



# Breaking the Marketing Manipulation Madness Model

By Gary M. Katz

Bet you can relate to this . . .

Yesterday I leave a voice message for a prospect and out of nowhere a page pops up in my browser with the audio blaring about something I either don't care about or don't want to hear at that inconvenient moment. I shuffle through multiple open browser windows with banner ads irritatingly flashing at me before I find the culprit and close it.

A couple of minutes later I receive yet another unwanted call from a telemarketer trying to convince me to buy something or donate to something. I'm not even sure which because as soon as this "space introducer" begins talking all I hear is white noise – it's all about them and whatever organization or cause they represent; I am reduced to a name and phone number on a list.

Right after hanging up on the telemarketer, I receive another call, this time from a freaking computer. The lazy person's approach to telemarketing. Save time and rejection by automating your intrusion process. Receiver be damned. I hang up the phone with aggression.

Back to outgoing calls, I finally connect to a live person. That's a big accomplishment because it is so damn tough to connect with a human being these days, what with everyone avoiding computer calls, telemarketers and pretty much everyone else they don't already know or expect a call from.

Heck, even if you are known and liked, that's no guarantee of getting through to someone quickly or receiving a return call within a reasonable period of time. If you still practice that once common courtesy of consistently returning phone calls within 24 hours, you are in the classy minority. Juggling too many balls, running around with our hair on fire, trying just to survive and hold on to our position, our job, our families, our home. Seems like a pretty good excuse to lower our standards.

Back to my live call, I need to refer to an e-mail exchange. I hunt through my in-box to find that last message between us. I search for it. I look for action flags. I look in folders. Damn! Where is it? When was it? What was that subject line again? This is the e-mail hell most of us know all too well. Finding what we need is like trying to find a needle in a haystack. It's somewhere among those barely-relevant offers, spam our junk mail settings didn't filter, and lots of stuff we're actually interested in if we just had the time to read and respond to it.

## Moving from Marketing Manipulation Madness to Marketing Operations 2.0

At the heart of this insanity are two attributes we value greatly (and should): creativity and technology.

From creativity and enabling technology, we've come up with all sorts of tricks and tools to perpetuate a marketing manipulation madness (MMM) that no longer works. In our quest for @ttention and immediate gratification, there's a trail of junk littering the Information Superhighway. Pop-up ads hoping to get us to hand over our money. Ill-timed or irrelevant offers in our e-mail



or on websites that distract us from quickly finding what we need. Complicated user interfaces and commerce platforms that serve the vendor need to sell but not the buyer need to buy what we need.

This constant commotion is fatiguing to most of us and makes it exceedingly hard to separate a compelling but empty promise (“I made \$1000 yesterday from XXX affiliate marketing”) from a sustainable (but hard-to-communicate with sound-bytes) value proposition.

Bottom line is that we’ve created a manipulation marketing model where the near-term needs of a company – particularly executive management’s ability to pacify shareholders – trumps whoever is on the receiving end of our me-me madness. Social media tools and channels that were intended to change the engagement model – to give customers what they want where, when and how they want it – are being misused as promotional levers.

Over the past few years, those of us in Marketing Operations have tried to help our companies break this madness cycle – to be more disciplined, more accountable, more customer centric, to truly live, not just talk, the brand. Sadly, MO is still being treated by most companies as a dumping ground for orphaned projects, as a tactical enabler, as a service organization cranking out volumes of campaigns and content to satisfy quantity-based measurement objectives that no longer apply.

Our ability to truly root out and replace the old MMM model, and all its manifestations, will only come when Marketing Operations is embraced as a strategic enabler at the C-level. That’s when [MO 2.0](#) will become more than a partially-realized vision – it will change the MO of Marketing by providing a holistic, integrating force for cross-functional (-organizational, -industry) alignment for badly-needed change in enterprise, industry and the marketing profession.

If you’re a [Marketing Operations leader](#) – whether enterprise, solution provider, services company or individual – speak up and join us in this cause. And stay tuned. Both Marketing Operations Partners and the industry group we founded, the [Marketing Operations Future Forum](#), will be leading industry-changing initiatives in the months ahead to burst the bubble of marketing manipulation madness. We welcome anyone with a similar vision and passion to get involved.

## Call to Action

If your company is facing challenges in any of the areas discussed in this article, or if you are thinking about creating a marketing operations function or increasing the effectiveness of the one you already have, you should start with a “current state assessment” that will help you evaluate the overall health of your marketing and/or Marketing Operations today. Doing so will help you zero in on those areas that represent your most difficult challenges as well as your greatest opportunities for bringing the significant benefits of MO best practices to your organization.

### About the Author:



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