

FOCUS PAPER

# From creative chaos to more efficiency and effectiveness?

Marketing Process Controlling

## Marketing Process Controlling – From creative chaos to more efficiency and effectiveness

*Marketing has always been the realm of creativity, dominated more by chaos than structured processes to come to results. At the same time, those responsible for marketing try to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their departments by clearly defined and opti-mized processes. Develop good ideas according to a formula? Difficult, but: creativity and increased productivity by workflow management need not cancel each other out.*

### Process vs. flexibility

The world of marketing is often overexaggerated as being a world reigned by chaos. But clear cut communications, always humorous and creative, which involve customers, make and drive the brands, are certainly not the result of chaos alone. Today, marketing staff and managers are more concerned than ever about increases in productivity. Budgets are under pressure, the number of tasks is growing and staff levels are often not increased. As a consequence, the term business process optimization is becoming more and more dominant in marketing.

Well organized processes promise more efficiency and effectiveness, regardless of business area. According to Wikipedia, a business process is a series of steps or a formula designed to achieve a business result. For marketing departments this means, guiding the creative chaos into orderly lanes leading to solid results. But how about badly needed flexibility? And don't formal processes obstruct creativity?

To answer this question, marketing processes can be divided into several categories: the strategic and planning processes, the creative process, implementation, production and controlling. These processes all have one thing in common: they depend heavily on administrative tasks, which need to be accomplished but do not contribute directly in terms of content. The following graph shows the core marketing processes and demonstrates that nothing is accomplished without thinking, or without operative excellence or without the ability of handling administrative tasks in a resourceful manner.

For the strategic process the administrative effort is relatively small compared to the content input. This is where thinking processes dominate, as well as the analytical creation of the roadmap. When proceeding to marketing planning, the administrative tasks increase considerably: departmental plans need to be consolidated, measures and budgets commented, adapted and authorized, and the results documented. Creation requires somewhat less administrative effort. Here we are concerned with the creation of concrete ideas. The thinking processes are focal point. Implementation and subsequent controlling require the same administrative effort as does planning. The implementation process is characterized by reviews, feedback, corrections, versioning and documentation. In the area of controlling, the retrieval of data from various sources and the processing of these data require considerable operational effort.

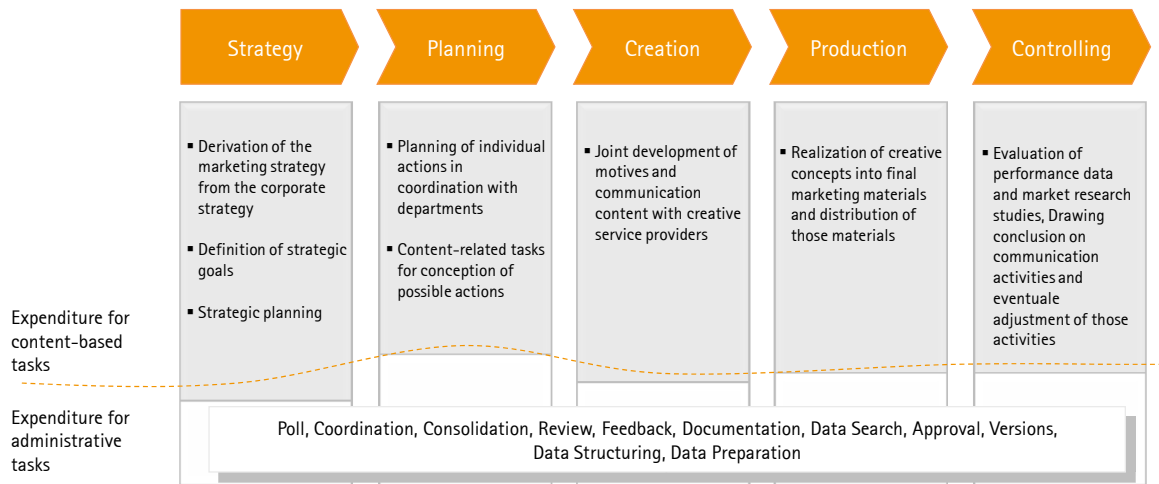


Figure: Schematic presentation of effort required for various marketing processes: administrative effort is always required

The main content of marketing activities is thus based on thinking: analytical, creative, strategic and organizational thinking. But: there are also numerous repetitive, operational chores in marketing. And this is exactly where formal processes with intelligently applied technology that can support and partially even automate processes, can increase efficiency and effectiveness dramatically.

### Practical example: Optimized processes in marketing planning

What this process optimization can look like in practice, is shown by the example "Marketing Planning": An exemplary marketing planning process consists of 3+1 parties: product managers request campaigns, the marketing planners manage the campaign and the agencies look after concepts and design. "+1" enters the scene, when a company includes decentralized units such as dealers, branches or franchises in its communication.

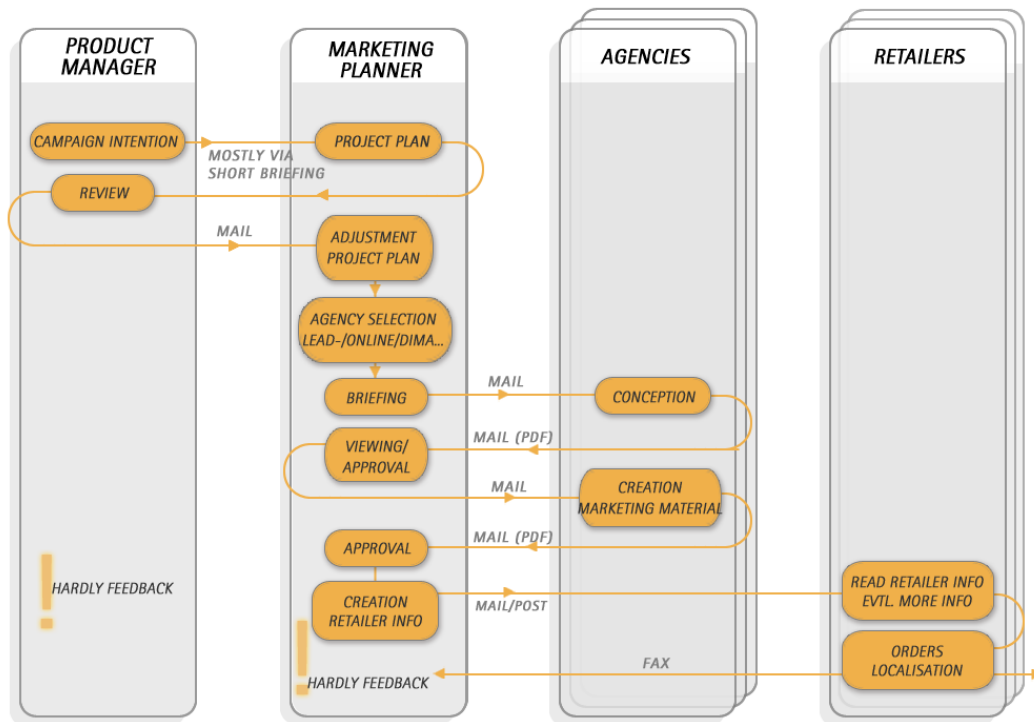


Figure: Marketing planning process without software-supported process optimization

The process is characterized by:

- Numerous review loops.
- A high degree of communication effort is required in marketing and becomes a potential source of errors.
- Little feedback to product management and marketing.

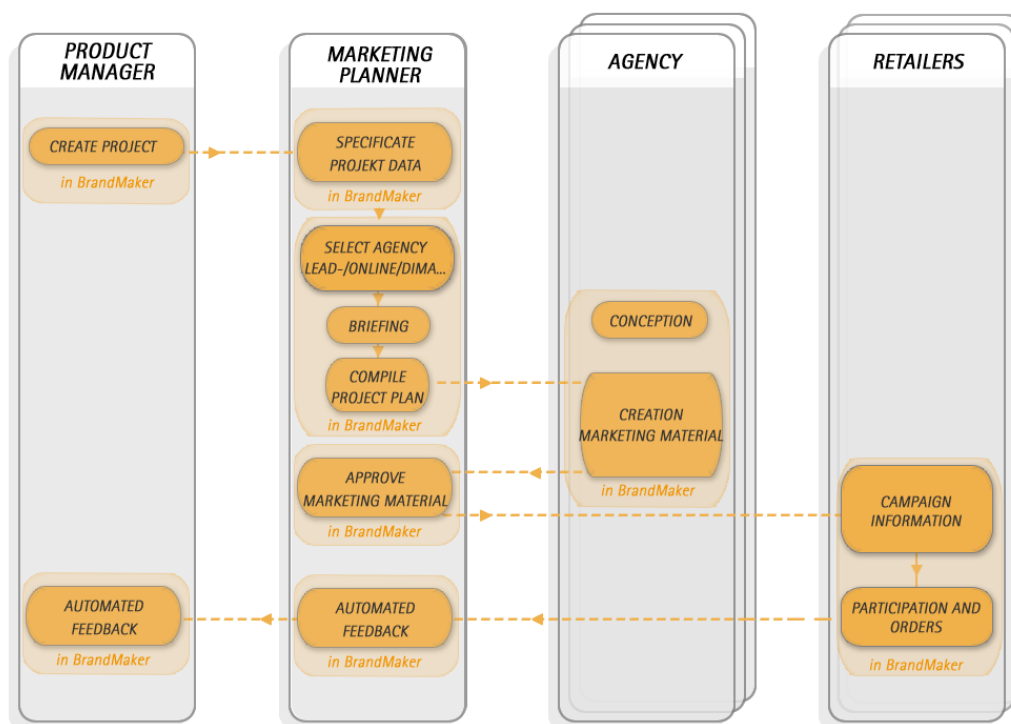


Figure: Marketing planning process, optimized using BrandMaker

The use of a centralized, web-based marketing platform, such as BrandMaker, for optimizing processes, has the effect that the information and data for the campaign are available from a single source to all parties. Each access to the platform is an access to up-to-date data. The product manager creates his campaign ideas in the tool. The marketing staff does the fine-tuning and manages the creative process via the platform. This means that the advertising elements of the campaign are spread within the platform. If dealers or decentralized units are involved, these obtain their campaign information via the marketing solution and can document their participation directly in the system. The tedious management of requests via fax or e-mail are no longer necessary.

The process is characterized by:

- Short communication channels.
- Automatic process documentation as the process is managed via the tool.
- Assured quality by access to up-to-date materials.

This optimization effect can also be provided for the other marketing processes when using high performance Brand Management Systems. Frequently of modular design, they allow customization for each area of marketing.

Marketing departments should be aware of their business processes, whereby one might rightly say, that not all tasks can be solved by a simple recipe. On the contrary: where innovative and creative concepts are in demand, thinking and action requires freedom. The goal is to find out - via process analysis - where room for freedom can be expanded by having tedious, administrative tasks performed more efficiently and effectively. The software market today offers supportive solutions and also makes modern process automation accessible for marketing. This offers marketers a tremendous

opportunity to make more of their budgets, to use their resources efficiently and to increase brand success in a sustained manner.

### **About BrandMaker**

BrandMaker is a Marketing Resource Management (MRM) system, which provides a broad spectrum of solutions: Offered are solutions for marketing strategy (scorecards as "guide rails" for marketing) and management modules (for example, software for integrated market planning and budgeting); as well as modules for marketing implementation and for optimization of the creative supply chain (job management, review management, media asset management, a web-to-print module, event planning, and a module for creation of online media). The system has a modular design and is applied according to the individual client requirements. The software is developed and marketed by the company BrandMaker GmbH. BrandMaker solutions are in use successfully in marketing departments of companies of varying size and in various corporate sectors – for example at EnBW in the energy sector, Commerzbank AG and DekaBank in the financial sector, at international service providers like Ernst & Young and companies from the producing industry such as ZF Services GmbH. The software company for optimized marketing processes has about 150 employees across Europe.

<http://www.brandmaker.com>