportunities exist to cut costs, and provide free resources for them to train their employees on tech solutions to bridge the gaps. That serving mentality created momentum and trust, and now we're surpassing our goals.

Narine Galstian

SADA Systems

We are a highly successful business, but our business model is transactional. And the travel industry, so far this year, has obviously seen fewer transactions. So we are focusing on providing leads for sales, because marketing is nothing without sales. By creating a transparent system, we can now track and report on leads, opportunities and pipeline.

Jussi Wacklin

Amadeus

A company like ours would work with an airline, with a bank, with a retailer. These businesses are under pressure and their IT budgets are under pressure. On the other hand, we will see evolution of more digital or technology-led business models as opposed to the way companies operate right now. That is a great opportunity for businesses like ours who are front and center of this transformation.

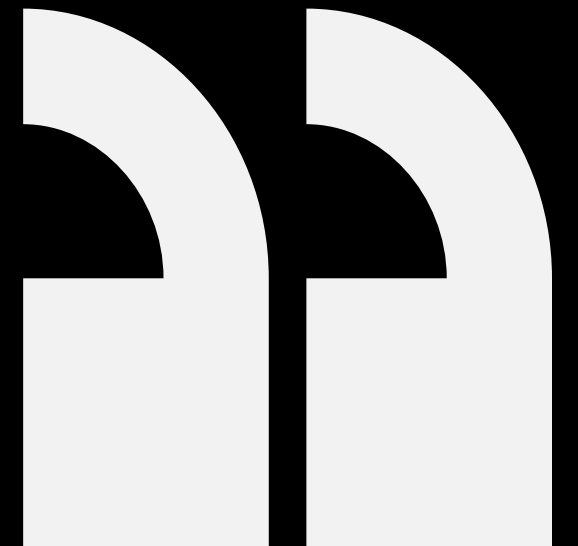
Rajashree Ramakrishnan

Tata Consultancy Services

There are companies that are, by nature, closer to our services because they cope with a larger amount of risk compared to the average of companies. Now, as a result of the crisis there are different companies coming into the frame, that are healthy businesses but have new risks to manage, owing to their growth.

Sergio Liscia

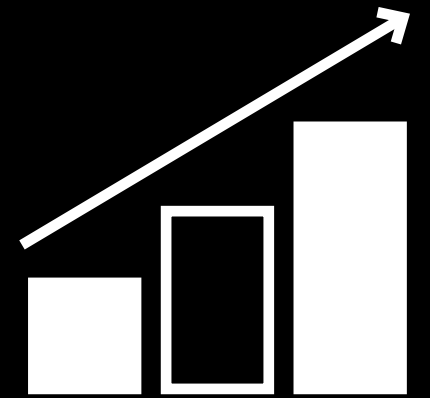
Wolters Kluwer



Firms know how critical a role they play in keeping the economy going.

The role B2B tech. companies are playing in enabling business – and ultimately economic – continuity is widely acknowledged, and leaders recognize their responsibility to help sustain this.

Theme 2



B2B tech. firms have long played fundamental yet frequently unsung roles in supporting their customers through business transformation. Now, the world is watching. Behind the scenes roles have taken center stage in transforming our working lives, for example.

The leaders with whom we have spoken report that they and their wider teams and organizations are inspired by this weight of responsibility and can point to many instances where they have stepped up to the plate. It's a responsibility they are expecting to need to continue to exert in the months ahead.



We have, of course, double clicked on how to re-focus our support for the business. A key focus is the Transportation & Logistics industry with its different needs. For example, supply chain and fleet management markets: what can they do to keep matching service to demand, even if there is an interruption in the supply chain? Demand for location technology has increased, with much more need for risk simulation and real-time visibility. New opportunities in the Public Sector have also arisen – public safety is now a priority market for us with completely different demands.

Kristina Bohlmann

HERE Technologies

We have sought to match the COVID challenge in distinct phases: Help, Accelerate, Thrive. The first one was really dedicated to help customers cushion the fallout in areas that were the most sensitive, including remote work transitions, supply chain enablement and safe travel. We offered many technologies for free, like Ariba Discovery, where we connected buyers and suppliers. We also developed new solutions like the German Corona Warn App in partnership with Deutsche Telekom in just 50 days - The largest open source project ever implemented in Germany on behalf of the German government. After European countries began to open up again, we focus now on helping our customers accelerate business again and thrive in the new normal, e.g. helping employees to come back to the office with apps with which they can book office space. Then also helping businesses run better, making sure that planning and integration and supply chain are working, and offering help with digitization.

Kerstin Koeder

SAP

The first thing was actually to address how we were going to help our clients and that was securing their current operations. How do you all of a sudden move – if it's a larger company with 40,000 people – to work from home with the access they all need, safe and securely. Now, we're focusing on how we can help customers make tangible progress, savings, new innovations, inside the next 50 days.

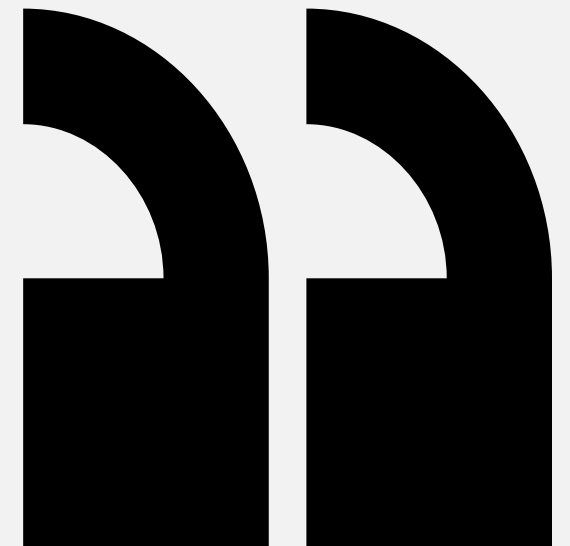
Christian Andersen

T-Systems

Digitalization is growing and we need more people to work with IT and technology. This will also be reflected in our marketing strategy going forward. We will have a lot of focus on employer branding to attract people to our industry over the next few years. These people might even be a little bit easier to access right now when there are many industries that are more challenged than our industry.

Line Hermansen Sulejewski

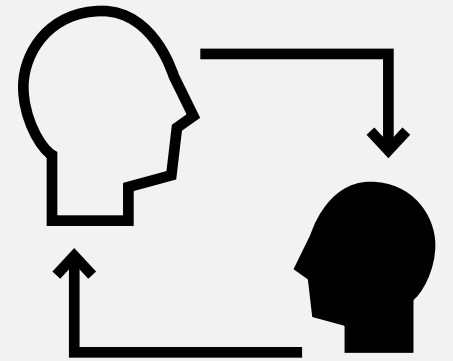
Visma Consulting AS



How firms market and sell is changing profoundly and likely permanently.

While face-to-face selling is temporarily a thing of the past, the future will see businesses deploy a more diverse range of marketing and sales techniques than previously.

Theme 3



Perhaps an irony of the B2B tech. space has been a focus for many businesses on face-to-face marketing and sales – the trade show or the sales center. Unsurprisingly, leaders report that these channels have been substantially disrupted during 2020.

In their place, firms have innovated, from online webinars to digital demonstration centers. These initiatives are not considered to fully substitute for in-person interactions, but they also offer some benefits – most notably, enhanced CRM and also a helping hand in reaching towards carbon objectives through a decrease in travel.

Going forward, CMOs expect face-to-face activities to play a role again, but alongside rather than instead of the digital marketing initiatives that have recently substituted for them. This more diverse toolkit of options is seen as one of the positives to have emerged.



When I joined Avaloq, one of my first tasks was to develop a digital acquisition funnel. This is a process of engaging and educating our prospects on our offering digitally, and as everything moved online following the lockdown, and we couldn't meet with prospects in person, we were able to deliver more digital engagement through webinars, automated emails, product videos and demonstrations. This resulted in a jump in the amount of leads in our funnel, creating more demand internally, from different parts of the organisation, which has had an impact on my responsibilities.

Orlando Werffeli

Avaloq

We initiated virtual events ourselves, building our whole entire virtual channel and conferences and we've hosted several large virtual conferences for our clients and partners in this time. We created a complete virtual innovation centre with all of our demo cases where you can run the presentations, play the videos, and virtually walk around and discuss with one-another as avatars. It's a huge asset for us now as we are connecting clients with our sellers.

Christian Andersen

T-Systems

We have for some time now had our main focus on digital content, previously also combined with a lot of physical events and courses, seminars and events on-site. With Covid-19, we have transformed all our physical events into webinars. It's been quite extensive work, but we have seen hundreds of participants on our online events. I think that we might go back to physical events at some point, but it will be in combination with webinars and online events as this has been so successful.

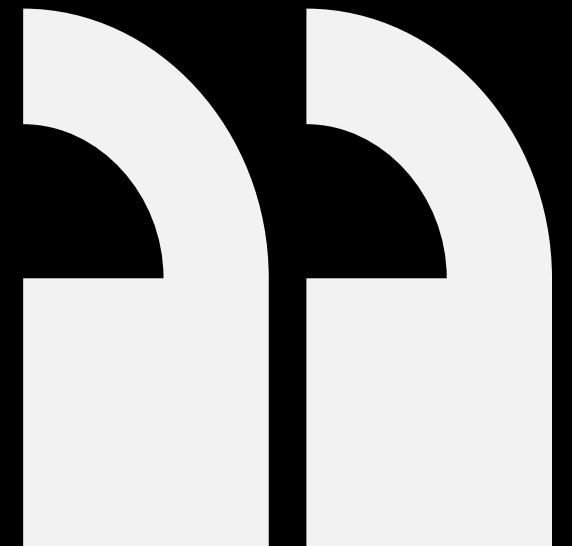
Line Hermansen Sulejewski

Visma Consulting AS

Like with a lot of companies, events and tradeshow represented a significant portion of the marketing budget at Linedata before Covid-19 effectively shut them all down. Like most of my marketing peers, I have been making a push for years to reduce trade shows and focus on digital marketing activities that have been proven to be more effective from a lead generating perspective as well as simpler to demonstrate ROI, especially thanks to marketing automation. I prefer digital activities that I can track. A lead generating from an activity like a webinar where someone has committed 40 minutes to a specific topic is going to be stronger, in my opinion, than somebody that came by a booth for five minutes over a two-day event and went home after talking to 20 or 30 vendors, jetlagged, and behind on e-mail. Being in a position now where we're forced to do these digital marketing activities, I'm happy to be able to show the cost savings and the actual improvement on lead quality.

Scott Greenwald

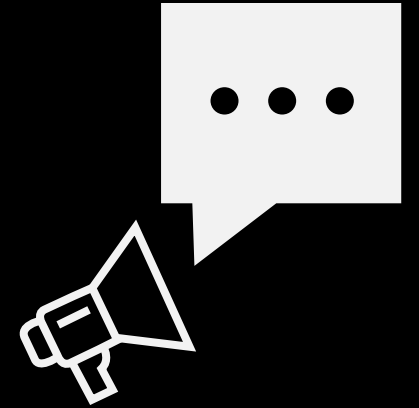
Linedata



Marketing is performing an increasingly integral role.

The imperative to drive sales and business metrics is stimulating closer collaboration across business functions.

Theme 4



Marketing leaders report that the last few months have seen an acceleration of the trend towards their discipline performing a more integral role. This might be a speeding of structural changes towards sector vertical-based approaches, or an opportunity for marketing teams to take a step back and model how they best fit within and add value to their changing business.

In particular, we have seen how a more digital approach to sales has created opportunities for sales and marketing to work more closely together than ever before, to convert outreach into leads that can be tracked through to successful closure.



We are establishing a path to be totally transparent on how we invest and the impact we make, our future strategy and the actions we're going to take, and to build internal ways of working. We're training our marketing organization on our product portfolio, what sell, to what customers and what markets. It's about data-driven automated and simplified marketing processes – empowering team leaders to take charge and follow the six key goals that we have set for marketing, and make sure that we do it in quarterly cycles. Every quarter, we go back to sales and the executive committee to explain what we've done.

Jussi Wacklin

Amadeus

There are two words which resonate with me in terms of how I look at the future of the CMO role. One is growth, and the other is culture. I personally think that we have to become a more active participant in the growth story of the company. That's a priority right now. The second, equally important, aspect is that if you look at how culture propagation would happen in an organization, and especially in a B2B context, our employees work on client's sites – we are a consulting company. When we have 45,000 people working from home, how does that culture get transmitted? How do you replicate that in a digital format?

Rajashree Ramakrishnan

Tata Consultancy Services

This organization is performance-focused, so it's very digital. We're scaling our digital activity globally, and it's all about acquisition, so very ROI-based. The focus right now is building out, optimising and strengthening the funnel. 2021 will be a big focus on retention and advocacy. Finding digital means to enable our clients and partners to speak, encouraging them to talk about what we're doing.

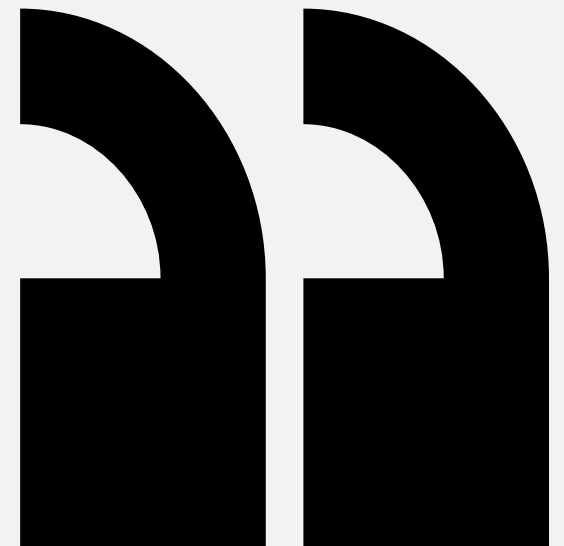
Orlando Werffeli

Avaloq

I'd say that overall my focus is on building our reputation externally, building those C-level relationships with our customers and also – and I'll never forget this – very much contributing directly to the revenue of the organization. A lot of the things we do within marketing are absolutely driven by how we want to grow the business. I think, particularly over the next few months, it's about how we in marketing can really bring the deeper insights on what's happening in the market, what's happening with our customers in current state at the moment, to then go out and build our positioning in the industry and take out those propositions and solutions to market in the right way.

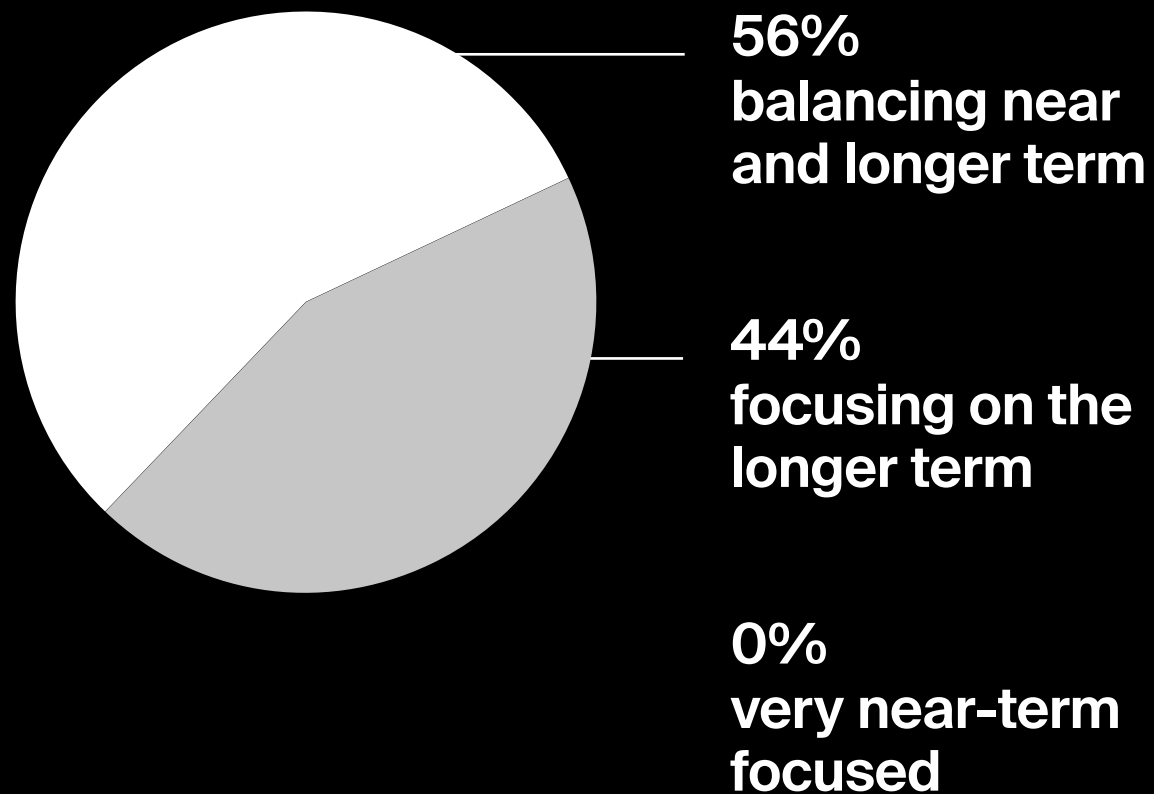
Catherine Dutton

Atos

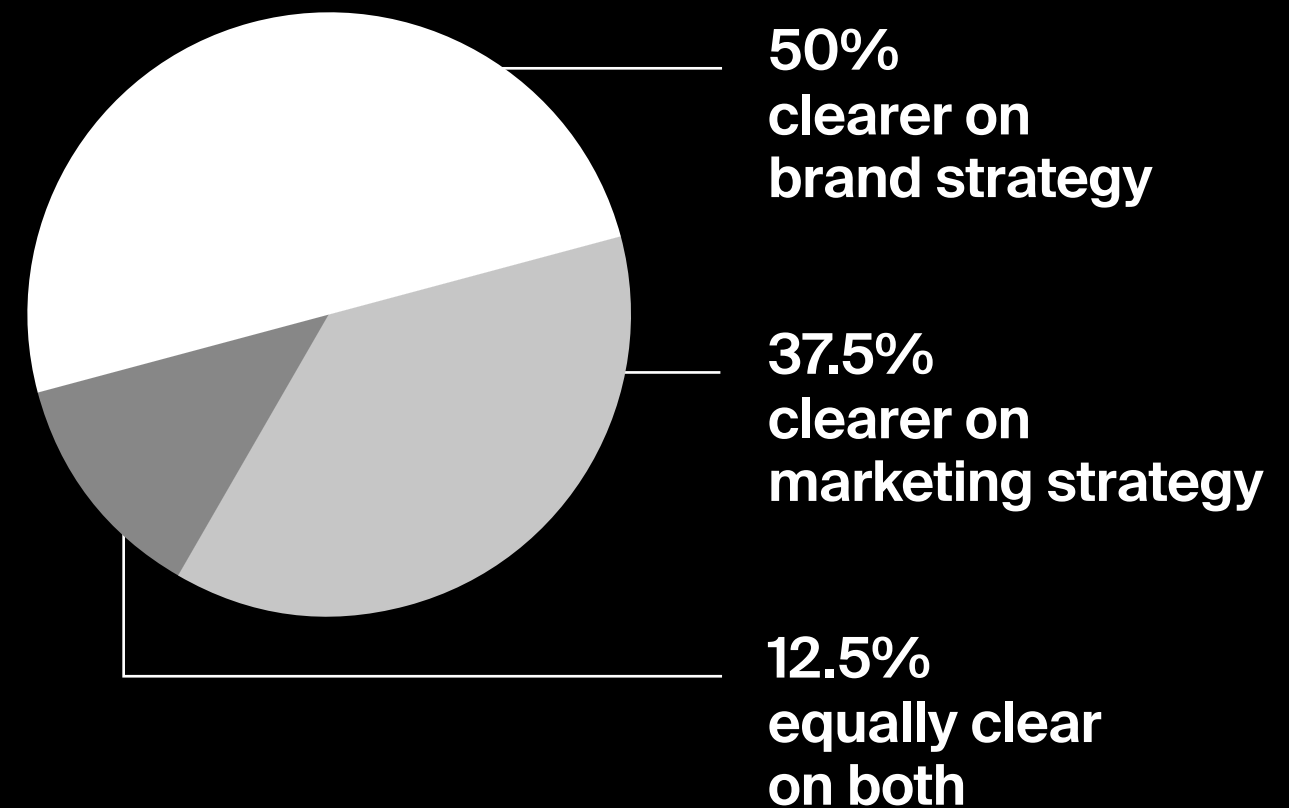


CMOs are unapologetically focused on the here and now, albeit with decision-making guided by clarity on long-term purpose.

Focus:



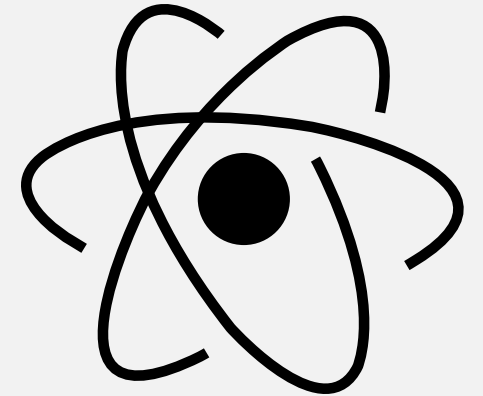
Clarity:



Purpose matters more than ever.

While most CMOs consider their firms to be purpose-driven, purpose is now playing a more prominent role within decision-making.

Theme 5



In unprecedented times with no playbook and unclear outcomes attached to major decisions, marketing leaders have reported that purpose is now more useful than ever in providing a compass with which to navigate and a rubric against which intuition can be evaluated in the here and now.

Precisely because of the transformation many B2B tech firms have been helping their customers make this year, purpose statements around enabling the world to work differently or connect more closely have proved especially resonant in guiding support to customers and giving internal stakeholders a source of pride around which to rally.



We've always been a purpose-led brand because nearly 50 years ago, the main idea of our founders was to help the world run better and ultimately, if businesses run better, we improve people's lives. This has always been our purpose, but it becomes even more important in these times. There is a tremendous expectation towards brands to actively participate in the issues and challenges that the world faces. By leveraging our expertise and technology we directly impact the way our customers work. Customers don't want to hear empty words, they want to see hard evidence and feel the results of firm action taken. It feels like, in times like these, it is even more important to really live up to the trust of our customers. There's a big correlation between purpose and success. It's a critical growth driver.

Kerstin Koeder

SAP

We believe that when things are connected the world becomes a better place, and that technology is making the world better. Part of our culture is to people to get things done and to do it quickly. So at the start of the pandemic this year, when one of our engineers in Italy was asked for help by a local hospital, they felt empowered to put technology into the hospital to connect patients to families when families weren't allowed to visit. We could show how technology can help, just in that one situation of that one hospital at that point, because somebody in our team could make a decision over a weekend.

Ruth Rowan

NTT

When challenges come at you so quickly and the context in which the challenges exist changes so quickly, all you can do is navigate by your purpose and your values. When you have a clearly defined purpose, it frees you up to say okay, what needs to change to allow us to continue doing our thing.

AJ Herrera

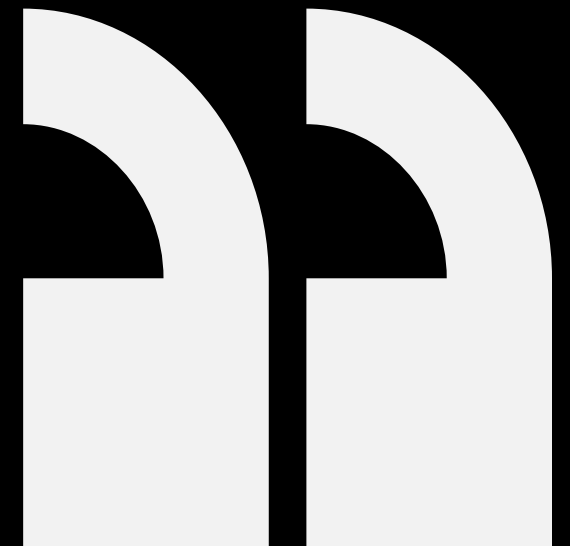
VMware

Looking beyond Covid-19, climate change is the biggest threat to humanity and one we must not lose sight of. 2020 has, if anything, accelerated the purpose that we already had around efficiency and sustainability. What it added is a new dimension around resiliency and human-centricity. All of these elements will be key to a brand and company's success as we strive for a healthy, net-zero future.

If we take one learning from 2020, it's 'speed of change'. We've seen governments and businesses transform the way they operate in a matter of days and weeks rather than months or years. The key to this agile transformation has been 'digital' technology. We've also seen that governments can put humanity before economy. But, in a post-Covid-19 world, one need not suffer at the hands of the other. Investing in digital technology will create new jobs to help with economic recovery for markets all around the world. With this mindset, our storytelling needs to de-mystify, simplify and help people understand the challenges we all face.

Steve Smith

Schneider Electric



2020 has taken leaders to places they've never been before.

Unprecedented times have made new demands on CMOs, stretching them and helping them grow as leaders.

Theme 6



Though travel has been curtailed like never before, 2020 has nonetheless taken CMOs to new places. Mentoring, coaching and the pastoral elements of their role have come to the fore.

Leaders also report experiencing having more personal conversations with colleagues than ever before, touching on family topics and the wider social and political themes we see playing out in many countries. For some, this is an extension of their pre-existing management style, for others it is more stretching, albeit rewarding.



As a person, I would say anyhow, I am quite approachable, and with 150 people in the brand organization, I have always been quite active in all areas. What I have increased are the catch-ups and check-ins. Some people are just rolling with it and taking it as a learning opportunity, but you need to make sure that you keep everyone engaged. So I believe and hope that I'm even more approachable than I have been before.

Kristina Bohlmann

HERE Technologies

A lot of brands have moved from what is my role in terms of my relationship with my customer, to what is the right thing for society. It isn't clear what the boundaries are of that shift. Where is that line, and that line is going to be different for different companies. I'm working with the other people in the company to figure out where that line is for us.

AJ Herrera

VMware

Everyone has a different journey through this pandemic, and so brands need to be co-creating alongside their customers. Creating and cultivating community around shared values and then working with that community on content means they guide us. For some marketers, that's a little scary because not everything will be exactly as we would communicate it – but it will be authentic. We need to think outside our four walls and empower our community, and that for me is the future of marketing.

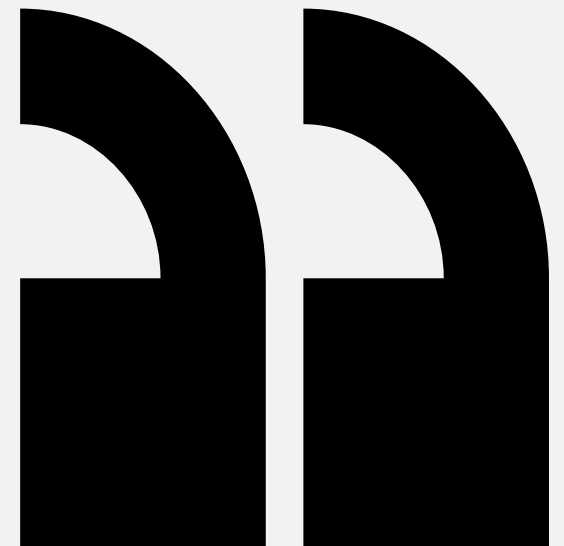
Stephanie Buscemi

Salesforce

I feel like the pace that we are setting now, in how we are working, how we are connecting, how we are recruiting, how we are communicating, is the way we will move forward for many years to come. It's effective. It's getting results. How we are connecting as human beings, the empathy that we're showing towards each other and in the community – I think it has opened up people's lives, meshing more the personal and the professional. I've certainly become more acquainted with people's families, children and pets, their homes. It has helped improve our human connection and tolerance of one-another. I don't want that to go back to the way it was, I like this new norm.

Narine Galstian

SADA Systems



Leading with empathy deepens customer relationships and simplifies strategies.

Firms are constantly listening to changing customer needs and responding with agility and tact.

Theme 7



CMOs report keeping the lines of communication with customers constantly open. The resulting feed of continuous insight is enabling leaders to listen not only to their customers' business needs but also to the organizational and emotional drivers of their needs. It has always been true that people buy from people. The better a firm can understand its clients as people, the more sensitively as well as effectively it is able to serve them.

Customer relationships in 2020 require not only empathy but also agility. As external circumstances change in unpredictable ways, so customer needs can suddenly change. Leaders and their teams are becoming ever more adept at responding to and even proactively anticipating customer needs as they change.



We're restructuring to have vertical industry alignment rather than be practice-led. It's a real switch for our organisation. My initial priority is to make sure that we've got our marketing function set up, that we're really building that vertical industry customer-centric marketing team. I say customer-centric because I think, more than ever, especially given the current situation, everything that we do has to be personalized and tailored to those individuals within those customers and prospects that we work with.

Catherine Dutton

Atos

We try and keep client experience as simple as possible and it's really about listening at all parts of the journey. We're accelerating our rollout of what we call 'voice of our client', which is our ability to listen on a daily basis, to what our clients are telling us across all touchpoints. We're really dialling up that level of feedback we're getting right now and we're also making sure that we are closing the loop every time and ensuring client experience is informing all the major decisions we make in our business. Great reputations are built in challenging times, so making sure we're listening and then making sure we're following up on everything is really important.

Ruth Rowan

NTT

We are living in such a dynamic time right now and it is most important to be hyper-relevant. The old playbooks for marketing don't apply. We have to be more agile, nimbler, and work in faster ways. This has encouraged us to get into reinvention mode, with speed and relevance a necessity.

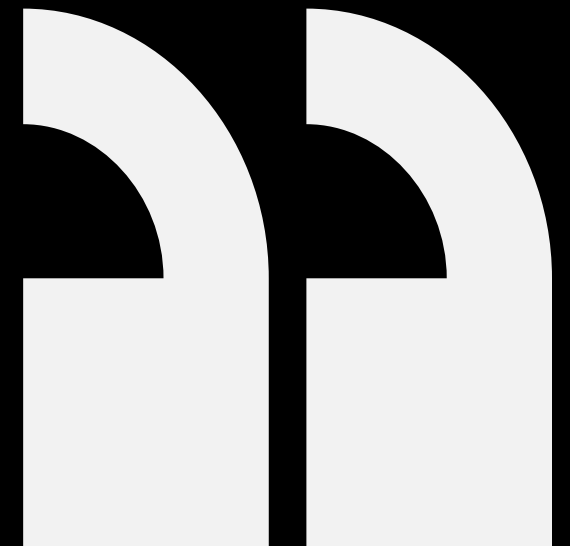
Stephanie Buscemi

Salesforce

Empathy is the right word. It's well known with Microsoft Teams, usage has been growing at an exponential rate. Rather than engaging in aggressive customer acquisition, we've been talking to customers who've already bought Microsoft Teams and asking them if they want help in figuring out how to deploy it and get their users trained – let us help you figure out how to get your workers working productively from home. This approach is also captured in our regional marketing campaign “Forward Together” – the notion that we're moving forward together, these are the things that we can do to help you, working to help in whatever way we can.

Peter DeBenedictis

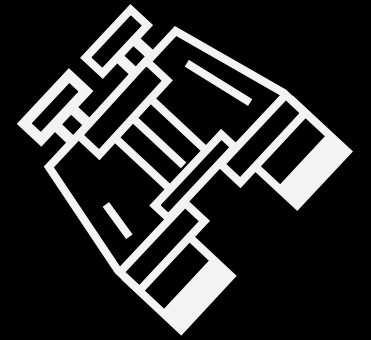
Microsoft



Persevering in the present, with one eye on the future.

Leaders are confident about their firms' future prospects, but more cautious about the wider economic picture.

Theme 8



Over the two months our survey was in field, sentiment evolved in line with the evolution of the pandemic. Early optimism about the months ahead has been replaced with a recognition that disruption will persist into 2021. This recognition is accompanied by a gritty determination to 'get on with it' and make the best of the situation.

Leaders express optimism for and confidence in the future of their businesses, founded in many cases on a strong performance during the year to date. The sentiment on the broader economic situation is much more mixed, with uncertainty and caution the watchwords.

The open question is how the macro picture will contribute to performance a year out. CMOs are determined to prepare for a successful future, starting in the present tense.



Globally the way we look at this is that companies, countries, industries and markets will come back at different speeds. We call it respond, recover, reimagine – those are the three phases. The travel industry, for example, is still figuring how to respond. Other industries are in the next stage of recover, where they're trying to figure out how do we navigate the next three, six, 12, 18 months. Then there's others – e-tailers, online shopping, online grocers – and those companies are looking to reimagine and accelerate their transformation. To have a crystal ball is quite challenging, because there's so many different permutations across industry, country and company.

Peter DeBenedictis

Microsoft

Based on what has happened in the last three, four months, I'm looking at the future in a different way compared to what I was doing at the initial stage of the crisis. I think the first variable that everyone is interested in is, are we going to go through another lockdown or not? The second variable is how quickly the economy and the GDP will recover. I cover several countries, several geographies, and they are all impacted by this kind of thinking: lockdown and GDP recovery.

Sergio Liscia

Wolters Kluwer

If you get this right, and if you better understand how to connect with your customers whilst others are only looking at the short-term, now is the time to go get market share. Personalize based on enriched data to understand what customers are interested in and understand what their challenges are so that you can serve them with the most relevant content. Now is the time of the smart marketeer.

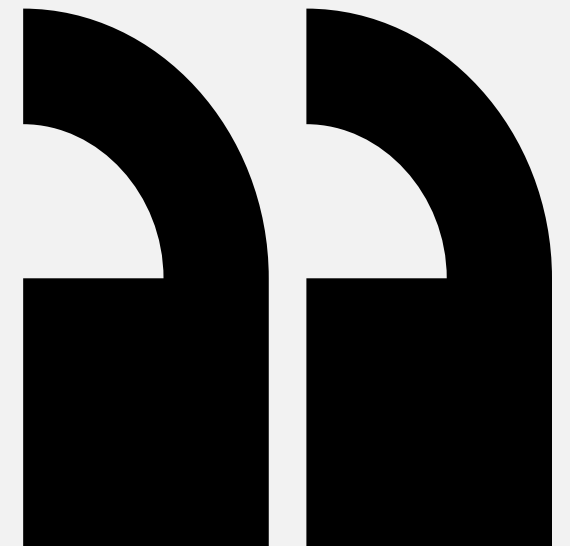
Steve Smith

Schneider Electric

Everybody knows we're in a pandemic, there's no point referencing it especially when communicating with clients and prospects. Keep it positive, I encourage all our people to say: 'This is an opportunity for improvement and progress. Let's have that discussion.' I tell our sales organization; your customers are not travelling so they should have more availability for meetings, for more conversations. Now's the time to talk to them and better understand how their business is changing or better yet, how we as market leaders can help them change by providing guidance. Now more than ever this is an opportunity for vendors to truly demonstrate value to their customers.

Scott Greenwald

Linedata



Thank **you.**

We are grateful to these 16 leaders for being so generous with their time, and so open in recounting their experiences and invaluable insights.

About

We believe in the power of simplicity. At Siegel+Gale, we own it, defend it and live by it.

We're a global brand strategy, design and experience firm. With unlimited imagination and a dedication to the facts, we build brands that cut through the clutter—and unlock success for our clients.

We are committed to keeping our community engaged through our virtual roundtables, practitioner-led webinars and thought leadership content.

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