

6 Primary Obstacles to Marketing Measurement



Along the path toward better marketing accountability, there are many rocks, holes, roots, and other tripping hazards. Here are a few of the most common ones. Which ones are blocking your path?

1. Applying Rocket Science to Garbage Data.

Measurement requires data, and your organization has plenty of it. But do you have the right data? Or are you just torturing the data you can and undermining the credibility of your conclusions? Measurement-inspired marketers often try to mold data into something worthy of brilliantly conceived metrics. Bottom line, if the data seems off target, avoid advanced analytical gymnastics.

2. The New Math: Speed > Accuracy > Relevance.

Whatever happened to face-to-face interviews in supermarket intercepts? The cost zoomed, and cheaper options for data collection prevailed. Getting a "right" answer soon became more important than exploring the possibilities thoroughly. On top of this, Web-based research now surveys a population of pseudo-target consumers faster and more cost-effectively than ever before. Relevance unfortunately has become equated with antiquated times, and the loss of relevance in our research makes it more difficult to tease out the subtle causalities between success and failure. Speed, accuracy, and relevance — why can't they all just get along?

3. IT Enthusiasts Control the Agenda.

IT people are living their glory days. In an increasingly data-driven marketing era, IT is responsible for collecting and storing data, mining customer files to build profiles of the most profitable buyers, and sending and receiving messages in record time. The people who groove on all of this monopolize the corporation's agenda; they make progress and success all about the technology. But a spreadsheet on an intranet doesn't make a business run. To get any attention and respect for marketing, we have to get the decision process right and only then apply technology to facilitate it.

4. Researchers and Analysts Suffer the Dangerfield Syndrome: They Get No Respect.

When was the last time you met a CMO who rose up through research? Researchers and analysts typically receive poor pay and have no career path. They need to act as thought leaders within the

organization, leveraging the thought and data models they build in marketing and in all of the business functions it touches. When researchers rise in stature, they encourage the use of facts and data to make smart decisions. So the smart CMO will see that they get the training in communications skills and leadership development to expose their talents more broadly and spread that discipline within the department. It's time to rethink the role of research and decision analytics in our marketing structures, not just expand on the same old models.

5. Training in Measurement Is Rare.

And we wonder why we hear so much complaining about skill shortages. Survey after survey on improving marketing measurement cites the No. 1 CMO need as "getting the right skills in place." But by our observation, fewer than one in 10 mid-sized to large marketing departments have comprehensive skill-building programs in place.

6. Delegating Measurement Strategy.

In selecting the right marketing metrics, the decision maker has to have not only a big-picture perspective, but the clout to negotiate marketing's new science within the organization. Mid-level managers can't do this. Only a person at the top can assess how much change marketing can take in one step and in which direction the group must move. Plus, when measurement strategy is delegated, truth and insight often take a back seat to rationalization and justification. Measurement requires leadership that ensures that every person in the organization is focused on being creative, being supportive, taking initiative, and performing as a team player.

