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## 2010 Business Marketers Survival Guide:

*A blueprint for eliminating the barriers  
to effective marketing.*

### YOU WILL LEARN

- How industry leaders **improve customer acquisition, retention and revenue by 25%** with customer intelligence
- The **latest research** from the CMO Council and the Aberdeen Group on what top firms do to market so successfully
- How you can **use your own data** to answer your marketing questions, and slice expensive marketing research costs
- **Four steps** to building better customer intelligence
- How to **prove ROI** (or not) on pet marketing projects more easily than ever before

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Start today.** Stop brainstorming and make real progress. With the **2010 Business Marketers Survival Guide**, you can learn how to center your marketing programs on sound intelligence, prove the value of these programs to your entire organization, and build a sustainable, growing customer base. Use this guide to counter the effects of today's challenging business environment by building practical insight you can use to drive measurable results.



Actionable  
Intelligence<sup>SM</sup>

Vantedge Group is a Customer Intelligence & Optimization company that helps sales, marketing and strategy teams gain the insights needed to make smart decisions and drive consistent growth. Vantedge Group specializes in turning internal and external data sources into valuable and usable intelligence without the excessive costs and timeframes of traditional solutions. Companies gain significant benefits by identifying clear opportunities for growth and the optimal way to deploy their resources against those opportunities.

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This paper will show you how to build the Actionable Intelligence<sup>SM</sup> assets that will drive customers to your door. And in the harsh new reality that most marketers are facing, actionable intelligence is more important than ever.

## Why Business Marketers are Feeling the Squeeze in 2010

In the breakneck evolution of today's business environment, marketers are feeling the heat from four distinct corners:

Due to **market saturation** in many industries, marketing decisions are being made rapid-fire. Traditional methods of performing research and building a marketing strategy are too expensive, too inaccurate and don't happen fast enough to keep pace with the hyper state of competition.

As a result, marketers are relying on **instinct and intuition** to make decisions, driving down the confidence level on every decision made. Yet, somehow, these decisions still need to measurably drive in customers and revenue.

Often after decisions are made, marketers are forced to **retroactively prove ROI and justify their budgets**. The push from senior management asks them to get beyond "Doesn't the creative look good?" to a point where they can say, "Here is the opportunity we've identified, here's the marketing mix that reaches them, and here are the results of what we've done so far."

### Marketing Trends

According to a current survey performed by the CMO Council:

50% of CMOs are hired to fix "broken" marketing organizations.

21% of marketers are either still trying to gain traction in their marketing programs or are stalled and losing credibility in their organizations.

53% feel that quantifying and measuring the value of marketing programs and investments remains the top challenge in the year ahead.<sup>1</sup>

Yet up front, the time and budget weren't in place for this level of reporting. In fact, in 2009, 52.6% of global marketers surveyed by the CMO Council had budgets equal to less than 4% of revenue. The dual demand for program performance alongside reporting accuracy makes the situation, let's just say, a mess.

The bottom line is that marketers need faster, more precise customer intelligence, and they need to accurately target every dollar they spend, and they need to do it in a way that doesn't break the budget. Fortunately, new customer intelligence tools from firms like Vantage Group and others allow for the hectic pace of technology marketing and answer these needs directly.

But there are other challenges that marketers face that aren't simply solved by better customer intelligence technology. Let's agree on those challenges before we get into new solutions for technology marketing that makes sense.

## Overcoming Specialized Challenges in Business Marketing

B2B companies face several unique hurdles in building the kind of customer intelligence they need to deliver the results demanded of them—not just the marketing results, but also the reporting performance.



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B2B marketers know they need **better intelligence on their customers**. But they live in dynamically growing industries, with high rates of mergers, acquisitions, new partnerships and vendor relationships. In this environment, B2B marketers have a tough time knowing exactly who all of their customers are, let alone developing comprehensive profiles of their customers across the enterprise.

Many B2B companies tend to focus their budgets on R/D and product development initiatives, leaving marketers with a limited budget and a need to eliminate wasted efforts.

B2B marketers are constantly bombarded with “great ideas” for the next promotion or campaign coming from all areas of their company. They need to determine the right marketing mix for their organization and eliminate unproductive promotions. They also need to be able to prove to the proponents of other strategies why this mix will deliver the best results. Today’s marketers basically need leverage to deal with their own political environment.

Many companies tend to think in terms of a technological solution when it comes to building customer intelligence. While technology definitely plays a role in this function, marketers need to ask themselves an important question: “Do I really want technology staff creating solutions to a business-oriented problem?”

Considering the realities that B2B marketers are facing in 2010, is it possible to generate the customer intelligence assets needed to survive and grow a business?

### The Tightening Wallets of CMOs

According to the CMO Council:

In 2009, 52.6% of global marketers surveyed had budgets equal to less than 4% of revenue.

37.6% of CMOs state that their annual budgets will not change in 2009.

Only 7.6% expect to see budget increases greater than 11 percent.<sup>2</sup>

## Best Performing B2B Firms Use Customer Intelligence

The answer to that last question is yes. Certain companies have found a way to not only survive, but to thrive in 2010 through the proper application of customer intelligence strategies.

An independent study by the Aberdeen Group, a Boston-based research firm, finds that “best-in-class leaders” reported using customer intelligence management (CIM) to attain **greater than 25% year-after-year performance improvement in customer retention and customer acquisition rates, and revenues**.<sup>3</sup>

These thought leaders have found salvation in a sound approach to customer intelligence that can deliver reliable, consistent and actionable results despite the many challenges discussed previously. And any technology marketer can achieve similar results by following certain best practices in customer intelligence.

According to the CMO Council, improved accountability of the marketing organization and using customer data and analytics for better targeting and effectiveness were the two top accomplishments CMOs listed in 2009.<sup>4</sup> In fact, 79% of CMOs surveyed stated that they believe “marketing is making significant or reasonable progress in improving the perceived value of the function.”

## Customer Intelligence Can Deliver

Customer intelligence is about making sense of the chaos. B2B marketers are assaulted with information on their industry, their market and their customers. But this is usually in the form of raw data.



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Customer intelligence is about mining specific, targeted information that empowers the marketer to make better decisions. It identifies what (or who) is the opportunity and how can that opportunity be capitalized on.

Customer intelligence helps marketers understand who they are talking to, what the biggest targets are within that audience, what their behavior is and what is it that they really want to buy.

### Typical decision drivers you can learn with customer intelligence.

Customer intelligence answers questions such as:

1. What are customers spending by product category?
2. What is the length of time of the customer relationship?
3. What is the importance of customer-centric variables, such as call answering time, to the customer relationship?
4. How much are customers spending within a specific period of time?
5. What is the number of products purchased per customer?
6. What is the average revenue per customer?

With the answers to these questions, a marketer can gain the intelligence that really matters:

7. Are the customers we are acquiring now more or less profitable than the customers acquired six months ago?
8. Are we building revenue per customer or losing revenue per customer?
9. Are we getting all of the business from each customer that we could, or are we losing certain revenue streams to our competition?
10. How high is our customer churn rate, and is it climbing or falling?

Once an organization has built up intelligence assets such as these, it can start to develop the strategies necessary to correct downward trends, and it can further utilize customer intelligence to test the marketing concepts and tactics that will be deployed in the future.

And once marketers have this information in hand, they can address the “big ideas” within their company, as they will have the data to prove what works . . . and what doesn’t. That data will be the leverage for unifying everyone within the organization around the marketing programs that are proven to deliver the best possible results.

### Roadblocks to Customer Intelligence

As attractive and obvious an option as customer intelligence seems to be, research shows that many companies are still resistant. An independent study by the Aberdeen Group<sup>5</sup> determined that **only 48% of the 125 companies it surveyed have actively managed customer intelligence for 12 months or more**. That puts the concept in the early adopter stage.



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What's the holdup? According to research conducted by the Association of National Advertisers and Forrester Research, **almost 50% of the CMOs they surveyed felt "ROI data is hard to obtain" and more than 40% said "it isn't granular enough."**<sup>6</sup> The problem is that these CMOs don't know how to build effective customer intelligence in a budget-conscious and efficient manner. The result is that the effort fails—or no attempt to build intelligence is made at all.

Other concerns are that building customer intelligence is simply "too far off" in the future. With many popular business intelligence software platforms, like Hyperion or Cognos, costing easily into the millions to implement and maintain, it's no wonder technology marketing leaders shy away.

## 4-Step Action Plan for Building Customer Intelligence Effectively

In fact you can forge customer intelligence that provides the action-oriented results an organization needs, and you can do it without the headaches or hefty cost. All you need is the right plan.

### **Step 1: Use the Data You Already Have**

One common denominator of almost all technology companies is that they have reams—and volumes—and terabytes—of data. So before launching into a massive market research project, a company needs to take a hard look at the resources they already have, including:

- Sales data
- CRM data
- Billing data
- Call center data

This is just a sample of the data that often goes unchecked and unused when examining customer intelligence. Smart companies will look at this data and ask, "What opportunities are we missing?" This is usually followed by "What don't we have in our data that we need to research further?"

The key to answering those questions is getting all that data centralized, getting it cleaned, and transforming it into something useful. This brings us to the next step.

### **Step 2: Centralize Information**

In the business sector, mergers and acquisitions are a quick way to build volume, get new products and gain intellectual property. But with the high frequency of mergers and acquisitions, as well as new partner and vendor relationships, comes a decided lack of cohesive customer information.

Data typically flies unchecked throughout an organization. Consider this example:

Two merged/acquired companies keep their products on separate billing systems. When Marketing examines the value of a customer, they may think that the customer is using only one product, but if they were to pull data from all of the billing systems, they might realize the customer is actually using three products.



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Customer intelligence is not about people making decisions in silos. An organization must extract data from every corner of its business and put it into a central area. Think of an intelligence magnet pulling all the data together, putting it into a consistent format, and allowing decision makers to extract out what they need.

### Mining the Data Mountain

At a recent Microsoft-sponsored database conference, Paul Flessner, Microsoft Senior Vice President of Server Applications, discussed the growth of data capacity requirements in layman's terms<sup>7</sup>:

1 MB (one million characters or so) = two novels (about 500 pages)

1 GB (1,000 MB) = about 1900 novels

1 TB (1,000 GB) = about 1.9 million books (requiring 15 miles of bookshelves and 50,000 trees)

10 TB = about the size of the Library of Congress (LOC), or 19M books

1 PB (1,000 TB) = 100 LOC's; in dollars, more money than in all the world's banks

12 EB (1,000 PB) = total of human knowledge through 1999 (about 1.2 million LOC's)

The next 12 EB were created by 2002; 7 EB was created in 2003 alone.

### Step 3: Conduct Research to Fill Knowledge Gaps

Once an organization understands what its assets are, it needs to validate that information against what it needs. There are four growth drivers within customer intelligence that should be considered:

- Customer Acquisition
- Customer Experience
- Product Research/Prioritization
- Marketing Optimization (brand analysis, communication effectiveness, etc.)

When the knowledge gaps are identified, a strategy needs to be developed to acquire the missing pieces. In developing the necessary resources, the latest techniques such as online survey research, should be utilized to streamline the process and keep costs in check.

The key here is that this research should be targeted to very specific pre-identified needs. That's how you keep the project scope from growing exponentially out of control, and slice marketing research budgets down from the type you need when you go on deep sea "fishing expeditions" to the much tamer budget you need to go firing at a target range.

### Step 4: Build Dynamic Intelligence in Real-Time

Technology is an industry that's perpetually on the move. Effective customer intelligence is not a single-pane snapshot of a customer at a specific moment in time.



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Customers are changing. Their needs, wants and desires are changing. Customer intelligence needs to continually refresh itself to keep pace.

A marketer doesn't need to just know the perfect marketing mix for their company. **They need to know the perfect marketing mix for their company right now.**

### Learn how to optimize your marketing dollars

US Online Advertising Spending by Format 2006-2011<sup>8</sup>  
(in millions)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Search</b>	\$6,799	\$8,624	\$11,000	\$12,935	\$14,906	\$16,590
<b>Display ads</b>	\$3,685	\$4,687	\$5,913	\$6,663	\$7,500	\$8,190
<b>Classified</b>	\$3,059	\$3,638	\$4,675	\$5,493	\$6,281	\$6,930
<b>Rich media/video</b>	\$1,192	\$1,755	\$2,613	\$3,575	\$4,463	\$5,481
<b>Lead generation (referrals)</b>	\$1,310	\$1,733	\$2,269	\$2,795	\$3,281	\$3,675
<b>E-mail</b>	\$338	\$428	\$481	\$553	\$600	\$630
<b>Sponsorships</b>	\$496	\$535	\$550	\$488	\$469	\$504
<b>Total</b>	\$16,879	\$21,400	\$27,500	\$32,500	\$37,500	\$42,000

With so much being spent across the marketing spectrum—perhaps haphazardly—**where do you plan on spending your budget?**

Once the right mix is determined, measurement is essential to make sure that the goals are achieved. Tracking data must align with the original objectives or a course change may be necessary.

Making adjustments should be considered part of the process. The market is constantly changing, and marketing programs should change right along with it. And the dollars spent on any adjustments must also be tracked to develop a picture of cost vs. customer impact to determine if the budget is well spent.

#### Many Companies Still Have Limited Tracking and Visibility

According to the CMO Council:

Nearly 55% of 2009 survey respondents do not track and measure the effectiveness of marketing expenditures or they stated that they have a minimal "line of sight" between business results and marketing efforts.

Only 7% of CMOs surveyed perform analysis to understand the causal relationships between marketing, revenues, and profits.<sup>9</sup>



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## Services Model Solves Typical Roadblocks to Better Insights

Many companies understandably focus on a technology solution, such as a CRM application, when the need for building customer intelligence arises. But building a technology-only approach has several shortcomings including:

Mining useful customer information using only hardware and software is a complicated task. This usually necessitates that IT resources generate the decision data points presented to marketing professionals. The result is that the technical resources of a company end up driving its critical business decisions.

Customer analytics software is usually expensive and difficult to implement and use. The complexity of deploying the technology, training staff, and providing maintenance and support drives down adoption and results in a solution that never gets used.

With technology, you're also missing one key ingredient—insight. Within raw data, there are often hidden observations that can be missed. It takes insight to take data and draw out the valuable conclusions that will make a definable difference in marketing programs.

Utilizing a services model to create customer intelligence means that a company gains the expertise of a third-party who not only generates data, but also offers the knowledge and insight to make that data truly worthwhile. This, in turn, gives the decision makers confidence that they are targeting customer-centric actions where they will have the most impact.

Another benefit of a services approach is that the highest caliber vendor will already have all necessary technology hosted within their company. That means no implementation or support issues on the part of the client—they get the benefit of the output with no headaches, hassles or uncertainty. It's a win/win partnership for all involved.

## Smart Companies Win with Better Customer Intelligence

Smart companies win when they build more accurate customer intelligence, faster and more cost effectively than their competition. When properly executed, customer intelligence will fit your business model, applying the right answers to your specific business problems. And it will do it with the agility to provide you the information you need when you need it—without lengthy ramp-up times or big-budget project executions.

The resulting intelligence delivers:

- Better decisions
- Better customer acquisition
- Enhanced customer loyalty
- More political capital within the organization



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- Tighter marketing with the dynamic capability to keep pace with the ever-evolving face of the technology industry
- Revenue growth across the enterprise

The bottom line is that smart customer intelligence is intelligence built for the practical world. And it's how you can win in today's marketplace.

### Customer Intelligence in Action

How can a business win with smarter customer intelligence? When clients such as Equifax turn to Vantage Group, a customer intelligence company, to help them reduce customer churn, Vantage Group responds with a proprietary process that slashes normal project timelines and identifies the prominent factors causing churn. This enables an "early warning system" where the client can build profiles of "at risk" customers and take corrective actions to regain their loyalty.

Typical results:

- Vantage Group helps companies reduce customer churn by 50% on average.
- Vantage Group's strategies cut time-to-intelligence in half.

Vantage Group helps companies like Equifax shrink churn and protect key revenue streams. And this intelligence in turn drives the customer acquisition programs that will build more revenue in the future.



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## Find Out More

We hope you've enjoyed this paper on surviving and thriving in the B2B marketing world with better customer intelligence. Clearly, it's an enormous topic, and charged with nuance for each individual firm.

If you're a B2B marketer and would like to discuss the approaches and insights in this white paper, I invite you to call a customer intelligence consultant at Vantage Group. We can talk you through how this approach has succeeded for dozens of firms like yours, and have a conversation about meeting your specific challenges in the next 8 weeks.

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## Author Bio

### READ ZIEGLER

Read is the President and Founder of Vantage Group, the leader in designing and delivering Actionable Intelligence<sup>SM</sup> solutions for growth-oriented companies. Read has more than 18 years of experience as a business leader and entrepreneur developing high performance sales & marketing teams in the communications, software, and technology industries. His first-hand experience provides the catalyst for a new class of intelligence solutions designed to arm businesses with vital information to make more effective decisions that result in greater ROI, increased business performance and higher value customer relationships.

With particular expertise in acquisition marketing, brand strategy, customer loyalty, and product management, Read has a passion for helping companies capture and activate market insights that produce new opportunities for growth. He began his career developing some of the first competitive telecommunications products and brands and was also a pioneer in the electronic bill payment industry, helping to launch and grow one of the industry's first electronic billing companies.

Read is an active member of the Atlanta community where he resides with his wife and two children.



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