

WINNING AT THE GAME OF MARKETING

6 COMMON MARKETING PROBLEMS AND THE TRICKS TO BEAT THEM

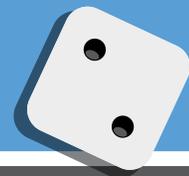


CHANGE THE GAME

When you started the game of marketing, you had brilliant ideas and the work ethic of a warrior. You felt undefeatable. Now, you are tired, frustrated, and overwhelmed.

Like a real-life board game, you can get sent backward, move ahead, or lose a turn at any moment in the world of marketing. Often, unpredictability and chaos abound, making work more a game of chance than strategy. While the project goals and individual tasks may change, the process stays the same—hold a kickoff meeting, develop a plan of attack, assign tasks, and set a completion date. Then, roll the dice and hope for the best.

There is a way to change the game. In this ebook, you will learn six key strategies to eliminate work chaos and gain control of the board. No more rolling the dice. It is now a game of chess, where creativity and strategic execution are the keys to winning.



ATTACK OF THE WORK REQUESTS

The Challenge: Requests for work are coming at you from every direction—email, meetings, hallway conversations, sticky notes, phone calls, and text messages. You make spreadsheets. You write lists. But in the constant barrage, you can't keep track of it all. Even prioritizing your work to achieve the highest level of success is difficult to do.

Long on ideas, short on time FIFO – First in, favorite out

As a marketer, you are creative by nature and have an abundance of great ideas, but not enough time to see every idea through to fruition. Your resources and budgets are limited. This means that new ideas need to be vetted for their ability to meet strategic objectives, rather than just their “wow” factor.

Your next challenge, then, is figuring out how to prioritize work to achieve strategic objectives. Of course, everybody thinks their request should be your top priority. And if you push out one deadline in favor of another, it could have a domino effect on the deadlines of downstream activities.

With new work requests coming at you every day, you try to defend yourself, but you don't know where to start. So you start with your favorite task, the easiest to complete, the ones with the loudest stakeholders, or even those from your favorite person. Maybe you spin the wheel and see where it lands.

This is not necessarily the work that needs to be done in order to meet the marketing team's goals. Once more, you've rolled the dice and lost. In the end, you're buried in requests and working nights and weekends to make everyone happy.



73%

OF PEOPLE WORK MORE HOURS THAN PAID.



DOMINATE THE WORK REQUESTS GAME

How to: Conquer this challenge by getting on top of the overflowing pipeline of requests. You will be rewarded with extra time, happier resources, and more successful projects.

Centralize request management

Choose one place to accept and manage requests and stick to it. This becomes the single source of truth for all marketing activities. The penalty for going around the system is that the new request won't be heard.

Provide resource visibility

Before you consider any requests, you should be able to check your availability and that of others. Having access to resource skills and schedules will help better target new work availability and filter through the barrage of requests.

Align to business goals

Every new request should align with business goals that are part of strategic initiatives. This weeds out ideas that are cool for the sake of

being cool from ones that contribute to business goals directly.

Understand tradeoffs

New work requests don't wait for current tasks to be finished. These, often urgent, new requests can interrupt work in the pipeline causing unnecessary delays. When considering a new request, it's imperative to understand the tradeoffs and downstream work impacts.

Empower workers

Every team member needs to be able to say "no" when the request is not aligned with strategic objectives, won't turn out acceptable ROI, or requires more resources than what are available. Make sure team members have enough visibility into the request to make that decision.



CONQUERING WORK

You now have total visibility into your work.
You accelerated your marketing process.

MOVE AHEAD 10 SPACES.

“Until we can manage time, we can manage nothing else.”

—Peter F. Drucker

SPINNING PLATES MAYHEM

The Challenge: Marketing activities can generate more work than there are hours in a day. You're spinning one plate, then two, then three. You're a good multi-tasker, but when you get up to six, the plates start to wobble. You're starting to find out there is a limit to how much work you can handle.

It's all fun and games until someone drops a plate

There are campaigns and creative briefs, research and advertising—the list goes on. There is always far more work to do than hours and people to do it all. Even a high-energy person reaches a point where things begin to fall through the cracks.

A simple campaign is composed of a number of tasks and steps, and involves multiple people. But simple quickly becomes complex when it's just one of your many spinning plates.

In addition to the other work you're doing, you are also involved in a marketing research study and writing the content

for a landing page. To save time, you skipped creating a plan for the campaign—you've done this so many times you could do it in your sleep. But, with so much going on, you forgot some key steps that require lead-time. Now your plates are beginning to crash.

You used to love marketing. Now you're too busy asking for favors, begging forgiveness, working nights and weekends, and rethinking your career path. So much for marketing being fun!

A 2012 SURVEY BY COMPSYCH SHOWS THAT 63% OF WORKERS HAVE HIGH LEVELS OF STRESS, WITH EXTREME FATIGUE/FEELING OUT OF CONTROL AND 36% OF WORKERS LOSE AN HOUR OR MORE PER DAY AT WORK DUE TO STRESS.²



MANAGE YOUR PLATES AND SPIN EFFICIENTLY

How to: The best way to excel at the Spinning Plate game is to develop consistency in your technique. For marketing, that means using a process that ensures every task and every resource is identified the same way every time, whether it's a trade show booth or an email campaign.

Achieve consistency

Although it may seem counterintuitive, taking the extra time to create and follow consistent processes will actually save time in the long run. With so many activities being done by so many different people, consistent processes will ensure that work gets done the right way every time. The added benefit is that everyone knows what is expected from writers, designers, approvers, etc. When they know where they are needed, they can plan their own work more efficiently.

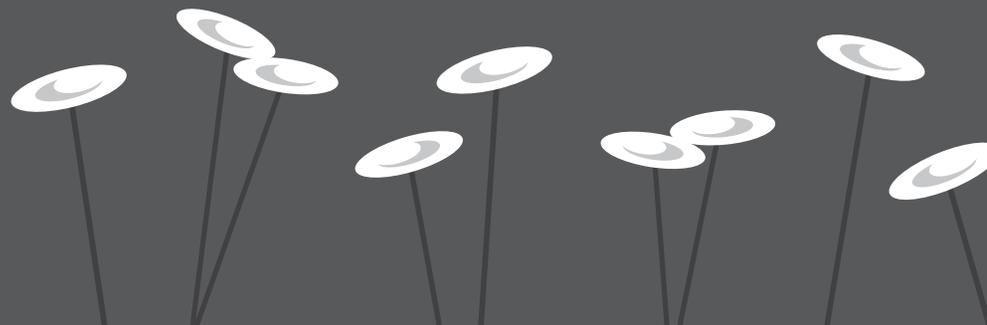
Develop standards

The best way to be consistent is to create standard templates and timelines that everyone can follow. Outlining the steps and resources needed for every marketing activity will ensure that you haven't missed critical tasks or done them in the wrong order. Once a template contains all the necessary tasks in the correct order, add timeline thresholds needed to complete each step.

Reap rewards

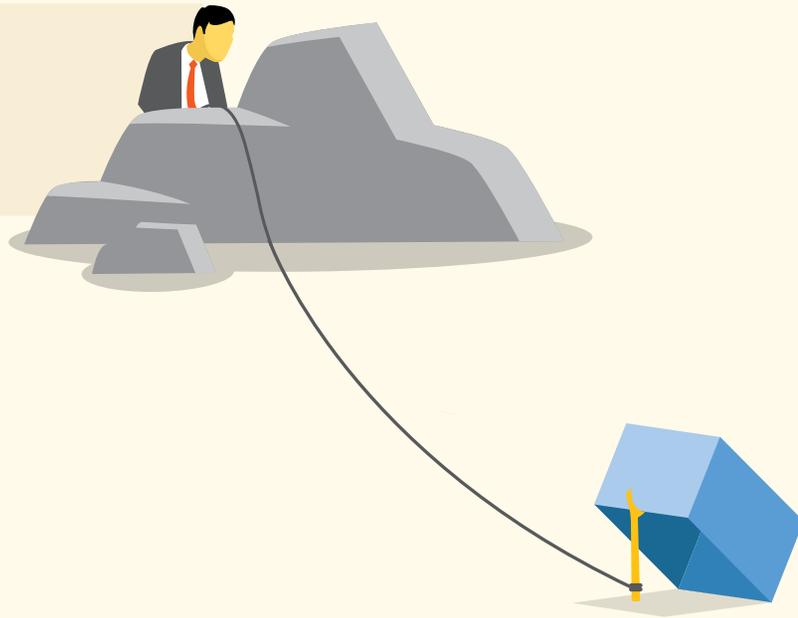
By requiring templates and timelines to be used with every request, you can save time by automating repetitive tasks. Additionally, you can more accurately forecast the time needed for each marketing initiative or campaign and be sure nothing gets missed. Be sure to consider holidays, vacations, and company events when planning. Then, roll up each request into a master calendar that shows all deliverables, deadlines, and owners to uncover any issues or constraints. As you improve these templates over time, you will eventually create your own marketing best practices.

IN 2013, ORGANIZATIONS WITH SUCCESSFUL WORK PERFORMANCE MEASURES (ON TIME, ON BUDGET, AND GOALS MET) ARE ALMOST THREE TIMES MORE LIKELY THAN ORGANIZATIONS WITH POOR WORK PERFORMANCE TO USE STANDARDIZED PRACTICES THROUGHOUT THE ORGANIZATION, AND HAVE BETTER OUTCOMES AS A RESULT. ³



RED ROVER, RED ROVER, SEND YOUR BEST RESOURCE ON OVER!

The Challenge: You need to find a creative resource quick! But, resources are limited, budgets are tight, and everyone is busy. You must figure out how to get what you need without upsetting the appplecart.



BEST RESOURCES

You've run out of resources and now have to beg, borrow and steal.

GO BACK TO START.

No visibility into resources or priorities

You need a resource, but you have no idea what everyone is doing or whether they have time to work on your request. So you beg, borrow, and steal your way into queues, with little care for what may have been ahead of your work or the business impact. You just know that you need your work finished. It could have a domino effect on the deadlines of downstream activities.

You're not the only player in this game. At the same time, your resource is both being courted with cupcakes by another team member and being asked for help from another player with a big title.

Shifting work can be risky

In marketing, there are seemingly endless levels of company, team, and individual priorities. These may be based on direction from the top, project timelines, or even emergencies. Needless to say, everyone in marketing is busy!

It's a fine balancing act to keep your resources happy and still get them to do what you need. If you're not careful, deadlines and budgets will get missed and, pretty soon, you'll have stressed out resources who won't stick around for long.



66% OF WORKERS SAY THEY DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO GET THEIR WORK DONE. ³

REDUCE STRESS AND WIN RESOURCES

The way to win the hearts and time of your resources is to make sure they feel they can control their workload. The secret is to keep them stress-free so they can be productive.

Reduce the busy work

Your resources have enough to do without having to spend time on non-productive work. Keep them focused on what they do best and not on fielding last-minute requests and questions about schedules.

Start by establishing a streamlined request management process to ensure that work is initiated the right way. This will reduce the stress that comes from work interruptions.

Understand the urgency of every request

Not every new work request requires an offering of cupcakes. You need to know which requests can slip when last-minute, emergency requests, such as a breaking press release, come into the pipeline. That requires a solid understanding of priorities and deadlines for every existing deliverable and those new ones being requested.

Provide visibility into commitments

No one wants to create additional stress, but sometimes you have no other way to find out if a resource is available than to interrupt and ask. And, if that information isn't shared, resources end up getting asked that question over and over.

Make sure you have a way to communicate to the team what everyone is working on and if they have any available bandwidth.

Allow resources to be people too

Theoretically, there are eight hours in a workday. Realistically, no one works eight hours non-stop. Aside from lunches and bathroom breaks, today's workers, especially the creative marketing types, need time for brainstorming. Today, 30% of workers have no time at all for thought and reflection during their day. Build padding into all of your resource schedules to account for worker down time.

JOB WELL DONE



Instead of begging for resources, you're rewarding work done well and on time.

MOVE AHEAD 15 SPACES.

Employees who report being happiest at work:

- Stay twice as long in their jobs
- Spend double their time at work focused on what they are paid to do
- Take 10 times less sick leave
- Believe they are achieving their potential twice as much⁶

GET A CLUE ABOUT YOUR WORK STATUS

The Challenge: Everyone in marketing is busy and what they're working on is a mystery. Solving the mystery requires communicating who's doing what, where, and when. It's not easy to do when communication and collaboration systems aren't working.

Who's doing what?

Walk into any marketing department and you'll instantly feel the buzz of activity. Phones are ringing. Keyboards are clacking. People are heading to meetings. It's a busy place. Everyone is working hard, but do you know what they are actually working on?

The marketing leadership is waiting for your weekly status report. But getting status updates from everyone is like herding cats. You've tried sending email and asking for updates. You will either never get them or statuses will change before the day's end. You've also tried holding standing meetings, but key people miss them due to conflicts or because it interrupts critical work time. Again, you get incomplete and often inaccurate answers that you have to go back and enter into a spreadsheet to email up the chain.

You really don't have a good handle on what anyone is doing at any given moment. You struggle to inform downstream resources when work will be coming.

When the boss asks about getting resources for a new project, you have a hard time knowing when anyone really might be available.



ON AVERAGE, TWO IN FIVE PROJECTS DO NOT MEET THEIR ORIGINAL GOALS AND BUSINESS INTENT, AND ONE-HALF OF THOSE UNSUCCESSFUL PROJECTS ARE RELATED TO INEFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS.⁷



SOLVE THE STATUS MYSTERY

How to: To win at managing work, you need to know what different resources are doing and what tasks are behind schedule in order to take appropriate actions. With activities changing all the time, you need to have access to statuses in real-time.

Reduce the resistance

Create a centralized system that lets users collaborate on deliverables, review requests, check statuses, and communicate from a single location. This reduces the disparate email chains, deleted voicemails, and forgotten hallway conversations—eliminating information overload.

Standardize what you need to communicate and to whom. Keep update requests to a minimum by asking team members to provide them based on the criteria, frequency, and content you've established.

Make status a value-add

When people miss your meetings and don't respond to email, it may seem like they don't value your communication. Maybe they don't! Sitting through an hour long status meeting only to provide a two-minute update is definitely not valuable.

Use a centralized system to allow team members to quickly update their task status, review the status of other tasks, and re-

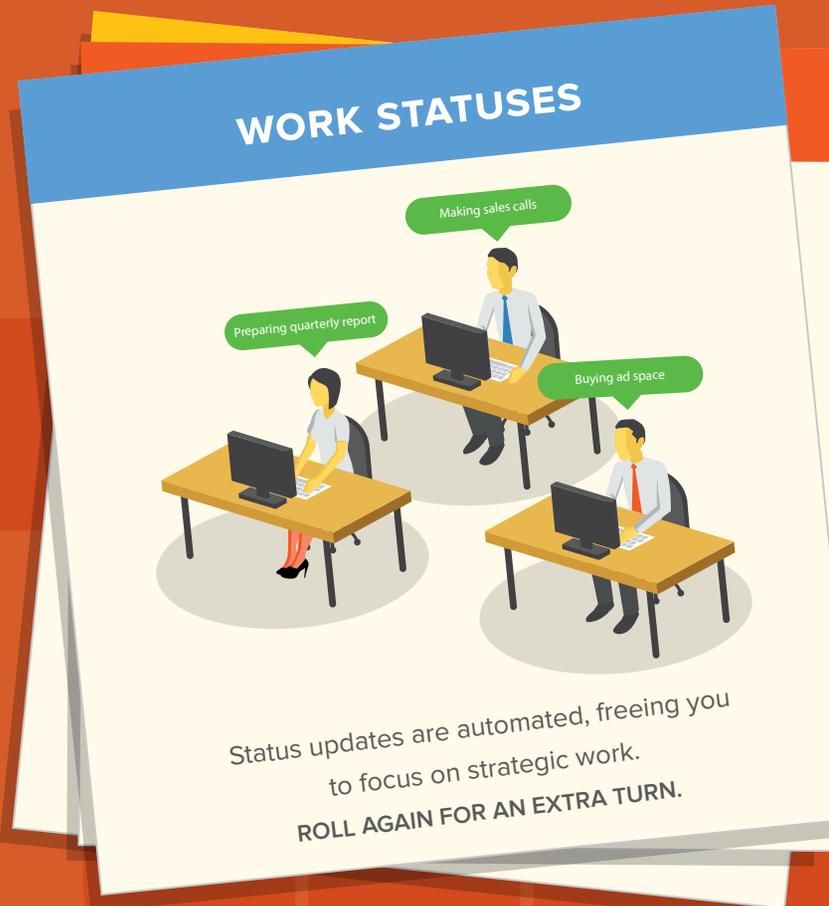
spond easily with feedback. When the members of the organization can easily update and access information about work requests and tasks, they are more likely to do it.

Provide customized communication

Different stakeholders have different things they need to know at different times. Management may need budget information. Staff needs to understand what is coming and when. Campaign managers need to be able to use data from one campaign to more accurately estimate another.

When asking for and providing work updates, you need to provide access to information that gives users what they require. Take the time to learn what your stakeholders' needs are.

+17%



EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS IS ASSOCIATED WITH A 17% INCREASE IN FINISHING PROJECTS WITHIN BUDGET. ⁷

MOTHER MAY I GET YOUR APPROVAL?

The Challenge: Working on marketing initiatives can be a series of starts and stops. Because the accuracy of the message is so critical, there are several approval steps along the way. That means having to hunt down and tie up approvers to try to meet deadlines.

OBSTACLES



You're waiting on approvals right up to deadline, making everything late.
GO BACK 20 SPACES.

The trouble with creative reviews

Just about everything that goes through a marketing department needs to be approved by someone, from project plans and budgets to creative content and graphics. A lot of what marketing does is customer facing, even public-facing. Getting things right is essential.

The approver list often consists of multiple people including senior management, legal, and outside agencies—people who are so busy they can hardly keep up with their own tasks, let alone your approvals.

You try sending an email of the documents you need approved, but you get no response. When you see them in the hallway, it seems like they duck away. You print off copies and drop them at their desk with a sticky note attached that says, “I need these approved ASAP!” You don’t see any signs of life, though. Are they on vacation?

One more drive by and you see your approver having a meeting in their office with the door closed. Desperate, you sit outside and wait!

No doubt about it. Tracking down and getting approvals is no easy task. It takes time, which can translate into high internal resource costs and rush fees. The alternative of skipping approvals can create legal and financial risks.

“Chains of habit are too light to be felt until they are too heavy to be broken.”

–Warren Buffet

YES, YOU MAY!

How to: Effective approvals follow timely, structured reviews throughout the marketing workflow, from concept to production. Make getting approvals quick and efficient by standardizing and automating the process. Then, instead of stalking approvers, you'll be celebrating your wins.

Identify approvers

When the initiative begins, identify who will be approving at each stage, from strategy to creative brief to asset development to production. Then, share the work plan to let approvers know when they might expect to be called upon. Make sure each approver is aware of their role in the process and knows the steps that need to be taken and who to notify.

Automate the approval process

Make the approval process fast and efficient by leveraging technology. Making the process available online can provide a single location that allows approvers to be notified, take action, and provide feedback. Create approval templates to capture necessary task details, reviewer comments, and next steps. These templates will also serve as an audit trail for tracking and legal purposes.

Establish approval timeframes

People work best and things get done when expectations are known. Look at each area requiring approvals and develop an acceptable timeframe. Typically, providing 48-72 hours for approvals is enough, but work with your team to decide the appropriate thresholds. Double-check these timeframes with the approvers so that everyone is in agreement.

Define “done”

When making final approvals to assets and initiatives, be sure to define what “done” looks like. You’ve seen it—documents saved as “final v4” or “final_final.” Defining done, including standard file names and locations for final versions will help eliminate having 10 “final” versions of a marketing asset. Make sure there is a matching approval for the final versions.



FINISH-LINE

Approvals were completed on time, keeping your plan on schedule.

JUMP AHEAD OF THE LEADER.

“Method goes far to prevent trouble in business: for it makes the task easy, hinders confusion, saves an abundance of time, and instructs those that have business depending, both what to do and what to hope.”

—William Penn

THE JUSTIFICATION GAME

The Challenge: Budgets seem tighter than ever. How can you justify adding to your team without any data?

Prove it to me

You barely got through that last assignment, working nights and weekends, and suddenly, you're tossed right into a new one. You simply cannot continue working like that. You need more help! Besides, you have a vacation planned toward the end of this new assignment that you don't want to miss. How will you justify adding more resources to the new work request when management saw you got it done last time?

This is a challenging game!

Marketing budgets are still not what they used to be, but expectations for deliverables haven't changed. The pipeline for marketing deliverables is non-stop.

CMOs ONLY SAW

3.5%

INCREASE IN BUDGET

When playing this game, you can't just hide from the problem and ignore the elephant in the room. It requires continuous justification for dollars, time, and resources. It's nearly impossible to support your request without hard metrics to back it up.

Management wants to know how many resources you need and how much cost it will add to the deliverable. They need to know how adding resources might reduce the timeline. They wonder if you've squeezed the turnip enough to make your processes as efficient as possible. It takes more than selling skills to win this game.

ALTHOUGH CMOs EXPECTED AN 8% INCREASE IN THEIR BUDGETS, THEY ACTUALLY ONLY SAW 3.5% ⁴

UNDERSTAFFED



You ignore the resources elephant in the room and hope it will fix itself, resulting in more late nights and missed deadlines.
STAY ON YOUR CURRENT SPACE.

MEASURE WHAT YOU MANAGE

How to: By mastering this game, you will reap the rewards! The keys to success are hidden in your data. Start tracking and analyzing your marketing activities, including budget and hours, and you'll unlock the secrets to the justification game.

Uncover productivity improvements

Analyze your data to find areas for improvements to productivity. Compare the hours spent on completed deliverables and individual tasks and see where your team is spending the most time. Look at campaign turn-around time and review planned versus actual hours worked to identify best practices and discover opportunities for improvement.

Improve resource allocation

Provide real-time visibility into what your different resources are working on. By knowing where resources are allocated, you can present a capacity snapshot to management that shows how much new work can actually be staffed. Also, understanding how many hours

are spent on a given task allows you to better plan the allocation of resources in future deliverables.

Provide cost reporting

Transparent budgets—showing both planned and actual cost data—gives leadership confidence in your ability to manage marketing initiatives. There is nothing like hard data to paint a truthful picture. Track all deliverable costs including the overall costs of a campaign, resource costs per hour, agency costs, and charge-backs. Deliver reports that communicate your success.



THE CHAMPIONS



Your team completes everything perfectly and on time.
JUMP TO THE END OF THE GAME.

MARKETING GAME CHEAT CODES

When you change marketing from a game of chance to a game of strategy, you will win every time. The best strategy is enterprise work management—a unified process that manages all work activities, with full visibility and two-way collaboration for everyone. Enterprise work management is your game changer.



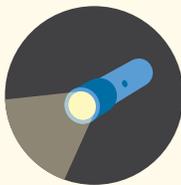
CENTRALIZE

Plan and track marketing activities and people in one place.



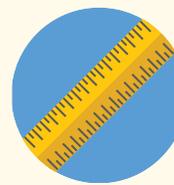
STANDARDIZE

Automate repeatable work.



VISIBILITY

Provide 360-degree transparency into workflow information and communication.



MEASURE

Monitor and analyze work activity and cost data.



COLLABORATE

Make shared discussions and feedback easy to have.



REDUCE

Streamline requests and processes.

THE GAME CHANGER

AtTask Enterprise Work Management

Enterprise Work Management is your ‘ace in the hole’ for unifying and standardizing your tools and processes, helping you to master these and many other workflow challenges in your organization.

AtTask is the only cloud-based enterprise work management solution that provides marketing teams a central place to manage

their entire workflow, eliminating wasted time dealing with fragmented tools and processes. Teams, managers, and executives have visibility into work planning, prioritization, and resourcing to help everyone work more efficiently toward achieving the organization’s goals.

Let AtTask show you how you can win at the Game of Marketing.

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