A&MPLIFY
BY ALVAREZ & MARSAL

DROWNING IN DATA, STARVING FOR INSIGHT

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INTRODUCTION

65% of CEOs don't trust their CMOs.[1] And they're right not to. Too many marketing leaders still show up with vanity numbers—clicks, impressions, leads—that the board couldn't care less about.

When profits fall short, marketing is first to take the hit. 45% of the time, your budget gets cut before anyone else's.[2] Why? Because leadership doesn't believe you can prove impact. In a downturn, you're seen as a discretionary spend, not a growth engine.

There is the existential crisis facing every marketing leader.

Global data creation is exploding past 180 zettabytes this year.[3] We're richer in data than at any time in history, but poorer than ever in insight. That's the paradox: You're not starved for numbers; you're drowning in them. But most organizations can't turn their vast wealth of information into actionable business insights.

Only CMOs who can draw a straight line from marketing activity to EBITDA will survive. The rest? Cost centers waiting to be cut.

The time for ruthless KPI accountability has begun.

We have a wealth of data but a scarcity of actionable insight.

THE CMO'S DUAL CHALLENGE

The winners in 2026 will be leaders who align every KPI to C-suite priorities and enforce accountability across teams and agencies. The rest will keep defaulting to clicks and site visits, trapped in a measurement culture divorced from business impact and doomed to fail.

THIS MISALIGNMENT MEANS EVERY MARKETING LEADER IS PULLED IN TWO DIRECTIONS:

Executive Accountability:
Deliver quantifiable ROI tied directly to EBITDA. Fail, and you're irrelevant.

Operational Excellence:
Keep the machine running day to day. But every metric—from campaign open rates to cost per click—must ladder up to profit. No excuses.

Success demands brutal simplification: If a metric can't be traced to EBITDA, kill it. Stop outsourcing your success to agencies that prioritize their profits over yours.

Marketers must demonstrate how their work influences pipeline, EBITDA, and customer lifetime value. Aligned KPIs and interactive dashboards that compare actuals to budgets empower teams to monitor progress, course-correct in real time, and rebuild C-suite trust.

In order to do this effectively, A&MPLIFY and Agency Mania Solutions (AMS) have partnered to unite executive accountability with operational excellence through AMS's cloud-based platform, KPIDeliver.

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But this isn't just a technology fix. It requires fundamental transformation across both infrastructure and culture. Solve your tech integration crisis, fix your cultural dysfunction, and place accountability above all else.

1. Jason Galloway et al., "65% of CEOs Don't Trust Their CMOs. It's Time to Shake Things Up." *Alvarez & Marsal*, September 16, 2025.
2. "The CMO Survey: Despite Uncertainty, Marketing Budgets Rebound," *Duke | Fuqua School of Business*, November 12, 2024.
3. "15 digital marketing metrics and KPIs to track in 2025," *Usermaven*, November 18, 2024.

1. THE ROOTS OF THE KPI CRISIS

Picture the newly appointed CMO walking into their first board meeting. The slides are polished, the KPIs are glowing green, but then they're hit with a rude awakening:

+ *Why are you measuring leads when what we care about is closed revenue?*
+ *Your reports show engagement is up, but sales are down. What's going on?*
+ *We spend 20% of our budget on agencies, but are they actually delivering?*

The C-suite is frustrated. Budgets are stagnant or shrinking. Pressure is mounting: Deliver immediate ROI without sacrificing brand equity, adopt AI tools to cut costs (including agency fees), and make it all happen with fewer resources.

But marketing is part art, part science. That's why proving impact has always been hard.

And the last decade has made it worse: over 15,000 martech tools promising precision, delivering fragmentation.[4] Every new channel spawned a new point solution. Instead of clarity, we got chaos.

The result: Marketers have learned to celebrate numbers they can easily see and track rather than what actually matters for the business. 60% of video marketers still cite engagement rate as a top KPI.[5] The C-suite doesn't care. Unless engagement predicts pipeline or profit, it's noise.

The crisis of marketing KPI management has two root causes:

PROBLEM 1: CULTURAL DYSFUNCTION

When no one is aligned on goals for the business, there is no hope of achieving them. Departments optimize for themselves, not the business. Cross-functional alignment drives profit growth 27% faster,[6] but most teams (and their data) are locked in silos. Rival priorities mean everyone loses: Sales blames Marketing for bad leads, Marketing blames Sales for ignoring them, agencies chase awards and billable hours.

"Although marketing, sales, and finance typically attract different types of people, they share common objectives. Overcoming cultural differences is key to fostering a symbiotic relationship where all functions drive toward common goals. Strong marketing campaigns with business buy-in can drive the bottom line, leading to confidence in marketing-influenced sales revenue by Sales and marketing investment by Finance. Strengthening relationship can offset cultural differences and push all functions forward."

– **Jason Galloway (Managing Director of A&MPLIFY)**

4. Dom Nicastro, "The Martech Supergraphic Has Grown Up: 15,000-Plus," *CMSWire*, May 6, 2025.
5. "The 2025 State of Marketing Report," *HubSpot*, June 26, 2024.
6. Sarah O'Neill, "Sales and Marketing Alignment: Stats and Trends for 2023," *LXA*, June 5, 2023.

PROBLEM 2: TECH INTEGRATION CRISIS

We keep throwing tools at problems instead of solving them. Teams churn out more data, but not more insight. Only 24% of companies have fully integrated their digital investments.[7] Nearly half of marketers can't measure ROI across channels, wasting millions without visibility or attribution.[8] Without integration, real-time dashboards are impossible, and operational metrics can't be tied to EBITDA.

"KPIDeliver unifies every agency-related data point into a single source of truth. Instead of fragmented tools, marketers gain a single dashboard covering rosters, finances, scopes, efficiency, staffing, and more. This unified view directly addresses the tech integration crisis and creates shared accountability across marketing, sales, and agency teams."

– **Bruno Gralpois (Co-founder and Principal of Agency Mania Solutions)**

The outcome: Vanity metrics from marketers and agencies, frustration for executives, and a CMO caught in the middle. Yet companies with strong CFO–CMO alignment can unlock 20%–40% more financial growth[9]—a reminder that the way out of the KPI crisis isn't more numbers, it's cross-functional accountability.

7. "The CMO Survey: Despite Uncertainty, Marketing Budgets Rebound."
8. Can Ozdoruk, "Marketing ROI Statistics: 30+ Stats to Boost Your Strategy in 2025," n.d., accessed October 8, 2025.
9. "Crack the code on cross-functional leadership that aligns CFOs and CMOs," *Funnel Blog*, updated September 26, 2025.

2. WHAT THE C-SUITE REALLY WANTS TO KNOW

The C-suite doesn't care about activity. They care about EBITDA. When they ask about "key performance," they don't mean clicks, impressions, or followers. They mean the hard metrics that connect marketing to earnings.

These are the blunt questions every CMO must be ready to face and respond to.

Why are you measuring leads when what we care about is closed revenue? And I see you're celebrating email opens and followers. How does that drive revenue?

This question signals an attribution gap. Lead volume and engagement rates only matter if they convert into paying customers.

CMOs should shift the conversation toward marketing-influenced pipeline, customer lifetime value, and full-funnel tracking. Vanity metrics can play a role as early indicators, but they must always be tied back to revenue or eliminated.

Engagement is up, but sales are down. Explain.

Here, the real problem is measurement focus. Reporting on activities without linking them to outcomes erodes credibility.

The answer is to anchor reporting in a small set of core KPIs that directly predict business success, for example, MQL-to-SQL conversion, cost per acquisition, and marketing's contribution to deal velocity. Anything outside those metrics should be treated as context, not success.

Sales says your leads are bad. You say Sales won't follow up. Who's wrong?

When this question comes up, it reflects misaligned incentives and a lack of shared accountability. Both functions are wrong if they work in silos.

The solution is joint KPIs that measure collaboration rather than volume: Marketing on lead-to-opportunity conversion, Sales on response speed and follow-up discipline, and both on cost-per-acquisition and pipeline velocity.

Which agencies are actually moving the needle?

This question exposes the need for integrated martech and disciplined measurement. Without attribution, it's impossible to separate value-driving partners from cost centers.

The response should be a clear plan to audit past performance against pipeline progression, implement full-funnel attribution, and double down on high-performing partners while cutting waste.

You spend 20% of your budget on agencies. Are they aligned with our KPIs?

This points to misaligned incentives. Many agencies optimize for clicks, impressions, or awards rather than demand generation or closed deals.

CMOs should demonstrate a plan to restructure contracts: Tie compensation directly to pipeline contribution, build quarterly reviews around revenue impact, and remove agencies that can't show business results.

What happens when an agency misses its targets?

Here the board is probing governance and accountability. CMOs need to show they have teeth in their agency relationships.

That means clear performance clauses: one quarter to course-correct, after which transitions begin. When agencies are held to scrutinized KPIs such as ROAS and qualified leads, revenue can rise significantly. Without consequences, mediocrity becomes entrenched.

The outcome: CMOs who can answer in business terms—pipeline, deal velocity, EBITDA—earn trust and keep their budgets. Those who can't remain stuck in activity metrics and lose credibility fast.

3. A 90-DAY ACTION PLAN

The board doesn't want another glossy road map. They want proof that marketing can move the business. CMOs who can reframe the conversation around business outcomes and show measurable progress will secure their seat at the table.

Don't let perfect be the enemy of good. The key is to start small, move fast, and show tangible impact within 90 days.

Timeline	Days 1–30 *Internal Alignment*	Days 31–60 *Integration and Activation*	Days 61–90 *Agency Realignment*
KEY ACTIONS	• Establish KPI framework: Align shared metrics across marketing, sales, and pipeline acceleration. • Conduct data and reporting audit of marketing activities for past 12 months against pipeline progression and closed revenue. • Assess martech stack and identify integration gaps.	• Define and implement shared criteria for lead quality and sales handoff. • Hold weekly Sales–Marketing pipeline alignment meetings. • Prioritize CRM and marketing automation integration. • Implement lead scoring based on conversion probability, not engagement. • Train team to prioritize revenue impact over engagement metrics.	• Conduct agency performance review: Analyze contribution to revenue pipeline. • Restructure agency agreements to tie compensation to core KPI.s • Launch quarterly business reviews with consequences for missed targets. • Eliminate agencies unable to prove pipeline contribution. • Deploy real-time KPI dashboard accessible to the C-suite.
OUTCOMES	Present baseline findings, proposed KPI framework, and implementation timeline.	• Demonstrate improved lead quality, initial attribution results, and agency audit insights.	Show marketing's influence on EBITDA growth, improved attribution, and results from agency realignment.

The outcome: After executing this 90-day plan, CMOs can prove the new discipline they've brought to the marketing organization with credible numbers:

+ **Growth rate:** Highly aligned companies grow 19% faster and are 15% more profitable.[10]
+ **Revenue impact:** Sales–Marketing KPI alignment drives up to 208% more revenue from marketing campaigns.[11]
+ **Campaign impact:** Martech integration boosts data accuracy and utilization by 25%–30%, enabling smarter decisions and faster optimization.[12]
+ **Agency ROI:** Companies that tightly align agency KPIs to business outcomes see up to a 28% lift in agency-driven pipeline contribution within the first year and nearly a 50% longer CMO tenure.[13]

10. Phil Harrell, "A Sales Executive's Perspective on Alignment: Outdated Stereotypes, Pipeline and Revenue Goals for Marketing," *Forrester*, March 4, 2020.
11. Hannah Wesson, "Marketing and sales alignment: KPIs and integrated funnel," *CMO Alliance*, February 21, 2023.
12. "Martech Integration: A Comprehensive Guide to Unite Your Marketing Technologies," *Elevation Marketing*, June 24, 2024.
13. "What Is a KPI??" *Agency Analytics*, n.d.

CONCLUSION: FROM NOISE TO IMPACT

The age of vanity metrics is over. Impressions, clicks, and followers don't keep the lights on—revenue does. The only path forward is ruthless simplification: Ladder every metric up to EBITDA, enforce accountability across teams and agencies, and eliminate everything else. Success depends on two disciplines:

+ **Alignment:** Marketing, Sales, and agencies must align to organizational goals. No more misaligned scorecards or blame cycles. Shared accountability, or nothing.
+ **Integration:** A KPI dashboard that consolidates metrics into one source of truth. No more siloed spreadsheets. No more guesswork.

This isn't just better dashboards or cleaner data. It's credibility with the C-suite and Marketing restored as a true growth engine. And the path is clearer than most leaders think: By executing a disciplined 90-day plan, CMOs can prove impact quickly, build trust, and lay the foundation for long-term growth.

In the end, the choice is simple:

+ Align to profit.
+ Or keep chasing activity and watch your budget, and then your seat, disappear.

"By aligning all KPIs under one umbrella and offering one-click, interactive dashboards that compare actuals to budgets and targets, a KPI management system empowers teams to monitor progress against priority objectives and course-correct in real time. Marketers can and must show precisely how their programs influence pipeline, EBITDA, and customer lifetime value—information that executives demand. By eliminating guesswork and misalignment between marketing and the C-suite, fixing the KPI management crisis is a major step toward building back trust."

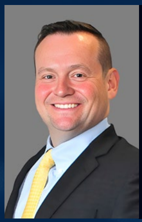
– Jamie Kim (Senior Director of A&MPLIFY)

With KPIDeliver as the single source of truth and A&MPLIFY as the transformation partner, Marketing has the means to rebuild trust with the C-suite and prove its impact where it matters most.

Discover more ways to optimize KPI management and regain C-suite confidence at A&MPLIFY.[14]

14. Alvarez & Marsal A&MPLIFY.

KEY CONTACTS



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Founded in 1983, Alvarez & Marsal is a leading global professional services firm. Renowned for its leadership, action and results, Alvarez & Marsal provides advisory, business performance improvement and turnaround management services, delivering practical solutions to address clients' unique challenges. With a worldwide network of experienced operators, world-class consultants, former regulators and industry authorities, Alvarez & Marsal helps corporates, boards, private equity firms, law firms and government agencies drive transformation, mitigate risk and unlock value at every stage of growth.

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