

**MARKETING LEADERSHIP
UNDER PRESSURE**

A PERSPECTIVE SERIES FROM INVERTA | VOLUME 03

!nVerta

Every new marketing leader inherits more than a marketing team.

A practical look at understanding what you've inherited before deciding what to change.

Executive Insight

Every experienced marketing leader stepping into a new organization knows the first 90 days matter. Meet the team. Learn the business. Dig into the data. Talk to customers and sales. Understand the strategy and build relationships before making significant changes.

Experienced leaders already know what questions to ask. The harder part is understanding the answers in the context of this specific organization.

A new marketing leader inherits far more than a team. They inherit planning decisions, technology, reporting, processes, metrics, relationships, priorities, and ways of working that have developed over years. They also inherit assumptions about buyers, performance, and how the organization gets work done.

Many of those assumptions may still serve the business well. Others may reflect decisions that made sense when they were made but deserve another look as buyers, technology, markets, and business priorities evolve.

The first 90 days offer something a leader will never have again in this role: fresh perspective. Experience gives them the pattern recognition to know what to examine. Being new gives them enough distance to see the organization with fewer assumptions about how things are supposed to work.

That perspective does not last. The first few months are the best time to understand why the organization works the way it does before making significant changes.

Fresh perspective changes what leaders notice.

Marketing organizations continually assess performance and evolve how they work. Over time, they also build institutional knowledge. Teams know why certain decisions were made. They understand the constraints behind a process. They remember which approaches have already been tried, and why certain metrics became important along the way.

That context is valuable. But familiarity can also make it harder to question decisions or practices that have been in place for a long time.

A leader entering from outside sees the same organization without that history behind it. They can ask why a process works the way it does, what assumptions the team is making about the buyer, and whether the problem a metric was originally built to solve still exists.

The goal is not to question everything. It is to understand which assumptions still make sense and which ones are worth revisiting.

Two kinds of perspective

Fresh perspective — comes from the leader. Experience helps them know what to look for, and being new helps them see things others may take for granted. That perspective changes as they become part of the organization.

Outside perspective — comes from someone independent of the organization. They can ask questions, gather input, and see patterns without being part of the reporting structure or leadership dynamics.

Used together, they can help a new leader build a more complete picture of how the organization actually works.



OBSERVATION FROM THE FIELD

When we begin working with a new marketing leader, one of our first steps is often a marketing functional assessment. Through surveys and interviews, we gather data and perspectives from across marketing and its key stakeholders to understand how the organization actually operates.

Those conversations can surface perspectives a new leader wouldn't otherwise hear during the first few months. Teams are still building trust. Relationships are still forming. Different stakeholders may see the same challenge very differently based on where they sit.

The value comes from bringing those views together: what the leader sees, what the team experiences, what the data shows, and what customers experience. That combination creates a more complete picture than any single source provides alone, and a stronger foundation for the roadmap that follows.

Organizations need to work across teams

A new marketing leader will naturally look at how each function is performing. The harder part is understanding whether those teams are working together in a way that produces the result the business expects.

Campaigns may be launching on time. Content may be performing. Paid media may be hitting efficiency targets. Marketing operations may be producing clean reports. Sales may be following up as expected. Each measure tells the leader something useful.

But strong results from individual teams do not always add up to a strong overall result. Teams have their own priorities, responsibilities, and measures of success. Business outcomes depend on how well those pieces connect across the customer's actual experience, not on how any one piece performs alone.

Individual scorecards rarely show those problems.

Questions about how the work connects:

- Where does this initiative's audience overlap with another team's audience, and does anyone know that?
- Who's accountable for what happens after the handoff, not just for the handoff itself?
- If this initiative succeeded, would every team's dashboard show it, and would that match the business result?
- Where do marketing and sales currently disagree about why something did or didn't move forward?
- Are there important parts of the process that no one clearly owns?



OBSERVATION FROM THE FIELD

One pattern we frequently uncover in assessments: different functions can each demonstrate strong performance while the business outcome still falls short. In many of these organizations, the problem is often not one team's performance. It is what happens when responsibility passes from one team to another.

Where does information get lost, where is it unclear who should act next, and where does the customer's experience break down across those boundaries?

These gaps become especially valuable when different sources tell different stories. Marketing may see one cause for stalled pipeline while sales sees another. Leadership may identify a strategic priority that isn't reflected in where teams are investing their time. The data may point to a performance issue that customers experience very differently. **The most valuable findings are often where those views don't agree.**

Looking across the system turns individual measures and perspectives into a shared understanding of what's actually driving the result.

Look beyond the marketing dashboard

A new marketing leader should dig into the reports, but the reports are only one part of the picture. They also need to understand what Sales is seeing, what is happening with pipeline, and what customers are experiencing.

Which marketing activity is actually leading to Sales conversations? Which opportunities are moving forward, and which are getting stuck? What does win/loss data tell you about why? Marketing and Sales may have different answers, and those differences are worth understanding.

Following one real buyer or account through that path adds another kind of evidence: what first created interest, what built confidence, when sales got involved, and where momentum slowed or the experience got harder than it needed to be.

The customer's actual experience gives context to what the numbers are showing. The data helps determine whether that experience is an isolated example or a broader pattern. Team and stakeholder perspectives help explain what may be happening underneath both. The value comes from bringing marketing performance, sales performance, customer experience, and organizational perspective together, and paying particular attention to where they disagree.

Understand the problem before deciding what to change

Experienced leaders recognize patterns quickly. That helps them know where to look. But the same symptom can have very different causes from one organization to another.

Stalled pipeline might point to targeting, positioning, buying-group engagement, sales follow-up, process, or several factors working together. A reporting issue may reveal a data problem, an ownership gap, or different definitions of success across teams. The first visible problem gives a leader somewhere to investigate. It doesn't always tell them where to intervene.

This is where combining those sources matters. A problem that looks obvious from one angle can look very different once performance data, customer experience, team insight, and the dependencies between marketing and sales are considered together.

Building enough shared understanding to make deliberate choices about what deserves attention first is the goal, not waiting for every question to be answered. That's what turns an assessment into a roadmap.

Questions worth asking

Before making significant changes, ask:

- Which assumptions about this business am I still validating?
- Where do Marketing, Sales, and leadership disagree about what is causing the problem?
- Does our reporting tell us how the business is performing, or mostly how individual teams are performing?
- Can we connect what the data tells us with what customers actually experience?
- Where does momentum slow across the buying process, and what appears to be driving it?
- Which parts of the current operating model still serve the business well, and which may need to evolve?
- Where are the data, customer feedback, and team perspectives telling us different things?
- Do we understand what is causing the problem before we decide how to fix it?

The value here is prioritization: knowing what actually deserves attention first.

Closing perspective

Every new marketing leader inherits more than a marketing team. They inherit years of decisions, assumptions, planning models, technology investments, reporting structures, relationships, and ways of working that shaped the organization long before they arrived.

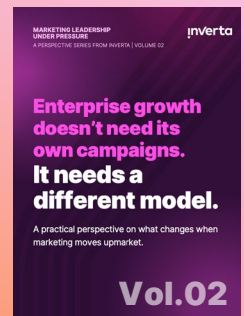
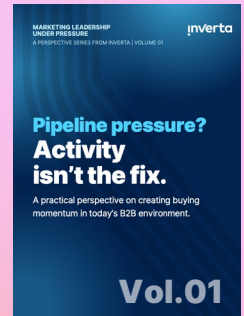
Experience helps a senior leader recognize patterns. Being new gives them a temporary opportunity to examine those patterns with fresh perspective. But fresh perspective has limits.

A new leader's perspective changes quickly. As relationships form and they become immersed in the day-to-day work, some of the things that stood out at first begin to feel normal.

An outside perspective can add another useful view. Someone who is not part of the reporting structure or organizational history may hear different things, question different assumptions, and help a leader determine whether an issue is isolated or more widespread.

Fresh perspective helps a leader see the organization differently. Outside perspective helps them see what they can't easily see alone. The goal is to understand what is working, what is not, and what needs attention first.

As we explored in [Volume 01](#), buying momentum is shaped by the experiences customers have with an organization. In [Volume 02](#), we explored the operating model that supports those experiences. Before a leader can improve either, they need a clear view of how those pieces work together in the organization they've inherited.



About Inverta

Helping marketing leaders think more clearly under pressure

Marketing Leadership Under Pressure is Inverta's ongoing perspective series exploring the real challenges marketing leaders face as they navigate growth, complexity, and change.

Through practical perspectives, proven consulting experience, and modern revenue operating models, Inverta helps marketing organizations make better decisions under pressure.

Because when marketing leaders think more clearly under pressure, they make better decisions. And better decisions create better business outcomes.



3553 West Chester Pike
Newtown Square, PA 19073
Tel. 1.866.780.5955
achieve@inverta.com

[Inverta.com](https://inverta.com)

WOMEN
OWNED

inverta