

Prove Your Marketing Team's Performance

HOW LEADING BRANDS CONNECT CREATIVE STRATEGY TO COMMERCIAL IMPACT



For decades, brand marketing lived under the shadow of ambiguity. Despite producing award-winning campaigns, glossy content, and high engagement, marketing departments struggled to quantify their impact on revenue. As LinkedIn's B2B Institute stated in a 2023 report:

"Brand building is the single greatest long-term lever for business growth—but only if marketing can prove it."

As businesses tighten spending and demand accountability, a pressing question confronts CMOs: Can you prove that your marketing drives deals? Campaigns may generate clicks, likes, or brand lift, but do they help win business? Can a CMO walk into a boardroom and point to specific content that influenced the pipeline, accelerated a deal, or retained a client?

Increasingly, the companies that can answer "yes" to these questions are the ones redefining the strategic value of marketing. Today, brand marketing performance is not inherently ambiguous. New technology provides marketing professionals with sophisticated analytics, not just vanity metrics. Today, all it takes is the right tools to align marketing and business performance.

Learn from Success: Company Case Studies

Adobe: Data-Driven Content

Adobe's marketing organization took a hard look at how its content influenced sales. By analyzing the digital footprints of prospects who eventually became customers, Adobe found a strong correlation between specific thought leadership content and enterprise deal conversions. This allowed them to refine their content strategy to double down on assets that moved the needle—ultimately increasing sales velocity by 25% for their B2B cloud solutions.

IBM: Brand Equity That Converts

IBM spent years building trust through its "Smarter Planet" campaign. But to prove ROI, the company developed a measurement framework that linked brand perception data with sales outcomes. When a region scored higher on brand relevance, sales performance followed. This empirical validation enabled IBM to justify sustained brand investments, even during restructuring periods.

Slack: From User Acquisition to Enterprise Revenue

Slack's marketing team was once focused on user acquisition metrics—downloads, trials, sign-ups. But as the company moved upmarket into enterprise sales, it needed to prove how content impacted C-suite decision-makers. By analyzing deal journeys, Slack discovered that certain case studies and analyst content frequently preceded major contract signings. This insight reshaped their go-to-market playbook and contributed to a 40% increase in enterprise ARR.

Salesforce: Quantifying Brand-Driven Growth

Salesforce has mastered the art of connecting brand to revenue. Through its State of Marketing and State of Sales content hubs, the company not only engages buyers but tracks how this content feeds the pipeline. In one example, thought leadership whitepapers were directly linked to \$135M in influenced pipeline for a single quarter, according to internal analysis published during Dreamforce 2023.

The High Cost of Unproven Marketing

Marketing budgets are being scrutinized more than ever. According to Gartner's CMO Spend Survey 2023, marketing budgets fell to 9.1% of overall company revenue in 2023—down from 11% in 2020. CMOs cited "proving the value of marketing" as their top internal challenge.

This skepticism stems from a historical disconnect: marketing speaks in engagement, while executives speak in revenue. If the link between brand and business is not established, marketing risks being seen as a cost center, vulnerable to cuts in any downturn. As Forrester Research noted in 2023, "In the absence of evidence, perception becomes reality—and too often, marketing is perceived as expendable."

Why the Stakes Are Rising

In B2B and high-consideration markets, the buying journey is increasingly self-directed, complex, and content-driven. Research from McKinsey shows that buyers now engage with an average of 10 or more pieces of content before speaking to a salesperson. This puts marketing at the center of the commercial process—but only if its role is understood and measured. When companies fail to connect marketing performance to business outcomes, they miss insights into what's working, what's wasted, and what's worth scaling.

The future of marketing leadership hinges not just on creativity—but credibility. The ability to quantify how marketing drives business is what will distinguish high-impact CMOs from the rest. It requires a cultural shift—from campaign-centric thinking to commercially accountable strategy. This does not mean abandoning brand storytelling or creativity. On the contrary, it elevates those efforts by ensuring they are purposeful, measurable, and aligned with growth.