Gartner

2024 Gartner Marketing and Communications Awards

Category Guide

What's Inside

This will direct to the 2023 Gartner Marketing and Communications Awards video showcase where you'll see "what success looks like" in our previous categories.

2024
Categories

Content and Campaign Excellence

Leadership and Functional Excellence

Excellence in Change Communications

Overview

The only thing that's constant is change — a cliché, yet true, nonetheless. Multiple world and macroeconomic crises create an unrelenting tidal wave of change. While many short-term changes evolve into long-term strategies, conventional drivers of change such as dynamic market events, fierce business expectations and evolving technology continue to reshape the organizational landscape. Communicators remain on the front lines, providing communication support to leaders while ensuring that employees understand the change and feel committed to and capable of taking action.

This award will recognize leaders and/or teams that have successfully communicated change inside and/or outside their organization. Judges will be looking for submissions that address changes such as (but are not limited to) hybrid work adoption, merger or acquisition, organizational restructures, digital transformation, product repositioning or changes to customer service models.

Winning entries may include approaches that demonstrate how they have:

- Partnered effectively with cross-functional leaders, executive leaders and managers by clearly defining respective roles during various stages of change management

- Effectively tracked change impacts and acceptance to recognize emerging risks and course-correct communication plans

- Supported leaders and managers in creating clear and compelling communication about organizational transformation, desired culture or behavior change

- Sensitively handled existing change fatigue, information overload and/or fear of new technology

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Content and Campaign Excellence

Excellence in Marketing and Communications Content

Overview

Great content connects you to your audience, and powers the experience. Now more than ever there is a need to fuel more channels with more relevant, often personalized content. The content bottleneck remains, but improvements in content capabilities, and distribution are helping to scale content across channels and geographies. Best-in-class approaches to content creation and management accelerate your efforts across all marketing communication channels, including advertising, personalization and more.

This award will recognize leaders and/or teams that have built strong brands and meet customer needs with differentiated content. Judges will be looking for examples that demonstrate that cool content isn't just unique, but it is a concerted effort by a strategic team who recognizes the needs of their customer and follows through with content that meets those needs.

Winning entries may include approaches that demonstrate how they have:

- Executed a well-designed strategy that resulted in high impact content across channels

- Supported dynamic, modular content experiences that resonate across the customer journey

- Scaled content through advanced, agile content operations

- Differentiated content that had a measurable impact on the organization

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Excellence in Supporting Employee Engagement and Experience

Overview

Have you strengthened employee connection to the company — and improved your organization's performance goals — with a smart communication strategy? Improved engagement and collaboration across geographies, working styles or business units? Redefined your internal brand and seen your culture, employee commitment and ability to meet customer needs become stronger and more competitive? Approached employee communications with a CX mindset, including persona development, journey mapping, or message sequencing? Judges will be looking for submissions that demonstrate success in areas such as these.

This award will recognize leaders and/or teams that have excelled in improving and/or promoting the employee experience in highly effective, creative and tangible ways.

Winning entries may include approaches that demonstrate how they have:

- Effectively reached and equitably engaged non-wired employee segments (e.g., those on the road or in a facility without constant access to digital messages) as a part of a hybrid workforce (i.e., employees with different onsite/remote statuses)

- Leveraged managers as employees' preferred channel of communication to ensure a consistent, positive employee experience

- Implemented ambassadorship or advocacy programs (e.g., for change, culture, brand, etc.) to align employees with the organization's vision

- Effectively partnered with HR or other internal support functions to manage enterprise communication channels, platforms and tools (including AI-enabled tools)

- Sparked excitement among employees for working with new technology (i.e., working with "robocolleagues" or "cobots")

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Excellence in Sustainability and ESG Communications

Overview

Whether it be ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance), Sustainability, DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion), or broader initiatives that create social impact, stakeholder expectations for organizations to be proactive and highly effective in their messaging continues to climb. But while communicating on these topics can significantly improve how connected your stakeholders feel to your organization, getting it wrong can present significant risks in the form of stakeholders boycotting - or even worse - actively advocating against your organization.

This award will recognize leaders and/or teams that have found an innovative way for Communications to support ESG, Sustainability, or DEI initiatives that have led to business outcomes. Judges will be looking for submissions that share examples such as increased sales, employee recruitment or retention outcomes, or increased referrals, brand awareness or preference.

Winning entries may include approaches that demonstrate how they have:

- Created or refreshed your ESG, Sustainability, or DEI communications strategy that has had a tangible impact on your organization

- Found innovative ways to use ESG, Sustainability, or DEI communications to connect with and influence your most important audiences

- Collaboration with other teams (such as Marketing, Sales, HR, or ERM) to either help select which ESG, Sustainability, or DEI issues to engage with and/or amplify the value of those commitments.

- Created highly effective reports on your ESG, sustainability, or DEI commitments and achievements. This could include either/both formal (e.g., CSRD) or informal reporting to internal and/or external audiences

Jump to…

CMO of the Year

Overview

Amid acute business risks and shifting digital ownership, the Marketing function risks being descoped and defunded such that it can no longer drive long-term business health. CMO's must recalibrate perceptions of marketing and drive business-wide alignment on new strategies and customer engagement models for long-term growth.

This award recognizes an individual who brings to life the qualities of an exceptional leader in navigating the challenges associated with being a CMO. Judges will be looking for how leaders have achieved outstanding success in their role, elevating the performance of their team and function.

This award is limited to CMOs (or equivalent, if your organization doesn't have a CMO). You may nominate yourself or someone else.

Winning entries may include approaches that demonstrate how they have:

- Successfully repositioned marketing from being a reactive order taker to a proactive business partner.

- Successfully led or contributed to enterprise-wide projects or initiatives that demonstrably supported enterprise goals.

- Successfully managed Marketing through adversity, such as budget cuts, talent challenges or macroeconomic pressures.

- Successfully built or rebuilt a marketing function from the ground up.

- Successfully spearheaded growth or innovation initiatives that introduced capabilities new to the organization, industry or customers with demonstrable positive impact.

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Excellence in Brand and Reputation Management

Overview

In a highly competitive and polarized environment, a truly differentiated brand message and experience is more important than ever. Leaders must think beyond just functional benefits to position their brands for success. Activating a brand and/or reputation management strategy by galvanizing broad internal support is necessary to bring the brand to life externally to customers in a way that truly resonates with them. "Business as usual" will not elevate brands in this environment.

This award will recognize leaders and/or teams that have looked beyond the conventional approaches to brand and/or reputation strategy and execution and addressed these challenges head on. Judges will be looking for how submissions have done things like demonstrated how unique insights drove a differentiated brand strategy, championed internal brand understanding, and/or drove the organization to execute the brand in new and exciting ways. When showcasing your results, please indicate how the brand changes (and not simply higher spend) drove meaningful changes internally and with customers.

Winning entries may include approaches that demonstrate how they have:

- Created and rolled out new corporate narratives and/or brand narratives.

- Repositioned or refreshed corporate and/or product brand(s)

- Redefined organizational brand architecture

- Measured and/or reported on brand and/or reputation health

- Demonstrated the value and impact of brand investments to internal stakeholders

- Delivered new and salient brand experiences that change audience perspectives

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- Submission Criteria

- Examples of Success

Excellence in Communications Measurement and Reporting

Overview

Excellence in measurement is the bedrock of impactful communications. It can maximize (or prove) the ROI of activities, provide early warning signs of a failing tactic and clarify where scarce resources are best invested. The most valuable measurement efforts are business outcomes-focused, going beyond volumetrics (likes, shares, open rates) to capture actual behavior change and business impact.

Judges will be looking for examples of what has worked -as well as what didn't! If your measurement of a project revealed that your tactics were failing, that means your measurement was succeeding. Measurement is as important for identifying when something's going wrong as it is for proving something went right. We encourage you to tell us both these kinds of stories!

This award will recognize leaders and/or teams that have measured and/or reported business outcomes in innovative and effective ways.

Winning entries may include approaches that demonstrate how they have:

- Created measurement plans of any altitude (function- or project-level) that use metrics and measurement methods tailored to desired audience and/or business outcomes

- Collaborated with business partners to develop outcomes-focused metrics and/or measurement methods for marketing or communications projects

- Created dashboards or reports that make it easy for teams to summarize their function's/project's performance on key metrics

- Created reports that clearly outline to leaders how Communications has supported key business outcomes

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Excellence in Cross-Functional Collaboration

Overview

The market never ceases to evolve, and Marketing can be a critical enabler of the enterprise's ability to sense and respond to change. But turning insight into action often necessitates cross-functional collaboration. Efficient and effective collaboration requires both the art of influence and the ability to win resource commitments from other functions. Even with cross-functional commitments, short term needs often stymie attempts to work together towards a collective goal. Effective marketing leaders innovate in order to impact enterprise objectives.

This award will recognize Marketing and Communications leaders (and/or teams) that have demonstrated consistent cross-functional impact through collaboration methods and approaches. Judges will be looking for examples that have supported organizational outcomes such as improved speed to market, speed of response to market changes, improved customer satisfaction or increased organizational efficiency.

Winning entries may include approaches that demonstrate the above impact by how they have:

- Established criteria for determining when/if to collaborate at all

- Enabled clarity and alignment of resource contributions (over time)

- Employed governance tactics that keep initiatives moving forward, faster

- Embedded agility with respect to altering resource commitments when necessary

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Excellence in Customer Journey Orchestration

Overview

Marketing channels and customer behavior are constantly evolving. Customer journeys are increasingly complex, with customers routinely interacting with brands across numerous channels – including digital and human-led – as they learn, consider and buy. All of this change makes it harder to serve the right message to the right customer at the right time. But technology and analytics have opened up new possibilities in serving customers and creating valuable multichannel engagement.

This award will recognize leaders and/or teams that have embraced innovation to help harness a complex environment. Judges will be looking for examples of how teams have successfully guided customers through their purchase journey objectives.

Winning entries may include approaches that demonstrate how they are:

- Building compelling experiences that deepen customer engagement by connecting channels

- Developing sophisticated methods of sensing and proactively responding to customer needs

- Applying automated personalization and/or next-best action design

- Coordinating between multiple teams to facilitate a cohesive customer journey

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Excellence in Marketing and Communications Talent Management

Overview

Talent is the lifeblood of a successful organization, but CMOs and Communications leaders report that it's more difficult than ever to hire and retain the right talent. Disruptive technologies have the potential to fundamentally change marketing skill sets forever. Big investments in marketing technology, the best creative and media executions, the most innovative commerce initiatives — all are doomed to failure without the right talent, organized effectively.

This award will recognize leaders and/or teams that have implemented successful programs to fully leverage and improve the marketing and communications talent on their internal teams. Judges will be looking for examples of programs that value and invest in talent for today and the future. These programs should be measurable in the business results they've generated - whether those results are realized at an organizational, team, or individual level.

Winning entries may include approaches that demonstrate how they have:

- Created and implemented a strategic workforce plan for marketing and/or communications

- Upskilled, trained, and planned career paths of internal marketing and/or communications teams

- Implemented programs focused on shared purpose, collaboration, and deeper connections between team members

- Implemented programs targeted to marketing and communications employees' personal growth and well-being

- Implemented flexible work initiatives - including flexibility in location, work hours, and autonomy

- Implemented Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives specific to marketing and communications

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Excellence in Use of Marketing and Communications Technology

Overview

Marketing and communications leaders rely on a technology stack to improve outcomes and support profitable differentiation. As the martech landscape matures, efficient and innovative use of data and artificial intelligence (AI) and data-driven strategies now separates the leaders from the pack. Technology is a mission-critical component of the modern organization.

This award will recognize leaders and/or teams that have leveraged technology to fundamentally change the way they engage with internal and external audiences with increased relevance and impact . "Out of the box" is not differentiating. Judges will be looking for examples of innovation not only in what technology enables but also in how technology has been rolled out, adopted and adapted to strategically support the organization.

Winning entries may include approaches that demonstrate:

- Execution of technology that has enabled innovative experiences for customers, employees or other stakeholders

- Execution of technology that has demonstrated a clear return on investment for the organization and/or enabled new business opportunities

- Strategic collaboration on marketing technologies between IT, CX, sales, customer service or other internal or external partners

- Adaptive processes that enable progressive adoption of new technology and use cases

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Excellence in Marketing Data, Insights and Analytics

Overview

Data and analytics are the foundation of marketing as well as critical differentiators in competitive performance across all business models. In recent times customer data, and customer analytics, have come to the forefront of leaders' minds, amidst the acceleration of marketing technology development and data privacy regulations.

This award will recognize leaders and/or teams that have excelled in this space. Judges will be looking for submissions that demonstrate how they have deepened and scaled their capabilities to generate insights about customers and their needs, accurately predict their desires and responses, and/or optimize ongoing decisions and programs.

Winning entries may include approaches that demonstrate:

- Cross-functional collaboration with business and data partners that deliver greater impact through use cases. Use cases which depend on customer and marketing data to deliver business outcomes.

- Progressive success in leveraging data to support new marketing use cases or increase the effectiveness of existing use cases.

- Effective customer analytics capabilities deployed at scale, for example personalization across channels including service, or customer value metrics in predictive modeling . B2B lead, prospect and customer examples are encouraged and welcome .

- Programs to increase marketing's usage of marketing analytics that delivered verifiable outcomes.

- Programs of measurement that prove marketing's impact on business outcomes. For example, use of marketing analytics methodologies to demonstrate marketing's impact, such as marketing mix modeling, experimentation and attribution.

- Operational performance measures that drive continuous improvement (good work management systems/processes) - measures that help us drive towards improved operational efficiency.

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Small Idea, Big Impact

Overview

Sometimes big things come from humble beginnings. Small tweaks, improvements and innovations can translate into major impact on internal and external audiences. Have you or your team had a "small idea, big impact" moment in the past year? Has your organization reaped outsize rewards from a small change? Judges will be looking for examples of ways teams have piloted, iterated, and experimented with approaches to achieve significant impact; this may include use of AI, adaptive or agile planning, or other kinds of tweaks and innovations.

This award recognizes the impact of teams, big and small, who have seen and felt the power of small but savvy ideas.

Winning entries will demonstrate the following:

• **Small idea**: Changes and initiatives of modest resource commitment and outlay. For the purposes of this award, small ideas are deemed as taking ~1-4 months from idea to execution and fewer than ~4 in-house FTEs to execute.

• **Big impact:** Demonstrated impact on audience attitudes and behaviors, as well as organizational outcomes. For the purposes of demonstrating the impact of your idea, ensure that you clearly articulate the business-impact that the work had on your organization.

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• Submission Criteria

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Submission Criteria: Content and Campaign Excellence Categories

Step 1: Business-Relevance of the Work *(max.100 words)*
In this section, briefly summarize the <u>business problem</u> that your work helped solve and/or the <u>business goal</u> that your work helped achieve. Make sure you articulate why your CEO (or equivalent) would care about what you did.

Step 2: What You Did *(max. 400 words)*
Provide full details of your entry, including:

•   How you took a strategic approach in your work.

•   The steps you took.

•   Examples of relevant tactics or deliverables.

Step 3a: Evidence of Business Impact *(max. 200 words)*
In this section, provide evidence of your *business impact*. Submissions that can link the work to business-relevant measures or outcomes (e.g., increased sales, revenue, wallet share, sales conversion rate, share price, employee retention, employee productivity) will be looked upon more favorably.

Step 3b: Evidence of Behavioral Impact *(max. 200 words)*
In this section, provide evidence of how your work influenced *people's behaviors* in ways that supported a positive business impact (e.g., increased customer referrals, attendance at events, requests for product demos or more information).

Step 3c: Evidence of Strong Content or Campaign Performance *(max. 200 words)*
In this section, provide evidence of how your content or campaign performed, if relevant (e.g., tactical content metrics such as reach, clicks, shares).

Step 4: Attach Examples of Your Content and/or Impact *(optional, max. 5 attachments)*
In this section, you are encouraged to share a maximum of 5 attachments that demonstrate the quality of your content or campaign, and/or the impact that your work had on your audiences or the broader organization.

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Submission Criteria: Leadership and Functional Excellence Categories

Step 1: Business-Relevance of the Work *(max. 100 words)*
In this section, briefly summarize the <u>business problem</u> that your work helped solve and/or the <u>business goal</u> that your work helped achieve. Make sure you articulate why your CEO (or equivalent) would care about what you did.

Step 2: What You Did *(max. 400 words)*
Provide full details of your entry, including:

• How you took a strategic approach in your work.

• The steps you took.

• Examples of relevant tactics or deliverables.

Step 3a: Evidence of Business Impact *(max. 200 words)*
In this section, provide evidence of your *business impact*. Submissions that can link the work to business-relevant measures or outcomes (e.g., increased sales, revenue, wallet share, sales conversion rate, share price, employee retention, employee productivity) will be looked upon more favorably.

Step 3b: Evidence of Behavioral or Other Impact *(max. 200 words)*
In this section, provide any other evidence of how your work contributed towards the business impact (e.g., people's behavioral change, qualitative feedback from stakeholders).

Step 4: Attach Examples of Your Work and/or Impact *(optional, max. 5 attachments)*
In this section, you are encouraged to share a maximum of 5 attachments that demonstrate the quality of your work and the impact it had on your function and/or the broader organization (e.g., specific slides from presentation decks, internal or external recognition of your work, dashboards, reports etc.).

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Examples of Success

In this section, you can view examples of entries from the 2023 Awards Winners and Finalists to see what successful entries have focused on in previous years. **Note**, we have made some adjustments to category criteria and overviews; **ensure your entry aligns with the 2024 category overview and submission criteria.**

Excellence in Brand Activation and Experience	View 2023 Finalist Videos
Excellence in Change Communications	View 2023 Finalist Videos
Excellence in Employee Experience	View 2023 Finalist Videos
Excellence in Marketing and Sales Alignment	View 2023 Finalist Videos
Excellence in Marketing Data, Insights and Analytics	View 2023 Finalist Videos
Excellence in Reputation and Thought Leadership	View 2023 Finalist Videos
Excellence in Social Impact	View 2023 Finalist Videos
Innovation in Communications Measurement and Reporting	View 2023 Finalist Videos
Innovation in Marketing and Communications Technology	View 2023 Finalist Videos
Innovation in Multichannel Customer Engagement	View 2023 Finalist Videos
Leader of the Year	View 2023 Finalist Videos
Small Idea, Big Impact	View 2023 Finalist Videos

Learn more about the winners and their award-winning entries.

Watch 2023 Awards Webinar Replay

Download 2023 Highlights eBook