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Case: From 'event organizer' to
'business partner' in a global
industrial company

How we helped a VP of Marketing with
a 30+ person team move from reactive
firefighting to build a foundation for
accountability and redefine
marketing's strategic role

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Executive summary: Moving from event organizer to business driver

This case story shows how a global marketing team started their journey from being a traditional "event organizer" toward becoming a true strategic business partner.

While the business saw marketing as important, its real value was unclear to stakeholders and the team alike. The team operated with defined targets, but these goals often lacked a direct link to broader business outcomes. For the VP of Marketing, a daily life was filled with back-to-back meetings and constant firefighting.

To change this, the team used The Mavenfirst Marketing Function Business Plan™ to establish a clear direction and a structured framework for their operations.

The impact is already visible. Ad hoc requests dropped from 65% to less than 5% as the team gained a sharper strategic focus. The team is now owning results instead of just executing tasks. Most importantly, the VP of Marketing moved from reactive problem-solving to proactive strategic leadership. The foundation for long-term growth is now stronger than ever.

Context —

A global B2B industrial company operating in a complex environment.

A multinational marketing team of 30+ professionals serving several independent Business Units (BUs).

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Challenges & starting point —

In this global industrial organization, the VP of Marketing knew that **marketing needed to evolve from a traditional event organizer into a strategic business partner**. The question was how to get there.

While the business understood that marketing was important, its **value and role were unclear** to stakeholders and the team. Marketing goals were often **disconnected from business** outcomes and it was difficult to communicate actual impact. The team remained **stuck in a support role**, primarily reacting to the loudest demands.

The marketing leader's daily life was filled with **constant firefighting and back-to-back meetings**. Every day was a race to solve urgent problems between business demands and team needs.

Without clear priorities, it was **difficult to delegate responsibility** effectively. The director spent their energy working 'in marketing' instead of 'on marketing'. While the budget was tracked closely, there was **no transparency** into where the team actually spent their time.

Root causes were identified based on the Assessment —

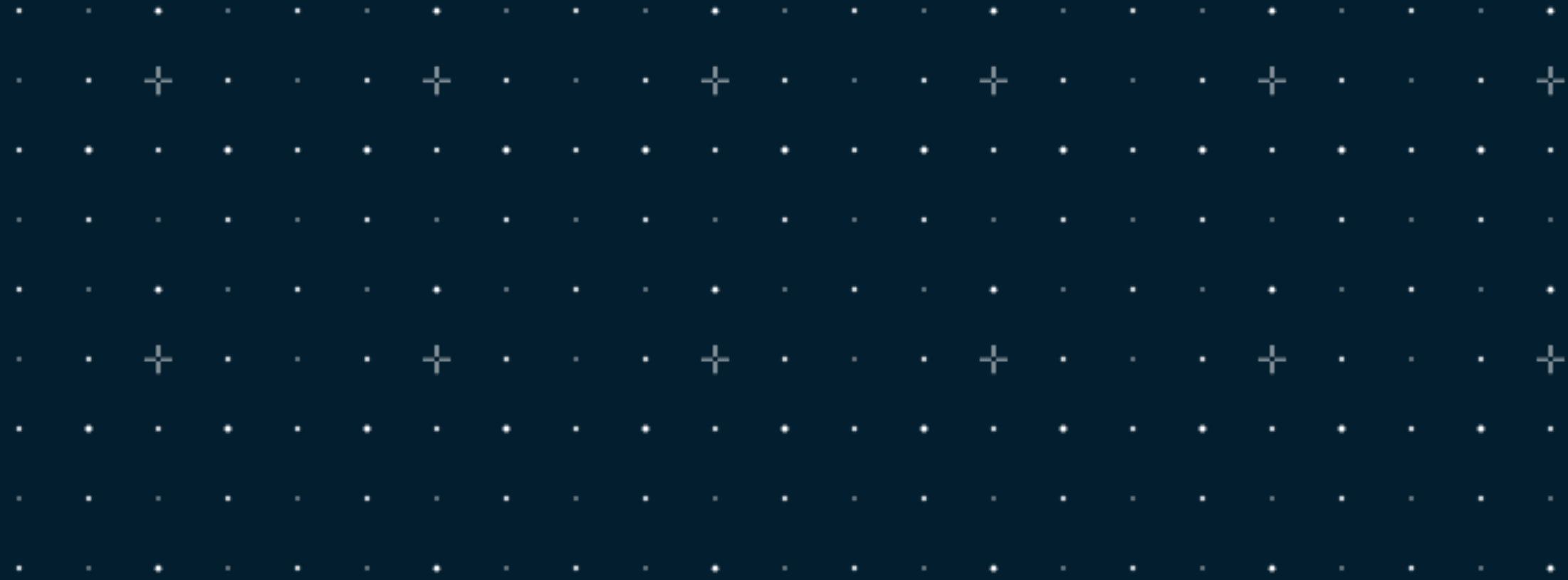
Outdated stakeholder image: Marketing has changed significantly over the past 5 years, and "why do we have marketing?" was either unclear to stakeholders or based on an outdated role.

Unclear vision: There was no unified horizon or shared vision for the function. This resulted in fragmented goals across different teams, with no collective objective to pull them together.

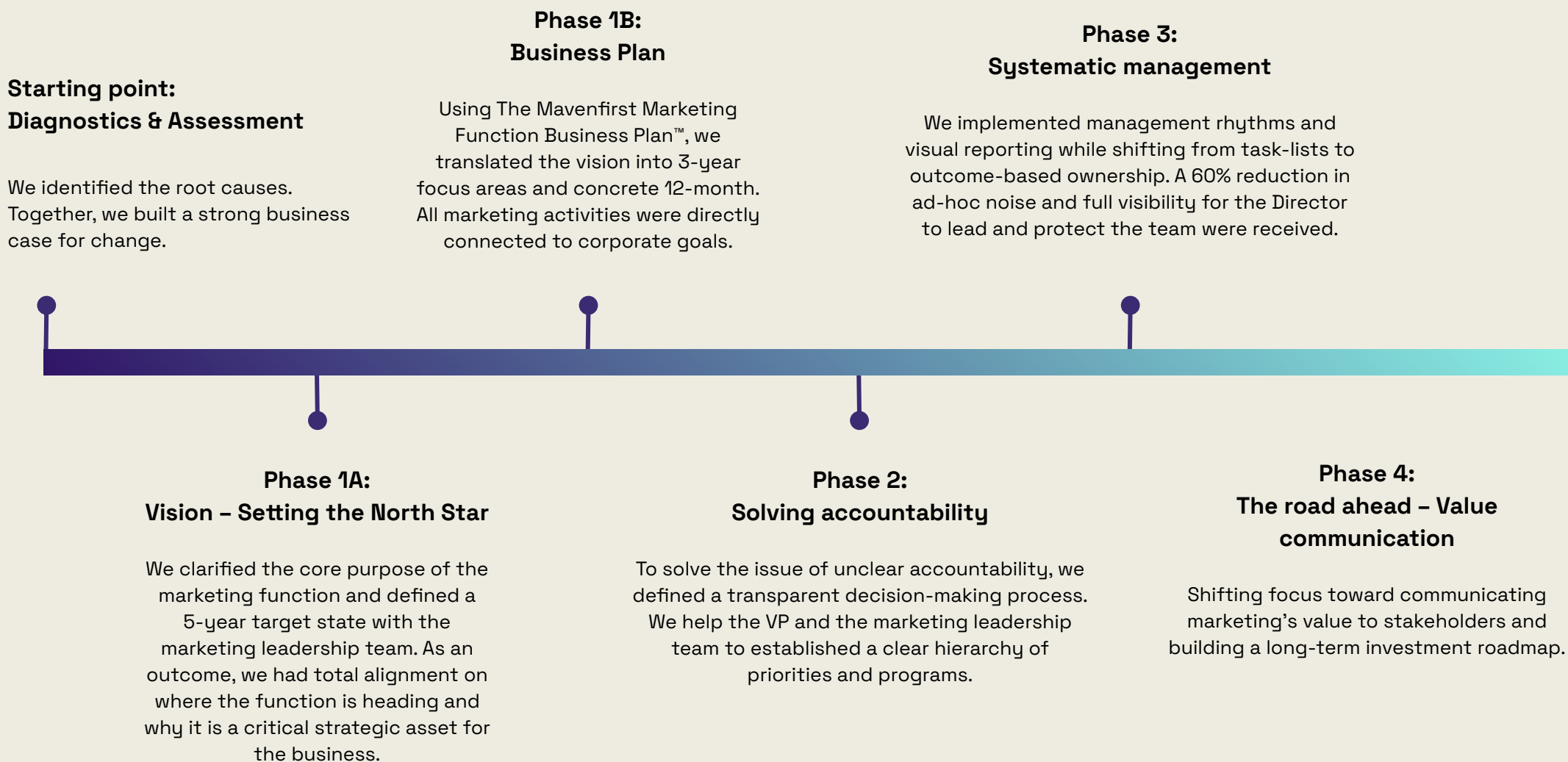
Unclear accountability: The process for setting goals and making decisions was undefined. It was unclear exactly how, when, and by whom these choices were made.

Transparency gap: Without knowing where the team's time was actually spent, the leader could not prioritize effectively or protect the team from ad hoc requests.

The diagnostic confirmed the VP of Marketing's intuition: the team was busy, but they were working without a shared strategic compass.



How this all happened: From ‘event organizer’ to ‘business partner’



Phase 1: Fixing the foundation through vision clarification

The outdated stakeholder image and unclear vision required more than a strategy document. We started by clarifying the core purpose of the marketing function for the VP of Marketing and the marketing leadership team. Through working sessions, they answered the fundamental questions: *Where are we taking this function? What is our 5-year target as a marketing function? Why should the business care?*

These sessions resulted in total **alignment across the marketing leadership team**. The VP and the team leads now shared a bold vision they believed in.

The process was designed to ensure **the client built their own future**. We provided the framework and the challenge necessary to ensure the resulting **ambition was bold and strategic**, rather than a "lukewarm" compromise.

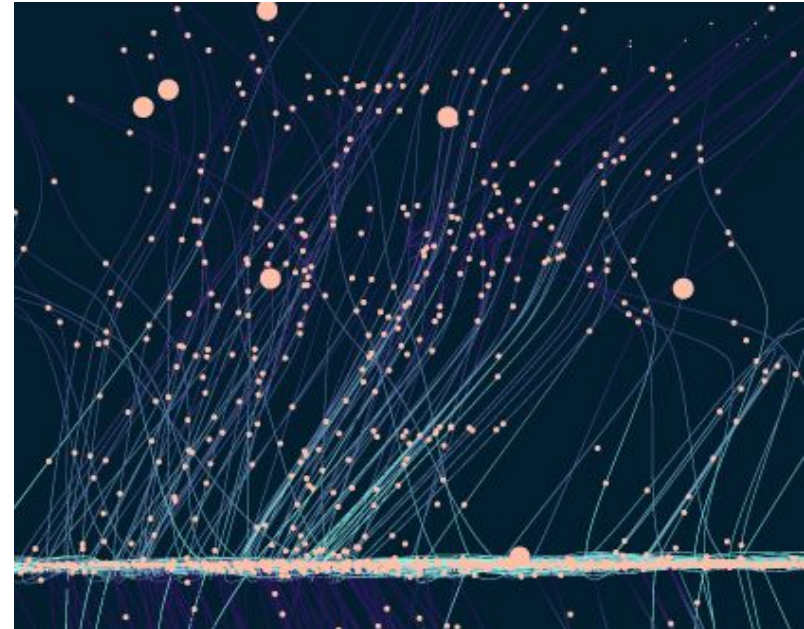
The VP now had the foundation to start building alignment with business leadership.

“Before, I thought I knew what we wanted, my leadership team and I. We had these goals about developing the function, supporting the strategy, and proving value. But we didn’t really know what it meant to actually get there.”

From vision to daily reality: Translating vision into a concrete Business Plan

With a clear direction established, we used The Mavenfirst Marketing Function Business Plan™ to turn the vision into a concrete reality for daily operations. This framework ensures the vision lives in the daily work of the 30+-person team rather than remaining a high-level concept. Within this framework, we helped the VP of Marketing and the leadership team translate the 5-year vision into **concrete 3-year focus areas and outcome-driven priorities** for the next 12 months.

Together with the marketing leader and the leadership team, we defined what the function must look like in three years to reach the vision (capabilities, structure, employee engagement and satisfaction, etc.). This process created **a shared understanding of the destination and the resources required** to get there.



The Mavenfirst Marketing Function Business Plan™ creates a direct link, with everything flowing from corporate and marketing strategy through execution. This alignment makes it much easier for the VP of Marketing to communicate marketing's value to the rest of the business. By demonstrating this clear connection, the leader can build stakeholder trust and establish marketing as a vital business partner.

The Mavenfirst Marketing Function Business Plan™

	Corporate Strategy			
	Marketing Strategy Who we want to influence (Targets) - Why should anyone care (Message) - Why we exist (Marketing Strategic Goal)			
BOLD VISION	Marketing Bold Vision – Value levers		Function’s Five-Year Picture	
3-YEAR PICTURE	Focus Area 1	Focus Area 2	Focus Area 3	Focus Area 4
1-YEAR PLAN	Priority 1.	Priority 1.	Priority 1.	Priority 1.
	Priority 2.	Priority 2.	Priority 2.	Priority 2.
	Priority 3.	Priority 3.	Priority 3.	Priority 3.
	Priority 4.			
	Programs – each priority has its own outcome-based programs			
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Framework: Mavenfirst Marketing Function Business Plan™				

Marketing Strategy: Defines who you want to influence (Targets), why they should care (Message), and the fundamental strategic goal of the marketing function.

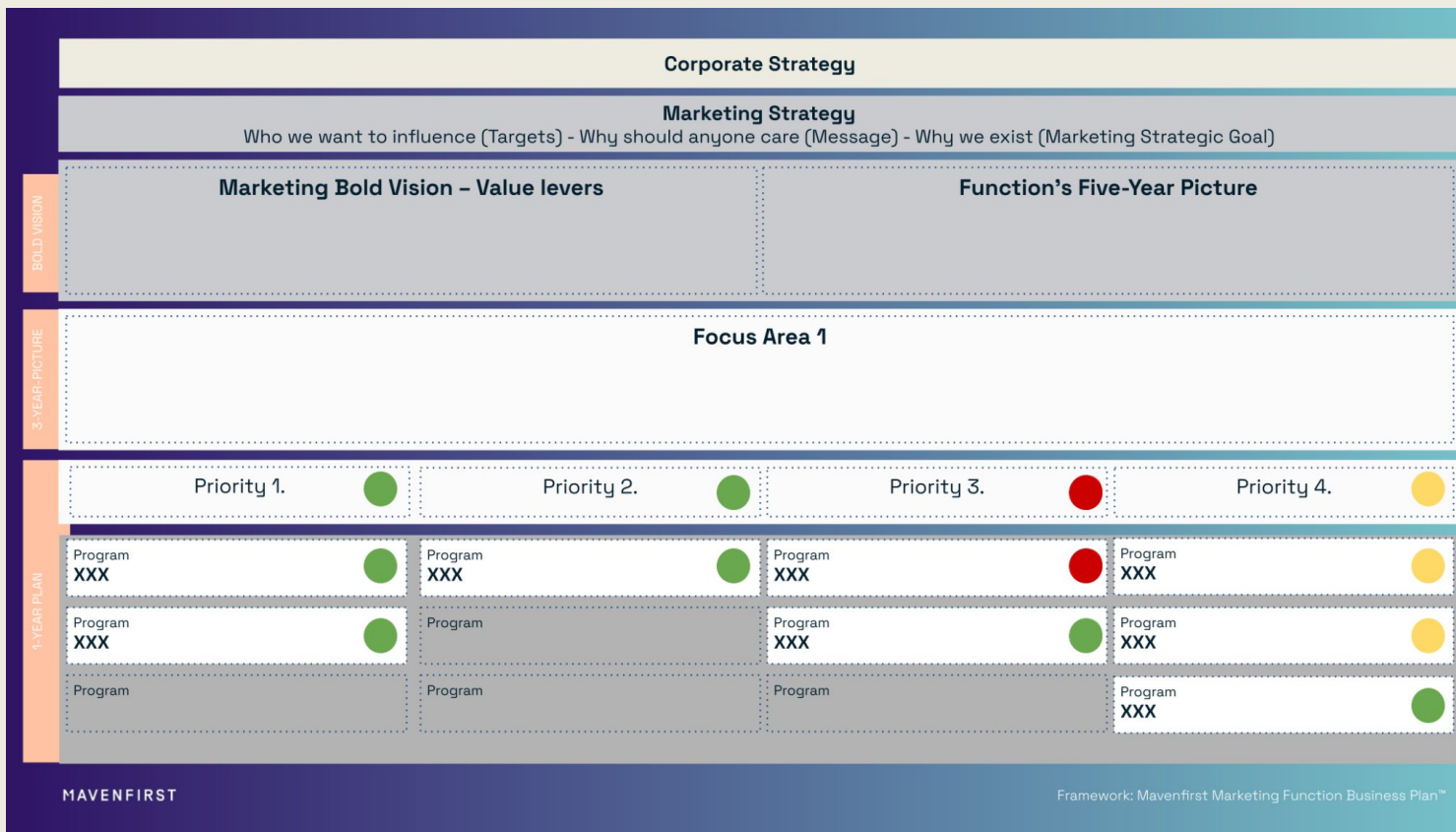
Bold Vision: The “reason to exist” and high-level ambition for marketing, anchored directly to the specific business value levers you aim to impact.

5-Year Picture: A concrete description of the future function, outlining the required team size, capabilities, and skills needed to realize the Bold Vision.

Focus Areas: The strategic “must-win battles” on a three-year horizon that dictate the most critical development areas for the marketing function.

Priorities: Clear 12-month goals that translate long-term focus areas into manageable and measurable annual milestones.

Programs: Short-term, outcome-based initiatives designed to execute yearly priorities and drive tangible results for the business.



Management visibility (traffic lights)

The traffic light system provides the VP of Marketing with real-time visibility into the status of every program. This enables proactive leadership and ensures that roadblocks are identified before they impact results.

Accountability

Every Focus Area and program is assigned to a single owner to ensure accountability. Having one specific name responsible for each outcome eliminates ambiguity and empowers the team to drive performance.

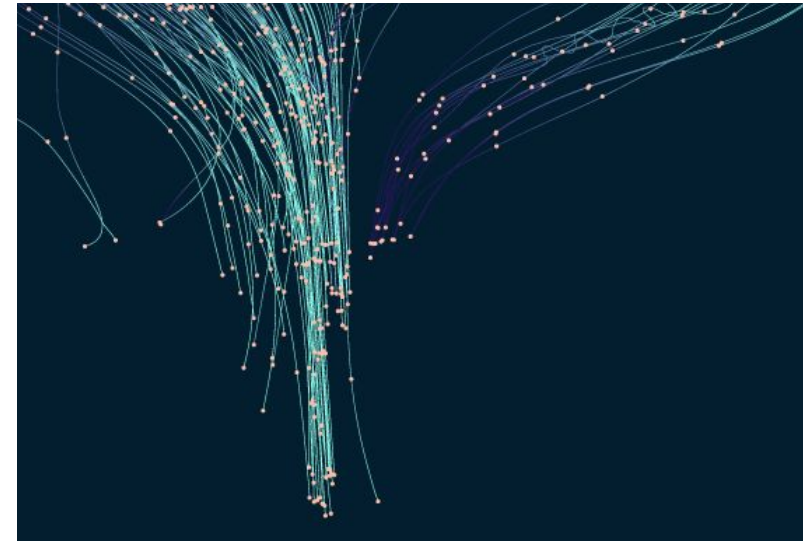
Phase 2: Solving accountability through ownership and defined decision-making

Even with a clear vision, the function still operated in a traditional **"order-and-deliver" model**. We needed to ensure the 30+-person team worked toward the new 3-year target.

To solve the issue of unclear accountability, we defined a **transparent decision-making process**.

The marketing leadership team and the VP collaborate to set focus areas and priorities. Once these decisions are made, the VP empowers program owners with the **autonomy to execute**.

Because we established outcome-based goals, **the team now has the freedom to manage their own work** within a clear framework. Everyone now understands who makes specific choices and where those decisions happen.



From task-doers to outcome-owners

We established a clear hierarchy of priorities and programs. We helped the VP drive yearly priority decisions to build total alignment across the marketing leadership team, ensuring everyone agreed on the big goals before execution began.

We coached team leads to develop **accountability-driven programs**. Instead of simply listing tasks, **every program now has one clear owner** accountable for its success.

This change helps the team move **from reactive firefighting to taking full ownership of their outcomes**. The team gained **autonomy to perform** because their goals were now directly linked to the corporate strategy.

What makes a good program —

- + SMART goal setting rules
- + Can be finished in 1-3 months (in a quarter)
- + Success/outcome is clear for all and non-debatable
- + Success is *mostly* based on our actions

Phase 3: Closing the transparency gap through systematic management rhythm

We eliminated the "black box" of marketing operations by establishing a disciplined management rhythm.

This system consists of from weekly pulses to monthly reviews and quarterly planning sessions that shift the focus **from debating the past to discussing how to solve** current risks and ensure future success.

We started with the most critical meetings and gradually built a full cadence that ensures the entire 30+-person function stays on track.

In this case, the quarterly marketing leadership team meeting is the most important meeting to get the full team in the same direction and rhythm.

- + Get full marketing management team to the same page
- + Plan and decide programs for the following quarter
- + Solve issues/opportunities
- + Decide changes to the priorities or additional goals

Visibility through management system

Previously, the VP of Marketing lacked visibility into where the team spent their time, making it impossible to prioritize or protect them from ad hoc requests. Now, the VP leads the entire department through a comprehensive Management System that tells the story of the function's performance through data.

A critical component of this system is the visual "traffic light" reporting. This allows **the leader to see the status of every program (Green, Yellow, or Red) at a glance.** The team now reports on outcomes and KPIs. This provides a real-time view of every initiative from the perspective of the accountable person.

We helped uncover weekly and monthly "pulse" metrics that **track the health of the marketing function as a whole**, rather than just individual campaigns. This data provides the VP with the evidence needed to justify priorities to the stakeholders and protect the team from ad hoc noise.

We also supported the client in **integrating this new model into their own marketing systems.**

"I was battling with setting accountability. Everyone sort of knew what was expected, but the real accountability was still missing. Then it just clicked once we had the programs in place.

Now I actually know who's owning those yearly goals and priorities. Not just actions, but outcomes. We're still learning to look at outcomes instead of just the actions, but we're moving in a good direction."

Measurable results after the first year: From chaos to strategic impact

Unplanned work dropped from 65% to less than 5%, serving as the primary driver for **improved overall performance**.

Strategic alignment: **95% of resources are now directly aligned with set yearly priorities and business outcomes**.

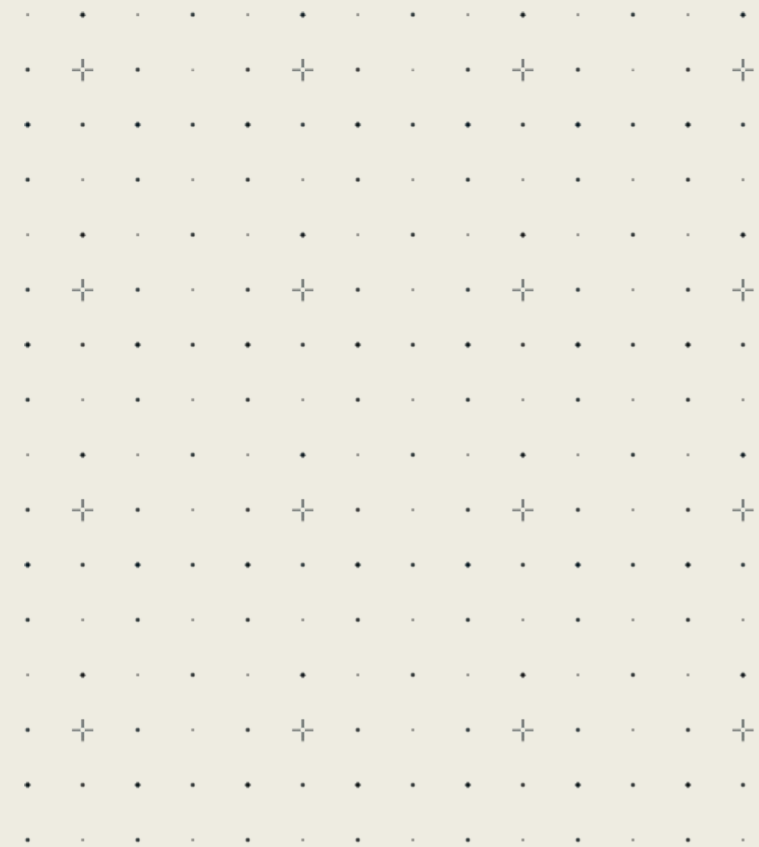
By focusing on the right things, the function has significantly increased its **commercial contribution to the organization**.

This new clarity also enhanced team wellbeing and improved employee retention: **the team's largest uplift in eNPS**, as clear expectations and autonomy allowed everyone to see exactly how their work contributes to business success.

For the VP of Marketing, the change meant moving from constant firefighting to **proactive strategic leadership**, with the confidence that the team can now plan and execute systematically.



“We finally have that confidence that we can plan, prioritize, and execute systematically. And actually hit our targets because of it. It feels like we’ve gotten way more done this year than in the last three combined.”



The consultant's perspective

"In this case, marketing's role was originally far from the target. Together with the client, we decided to seek stakeholder alignment later than usual. Every situation is unique.

We decided first build strong evidence and results, and use them to secure business alignment and trust. We recognized that in an organization of this size, we first needed to 'get our own house in order.'

I am very satisfied with this choice."



Where the marketing function is heading next

Now that the internal foundation is solid, the marketing leadership team is shifting its focus toward communicating marketing's value to the wider organization.

This new clarity creates a path for marketing to transform from a traditional support function into a core part of how the business operates.

By fixing the foundation, establishing accountability, and creating transparency, they have built the readiness to develop a long-term investment roadmap. The team is now in a position to explore new ways to multiply their impact on business outcomes.



Phase 1A:
Bold Vision

Phase 1B:
Business Plan

Phase 2:
Solving accountability

Phase 3:
Systematic management

Phase 4:
The road ahead – Value communication

Do you want to hear more? Or are you ready to get started?

If you recognize similar challenges and are ready to become a strategic driver of business growth, or just want to hear more details, please reach out.

You can also book a complimentary, no-risk assessment. This high-value work sample demonstrates our expertise in complex B2B environments.

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