

THE EVOLUTION OF MARKETING

How aligning marketing with core business functions creates enhanced stakeholder value for a data center provider

By Mark Freeman, Vice President of Global Marketing and Public Policy, Vantage Data Centers



It's no secret that the role of marketing leaders has come a long way—or that it continues to evolve. Today, while marketing priorities may differ between B2B and B2C enterprises, it's the head of marketing's responsibility to ensure that the performance and outcomes their team produces align with the organization's overall priorities.

At first glance, aligning marketing with company priorities may sound straightforward. But when it comes to the development and implementation of a comprehensive marketing plan, the marketing lead must consider everything from brand strategy, go-to-market tactics, messaging and positioning, public and analyst relations, digital marketing, content creation, analytics, market research, the customer experience, and more. These aspects stand to show just how varied the role can be. Critical to the role's success is aligning performance metrics with expectations in an ever-changing environment.

To be most effective, it is important for marketing leaders to be well rounded and approach their role holistically. Beyond spearheading the traditional components of marketing, such as supporting revenue generation, an effective marketing leader must also align with other executives in the organization on shared business goals and work together to achieve mutual objectives. For example, the marketing head might partner with the Chief Information Officer on digital marketing and the technology stack or collaborate with the Chief Human Resources Officer on talent acquisition strategies. This holistic approach creates synergies, enabling multiple company goals to be realized at once, driving significant additional value for the business—and for the industry as a whole. Let's dive into a few examples. As a connection point between



Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)

the company, its customers, its employees, and its community, today's marketing professionals have numerous opportunities to support ESG efforts not only in terms of messaging and championing, but also with respect to taking action and driving results. Due to the expanding role of marketers, they now have a unique lens into the needs of each of these audiences, which is advantageous when it comes to advocating for and influencing change. In addition, they have an ability to tell compelling stories that reach the intended audience and inspire positive action. They can draw

on this perspective and storytelling to support the business by:

- Developing and socializing the ESG narrative, including annual reports that highlight corporate commitments and annual progress.
- Demonstrating the company's dedication to sustainability, social responsibility, risk mitigation, and transparency to build trust with constituents, amplify brand awareness, and attract investors.
- Communicating the ESG story and core messages to customers, investors, employees, partners, communities, local politicians, and other stakeholders.

Public Policy

Another benefit of being the conduit between the company and the community is that today's marketing leaders are equally in tune with the internal voices of the company as they are with the external voices that affect every element of the company's business. Their awareness combined with their ability to "social listen" helps them anticipate, locate, and navigate any potential opportunities or risks from public sentiment, regulation,

and policy. These traits will also put them in a position where they (and the company) are better able to act quickly and capitalize on potential advantages, or pivot to an alternative approach if needed as political and social winds shift. Such skills can add value to the business through initiatives such as:

- Outlining strategies and tactics needed to initiate or protect changes to legislation or regulation in a way that speaks to all stakeholder concerns.

- Identifying and tracking key issues that could potentially impact the business or the industry, from sales and use tax exemptions, to energy, emissions, water, noise, design aesthetics, and other considerations that may vary by geography.
- Crafting messaging for key public stakeholders, from local politicians to economic developers, city planners, utility providers, and communities, to articulate and advocate for the benefits of data centers.



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Talent Acquisition, Employee Branding, and Internal Communications

As the principal actor in shaping the company's brand, marketing can play a key role in guiding a company's culture. From establishing clear and transparent communication to supporting continuity in development, workflows, and assets, a good marketing leader can help the business convey—through both messaging and execution on values—its identity and future-facing goals.

This relationship is particularly important during times of uncertainty or change. The marketing leader can become a pillar of clarity and authority that helps align the larger organization and promote external confidence in its people, products, services, and overall goals. They can achieve this by:

- Supporting the identification of key topics and trends that resonate with employees and potential future talent, and engraining these into the company communications.
- Making the company and its growth



opportunities top of mind for job seekers and external recruiters in order for the organization to be seen as an employer of choice.

- Working with human resources on employee surveys to understand workplace culture and employee Net Promoter Scores (eNPS) better, which is especially critical for decentralized organizations with global footprints.
- Partnering with internal

communications, talent development, and culture teams to deliver aligned messaging, positioning and branding.

Ultimately, it's unlikely that the role of the marketer will cease evolving. As business objectives come to light through new technology and innovation, the position will continue to expand to involve new stakeholders and create new opportunities for synergy and additional stakeholder value. ©

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Freeman has more than 25 years of strategic marketing experience delivering high-impact business results, including growing market share, acquiring and retaining customers, launching products, expanding into new markets, and rebranding companies. In his current role at Vantage Data Centers, he leads the company's global marketing and public policy teams and has been instrumental in taking the company from a US West Coast regional data center provider to a global operator with 32 campuses in 19 markets on five continents. He is also a founding board member of the Data Center Coalition.

Freeman previously held leadership roles at DuPont Fabros Technology (DFT Data Centers), CalAmp, and Wireless Matrix.

