

An abstract graphic on a dark blue background. It features several clusters of four light blue squares arranged in a 2x2 grid, each cluster enclosed by a thin light blue circle. These clusters are connected by thin, light blue lines that form a network-like structure. The lines are thicker at the junctions and become thinner as they extend. The overall composition is clean and modern, suggesting a digital or organizational structure.

Future-Proof Your Marketing Organization to Outpace Competition

Build the right foundation to support sustainable growth

Gartner®

Following a period of disruption, CMOs centralized their marketing organizations to alleviate operational problems, and grew their teams despite a challenging talent environment. Gartner's Marketing Organization Survey captures the state of the function as it adapts to unprecedented change.



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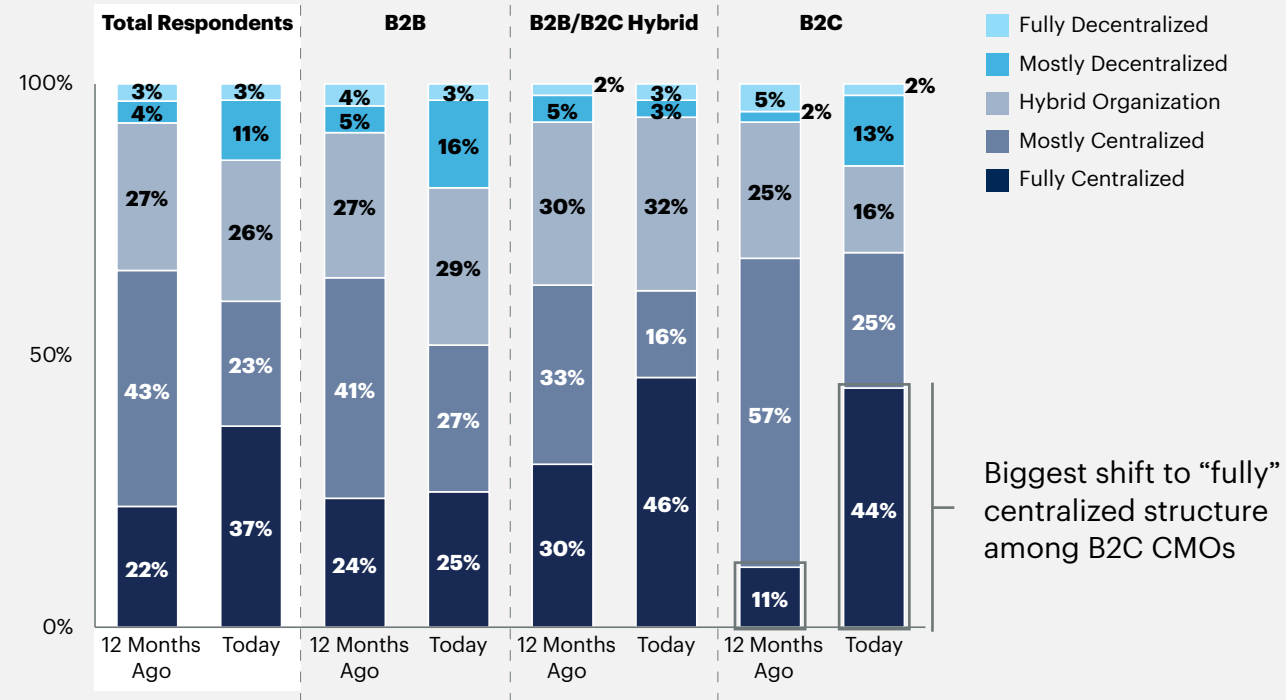


Data Snapshot

Figure 1: CMOs Further Centralize Their Marketing Organization Structures

Marketing Function Structure: Today vs. 12 Months Ago

Percentage of Respondents



n = 203 marketing leaders. Base sizes vary by business model
 Q: Please select the best description of your Marketing function structure as it existed 12 months ago and as it exists today.
 Source: 2022 Gartner Marketing and Communications Organization Survey

Data Insights

Increased enterprise costs, growth expectations, squeezed marketing budgets, repercussions of the Great Resignation and a period of digital transformation have forced CMOs to reexamine their function's structure. There is a deliberate push toward exploring customer-focused team structures and investing in marketing operations teams.

60% of Marketing Organizations Have Centralized Some or All of the Function in the Quest for Operational Efficiency

Centralization is not a new concept in marketing. Previous Gartner Marketing Organization surveys reported a drift to the center. But respondents to the 2022 survey reported that the pace of centralization has quickened, with CMOs significantly shifting their organizations in the last year to centralized structures, with 37% fully centralized and 23% mostly centralized. With a slight exception for B2B marketing organizations, CMOs favor centralized organizational structures over decentralized or hybrid models. CMOs in B2C organizations doubled-down on a “fully” centralized structure over “mostly” centralized.

So why centralize, and why now? CMOs cited a host of operational excellence issues — such as prioritization, workflows and collaboration — as the primary reasons for making changes to their organizational structures.

But centralization should not be seen as an organizational panacea. A.D. Chandler, professor of business history at Harvard Business School and Johns Hopkins University, stated that “structure should follow strategy.” CMOs may be lured by the promise of greater control and economies of scale that centralization offers, but each structure brings with it a set of benefits and drawbacks. CMOs must place organizational decisions in the strategic context, making trade-offs based on restructuring objectives, capability gaps and cultural realities.

CMOs Increase Control of Operations and Strategy, but Cede Responsibility for Creative and Resource Management

The last couple of years of disruption have impacted the external and internal environments, and Gartner reported on the changing role of marketing in the enterprise. As roles and relationships change, how does this impact the responsible, accountable, consulted and informed (RACI) matrix for marketing capabilities?

CMOs report that responsibilities across the marketing organization have shifted. Marketing’s sole responsibilities for marketing operations, marketing strategy and marketing-led innovation have increased (see Figure 2). These shifts are consequential, as previous Gartner surveys have identified these capabilities as being vital to the delivery of the marketing strategy. But marketing’s sole responsibilities for resource management, creative development, content tagging and martech management have decreased (see the 2023 Gartner Marketing Technology Survey).

Figure 2: CMOs Increased Marketing's Sole Responsibilities in Strategic Areas

B2B Marketers	YoY Percentage Point Change	B2C Marketers	YoY Percentage Point Change
Marketing-Led Innovation	▲ 18 pp	Brand Management	▲ 16 pp
Marketing Operations	▲ 11 pp	Digital Marketing	▲ 11 pp
Marketing Strategy	▲ 6 pp	Marketing Strategy	▲ 10 pp
Marketing Data and Analytics	▲ 6 pp	Content Management	▲ 8 pp
Digital Marketing	▲ 6 pp	Marketing Financials	▲ 8 pp
Market Research	▲ 5 pp	Marketing Operations	▲ 7 pp
Traditional Media	▲ 4 pp	Marketing-Led Innovation	▲ 3 pp
Business Strategy	▲ 3 pp	Traditional Media	▲ 3 pp

n = 79 B2B marketing leaders; 61 B2C marketing leaders. Base sizes vary by area.
 Q. What level of responsibility does marketing currently have in each area?
 Q. Now thinking back 12 months ago, did Marketing have sole, shared, or no responsibility for each of these areas?
 Source: 2022 Gartner Marketing and Communications Organization Survey
 Note: Percentage point differences may not add up due to rounding

Marginal losses of sole responsibility (in favor of shared and collaborative) were also reported across capabilities essential for digitally oriented growth, including digital media, digital commerce and CX. In the year ahead, CMOs must work to identify the responsibilities that marketing can afford to cede, and those they must fight to maintain to ensure that marketing plays an active role in future-forward enterprise value creation.

61% of CMOs Have Grown Their Teams, Despite Talent Challenges and Attrition

As customer journeys become more complex, CMOs must recruit and develop new skill sets to support these journeys, while maintaining a culture of creativity and collaboration in new hybrid work environments. This is challenging at the best of times, but with increased talent competition, and in the face of the Great Resignation, the talent challenge is amplified.

Despite these challenges, respondents to the 2022 Gartner Marketing Organization Survey feel positive. Sixty-one percent of CMOs surveyed grew their marketing organization over the last 12 months. Within that group, 16% reported that their teams are now significantly larger than a year ago.

So, what does this mean for team size? CMOs surveyed reported a median of 6.3 direct reports and a median team size of 115 notwithstanding a 10% median attrition rate for marketing. While a 10% resignation rate sounds bad, their communications counterparts got hit with a whopping 20% median attrition rate. One of the reasons why CMOs fared better is that they got creative: 55% reported that they offered different flexible working options than the rest of the organization.

However, marketing is still not out of the Great Resignation woods yet, as 15% of CMOs cited a loss of 30% or more, and 8% cited a 21% to 30% loss. Furthermore, staff retention is an issue of quality, not quantity. Maintaining the optimal balance across capabilities, especially those with the greatest talent competition, will remain a strategic imperative for CMOs.

What You Need to Do

By using this data as a guide to spur action, CMOs can quickly run a more effective and efficient marketing organization by taking specific actions in the short and long term. The goal is not to just build a more modern marketing organization but to transform marketing into an agile, strategic partner for business growth and innovation. Another goal is to expand influence with executive peers to gain control over cross-functional dependencies that impact marketing's success.

If the CMO is running a tight organization that delivers on business outcomes time and time again, marketing's value isn't in question because it is demonstrated on a day-in and day-out basis.

Near-Term Actions

1. Benchmark your current organizational structure against your peers.

Fully decentralized structures are nearly nonexistent. While B2B organizations utilize a balanced or hybrid approach, B2C organizations are primarily centralized. Benchmarking your marketing function by using the [Gartner Marketing Score tool](#) will help identify marketing work that can be centralized and make changes that reduce waste, inefficiencies, duplication and silos.

2. Determine if the marketing organizational structure changes made in the last year were to fix operational challenges.

Have you made marketing operations a priority? Alarm bells should be going off if you didn't make any organizational changes within the last year, or if the ones you made didn't address operational efficiency challenges.

Longer-Term Actions

- 1. Consolidate similar or like functions.** Functions or responsibilities in your marketing organization that are similar can be combined to increase efficiency and effectiveness and encourage collaboration. CMOs are merging smaller teams into one centralized insights unit to bolster thought leadership, marketing strategy, innovation, content messaging and digital experience.
- 2. Evaluate your team's responsibilities to determine which are considered a "sole" responsibility vs. "shared" or "no" responsibility within the marketing team.** It is OK to lead where marketing should, but it is also OK to share or give up responsibilities if those are better served and led elsewhere. Sharing responsibilities is difficult and requires effective collaboration, leadership, and project management skills.
- 3. Stave off talent retention problems and reduce high attrition,** especially if your best talent goes elsewhere, by offering flex work options beyond what your organization offers. CMOs in this survey included flexible options for location, hours, days, desk mobility at the office, work amount and even the freedom to choose projects.
- 4. Train your marketing team to improve strategic thinking skills.** With the increase in AI in content production and other areas of marketing, CMOs cited the skill most difficult to develop within their teams was strategic thinking. Strategic thinking skills are required for marketing to be considered an influential entity.

Actionable, objective insight

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