

# BRIDGING THE GAP WITH THROUGH-CHANNEL MARKETING AUTOMATION

In a time when localized marketing processes can serve as a company lifeline, TCMA technology distributes corporate marketing efforts with tools that enable integration, measurement and scale.

Marketers dependent upon local franchises, retailers and channels to drive revenue for their brands face a unique challenge: How to maximize sales in local markets with cohesive marketing campaigns at scale while still maintaining brand compliance. But the reality is this: Local partners may not possess the marketing chops that are present at the corporate level. Enter through-channel marketing automation, or TCMA, which allows marketers to maximize performance through managing brand assets and localizing them efficiently.

Particularly during times of upheaval and recent business challenges brought on by COVID-19, local partners—and the sales opportunities they unlock through corporate marketing efforts—are critical to companies' ability to generate revenue. **Forrester's TCMA Wave Report for Q2 2020**, an analysis of 13 providers, ranks BrandMuscle's Integrated Local Marketing Platform at the top of the list. We spoke with BrandMuscle's Richard Mendis, Chief Strategy Officer, about the benefits of TCMA, the technology's evolution over the years, how to create personalized experiences for local audiences and recommended tactics for marketers during the COVID-19 era.



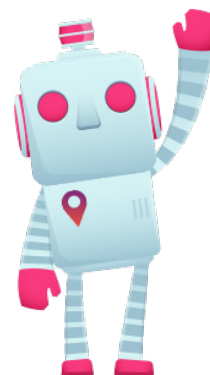
**RICHARD MENDIS**

*Chief Strategy Officer*

**BrandMuscle**

**CHIEF/  
MARKETER**

**brandmuscle**  
Amplify your brand. Unleash your channel.



**CHIEF MARKETER:** For those who aren't aware of the value that a through-channel marketing automation partner can provide for a marketing organization, give us the rundown of how it can maximize a company's performance.

**Richard Mendis:** TCMA addresses the last mile of marketing at the local and channel partner level. While marketers spend massive amounts on funds on national advertising and brand campaigns, and often provide incentives—such as co-op, MDF and SPIFFs—to encourage local partners to effectively market the brand locally, most agents, dealers, franchisees and channel partners don't have the marketing knowledge or resources at their disposal to help them execute marketing in the most impactful way.

The top pain points that are solved are: brand compliance, co-op/MDF fund management and scale. TCMA bridges the gap between national and local by helping marketers empower their local sellers—including agents, dealers, franchisees and channel partners—with the tools and resources they need to execute the brand message consistently and more effectively, in local markets at scale. This video and slides with **our customer Bobcat** is a great example.

Our annual State of Local Marketing Research identifies a 2x revenue growth opportunity when local and channel partners reach the highest level of local marketing maturity. You can download the report **here**.

**CM:** TCMA has been analyzed by Forrester since 2015, but it was a different world back then. How have clients' needs changed since that time, and what kinds of things should they be looking for in a partner today?

**RM:** Yes, we have seen a major shift over the past five years in this space. The focus has really accelerated in terms of a connected experience and measurement. The keys to look out for when shopping for a TCMA provider can be broken down into three areas:

- 1) **Integration**—How well does your platform connect brand and fund management, social, media, analytics, etc.? This doesn't necessarily mean it has to be within one connected platform. The platform can seamlessly connect with multiple different vendors that your brand wants to work with and brings to the relationship a benefit for both corporate and local marketers.
- 2) **Measurement**—Can you get access to data that helps understand the impact of your marketing and funding efforts? Be sure you have the data you need to help you measure and drive business value.
- 3) **Scale**—A TCMA platform should enable scale for your business across design, marketing, media, analytics and more. Look for the ability to set up subscriptions for packaged options for media, social, location data management, etc., that provide scale, confidence and metrics for your channel partners.

We created a **RFP template** that brands can use to help provide guidance when shopping for a provider.

## Identify gaps and discover tactics to improve your Local Marketing Maturity Score

Improving your local marketing maturity can impact revenue growth by 2x.

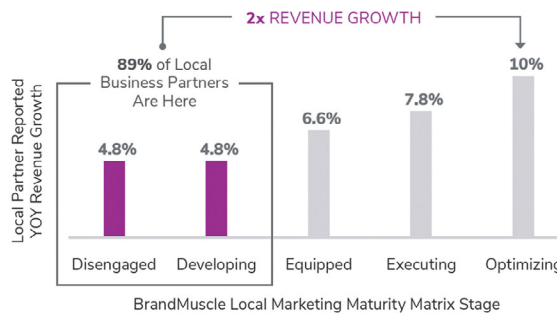
Our research of over 1,000 local marketing partners indicates a relationship between marketing maturity and business outcomes.

Local partners at the highest level of maturity demonstrate two times higher revenue growth.

The 2019 State of Local Marketing Report identifies the top trends and opportunities in local marketing.

[Learn More](#)

Local Partner Reported YOY Revenue Growth within Each Stage



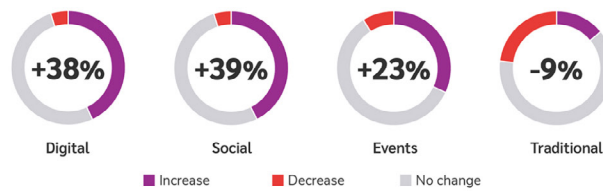
Discover your local marketing maturity in 10 minutes or less.

Our free assessment provides you with a personalized snapshot of your local marketing maturity, including:

- BrandMuscle Marketing Maturity Matrix Stage
- Top growth priorities
- Competency dimension scores
- Best practices and recommendations

[Learn More](#)

How Partners Plan to Adjust Spending



**CM:** A key benefit of using a TCMA partner is the ability to localize marketing campaigns and drive sales. What kinds of tools can local partners take advantage of to create more personalized experiences for their target markets?

**RM:** The best TCMA solutions will offer partners with varying degrees of sophistication multiple options for creating and executing more personalized experiences for their local audiences.

With brand management, partners can easily access branded assets and templates to personalize the imagery, products, messaging and offers to the extent the corporate marketer has allowed to execute their own campaigns on nearly any channel—social, traditional and web. For example, we can dynamically pull in real-time rate data for home equity rates to ensure that the most current rates are available to leverage in marketing campaigns.

Another tool is marketing execution. Partners can opt into turnkey programs that are executed on their behalf and reach out for one-on-one support with local marketing specialists to develop a media plan or place a local ad buy. For example, channel partners can upload their target audiences' addresses and automatically geo-fence their potential customers, giving them a digital direct-mail approach that provides detailed targeting at scale.

**CM:** What are some of the greatest challenges that local partners face when implementing marketing campaigns in their target markets? What are clients' biggest challenges when working with these local partners?

**RM:** Most local partners are not marketers by trade. Our State of Local Marketing survey found that 89 percent of local partners were not mature marketers. This creates a challenge of simply not knowing what you don't know. They need guidance. They need to know who to target, where they should target them, and how to know if it is working or not. Too many local marketers are not aligned with the brand strategy, or are just doing what they have always done for many years.

We have found that structured subscription programs that are either funded by corporate or provided at scale give local partners the confidence that they are doing what their peers are doing, and that they are following best practices and can be assured of some level of success. We have built recommendation engines for our local partners to be able to guide them to the right package and increase their confidence level as they choose the best subscription for their business.

**CM:** It's a serious challenge for brands to market their products during COVID-19. Given that many brands are avoiding the "hard sell" during the pandemic, how would you recommend marketing messages achieve scale while still remaining sensitive toward consumers who may be struggling on a variety of levels?

**RM:** We have found that two items are critical during these unprecedented times. First, be present on social media. We encourage brands to provide consistent updates about their employees, customers and business overall.

Provide information about whether you are open, if you require masks, etc. Letting consumers know your approach and how this has impacted your business helps relate and stay in touch. Secondly, update your location data management. This includes Google My Business, Facebook and Yelp. These listings provide critical information that consumers are counting on. For example, is your location open? Are the hours updated? Do you provide curbside pickup? Ensuring this data is accurate and changing with your business is key.

These two approaches help provide accurate information at scale and provide a sense of comfort and community.

**CM:** With in-person engagement limited during the pandemic, how has lead generation had to adapt? What are the new ways that clients are generating leads?

**RM:** Local event and sponsorships were highly-ranked tactics for local marketing and lead generation for the past five years as evidenced by our State of Local Marketing survey. Events, traditional and OOH media spend has shifted largely to digital and social and is more integrated and measurable cross channel campaigns. We recommend the following:

- **Investments in Location Listings/SEO**—complete accurate, new hours of operation and services (e.g. curbside pickup)
- **Investments in Social Media Advertising**—particularly Facebook
- **Turnkey Integrated Campaigns**—e.g. digital and direct mail executed on behalf of local partners
- **Increased Use of Rebates at POS by CPG customers**—particularly for beverage and alcohol businesses to promote trials of new products or larger quantity purchases
- **Deferred Payments and Financing**—for large ticket items, such as Bobcat

**CM:** How has the channel marketing landscape been altered the last few months? What has changed and what will need to change in 2020 and beyond?

**RM:** The biggest shift that we have seen and hope stays is that brands have started to do their planning more frequently. An annual plan can change on a dime during these times. We have seen business adapt and move to monthly strategic planning periods. This has enabled them to shift as restrictions shift, ensuring their dollars are allocated in the right places at the right times.

**CM:** How has the need for integrated technology systems within marketing organizations increased during the pandemic?

**RM:** More brands are realizing that it is impossible to quickly scale new messaging to address changes in the marketplace without technology and a strong and engaged channel of partners. Technology also brings operational efficiency at a time when budgets have been tightened and staff has been downsized.