

Gartner Research

Build Adaptive Product Marketing Teams to Navigate GTM Challenges

Rahim Kaba

3 May 2024

Build Adaptive Product Marketing Teams to Navigate GTM Challenges

Published 3 May 2024 - ID G00801954 - 18 min read

By Analyst(s): Rahim Kaba

Initiatives: Product Marketing Strategy

Product marketers grapple with adapting and scaling their teams amid go-to-market opportunities and challenges. This research provides insights into building the adaptive team structure and capabilities necessary to bolster product marketing maturity and effectiveness in four common GTM scenarios.

Overview

Key Findings

- There is no universally accepted definition of a product marketer's responsibilities, and as a result, their remit varies greatly from one technology provider to another.
- Product marketing leaders, met with unprecedented go-to-market (GTM) challenges, are reevaluating their team structures in an attempt to create order from chaos.
- Product marketing leaders who focus solely on immediate needs miss an opportunity to build highly adaptive teams for the long term.

Recommendations

- Before making organizational changes to your team, clarify the value and role of product marketing by developing a product marketing team charter with clear purpose, roles/responsibilities, success metrics, stakeholders and deliverables.
- Support new and evolving business needs by identifying roles and team structures that help accelerate the path to market. Recommended organizational development approaches across four common GTM scenarios are detailed in this research.
- Improve product marketing's bench strength by addressing skill, competency and knowledge gaps to deliver on strategic and tactical priorities. Partner with your HR and learning and development teams to build the necessary development plans to address these gaps.

Introduction

As technology and service providers face increased GTM challenges (and opportunities), the pressure grows on product marketing leaders to adapt and scale the functional capabilities that are central to success. Because GTM strategies and tactics are often moving targets for technology and service providers, product marketers must be able to quickly adapt to waves of change.

Many product marketing leaders review functional design when building new capabilities to support their company's growth potential. They identify the roles and team structures that will enable them to consistently improve GTM performance while maximizing the impact of one of the largest areas of product marketing's investments — **its people**.

Product marketing leaders need to make decisions about how to structure and adapt their team (including defining new roles and hiring outside resources), and about the responsibilities of each role to support the needs of the business. Poorly defined and poorly structured product marketing teams can cause internal frustration and delays, leading to a failure to properly tackle and capitalize on GTM challenges and opportunities. This research explores organizational development approaches that help product marketing leaders navigate four common GTM scenarios to advance product marketing maturity and effectiveness (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Identify Product Marketing Roles and Team Structures to Navigate Four Common GTM Scenarios

Identify Product Marketing Roles and Team Structures to Navigate Four Common GTM Scenarios



Source: Gartner
801954_C

Gartner

Analysis

Develop a Team Charter to Clarify the Value and Role of Product Marketing

Before product marketing leaders make organizational changes to their teams, they must first clarify the value and role of product marketing in their organization (see *How Tech CMOs Should Define the Product Marketing Role*). When product marketing is not well-defined, it often leads to frustration, ill-defined processes, delays and inconsistent delivery of deliverables. The result is internal confusion and inefficiency that can have negative consequences on interactions with buyers, customers and other external audiences.

In many technology and service providers, the role is narrowly seen as a support function only (which often results in reactionary activity), or stakeholders do not fully understand the broader context and potential impact of product marketing's role on the business. Defining the role clearly gives you a foundation on which to expand it over time so that it is highly aligned with revenue and the customer experience (CX).

In order to elevate its role, product marketing must define its role with a charter. A charter states product marketing's role in the organization: **Why does product marketing exist? What is its purpose?** In addition, it defines a proactive function aligned to key internal stakeholders and must include the following details:

- Areas of focus and responsibility (including which products, services and/or solutions are supported)
- Description of the team structure
- The strategic, operational and tactical metrics used to measure success
- Stakeholders who provide direction, resources and priorities
- Key functional partnerships for GTM strategy and execution (e.g., content marketing, demand generation, product management, sales, presales and sales enablement)
- Description of key deliverables (e.g., insights, messaging, content, tools and training) and the intended audiences
- Principles used to prioritize work

Investing the required time to develop a team charter reduces confusion about the product marketing team's purpose and objectives. It illustrates the focus and direction of the team to key stakeholders (including executives) and clearly identifies the negative consequences on the business if product marketing did not exist.

For additional guidance and illustrative examples, download the presentation slides in [Use Gartner's Product Marketing Planning Framework to Drive Impact](#).

Reassess Your Team Structure to Support New and Evolving Business Needs

Product marketing teams must remain agile and address the needs of the business and its key stakeholders while driving and supporting ongoing GTM initiatives to achieve revenue and retention goals. Product marketing leaders must identify the areas of focus and team structures that will support these goals. They must evaluate the breadth of their organization's portfolio and the sources of expected revenue (e.g., across offerings, segments, channels and geographies), and they must look past short-term, immediate gains and avoid reactionary measures.

As new GTM needs arise in your organization, ask yourself the following questions:

- What are the key GTM opportunities and challenges your organization faces? What is prompting the need to adapt, scale or restructure the team?
- Which areas are not addressed well today? Which areas of responsibility are not addressed at all?
- What is the level of urgency to address these opportunities and challenges?

In the 2023 Gartner Tech Marketer Role Survey, CMOs said that the most critical areas of focus for product marketing were improving positioning and differentiation (38%), customer and revenue retention (36%), brand reputation and awareness (26%), and launching new products/solutions (26%).

Based on interactions with Gartner clients, product marketing leaders often reassess their team structures and talent to navigate four common GTM scenarios (see Table 1). The approaches for each of these scenarios are explained below. The drivers for these scenarios vary greatly, but can be the result of:

- A merger or acquisition
- Increased funding from investors
- A switch in focus toward a future growth area
- A competitor's decision to divest
- The internal reprioritization of resources/investment

Table 1: Product Marketing Organizational Development Approaches to Navigate Four Common GTM Scenarios

(Enlarged table in Appendix)

GTM Scenarios	Requirements	Approaches
Launch new offerings: Introduce new products, services and/or solutions (a combination of products and/or services) to address new or emerging market opportunities.	- Requires managing a new set of responsibilities and activities to drive awareness, interest and adoption of the new offerings. - Also requires competitive intelligence (CI), positioning, messaging and sales enablement materials to be developed and communicated internally to articulate differentiation and value.	- Realign existing staff with offerings in your portfolio — focusing on how your buyers and customers buy your offerings (individually or in combination). Allocate resources based on expected near-term and future revenue contribution. - Hire a new product, service or solution marketer. - Develop a product marketing center of excellence (CoE) to ensure consistency of launch strategy and execution.
Enter a new market segment: Pursue new market segments (e.g., industries, geographies and customer segments).	Requires a deep understanding of the new market, which may or may not currently exist in the team. This includes knowledge of the industry, buyers and competitors (and development of related materials) to optimally serve and compete in specific market segments.	- Use existing staff, but realign priorities as they dive deep into the new segment. - Leverage internal subject matter experts (SMEs) from other functional areas of the business to support programs. - Hire a segment marketer (including variations such as a vertical marketers and regional product marketers) with expertise in the target segment (e.g., banking and EMEA). - Leverage a product marketing CoE for frameworks and core assets, and have product marketers attune to the specific needs of the new segment.
Introduce a new GTM motion: Pursue new ways of reaching and engaging with your target audience — for example, via product-led growth (PLG), developer marketing and communities, and partner ecosystems.	- Requires product marketers with competencies and skills to attract and activate buyer and user engagement. It also requires the ability to influence the broader marketing team (ABM, demand generation, etc.) and the activities they lead/own. - May require expertise in improving the overall CX.	- Increase the remit of existing product marketing staff at the individual or team level. Initiate upskilling to close any capability gaps (e.g., marketing to developers). - Hire outside resources (e.g., product marketing consultants) for short-term coverage, training and mentorship.
Meet growing internal stakeholder needs: Address expanded expectations of the role and associated deliverables — for example, an increased focus on fostering growth from existing customers.	Requires product marketers with greater depth of coverage in specific areas based on the needs and outcomes of key stakeholders — for example, added responsibilities to drive expanded product use and value realization with existing customers.	- Increase the remit of existing product marketing staff. Initiate upskilling to close any capability gaps. - Introduce specialized functions within product marketing (e.g., CI, sales enablement, customer marketing, partners, pricing and packaging). - Develop a product marketing CoE to enable scale and consistency across portfolio efforts.

Source: Gartner

Depending on your organization's portfolio size, complexity of offerings and GTM strategy, there are many ways to organize and scale your product marketing team (see Figure 2 for an example of a tech provider with a security portfolio). The most common approaches that Gartner sees in the market are detailed in the list below and are often used in combination, especially in larger, more mature technology and service providers.

In the 2023 Gartner Tech Marketer Role Survey, respondents said their companies organized their product marketing teams by:

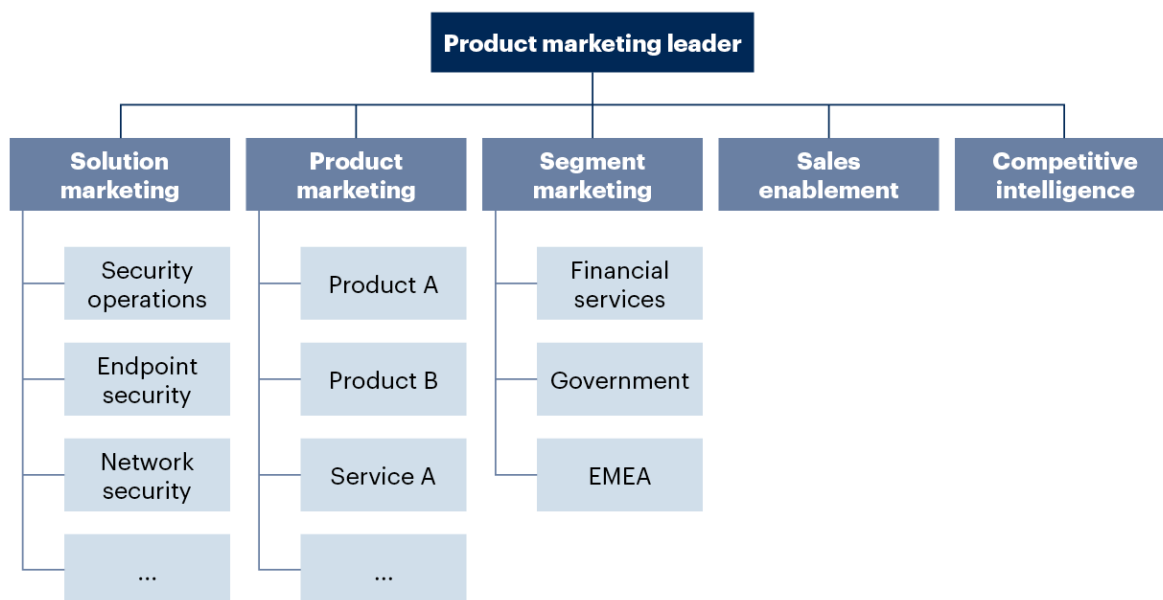
- Product line — 75%
- Solution (i.e., a combination of products/services) — 71%
- Vertical or industry — 55%
- Portfolio — 50%
- Specialized area or core competency (e.g., CI) — 41%
- Geographic region — 40%
- Partner ecosystem — 39%

Make sure you align your approach to your organization's needs and priorities. Schedule an inquiry with a Gartner analyst to explore options that may be the best fit for your organization's circumstances.

Figure 2: Product Marketing Organizational Structure (Illustrative Example)

Product Marketing Organizational Structure

Illustrative example



Source: Gartner
801954_C

“What is the ideal ratio of product marketers to product managers?” is a question Gartner often gets from its clients. To ensure the product marketing role remains proactive and is able to support both strategic and tactical priorities, we recommend a ratio of 1:1, especially in emerging tech markets. In more mature, established markets, this ratio is often 1:2 or 1:3. In companies with ratios greater than 1:3, product marketing teams tend to be more reactive, predominantly tactical and treated like a content factory.

Resources are finite. You may need to deemphasize certain offerings in your portfolio to ensure the success of others. Make sure that you align your resources to the most promising and high-growth potential areas of the portfolio.

Approach No. 1: By Product, Service and/or Solution

The classic product marketing team structure is organized by individual product and service lines. However, as technology and service provider offerings grow in quantity and complexity (whether through acquisition or organic development), it becomes increasingly important to organize those offerings more effectively. Organizations with large or complex sets of offerings must be able to define the individual products and services, as well as combinations of products and/or services (e.g., solutions), through the lens of technology buyers (see Portfolio Marketing: Define Offerings to Align With Customer Needs).

In other words, they need to organize their portfolios based on how buyers purchase their products and/or services (whether individually or in combination) to address buyer needs and ultimately achieve the outcomes they seek. Organize your product marketing team around those business outcomes that buyers are trying to achieve, and thus around how buyers purchase technology offerings.

“Solution marketers” are often overlay talent in product marketing teams. They work closely with product marketers to understand product- and service-level positioning and messaging, and they articulate solution-level value propositions that address a broader set of buyers, use cases and, often, competitors. As such, solution marketing demands deeper expertise to describe the value in how solutions can solve a broader set of business problems. Product marketing teams may also include “portfolio marketers” whose responsibilities align with a broader portfolio — that is, a large or complex set of offerings.

Approach No. 2: By Market Segment

For organizations with well-defined target segments, market context is crucial to product marketing's ability to maximize impact. Industry- or geographic-specific regulations, buying behaviors, value expectations and competitive landscapes can influence how product marketing operates (see [A Practical Guide to Market Segmentation for Technology and Service Providers](#)).

Buyers gravitate toward messaging and content that demonstrates an authentic understanding of market-specific conditions, buying dynamics and operational constraints. Technology and service providers who want to appeal to these types of buyers must consider embedding market segment expertise into their team structures — often, by industry (e.g., government), geography (e.g., Europe) or company size/maturity (e.g., mid-market).

“Segment marketers” (including variations such as vertical marketers and regional product marketers) within the product marketing team have deep knowledge of a given segment and are able to tie products, services and solutions to the specific buyer needs of that segment. Similar to solution marketers, segment marketers are overlay talent that work in conjunction with the broader product marketing team.

Demand for product marketers with market-specific expertise is high. In the absence of specific market experience, candidates familiar with your target organizations and buyer personas should be strongly considered (see [The Importance of Market Experience in Product Marketing Candidates](#)). In addition, identify and partner with experts in other functional areas of the business who possess the market-specific skills you're looking for to support your needs in the interim.

Approach No. 3: By Specialized Function

Additional specialization in product marketing may be needed to address the expanded stakeholder expectations of the role and associated deliverables. The two specialized functions we see often are CI and sales enablement, but they may also include other areas such as customer marketing, partner and developer ecosystems, and pricing and packaging.

These specialized functions may:

- Be part of an existing role outlined — that is, a product marketing manager covering specific competitors related to their product category

- Have sole responsibility over one of these specialized areas and provide deeper insights and depth of coverage to the broader product marketing team and other key stakeholders
- Be owned by other parts of the organization — for example, sales enablement may be owned by sales or sales operations, and CI may be owned by corporate strategy or product management, but both should be supported through guidance from the product marketing function and expertise from the overlay talent

Approach No. 4: By Center of Excellence

Product marketing leaders are evolving their teams through increased centralization to create more efficient, scalable and agile teams. Gartner describes a CoE as “a specialized team responsible for leading the adoption or advancement of a particular capability.”

Rather than directly executing on the capability, the team shares its expertise across the organization through guidance, coaching and training to enhance execution.

Implementing a CoE can assist technology and service providers in disseminating best practices more effectively throughout their organization.

Common areas of expertise within product marketing CoEs include product launches, positioning, messaging, CI and sales enablement (see Critical Competencies for a Product Marketing Center of Excellence). For example, you may have a high number of product launches or significant geographic expansion strategies, or you may be in the process of defining new routes to market. Consequently, for your unique strategies, you will need to modify or add to your core competencies to reflect what’s critical to your organization and ensure the achievement of business objectives.

Although centralization is critical for driving efficiency, it is not a substitute for GTM alignment. To drive growth and greater contribution to business, strong cross-functional collaboration within and outside of marketing is imperative (see Strengthen GTM Alignment to Accelerate Your Path to Market).

Address Skill, Competency and Knowledge Gaps

Product marketing leaders address talent gaps in different ways. These include hiring new in-house talent, upskilling existing product marketing staff, hiring outside resources and leveraging resources from other functional areas of the business. Organizations that perceive an area of responsibility as a core competency and central to the product marketing function tend to place a higher emphasis on upskilling existing staff and hiring new talent in-house. Outside resources, however, are used to support such work when internal resources are exhausted or not available. They are also critical in supporting organizations in their efforts to dispel internal bias.

Product marketing leaders must assess their team's skills and competencies and identify gaps in the capabilities needed to deliver on strategic and tactical priorities (see Tool: Product Marketing Job Leveling & Competency Guide).

Product marketing leaders should:

- **Recognize the GTM challenges, needs and opportunities, and related urgency across the organization:** This includes executive leadership, product management, demand generation, analyst relations, sales and customer success. This can be achieved, for example, through the use of biannual stakeholder confidence surveys to gauge sentiment with revenue teams and their ability to win, retain and grow customers. Note, too, that this can change and evolve over time as the needs of the business (and/or buyer dynamics) adjust and shift.
- **Evaluate attributes such as competency depth, skills coverage and position volatility:** Do this by gathering input from talent and key stakeholders to establish the current baseline (see Tool: Product Marketing Job Leveling & Competency Guide). Revisit this baseline regularly to optimize talent development strategies and to stay ahead of talent-related risks. When teams lack skills coverage and competency depth, product marketing leaders should consider upskilling existing staff through services offered by learning and development providers. According to the 2023 Gartner Tech Marketing Organizational Design Survey,² almost half of tech marketing leaders (48%) said they were investing in upskilling existing staff to address capability gaps. This includes participating in coaching and mentoring programs, as well as attending external events and training seminars. Analyst research and advisory services can also help product marketing teams improve their understanding of the market and GTM effectiveness in evolving areas such as PLG, developer marketing and communities, and partner ecosystems (see Tech Marketing Approaches Primer for 2024).

- **Determine whether to source resources and skill sets internally or externally based on factors such as budget and time frames:** Keep in mind that, as product marketing teams mature and grow, external resources do not necessarily replace the need for internal resources; rather, they may provide short-term coverage as the organization evolves. Consider leveraging talent from other functions that may share core identified and required attributes (such as expertise in a specific industry).

Product marketing leaders must partner with their HR and learning and development teams to build development plans to develop critical skills and competencies. This allows them to simultaneously engage their staff and meet the future needs of the business.

Evidence

¹ **2023 Gartner Tech Marketer Role Survey.** This survey sought to understand the tech marketers' evolving priorities, focus, collaboration with other key functions, and metrics to measure performance and technologies. The research was conducted online from October through November 2023 among 237 respondents from North America (n = 126) and Western Europe (n = 111). Respondents were from midsize (n = 34), large (n = 77) and extra-large (n = 126) organizations across the telecom and technology product or service industries, held the position of director level or higher, and were responsible for marketing/product marketing within their organizations. 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.

² **2023 Gartner Tech Marketing Organizational Design Survey.** This survey explored which organizational designs, cross-functional alignments, influences, strategies and brand efforts impact tech providers that are experiencing growth; where adjustments to drive efficiencies are being made; and the reasons behind some of those adjustments. The primary research was conducted online by an external partner in April, May and June 2023. In total, 201 respondents answered the survey. Qualifying organizations were providers of technology and telecom products and services (software, professional/managed services and hardware) with estimated enterprisewide annual revenue of \$100 million and above in North America (n = 163) and Europe (n = 38). Qualified participants were senior leaders in their organizations whose job titles included C-level executive and equivalent (n = 73), SVP/EVP/head of function/general manager (n = 77), and vice president and equivalent (n = 51) in the marketing function. Almost all the survey participants were no more than one level away from the most senior marketing executive within the company. All organizations focused on businesses as their primary customers (including B2B, business-to-business-to-consumer [B2B2C] and business-to-business-to-business [B2B2B]). 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 Author

Some documents may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.

Tool: Product Marketing Job Leveling & Competency Guide

Boost Product Marketing Performance With Data Literacy Skills

Strengthen GTM Alignment to Accelerate Your Path to Market

Top Metrics to Optimize Product Marketing Performance

Infographic: Product Marketers — The Super Heroes of Tech Marketing Teams

Tool: Product Marketing RACI Matrix

© 2025 Gartner, Inc. and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved. Gartner is a registered trademark of Gartner, Inc. and its affiliates. This publication may not be reproduced or distributed in any form without Gartner's prior written permission. It consists of the opinions of Gartner's research organization, which should not be construed as statements of fact. While the information contained in this publication has been obtained from sources believed to be reliable, Gartner disclaims all warranties as to the accuracy, completeness or adequacy of such information. Although Gartner research may address legal and financial issues, Gartner does not provide legal or investment advice and its research should not be construed or used as such. Your access and use of this publication are governed by [Gartner's Usage Policy](#). Gartner prides itself on its reputation for independence and objectivity. Its research is produced independently by its research organization without input or influence from any third party. For further information, see "[Guiding Principles on Independence and Objectivity](#)." Gartner research may not be used as input into or for the training or development of generative artificial intelligence, machine learning, algorithms, software, or related technologies.

Table 1: Product Marketing Organizational Development Approaches to Navigate Four Common GTM Scenarios

GTM Scenarios	Requirements	Approaches
Launch new offerings: Introduce new products, services and/or solutions (a combination of products and/or services) to address new or emerging market opportunities.	■ Requires managing a new set of responsibilities and activities to drive awareness, interest and adoption of the new offerings. ■ Also requires competitive intelligence (CI), positioning, messaging and sales enablement materials to be developed and communicated internally to articulate differentiation and value.	■ Realign existing staff with offerings in your portfolio — focusing on how your buyers and customers buy your offerings (individually or in combination). Allocate resources based on expected near-term and future revenue contribution. ■ Hire a new product, service or solution marketer. ■ Develop a product marketing center of excellence (CoE) to ensure consistency of launch strategy and execution.
Enter a new market segment: Pursue new market segments (e.g., industries, geographies and customer segments).	■ Requires a deep understanding of the new market, which may or may not currently exist in the team. This includes knowledge of the industry, buyers and competitors (and development of related materials) to optimally serve and compete in specific market segments.	■ Use existing staff, but realign priorities as they dive deep into the new segment. ■ Leverage internal subject matter experts (SMEs) from other functional areas of the business to support programs. ■ Hire a segment marketer (including variations such a vertical marketers and regional product marketers) with expertise in the target segment (e.g., banking and EMEA).

		■ Leverage a product marketing CoE for frameworks and core assets, and have product marketers attune to the specific needs of the new segment.
Introduce a new GTM motion: Pursue new ways of reaching and engaging with your target audience — for example, via product-led growth (PLG), developer marketing and communities, and partner ecosystems.	■ Requires product marketers with competencies and skills to attract and activate buyer and user engagement. It also requires the ability to influence the broader marketing team (ABM, demand generation, etc.) and the activities they lead/own. ■ May require expertise in improving the overall CX.	■ Increase the remit of existing product marketing staff at the individual or team level. Initiate upskilling to close any capability gaps (e.g., marketing to developers). ■ Hire outside resources (e.g., product marketing consultants) for short-term coverage, training and mentorship.
Meet growing internal stakeholder needs: Address expanded expectations of the role and associated deliverables — for example, an increased focus on fostering growth from existing customers.	■ Requires product marketers with greater depth of coverage in specific areas based on the needs and outcomes of key stakeholders — for example, added responsibilities to drive expanded product use and value realization with existing customers.	■ Increase the remit of existing product marketing staff. Initiate upskilling to close any capability gaps. ■ Introduce specialized functions within product marketing (e.g., CI, sales enablement, customer marketing, partners, pricing and packaging). ■ Develop a product marketing CoE to enable scale and consistency across portfolio efforts.

Actionable, objective insight

Position your organization for success. Explore these additional complimentary resources and tools for tech marketing leaders:



Webinar

Product Marketers, Drive Greater AI Partner Productivity

Uncover four key areas that drive greater partner productivity.

[Watch Now](#)



Research

Predicts 2024: How GenAI Will Reshape Tech Marketing

Prepare and capitalize on the opportunities from GenAI.

[Download Now](#)



Infographic

Increasing investments and the impact of GenAI

Find out how to drive business growth through optimized investments.

[Download Now](#)



Client Story

Refining Product Positioning and Messaging to Improve Customer Acquisition

Discover how Gartner helped a fast-growing company refine their positioning strategy.

[Learn More](#)

Already a client?

Get access to even more resources in your client portal. [Log In](#)

Connect With Us

Get actionable, objective insight that drives smarter decisions and stronger performance on your mission-critical priorities. Contact us to become a client:

U.S.: 1 844 466 7915

International: +44 (0) 3330 603 501

[Become a Client](#)

Learn more about Gartner for Tech Marketing Leaders

gartner.com/en/industries/high-tech

Stay connected to the latest insight

