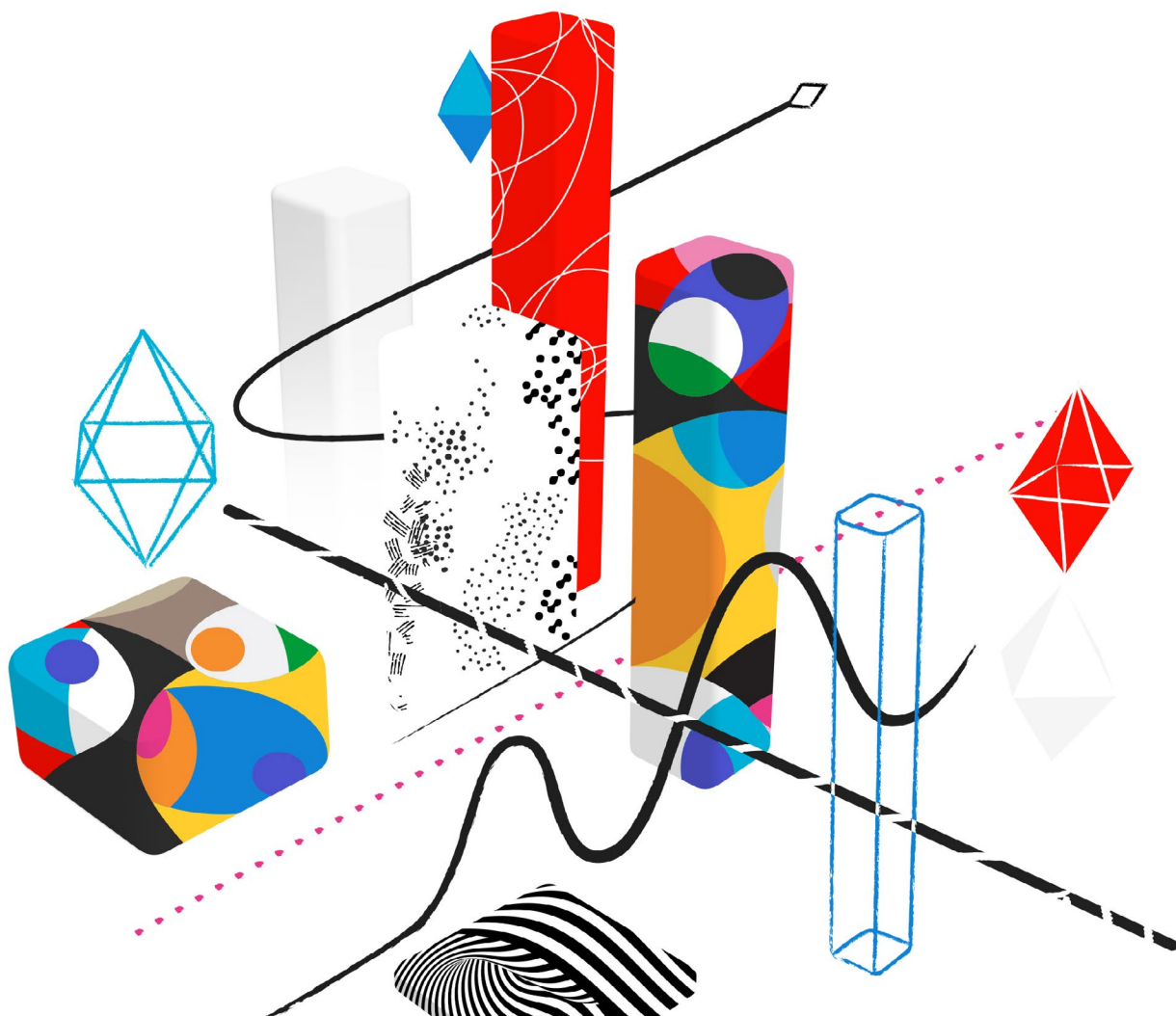


# Tomorrow's CMO: Marketing's generation of change.

Why the next generation of CMOs is determined to shake up the industry for the better.



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## **Methodology.**

Adobe Workfront commissioned Arlington Research to undertake research amongst 1,100 marketing managers, directors, and SVPs at enterprises in organisations with at least 500 employees. The study was conducted in July 2021 in the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Australia.



## Introduction.

Customer champion, strategist, storyteller, frontline defender of the brand—the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) holds one of the most innovative and demanding roles in any organisation.

Over the past 18 months, those senior marketing leaders have been put under even more pressure as they stepped up to lead their teams through one of the most challenging, if not the most challenging, periods in business history.

Marketing strategies and plans were forced to pivot overnight and adapt to constantly changing, and completely unpredictable, market forces. At the same time many faced budget cuts, reduced headcount, alongside the challenge of managing entirely remote and dispersed teams.

This research, which surveyed 1,100 senior marketers across Europe and Australia, shows that as marketers rebalance from the last 18 months, they are more acutely aware of the opportunities they have to transform the way marketing works for the better.

This report explores their vision for the future of marketing, the key attributes they expect to bring to the role of CMO, their ambition to make change and improve the marketing ecosystem—and why existing CMOs need to step up and help their teams make those changes today.

“ We’ve seen that the next generation of CMOs are an inspiring generation of changemakers looking to improve the industry and the workplace for the rest of us, and those coming behind them. Our role as senior marketing leaders is to provide them with the resources, and the technology, to affect that positive change now.

**Alvaro Del Pozo**

VP International Marketing  
Adobe

## CHAPTER 1

# The attributes of tomorrow's CMO.

### Agents of change.

Marketers have emerged from the pandemic asking: “are our ways of working holding us back from our best work?”. The answer is yes. Our research reveals that the biggest motivator these marketers have for progressing to the CMO role is **the opportunity to innovate and change marketing for the better (27%)**.

### Almost everyone wants to be CMO.

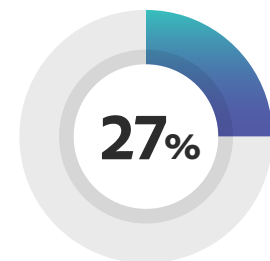
Despite the growing set of challenges the CMO has had to face over the last 18 months, almost every marketer surveyed strives to reach that most senior of marketing positions:

- 99% of marketers aspire to be CMO.
- Just 11 people in our study aren't motivated to be a CMO.

### Managing the business of work.

Marketers recognise that being a good leader requires helping their teams do their best work. They know work impacts every aspect of the organisation and is a primary driver of the marketing experience—and they want to manage it accordingly:

- The role of work management is especially important for those marketers in Generation Z (49%), higher than Millennials and Generation X (42% and 43% respectively).



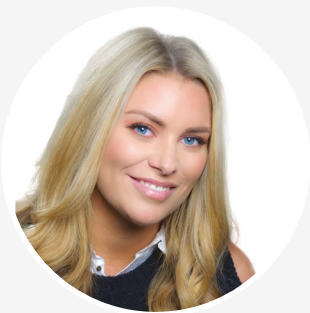
of marketers are most motivated to become a CMO to innovate and change marketing for the better.

- Four in ten (43%) marketers believe the biggest challenge facing CMOs is managing the business of work—areas such as completing projects, managing people and coordinating workloads. Tomorrow’s CMO understands that the orchestration, execution and measurement of marketing work must be managed strategically, with the same level of process and technological sophistication as all other business-critical tier one functions—like finance, sales, HR, and IT.
- Marketers value technology to help them manage the challenges of ways of working. Tomorrow’s CMO believes technology most supports them to:
  - Improve work processes and data usage (34%).
  - Improve visibility into the real-time status of all work (33%).
  - Achieve clarity and confidence around shifting business priorities (32%).

### **Fragmented working makes marketing harder.**

Tomorrow’s CMO believes in simplifying and streamlining martech stacks to align work with strategy, and help their teams deliver their best work:

- Almost two thirds (65%) believe their company has too many technology options which hinders their productivity.
- The same number (65%) feel that the technology in their department is constantly changing and they can’t keep up.
- Seven in ten (70%) say their team cannot work to the best of their ability without efficient work management tools.



“ I’m energised by the drive and passion we see from my fellow generation of future CMOs. Following the last 18 months of unbelievably challenging digital-first work, tomorrow’s CMO is striving to shake up the industry and deliver not just outstanding work, but cultural change that will shape the future of the marketing ecosystem for the better.

**Jada Balster**

Head of International Marketing  
Adobe Workfront

## Digital-first.

The CMOs of tomorrow are technologists. Our research reveals that marketers rely on, and are passionate about, digital tools to support the entire marketing ecosystem. They keep a finger on the pulse of emerging technology to stay competitive and turn to digital tools to prove the value of marketing to their organisations.

### Tomorrow's CMO is driven by data.

Future marketing leaders will rely on data to make decisions, innovate, test and confidently change course.

- Almost eight in ten (79%) marketers regularly use data to make informed marketing decisions.
- This is even more strongly felt by marketers in the Netherlands (87%), Australia (85%), and the UK (81%).

**87%**

Netherlands

**85%**

Australia

**81%**

UK

### The tech-native CMO.

The next generation of CMOs will fully embrace the relationship between marketing and technology to help them deliver change. They also value the power of digital tools to deliver outstanding customer experiences—more than a third (36%) of marketers feel that technology adds value to create a better customer experience.

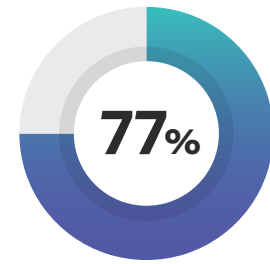
But it is in the ability of technology to transform ways of working, and help their teams deliver their best work, that marketers feel technology has the most to offer. Tomorrow's CMO finds technology most valuable to help them to:

- Improve the speed of processes to improve efficiencies (45%).
- Analyse, measure, and improve the productivity levels of staff (41%).
- Achieve a competitive advantage in the marketplace (39%).
- Demonstrate the value of the marketing team (36%).

## Showing your value.

When a business is tested, it is often the marketing budget that takes a hit as many CMOs struggle to deliver measurable ROI, tying all marketing efforts to financial results. But the next generation of CMOs are turning to technology to help them demonstrate marketing's value to the enterprise.

- Almost a third of marketers (29%) see demonstrating the value of marketing, growing revenue and proving ROI as the biggest challenge facing the CMO today.
- And the vast majority of them see technology as the solution. More than three quarters (77%) of the next generation of CMOs surveyed rely on technology to demonstrate marketing's value to the rest of the business. That's even higher for those in the Netherlands (84%) or Australia (83%).



of marketers rely on technology to demonstrate the value of marketing.

## Hybrid creatives.

Marketers found the creative process one of the most challenging areas of their role over the last 18 months. As they look to correct the course, tomorrow's CMO will embrace a hybrid approach to creativity. They value the power of technology to free up their team's time to be creative, while recognising the need for face-to-face sessions to allow new ideas to flow.

## Creativity in lockdown.

The creative process has taken a hit for marketers over the last year following the forced shift to remote work.

- More than seven in ten (71%) marketers feel that creativity suffered during the pandemic.
- Tomorrow's CMO acknowledges the importance of in-person creative sessions. Almost eight in ten (79%) plan to bring back face-to-face meetings to encourage creative thinking when workforces return to the office.





## Letting the ideas flow.

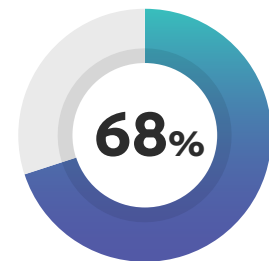
Technology has kept teams connected over this unusual time, and the next generation of CMOs will continue to embrace digital tools to enable collaboration and unlock creativity in their teams.

- Over half (54%) of marketers think business leaders need to invest in technology that allows open communication and information sharing across teams to maximise creativity.
- 68% of marketers want to see investment in technology that fosters a culture of creativity or clear creative processes.
- Three in ten (30%) marketers believe making room for creativity and innovation is one of the top benefits of technology.
- Tomorrow's CMO believes that, of all the functions of the marketing role, creativity is the one that would be most improved by advances in marketing technology in the next five years (27%). This increases to 36% in the UK but falls to just 22% in Germany and Australia.

## Not all martech is created equal.

While technology supported marketers throughout the pandemic, many found the fragmented nature of their enterprise martech stack actually made it harder to do their work.

- Seven in ten (68%) marketers found their martech stack did not accommodate remote working efficiently. This is even higher among marketers in the Netherlands (80%) and Sweden (75%).
- Almost two thirds (63%) of marketers feel the tools they use to manage marketing work are outdated and don't make their lives any easier. Again, for marketers in the Netherlands and Sweden this is far higher at 76%, and 73% respectively.



of marketers want to see investment in technology that fosters a culture of creativity or clear creative processes.



## Dexterous business leaders.

After a year of working in a constantly evolving environment, the CMO of tomorrow is looking beyond the 'traditional' marketing leadership skills. They are working to develop a broad skillset to become dexterous leaders that help drive innovation and make change in their organisations.

### Expanding the skill set.

Our data shows that in order to prepare for the changing senior role, tomorrow's CMO wants to upskill in these areas:

- Data analysis, financials, project management and coordinating workloads (31%).
- Advanced knowledge of the latest marketing techniques (14%).
- Motivating and leading a team of marketing professionals (14%).
- IT and digital transformation (11%).

**31%**

of marketers believe data analysis, financials, project management and coordinating workloads are some of the most valuable skills for the CMO to have.



### Investing in innovation and creativity.

CMOs of the future are motivated by the opportunity to drive marketing transformation and they want to achieve it by investing in ways to:

- Improve visibility into top business priorities and strategy (48%).
- Reduce repetitive or mundane tasks (36%).
- Reduce the distraction caused by using so many digital tools (43%).
- Create a single place for managing all work (37%).



## CHAPTER 2

# Supporting the next generation of CMOs.

The reality of marketing life during a global pandemic has opened the eyes of tomorrow's CMO to the imperative to drive change for the better. Marketers have welcomed digitisation with open arms and will continue to take a digital-first approach in marketing. But it's the business of work—the orchestration of complex marketing workflows—that is the main cause for concern for tomorrow's CMO.

Following the last 18 months, they have a lower tolerance for outdated work processes that hamper their ability to do their best work. They see the opportunity that technology presents to transform the way marketing works for the better. And they are ready to lead this charge.

But they need support to help them revitalise the marketing industry.

For the CMO of today, this research spotlights the ambition of the CMO of tomorrow, as well as the immediate challenges affecting their frontline teams today.

It's time for current CMOs to empower their teams by removing inefficiencies that stand between them and their best work—so that tomorrow's CMO can deliver great work and extraordinary experiences for your customers.

## Takeaways for marketing leaders.



### **Connect your people, processes, data, and technologies.**

Marketing teams may have the tools and data they need to do their work, but often their processes and people still aren't fully connected to those tools and data.

Workfront is a work management application that manages all work in one place and ties it all together: the tools, data, people, and processes. Because when every element of work is visible and understood, strategic alignment becomes clear. And it's much easier to ensure the right work is getting done at the right time.



### **Align work to business goals to empower marketing teams to deliver change.**

In order to deliver change, you need to align everyone's work to business goals. It's important to keep your entire team's work connected to company strategy and free up their time to deliver change. A work management application empowers the CMO to set the marketing goals and cascade them down the entire marketing organisation. It ensures the work getting done is the work that matters most.

Aligning work to strategic goals empowers individuals and teams to prioritise meaningful, high-value work that contributes to business outcomes and helps the company achieve its goals. It also motivates and engages employees because they know their work matters and understand exactly how it drives results.



### **Treat work as a tier one asset.**

This data reveals that Tomorrow's CMO values the ability to manage work to help them deliver innovation. A work management application like Adobe Workfront makes it possible to accelerate and orchestrate work with the same precision and certainty as other critical tier one business systems.

Together, Workfront and other Adobe applications provide marketers with a single system for planning, aligning, recording, measuring, and optimising the entire marketing work lifecycle in one place.

This integrated system empowers marketers to create and deliver the best experiences, while efficiently and seamlessly managing the workflows that bring these experiences to life. It ties marketing teams' work to the operational side of managing that work, setting them up to be more effective than ever.



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