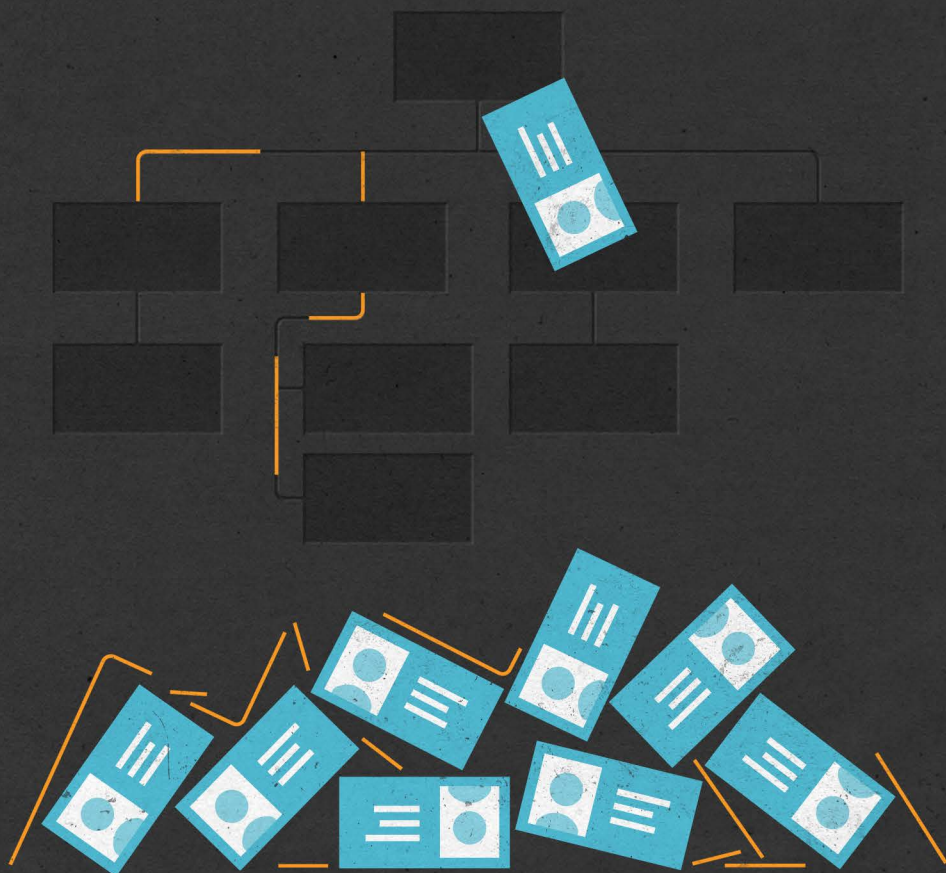# FIRST, KILL THE ORG CHART

FIVE PRINCIPLES OF BUILDING FUTURE-PROOF MARKETING TEAMS
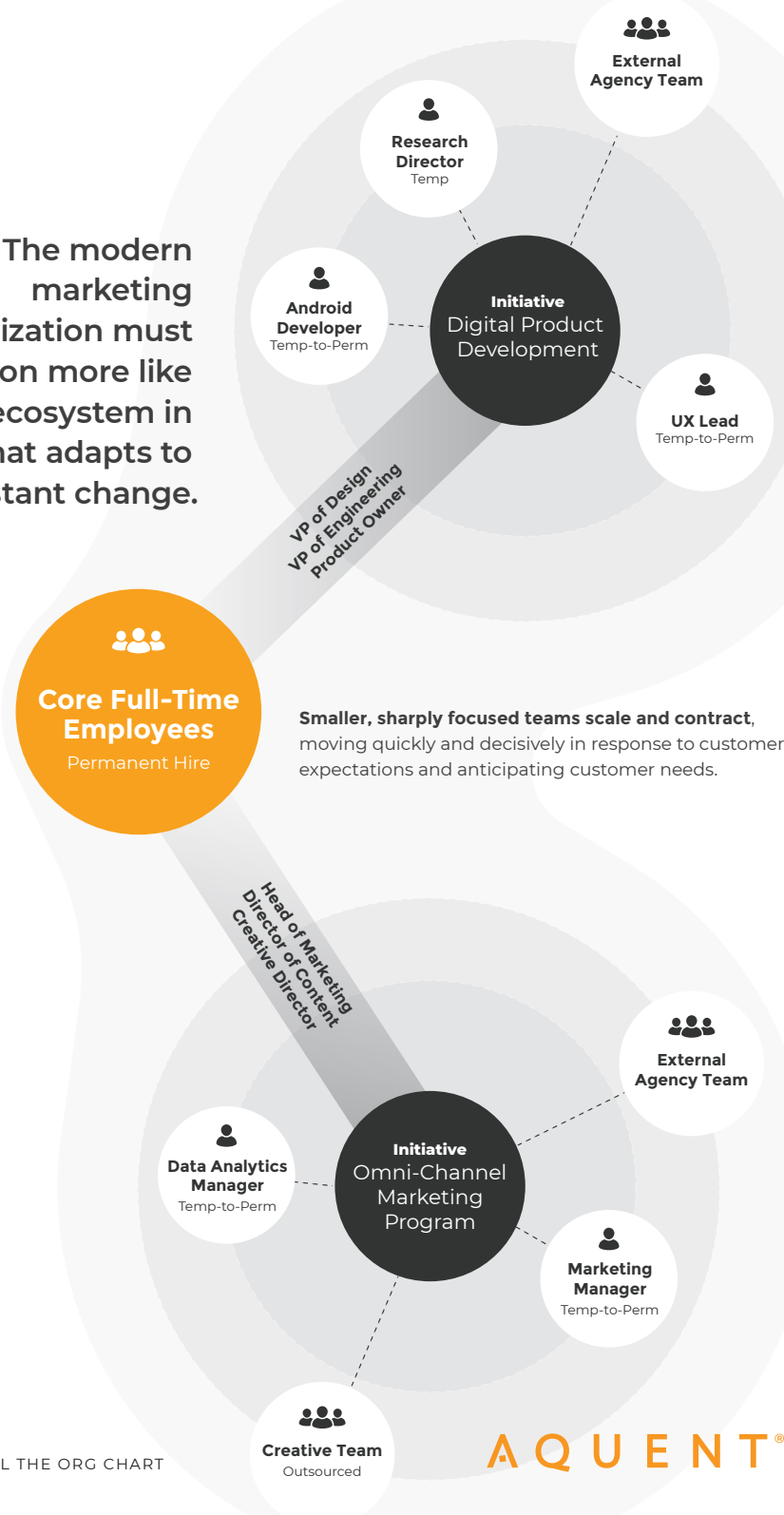
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Responding swiftly and effectively to customer expectations requires **radically reimagining and restructuring** your workforce now.

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The modern marketing organization must function more like an ecosystem in nature that adapts to constant change.

External Agency Team

Research Director
Temp

Initiative
Digital Product Development

Android Developer
Temp-to-Perm

UX Lead
Temp-to-Perm

VP of Design
VP of Engineering
Product Owner

Core Full-Time Employees
Permanent Hire

Smaller, sharply focused teams scale and contract, moving quickly and decisively in response to customer expectations and anticipating customer needs.

Head of Marketing
Director of Content
Creative Director

External Agency Team

Data Analytics Manager
Temp-to-Perm

Initiative
Omni-Channel Marketing Program

Marketing Manager
Temp-to-Perm

Creative Team
Outsourced

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THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

The first step in remaking your marketing organization is to toss out the traditional top-down, unvaried employee structure. Gone are the set number of full-time employees working in silos to plan and execute massive, multi-month campaigns.

That rigid model worked in the 20th century, when the entire media universe consisted of a handful of channels. In contrast, the Digital Age is relentlessly disruptive and fast-moving, requiring marketing teams to become more flexible, nimble, and responsive.

This new-look organization requires a more fluid mix of contributors: a core of permanent employees; outsourced members and temporary internal members with specialized skill sets; temporary-to-permanent resources for pilot programs; and external partners that execute templated projects.

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Restructuring your workforce to meet today's and tomorrow's marketing opportunities involves a learning curve. In this guide, we describe the five key features of marketing organizations designed to get out in front of their customers:

1 SCALABLE, NIMBLE, AND FLUID TEAMS

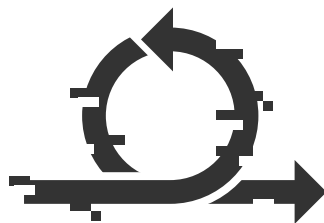**2 INITIATIVE-FOCUSED TRIBES**

3 A CORE STRATEGIC TEAM

4 A RICH, FLEXIBLE TALENT POOL

5 BOUNDARY-BREAKING CREATIVES

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PRINCIPLE #1

SCALABLE, NIMBLE, AND FLUID TEAMS

Agile marketing 1.0 enabled marketing to break free from the template of managing large campaigns that take months to plan and deliver. Agile marketing teams run sharply focused projects to bring new deliverables to market in just one or two weeks.

Agile 2.0 scales this nimble team model massively upward to pursue many more marketing opportunities. Moving to Agile 2.0 requires restructuring marketing to function more like an ecosystem that is capable of adapting to constant change.

This calls for a fluid pool of contributors and may include full-time marketers, temporary contributors, and freelancers.

The beauty of Agile 2.0 is flexibility: Teams expand and contract, bringing together the right mix of people with the skill sets needed to move quickly and decisively in response to the always-evolving marketplace and customer expectations.

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# PRINCIPLE #2

INITIATIVE-FOCUSED TRIBES
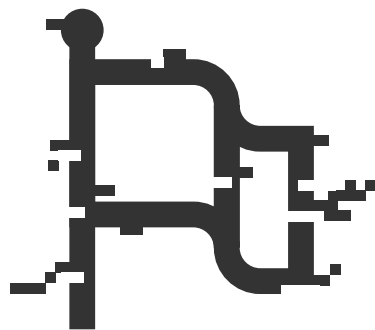
Agile organizations don't let the quaint little boxes, lines, and arrows of org charts box them into a corner and prevent them from acting swiftly and purposefully. It takes a village to provide amazing end-to-end customer experiences (CXs), and Agile marketing teams look beyond marketing's traditional silos for the talent to tackle their most important initiatives. As the company's hub of customer intelligence and brand strategy, marketing must take the lead in forming initiative-focused tribes.

Initiative-focused tribes bring together contributors with specialized skill sets from multiple marketing and technical areas to focus on a single objective. External partners are brought into

tribes when their skill sets are needed. A senior marketer sets the strategy for each tribe, determines the tribe's goals and deliverables, and specifies KPIs to measure the tribe's performance.

Consider the example of online travel agencies (OTAs), which let consumers research destinations and shop hotels, resorts, and airlines for the best deals. When consumers switch among an OTA's e-commerce site, mobile app, and social media sites, they expect the overall CX to be consistent and rewarding.

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To provide a seamless CX at every touchpoint, the senior marketer leading this initiative might assemble a tribe by recruiting:
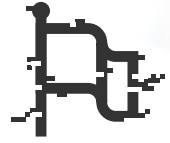
- **Two UX designers and a copywriter** to create multiple versions of creative in the company's voice and tone that urge visitors to book their trips before their deals expire
- **A UX researcher** to test multiple versions of the creative with real-world customers
- **A data analyst** to crunch the numbers to reveal which versions convince the most customers to book trips

Armed with the data, the tribe continually optimizes the creative until it arrives at the best combinations of design and copy. These combinations accelerate the sales process and boost conversions while presenting a familiar brand identity to consumers, no matter which device they are using.

AT A GLANCE

A Fortune 500 consumer packaged goods (CPG) company has outsourced all its package designs to an external team with expertise in this specialized craft. Over 10 years , the outsourced design team, managed by a senior in-house marketer, has been integrated into the client culture and gotten to know the CPG's business intimately. By experimenting with various package designs online and in stores, the outsourced team has developed invaluable insights into the company's customers.

This external team has become such a well-oiled machine that it can optimize package designs almost instantly and bring them to market quickly. Additionally, the team's efficient execution enables the senior marketer leading the tribe to focus more on strategy.

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PRINCIPLE #3

CORE STRATEGIC TEAM
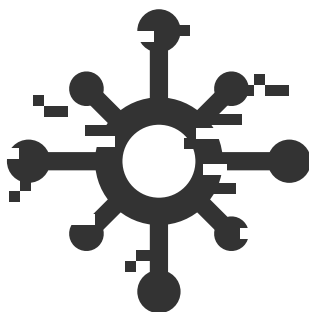
As companies blur or shatter the boundaries among functional silos and combine internal and external resources, the need for a core strategic team in-house is critical. This team provides stability and strong direction in a dynamic multi-team environment, which is common at leading brands.

The core team's main role is developing the overall strategy to be executed by the marketing ecosystem, which includes full-time and temporary employees as well as external partners, from digital agencies and media buyers to vendors and channel partners. This foundational group of senior marketers knows the customers, business, and brand better than anyone.

Leadership provides tribes and teams with strategic direction in the form of roadmaps and templates that guide the execution of the strategy. KPIs ensure the team's accountability and are used to measure their performance. The core team grants these teams autonomy to innovate quickly without waiting for approval from headquarters, a must in the high-velocity Digital Age.

Finally, the core team acts as the keeper of the corporate brand and culture. Although many companies document their culture, it's the core team's values — embodied in its behaviors — that set the example for the entire marketing ecosystem.

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PRINCIPLE #4

RICH, FLEXIBLE TALENT POOL
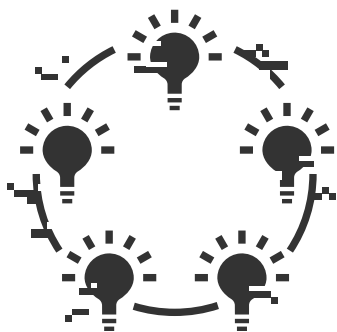
The key to quality execution, unsurprisingly, depends on the depth and breadth of a company's talent pool. Company leadership must empower its marketing directors and managers to build a rich and diverse talent ecosystem, free from the constraints of traditional org charts.

Take the example of a fashion retailer providing its e-commerce site visitors a realistic augmented reality (AR) experience for trying on new outfits and accessories. AR designers and developers are in high demand, so hiring them is difficult and expensive.

An internal marketing manager outsources a small team of talented AR pros for a set time to pilot the company's AR program. Next, the manager embeds this team in the company to design, build, and test its first production AR environment. After proving the success of this marketing concept, the company expands into new markets, such as kids' clothing and fashionable athletic gear, and hires a permanent, in-house AR team.

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This flexible approach to sourcing and managing talent offers these key benefits:
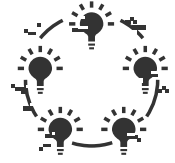
- Access to skilled and experienced contributors that marketing didn't have in-house and are difficult to find

- Tight control over the CX and creative that wouldn't be possible if the initiative were outsourced to an agency

- Meeting or exceeding customer expectations and bringing deliverables to market faster

Hiring mostly permanent employees for your marketing team would be riskier and costlier: You would have to secure the budget, open reqs, interview candidates, and onboard them. During this time, which may last months, customer expectations may change so dramatically that you never catch up.

Instead, exercise flexibility to bring aboard the necessary talent faster by:

- Hiring mainly permanent employees for strategic and ongoing projects

- Rounding out teams for ongoing projects by adding temporary resources when needed

- Working with temporary contributors for shorter-term projects and temporary-to-permanent resources for pilot projects

- Letting a talent partner create an embedded or outsourced team from its talent pool of employees

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PRINCIPLE #5

BOUNDARY-BREAKING CREATIVES
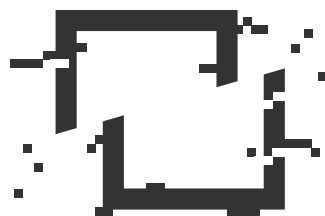
Creative today is as important as ever, but it has a new form that differs from the mid-century heyday of Mad Men-style marketing and advertising. While the spotlight of the Digital Age has been on emerging technologies, these are simply tools — no matter how advanced they are. And like all tools, technologies require people with the imagination and expertise to unleash their full capabilities. That means the creative members of modern marketing teams wear many hats (artistic, technical, strategic) and their areas of influence are expanding.

Agile marketing organizations don't confine their creatives to silos. Instead, these companies weave their creative talent throughout the fabric of all their marketing teams to ensure consistency and quality across initiatives.

For example, a financial services company may hire a UX designer to improve the CX across its thousands of online customer-facing applications. The UX designer also works on another team tasked with ensuring kiosks at physical locations match the company's online experience. And the UX designer works with the team of designers to guarantee the brand expression is the same across digital customer touchpoints.

Today's creative teams look dramatically different, and they are often a mix of both internal resources and outside agencies with specialized expertise. AI and machine learning enable countless new opportunities to deliver amazing CXs, but it still takes creative members on all your marketing teams to empathize with customers and envision what's possible.

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NAVIGATING THE NEW MARKETING ECOSYSTEM

The rigid, hierarchical marketing department staffed exclusively with permanent employees is a relic of the 20th century. Marketing teams still have familiar, permanent faces, like creative directors, art directors, and marketing strategists. To position your teams for the future, though, it pays to restructure your organization by having:

- Interconnected resources recruited in nontraditional ways

- Multiple teams mixing creative, technical, and analytical talent

- Teams that change size and shape in response to customer needs

- A strong foundation of in-house leaders

- A wide range of exceptional talent that execute on strategy:

  - Permanent, freelance, and temp-to-perm talent

  - Outsourced and embedded teams

  - Agency partners

It takes a dynamic, flexible, and agile ecosystem of talent to compete today and thrive tomorrow.

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LET US HELP BUILD YOUR

MARKETING TEAM OF THE FUTURE

Aquent is helping the world's biggest, most innovative brands build teams that can deliver quickly, pivot effectively, and create brand-differentiating customer experiences. We work with you to understand your goals, and help you design, recruit, and assemble the talent—permanent, temporary, temp-to perm, embedded, and outsourced—to deliver breakthrough experiences.

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