

Mind the gaps

Untangling & managing your MarTech Investments



About Purple Square CX

We are a Customer Experience Advisory that offers a diverse range of services aimed at enhancing customer interactions for businesses.

Our expertise lies in three key areas:

1. CX Advice and Strategy
2. Marketing Automation
3. Customer Data Platforms (CDPs)

Our team comprises CX strategists, architects, engineers, developers and builders, all focused on delivering against the 5 Core Principles of CX: Vision, Operations, People, Data and Technology.

We build long term partnerships with our clients, that deliver their Customer Experience goals, both short-term and long into the future.

Let's talk!



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The very nature of technology means that in an effort to keep up and continue moving forward, it rarely stands still. MarTech platforms are no exception and whether your business is using Unica, Adobe, Salesforce, Pega or – very likely – a combination of these and other niche platforms, chances are the latest version of your tech stack looks somewhat different to when you originally purchased it.

This doesn't mean that the careful investment of time (and budget) you spent researching, evaluating and implementing the most suitable solution for your organisation was wasted, or even that the technology is no longer an asset for your team. In reality, it most likely has more functionality than any of its regular users realise – or take advantage of.



Customising your tech stack – and its unintended consequences

As we explored in our [‘Slide to Simplicity’](#) blog post, marketing technology providers are striving to balance user-friendly platforms with functionality in order to appeal to a wider user base and provide broader offerings. As a result, more advanced features that help enable greater personalisation and customisation have either been stripped away or relegated to exclusive licensing agreements.

To fill in these gaps, marketers often turn to smaller, niche players to support their customer journeys and CX vision. These emerging technologies like Optimove, Braze, and Iterable, deliver real time customer data platforms and AI-led self-optimising customer journeys that can supplement CX functionality from existing MarTech implementations. And integrating functionality from platforms like Hootsuite can also extend audience reach by working with emerging marketing channels such as TikTok. Adopting this ‘best of breed’ approach can help your marketing team to stay relevant and keep on top of the latest trends.

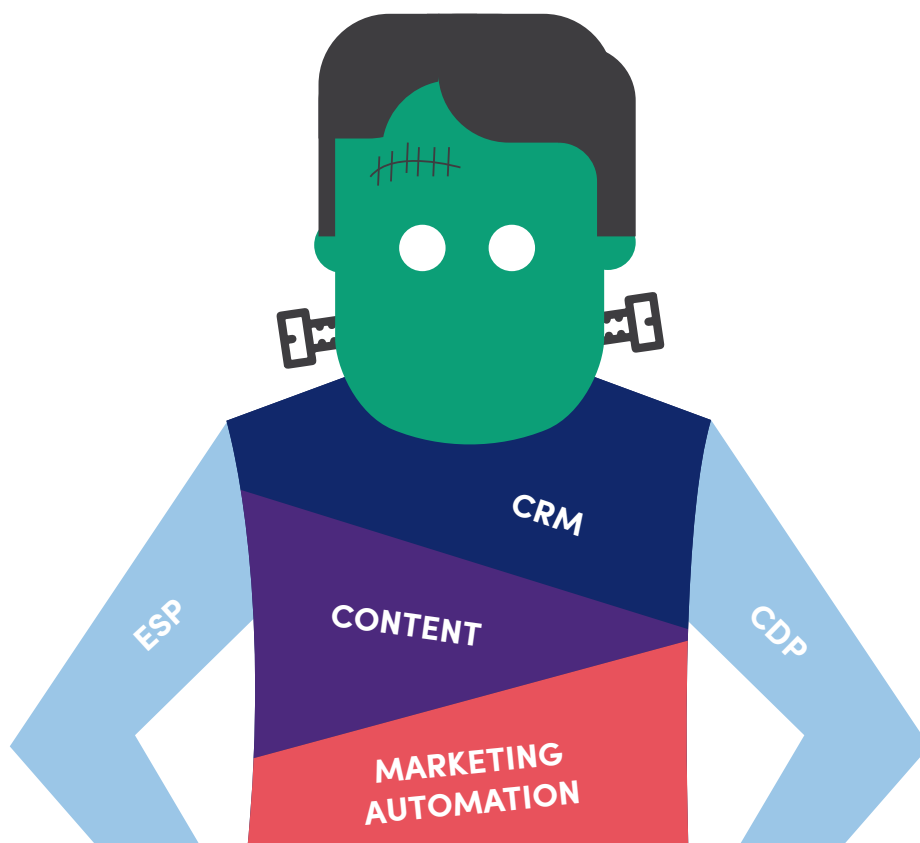
Left unchecked, however, this approach can lead to a disjointed ‘Frankenstack’ or ‘Spaghetti Junction’ of overlapping and redundant marketing technologies fuelled by knee-jerk decision making and resulting in wasted resource. In short, you’re likely to have a tangled mess on your hands without a clear view of what functionality you have or need to deliver great CX.



A downward trend

In a September 2022 Marketing Technology Survey, the respondents indicated that they use only 42% of the capabilities available in their MarTech stack. This figure was down from 58% in 2020. The report attributed this drop to a number of factors, including:

“...a significant amount of overlap among marketing technology solutions (30% of respondents), difficulty identifying and recruiting talent to drive adoption/utilization (28%), and complexity/sprawl of the marketing technology ecosystem (27%).”



As technologies evolve and teams change over time, it becomes more difficult for marketing teams to (1) understand what functionality you have and (2) to make the most of your marketing technology investment. We've worked with companies running two CRM systems side by side for a year. And this is not just an issue for large multinationals – at one point Purple Square ourselves had contracts with three different email service providers. We work with a lot of email campaigns, but even this was more than we needed.

No matter what size of business, it is easy to lose track. We refer to this oh so common disconnect between what you have and what you use as the hidden cost of marketing technology or 'MarTechnical Debt'.

The good news? There is a way out. By gaining an understanding of your MarTech investments and putting a strategic plan in place, you can eliminate redundancies and fill gaps to ensure your tech stack aligns with – and supports – your marketing and CX roadmap for years to come.

Taking back control: steps to understanding and managing your MarTech

Take a breath

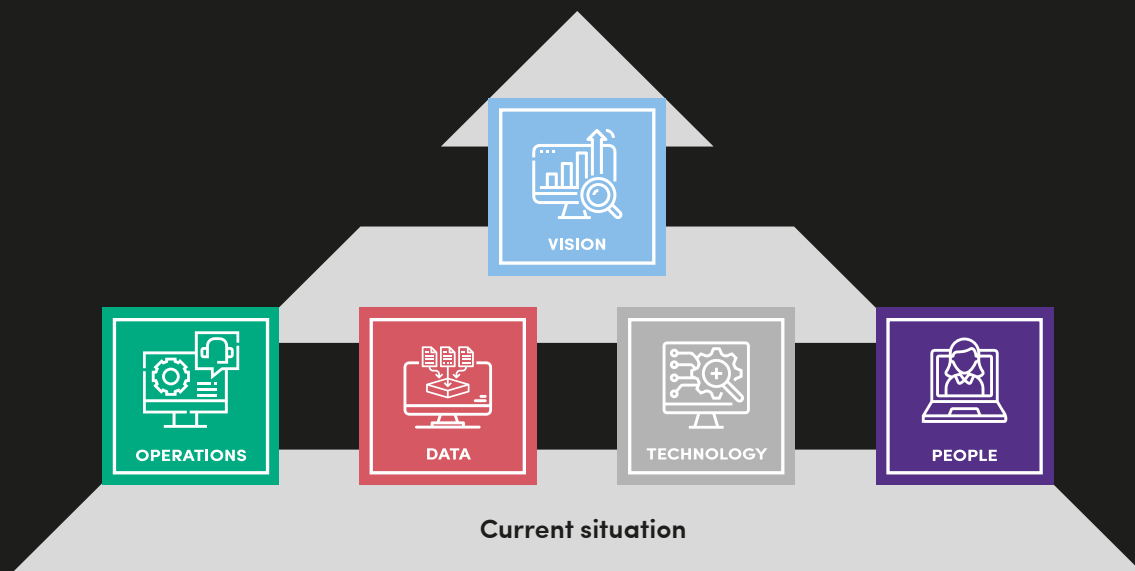
It may seem counter-intuitive, but before you can move forward to assess what you have and where you want to go, it's important to stop. Or at least pause.

To gain an accurate picture of your current state of play and what gaps in your marketing tech stack need filling, you need to take a breath and a step back. Refrain from purchasing any new technology (no matter how tempting) and pause your decisions around future investments.

During this recess, it is important to re-visit (or in some cases redefine) your vision when it comes to delivering effective customer journeys and great CX.

Don't worry, we can help!





The 5 Core Principles of CX

We believe great CX is driven by five key principles. Agreeing these will help you to cement where you are and where you're going – and provide the first step in regaining control of your tangled MarTech investments:



Vision:

Agreeing a vision that everyone in the organisation understands and is working toward is an essential first step. It is this overarching view that will define your direction of travel as a business and provide the foundation to build a roadmap toward success – motivating you and your team to, ultimately, deliver the experience your customers deserve.

Underpinning this vision are:



Operations:

Building your marketing operational processes with CX at the centre gives you the ability to scale and adapt in line with your business needs.



Data:

Customer data is one of your most valuable resources. The information it delivers allows you to craft meaningful relationships with your customers.



Technology:

Technology is an enabler, not a magic bullet. By understanding your technical assets, you can maximise their potential, making it easier to deliver customer-led marketing.

And most importantly...



People:

Your team is your single most critical asset. Without the right people who are properly skilled, resourced and enabled, delivering great CX is almost impossible. Every team member from the CMO through to those designing and delivering the marketing assets needs to understand how the work they do (and the technology they use) impacts your vision.



Helping you get started: Customer Experience Maturity Assessment (CXMA)

Taking the first step can be the hardest. Purple Square's **CXMA** can help you to establish your vision and define these principles, providing a benchmark of your current strengths and weaknesses when it comes to CX.

Together with other representatives from across your business, we will walk you through our comprehensive survey to:

- understand where you are
- prioritise what you need to change to move forward
- develop 3 month, 6 month and yearly action plans; these will provide a roadmap for your marketing strategy, aimed at achieving your long-term vision for great CX

Auditing your MarTech

Our CXMA process works hand-in-hand with the next step in making your marketing technology investment work for you: the MarTech Audit. We can break this down into four parts:

1. **Identify:** what software licences you have, what they cover and the terms and conditions of each. Here's where we discovered we were subscribing to – and paying for – three different email service providers. We've worked with other customers who had multiple different licences with the same software vendor, all set up by different team members.
2. **Analyse:** the features and function of what each software licence offers so you understand what each investment provides your business. This step will help you to start unpicking what functionality and services you are paying for and what you're using.
3. **Visualise:** Creating a MarTech Directory will produce one of the most important outcomes of this entire process. Whether you choose to use a spreadsheet or other medium, this directory needs to be accessible and easy to understand.

Your MarTech Directory should provide a comprehensive visual list, bringing together the results of your analysis. It needs to outline the capabilities, features and functions you have access to across all of your marketing technology assets. It will help to highlight any discrepancies, redundancies, duplicates and gaps in your tech stack, allowing you to gain a true picture of what you have, what you're using and what you're not, as well as what you might need.

Tips on creating your MarTech directory

Your directory is essentially a matrix of what marketing technology you have across the organisation. It should provide a complete picture of your MarTech investments.

What should it include?

Details of licensing agreements (renewal dates, numbers of seats, terms of the agreement) for all of your MarTech assets. It should also include tick boxes for:

- Each feature and function included as per each signed agreement (i.e. what you're paying for).
- Details of upgrades included in each agreement and additional features these provide

- Which of these features you're using (by whom and how frequently), which ones you're not.

Who should own it?

Each organisation should appoint a leader who is ultimately responsible for delivering the directory and keeping it up to date. This can be a head of MarTech (if you have one) or, more likely a leader in your marketing operations or procurement team.

As the directory stands to benefit the organisation as a whole, it is important to select a small committee to work with the leader to populate it, ensuring it accurately reflects what technology is used, needed and who is benefitting from it. Again, this will vary but should include team members from procurement, tech/IT support and across your marketing teams: digital, CRM, strategy, etc.

Where should it be kept?

Wherever you choose to store the directory, it needs to be accessible, updateable and easy to refer to. To help combat redundant or duplicate technology licence purchases, the directory should be the first port of call before any new marketing technology purchases are approved.

How often should you update it?

In theory your directory should be updated with every new licence agreement or software upgrade (or software update, even if you don't deploy it) so it provides an accurate picture of your assets. In reality, it should be reviewed quarterly and become part of a yearly audit programme.

Feeling stuck?

We can help you get started! Drop us an email at letstalk@purplesquarecx.com

It may seem daunting, but once it's established and kept up to date, this directory will prove invaluable and will arm you for the final step in the audit...

4. **Making big decisions:** Once your directory is established, you can use it to guide future investments and make an informed decision of what to do next. Even if you choose to maintain the status quo and take no further action in untangling your existing MarTech stack (some knots are too complex to untie), you will already have a clearer picture of your assets and any gaps that need filling to help drive future procurement and decision making.

Alternatively, you may choose to embark on the next part of the process...

Unique
Capabilities

Mixed
Capabilities

Redundant
Capabilities

maintain

monitor

manage out

Refining your MarTech

If you choose to tackle your Frankenstack of marketing technology investments, this next step is to refine what you have. Use the analysis you've already done along with your MarTech directory to identify the following:

- **Unique capabilities** you want to **maintain**: in other words, the assets you have that are critical for your business. These may be as specific as a tool for targeting customers using TikTok or other niche channel that none of your other suppliers provide, or more generally, an email marketing platform you've refined with customer preferences over the years. Whatever the criteria, these are solutions that don't exist elsewhere and that you need to retain and keep up to date as you move forward.
- **Mixed capabilities** you need to **monitor**: these are areas where you may have multiple versions from the same or different vendors that your teams use to perform tasks. Despite the duplication, these may have some unique elements and therefore need to be monitored to understand how each tool is being used. In some cases, there may be better or more efficient ways of handling these cross overs or redundancies. For example, when we discovered our team was using three different email service providers, we realised two out of the three were providing unique services we needed to best serve our clients, so we narrowed our subscriptions down to those.
- **Redundant capabilities** to be **managed out**. These are the technologies that you are not using, using ineffectively or whose functionalities are already covered (and being used effectively) by other assets within your organisation. In essence, if they are creating noise without benefit, you need to plan a way to exit from these licences when they are up for renewal.



After you've decided what to maintain, monitor and manage out, you can refine your MarTech stack using the CARE approach:

- **Consolidate:** Here's where you can bring together overlapping functionalities and offerings. Working with one client, we identified that they had three licences for products with one software vendor. Armed with the details, they were able to renegotiate a single licence to cover the products and functionality they needed.
- **Augment:** This step allows you to fill in the gaps you've spotted along the way – either with updated offerings from your current vendors or adopting a modular approach by integrating the functionality you need from a complementary solution.
- **Replace:** In some instances, you may discover a better fit: that meets multiple needs or is more integrated than your current offering. For example, replacing a lone email provider with a vendor that manages your CRM as well as in-app and SMS messaging.
- **Eradicate:** To ensure you're not spending money and wasting resource on technology you're not using, eliminate it!

Without wanting to encourage an environment of 'hoarding' which likely got you into this tangled web of tech in the first place, do be careful not to eradicate technologies you may need in future as part of this exercise. This is where your roadmap can help.

To ensure your MarTech continues to support your operations and team in their quest to deliver great CX, we recommend you apply the CARE process on a regular basis. How often you undertake the exercise depends on the size of your organisation and your technology portfolio, but we'd suggest reviewing it at least every two to three years or annually for larger companies, building it into your roadmap for achieving your vision.

Roadmap for success

We aren't going to pretend that keeping your MarTech – or any other technology investment – in check is easy. All too often, heads are turned by the newest, shiniest solution or marketing channel that promises to be the holy grail in winning and keeping customers. Sometimes they may indeed prove to be a huge win for your team, but before they go off and purchase it, they can evaluate if the promised functionality aligns with the overall vision and whether or not some of the tools they're currently using can do the same job.

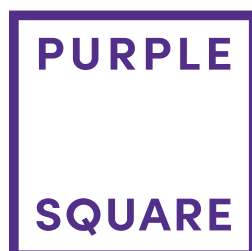
As we mentioned earlier, technology is an enabler, not a silver bullet and by gaining control over yours, you can ensure your current and future investments align with your strategic vision, helping to avoid gaps in the tools you need to deliver and achieve CX success.

About the author

Andrew Addison

With over 25 years of experience defining and delivering CX and marketing technology solutions for mid-market and enterprise marketing organisations around the world, Andrew has seen what works and what doesn't, whether it is operations, strategy, data, people or technology.

When founding Purple Square, his objective was to create an organisation that not only provided clients, partners and vendors with a highly experienced and capable team that delivered successful technology projects time and again, but also one that worked closely in partnership with clients for the long term, to deliver their Customer Experience strategies and growth. When he's not working, he still enjoys tinkering with technology but spends most of his free time with his family, playing golf (badly), brewing beer (pretty well), watching rugby and visiting Italy whenever he can!



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