

Your New Game Plan for Managing Marketing Resources at Scale



BrandMaker



MARKETINGDIVE

Custom content for BrandMaker
by Marketing Dive's Brand Studio

Did you know marketing resource management (MRM), the software that once assisted with marketing budgeting and planning alone, can now do so much more? It's true. In fact, [Forrester reports](#) there's an "MRM renaissance" in the works with so many marketers turning to the platforms. "MRM development transforms tomorrow's marketing organizations," the research and advisory firm says.

MRM now incorporates a broad selection of tools for digital asset management, local area marketing, brand management, and more. It's not necessary to deploy all the capabilities at once, however. Instead, you can get started with each à la carte or in a bundle and then easily integrate other elements down the road. That piecemeal approach maintains collaborative environments and enables a 360-degree view of marketing content, planning, and budgeting in a way that doesn't overwhelm new users.

"You don't have to take on too much at once," says Ted Leshner, BrandMaker's managing director. "But when you do want to add modules to solve additional business problems, you won't face the complexity of stitching together a bunch of different vendor solutions."

An Explosion of Content Strains Bandwidth of Marketers

With today's media landscape so fragmented, marketing leaders must produce more content than ever before and must do so efficiently with limited budgets and resources. Print, television, radio, out-of-home, email, digital advertising, and direct mail are just some of the channels you may use to reach customers. You may also be investing in opportunities like content marketing, mobile, online video, SMS, apps, social media, search, cinema, and podcasts.

That's a lot of content for stressed departments to produce, and it's also a lot of content for busy consumers to absorb. They face an information overload and just can't take it all in. This creates a second marketing challenge: "One size fits all" content gets ignored. To grab the attention of target audiences and build strong relationships, you must

continuously create personalized content with highly relevant messages.

Today's consumers need to instantly recognize and relate to content, which means marketing materials must be customized with the appropriate culture, imagery, currency, references, and colors. It's important to tailor content in other ways, too, such as to the appropriate stage of a customer's purchase journey.



80%

of consumers are more likely to make a purchase when brands offer a personalized experience.

ACCORDING TO EPSILON

Inadequate Tools and Processes Slow Creative Workflow

Amplified content demands increase the need to build a scalable and agile organization that can navigate volatile markets within budget. The goal can be tough to achieve if business users can't easily collaborate due to awkward manual tools and processes or systems that don't fully integrate.

For example, you may be keeping budgets in simple Excel spreadsheets without a central database. The more content variations you have, the more fragmented your budgets become, and therefore harder to manage. The constant back and forth, as well as the redundant files, discrepancies, and governance issues, can be unwieldy and a time sink.

Consider the case of the [Norwegian Seafood Council](#) which previously tried to use Excel and Access to map marketing planning for up to 1,000 marketing actions it conducted annually in 20 markets. The arrangement wasn't ideal. One reason: Seafood exporters that paid the Council fees to promote their products couldn't gain ultimate transparency into how the organization was spending global budgets. Deploying an MRM solution has greatly benefited the group. A Council representative says, "Today our marketing is much more structured, transparent, and more efficient because all information and materials are available centrally."

Meanwhile, many prevalent calendar alternatives, like Google Calendar and Lotus Notes Calendar, lack key capabilities for modern marketers.

“You can have a great calendar tool, but if you can’t flip your view to see how you’re doing from a spend perspective across campaigns, it’s not very helpful,” Leshar says. You may also be missing out on other features MRM offers, like the ability to filter your calendar for queries about specific brands and channels.

And are you storing media assets like photography in a less-than-desirable way? Maybe you’re using file sharing services like Dropbox or other solutions that are hard to organize, difficult for far-flung teams to access, and potentially vulnerable to security threats.

Of course, there’s always the option of buying commercial solutions from different vendors to fit your needs. They may not integrate properly, however, and the approach can zap precious resources. “Many companies don’t really have the time, money, or IT resources to glue a bunch of different point solutions together,” Leshar says.

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NORWEGIAN SEAFOOD COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE



Marketers Operating with an Incomplete View Face Risks

Companies that produce marketing materials centrally for direct employees, resellers, and franchises face unique risks in not being able to provide a governable, 360-degree view into marketing activities. Among these difficulties are:

- › Understanding where marketing drives value to justify future investment.
- › Realizing content value when it is misplaced or can't be found, and used, by the sales team.
- › Governing accessibility and permissions to content.
- › Addressing version control of content to ensure media assets are in compliance and current with legal and branding guidelines.
- › Maintaining efficient collaboration with outside agencies, franchisees, and other departments involved in approvals and budgeting.
- › Managing the brand due to inconsistent asset development — off-brand, inconsistent messaging, aesthetically objectionable graphics and artwork — from teams outside of marketing who get frustrated waiting for approved materials.

Self-Service Customization Can Shorten the Marketing Queue

MRM can help you scale your content while maintaining brand management. You can use the software and processes to structure content, make it more accessible, and indicate which assets are current and in compliance. In fact, your sales team, franchisees, and direct employees can easily create their own marketing materials by accessing self-service templates with approved content in a web browser.

For example, [Marriott International](#) — which has 30 brands in 130 countries and communicates in more than 20 languages — loads print and digital templates into a central marketing hub with choices of headlines and body copy that can run together with a set of images. Associates can access the templates and tweak them to produce locally relevant materials like sales flyers and banner ads that are true to their respective brands.

“We now have a 360-degree view,” says Catherine Josef, senior manager, global marketing at Marriott International. “Typically, as marketers, we’ll develop a beautiful campaign and roll it out, hoping everyone uses it and that it works. What this gives us is accountability and a very practical implementation of what’s being used and how it’s being used.”

Likewise, dental office managers can now use [Pacific Dental Services’](#) centralized portal to access digital assets and templates for flyers, brochures, booklets, business cards, and other promotional items to quickly create and print the content they need. “We wouldn’t be able to function without it,” says a company representative. “Plain and simple.”

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CATHERINE JOSEF
SENIOR MANAGER, MARRIOTT
INTERNATIONAL

Don't worry — MRM still gives marketing departments desired levels of control over print and digital materials that others create. Rights and roles are applied to templates so content elements like a logo, call to action, product price, and headline can only be changed when a user has been given the rights to do so. Also, you can require that the user-generated content uploaded by associates must be approved for tone of voice, quality, and other attributes.

In addition, since shareability is a core capability of MRM, content pieces produced internally or externally can be approved through the platform rather than through messy, and time-consuming, email chains.



Integrated Hubs

Boost Efficiency in Other Ways

MRM can improve your creative workflows and, in the case of self-service customization, eliminate some altogether. When you aren't as bogged down with repetitive creative requests and operational ping-pong games, you'll be able to focus more on strategic initiatives. MRM also automates manual processes for planning and budgeting.

Likewise, using a centralized platform can improve reporting by automating what is often otherwise accomplished through tedious copying and pasting. And, by providing a 360-degree view of marketing activities, including performance data from various channels and spending data, MRM gives you the ability to swiftly make informed decisions

regarding where to direct limited resources. "Many companies don't have anywhere near real-time reporting or even quarterly reporting because they must manually mash together data from various sources," says Leshner. "As a result, they may not know until it's too late that they're getting better results out of certain types of efforts than others and need to make a course correction."

Looking ahead, MRM platforms will continue to evolve to meet the changing demands of clients as technologies are embedded into the components. Artificial intelligence, for instance, will soon reduce the work associated with manually tagging imagery.

MRM Drives Extensive Value

You won't have to wait long to reap benefits from an MRM deployment. In fact, [Forrester](#) says, "The advantages of connecting teams, workflows, measurement, and assets come immediately."

Notably, the return on investment of MRM can't be calculated with cost savings alone — there are other value drivers at work. For instance, MRM can boost a company's agility, which has great advantages in volatile markets. MRM also facilitates risk management.

"There are all sorts of risks that are associated with marketing operations, and with MRM software and processes, you can reduce those risks," says Romek Jansen, BrandMaker's chief marketing officer.

It's worth considering how MRM can help you solve your own pain points, and chances are you'll be pleasantly surprised at the results of investing in a marketing suite. Jansen adds, "The value of MRM projects is generally a lot higher than what companies expect."

Value Drivers of MRM

Marketing Efficiency

You can drive higher return on investment through smarter allocation and use of marketing resources.

- Save money
- Save time
- Save capacity

Marketing Effectiveness

You can achieve better results through a better infrastructure. Enabling “right time, right place, right offer” capabilities can result in higher sales.

- Increase the speed to market of content
- Increase the relevance of content
- Increase exposure of content

Marketing Compliance

You can lower your risks by deploying a better-controlled marketing infrastructure and delivering output according to your brand, finance, and legal guidelines.

- Improve brand consistency
- Improve budget transparency
- Improve legal compliance

Steps for Developing a Comprehensive MRM System

1. Move spreadsheets, calendars, media assets, and other marketing materials out of silos and into a cloud-based, shared environment.
2. Build templates, workflows, and approval processes to collaboratively develop content that follows brand guidelines.
3. Integrate MRM with your company's accounting system, marketing communication tools, and other relevant resources to ensure consistency among departments and assets.
4. Gain intelligence from having a 360-degree view, perhaps with the help of AI, to be agile and continually improve marketing processes.



BrandMaker is a leader in marketing resource management (MRM). Our solutions help enterprise marketing and sales teams by optimizing marketing operations management and the delivery of customized marketing content that addresses the needs of specific customers at appropriate points in the buying process.

Unlike traditional marketing software, BrandMaker supports its customers to transform and grow their businesses with leading-edge technology that is combined with a unique marketing methodology, and consultancy services based on a Best-Practice approach.

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BRANDSTUDIO

Custom Content. Targeted Results.

Industry Dive's Brand Studio collaborates with clients to create impactful and insightful custom content. Our clients benefit from aligning with the highly-regarded editorial voice of our industry expert writers coupled with the credibility our editorial brands deliver. When we connect your brand to our sophisticated and engaged audience while associating them with the leading trends and respected editorial experts, **we get results.**

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