Mighty Guides

DEFINING MARKETING SUCCESS:

METRICS THAT TIE TO SALES & REVENUE

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FOREWORD

Dear Fellow Marketer:

Marketing used to be a much simpler proposition. Brands created advertising campaigns primarily for TV, print, and radio, with an emphasis on storytelling and emotional appeal. Attempts to measure effectiveness were based on where ads appeared and how much exposure they received.

Since then, marketing accountability has taken on much greater significance. With the rise of digital channels and the vast amounts of granular performance data they produce, marketers are under more pressure than ever to show exactly how their investments further business objectives and contribute to the bottom line. Yet every day, we encounter marketers who are still challenged to do so.

At Visual IQ, we wanted to create a resource to which marketers could turn for advice on which metrics to use to effectively measure the impact of marketing on business goals. The result is *Defining Marketing Success: 28 Experts Tell You How.*

From the most effective marketing technology and time-tested formulas to the specific metrics that matter most, I am thrilled with the diverse insights and advice these experts have provided. We think that there is something useful for everyone, and we hope that you will find a few specific gems within these pages that you can use at your organization.

Regards,
Manu Mathew
Co-Founder & CEO, Visual IQ

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As a pioneer in the space, Visual IQ has been producing the world's most powerful cross channel marketing attribution software since 2006. Its hosted IQ Intelligence Suite of products combines a user-friendly interface with advanced attribution management and predictive modeling functionality to provide clear recommendations for marketing optimization. Recognized as a leader in cross channel attribution by a leading market research firm in 2014, Visual IQ won The Drum's 2015 Digital Trading Award for Best Attribution Solution, won the 2014 ASPY Award for Best Data or Analytics Solution, and was a finalist in the Digital Analytics Association's Excellence Awards in 2013, 2014 2015 and 2016. For more information, visit www.visualiq.com.

INTRODUCTION

Do you know exactly how your marketing spend affects revenue growth? If you do, you are in the minority. Most business leaders want to know the value they are getting for their marketing investments, but few are fully satisfied by the answers they receive. And the problem is not lack of metrics.

Online channels are data-rich environments. Data fuels programmatic advertising, marketing automation, and attribution platforms. There is a lot of data available to consider. Email marketers like click-through rates. Social marketers closely watch social-driven web traffic. Mobile marketers zero in on app traffic. But do these metrics have anything to do with bottom-line performance?

To better understand what marketing metrics matter most to business leaders, and with the generous support of Visual IQ, we reached out to 28 marketing experts with the following question:

On which metrics do you advise senior marketers focus to most effectively measure the impact of marketing on business goals, and why are these metrics the most important?

Not surprisingly, many experts qualified their answers with, "that depends on business goals." Of course, they said a lot more, providing perspectives from several industry verticals, geographies and business models. In this e-book, we have collected a fascinating array of business-goal-oriented marketing metrics. Many not only tie to bottom-line performance but also enlighten broader business management decisions.

I am confident that anyone interested in quantifying the business value of marketing expenditures will find this e-book a thought-provoking resource.

All the best,
David Rogelberg
Publisher

Mighty Guides

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These authoritative and diverse guides provide a full view of a topic. They help you explore, compare, and contrast a variety of viewpoints so that you can determine what will work best for you. Reading a Mighty Guide is kind of like having your own team of experts. Each heartfelt and sincere piece of advice in this guide sits right next to the contributor's name, biography, and links so that you can learn more about their work. This background information gives you the proper context for each expert's independent perspective.

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METRICS CAN HELP EVERYONE ALIGN TO THE KEY GOAL—REVENUE

ALEXANDER MONTUSCHI

Digital Performance Manager for EMEA,
Cisco

With 12 years of international digital marketing experience, Alex Montuschi is the digital performance manager for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa at Cisco. His role is a mash-up of social media, digital advertising, and analytics. Previously, Montuschi served as European customer relationship management manager at lastminute.com. Studies in marketing communications in the US and UK, completed by an MBA in e-business management at MIP Politecnico in Milan, allowed him to develop broad expertise in the digital space.

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According to Alexander Montuschi, several metrics most directly measure the bottom-line business impact of marketing:

• **Registrations** (in Cisco parlance, "reveals"). "For us, registrations are the main metric," Montuschi says, "because this is where users 'reveal' themselves." He explains that reveals are defined by users raising their hands asking to be contacted. Reveals are crucial in helping the company qualify prospects. "The typical journey," Montuschi says, "starts with marketing content that is delivered on various channels." If all goes well, an anonymous user sees that content, clicks on the ad or link, and is taken to a landing page where they complete a registration form with their contact information, including phone number. Once obtained, that information is sent to the Cisco call center, which rings up the customer for marketing verification. Tracking registrations, then, is Cisco's entrèe to actual sales. "In general, registration is the start of marketing verification," Montuschi states. "It is our conversion."

For us, registrations are the main metric because this is where users "reveal" themselves.

KEY LESSONS

1. **The best marketing metrics are those that help the entire team—from channel owner to CEO—align on the same business goals.**

2. **Harnessing big data and applying advanced marketing attribution to that data delivers on the promise of every marketer's dream—delivering the right content, to the right person, at the right time and through the right channel.**

• **Engagements.** This metric is Cisco's primary method for measuring how users engage with ads and other content such as whitepapers, video, and various reports. "Our goal is to engage with the users early in their buying journey and support them in their decision process," Montuschi says.
Cisco has begun unifying around an attribution-oriented definition for engagements, which assigns a point value to various engagements depending on their proximity to revenue generation. A Facebook "like" might rate 0.1 points, he suggests, while a registration rates 0.8 points. "We combine all these touchpoints in one single metric to provide a unified view of the media impact on engagement," Montuschi observes. What adds power to this metric is Hadoop—the big data distributed storage and processing platform that allows Cisco to analyze customers' complete profiles. When a user registers, Cisco can track backward through the anonymized, preregistered engagements of that customer to get a fuller picture.

• **Conversions from Engagement to Registration.** This metric tracks marketing-qualified leads (MQLs). An MQL is a prospect that has demonstrated enough interest to warrant direct, one-on-one nurturing. In effect, this metric reveals when the marketing rubber has hit the road. "Conversion rates from engagement to registration tell us the effectiveness of our content and digital marketing," Montuschi states. That information is crucial because it is relatively easy to generate lots of registrations. Although those raw numbers matter, MQLs matter a lot more. "This metric is important because it really validates the quality of the registration," Montuschi says. "That is a crucial point to us, as well as a positive metric."

"You need a data-driven attribution model that can uncover the real contribution that each marketing channel and tactic has on your pipeline. That is where Visual IQ can help us."

The reason for singling out these metrics, Montuschi suggests, is that they are bottom-funnel-oriented metrics that connect directly to conversions and therefore to prospective sales. They can help bind the entire business—from channel owners to C-level executives—around a uniform set of business goals. "If we have a common goal, " he notes, "we can compare the performance and ROI on each channel quite easily."

For Montuschi, the associated big data tools are the not-so-secret sauce that makes it possible for a marketing organization such as Cisco to align marketing metrics to the business mission in ways that, not long ago, seemed impossible. "We are now able to do what every marketer has always dreamed of—to provide the right content or action at the right time for the right audience," Montuschi says.

Of course, big data cannot do that alone. Only with the help of tools from attribution vendors, such as Visual IQ, does it become possible to leverage big data tools such as Hadoop to tailor channel-appropriate content to individuals and therefore become a truly omni-channel marketing organization, he asserts. "With Hadoop you have the data, but you still need the data-driven attribution model that can uncover the real contribution that each marketing channel and tactic has on your pipeline," Montuschi indicates. "That is where Visual IQ can help us." ■

JEFF MARCOUX

Board Member and Northwest Chairman,
Internet Marketing Association

Jeff Marcoux is a board member of the Internet Marketing Association. He has driven cross-product and team collaboration and supported multiple product releases, bringing new products to market through innovative content strategies, channel development, and acquisition integration work. He believes that every touchpoint with a customer—from marketing to sales to customer service—is a marketing experience. Marcoux is a marketing growth hacker and martech expert and brings entrepreneurial innovation to a big tech world.

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When Jeff Marcoux considers how CMOs can best evaluate whether marketing is helping the business achieve its goals, he recommends that marketers ask themselves a few key questions. "First, 'Is my brand growing and is it positive?' The ability to measure brand growth is important because you want more people to become aware of your product and offerings, and you want that awareness to be positive. It would be terrible to earn your brand awareness because of some mistake or flub that occurred in the space."

The second determination is whether the sales team is happy. "Are you driving enough leads and, in particular, enough qualified leads, to your sales team? If your sales team is not happy, the team is going to point the finger at marketing. Working in collaboration with sales to establish what a sales-ready lead looks like and defining a common set of well-defined outcomes is key," Marcoux explains.

> *"Are you driving enough leads and, in particular, enough qualified leads, to your sales team?"*

KEY LESSONS

1. **To assess the contribution of marketing to business goals, CMOs should look at brand growth, the effectiveness of lead-generation efforts based on sales readiness and deal size, and how demand-generation activities are tied to true, bottom-line revenue.**

2. **Although understanding revenue is critical, it is also important to associate marketing activities with the opportunities they generated, and then look closer to determine why lost opportunities were not successful.**

The third and most crucial question for any marketer is, Can I show the impact of marketing on the business? "I define this metric as being able to tie demand-generation activities all the way through to revenue," says Marcoux. "If you are able to track your marketing efforts only to opportunities, you do not know how many of those opportunities closed. At the end of the day, you need to know the true bottom-line revenue that you contributed to as a group."

Although revenue is critical to understand, it is also important to track your marketing activities to the opportunities they generated and then look closer to determine why lost opportunities were not successful. "Is it because expectations were not set right? Is it because the sales team did not follow up or is having difficulty closing those leads? This insight can be really helpful," Marcoux explains.

Deal size can also be a useful metric to explore, he notes. "If marketing is driving a bunch of small deals whose overall impact on the company is minimal, you might want to look at how you up-level your strategies and tactics. And if marketing is driving all the big deals, that information is good to have as well."

By asking a few key questions, marketers can begin to unlock the crucial areas in which they contribute to business growth. From there, taking a close look at opportunities and deal size will help illustrate the contributions of marketing toward the bottom line. ■

"If you are able to track your marketing efforts only to opportunities, you do not know how many of those opportunities closed."

EDWARD NEVRAUMONT

Chief Marketing Officer, Author and Advisor,
Good Enough LLC

Edward Nevraumont is focused on helping companies grow. He led the turnaround of A Place For Mom, was an executive at Expedia, and spent 4 years at McKinsey working around the world, including in Australia, Nigeria, Denmark, and the Congo. He is author of *The Ultimate Improv Book*, and his upcoming book, *Good Enough*, is an exploration of the counterintuitive notion that being good is better than being excellent. He has an MBA from Wharton and an undergraduate in physics.

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Edward Nevraumont believes there are two types of marketing: marketing tied to revenue and marketing tied to expenditure. "The world is rapidly moving from marketing as a cost to marketing as a revenue driver," he explains. He adds that if marketers are not already approaching their metrics from this perspective, they should make the shift as soon as possible.

However, in some cases, it may not be possible to directly measure revenue. For instance, some campaigns are designed to stimulate brand awareness and consideration versus a direct response, and are therefore harder to tie to the bottom line. In those situations, Nevraumont recommends analyzing reach. "Reaching people who have not seen your brand before and getting them to remember your brand is key. The next step is to figure out if your brand is being linked to specific category entry points."

> *The world is rapidly moving from marketing as a cost to marketing as a revenue driver.*

KEY LESSONS

1. **Marketing metrics should focus on linking marketing spend to revenue to best demonstrate business impact.**
2. **If revenue cannot be directly measured, another option is to measure reach in the form of network size and mental penetration.**

A fast food restaurant, for example, might want people to consider its brand when they are thinking about eating, but not every meal is the same. There is breakfast, lunch, and dinner—and different decision-making processes might be set up around each of those meals.

From the perspective of a marketer, each of those meal categories is considered a category entry point. "Your job is to maximize category entry points," advises Nevraumont. "You could measure that by first defining those category entry points. Instead of asking consideration questions, such as, 'What fast food restaurants do you recognize?,' which a lot of brand research does, you should ask, 'When you are thinking about going out for dinner, which restaurants do you consider?' 'When you are thinking about going out for breakfast, which restaurants do you consider?'"

From there, you can draw out data that you can use to evaluate the performance of your brand in desired categories, according to Nevraumont. "There are two metrics to consider. What percentage of customers list your brand at least once in each of those category entry points—your mental penetration—and, of the people who think about your brand, in how many category entry points are you considered—your network size."

Nevraumont shares an example. "Suppose 50 percent of people consider McDonald's for lunch, but nobody considers them for dinner or breakfast. In this case, McDonald's has a 50-percent mental penetration but a network size average of just one.

> *"A bigger reach will get you higher mental penetration and smart creative will enable you to increase your network size."*

Suppose only 30 percent of people consider Denny's at all, but when they do consider Denny's, people consider it for both breakfast and dinner. In this case, Denny's has a 30-percent mental penetration and two for its network size. If you multiply those two, Denny's actually has higher mental share than McDonald's has if you assume an equal split of category entry points between breakfast, lunch, and dinner."

When multiplied, mental penetration and network size demonstrate overall brand awareness or mental market share. "If you do well on marketing, you should be able to drive up mental penetration and network size," he says. "A bigger reach will get you higher mental penetration and smart creative will enable you to increase your network size."

In sum, Nevraumont strongly believes that the best method for demonstrating the impact of marketing on business goals is by directly tying marketing spend to revenue. However, if that is not possible, Nevraumont feels that reach—calculated in the form of network size and mental penetration—will help highlight how marketing campaigns contribute to business success. ■

MACIEJ PIWONI

Global Digital Analytics Manager,
Sage

A creative yet data-driven digital analytics professional, Maciej Piwoni has a proven track record in the analytical environment, including optimization, insights, data storytelling, communications, and budget management. As global digital analytics manager at Sage, Piwoni develops and executes the global digital analytics strategy and mentors the modeling and marketing performance teams. With 10 years of hands-on digital analytics experience and 14 years of Internet-related experience, he is a strong advocate for agile marketing based on data and logic.

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Maciej Piwoni has never met two executives who want to discuss the same metrics. Taking this awareness into account, he focuses on three primary balance-sheet metrics that serve as an anchor point for discussions:

• **Revenue Performance.** Executives are most interested in revenue and revenue-based metrics, Piwoni believes. "They have a handle on digital marketing," Piwoni says, "but they need more than ever to understand the role of marketing in revenue generation. Executives want to be able to drill down and have a complete understanding. 'What is driving that number? What products? What data ranges?'" Some marketers think it is unfair to make marketing accountable for revenue metrics, he notes, but it is unavoidable. "It is one of the most difficult elements," he says. "But at the same time, we cannot just say no because it is difficult."

KEY LESSONS

1. **Executives are most interested in revenue and revenue-based metrics and they need to understand the role of marketing in revenue generation.**
2. **Concentrate on pulling a narrative out of your metrics and presenting that story as cogently as possible.**

> *Sales velocity is one of those paramount metrics that companies should track to understand how much time and money you spend to acquire a new customer.*

• **Sales Velocity.** Simply put, this metric measures how fast customers move from the top to the bottom of the sales funnel. "Sales velocity is one of those paramount metrics that companies should track to understand how much time and money is spent to acquire a new customer," says Piwoni. "It actually translates into the effectiveness of your marketing," Piwoni notes. "You can measure effectiveness by the number of conversions, as well as how many of those conversions happen in a particular space of time. You want to make sure that the velocity is aligned and producing the shortest possible customer acquisition times." From the viewpoint of leadership, this metric offers visibility into the effectiveness of marketing investments.

• **Customer Conversions.** This metric was probably the top metric earlier in the Internet age, and it is still a key element, according to Piwoni. "Every executive understands this metric, and it is easy to communicate around the business," he says. Conversion rates are KPIs that tend to be extremely well defined and readily measurable. He adds, "It is easy to have targets against conversion rates."

However, collecting the data for these metrics is a highly challenging part of Piwoni's job. "There is an almost infinite numbers of systems from which you can collect data," he notes. "In our case, it is about setting goals and really understanding what are the prime results we want to get from a specific campaign."

"You try to improve the metrics with the way that you collect data, and you refine that with every stream."

Having a solid companywide data-literacy culture helps, he observes. "That helps continue the learning process," Piwoni notes. "You try to improve the metrics with the way that you collect data, and you refine that with every stream."

When communicating with senior leaders, Piwoni always tries to pull a narrative out of the numbers and present that story as cogently as possible. "To help senior leaders in their decision-making process, I focus on showing all of those elements, and exploring what-if scenarios," he states. "It is really all about storytelling with data."

He believes his choice of metrics helps keep senior leaders on the same page, despite their divergent interests and concerns. The metrics provide a focal point so that the conversation can be easily steered back to its fundamental anchor points. "Around the table, you have these smart guys; they would like to know the story from different angles," Piwoni says. "This is where you start your journey." ■

JON PARKS

Founder and Lead Dijital Strategist,
Dijital Farm

A marketing industry veteran of more than 15 years, Jon Parks has experience in the trenches on both the client and agency sides of marketing. As the founder of Dijital Farm, Parks consults with business-to-business (B2B) companies that want to build and deploy sustainable inbound digital marketing strategies. He is a proud husband and father who is honored to call the Raleigh, North Carolina, area home. In his spare time, he trains for half-Ironman triathlons.

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It is important to measure the impact of marketing on business goals, but Jon Parks recommends that senior marketers avoid the temptation to collect as much data as they can and try to analyze it all. This over-collection is possible thanks to the arrival of sophisticated marketing technology, but it is not actually practical and can ultimately distract a brand's focus from the core metrics that truly communicate business value.

Parks finds two metrics particularly effective for assessing the impact of marketing on the business: marketing-qualified leads (MQLs) and sales-qualified leads (SQLs). "Most business goals are in some way tied to revenue. MQLs indicate how well our content is doing at finding new leads with whom we can engage. They directly feed into SQLs, which indicate whether we are talking with the right prospects—those that can lead to opportunities that ultimately turn into revenue," says Parks. "So, in many respects, the volume of SQLs is a good indicator of whether we are on track to achieve revenue goals."

> *Did we actually deliver the people who bring the projects that turn into the sales for our business? That is where it starts and ends for me.*

KEY LESSONS

1. **Marketing metrics should focus strongly on the top-level drivers that affect business success.**
2. **Predictive modeling can be useful for setting goals against which a marketer can track performance quarter by quarter.**

Ultimately, it all comes down to sales and the revenue those sales generate. "As a digital agency, did we actually deliver the people who bring the projects that turn into the sales for our business? That is where it starts and ends for me," he explains. To answer that question, Parks considers a wide range of underlying metrics that help him understand how his team is finding its MQLs or deriving its SQLs. "Tier 1 metrics is where MQLs and SQLs live for me. Then, Tier 2 is where we get into metrics such as channels and which specific channel is delivering traffic. Is it from social? Is it from email marketing? Is it from organic? Is it from paid? Which of those channels is delivering and in how much volume? We really want to be able to understand those pieces," he explains.

It is important to set goals against which you can measure a marketing program, according to Parks. Otherwise, marketers can never really know whether they made improvement. Predictive modeling can be useful for this purpose—using data about past performance to achieve future goals. Parks shares an example of how you can use predictive modeling to establish such goals. "I know what traffic looked like in terms of MQLs and SQLs in the fourth quarter of last year. I am actively working to exceed those goals right now," he says. "I established a baseline with the data from last quarter, then I used it to create a new set of goals for this quarter. From there, I was able to develop the tactical-level moves that work to exceed those MQLs and SQLs within the quarter."

"Marketing-qualified leads (MQLs) indicate how well our content is doing at finding new leads with whom we can engage. They directly feed into sales-qualified leads (SQLs), which indicate whether we are talking with the right prospects—those that can lead to opportunities that ultimately turn into revenue."

By focusing on metrics that are closely linked to business success, such as MQLs and SQLs, Parks and his team keep their eye on the most important indicators of how well their marketing programs are helping the business achieve its goals. In the process of assessing and understanding the underlying metrics that drive MQL and SQL trends, then setting marketing goals for future growth, they are able to assess and refine the strategies that can, over time, lead to even greater and more impactful results.

JOHN WATTON

EMEA Marketing Director,
Adobe

John Watton leads marketing for Adobe Marketing Cloud in EMEA. With more than 20 years experience in enterprise technology, Software as a Service, and e-commerce marketing, he is a regular speaker and blogger on the topic of digital marketing. Watton is a member of the IDM Business-to-Business (B2B) Marketing Council and serves on the Business Marketing Collective Executive Council. Recognized by several industry awards, Watton was included in the Brand Republic Top 50 Klout UK Influencers of 2015.

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At Adobe, key marketing metrics must tie back to revenue. Although business organizations within Adobe have the responsibility of ensuring revenue is profitable, marketing is responsible for efficiently driving or accelerating that revenue. "The number one metric I am measured by is the contribution of marketing to our business revenue," says John Watton.

The revenue-related metrics that matter most are those that the company uses for forecasting. "Management wants more predictability and more accurate revenue forecasting," Watton says. "When our senior management is looking at marketing performance, they are most interested in what is in the pipeline." This interest is partly driven by the nature of the Adobe business model, which has a business-to-consumer (B2C) component made up of direct sales, and a business-to-business (B2B) component consisting of a traditional sales funnel that requires leads, and typically has a much longer conversion cycle. The job of marketing is to contribute to keeping the sales pipeline full looking one, two, and three quarters into the future.

> *The number one metric I am measured by is the contribution of marketing to our business revenue.*

KEY LESSONS

1. **The ability to receive campaign insights on a weekly or daily basis allows companies to have real-time visibility into pipeline activity and revenue forecasts.**
2. **Companies with B2C and B2B components will have different revenue-centric metrics. On the B2C side, direct response metrics such as conversions are most important. On the B2B side, other pipeline metrics such as leads, forecast sales value, and velocity come into play.**

Revenue forecasting has always been important, but market expectations and technical capabilities have changed the way businesses collect and use metrics. In the past, Adobe would run a campaign that might be associated with a market event, such as a major product launch. In 6 months, they would know how the campaign was going, and then review business and brand tracking data to determine whether the campaign was successful. Watton says, "With digital technology, we are getting these campaign insights on a weekly if not daily basis, and using that to continually modify how we are going to market." This approach affects the whole business, from turning big product releases into a more continuous delivery model, to being able to generate real-time visibility into pipeline activity and revenue forecasts. Although operational metrics, such as qualified leads, unique visits, metrics related to social media, database contacts, brand awareness, and sentiment are all still important, future pipeline dominates the discussion. "We can now provide better revenue predictions, which make the business much more confident about making marketing investment decisions to achieve revenue goals," says Watton.

That being said, the B2C and B2B sides of the business focus on different revenue-centric metrics. In the B2C business, where customers engage at the website and buy direct, marketing and on-site conversion drives revenue. Watton says, "We are much more focused on the efficiencies of attracting the audience to our website, monitoring trial software downloads, and watching the rates of conversion to paying customers."

"We can now provide better revenue predictions, which make the business much more confident about making marketing investment decisions to achieve revenue goals."

On the B2B side, Adobe focuses more on pipeline metrics, such as leads in the pipeline, forecast sales value in the pipeline, pipeline conversion rates, and pipeline velocity. "From the marketing perspective, the B2B approach is about attracting the audience and then passing them into the sales pipeline. Through pipeline metrics and historical pipeline data, we can better forecast B2B revenue," says Watton.

Brand metrics are important too, although they are not as specifically tied to revenue performance. "We have to support the business by driving top-level awareness," explains Watton. Adobe employs brand tracking, sentiment analysis, share of voice, press and social sentiment, and other brand-related measurements. "Although we cannot map specific qualitative brand metrics to revenue, those metrics do tell us something important. For example, we know that brand activity, PR activity, and physical events are the three marketing activities with the strongest influence on future revenue," says Watton. ■

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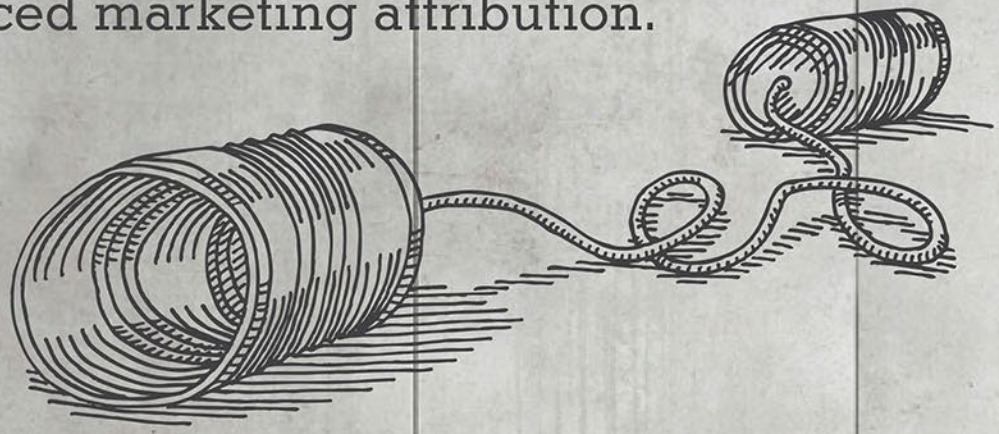

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