Shared responsibility: Unlocking the CIO and CMO Partnership.

Any strong partnership plays to the strengths of each side. How the CIO and CMO work together to build better customer experiences is no different.

It's time to rethink the roles.

With any experience, there's more than meets the eye. It's no different for the CIO and CMO partnership. A simple comparison assigns art to the visionary CMO. It attributes science to the hard-wired CIO. But like any strong partnership, each brings out the skills of the other. A CMO that digs into their technology understands what's powering the customer journey. And a CIO that's tuned in to customer experiences can dream up innovative applications to make them better.

In today's world, there's no denying the importance of digital. To deliver the customer journey, companies need the right technology. That's where the CIO and CMO partnership becomes so important. Nearly 60% of CIOs meet with their CMO counterpart on a daily or weekly basis. And it makes for better business. The same study showed 95% of CIOs say partnering with the CMO improves their organization's customer experience, while 93% say it promotes innovation.

Together, CMOs and CIOs are taking on a changing world. "Despite the enormous weight on our shoulders, CIOs are stepping up to the challenge," says Cynthia Stoddard, senior vice president and chief information officer at Adobe. "We've embraced our enhanced responsibilities as an opportunity to further collaborate and succeed in today's new digital-first reality."

But it's easier said than done. Despite the value of bringing together these two perspectives, it's not a relationship currently achieved by most brands. Tensions around shared responsibilities have kept these roles apart.

Unpacking the personas.

Building a partnership can feel uncomfortable—especially when you don't know where to start. Whether you are a CMO or a CIO, knowing the goals and challenges of your counterpart can begin to bridge the gap.

Adobe has helped countless CMOs and CIOs transform their businesses. We've noticed innovative ways that leaders are blending art and science into their roles. And working together on common goals.

The CMO just got technical

We've seen how important the customer journey is to the CMO. Many are constantly looking to improve by giving customers unique, personalized experiences. But it's not just about the vision. CMOs are digging into martech and commerce, using automation tools, content management, and data to fuel the experiences they're creating.

Seeking positive customer reactions, many CMOs are motivated by customer acquisition, conversions, and loyalty. When expectations are exceeded—and new or existing customers are engaged—they feel accomplished. But many are conscious of the numbers too. They're measuring both lead generation and conversion metrics,

along with the efficiency of customer engagement through cost per acquisition. The goal of many CMOs is to increase sales and revenue to keep the business growing. Using creativity to build innovative experiences, they're striving to stand out against competitors.

The challenge lies in the technology. To build better experiences, CMOs are looking for technology to integrate across platforms and work with legacy data and systems. But we've noticed that they also need access to organizational resources—the people, skillsets, and budgets to implement and run new technology.

Fortunately, these challenges align with the strengths of the CIO.

The CIO understands the journey

While CMOs are focusing on what the customer experience looks like, CIOs manage the right technology to make it happen. But it's not all integrations and capabilities. Managing the technology means CIOs are thinking like the customer and creating intuitive experiences. With less friction, they're keeping customers engaged. But this takes creative problem-solving to get right. Faced with a unique set of regulatory, resource, and technical constraints, CIOs are creating novel solutions. Many are adding artificial intelligence and machine learning to make systems work more efficiently while also keeping them secure, compliant, and cost-effective.

CIOs know that technology is always evolving. When it's out with the old and in with the new, they're making it happen. This means replacing legacy systems with new technology. To keep up with customer expectations, many CIOs are supporting experiences on new cloud-based and mobile channels. But they're also managing

the business. Many CIOs measure success by deploying new products on time and within budget, decreasing costs and increasing ROI where they can. All while maintaining existing technology that both keeps the customer experience going and maintains customer engagement with high CSAT and NPS scores.

The CIO is not without challenges. Honoring the trust that customers place on their systems while innovating with new technology—that balance is tricky. And it takes organizational resources. Like the CMO, we've seen that CIOs need the right people, skillsets, and budget to achieve their goals. But conflicting priorities and shifting directions can make it difficult for them to align the right technology to the business. Many are navigating resistance to change and educating other teams to build trust in digital systems—all while keeping security top of mind.

In a highly digital world, partnering with the CMO can help make cultural shifts happen.

Common ground is closer than you think.

The CIO and CMO have different views of how responsibility is shared. But we've noticed the roles have complementary goals. For example, CIOs and CMOs both aim to provide better customer experiences. It's at the heart of what they do. Both are contributing to growing the business. Whether it's through increased revenue, gaining new customers, or keeping those they have, many CMOs and CIOs are seeking to boost engagement. When it comes to strategy, we've seen how content management, analytics, marketing

automation, and commerce can be central to achieving their goals. If that means adding to their existing technology stack, many CMOs and CIOs are both in the room considering their options. And most important to the partnership, we've seen how both can be willing to compromise when it comes to decision-making.

Many CIOs and CMOs are willing to take their time—during the early stages of bringing in new technology, that is. When purchasing their next solution, they're both willing to wait if it means gaining the right capabilities to make better experiences.

The same goes for implementation. Many are willing to compromise on the speed of setting up new technology if it means it will work seamlessly with the rest of their tech stack.

Even where the CMO and CIO aren't willing to compromise, we've noticed that there's still opportunity for collaboration. For example, many CIOs are less willing to budge on support or technical requirements. But many CMOs are more lenient in these areas and can take the lead from their technical counterpart. The reverse is also true. While many CMOs will stand firm on the budget for new technology and the business requirements it will need to support, many CIOs are more willing to follow the CMO's lead.

Technology now plays a major role in the customer experience.

" The CIO has to get out of the backroom and into the customer-facing applications and physical footprint that they have as a business."

Vineet Mehra
CMO, Walgreens

Mehra has used this partnership to understand the experience-based technology customers have come to expect. "The modern CMO also needs to be fluent in data architecture and technology to be truly cutting edge and build and manage experience effectively."

Collaboration leads to more informed, meaningful decisions. It also allows the CIO and CMO to advocate together when the rest of the C-suite gets involved. This dynamic has already shown its benefits.

Bill VanCuren, CIO of NCR Corporation, works closely with the senior vice president of corporate marketing, Marija Zivanovic-Smith. "In IT, we generally work in the background, keeping business applications and infrastructure operating as seamlessly as possible. Marketing helps us shift that narrative by highlighting the critical role IT plays internally," says VanCuren. "Working together, we can shine a light on IT and demonstrate the meaningful value it brings to our organization while also helping marketing spread that message externally."
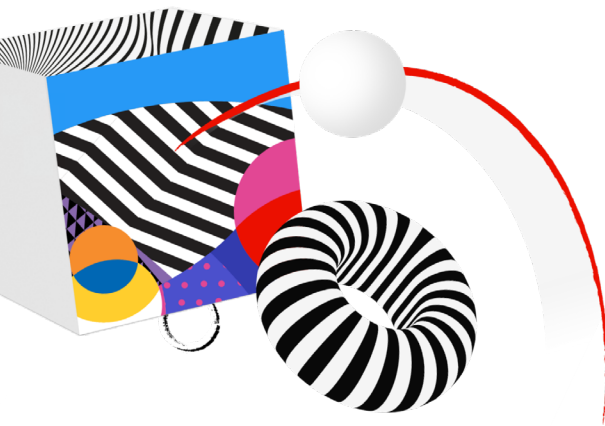
New tech in lockstep.

Building a partnership doesn't happen all at once. It takes constant collaboration. Through working closely with CMOs and CIOs, Adobe has seen how each stage in considering new technology can be a give and take. Learn from the leaders on how they've found a balance and brought art and science together from both sides to build better customer experiences.

Discovering and scoping new technology.

New technology allows CIOs and CMOs to create better customer experiences. But they need to know their options first. With marketers as core users of this technology, the CMO often leads. That's not to say the CIO isn't key to decision-making.

CMO role: Oversees marketing team on specific needs.
CIO role: Oversees IT team on technical requirements.

"When face-to-face interactions went on pause, sales leaders had to rethink engagement models and build relationships digitally. The company is now exploring ways for artificial intelligence to measure engagement, as well as augmented reality for creating new customer experiences. Our CIO was quick to assign a cross-functional taskforce across marketing, sales, and IT to evaluate available technologies."

Amy Hu
Vice President and Co-Head of Marketing,
New York Life Company

Exploring capabilities and vendors.

Technology is only as useful as its capabilities. And how well it supports both technical and marketing goals. At this stage, many CMOs and CIOs combine talents to envision the customer experience and find the right technology to make it happen.

CMO role: Oversee marketing team exploration.
CIO role: Oversee IT team exploration.

"The maturity and value of martech tools is increasing exponentially and impacts everything from customer experience to products and services, to operations and even employee engagement. The CMO and CIO need to lead the way by working together to drive change through behavior-based marketing and selling tools, developing talent strategies, and identifying partners who can provide the skills and capabilities in these new emerging areas that are so critical to growth."

Shade Vaughn
CMO, Capgemini North America

Evaluating technology and making recommendations.

Evaluating technology requires insight from all angles. And collaboration helps account for both the art and science of customer experience—from the CMO, CIO, and their respective teams.

CMO role: Lead the budget.
CIO role: Lead the technical review.

"We now think about privacy by design. We understand the importance of an end-to-end data architecture. And where our modeling capabilities meet our creative instincts, we are getting into the next level of sophistication, combining math and creativity. I couldn't do any of that without my partnership with our CIO. Things that even a year ago we thought would take five to 10 years we are now accomplishing in record times."

Allison Dew
CMO, Dell
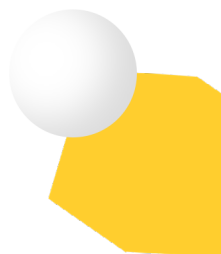
Developing a business case.

Determining the right technology for the business is no small feat. But collaborating early on makes sure the technology can not only support but enhance the experience journey. If any requirements aren't met at this stage, speed is often compromised for quality.

CMO role: Confirm that the preferred solution meets the business needs.
CIO role: Check on security requirements and integration into the existing tech stack.

"Over the past year, CIOs have been able to further improve digital customer experiences, but these experiences have also become more complex. Moving forward, CIOs need to think about the integrated tools and frameworks necessary to help their organizations effectively capture customer data, convert that data into valuable insights, and utilize those insights to shape a personalized and enhanced customer experience."

**Cynthia Stoddard**
CIO, Adobe

Building consensus.

New technology breathes new potential into a digital business. But to bring about this change, everyone needs to see its value. When the CIO and CMO collaborate up to this point, they can show this value together to get buy-in from the CEO and CFO. And exceed their goals for digital experiences.

CMO and CIO role: Demonstrate to the CEO the technology's value to the business.

"Digital technology needs to be tailored to the right expectations. Every company thinking about their digital DNA has to pivot. They have to think about things from a consumer-centric perspective."

Shantanu Narayen
CEO, Adobe
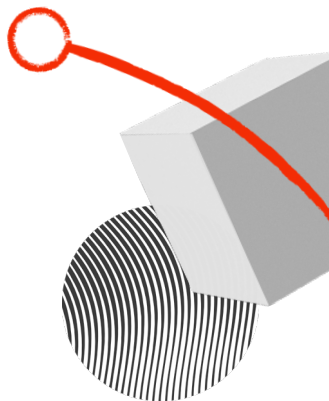
Making the decision.

The right technology empowers businesses to blend art and science. But only when they're integrated properly. Before a decision is made, any implementation or security concerns typically get addressed. If the CIO is brought into the conversation earlier, these concerns become a thing of the past.

CMO role: Make the case to the C-suite for the preferred technology.
CIO role: Address implementation and security concerns, pushing back the decision if needed.

"IT and marketing will certainly 'co-create' experiences in 2021. It will be very hard for companies to succeed if their marketing and technology teams are still operating in silos. It's essential for these two functions to partner together to ensure the right technology is in place to scale personalized customer communication across offline and digital channels."

Cynthia Stoddard
CIO, Adobe

Navigating renewals.

With technology constantly changing, renewals carry more weight. And they often require a more complex strategy. Both the CMO and CIO have important insights, and they understand the art of creating better customer experiences. The CIO is a valuable resource at this stage, weaving new capabilities into their existing strategy.

For many businesses, this is already happening. At least three-quarters of CIOs feel their role has expanded, their responsibilities increased, and their influence on leadership decisions has grown.

CMO role: Determine how marketing can improve the customer experience through new technology.
CIO role: Lead the renewal strategy by considering the value of IT supporting the capabilities of new technology.
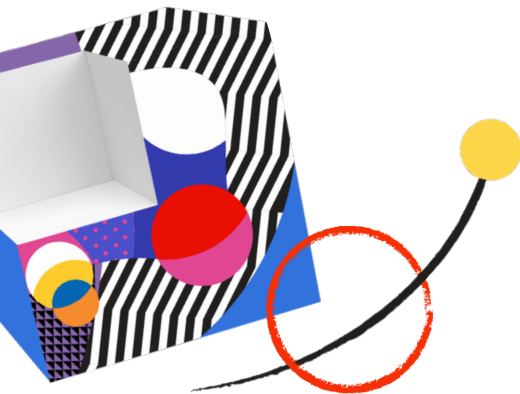
Adobe can help

The CIO and CMO partnership is only as successful as your technology. Explore how Adobe helps businesses create customer-focused digital experiences.

Learn more

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