

# How Technology Enables Integrated Marketing

By [Elana Anderson](#), The ClickZ Network, May 8, 2008

Let me state right up front that technology is no panacea to easing the challenges and complexities that marketing organization face today. Yet more marketing organizations are turning to technology to help:

- **Automate.** As marketing organizations seek to deliver more relevant, individualized customer experiences, they add tactics driven by customer behaviors and actions to their marketing communications mix messaging, a change from pure outbound push models. In addition to being very responsive to customers, these tactics are ideal because they can be automated. Today's campaign management solutions are maturing beyond support for the traditional push campaigns to facilitate campaign automation through functions like real-time data integration and event detection, multistage campaign process flows, and business-rule-driven automation.

- **Collaborate.** Relevance isn't just about the message. Relevance requires an equal focus on time and place. From the customer's perspective, relevance is inherently multichannel and integrated. As marketing organizations work to increase their relevance and become more customer-focused, they will need to collaborate more, a lot more, with other marketing teams and other functional areas of the company (like customer service). Marketing resource management technology can help facilitate collaboration by providing a consolidated marketing calendar, establishing common work areas for virtual teams, and facilitating processes, as interdisciplinary teams work to design, build, and launch integrated programs.

- **Integrate.** Whether you're integrating disparate data from various systems across the enterprise or integrating teams to streamline marketing processes, technology is required. Moreover, marketing application suites that are themselves integrated and support the entire marketing process -- from planning through design, execution, and measurement --

can dramatically simplify the complexity that marketers face as they work to become more relevant and customer-focused.

Just as technology is a critical enabler of relevant marketing, it can also fail to deliver on expectations. Why? Increasing marketing relevance and improving marketing integration requires that organizations mature their skills, consider new metrics, and overcome organizational silos. Technology offers little to address these challenges.

Additionally, many marketing organizations don't take enough ownership of technology. Marketers and the technology groups that support them must recognize that technology has become critical to day-to-day marketing operations. Relevant marketing requires operational access to data and iterative levels of analysis, needs not well met by traditional project-focused IT organizations. Marketing organizations that want to differentiate customer experiences through relevant customer-focused marketing communications and content delivery must bring technology expertise under the umbrella of the marketing organization, either internally or through a trusted service partner that behaves as the marketing team's extension.

### **Emerging SAAS Options: Good News for Marketers**

As with most enterprise business technology, marketing applications originally entered the market as premise-based software solutions. While these applications still have their place in some companies, for most marketers they are too complex, difficult to use, tough to integrate, and aren't enhanced at the rate required to support the evolving needs of fast-paced marketing environments. Enter on-demand SAAS ([define](#)) solutions. Although still in their infancy, SAAS marketing solutions promise to:

- **Lower upfront investment costs.** Few marketing organizations are blessed with big capital budgets enabling them to make six- or seven-figure software and hardware purchases. But marketers often have one of the largest discretionary budgets in the company and are accustomed to buying "services." For marketing organizations, the pay-as-you-go model that SAAS providers offer is ideal.

▪ **Reduce the need for IT involvement.** While marketing organizations will never cut IT out of the loop entirely, SAAS solutions can dramatically decrease the day-to-day demands marketing places on internal IT groups. There's no software to install and maintain, and SAAS solutions are backed by a service team that supports them day in and day out. Some very sophisticated, technically savvy marketers may feel limited by lack of flexibility, extensibility, or near-term comprehensiveness of emerging SAAS solutions. However, the majority of marketing organizations, particularly in the midmarket or in industry sectors that don't sell to and service consumers directly, will find that they reduce headaches and offer more flexibility in the long term as vendors roll out new capabilities and features at a rate that enterprise software vendors simply can't match.

▪ **Shorten time to market.** On-premise software solutions typically take three or more months to implement, and installation costs are generally double the cost of the software. In contrast, marketers are typically up and running with SAAS solutions within weeks or, at most, a couple of months. Again, there's a complexity factor in both scenarios. The on-premise software tools can sit on top of a more comprehensive data infrastructure and support more complex data exploration and manipulation. But few marketing end users want to or can handle the complexity on their own.