



7 Habits of High-Performance Marketing Teams



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Part I:

Defining High-Performance

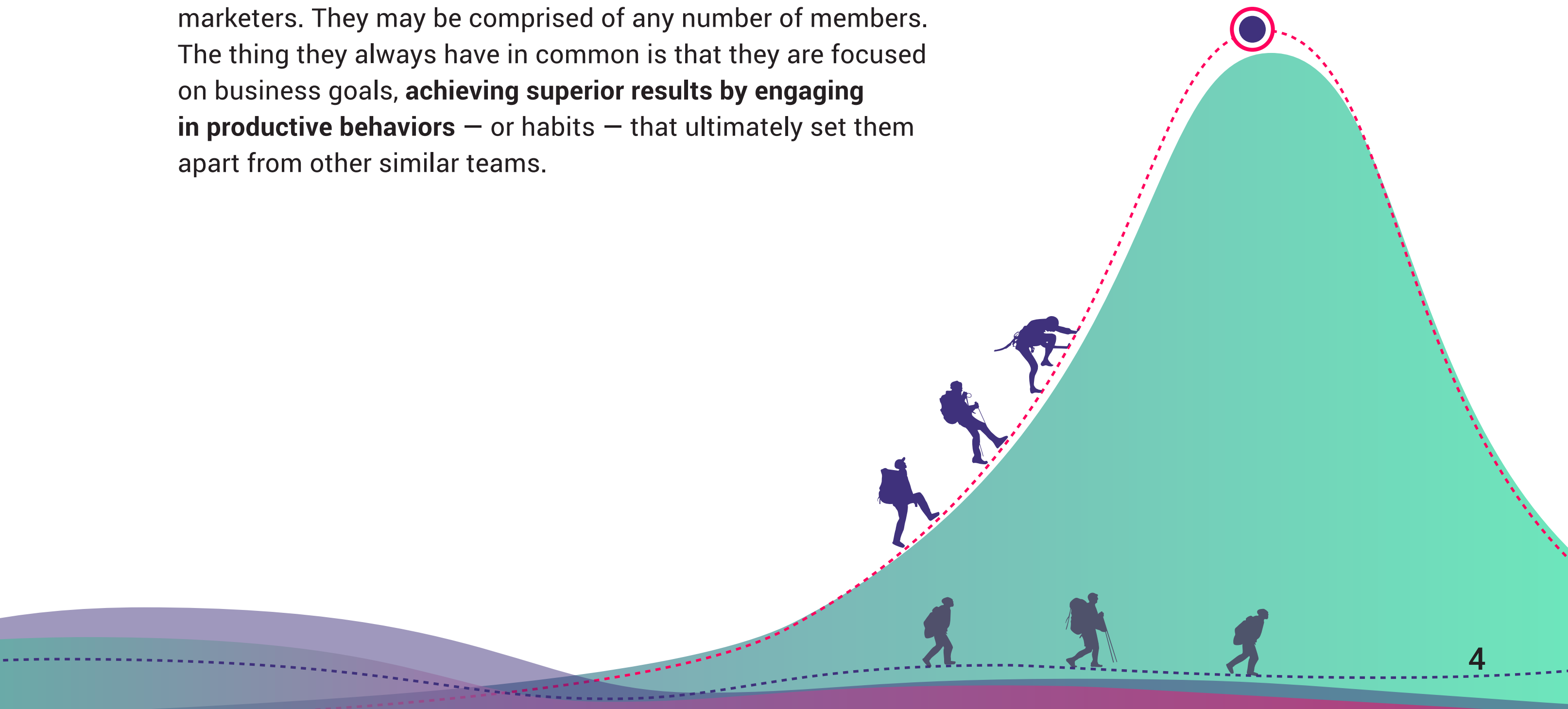
Marketing organizations are under a huge amount of pressure to perform. With advancements in digital communication streaming past us at lightning speeds and new media channels opening up daily, there are more sites and stats to monitor even as the need to produce more marketing content escalates. Customers both internal and external are demanding viral videos, up-to-the-minute social media engagement, and content that resonates and converts.

More than ever before, marketing teams need to step up to the plate and transform themselves from simply “good” teams into “great” teams — specifically high-performance, high-velocity, high-agility teams.



What is a High-Performance Marketing Team?

The essence of every high-performance marketing team is achieving results. These teams may be made of onsite or remotely located marketers. They may be comprised of any number of members. The thing they always have in common is that they are focused on business goals, **achieving superior results by engaging in productive behaviors** — or habits — that ultimately set them apart from other similar teams.

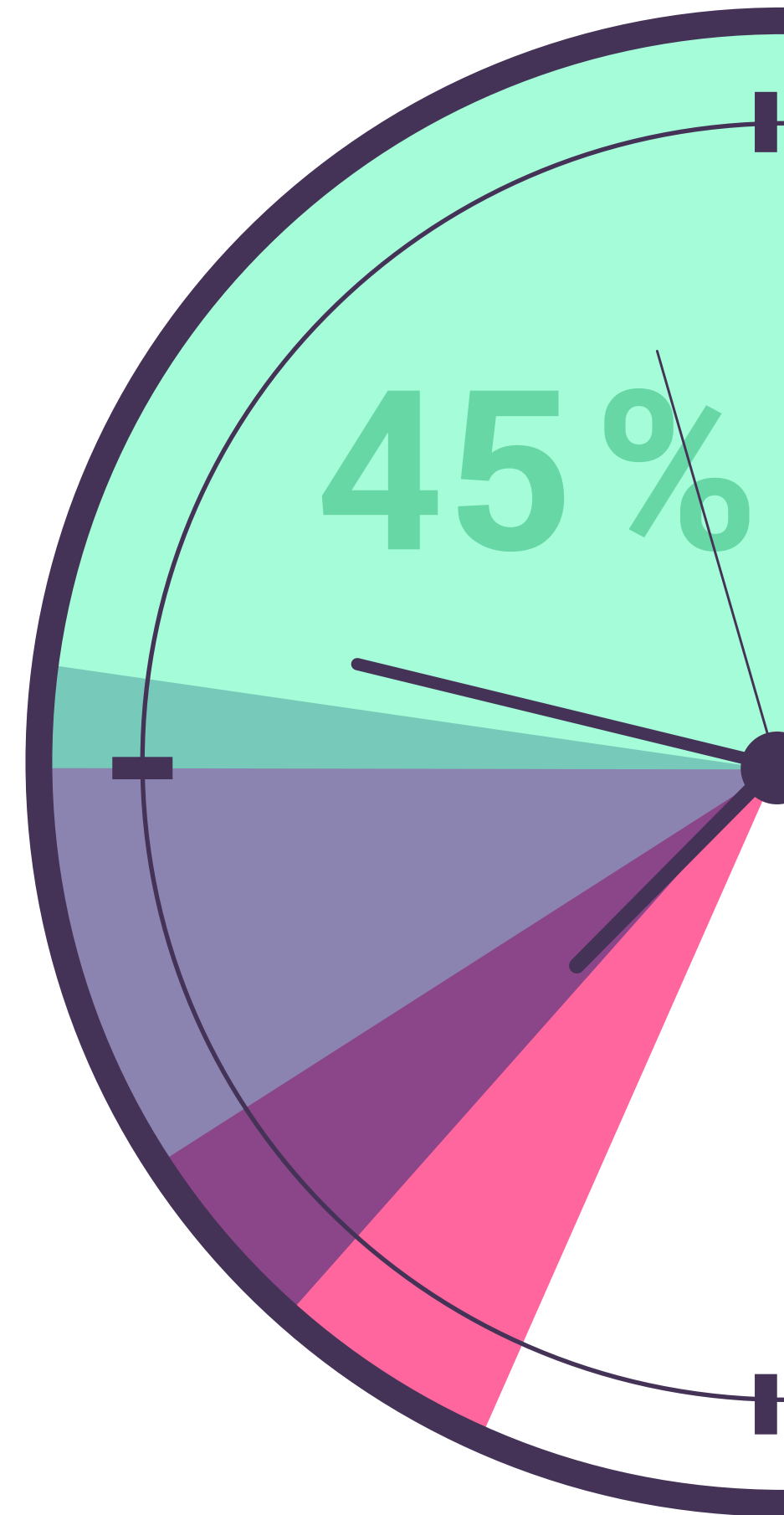


What is a Habit?

Habits are automatic behaviors that we do on autopilot. A study says that 45% of our day — almost half of our waking existence — is spent engaging in habits.

Habits are a way for the high-level functionality in our brains to work at full capacity even when making other tiny decisions such as: what to eat, how to dress, which way to bathe, which route to take for work. Instead of using up precious energy for these repetitive behaviors, habits take over and allow us to conserve brain power for the real heavy lifting — creative problem solving.

So doesn't it make sense that we foster productive habits for accomplishing daily, repetitive work? The result will let us spend time on other unique projects.





Why Should I Care?

Because your success depends on beating the competition and delivering projects that go above and beyond customer expectation. And high-performance marketing teams outperform similar teams, producing results that leave the competition in the dust.

In short, you should care because your future employment and ultimate job satisfaction lies not in coasting along and going with the flow, but in fighting mediocrity and reaching for excellence at every stage. Building successful workplace habits helps you go above and beyond in your daily task execution.

If you follow the strategies laid out in this ebook, you will be well on your way to transforming the marketing team you care about into a **high-performance marketing organization** you can rave about.



Part II:

The 7 Habits of High Performance Marketing Teams



*We are what we repeatedly do.
Excellence, then, is not an act,
but a habit.*



Aristotle

HABIT 1:

Superior Communication.

If Needed, Use Words!

[MIT's Human Dynamics Laboratory](#) conducted some fantastic research on team dynamics by outfitting people in banks, call centers, marketing groups, and even laboratories with sociometric badges that measured the tone of voice, body position relative to team members, and body movements of individuals interacting with their teams.

They discovered they could easily predict which teams would outperform other similar teams based solely on their pattern of communication.

It's not what they said, but how they said it. Factors like intelligence, creativity, ideas, charisma, or even skill — while useful — could not predict whether the teams would succeed. Just the ways in which they communicated with one another and with other teams was an accurate predictor of their success.

Researchers highlight four main strategies for effective communication that more often than not, lead to outstanding team performance:

A. Listen. Speak. Participate.

High-performance marketers don't hog the limelight at meetings. On the contrary, **everyone on the team gets a chance to talk and listen** in roughly equal amounts. This means speeches are short and sweet. If all participate, the effect is instantaneous: team members are more aware, more engaged, and ultimately they are more eager to claim ownership of their work.



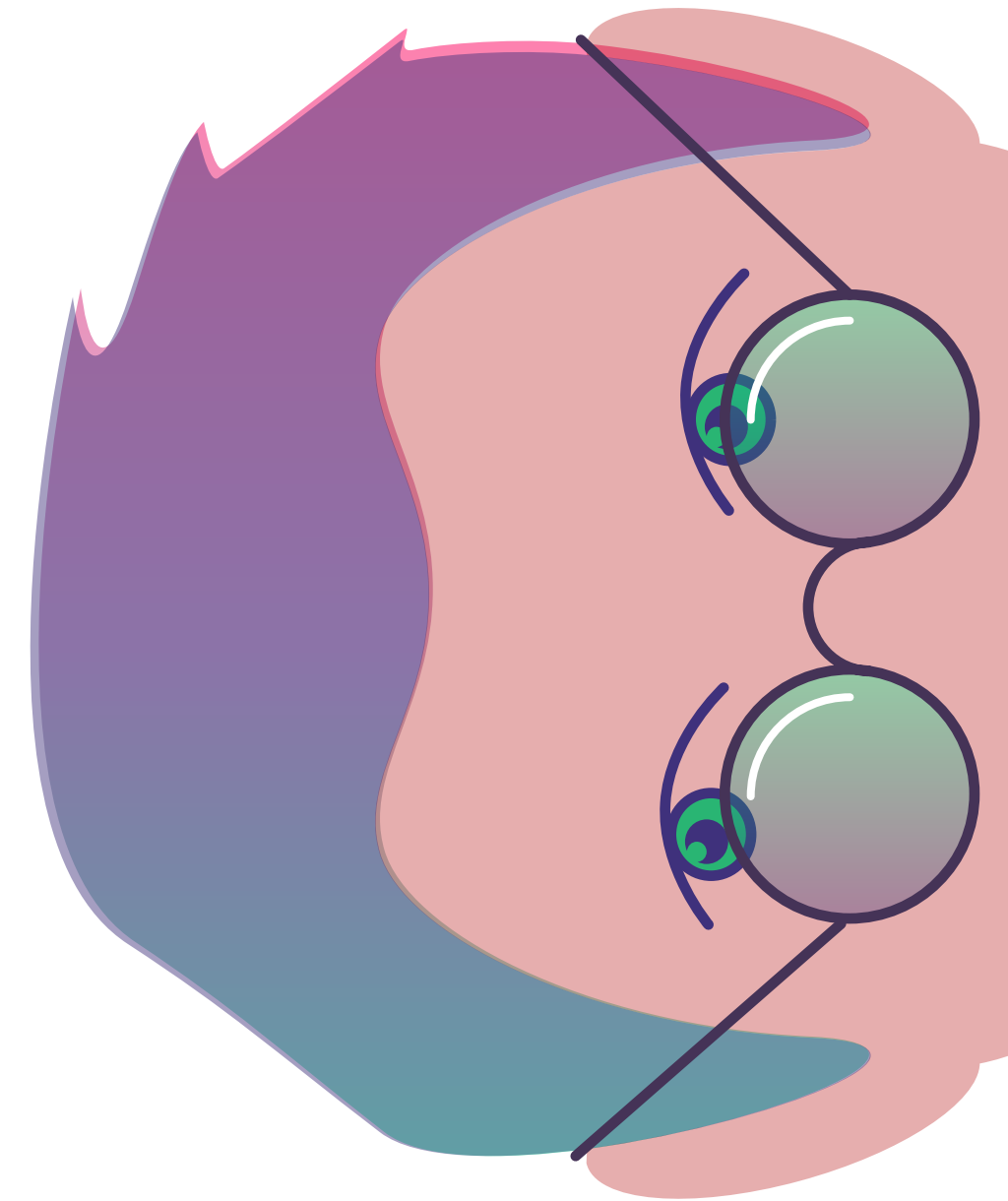
Short and Sweet a la Lincoln

Take a cue from Abraham Lincoln's "[The Gettysburg Address](#)" of 1863. In roughly two minutes, he tackled the Declaration of Independence and the principle of human equality. If it takes you longer than Abe to talk about MQLs, consider making an outline of what you're going to say.

B. Look Me in the Eyes

Body language and visual cues are vital to effective communication. Successful marketing teams face one another when they talk, peppering conversations with energetic gestures.

Sure, the rise of remote workers makes this a little more difficult, but the technology for video calls has vastly improved. Video calls are no longer a luxury, they're a necessary tool for conveying both data and nuance to remote colleagues.



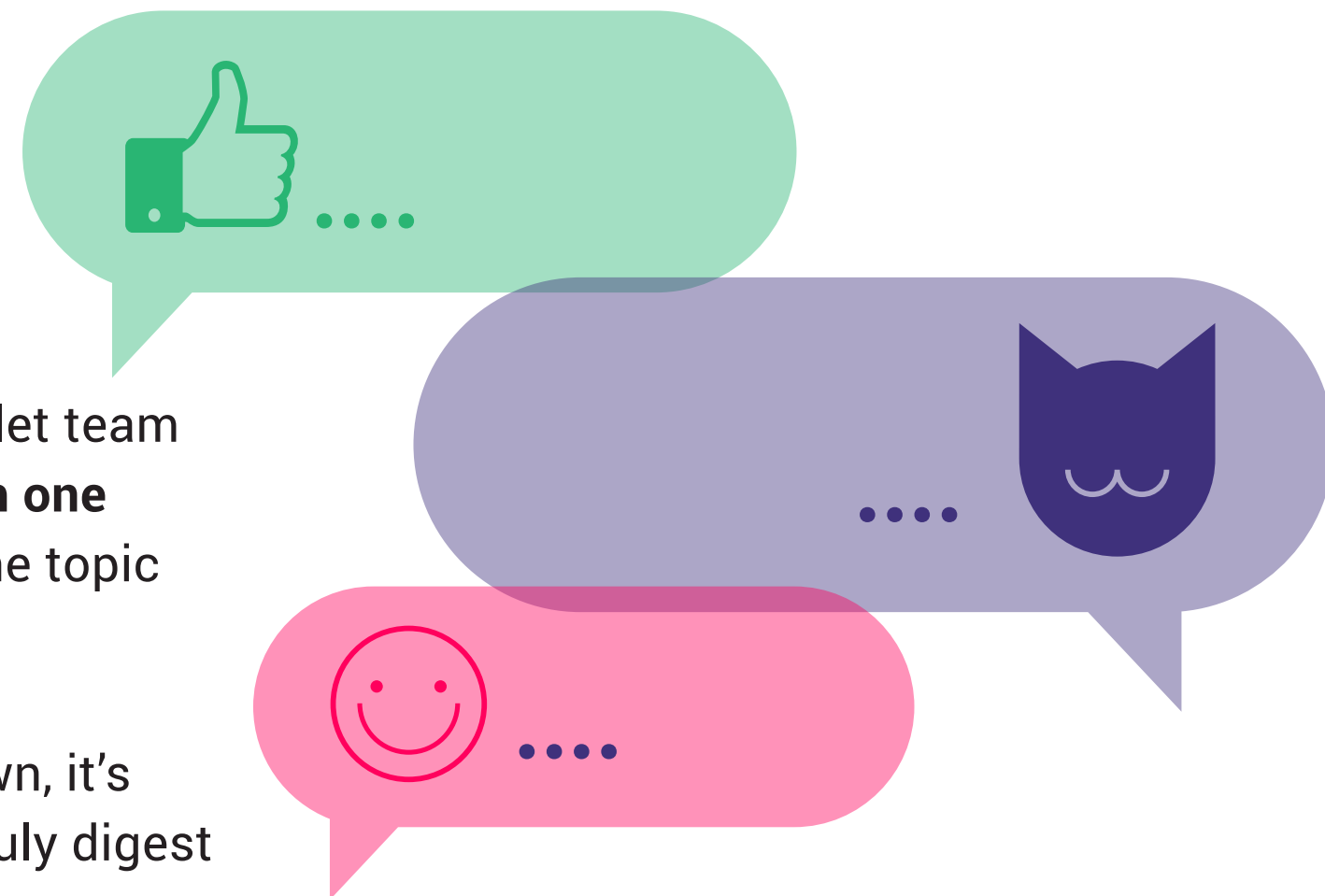
I Can See It In Your Face

When the police finally found the ultra-reclusive thief called the "[North Pond Hermit](#)" who had isolated himself from humanity in the forests of Maine for 27 years, he explained why he couldn't look people in the eyes: "I'm not used to seeing people's faces," he said. "There's too much information there. Aren't you aware of it? Too much, too fast."

C. Talk Amongst Yourself

Truly successful marketing teams don't just sit back and let team leaders talk at them. **Team members connect directly with one another**, carrying on expanded conversations regarding the topic using back channels (like chatting tools).

This means information isn't just shared from the top down, it's chewed on, filtered, and analyzed by peers who want to truly digest the data given them in order to understand their work.



Back Channel: The Virtual Watercooler

Tip: establish informal channels where people can carry on these conversations and brainstorm informally. We like to call them virtual watercoolers. In our company, every team has multiple private channels where discussions continue, or where people simply relax, bond, and share links to cat videos.

D. Forage for Info

Useful information is out there: in the other departments of the company, on the streets, on the Internet “tubes.” High-performance marketers are those who take the time to periodically break away to **explore, hunt for information, and bring it back to the team’s ongoing conversations.**



Several ways to forage for information:

- Formal meetings with subject matter experts. Find out what’s going on in their worlds. (E.g. talk to the head of software development about what’s launching next month, or ask key salespeople what content they need to sell more effectively.)
- Informal chats around the office watercooler (even virtual ones). Find out what’s going on in the larger context of the office.
- Surveys, polls, opinions via IM. Get the pulse of the organization.

HABIT 2:

Focused Customer-centricity.

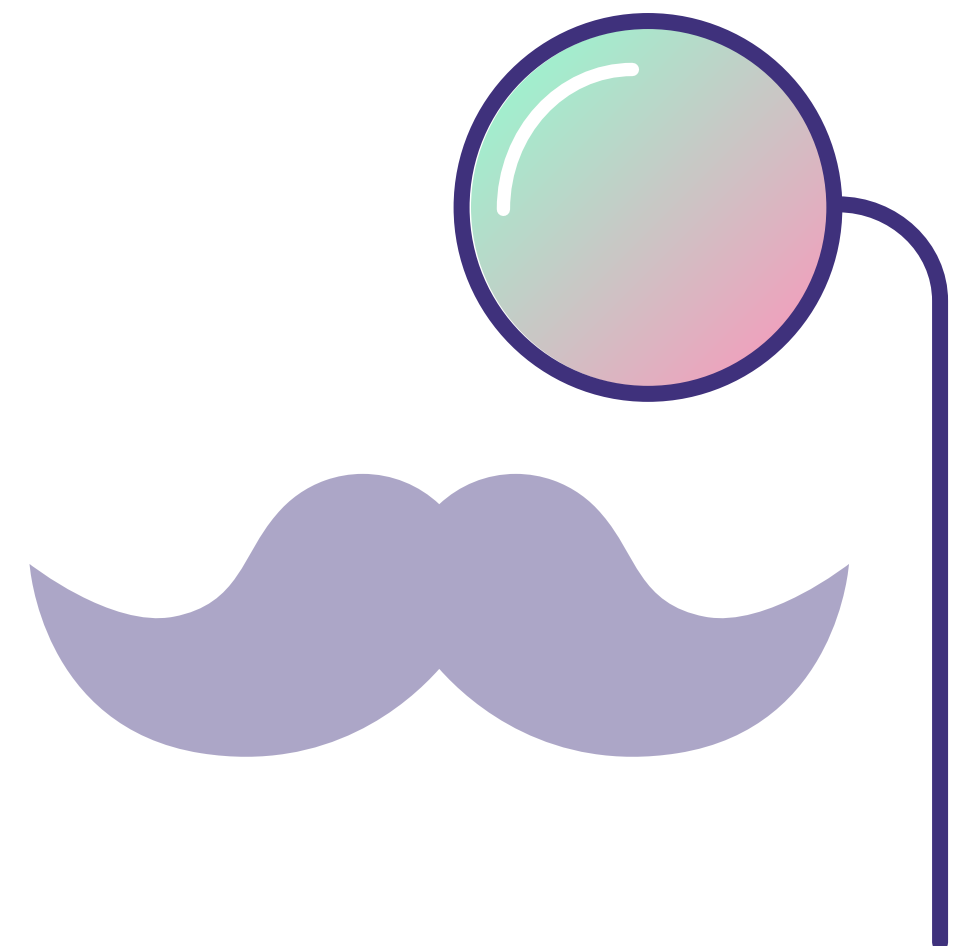
'One Size Fits Most' Won't Work.

The second habit is just good business sense: put customer needs over personal preferences. The customer is after all, the end user of your product or service. So make an excellent product with that customer's needs — and especially pain points — in mind.

Profile First, Plan Second

But who is that customer exactly? What is his day job? What are her habits? What is s/he thinking? Here, **researching the geographic, demographic, and psychographic** profiles of your ideal customer is key to finding your target market.

Only after profiling your ideal customers should you begin designing a plan on how to market to them so that they discover you, learn from you, and begin trusting you enough to buy from you.



Focus on One Segment at a Time

High-performance marketing teams don't use shotguns, they use lasers to selectively focus on one segment at a time for better effectiveness.

If you try to market to them with a "one size fits most" message, you'll waste time and resources, and lose more than 50% of your audience simply because it won't resonate with them, and therefore it's spam to them.

This is the point where **target marketing and market segmentation** come in. Build content for specific audience personas so you can target the unique pain points of each segment. Pay heed to the old adage: "If you're talking to everyone, you're talking to no one."

Market segmentation is: breaking down all possible customers into groups characterized by a specific buying behavior that may be connected to their demographics (e.g. technology companies in the SF Bay Area) or psychographics (e.g. higher managerial/administrative professionals)

Target marketing is: choosing a specific subgroup within a larger segment to focus marketing efforts on (e.g. aggressive, materialistic, 30-year old male, C-level executives in the SF Bay Area)

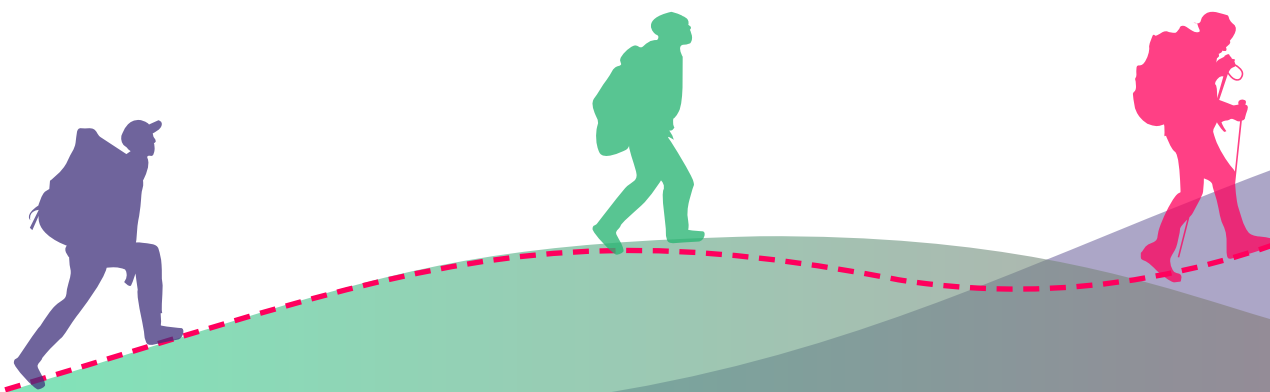
HABIT 3:

Clear Role Definition.

Who Does What, Again?

If a new marketing team member has to keep asking who's in charge of email marketing after the second week, there's something amiss in your onboarding process. Your most forgetful employee should have a guide to refer to when questions arise.

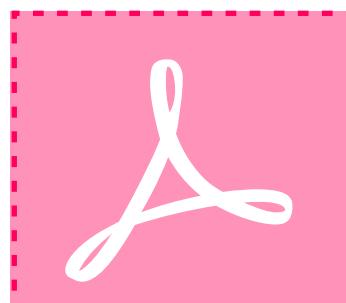
High-performance marketing teams ensure that every team member understands the positions and responsibilities of all people in the company. Especially the team leaders for key areas such as sales, customer service, production, plus all the crucial areas within marketing: paid advertising, SEO/inbound, content marketing, email marketing, social media, and so on.



Give 'em an Onboarding Document

The easiest way to educate new team members is to **create an onboarding document** that includes an outline and details for each person's roles and responsibilities. It could be a printed packet of information, or a PDF. It might even be better as a living document on Google Drive or your project management software — such as Wrike — so your onboarding is easy to update and maintain.

Another part of that onboarding document should explain who to go to for help, what resources are available to the new member, and it should be supported with some guidance on the first few projects and tasks assigned to your new hire.





Essential Info to Include in the Onboarding Document

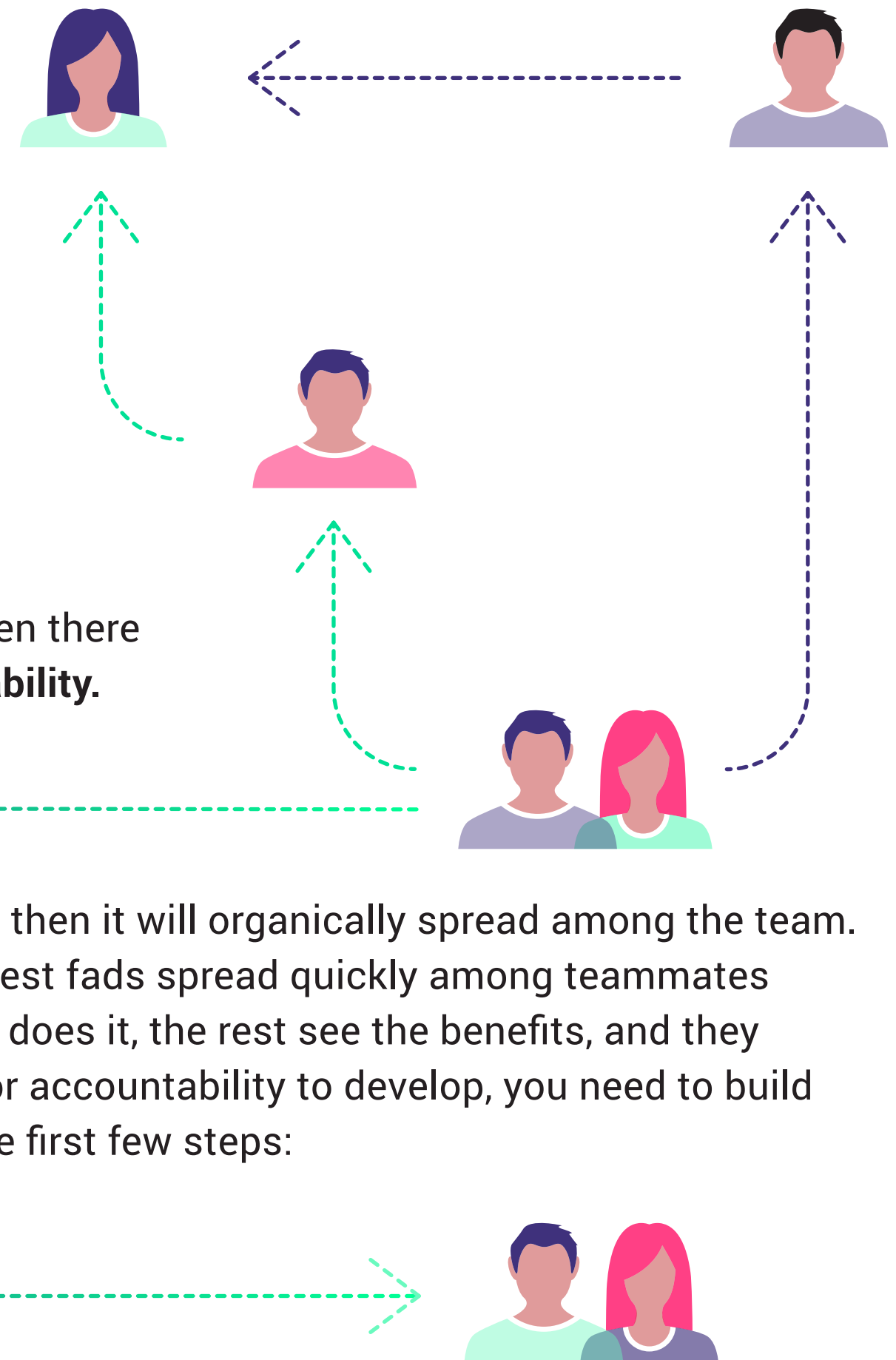
- Who's who in the company, the executive committee, the marketing department – including all contact info
- What paperwork the employee should bring on the first day/first week
- Where the employee should park
- What kind of attire the company favors
- Whom the employee should ask for in the lobby
- Where the restrooms are located/floor plan
- Where the copy machine is and how it works
- Where the cafeteria/kitchen/break room is
- Where nearby eateries are
- Whom the employee should talk to if there are additional questions
- What tools are used within the company and how to use them
- Where the fun, virtual “watercooler” channels are located and on which tool
- Anything and everything a Week 1 employee needs to know

HABIT 4: Public Accountability.

Transparency Equals More Responsible Workers.

If you want the team to work responsibly without needing a micromanager hovering to see if things are getting done, then there must be accountability. **No team works well without accountability.**

If you design the work environment for it, then it will organically spread among the team. Consider how good habits or even the latest fads spread quickly among teammates — it's leadership by example. One person does it, the rest see the benefits, and they inevitably take up the flag. But in order for accountability to develop, you need to build the framework for it by taking these first few steps:





Building a Framework for Accountability

A. Get Individuals to Own Their Work

When there is no confusion as to who does what (see Habit 3: Clear Role Definition), people are much more likely to take ownership of their individual tasks. “This is my responsibility. I will take care of this.”

B. Get People to Own Team Results

Owning your tasks is step one, owning the larger goals of the team’s projects is next. It’s easy enough to grow into owning a team’s key area (e.g. MQLs or inbound SEO results or webinar registrants) when individuals already take pride in their own tasks.



C. Set Up a Tool to Make Accountability Easy

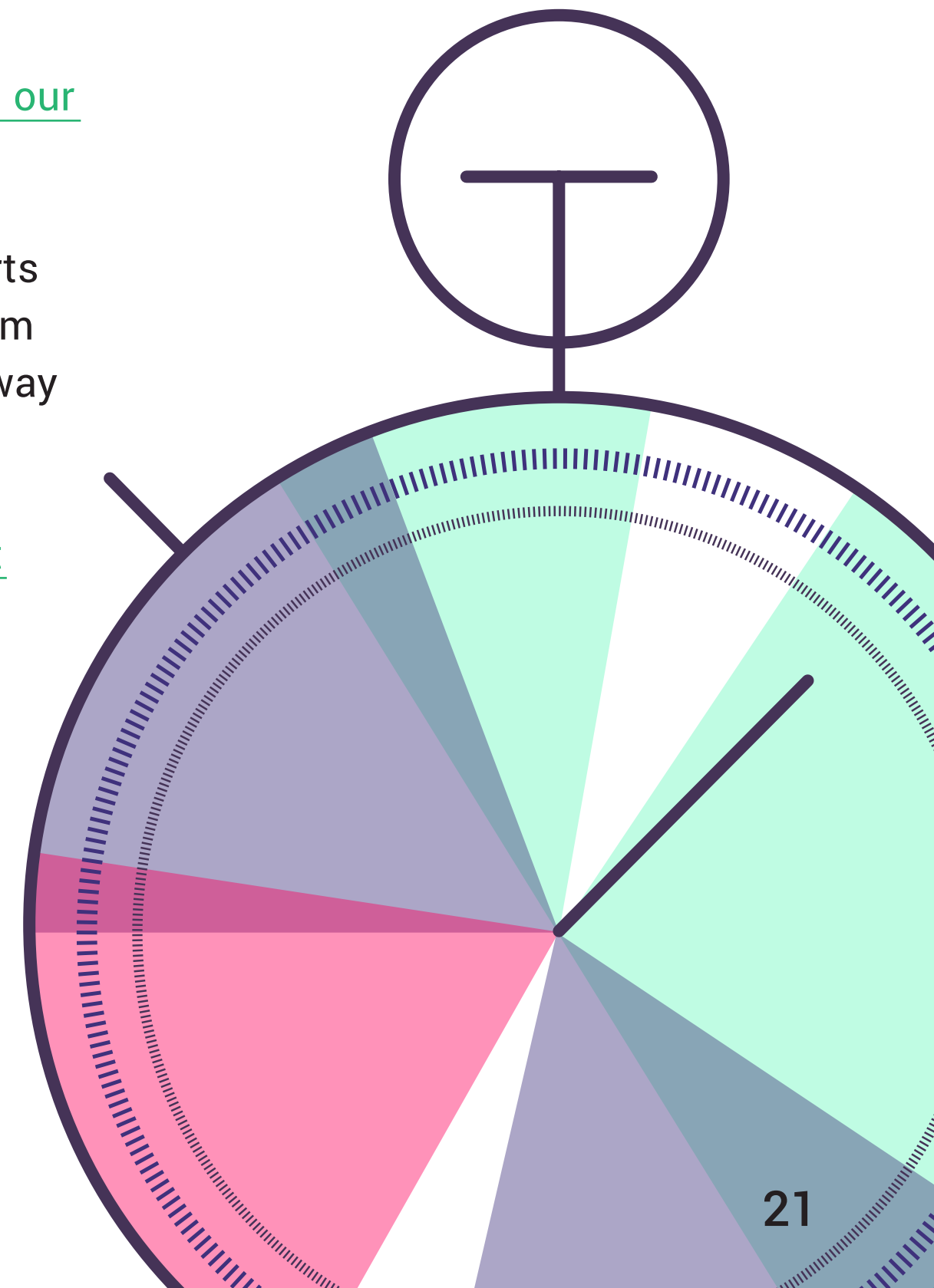
The easiest way to hold team members accountable is to use a project management system to list and track everyone's to-do items. This is where tools like Wrike come in handy because all tasks and all work-related info is brought under one roof, visible to everyone involved. If the technology is in place, and there's a process attached to it, it will motivate your team to be more responsible and accountable.

Just a reminder: accountability is not about hovering over your team's shoulders and micromanaging them until they get their tasks done. Rather, it's about setting up an environment where they're sufficiently motivated to progress and complete work.



Accountability in Wrike

- 1. Weekly Meetings:** A great way to build accountability is to open up Wrike during weekly meetings to see the status of projects in a public forum. You show what people are working on, and hold everyone accountable for the tasks they own. [Read our blog post about running weekly meetings in Wrike.](#)
- 2. Time Tracker:** Additionally there's the time tracker which alerts the team when someone is working on a task. Have your team start the timer when they work on a task – it's just another way that individuals can show their accountability to the group. It also tracks how much time is spent on a specific project, allowing for better planning in the future. [Read our blog post about using the timer to create project benchmarks.](#)



HABIT 5:

Generous Teamwork.

Sharing is Caring!



High-performance marketing teams prioritize the success of the team over the glory of the individual. That's not to say that individual success shouldn't be celebrated. On the contrary, every show of excellence should be praised. But what this does mean is **team members support one another**: in getting tasks done, and in working toward the completion of projects.

This comes about when the marketing team is proactively sharing everything from project information and new ideas, to expertise, editorial standards, and files.

Nurturing a culture of sharing within the team enhances collaboration and takes away selfish “fiefdoms” of knowledge. Instead of people hogging info and becoming roadblocks for productivity, project data is stored in a central database for all to access. Ask team members to impart their specific expertise in shared wikis or internal blogs to jumpstart this habit.

There are many reasons why people don't share knowledge: either they don't realize how much their expertise can impact the team, or they simply don't have an efficient system for doing so. You will have to lead by example so they realize just how beneficial sharing can be. You may even want to gamify the process and reward people who share consistently. Maybe incorporate it into your weekly standup meeting by asking: "Did you learn anything you'd like to share, or something you think could be helpful for the rest of the team?"

Alongside sharing, make it clear that the team needs to be aggressive in asking for help and offering help to others. Apart from being a great value to live out on a personal level, **generosity is also the oil that makes teamwork both frictionless and fruitful.**

Tips for Building a Culture of Sharing

- 1. Lead by example:** Whether you're a project manager or a team member, your efforts will go flat unless you practice what you preach.
- 2. Build a core group:** Find and empower a proactive core group of "sharers." Make them heroes. Get them to lead so the rest of the team follows.
- 3. Train the team:** Have a quick start session to align everyone. Keep a library of references/process documents that people can refer to.
- 4. Gamify the process:** Use game mechanics to make the sharing more fun. Give people awards/prizes for consistently sharing.
- 5. Involve the executives:** Want lightning-fast buy-in? Get your executives onboard.

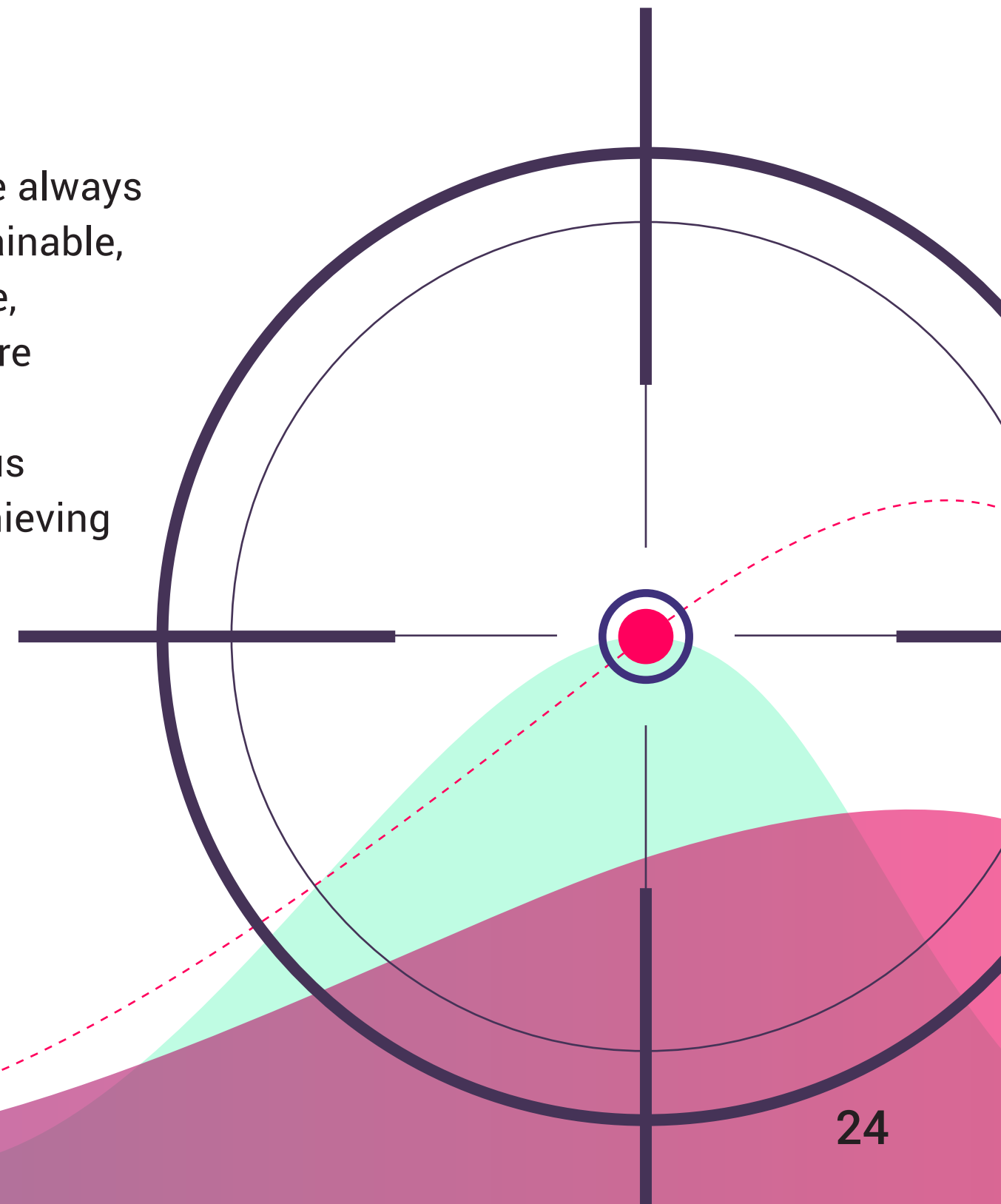


HABIT 6:

Precise Goals and Metrics.

Know What to Measure.

When high-performance marketing teams create goals, they're always SMART — this means, the goals are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound. You need to know what to measure, and ensure you're measuring the right things in order to acquire data that will help you make future decisions. Not everything is business critical. Not everything NEEDS to be tracked. Focus your efforts on what brings your marketing team closer to achieving business objectives.





Decide what metrics will define the success of your team. And always use metrics that matter to your C-level executives. It's not the number of retweets or webinar attendees (though those are good things to know for tracking progress), but metrics that actually roll up to the business objectives of the entire company.

Then use every measuring tool that makes sense — analytics tools, social media monitoring software, behavioral info (AKA digital body language), customer interviews and surveys, third party analyst research — to inform your strategy and decisions.

Dive Deeper into Marketing Metrics & Analytics

After you finish reading this ebook, if you want a more in-depth discussion on marketing ROI, program measurement, marketing forecasting, and implementation, take a look at the [Marketing Metrics & Analytics ebook](#) by Marketo. It's chock-full of good information.

HABIT 7:

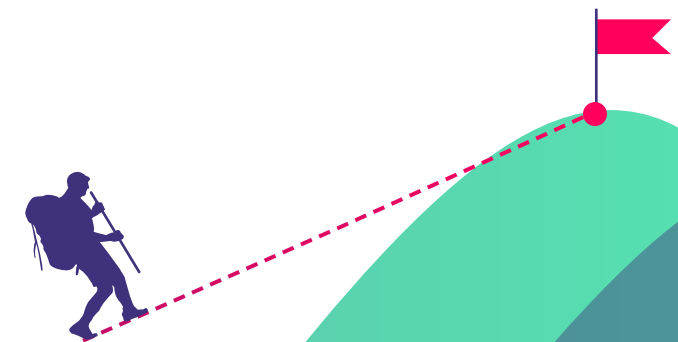
Fearless Experimentation.

Even Failures are Learning Experiences.

The secret to the output and stellar results of high-performance marketing teams is their attitude towards experimentation. They're never afraid to try new tools and tactics that might just bring them closer to a successful outcome.

With this kind of attitude, even failure can motivate the team to glean new insights and take their projects or campaigns in new directions, moving quickly so momentum isn't completely lost.

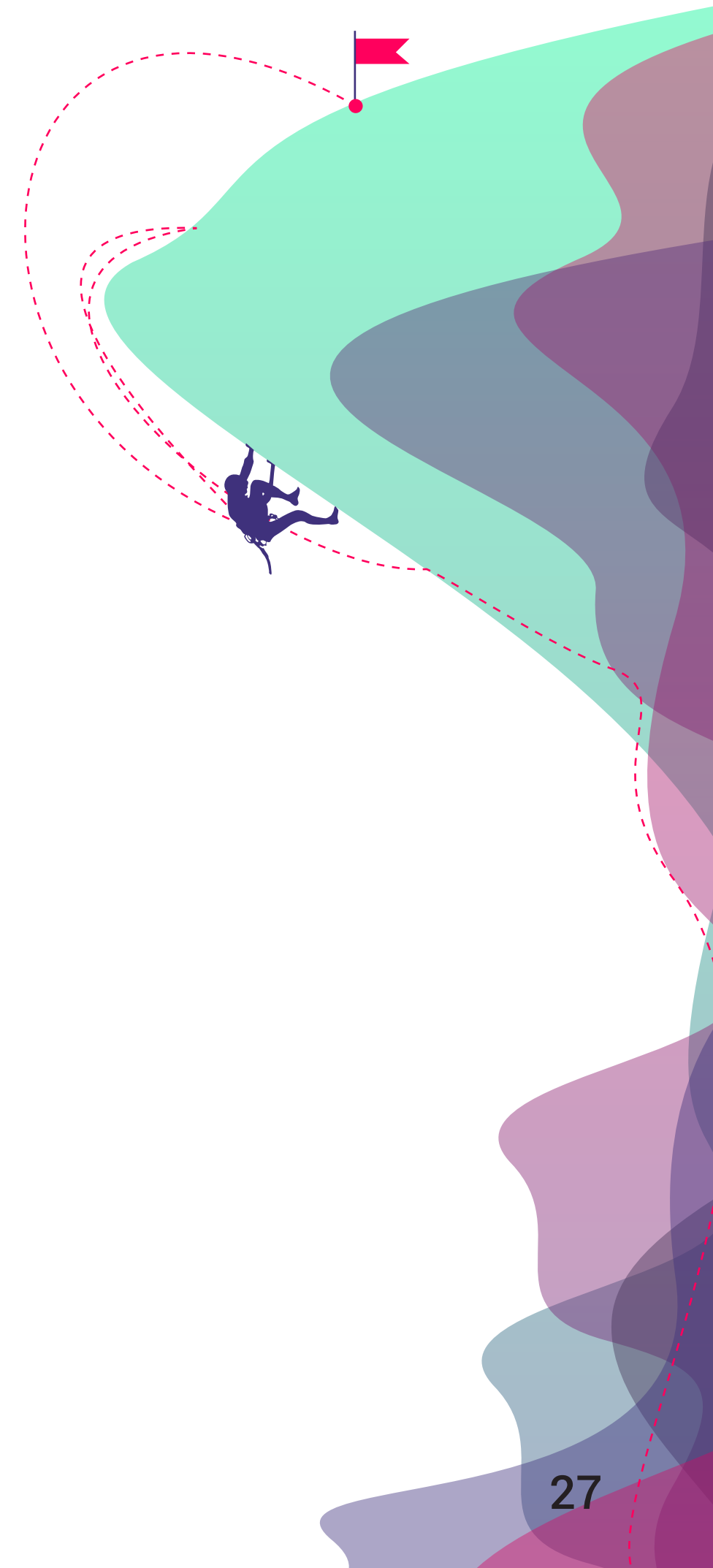
The idea is to keep testing while documenting your strategy and process. Keep what works, discard what doesn't. Your team will learn from every experience.





Tips for Successful Testing

- 1. Don't overtest.** Technically, you could test everything, but really you shouldn't waste time and resources. Instead, decide which tests are most important.
- 2. Prioritize tests using a scoring system.** Criteria to score for: potential business impact, effort required, opportunity for learning.
- 3. Document it all.** Have a record of the test queue, the campaign setup requirements, the customer pain points, the formal QA script.
- 4. Analyze successes and failures for lessons.** Even failures contain nuggets of wisdom if we can get past the emotion.
- 5. Communicate results to everyone.** Let the organization know relevant results— especially if it leads to a better understanding of the customer.





Part III:

The Takeaways

If you take the 7 habits laid out in this ebook and work consciously toward cultivating them in your marketing team, you will transform them into a **high-performance marketing organization** that can easily outperform the competition. Just be aware: change isn't instantaneous. These 7 tips will take time to incubate and form into long-lasting habits.





1. Superior Communication: No team can function well without clear communication, which includes body language.
2. Focused Customer-Centricity: Know who your customer is, and target them like a laser.
3. Clear Role Definition: Define who does what in the team. Make responsibilities crystal clear.
4. Public Accountability: Teach all teammates to own their goals, and also higher team goals.
5. Generous Teamwork: Give them ways to share and help one another. Generosity is crucial!
6. Precise Goals and Metrics: Have SMART goals that roll up to business objectives. Know what to measure and use proper tools.
7. Fearless Experimentation: Never be afraid to experiment and test. And constantly learn from every test. Not even failure can keep you down.

THIS EBOOK WAS BROUGHT TO YOU BY **Wrike**

Our online collaboration software powers the performance of many high-performance marketing teams around the globe. With it, your own team can:

- manage multiple projects in one workspace
- collaborate in real-time with others inside (and outside) your company
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