

A photograph of a desk setup. In the foreground, there is a wooden desk with a silver laptop on the right, a yellow notebook with an orange cover on the left, and a black pen lying horizontally across the notebook. The background is a blurred office environment with a window showing a grid pattern.

*The  
four steps  
to mastering  
digital marketing  
project management*

**Prioritising your workload, sticking to  
the plan and when to say no**

# The balancing act...

**As a marketer, you're often faced with everyday challenges that see you being pulled from pillar to post - like juggling campaigns, keeping abreast of brand performance, overseeing projects and managing your external agencies. If you think about all of the aspects of marketing that you're expected to be an expert in, it's easy to become a jack of all trades - but a master of none.**

If we consider digital marketing alone, best practices change at such a pace that you have to constantly be on your game to ensure that these projects run without a hitch.

As digital marketers, we feel your pain. In fact, a recent survey found that 73% of those working within the industry felt their role had become increasingly complex over the past 12 months. Couple this with the fact that many of those managing digital projects do not feel as if they're being fully backed by senior management, and the job becomes a whole lot harder - especially as you're expected to provide MI reports and closed-loop metrics which clearly demonstrate the impact that marketing has upon sales. The levels of expectations to deliver on all fronts can be more than a little overwhelming.

So how do you go about managing all of these conflicting goals and agendas? This guide looks at the challenges, and addresses how to deal with them.



**Only one third of brand marketers think that senior leadership at their company has a clear vision for the role of digital marketing.**

# The challenges



## Balancing multiple requests

Marketers get pulled in many different directions, with demands coming from all parts and levels of the business. This can be even more challenging when you're marketing multiple brands, products or services.

## Scope extension

This is a common issue that we come across. You think you've been tasked with one thing, and all of a sudden it's ballooned into something much bigger, making resource management difficult to predict - particularly when you're not 100% sure of the complexities that come hand in hand with all aspects of digital marketing, such as PPC (pay-per-click) advertising or SEO (search engine optimisation).

## "Can you just..."

You know the drill—you've got a plan outlined for the day (week... month...), you have a campaign almost ready to go, and then... sales want a sign making, operations put an urgent request in for product data, your MD wants a last-minute report on current marketing activity, accounts suddenly need customer data pulling – these seemingly small requests can all add up and before you know it your carefully laid plans are put on pause.

# The challenges

continued...

## Managing expectations

With all of these requests, managing expectations can be a full-time job on its own. From a lack of understanding of the marketing function (up next!), to unrealistic expectations of your time or resources—especially in a multi-brand environment – it falls to you to manage everyone’s expectations, which can be unrealistic.

## Lack of understanding of the marketing function

We know from a recent study that 40% of those working in marketing felt that there was a ‘lack of understanding’ from senior staff - particularly when it comes to digital marketing. Perhaps there’s a misguided sense of what marketing actually does, and you need to look at internal communications to address this.

## Limited in-house resources

All of this becomes much harder if you don’t have the resources to help you achieve your goals, whether that’s an in-house team or budget for external support. How do you ensure that you’re getting the best from your resources?

**Let’s get started with prioritising...**





# Prioritise

**When you're prioritising your own responsibilities as well as those of the team, facility, and customers, there's a lot of plate spinning to be done. By first defining your goals and the activities that will have the most impact, then organising your time around these, it will prepare you to face each day with clear vision and purpose.**

Digital marketing can be time-critical. You'll want to react quickly to any feedback you receive online from your users, and also be able to provide commentary on current affairs that affect your industry. But it can also be an incredibly flexible medium without finite deadlines, and you can use this to your advantage when planning schedules.

If at all helpful, we have put together a rudimentary matrix of suggested timings for your digital marketing activities, designed to help you to understand more about the timescales required.

On the next page we've put together a list of some of the most common marketing activities, with guide timescales of how long you should expect to have to spend on each one.

Activity	Average time required
Website development (RWD)	12—16 weeks
E-commerce website	6 months
Web app development	12—16 weeks
PPC (pay per click) campaign	1—3 days setup, followed by 12 hours per month maintenance
Email newsletter	1 day to build a HTML template, followed by 4—6 hours for content creation population
Social media management	4—6 hours per week
Blogging	2—4 hours
Reporting	8 hours per month
Ongoing website maintenance and management	4 hours per month

You'll need buy-in from your directors—as a company, you'll need to clearly define the priority of your products, as well as the goals associated with each. Don't be bulldozed into thinking that your digital marketing campaigns should take a back seat over the more traditional forms of marketing that have, in the past, yielded good lead generation. Set out your argument from the outset why plenty of investment (in time and money) should be made to this part of the marketing strategy.

This way, it's not always a matter of who shouts the loudest—it's about managing priorities that are already clear. Even so, get into the habit of asking how important a requested task is. Was a deadline provided? Consider how it contributes to your marketing goals.

You need the time to step back and take a look at the business as a whole. You may be responsible for both B2B and B2C marketing, and if you're dealing with multiple brands, products or services, you need to explore the relationships between them to ensure that you're taking advantage of all possible opportunities for cross-promotion, while sticking to an overarching brand identity.

If you're working with limited resources, you need to ensure that you're getting the best from them. Is delegation possible? If you have the benefit of an in-house team, ensure that you've assembled one that supports you. There are many digital marketing activities that can be carried out by an auxiliary team that don't need a CIM certificate. In fact, you may find that members of your team share expert knowledge of your industry and can produce a highly rich and authoritative pieces of content that will resonate with your prospective customers.

Whether you have a team or employ an agency, define the constraints before getting out of the way and trusting that they'll achieve it.

## Challenges & Solutions

### **Balancing multiple requests**

Prioritise requests as they come in by how they help you achieve your goals.

### **Managing expectations**

Don't over-compromise. Say no if it's not within marketing's remit. Ensure that time expectations are realistic and achievable.

### **Limited in-house resources**

Have a strong core team if possible, and either delegate tasks among the team, or employ an agency to support you.



# Stick to the plan

# 2

**As a manager of multiple brands, delivering content through many different marketing channels, you may well be juggling more than one plan at the same time - some of which relate back to different teams. You must have an overarching marketing plan, then a day-to-day plan for implementation.**

Write everything down to be clear in your own mind, and work with specific goals that you can track and measure where possible – big concepts are easily waylaid until they’re broken down into smaller chunks.

We use a simple, but very effective, scheduling tool to map out our projects, which breaks down by type of activity, brand, action, who is responsible, and week/month of delivery.

If you’re feeling overwhelmed, sometimes software can help. Try out some of the many tools out there to find, one that will fit with your working ethos. Some good examples include [Aha!](#) (a visual roadmap tool) or [Liquid Planner](#) (a project management tool). We use [Basecamp](#) to manage our projects, which ensures that all team members are on the same page, tasks can be assigned and reviewed, and calendars can be synced.

**Ad hoc requests will always come in - it’s the nature of the job - but don’t be distracted by small tasks that don’t require your attention.**

Ad hoc requests will always come in—it's the nature of the job—but don't be distracted by small tasks that don't require your attention. Delegate where you can, and learn when to say no.

Manage expectations by not overpromising. If it's not achievable, feel confident in explaining that you have X, Y and Z this week, but you can certainly look at that next week. Obviously, there will need to be some flexibility within any plan, but have confidence in the prioritisation that you've set—it's there for a reason.

Don't be afraid to implement a process - setting the rules for dealing with requests manages expectation from the outset. By simply asking about the nature of the job and when it's required, you can turn what is perceived as an urgent task into something which is more manageable within an agreed timescale.

However, it can sometimes be beneficial to go off-script. Don't be afraid to change your plan if you have access to more data, ideas or resources. A more informed plan is always going to perform better, but it should be on your terms. Make sure it's your decision.



## Challenges & Solutions

### Scope extension

Make it clear that your resources are committed to other projects. You can accept scope extension without saying no – it's more of a “not right now”.

### “Can you just...?”

Don't overpromise! If requests are verbal, ask for an email so you can keep track of them.



# When (and how) to say no

**This is a tough one - especially if the request comes from above. However, there are ways you can say no - particularly if the request isn't helping you to achieve those important business goals. Sometimes you don't even have to say no – it could be a “not right now”.**

Here are some ways of saying no without saying no...

## Challenges & Solutions

### “Can you just...”

**“We’ve already planned this activity this week. Do you think that’s a good exchange?”**

Help the person see that you have a plan in place, and that working on their idea would mean you have to divert attention from that plan. It goes back to prioritising.

## Managing expectations

<b>“What are we trying to accomplish with this?”</b>	Let’s face it—people do get excited when they think they’ve hit on a great idea, and you don’t want to discourage that creativity. By keeping your strategy in mind and discussing it, you may find that their idea doesn’t quite fit, isn’t fully-formed, or you already have something planned to meet that goal.
--	---

## Scope extension

<b>“Why don’t I do this instead?”</b>	This could be in conjunction with the one above—meeting the same strategic objective in ways that are less time-consuming, or more in-keeping with your plan.
---------------------------------------	---

## Lack of understanding of the marketing function

<b>“Let me think about this idea.”</b>	This tactic buys you a bit of time to consider the request without giving an answer there and then. If it’s a real suggestion, the person may follow up—if they’ve been struck by sudden inspiration with no continued enthusiasm for the idea, their silence may mean that you don’t even need to pursue it.
--	---

## Limited in-house resources

<b>“Could you find out more about this?”</b>	A half-formed idea could mean you end up putting time into researching something that isn’t fruitful in the end. Put the ball back in their court—they’ll either follow through, or they won’t. This is a great way to handle vague requests.
--	---



# Identify an agency to support you

**Even if you have a team in place, it may be that a specialist agency could help you in your digital marketing efforts. Think about a partnership that will both help your company and assist you in achieving your goals.**

**There are many reasons you could require agency support:**

- An agency could have specialist skills that you or your team don't possess
- It could be more cost-effective to employ an agency than have another body in your office
- You'll be benefiting from their tools and technology
- There's no learning curve—they'll have the experience and resources in place to hit the ground running
- Their perspective will be different to yours
- They can educate you

**60% of brand marketers believe they need more help from experts to get the most out of their digital efforts.**

Don't just meet one agency - look at portfolios and testimonials of a number of different ones, speak to the staff, get recommendations, and [provide a brief](#) for what you need. This should open a dialogue, and the next step would usually be for you to meet face-to-face to get a feeling for the company – this will be a close partnership, after all. Ask specific questions to get specific answers, and ensure that the agency explain what aspects of their proposal are based on speculation, and what is and isn't guaranteed.

Another option is marketing automation. This refers to software platforms and technology designed to help marketing departments more effectively manage multiple online channels such as email, social media, websites etc., and can automate repetitive tasks.

**On average, 49% of companies are currently using marketing automation, with more than half of B2B companies (55%) adopting the technology.**

Whether it's alongside or instead of working with an agency, marketing automation is often useful in the long run. Although automation can be time or resource-intensive to set up, it could solve a lot of resource issues in the future.

Marketing automation refers to software platforms and technology designed to help marketing departments more effectively manage multiple online channels such as email, social media, websites etc., and can automate repetitive tasks.

## Challenges & Solutions

### Limited in-house resources

Think about employing a specialist agency to manage certain areas of your marketing.

# Conclusion

**As a multi-brand marketer, you can often find yourself so inundated with tasks and requests that the conflicting goals and agendas become difficult to juggle. Prioritising what's important and getting rid of the other clutter doesn't mean that you disregard others' opinions – in fact, a feedback loop should form part of a good plan.**

This advice does all work on the basis that you have that good plan in place, so ensure that you set time aside to write this, or at the least - to brief an agency so they can provide you with a comprehensive plan. The challenges you can face can often be improved (if not completely eliminated) by educating your colleagues, so consider incorporating this into your strategy.

**When you and your team start your day with a clear plan and stick to it, you'll reap the benefits.**



# About Splitpixel

Founded in Yorkshire in 2008 as a team of three making websites, Splitpixel has grown over the past decade into a full-service digital agency that specialises in design, development and digital marketing.

We focus on creativity, customer service, and achieving good results for our clients. Honesty, good value, and helpful advice that's accessible to everyone has always been what we're about, right from the very start.

We're very proud to have worked with such a diverse range of businesses not just in Yorkshire, but across the whole of the UK. From SMEs to national blue-chip companies, we still aim to give everyone that same accessible service that we've provided all along.

So drop us a line - let's see what we can work on with you. We can't wait to get started!

## Call

01484 970 860

## Email

[hello@splitpixel.co.uk](mailto:hello@splitpixel.co.uk)

## Visit

**Heritage Exchange  
Wellington Mills  
Huddersfield  
HD3 3HR**

