

CMO

OUTLOOK GUIDE

Marketing Leaders Embracing
AI, Diversifying Content &
Prioritizing Tech

2024

INTRODUCTION

When thinking back to 2023, some words that come to mind are volatile, rocky and uncertain. Despite delivering several blows to morale and budgets, high-level B2B marketing executives capitalized on the limited resources available in 2023 to keep their teams' spirits high and continue delivering high-performing marketing campaigns. Now that we've entered a new year, marketing executives are preparing to reclaim the land by embracing new technologies, phasing out outdated systems and adapting to changing buyer behaviors.

As marketing leaders aggressively start rebuilding their foundations, they're also focusing on improving internal operations and enhancing existing strategies to help their businesses thrive in the new year. To better understand the current B2B landscape and examine their goals throughout the new year, the "2024 CMO Outlook Guide" queried six marketing leaders to uncover:

- The latest advancements in digital technologies reshaping B2B interactions;
- The steps they're taking to understand, meet and even exceed changing buyer expectations;
- The impact of interactive and immersive content formats;
- The steps they're taking to build a diverse and inclusive workforce and how they're demonstrating those values to prospects and buyers;
- The increasing role of AI and machine-learning, with insights into how they're harnessing them and incorporating them into business practices; and
- A forward-looking view into their 2024 goals, strategies and priorities.

LEARN MORE FROM:



Courtney Beasley

Fractional CMO and Founder
of cobe marketing



Karen Steele

Fractional CMO and Founder/
Advisor at Steele-Alloy



Tara Clever

SVP Marketing & Partnerships
at MarginEdge



Evelyn Swaim

CMO Advisor for SecureCo &
Stage 2 Capital



Megan Heuer

Former CMO, current
Principal of HeuerB2B



Derek Thomas

SVP Global Field Marketing & Business
Development at Blue Yonder



COURTNEY BEASLEY

Fractional CMO and Founder
of **cobemarketing**

Courtney Beasley is a passionate marketer with more than 13 years in B2B and startups. Throughout her career, she has played instrumental roles in companies like Walker Sands, United Way and Groupon, where she built and led innovative marketing strategies and teams. Currently the Owner of cobemarketing, Beasley is a Fractional CMO known for her ability to translate business goals into effective and integrated marketing plans, consistently driving brand recognition and market share growth.

DGR: *How do you envision the evolving role of AI shaping B2B marketing strategies in 2024, and what specific applications or advancements do you anticipate leveraging to enhance campaign effectiveness and customer engagement?*

Beasley: AI is rapidly becoming an integral part of our professional lives, profoundly influencing B2B marketing strategies. As we approach 2024, AI's role in our daily decision-making processes will be even more obvious, acting as a catalyst for strategy formulation and execution. Consider its ability to streamline data analysis, enabling us to make quicker, more informed decisions, ensuring that our strategies are backed by solid data insights.

Additionally, AI's support in content creation will revolutionize campaign development, allowing for more efficient and targeted messaging and speed to market. AI can also play a significant role in team development, offering structured frameworks and guidelines that enhance clarity and accessibility in communication and expectations.

DGR: *As content consumption patterns continue to evolve, what emerging content formats or channels do you foresee gaining prominence in B2B marketing?*

Beasley: The speed of information creation and consumption is reshaping content strategies, especially in B2B marketing. Video and visual content are becoming increasingly crucial due to their ability to convey information quickly and engagingly. We see how this shift toward visual formats is partly driven by search engine optimizations like Google's zero-click searches, which emphasize concise, bullet-point information that doesn't require a viewer to click through to your site.

Tools like YouTube's bookmarking feature, which directs viewers to the most relevant parts of a video, exemplify the demand for quick, accessible content. While traditional formats like white papers and E-books remain relevant, our approach to design and format of longer-form content will be more important than ever before.

DGR: *How are you planning to address the rising demand for authenticity and transparency in B2B communications, and what initiatives are in place to build and maintain trust with your target audience?*

Beasley: In today's market, authenticity and transparency are non-negotiable qualities, especially in B2B communications. These values cannot be superficially added to a brand; they must be deeply ingrained in the company's culture and practices. Meeting the rising demand for genuine and transparent interactions requires a commitment that spans both B2B and B2C sectors.

This involves aligning with missions that genuinely make a difference, ensuring that key messages are not only true but also actively embodied in daily interactions and company policies. Additionally, fostering a culture of philanthropy and encouraging team involvement in social causes can further reinforce a brand's commitment to authentic values.

DGR: *What are some lessons you learned in 2023 that will fuel your GTM strategies going forward?*

Beasley: Firstly, authenticity remains a cornerstone of effective marketing — it's about connecting with people on a genuine level beyond just business transactions. The importance of personal, 1:1 relationships continue to be paramount, emphasizing that at the end.

Another key consideration for GTM strategies in 2024 is clean and reliable data. Without it, our decision processes are flawed and stalled, resulting in complications in various facets from competitive advantage to customer support.

“In today's market, authenticity and transparency are non-negotiable qualities, especially in B2B communications.”



TARA CLEVER

SVP Of Marketing &
Partnerships at **MarginEdge**

Tara Clever was an unlikely hire at MarginEdge, coming to the role with more than a decade in sales, marketing and operations in B2C and DTC organizations but no direct experience in B2B marketing. Fast forward, her “unlikely” skillset has created 40X growth in inbound revenue, all while maintaining a consistent 2X ROI on marketing spend. Clever’s expertise in high growth environments and her deep focus on customer economics brings a fresh perspective to B2B marketing and metrics, blending the unlikely with best practices with a focus on sustainable and efficient growth.

DGR: *What steps are you taking to build a diverse and inclusive workforce, and how are you demonstrating those values to your prospects and buyers?*

Tara Clever: Our company serves restaurant operators, which is one of the most diverse workforces out there. We believe that our superpower is deep empathy and understanding of our end user, as a huge percentage of our team are former restaurant owners, operators, chefs or general managers. It also means that it is essential that the diversity of our team reflect the diversity and lived experience of our customers.

In addition to DE&I practices in hiring, we also do not require a college degree and place a heavy emphasis on experience in hospitality, which also widens our candidate pool to folks who might have unobvious (but awesome) resumés in traditional tech hiring.

DGR: *Considering the growing importance of customer experience, what initiatives or technologies are you exploring to enhance the overall journey for your B2B customers from awareness to advocacy?*

Clever: Customer listening is the heartbeat of our marketing department. We set up “listening posts” throughout the organization to be sure we are hearing what customers are saying and stay connected to their lived experience. Data tells us a lot, but the combination of data with actual insights from customers and prospects is where the magic happens.

We use Gong to listen to sales, onboarding and support calls. We lean on NPS open field feedback to get a sense for what we are doing well and where we can improve. Our sales team fills out a form before every demo, outlining the “why” of the customer and our team reads as many of those as we can.

This listening allows us to craft messaging and experience that is totally and completely designed with what operators are facing and it also allows us to be agile as the dynamics in our verticals change — adjusting our messaging and value proposition accordingly.

DGR: *As content consumption patterns continue to evolve, what emerging content formats or channels do you foresee gaining prominence in B2B marketing?*

Clever: I believe that the standard of “adding value” through content is going to continue to rise. With the ability to churn out content more quickly, brands are going to have to get more creative on how their content stands out and, more importantly, how it truly adds standalone value to the customer.

For us, our big bet in 2024 is leaning on our data set to create valuable insights for our customers and prospects. If we can help restaurants recognize trends, understand numbers for businesses like theirs and empower their decisions with high quality and relevant data, we believe this will grow our audience and brand equity in a way that is brand aligned and based in our mission of empowering operators.

Our hope is that this democratization of our data can live across our organic and paid channels, fuel our PR strategy and be a key investment in audience building and top of funnel success.

DGR: *What are some lessons you learned in 2023 that will fuel your GTM strategies going forward?*

Clever: As our company and team grow, knowing what to prioritize and when to say no is one of the most important skills we can have as a team. In 2023, there were moments where we were spread too thin — a “problem” caused by so many amazing opportunities ahead of us.

In 2024, we are going to be increasingly disciplined about the things that get our focus and the things we need to let go. Our hope is that this focus will allow us to understand the true impact of the opportunities by giving them our full attention and allow our team to feel a more consistent connection to their work and the outcome.

“Our big bet in 2024 is leaning on our data set to create valuable insights for our customers and prospects.”



MEGAN HEUER

Former CMO & Principal
at **HeuerB2B**

Megan Heuer is currently the Principal at HeuerB2B. Previously, she served as CMO for Datos Insights (formerly Aite-Novarica Group), focused on ensuring the company and its clients deliver business impact. She is a B2B go-to-market leader with more than 20 years' experience in industry and professional services roles. Heuer led the Research and Advisory organization at B2B analyst firm SiriusDecisions (acquired by Forrester), where she was responsible for delivering exceptional customer experience and double-digit growth.

DGR: What are your strategic priorities for 2024 and beyond?

Meg Heuer: This year is all about realistic revenue strategies for (GTM) teams: There is no room for growth-at-all-costs or an untargeted GTM approach in 2024. CMOs who come out ahead will focus on:

- 1 A clear definition of best-fit customers (including alignment with sales on this);
- 2 A tech-enabled and fact-based understanding of customer needs and behavior; and
- 3 A marketing strategy that balances new customer acquisition with customer retention and expansion.

As part of the third element, CMOs need to ensure alignment with the rest of their leadership teams on business goals, then use the most effective tools to achieve them. Don't overlook internal communication as part of process. Use language those outside of marketing can understand to show how marketing activity rolls up to business goals, including how and when you'll know if marketing's efforts yield expected impact.

DGR: How do you envision the evolving role of AI shaping B2B marketing strategies in 2024, and what specific applications or advancements do you anticipate leveraging to enhance campaign effectiveness and customer engagement?

Meg Heuer: While the hype is out-of-control around AI, for once it's based on true market potential. I've always loved the William Gibson quote that says, "The future is already here; it's just not very evenly distributed."

We're past taking a wait-and-see approach — GTM leaders must embrace AI tools or risk losing any competitive advantage. One way to get teams excited about AI's potential is to challenge them to identify how AI can improve productivity and creativity. Every team has strategic projects they'd love to do, or new methods they'd love to test, but can't because routine, manual tasks take too much of their time. Hold a contest to see who does the best job of finding tools that make

their lives easier. The prize is being able to choose more interesting projects when that old work goes away. This approach provides the incentive of team members growing in their roles while mitigating the fear of not being needed if an AI tool can do their work.

DGR: *Considering the growing importance of customer experience, what initiatives or technologies are you exploring to enhance the overall journey for your B2B customers from awareness to advocacy?*

Meg Heuer: We're going to see more CMOs embrace the undeniable math of recurring revenue: Keeping customers is the most cost-effective path to growth. The opportunity is to define post-sale customer enablement with as much careful thought as we do to support the buyer's journey. Retention often improves when marketing delivers an online experience that makes self-service faster and easier, including using AI to help customers navigate their choices. Also, the immediate application of intent data to anticipate churn and cross- or upsell opportunities could be a short-term but high value boost.

For advocacy, tools that help you build and engage an active community around your brand are another cost-effective way to boost the social proof that has become the most important influence on B2B decision makers.

DGR: *How are you planning to address the rising demand for authenticity and transparency in B2B communications, and what initiatives are in place to build and maintain trust with your target audience?*

Meg Heuer: Since I've worked in several B2B information services companies, there is a built-in opportunity for authenticity in the form of content creators and advisors. These are people with their own expertise and voice, who build personal brands that help elevate the corporate brand. The challenge for CMOs in that scenario is not to dilute those voices too much. While you want to maintain a unified corporate brand voice, let your people speak for themselves. Those human connections are what build trust.

The other opportunity for CMOs is to remember that, in most cases, you're not your target audience. Don't make decisions about what content, tone and formats are most helpful without real customer and market data. This doesn't mean just asking what your audience wants. Customers literally show us what they want through their behavior, so use all those insights to understand their goals and preferences. Strive to maintain trust by knowing what customers need, sometimes before they do.

“We're past taking a wait-and-see approach — GTM leaders must embrace AI tools or risk losing any competitive advantage.”



KAREN STEELE

Fractional CMO/Founder
& Advisor at **Steele-Alloy**

Karen Steele is a full-stack marketing executive and the Founder of Steele-Alloy, a strategic marketing consultancy. Most recently, Steele was the SVP Marketing at Near, and prior to that, she was CMO at LeanData where she helped double revenue for two consecutive years and pioneer an emerging market category called Revenue Operations. She was Group Vice President of Corporate Marketing at Marketo, where she led the leading marketing automation company through its transformation from a public to private company.

DGR: What are your strategic priorities for 2024 and beyond?

Karen Steele: The first is creating efficient, smart go-to-market (GTM) motions to support the entire buyer's journey, and then mapping those journeys to understand all touchpoints. We also need to unify all departments into one GTM team; it can no longer be viewed through the lens of, "sales contributed X while marketing contributed Y." It's one team and one revenue goal, and everyone needs to work in harmony.

In terms of the customer, we're focusing on landing and expanding. Our winning strategy right now is, "love thy customer," and we want to generate excellent net revenue retention. We also want to leverage strategic partnership for revenue and value, as these are the biggest multipliers.

DGR: How do you envision the evolving role of AI shaping B2B marketing strategies in 2024, and what specific applications or advancements do you anticipate leveraging to enhance campaign effectiveness and customer engagement?

- Getting data exact, which is still one of marketers' biggest flaws and why marketing analytics have failed over the years;
- Testing and measuring;
- Enabling GTM teams; and
- Testing new channels.

Above all, companies need to reduce complexity and increase ease of use. Interestingly, we're seeing innovations in the AR space. For example, Cardii combined augmented reality (AR) with AI to create an immersive, personalized digital gifting experience.

DGR: *Can you highlight the key technological advancements you believe will significantly impact B2B marketing strategies in 2024, and how are you preparing to integrate them into your plans?*

Steele: Businesses need to invest in content like they're a media company — they need to use short-form, impactful content, videos, podcasts and less-syndicated long-form content, as well as targeted, personalized, authentic and personalized content catered toward their ideal customer profile.

You need to turn your prospects and customers into subscribers by providing engaging content they can't live without — think Netflix for the B2B decision-makers.

DGR: *Considering the growing importance of customer experience, what initiatives or technologies are you exploring to enhance the overall journey for your B2B customers from awareness to advocacy?*

Steele: You need to apply strategy across the entire customer and brand lifecycles, and equally involve everyone in marketing, sales, customer experience, product and RevOps — this is core to your holistic GTM strategy and execution. Live your brand promise, set expectations and execute accordingly to create a unique customer experience.

You also need to embrace advocacy across community, advisory, adoption, expansion and renewal. Rinse and repeat, then measure it all and optimize.

DGR: *What are some lessons you learned in 2023 that will fuel your GTM strategies going forward?*

Steele: 2023 was bumpy and painful for all: We had to spend less, reduce staff, and consolidate the bloat of all of the sales and martech systems we all consumed that are largely unused and do not provide ROI. Make sure to evaluate your tech stacks and ensure you have excellent RevOps and enablement to get value and a lens on performance every single day.

“Businesses
need to invest
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EVELYN SWAIM

CMO Advisor For **SecureCo**
& **Stage 2 Capital**

Evelyn Swaim is a marketing executive known for scaling businesses from \$10MM-\$50MM to over \$1B. Currently serving as a CMO advisor for SecureCo and Stage 2 Capital, her expertise has left a profound impact on the tech industry. Her digital-first, data-informed approach delivers modern strategies for predictable and profitable growth. A sought-after speaker and thought leader, Swaim shares her knowledge and experiences to inspire the next generation of marketing professionals.

DGR: *How do you envision the evolving role of artificial intelligence (AI) shaping B2B marketing strategies in 2024, and what specific applications or advancements do you anticipate leveraging to enhance campaign effectiveness and customer engagement?*

Swaim: AI is an accelerator for marketing: As we strive to deliver more authentic and relevant engagement with our customers, AI can enable marketers to deliver frictionless, seamless and highly personalized digital customer experiences for our buyers.

We're tapping into AI for real-time data analysis to craft campaigns that resonate on a personal level with each customer. Predictive analytics is becoming a mainstay, allowing us to forecast trends and tailor strategies that resonate deeply.

With generative AI, content creation is scaling new heights, enabling us to deliver relevant, high-quality content that engage and convert. Chatbots have evolved into indispensable assets, offering personalized interactions around the clock.

On the advertising front, AI-driven programmatic buying is maximizing our ROI by targeting the right audience with laser focus. Our CRMs are smarter, infused with AI that offers actionable insights and predicts customer needs, sometimes even before they're fully aware of them.

Voice search optimization is now part of our toolkit, responding to the growing use of voice-activated devices. It's an era where AI doesn't just automate; it enhances our marketing efforts, ensuring that we stay connected to our customers' evolving needs with a clear, insightful approach. AI in 2024 is not just about automation — it's about enriching connections and driving meaningful customer engagement.

DGR: *Can you highlight the key technological advancements you believe will significantly impact B2B marketing strategies in 2024, and how are you preparing to integrate them into your plans?*

Swaim: Knowing our customer in a deep, meaningful way is critical to success. That means data — rich, robust, complete, clean — giving us a 360-degree view of our customer.

We are looking at integrating a customer data platform (CDP) into our systems, along with AI-enabled ABM personalization platforms and a modern content management system (CMS) to enable us to deliver seamless, frictionless, highly contextual, personalized experiences mapped to the buyer's journey, by persona, by audience – right message, right person, right time.

These advancements will help us engage buyers in a meaningful way, building trust with our brand and effectively give us the fuel we need to grow revenue, bookings and market share.

DGR: As content consumption patterns continue to evolve, what emerging content formats or channels do you foresee gaining prominence in B2B marketing?

Swaim: Video continues to dominate due to its ability to convey complex information quickly. Short-form videos, live streams and video podcasts are likely to become more prevalent, as they cater to the demand for both brevity and depth. I believe we will see a rise in using Instagram Reels, LinkedIn Live, TikTok and YouTube. With the rise of smart speakers, mobile devices and podcasting, voice and audio content are becoming a more common channel for B2B marketers.

Generative AI is starting to create more sophisticated content, including personalized reports and market analyses, which can provide unique value to B2B buyers. As technology becomes more accessible, AR and VR could be used for product demos, virtual tours of facilities and immersive training experiences.

Engagement is key in B2B. I believe we will see more interactive content like virtual experiences and interactive infographics that allow users to dive deeper into the data that interests them.

DGR: What are some lessons you learned in 2023 that will fuel your GTM strategies going forward?

Swaim: The key lesson from 2023 is the importance of making sure foundational elements are in place around ICP, personas, processes, SLAs and targets, otherwise you won't have a clear roadmap as a marketing leader.

Your tech stack should be designed to optimize the revenue engine, and the diagnosis and insights should help indicate whether you're on the right track or off the mark completely.

Lastly, pipeline is a key measure of marketing's impact – not marketing qualified leads (MQLs). At my last five companies, pipeline growth has been a key objective for my marketing teams. I can tell you that the board and the executive team want to know whether marketing is producing and delivering quality pipeline that converts, because it's an indicator that we actually do have a predictable, scalable marketing engine.

“The key lesson from 2023 is the importance of making sure foundational elements are in place.”



DEREK THOMAS

Global Field Marketing & Business
Development of **Blue Yonder**

Derek Thomas is the SVP of Field Marketing & Business Development at Blue Yonder, where he is responsible for driving the company's global marketing strategy, demand generation, events, digital and business development functions to position Blue Yonder as a category leader in supply chain management. Thomas joined Blue Yonder in 2022 as Corporate Vice President, Portfolio Marketing. He brings 20 years of experience as a manufacturing industry executive, leading organizations across marketing, branding, product management and business development.

DGR: *What are your strategic priorities for 2024 and beyond?*

Derek Thomas: B2B buyer journeys continue to shift earlier with each passing year, demonstrating a similar pattern to what we saw in B2C several years ago. More information is available to self-educate, explore and even demo new solutions before interacting with potential providers. But at the same time, modern buyers face information overload, driving a demand for high-quality content that enables an individual to self-educate in an unbiased and authentic way. Prospective clients are looking to walk into meetings with greater knowledge and awareness of technology, trends and competitors before interacting with potential vendors.

As we look at 2024 and beyond, we are focused on three key priorities:

1

SHIFT LEFT

The need to capture and influence early exploration and interest has never been greater. Instead of thinking of brand and demand generation as separate functions, we are focusing on the value of education and awareness building to generate long-term pipeline and revenue growth. In particular, we're focusing on how to better track and measure engagement to see buyer intent signals earlier and convert those into more personalized engagement to nurture and convert into opportunities.

2

SHARPEN OUR FOCUS

Our channels are more clogged than ever before with content, opinions and advertisements. It takes more time and touchpoints today for a message to reach its intended audience. As we shift left, we are focusing on the need to narrow and prioritize fewer things more deeply delivered to optimize channels and maximize value through the funnel.

3

BE MORE DATA-DRIVEN

We have a long buyer cycle, and with an increasing amount of research happening before direct engagement, it's even more critical that we capture and understand what's working. We're investing in tools for greater intelligence and to better connect data, workflows and operating reviews so we act, learn and improve more intentionally.

DGR: As remote work becomes more ingrained in business operations, how are you adjusting your B2B marketing strategies to effectively engage decision-makers and stakeholders who may be dispersed geographically?

Thomas: We've invested in tools like Wrike to ensure we have solid processes, tracking, accountability and communication to ensure everyone stays in alignment. We also leverage Microsoft Teams to increase communication and document sharing, and PowerBI to ensure we're keeping our KPIs front and center in our decision making and stakeholder management.

We've also implemented new "ways of working" and review cadences at various levels to ensure stakeholders within and outside of marketing stay informed of what's going on and what's coming. We've created a set of marketing centered quarterly business reviews, monthly updates and weekly operating meetings to ensure each layer of the organization is engaged at the appropriate level. It's a change that the team is still adapting to, but in the end, it is driving increased communication and transparency across a broader set of stakeholders and reinforcing the importance of process and standardization in how we work.

DGR: : How do you envision the evolving role of AI shaping B2B marketing strategies in 2024, and what specific applications or advancements do you anticipate leveraging to enhance campaign effectiveness and customer engagement?

Thomas: The rapid rise of AI applications unlocks a new paradigm for human-machine collaboration. Instead of being limited by the information in front of us or available time, we can now process enormous amounts of data in seconds, inquire across expansive knowledge bases and generate two-way dialogue with machines to uncover information and make decisions faster than ever before.

The most immediate opportunities come from how we analyze digital touchpoints. AI enables us to pull data from every application to create a digital thumbprint to assess behaviors, timelines and interests much earlier in the journey. AI is helping us create more personalized engagements with tailored content and conversations across advertising, websites, chatbots and other digital channels.

As we look to 2024 and beyond, many of our existing providers are embedding new AI capabilities into their solutions. We are actively assessing these new capabilities to understand use cases, needs and benefits so that we can adopt at a pace that fits our organization as well as pushes us forward in serving our customers. Most importantly, we are also ensuring that our teams are fully equipped to take advantage of these tools in a responsible way with the appropriate governance, processes and education to ensure success.

DGR: : What are some lessons you learned in 2023 that will fuel your GTM strategies going forward?

Thomas: We need to be more data- and performance-driven to ensure the time, effort and money going into marketing is delivering the expected outcomes, and we need to remain agile to shift as our customer's needs and interests change. Secondly, we need to work more closely with our product and GTM teams to craft more value-oriented, personalized approaches that speak to customer and prospect needs rather than our offerings.

Both relate to how we utilize technology as a deployment engine and an insight, intelligence and orchestration engine. The better we anticipate where potential clients are in their journey, the more effectively we can ensure what we deliver from marketing is aligned with our customer's interests to drive long-term value creation.



Demand Gen Report is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multi-channel demand generation efforts.

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