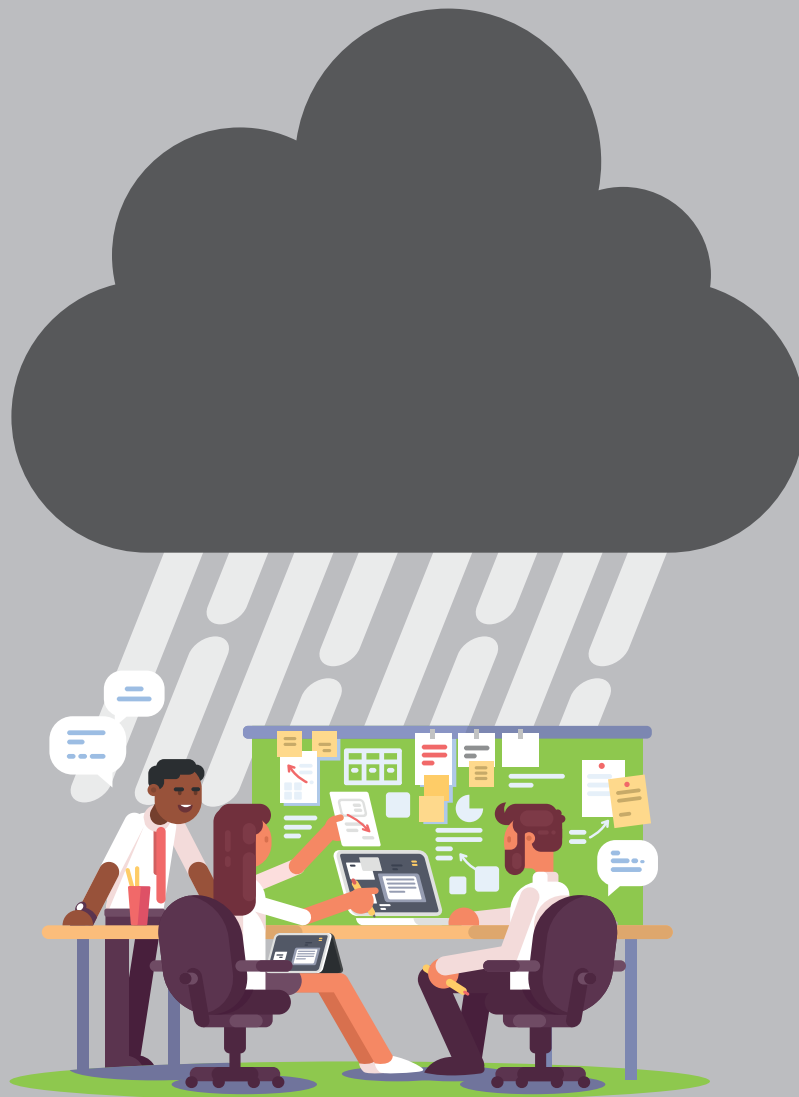


Don't let the marketing cloud rain on your plans



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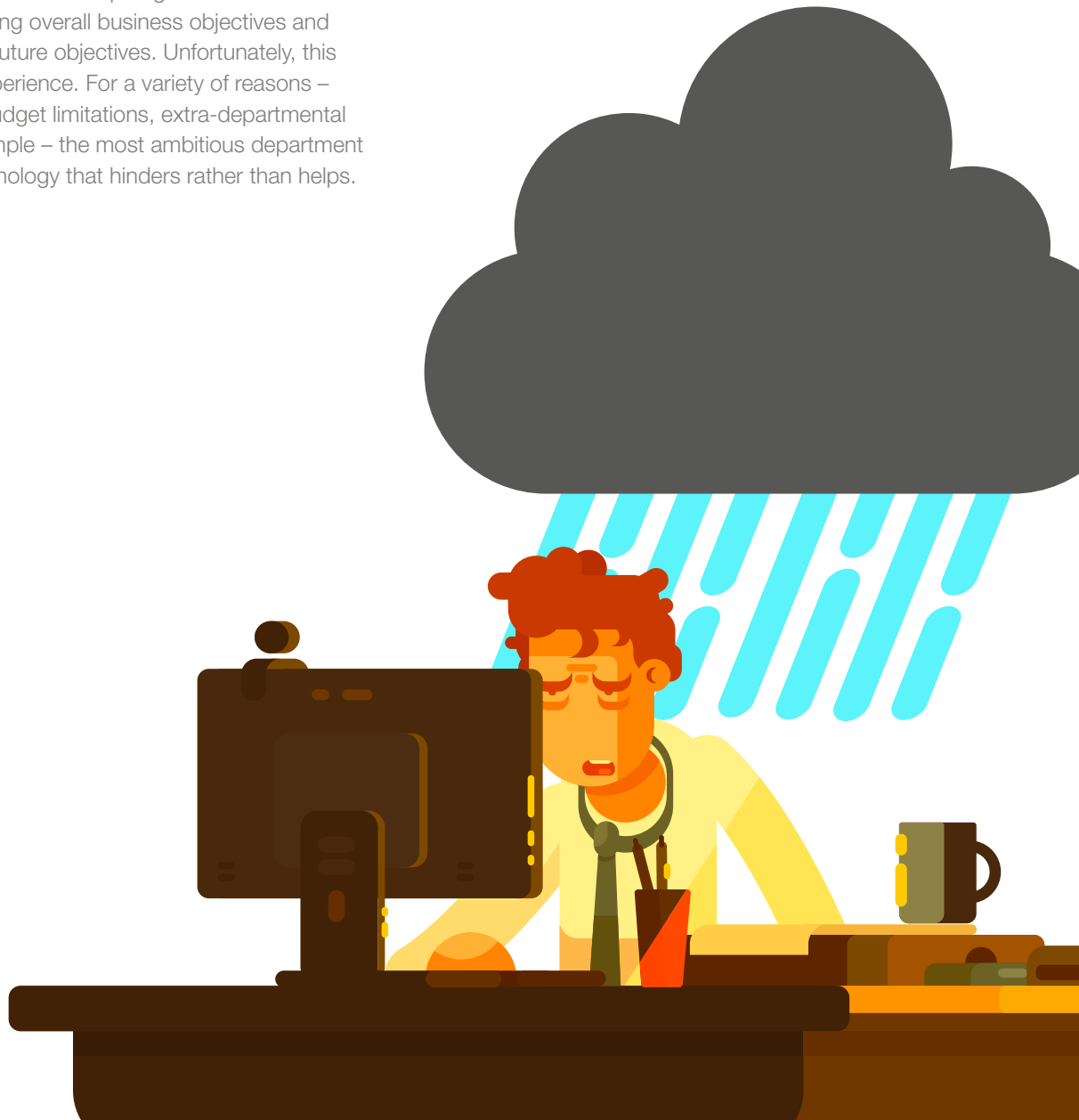
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Don't let the marketing cloud rain on your plans

Ill-fitting technology will damage your business.

We live in an age of machine empowerment. The success of your marketing department is still judged by sales, engagement, and brand recognition. However, it is now impossible to achieve meaningful success without support from the right technology.

Whether you favor the best-of-breed providers or are intrigued by the all-in-one solution, your technology choices should provide the perfect fit. A good match will enable your marketing department to develop bright ideas into successful campaigns, supporting overall business objectives and providing scope for future objectives. Unfortunately, this is not everyone's experience. For a variety of reasons – legacy structures, budget limitations, extra-departmental stipulations, for example – the most ambitious department can be left with technology that hinders rather than helps.



Here's how the wrong technology can hurt:

- **"It's complicated."**

An ill-fitting technology adoption can instill fear into the hearts of those tasked with its implementation, especially if the tools are difficult to leverage. You may also have to untangle yourself from your current setup, a process which puts a strain on all of your resources and keeps your team from their day job.

- **Costs**

Adopting the wrong technology means paying for features that you don't intend to use. Think about all of the unwatched TV channels you're currently paying for with your service provider; now imagine justifying that investment to your CTO. These features qualify as a wasted asset, and that's without factoring in the cost of adoption, onboarding, and training. Aside from real costs, it's important to acknowledge the costs that accompany a bad software choice. With your marketing team spending their time grappling with difficult on-boarding processes and other various implementation woes, your strategy is forced into the background.

- **Integration woes**

A poorly-constructed piece of software is, by extension, a poor integrator. Unfortunately, it's all too easy to hamper your team with technology that does not connect as well with others in practice as you were promised. From that point on, you will find it harder to adopt those new technology add-ons that may become necessary for your marketing objectives.

- **A depletion of time**

Notwithstanding the time dedicated to onboarding your new marketing technology, with the wrong software, a task that should take minutes to complete could take hours of workarounds to achieve.

Struggling on with a software adoption that is ill-suited to your team's needs will inhibit your progress.

The support from the marketing department to the company becomes stunted; campaign development grinds to a halt, while the restriction on the team's performance breeds frustration and demoralization.

The end of this story (which sounds more like a nightmare) is disheartening: the business suffers an overall reduction in performance, while the marketing team itself is unable to achieve its day-to-day aims; there is little scope for the realization of new, innovative ideas and, eventually, the team of creatives that you've worked hard to assemble take their initiatives elsewhere.

6 out of 10 marketers don't believe they have the right software to do their job properly ¹

Your team are the instigators of your marketing strategy; it's crucial that you provide them with the technological tools to do their job. Choosing between the best-of-breed providers and an all-in-one adoption could mean the difference between enabling your department to achieve a healthy ROI, and hindering their performance for the next financial year and beyond.

To avoid saddling your team and your business with more issues than solutions, it's imperative that you make the right choice when it comes to your marketing technology.

It's not about making the biggest purchase possible or investing in the most recent technological innovation. Artificial Intelligence platforms and cognitive software solutions are a good fit for companies of the size and stature to require their functions, are a disproportionate investment for small to medium business enterprises (SMBEs). It's important to scale as you grow; perfect the basics to create a solid foundation of success from which to build your future strategy. Many companies are still grappling with simple automated programs like email marketing welcome campaigns, making a big marketing suite investment inappropriate. Most importantly, do not get sucked into magpie marketing. The lure of the 'Big Shiny Toy' cannot transform your email marketing for you, but could easily sway you into making an ill-fitting choice for your team.

Marketers' biggest day-to-day challenges:



Source: The 2016 Marketing Technology Adoption Survey Report from dotmailer

¹ The dotmailer 2016 Marketing Technology Adoption Survey

The state of the nation: a fast-paced and competitive industry requires responsive marketing technology adoption

In order to make the right choice when it comes to your marketing technology, you need to know what the industry demands of your business.

Customer expectations

Today's customers are arguably better digitally connected than your entire business. They are experts in multi-channel engagement; their path to conversion is organic and multi-directional, containing numerous interactions with various touchpoints, sometimes more than once. Whether buying a product or seeking a service, the process of engagement will vary from instance to instance. Your marketing needs to have the power to meet these customers at the right stage, the right time, and through the right channel. It also goes without saying that it needs to be automated, in order that every customer receives the same level of service.

This digitally shrewd generation is not immune to your marketing efforts. In fact, customers are fully prepared to leverage their data to access an exemplary brand experience. In return, they expect a consistently seamless interaction with your business, from brand consistency across all channels, to personalized email correspondence. If they receive any less than the above, they will take the time to review the negative experience and flag up your shortfalls to protect their peers. Therefore, the customer centricity required of today's marketer also includes responding to feedback effectively, at speed, and at mass scale.

According to a recent report from Forrester, the preferred setup for 74% marketers is currently the best-of-breed approach. 41% of "high maturity marketers" implement a best-of-breed platform for performance and campaign management, and then integrate further relevant technologies. 31% of maturing marketers have assembled multiple best-of-breed solutions to suit their needs.

Source: Put Data Management at The Core of 1:1 Marketing - A Forrester Consulting Research Study 2016

Competitor reactions

Consumer demand for slick, intelligent digital engagement has provided the business sector with a catalyst for marketing technology adoption. The sheer speed in the development of new touchpoints in the customer lifecycle has produced a higher number of integration requirements, resulting in an increase in new technology. Once adopted by a business, it's crucial that these incorporations work together in harmony from the moment of implementation; any investment must produce positive results from the off. Marketing teams (who are savvy customers themselves at the weekends) expect to have the tools that will enable them to reach out at mass scale. In 2016, 60% of marketers reported inadequate software as their biggest day-to-day challenge²

Luckily, CMOs are responding well to this landscape shift; their technology budgets now rival that of the CTO.³ Investments like these industry-wide are nurturing greater experimentation in the digital makeup of companies, providing CMOs of both newly-formed and well-established businesses with the opportunity to choose a tailored technology solution. Larger and more traditional companies currently face the biggest challenge when it comes to new software. Burdened with legacy systems that aren't customer-centric, they require large-scale transformations in order to begin to put their data to work. Recently established fast movers like uber and Airbnb are already built around the needs of the customer, and are in a better position to leverage custom technology stacks made up of best-of-breed integrations.

² dotmailer, 2016 – The dotmailer 2016 marketing Technology Adoption Survey

³ Gartner, 2016 - CMO Spending is on the Rise (Again!)

Making the right choice: best-of-breed technologies vs all-in-one solutions

We've already established that each business will require a different marketing technology strategy to suit its aims. When choosing between a best-of-breed provider to fit in with your current setup, versus an all-in-one solution to replace your stack, it's important to establish what you require from the software. In order to obtain the right fit for your investment, put your contenders through the following paces:

1. Scalability

Your company's requirements could alter drastically from quarter to quarter, or even month to month. Your marketing technology needs to be able to adapt with you, and to accommodate and support the changes that your business may undergo. In the past, a number of our clients have experienced their technology's inability to support global scaling, an issue that can turn a positive business achievement into a real frustration for its marketers.

2. Future scope

One of the difficulties of living in the digital innovation age is the inability to predict what our marketing technology will need to integrate with in the (near) future. Find out the roadmap for the product in question; don't be afraid to enquire into the company's plans to invest in research and development.

3. Tailoring

From custom integration requirements to brand consistency, the best marketing technology providers will be able to accommodate your business's needs without issue or delay. Try and ascertain the flexibility of the marketing technology when it comes to customization. The sheer variety of options on the market means that there is no need to settle for anything less than tailored.

4. Agnosticism

It's crucial that your marketing technology is easy for your team to introduce, implement, and maintain. If you plan to continue using software you've already implemented alongside your new adoption, you'll need a platform that can talk to that software and share data with it effectively. If you're looking to replace your existing stack with an all-in-one provider, check that they offer their own version of every integration that you currently have in place.

5. Measure of success

To effectively gauge the ROI from your digital marketing efforts, you need to have access to sophisticated, real-time reporting capabilities. These reports should be digestible with easily visualized data that your team can use to inform their next step. Accurate reports engender better insight, leading to more informed strategy-building.

Best-of-breed: the pros and cons

+ Pros	- Cons
Best-of-breed marketing technology often provides a good fit for SMBEs because of the flexibility and scalability that they can offer. As your business needs evolve, so can your software's capabilities.	Multiple negotiations must take place when selecting and onboarding best-of-breed technology solutions, and your finance team will deal with multiple invoices for the various technologies you want to integrate. Fortunately, these tend to happen over time as and when you require additional functionality.
Considered good value for money, best-of-breed provides potential for a better ROI; marketers can easily leverage the technology to achieve results, and you only have to pay for the tools that your company requires.	In dealing with multiple vendors, it's important to avoid poor communication. Not only should you ensure that all of your best-of-breed suppliers are clear on your overall strategy and objectives, you should also be clear on who is responsible for delivering on the various components of your strategy.
An integrated best-of-breed marketing department is a happy one; team members have access to the tools that drive efficiencies and enable their ideas to come to life, and you don't have to be an IT technician to be able to get the most from the software.	The different best-of-breed technologies you incorporate need to work well with each other. For dotmailer, we have an ever-growing App Directory of extensions and premium integrations that play well together, so our customers can rest easy.
With fewer eggs in one all-encompassing basket, a marketing stack comprised of best-of-breed technology poses less of an investment risk, especially when you can pick and choose the tools that are important to you.	—
When it comes to future endeavors, it's easy to update the constituent parts of your best-of-breed stack by swapping one component for another. It's also simple to integrate new, emerging technologies.	—
The ability to gradually migrate to your new technologies over time, rather than in one big hit, existing technology over to an integration with your new adoption means that you can keep one, smaller, phased outlays in check; this keeps budget and resource strains down	—
Jack of all trades, master of none: with best-of-breed providers, you get access to dedicated support from a technical team that are experts in leveraging the software. In one, best-of-breed solution.	—
Best-of-breed providers put all of their energies into developing one fully-optimized product, rather than spreading resources across multiple digital marketing tools.	—

Walker Sands recently conducted a report on [The State of Marketing Technology 2017](#). According to the survey, 83% of marketers using best-of-breed technology solutions rate their ability to maximize the potential of their software as "excellent" or "good."

Source: [The State of Marketing Technology 2017](#)
- Walker Sands Communications

All-in-one: the pros and cons

+ Pros	- Cons
All-in-one solutions are well suited to companies operating in regulated industries who, by extension, have strict and lengthy purchasing and onboarding processes for 'approved suppliers'. If your procurement process takes up to 12 months, you might benefit making one big change to one big suite.	All-in-one solutions are often extremely expensive, making them more unattainable for SMBEs.
With an all-in-one solution, your finance department will only have one monthly invoice to deal with.	Your switch to an all-in-one provider can't be staggered, and must be performed entirely in one go.
Your team will be dealing with a single point of contact that controls all of the technology functionalities your businesses uses.	Companies often end up investing in a lot of tools that they have no use for, such as advanced pricing, SMS tools, and remarketing technology . According to a 2016 survey from The Real Story Group, two thirds of marketers disagreed with the statement: "We fully utilize purchased tools." ⁴
—	Many all-in-one marketing clouds are cobbled together from different solutions that have been brought together through acquisition. This patchwork composition can detract from the technology's efficiency, making it more difficult and time-consuming to use.
—	If you decide to move away from your all-in-one provider, you will find the process of 'untangling' from the software disruptive and costly.
—	Much like your marketing department is composed of different roles and responsibilities, your single point of contact cannot be an expert in all aspects of your marketing strategy. This often leads to additional costs and delays in getting the right advice.

Building in-house: a viable alternative for your business?

A third way to obtain a good marketing technology solution for your company is to build your own. Adopting any productized software will always involve some compromises. An in-house-built solution would naturally provide a tailor-made fit for your requirements and allow you to control each aspect of its integration capabilities. The decision to build in-house really comes down to how much of your revenue is dependent on one or more channels. Your in-house solution will take a large amount of time, human resource and money to initially develop. It will then need to be constantly developed by a dedicated in-house team to keep your business abreast of technological advancements and user requirements. Furthermore, your software will need to be able to meet the standard created by dedicated SaaS companies if it is to do your marketing justice.

⁴ Theresa Regli, The Real Story Group 2016

The verdict: best-of-breed can't be beaten

The right marketing technology to future-proof your business is a tailored balance of integral software complemented by specialized solutions.

An all-in-one marketing technology adoption can prove a good fit for regulated business operating under an elongated procurement process. In a marketing technology landscape that's constantly evolving, however, it is the best-of-breed providers that will empower your marketing department to optimize customer engagement and, ultimately, keep your business up to speed. Making the choice of best-of-breed allows your marketing technology to scale with you and address the needs of your team, from integrating seamlessly with other solutions to giving you access to new innovations. And, with the scope of best-of-breed completely uninhibited, your business is comfortably insured against the cost of a future technology overhaul. This gives your team time back to focus on a customer-centric marketing strategy that delivers impeccable experiences, time after time.



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