Key Responsibilities for Customer Marketing

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By Analyst(s): Maria Marino, Michael Maziarka

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While most technology and service providers have a dedicated customer marketing function, clients often ask how customer marketing teams are typically organized, and with what responsibilities. We present Gartner research data to illustrate customer marketing’s key responsibilities and structure.

Overview

Key Findings

- Technology marketing functions are increasingly focused on existing customer marketing and engagement as a critical source of revenue growth.
- Customer marketing's primary responsibility remains to cross-sell/upsell campaigns, much more than product education or adoption.
- In growth organizations, customer marketing reports more often into a centralized marketing function.

Data Insights

While marketing organizations gravitate toward new customer acquisition, the reality is that most revenue opportunities originate within the existing customer base. Thus we see increasing responsibility in marketing roles for customer engagement. Marketers can drive greater impact when customer engagement is defined more holistically than simply cross-selling and upselling, and when customer marketing resources are centralized.

An Increasing Focus on Customer Marketing in High Tech

There is an increasing focus on customer marketing, as reflected in the growth in inquiries on this topic. Such Gartner client inquiries jumped 43% from 2021 to 2022. ¹
Surprisingly, when we conducted a search of job postings with the actual job title “customer marketing,” we found that the number of positions did not grow significantly from 2019 to 2021. However, when we examine customer-focused marketing roles more broadly — as indicated by a responsibility for “customer engagement” — we find a wide span of job titles, especially product marketing or generic marketing titles, but also field marketing and digital marketing roles. Within these customer-focused marketing roles, we find customer engagement as a job responsibility growing by 172% in the same time period.  

Marketing’s focus on customers makes sense given that respondents to Gartner’s 2022 Technology Marketing Benchmarks Survey reported that 64% of their organizations’ leads are generated from existing accounts, compared with 36% from new opportunities (for tech providers with over $100 million in annual revenue).  

**Key Take-Away:** With a majority of revenue opportunity coming from existing customers, it’s no surprise that there’s been an increasing focus on customer-focused marketing roles within technology service providers.

**Next Action:** Unless your organization is entering a new market and, as a result, needs to primarily focus on new logo acquisition, strike a balance between acquisition and growth/retention marketing to hit your revenue targets.

**Customer Marketing Responsibilities Identified**

Gartner’s 2022 Technology Marketing Organizational Design Survey identified five responsibilities that typically make up customer marketing (see Figure 1):

1. Cross-sell/upsell campaigns (72%)
2. Customer experience (CX)/voice of the customer (67%)
3. Product education and adoption campaigns (61%)
4. Customer advocacy program (58%)
5. Customer success enablement (49%)
Figure 1: Top Responsibilities of Customer Marketing

Top Responsibilities of Customer Marketing
Multiple Responses Allowed

- Cross-Sell/Upsell Campaigns: 72%
- Customer Experience/Voice of the Customer Program: 67%
- Solution/Product Education and Adoption Campaigns: 61%
- Customer Advocacy Program: 58%
- Customer Success Enablement: 49%

Mean Number of Mentions: 3.1

n = 195; customer marketing function exists within marketing, excluding unsure/don’t know

Q: Select all the responsibilities included in customer marketing.
Source: 2022 Gartner Technology Marketing Organizational Design Survey 77514_C

Key Take-Away: The primary responsibility of customer marketing is to cross-sell/upsell, while product adoption and success enablement lags more than 10 points behind, leaving both significantly underserved.

Next Action: Customers have to see value from what they have already purchased before they will consider buying more. Expand your customer marketing function to include product adoption/education, and work closely through customer success teams to execute customer value realization.

Customer Marketing Can Drive Growth When Centralized

In the 2022 Gartner Technology Marketing Benchmarks Survey, 66% of respondents indicated that they have already invested in a dedicated customer marketing function. But there is a disparity in terms of how growth organizations (technology service providers that experienced organic revenue growth in the past 12 months) versus nongrowth organizations (technology service providers that experienced revenue stagnation or decline) structure it.
The same survey found that customer marketing typically reports into a centralized marketing group within 69% of growth organizations, compared to 46% of respondents from nongrowth organizations (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Customer Marketing in Growth Organizations Tends to Be Centralized**

Key Take-Away: Customer marketing likely already exists in your organization, but it has a better chance of being a growth engine when reporting into a centralized marketing function. For example, in some organizations, the responsibility for cross-sell/upsell campaigns likely rests with customer marketing, but voice of the customer may be owned by a separate CX team. And customer success could be running with product education and adoption, with little marketing help.
Next Action: Identify the reporting structure of customer marketing within your organization. The responsibilities (see previous section) might actually be dispersed across several teams. Make the case for consolidating resources so that customer marketing can have a more significant impact on revenue growth.

Evidence

Research Methodology

1 Gartner inquiry data.

2 Gartner TalentNeuron data.

3 2022 Gartner Technology Marketing Benchmarks Survey: This survey was conducted online from 8 March through 9 May 2022. A total of 381 respondents were gathered from technology-focused organizations with more than $10 million in revenue located in the U.S., Canada or the U.K. Respondents were required to have one of the following primary job functions/roles:

- CEO/president/founder
- Demand/lead generation
- Marketing leadership
- Sales leadership
- Web/digital social marketing
- Marketing operations/analytics

They were also required to have knowledge of the marketing budget and spend for the company or business unit, and knowledge of the marketing campaign/programs tactics. At the country level, quotas were established to guarantee a good distribution in terms of product offering (software, technology services and hardware) and company size (revenue).
This survey seeks to understand what the modern technology marketing team looks like. More specifically, this study deep-dives into how the team is designed, how it collaborates with or influences other functions, and what makes it unique. Results in this research reflect the 204 responses collected through Gartner’s primary research. Technology providers operating in the software, services and hardware verticals were qualified. Disclaimer: Results of this survey do not represent global findings or the market as a whole, but reflect the sentiments of the respondents and companies surveyed.

Recommended by the Authors

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Tech Marketing Benchmarks Survey 2021: Marketing Budget, Organization and Tools Insights

Marketing’s Missed Opportunity: Growth via Customer Success Management

Best Practices for Advocacy Marketing in Technology Companies