

# CONVERGENCE AHEAD:

the integration of  
communications & marketing



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## Introduction

It is a complex time for communications and marketing professionals, marked by an explosion of influencers, a voracious demand for content, one-a-day crises, consolidating media outlets, and rapidly expanding social media technologies. Although marketing has traditionally been responsible for the customer and communications responsible for other stakeholders such as media, government and investors, this dual-structure may be losing its relevance and efficiency in today's marketplace. It should therefore not be a surprise that companies are responding by merging their communications and marketing functions to respond more quickly and strategically with "one voice." This trend is often referred to as converged communications, integrated communications and hybridized communications.

This convergence trend has been of long-standing interest to Weber Shandwick. We have been tracking the appointments of corporate communicator hires for years and have noticed an increasing shift to dual roles. In recent years we've also seen the emergence of titles such as Chief Marketing and Communications Officer; VP Global Branding, Corporate Communications and Creative Services; and VP Strategic Marketing and Corporate Communications. The future will decide which term and title wins out in the long run.

The Rising CCO, a global tracking study of chief communications officers conducted by Weber Shandwick and Spencer Stuart, found a 35% increase from 2012 to 2014 in the number of global CCOs who have both communications and marketing responsibilities.

As the trend to convergence takes shape, Weber Shandwick investigated several questions that are surely top-of-mind for organizations considering convergence.

- How are these pioneering Chief Communications and Marketing Officers (CCMOs) faring?
- What should newly-minted and soon-to-be CCMOs expect when faced with the daunting assignment of combining two historically separate functions into one?
- What advice do they have?

This study, **Convergence Ahead: The Integration of Communications & Marketing**, helps communications professionals understand how to build an integrated organization. Our research explores the drivers behind convergence, the upsides and downsides, how integrated organizations are structured and social media's role in convergence.

The insights outlined in this report represent lessons learned from 10 in-depth telephone interviews conducted with CCMOs from October 2013 through January 2014. Interviewees were located in the United States, Europe and Asia Pacific and come from a variety of industries - from banking and healthcare to automotive and higher education (see Appendix for a list of sectors). Similarly, company sizes represented in this research range from start-ups to Fortune 500s. Throughout this report, we use direct quotes of research participants to illustrate our insights.

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“Increased demands for transparency and authenticity mean that companies must speak with one voice. Achieving one voice starts with integrating the outward faces of the organization - communications and marketing. With those functions properly integrated, everything else is aligned to be credible and compelling to every stakeholder to maximize the company value proposition.”

# THE CALL FOR CONVERGENCE

“A singular focus on building a 21st century reputation requires communications, marketing and digital all working in lockstep to break through and be heard.”

Leslie Gaines-Ross, Chief Reputation Strategist  
Weber Shandwick

The combined communications and marketing structure makes sense from a number of vantage points:

## Integrated structures have proven invaluable during shifts in corporate strategy and reputation management priorities.

“If you look at how brands and reputations get built and maintained – it is a hybrid. The boundaries between what used to be traditional marketing and communications are dissolving. If you can’t mix and match the different components of marketing and communications, you won’t be effective at building brands and reputations.”

## Integration yields satisfaction and unforeseen innovation.

“When it all comes together, it is like a symphony... like conducting an orchestra. It is incredible when you see it work.”

“We’re looking at activities for the next year, and everyone is really excited about them. They see the power of doing these things under a new strategy and in an integrated manner. Being a team and doing the things we’re contemplating – radically different than the traditional strategies that were invented within their old silos – these integrative strategies are really exciting.”

## Integration better aligns with an ever-changing and increasingly complex media environment.

“Ultimately, because of the media environment we live in, with blurred lines brought forth by technology and social media, these functions are much better off integrated than they are being apart.”

“If you think about content engagement in this more channel agnostic world, it seems irreversible. Having silo-ization doesn’t seem to make sense.”

**We have categorized the in-depth findings into 6 Insights Into Convergence and, based on these insights, developed a Guide to Convergence for companies contemplating or undergoing convergence today.**

“ All the external trends in how stakeholders interact with corporations and other brands point in this direction. Convergence can be hard to do, but it is absolutely the right thing to do. ”





6

INTEGRATION  
INSIGHTS

## 6 INTEGRATION INSIGHTS: AT-A-GLANCE

Below are the 6 insights from Weber Shandwick's research with CCMOs. A deeper dive into these insights follow this page.

01

### The genesis of integration

- changes in business portfolios
- proliferation of media channels
- cost effectiveness
- mandate from the CEO

02

### Acceleration through digital

- technology drives convergence
- marcomms has become digitally centric

03

### Returns on integration (ROI)

- consistency of message
- more nimble organization
- resource and cost efficiencies
- improved career pathing
- compelling original content

04

### Pre-integration jitters

- cultural clashes between marketing and comms
- uncertainty breeds fear
- steep learning curve

05

### Integration challenges

- increased budget scrutiny
- fiefdoms persist
- qualified integrated talent is hard to find
- prioritization and customer service
- external integration

06

### No set integration structure or path

- CEO reporting lines vary
- decision to centralize or decentralize varies
- "how" to integrate varies

“ In 2012, Procter & Gamble announced that it would reorganize its communications function to be led by Marc Pritchard, P&G's global marketing and brand building officer. According to Pritchard, P&G is changing the unit at this point because of how 'communications is rapidly changing. When it comes to communications and PR, the expectations and scrutiny of companies is becoming much higher. Technology is giving us 24/7 real-time information, we're all totally connected, people expect transparency and want to know more about our company and our brands and the people behind them.' ”

## 01

## THE GENESIS OF INTEGRATION

CCMOs describe a variety of strategic events that led their companies to integrate the marketing and communications functions, or “marcomms” as participants sometimes referred to it.

- Some companies had undergone radical shifts to their business portfolios, including spinoffs, or had entered more mature and complex markets, requiring new corporate positioning initiatives.
- In other cases, senior leadership realized that in order to effectively reach their stakeholders through ever-increasing media channels, a cohesive and disciplined approach was incumbent on their marketing and communications.
- In only two cases were management streamlining or cost-savings the impetus. These interviewees took advantage of their new positions to better align their departments with corporate goals and reputation needs.

*“We didn’t have any dedicated focus to managing brand and reputation, and the company had reached a level of maturity as a business where it would be appropriate to be taken to the next level.”*

*“People get information from multiple channels and sources, but we weren’t set up to be able to service people...we weren’t where people were getting their info.”*

*“This is how corporate identities get built today... The thinking is that all stakeholders want to understand product brands and the company that stands behind them (this is true of consumers, regulators, prospective talent...). So, the way to engage them is not pure marketing or pure communications or pure citizenship, but a hybrid of all those things.”*

Yet in every instance, the mandate for integration came from the CEO. While not all CEOs explicitly requested a merger of the functions, they appealed for action against very specific, reputation-related goals.

*“At the time, our CEO needed a senior person to help advise with healthcare reform and manage our rebranding effort...so it was easier to help drive the chairman’s strategic agenda through integrated marcomms.”*

*“The entire executive committee was involved through a direct request from the CEO.”*

## ACCELERATION THROUGH DIGITAL

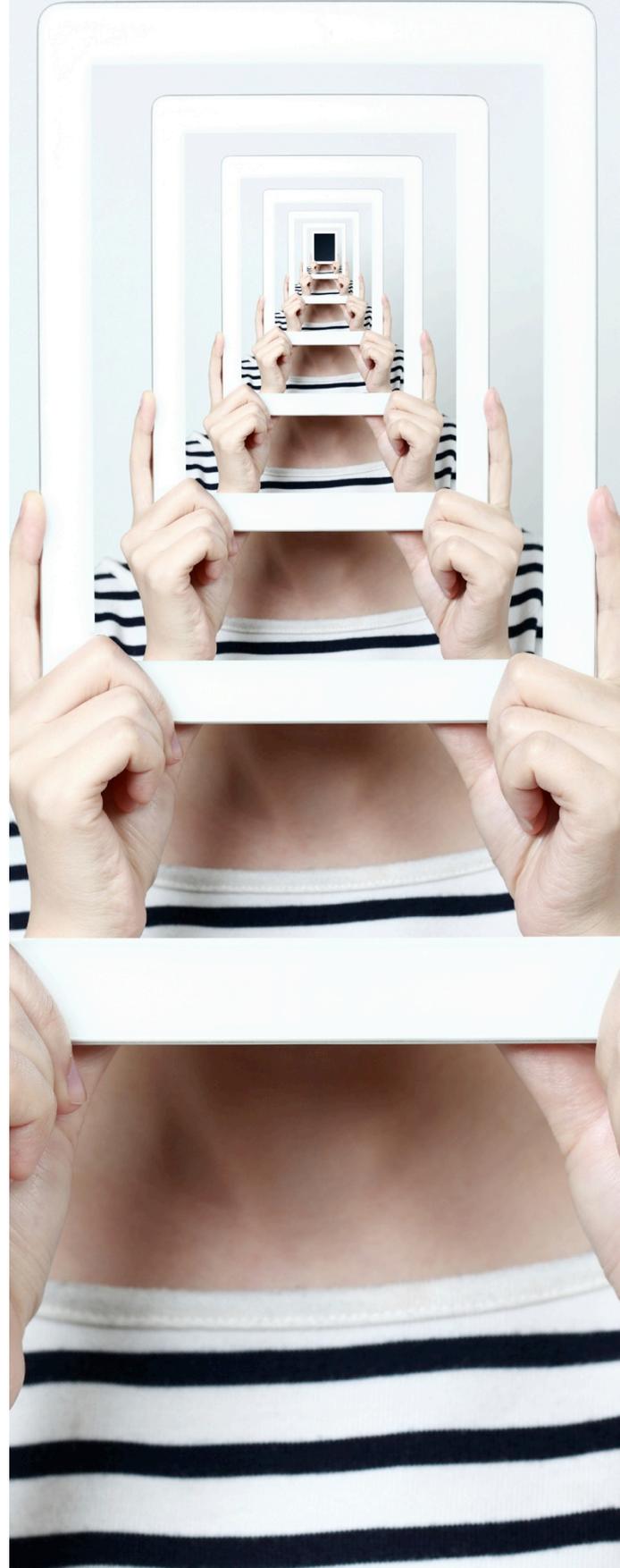
Many CCMOs describe how the greater variety of information choices arising from digital media compelled them to evolve and organize around multichannel communications.

*“Integration can work because of the new world we operate in. History has shown that marketing always got the big budgets... Today, it is a new ballgame... You don’t see the same ad spends – you see digital spend... There are so many ways to communicate now.”*

*“Marcomms, as a discipline, has become digitally centric – call it digital convergence. That fundamentally changes what we do, how we do it, and the kind of people we need. We are reevaluating our structure, the skill sets and our tools we need to ensure we are set up so we can succeed in this digitally converged world.”*

For some, the digital functions have instilled greater collaboration in their marcomms organizations.

*“Our interactive team thinks about the user experience across our entire digital portfolio. What is it like to listen to a podcast, what is it like to look at our site on your cell phone? This team has to reach out and work closely with the PR folks, since they create the content, and also with the marketing team – where our creative sources live.”*



## RETURNS ON INTEGRATION (ROI)

Interviewees agree that many benefits are realized from combining marketing and communications under one leader.

- Creates and maintains a **consistent message and voice** across all channels of communication.

*“The best run brands in the world behave in a consistent way; they stand for one thing or a few things and consistently communicate that globally.”*

*“You speak with one voice to anyone you are talking to – whether it is your internal customers, your partners, external clients or regulators... It is one to many communications versus one to one.”*

One CCMO describes his role as managing a “seamless continuum” or “ecosystem” of communication channels:

*“We look at our ecosystem to figure out what to do, starting with internal communications, social media, earned media, client communications, and paid media. So we are activating all these channels with the same message. If you didn’t have an integrated marcomms function, you would have a bifurcation of those activities and therefore you would be under-optimizing or exploiting the opportunity and risk inconsistent messaging.”*

- Yields **more nimble organizations**, where team members can act faster and coordinate across disciplines more fluidly.

*“We deal with a lot of crises...and while I’m confident the team regardless of structure would perform well, it does help. It helps to form a community that is supportive of one another, learning from each other... you know they’ll pay you back when you need help.”*

*“What is earned, owned and paid media is changing so quickly...the boundaries and lines are getting so blurry that the advantage to having [the disciplines together] makes you much more agile in terms of responding to that. I have some senior PR people who know about press releases, but far more now they are being brought into the conversation about social selling and sales enablement and how you distribute content in a more intelligent way because of the many ways people get their information.”*

- **Better position to leverage resources and manage budgets.**

*“We have never had a huge team or been flushed with cash, but this helps manage our resources to get us the greatest value.”*

- Generates **more efficient programming and tactics.**

*“Greater alignment results from integration, and that includes capturing all disciplines upfront in program planning, versus including some at the back end. The way campaigns are built changes – accountability starts earlier.”*

*“Everyone has started to think more broadly about the different channels we have and how to use them. We are here to tell the story of [our institution] and we have to use all the channels we need. What is the traditional media play, social media play, video play? It is a much different conversation now.”*

One participant noted how their integrated structure enabled his team to manage initiatives such as a global sponsorship and global brand campaign – larger programs they had not attempted when working in separate departments.

- Provides **better career paths**. Clarity and greater variety of career opportunities arise from combining marcomms.

*“It allowed us to create better career paths for people, especially in the communications profession. Before, when you were in a business unit, that was your worldview – that was it in terms of job progression. Now, we have opened up possibilities to more easily move around.”*

*“I sat with the younger staff. They had to be given support and education to learn their new roles and how to drive the business forward...I was able to set a foundation for their careers.”*

- Powers **compelling original content**. CCMOs are finding that the aggregation of functions better positions them to develop and distribute original content. Integration’s larger budgets and greater authority have enabled some CCMOs to craft compelling stories that shape reputation through content journalism. Interviewees described a variety of reasons why they expended resources to produce original content:

*“There are so many ways to communicate now, especially with social media...Creating content is what a lot of companies are doing...because you can control your messaging. It is also easier from an internal legal review perspective.”*

*“Our goals in doing this are based on the simple premise that people are watching less conventional media and consuming content in various forms, and they want storytelling. We lacked the ability to be effective in that space. We are set up to tell stories about the company and our brands in a way we thought would be compelling.”*

*“What I perceive to be happening is a shift from messaging to storytelling...the way brands are being shaped is more by the story and the emotion than the message or the advertising. It is about authenticity.”*

CCMOs find significant benefits from creating and deploying their own content. First, original content helps differentiate their companies through thought leadership positioning.

For one CCMO, proprietary analysis and perspective becomes a calling card for the company’s sales force. His team helps company researchers decide where to devote their efforts.

*“Where and how we deploy insights depends on who we are trying to reach in our marketing efforts. The data and insight is pure – but it helps to have marketing as bookends on both sides to make sure the research is valuable.”*

Secondly, original content helps SEO efficacy. One CCMO advises start-ups to develop original content with the goal of building a strong digital presence.

*“[Original content and stories] are the demands of business today...Building up your YouTube channel and your content syndication – which helps develop strong partnerships – is so important for companies going forward...to thinking and planning their identity for the longer-term.”*

## CREATING ORIGINAL CONTENT: GETTING STARTED

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CCMOs find that original content requires unique skills and outlooks:

*“You find a mindset in the best practitioners of marketing and communications...an ability to bring the outside in and inside out... a journalistic sense of what is interesting about our story that would resonate with the stakeholders we care about. In the marketing world, the best creatives connect with cultural means and relate those to aspects of a product, corporation or the business. The people that know how to do that work well across disciplines.”*

*“When I hired a video producer, I did so not because she was a good videographer, but because she was trained as a photojournalist, and she has the ability to tell stories. Video is table stakes, but we wanted someone who can find what is interesting and tell it in an interesting way. We want good storytellers.”*

*“The new PR is like the old PR ...everyone still wants to hire journalists but now, we are asking them to do something different. We used to hire them to be PR people, but now, we are hiring them to be journalists internally.”*

“Owning” the responsibility of content creates distinct, professional content creation hubs. Some have built stand-alone production departments, with videographers, directors and producers to develop content for modern channels. Others have hired former journalists to help shape an organization’s ideas and stories into accessible stories for business, consumer or trade media.

*“In the future, we will go onto wider distribution channels and develop longer-form content and start experimenting with more documentary style content vs. a journalistic approach.”*

## PRE-INTEGRATION JITTERS

The CCMOs interviewed characterized the process of integrating departments as challenging. For many, it took longer than they initially expected for the newly combined departments to gel, and some acknowledged that their “multi-year build” is still under way, with unresolved resource and process gaps.

### – Cultural issues

*“Creating the organization mechanically was straightforward. The difficulty comes because there are differing cultures in the original divisions combined. Despite everyone’s best intentions to work together, sometimes they just don’t speak the same language. That is a multi-year goal to work on a seamless basis.”*

*“Managing different perspectives and different agendas to stay on mission is hard. We make sure we have the right protocols. It requires lots of internal engagement.”*

### – Uncertainty and fear

*“Not everyone was committed initially, they were unsure... We have to continually work at integration.”*

*“At first, it was very challenging because this involved changes in managing people. Some people lost power and some gained power. It was the normal back and forth... some were resisting the change and some fighting for it.”*

- **Need for cross-education.** Some CCMOs inherited legacies of limited marketing or communications experience, where companies had done little in one or both spaces. As a result, it became paramount to educate business units or other internal partners about the benefits of the less familiar discipline.

*“When a company has known for years that they can grow sales by hiring more salespeople, demonstrating that a dollar invested in marketing versus in sales can be very hard... Educating that we have a lot of touch points, influence points... that close rates are higher and faster because of what we do - those metrics take time to develop... I’m more a salesperson and evangelist than anything else - working and socializing and educating about those things.”*

## INTEGRATION CHALLENGES

When asked about any pitfalls or ongoing challenges to integration, interviewees note several particularly vexing issues.

- **Greater budget scrutiny** with greater, centralized resources.

*“Once more assets were in one place, the more we became a target for cost reductions... You are always fighting the budget fight.”*

*“There is always the corporate function stigma that can happen in times of stress. You get: ‘well, you’re infrastructure, a cost center.’ If we were in a business unit, we would still be a cost center – it is a curious argument... So we make it about the customer and the work... We do things to move the business forward.”*

- **Fiefdoms or personal priorities persist.**

*“Regional operations still want to do their own thing and create their own assets in communications for their markets. There is a sweet spot to allow them to do what is right for them, but still adhere to the global brand directive. The problem is in how to balance a top-down centralization of communications combined with smart localization.”*

*“You can have the greatest structure in the world, but there are always personalities involved. Companies are living, breathing organisms. It helps to have some sponsorship from the leadership – signaling expectations... It is an ongoing process.”*

- **Finding staff experienced in both disciplines** is problematic.

One CCMO with a start-up background believes that small and mid-sized companies need staff who understand marketing, communications and digital so they can help coordinate and work across the disciplines. He would like to see better education at the university level, where students are exposed to the greater variety of marcomms disciplines.

Similarly, another interviewee observes that the pool of senior level executives with experience and appreciation for both disciplines is limited.

*“The recruiters I know have a hard time finding someone who gets marketing and communications and can also run large budgets and complex organizations.”*

Some express concern that if the CCMO has a propensity toward one discipline, the other elements of an integrated function become weakened.

*“The disadvantage can be that communicators are generally concerned with the broad reputation of the company and not just the bottom line... there needs to be some discipline, leadership and experience in place for the communications function to be credible; they have to think beyond the sale and new product launches into the broad reputation of the company.”*

*“It depends on how good that head of the combined department is. If they are too oriented to marketing, they won’t take care of corporate communications and vice versa.”*

- **Prioritizing the resulting and disparate requests** may be challenging once an integrated marcomms resource is widely introduced.

*“Introducing a set of tools to the company that they were unfamiliar with – everything from professionalized media relations... to professionalized product launch marketing – required us to create a set of prioritizations. Our marcomms group doesn’t charge back to the company for our services, so having authority to make prioritization decisions is still challenging.”*

As with any major organizational change, senior leadership can be pulled in many different directions, and prioritizing the countless demands on their time is challenging.

*“[Integration] involves a shift in practices, and there aren’t enough hours in the day to get everything done... a large complex organization can move slowly and the world and information moves fast. It is constantly a challenge to keep up with the speed of change in the external environment.”*

- **A ripple effect takes time to still.**

CCMOs also take on existing relationships with agencies and other external partners, requiring time and energy to evaluate each company and inculcate them into the new, hybridized way of working.

*“I was skeptical with the ad agency... getting to know them and evaluate them and how they work, while watching the spend. It was more work, in a way. Now I oversaw two groups and inherited more things and contracts to manage. It becomes a big management role – people, vendors, partners.”*

- **Bend, but don’t break.**

Two interviewees report that their companies are reverting to a divided marketing and communications structure. For those outliers, their business environment has resulted in a strategic redirection that necessitates this realignment.

*“We have historically been a B-to-B company, but now we are moving to a B-to-C model. That means we need to shift to a direct to consumer marketing model... Integration is done very much on a case by case basis, depending on the company’s specific needs.”*

*“In our latest realignment, the company felt it needed to focus more on our customers. Rather than having the businesses do this, we created a corporate enterprise group to devise strategy around how to go after customers... So customer-related marketing tactics will be housed in this new group. We will manage corporate branding.”*

## NO SET INTEGRATION STRUCTURE OR PATH

*“Inform your thinking by understanding first and foremost the dynamics, idiosyncrasies and needs of your own organization, but also draw on best practices of others. Realize it will always be a work in progress.”*

The architecture of each CCMO’s integrated organization differed among our interviewees, and was shaped by the type of business, corporate culture as well as the relative maturity of each discipline at the company. The various organizational structures were distinguished by a few considerations:

- **CCMO reporting lines.** While many interviewees report to their CEO, a few have other reporting relationships. Those reporting to a COO, head of sales and marketing or other senior executive do so for strategic reasons which are determined by the needs of their company.

*“In a company like mine, the reporting structure makes sense. We do our sales strategy first, which informs our product strategy and business unit strategy. [Marcomms is] at the front end of it because we’re on the sales side because of how our company works.”*

*“Sometimes if a marketer doesn’t report to the CEO, they get their nose out of shape as if ‘we don’t matter.’ But it is about being practical...understanding what is needed.”*

- **The decision to centralize or decentralize the integrated organization depends upon the CCMO’s responsibilities.** Those responsibilities are either corporate or both corporate and brand or business unit.

**Centralized.** Most interviewees manage central corporate marketing and communications organizations only. Yet they also have dotted line relationships with separate marketing teams that sit in individual business or brand units and reporting directly to business/brand leaders. In the case of these centralized models, many CCMOs established processes or integrative councils that connect the marcomms leaders of all the non-centralized units. These councils meet regularly and serve as the “connective tissue” or governance mechanism, sharing important business developments and coordinating corporate priorities.

**Matrixed.** In the case of those CCMOs who manage both corporate and brand or business unit activities, they adopted a matrix structure, with marcomms teams co-located with brands and reporting to both the CCMO and brand leader. The benefit of this structure is the ability to foster a strong relationship between embedded teams and their assigned business units, achieving a deeper understanding of and dedication to their missions. Some CCMOs also have responsibility for regional marcomms teams. Regardless, knowledge of and commitment to corporate priorities is important. One CCMO has brand marcomms staff devote 80% of their time to business unit initiatives, allocating the remaining 20% for corporate activities.

*“The co-location with our business units allows [our staff] to be close to the businesses but still have some connection to the corporate team...Our business partner groups align their objectives directly with the business, and work on moving that business forward.*

*They serve as the focal point for tapping into all the disciplines and support we have under the central [marcomms] umbrella... It really helps you leverage your resources.”*

*“Our challenge is tighter integration of these resources...so we have to strike a balance between full integration and embedding with the business units... You need a hybrid model – we call it the ‘glocal’ organization, where you have sets of shared services that cut across business units and geography – like digital, messaging people, etc. And then you have areas of specialization, channels that tap into the resources of the greater marcomms group.”*

#### – How integration works varies by organization.

In some cases, CCMOs maintain separate sub-departments, where marketing, communications and digital remain separate entities with individual reporting lines up to the CCMO. Programs are still coordinated across these marcomms units, but they maintain separate identities and for some, discrete budgets. Reasons for this vertical approach include:

- established cultural identities and ways of working
- recognition that each discipline represents a distinct profession requiring career paths
- easier oversight for the CCMO

Several interviewees foster more horizontal work arrangements, where the disciplines operate in a more integrated manner. For one CCMO, regional units are integrated, but corporate functions remain separate.

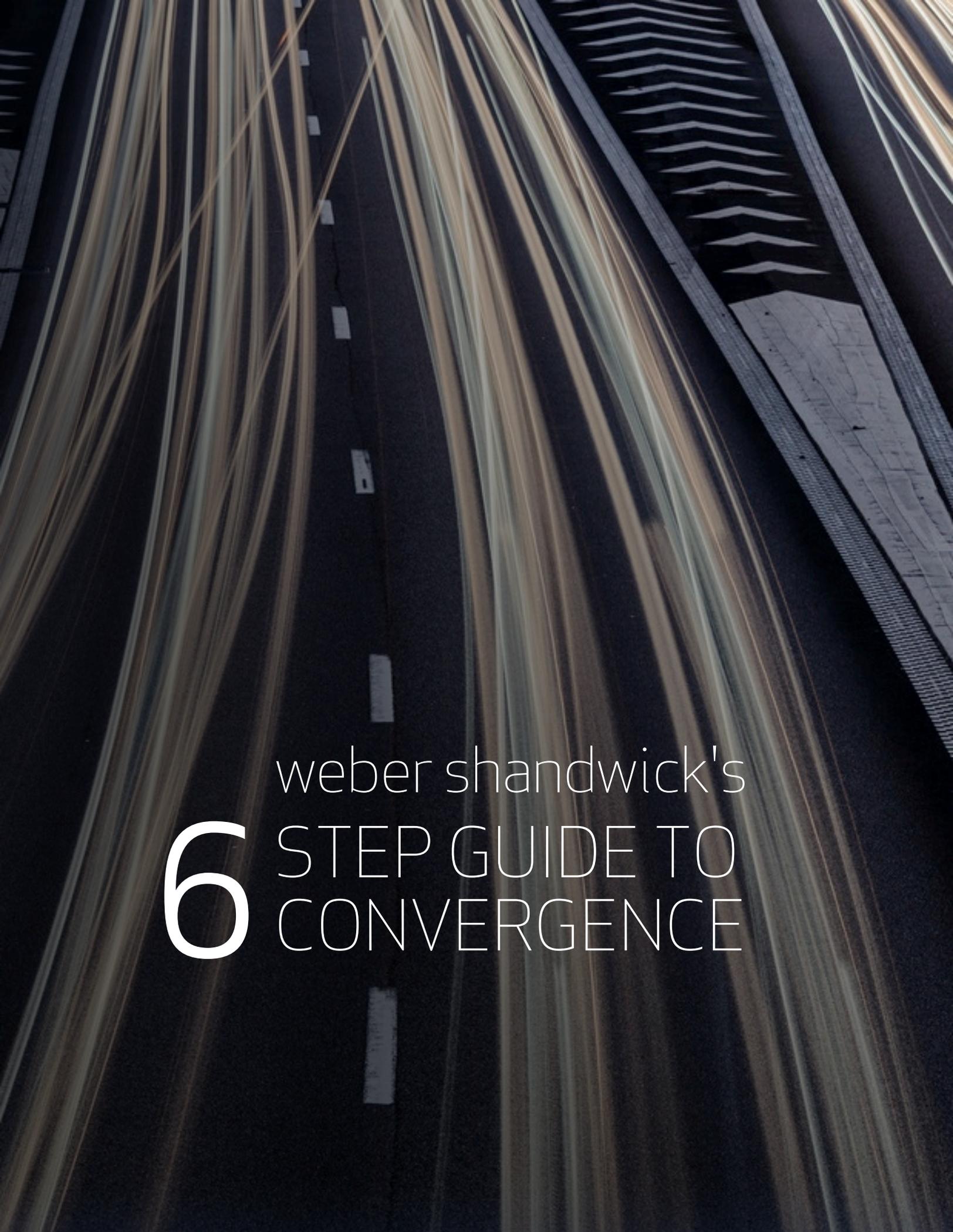
*“At headquarters, it works well the way we have it. At the regional level, we are trying to build a new, more integrated structure and fluid, fungible type of organization where we are actually living the new way of doing things... Still, you can connect the pieces together the way you want to for specific campaigns and macro efforts.”*

A few CCMOs are beginning to move their entire organizations toward greater integration. For one, the goal is to have one unique team manage all stakeholder touch points across a specific initiative, such as a sponsorship.

*“Instead of handing off to Digital or PR...we are working toward a 360 degree view of how a property is managed.”*

Below are examples of CCMO reporting lines and functions based on a media scan of new communications hires and promotions from January 2012 - February 2014.

Title	Reports to	Job description
VP Corporate Marketing and Communications for Asia Pacific	SVP Corporate Communications with dotted line to Asia Pacific CEO	Oversee media relations, executive communications, corporate brand, internal communications, CSR and sponsorship.
SVP Marketing and Communications	Chief Consumer Officer	Align marketing, PR and digital functions.
EVP Marketing, Innovation and Corporate Relations	CEO	Expansion of CMO duties to include corporate communications.
VP Communications, Marketing and Public Affairs	President	Lead all communications and marketing programs.
EVP Marketing and Communications	CEO	Lead global marketing and communications functions, including internal and external communications, content development, digital marketing, industry relations and events.
Chief Marketing and Communications Officer	CEO	Oversee global communications strategy, including internal and external communications, social media, corporate social responsibility/cause-related initiatives and corporate events. Responsible for global brand development, partnerships and consumer marketing initiatives.
Executive Director, Communications and Marketing	CEO	Responsible for strategic oversight and direction of communications and marketing function.
VP and Director of Marketing, Communications and Research	CFO	Oversee all aspects of marketing and communications.
VP Corporate Communications	SVP Communications and Investor Relations	Responsible for communications, community relations and creative services, including marketing and advertising.
Global Head Corporate Communications	CEO	Oversee corporate marketing and branding, PR and public affairs, media relations, digital, and internal communications.
VP Global Branding, Corporate Communications and Creative Services	Dual reporting line: CEO and President/GM of specialty markets	Responsible for corporate communications, PR, marketing, branding strategy and CSR. Lead a team of 11 people.
VP and Head of Strategic Communications and Marketing	SVP Corporate Strategy, Communications and New Media	Oversee corporate communications and marketing departments, including global public relations, branding, social media, internal communications, corporate marketing and online communications.



weber shandwick's  
**6** STEP GUIDE TO  
CONVERGENCE

# 6 STEP GUIDE TO CONVERGENCE

Based on our 10 in-depth interviews with industry professionals, Weber Shandwick offers the following six recommendations to executives who are considering or executing on a hybrid marcomms model.

**01** **Consider convergence for strategic advantage.** When evaluating strategic priorities and how to effectively reach diverse stakeholder groups, take a close look at combining marketing and communications. CCMOs have found integration invaluable to initiatives involving marketplace repositioning as well as reputation recovery. While we recognize that some corporate strategies, internal cultures or the relative maturity of each discipline dissuade some companies against integration, it is still worth examining if and how some hybridization makes sense.

*"[Integration] makes more sense from a corporate reputation standpoint, where everything is connected. If you're not connected, competing interests for dollars, for messaging, for executive attention will ensue... Also, in terms of the different and many channels now, why wouldn't you try to integrate? There are so many more opportunities now... Even from a spend factor, it may be more beneficial for the company, so there aren't two groups spending on similar things."*

**02** **Start with a shared vision and mission.** First, establish a definition of your brand identity, and what it is your company stands for. In order to create a consistent voice, a set of common visions and values is critical to fulfilling your mission.

*"You have to rally around what it is that makes [your company who it is], and it needs to be authentic to what the company is and relevant to its stakeholders. We took time to define that and came to a focused view of it... Then that helps that you're not communicating for the sake of communicating, but reinforcing who you are."*

Secondly, organize the department around its corporate or brand mission. Clearly articulate the rationale for marcomms change – to deliver on the company's mission – and consistently communicate your compelling case for integration.

*"Once the mission is clear, then you set up the functions to deliver on those objectives. We decided what the objective was, and then as a consequence of that, the department was formed."*

*"Transparency is important to motivate the team and help them understand that better alignment will help them be more successful. Then, they will embrace change... The more you can get the team shooting toward the same thing, the more you'll get them to volunteer to align vs. you forcing them... Nothing bonds like a common enemy."*

**03** Evangelize wide and deep.

Promote the marcomms mission by sharing with internal stakeholders what it is you can achieve and how your hybrid function works. Importantly, explore the aspirations and needs of key internal partners as well as external clients to understand where you can add value to move the business forward.

*“I should have spent more time telling everyone – middle management at the brand/business level – what we do...I still find that people don’t understand [marcomms], and so I get asked, ‘what are you doing, why does this cost so much?’...We communications people should over-communicate to a broader audience.”*

*“I got to know the business from the outside... I’ve gone on sales calls, out to client sites to see what implementation challenges they have... Really experiencing the business is important. Then, you can inform marketing in a way that is discretely valuable... You also have credibility... I can preface things by saying, ‘when I was taking service calls.’ Demonstrate through your behavior that you care about the same things.”*

**04** Govern the integration.

Managing larger organizations requires strong coordination, often across distant geographies and business units. Regardless of whether a CCMO has oversight over brand, or regional marcomms, convening leadership groups across these disparate parts of a company helps manage important priorities. Scheduling regular, periodic meetings to level-set and find areas where responsibilities are shared across teams is an important tool for many CCMOs.

*“The governing council is the glue that allows us to coordinate across product brands and regions. Looking back, I would have moved on this integrative process sooner...it would have helped to identify the different ways people worked across the functions, and we could have addressed those sooner.”*

And on the smaller scale, where marcomms staff work in the same location, seating newly combined staff together on the same floor or office helps bring about collaboration. For one CCMO, it was as simple as having one coffee station and one meeting room: *“It forced interactions that they hadn’t experienced before.”* For others, weekly goal-setting meetings quickly aligned staff toward shared goals.

**05** **Move quickly but planfully.** Trust your instincts, and accelerate actions that will make the newly-merged organization run smoothly.

In hindsight, a number of research participants say they would have moved faster on personnel decisions, either downsizing in areas of redundancy or staffing up where resources were lacking.

*“It took longer to build the organization than I wanted... The regions were used to running things themselves. It involved getting a lot of people on board and comfortable... We were collaborative and that slowed us down.”*

Some interviewees lament not filling resource gaps more swiftly – risking their ability to execute integrated programs. Areas they found particularly underdeveloped include digital and social, market and competitive research, and growth markets. One solution, particularly for start-ups, can be engaging outside agencies to fill these initial voids. That way, the contributions of those disciplines are not deferred while planning and hiring is under way.

*“Your agency should have staff physically sit with you at least once a week. They won’t get a taste for the company if they are working outside.”*

**06** **Celebrate successes early and often.** Find ways to internally promote the benefits of integration by showcasing results as soon as possible. For a few CCMOs, developing an integrated digital platform and making it available to all brands/business units was viewed as an early success. Contrasting content engagement with competitors, or benchmarking brand strength in third-party research were other ways in which interviewees gained internal support for their integrated departments.

*“To the extent you can demonstrate ROI and results by virtue of this approach, that is the way to go.”*

Importantly, consistently demonstrate value to the C-Suite.

*“You need to get into their heads early to operate effectively. Know what the CEO’s priorities are. Understand what makes them tick and how you take it and shape it in a way that helps move toward that objective... Get into their head and help them understand how marcomms is a lever they can use to help them meet their goal, even if they’re not a huge fan.”*

# APPENDIX

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## Participant profiles

- Automotive manufacturer, communications background
- Business processing outsourcing provider, communications background
- Diversified healthcare company, marketing background
- Healthcare insurer, communications background
- Healthcare services provider, communications background
- Institution of higher education, marketing background
- Investment management company, communications background
- Multi-industry manufacturer, communications background
- Multinational bank, communications background
- Advisor to European start-ups and former dot-com CCMO, marketing background



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