

The Emerging Role of Marketing Technologist

With each new day, the emphasis on using technology to reach customers—through web sites, mobile apps, social media and other interactive means—brings businesses of all sizes exciting opportunities for visibility and growth. And as organizations grapple with melding technology and marketing, more and more are embracing a new role: marketing technologist.

When online marketing and brand initiatives were introduced, these initiatives were often owned by a company's IT department, rather than its non-tech-savvy marketing department. But often those IT projects were out of alignment with marketing priorities. To right this situation, such projects needed to come squarely under the control of marketing. As a consequence, the role of marketing technologist is becoming paramount for companies looking to put their marketing efforts at the leading edge.

Marketing Takes Ownership

Scott Brinker, author of the Chief Marketing Technologist blog (<http://www.chiefmartec.com>) recently stated in an article for *Advertising Age* that, "Marketing has become deeply entwined with technology. This didn't happen overnight; it's been sneaking up on us for a while. But because technology had been so tangential to marketing management for most of our history, the organizational structure of marketing has been slow to adjust to this new technology-centric reality. But we've clearly reached a tipping point. To fully reap the benefits of this Golden Age, marketing must officially take ownership of its technology platforms and strategies. And the first step of such ownership is to appoint someone to lead it. Enter the chief marketing technologist."

As Brinker explains, the marketing technologist or more often, the chief marketing technologist (CMTO), is likely to be a business-savvy strategic player who, in addition to being an information technology aficionado, is involved with planning, product development, sales and marketing. The chief marketing technologist is seen as the equivalent of a CTO and CIO—dedicated to all things marketing – including marketing software, data and analytics, social and mobile platforms, apps development, content marketing, web mechanics, and digital advertising networks.

Today's marketing technologists have a broader voice in their organizations. They are working more closely with the business leaders to prioritize IT strategies and make them executable as they relate to key marketing strategies. Over time, many marketing technologists have become involved in strategic management decisions, relationship decisions and marketing management development. More importantly, in virtually any company in any industry, the marketing technologist's primary role is to assure that technology is being used in the most effective manner and that it offers a competitive marketing advantage.

Brinker observes that the array of technology decisions being made within today's marketing environment are continuing to grow at a dizzying pace, such as: digital asset management, mobile marketing, marketing automation, social media monitoring, web analytics, e-commerce platforms, and organic SEO management. <http://www.chiefmartec.com/2010/04/rise-of-the-marketing-technologist.html>



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“Every time a new platform or application arrives on the field, the decision space actually grows exponentially,” Brinker says. “Because again, it's not just decisions about individual components—but decisions about their interactions with each other.”

Brinker illustrates the increasing attention being paid to marketing technologists through recent Google searches for terms related to the emerging field of marketing technology:

Google Search	February 2008	February 2011	February 2012
chief marketing technologist	320	320,000	265,000
director of marketing technology	7,520	847,000	1,670,000
marketing technology		625,000	2,670,000
marketing technologist		109,000	203,000
marketing technology manager		340,000	748,000
VP marketing technology		194,000	684,000
vice president marketing technology		232,000	694,000
creative technologist		103,000	247,000
geek marketer		9,830	22,300

Source: <http://www.chiefmartec.com/2012/02/state-of-the-marketing-technologist-2012.html>

A Pivotal Role

In August 2012, Gartner, Inc., the world's leading information technology research and advisory company, released its 2013 High-Tech Provider Marketing Budgets survey. In the survey, Gartner asked respondents, “Does your organization have the equivalent of a Chief Marketing Technologist today, and do you expect to have such a function 2 years from now?”

Seventy-two percent of respondents indicated they currently have a chief marketing technologist today and 87% plan to add this role to their organizations within two years. The companies recognized that technology decisions and marketing strategies are intertwined.



So what attributes should marketing technologist candidates possess? According to Brinker, they need marketing experience within an interactive agency, a web development project, or within the search engine optimization field.

“A whole generation of web developers and web entrepreneurs have developed these commingled capabilities — out of necessity and desire,” Brinker says. “They often have a formal engineering background followed by business or marketing graduate studies or in-the-trenches experience. Such technologically-savvy marketers will be better able to apply the contributions from agencies and vendors — and ultimately will have a better chance of success. And that's good for everyone.”

Sources:

<http://www.chiefmartec.com/2012/10/ibm-champions-the-chief-marketing-technologist.html>

<http://www.chiefmartec.com/2012/05/marketing-technology-suite-platform-or-portfolio.html>

<http://www.chiefmartec.com/2011/10/agencies-and-the-marketing-technologist-revolution.html>