2017 ROUNDTABLE REPORT

Trends in Investment Marketing & Sales

Key Insights from our Private Roundtable Event

In May, 2017, we hosted our second annual Investment Marketing Roundtable. Senior marketers and sales executives shared insights about how they approach sales and marketing. The 15 participants come from a range of large, medium and boutique asset management firms. The report covers:

- Client-centric vs. investment-centric marketing strategies
- Account-based strategies for growth and retention
- How the industry can improve marketing and sales effectiveness

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This was our second opportunity to meet with 15 marketers from small, medium and large investment management firms. These marketers have made substantial progress since last year, building out marketing stacks, building better analytics and improving their ability to develop targeted programs. While last year, the focus was mostly on operational issues, this year, the marketers talked more about their strategies for helping drive revenue. They're still hampered by a heavy focus on tactical execution, and in some cases, are also hampered by unrealistic internal expectations.

> *"The industry is gradually becoming more client-centric."*

Overall, my impression is that the industry is gradually becoming more customer-centric in their focus, rather than being all about product. But they still have a ways to go on this front.
At the same time, these marketers are struggling with a number of common challenges. For example:

- Customer and prospect engagement with marketing content is not where they want it to be.
- Expectations for campaign results are sometimes unrealistic.
- Marketers often lack access to the systems and data that can help them evaluate and optimize the effectiveness of campaigns.

Executive Summary

In May 2017, I moderated the second annual asset management marketing round table hosted by Synthesis Technology.

This was a private roundtable with 15 senior marketers from a range of investment management firms. The participant firms included boutique asset managers, medium-sized regional and global investment firms, and 3 of the top 20 global asset managers. AUM for the firms represented ranges from $20 Billion to more than $2 Trillion.

All of the participants serve multiple channels including institutional (trusts, foundations, pensions, corporations, etc.), intermediary and direct retail advisor channels.

The goal of the event was to bring together experienced marketers and give us an open forum in which to learn from each other. Topics we discussed included:

- Customer-centric versus investment-centric marketing
- Marketing strategy in terms of branding, thought leadership and sales support
- Lead generation, nurturing and account-based marketing
- Marketing alignment with sales, compliance, and brand marketing
- Marketing technology, budgets and the very painful buying process
- Analytics and tracking ROI

A big thank you to Synthesis Technology who sponsored and hosted the roundtable. This is the second annual event, and we're already looking forward to next year's gathering.

This report covers some of the topics addressed in the round table. But we don't have space to cover everything here. So Synthesis will be blogging on some of the other topics we discussed. You can find these articles at www.synthesistechnology.com/roundtable.

Event Takeaways

Here are some of my takeaways from the event:

Firms are moving toward a more customer-centric focus.
Roughly half the firms have moved to a more customer-centric focus, instead of focusing their content exclusively on investment products. The firms that are investment-centric tend to focus on the "nitty-gritty" aspects of their investment strategies. But this doesn't always serve the customer well. One marketer says she constantly asks her team, "What does that mean to the customer? How are they going to get interested? Why do they care about that?"

The firms that are moving to a more customer-centric approach are focusing on those key questions. They're realizing that their best revenue opportunities come from existing clients. So they're becoming more relationship-focused. Interestingly, this is also motivating the product teams. As they learn more about the customers' goals, they're getting more excited to attend client meetings and communicate in a more customer-centric manner. It will take time for firms to fully make this shift, but in the end, the customer will be the beneficiary; and it will allow firms to differentiate more effectively.

Different channels respond differently.
Marketers are realizing that institutional, intermediary and advisor clients respond very differently to marketing outreach. So they're beginning to find ways to tweak their programs to maximize response. In the course of the discussions, I noticed much more collaboration with Sales than we saw last year. This is a natural result of a firm moving to a customer-centric focus.

All of the firms struggle to different degrees with finding ways to market through intermediary channels. Fiduciary rules adopted by these intermediary firms continue to restrict how the marketing team promotes its products.

Alignment with Sales has improved.
We did not spend as much time talking about sales/marketing alignment this year, but it was clear to me that the firms are all in various stages of improving the relationships between the two departments. Marketing appears to be working more closely with Sales to plan content and campaigns, especially in the firms that are moving to a customer-centric focus.

Alignment with Compliance is great.
The entire group strongly agreed that they have great alignment with their Compliance teams. Most of them have Compliance on speed dial and have a good working relationship. They're figuring out how to collaborate to develop marketing programs that meet the goals of both Compliance and Marketing. In many cases, Compliance has become Marketing's ally when confronting unreasonable requests from the Sales team.

Alignment with Corporate Marketing…not so much…
Most of the marketers, even at smaller firms, are struggling to align with the corporate marketing and branding groups. In some cases, the asset management business is part of a large commercial bank. This creates conflicts in brand identity and messaging. In other cases, there are cross-border conflicts.

Marketing is focusing attention on client retention.
While our participants don't have direct responsibility for client retention, they do provide content to support the departments responsible for client services. In nearly all cases, the marketers are providing content to support those departments, and in most cases, the content they're creating is very specialized and client-centric.

Marketing Automation
Nearly all the participants are now using marketing automation, and it is integrated with their CRM. However, most do not have full visibility into the client lifecycle in the CRM. This is severely hampering marketers' ability to evaluate the effectiveness of their campaigns and improve the ROI on marketing investments. The problems appear to be tied to enterprise implementations of CRM. Line-of-business marketing needs are not being considered when functional requirements are drawn up. Enterprise-level implementations end up diluting the tools so much that they become almost useless at the tactical level. This issue represents a opportunity for small and medium sized firms to differentiate their marketing while the large firms focus on efficiency at the cost of effectiveness.

Account-based marketing is a new frontier.
Marketers are optimizing their strategies to make the most impact to revenue. All of them agreed that the best way to do this would be to focus just outside the top 20% of producers and try to move those to become part of the top 20%. Account-based strategies are still foreign to this group, so we talked a bit about how to shift their approach and target at key accounts. This will be a challenging learning curve, but promises to deliver a more significant ROI than traditional mass marketing methods.

About The Author

Candyce Edelen
Roundtable Moderator, CEO of PropelGrowth

Candyce Edelen has 25+ years of experience in launching and marketing technology companies, including 16 years in the financial services industry. She has founded five companies, including PropelGrowth. Her background includes product/company launches, go-to-market strategy, and building/training sales and marketing teams. In addition to her extensive marketing background, she also has a strong background in sales. Over her career, she has trained more than 1,000 sales people in solution selling.

As the managing partner at PropelGrowth, Candyce lends her expertise to companies that serve the financial industry. She helps clients design and execute effective go-to-market strategies that leverage the latest approaches in marketing and sales 2.0 to help drive revenue. Since 2007, she's been helping financial industry participants develop and execute revenue-centric content marketing and thought leadership programs that support a solution sales approach. She also has expertise in aligning marketing and sales processes with customer buying cycles to maximize close rates for complex sales.

Candyce also regularly produces research about the state of financial services and financial technology marketing. She writes articles about industry trends for her blog and several trade publications.

Introduction

This event was one of the most fun round tables I've had the pleasure to moderate. The participants were open and enthusiastic to learn from and encourage one another. We discussed many shared challenges. Last year, one of the participants laughingly described the session as "half learning, half group therapy." This year was no different.

After the event, one participant commented, "I learned that pretty much everyone is in the same boat in terms of ROI and budget wise. Sales and marketing alignment as well. I also learned different technology that was available, and what other firms are using." Another said she appreciates now having a group of people she can call to bounce ideas off, because she knows they're facing the same issues. She said, "now I know I am not a unicorn by myself anymore."

I talked to most of the participants at a cocktail party after the event, and it seemed that everyone was able to take away ideas to improve their effectiveness. That was our goal.

This report covers portions of the discussion and findings from the event. You can find additional articles about the event at www.synthesistechnology/roundtable. Synthesis will be adding articles to this site on a regular basis over the next few months, so I encourage you to subscribe.

We look forward to doing a similar event next year, so we can continue learning from each other. If you're interested in participating next year, you can sign up at http://www.synthesistechnology.com/2018-investment-marketing-roundtable/.

Event Agenda

The round table was a full-day event, allowing the group to dig deep into the topics. The topics included:

- Creating a Customer-Centric Marketing and Sales Process
- Sales/Marketing/Compliance Alignment
- Designing your Technology Stack
- Measuring Effectiveness/ROI
- Marketing Department Budget Pressure

Confidentiality

To protect confidentiality and allow a free-flowing discussion, we agreed to maintain anonymity for the round table participants. So in this report the only quotes that identify speakers are comments from the event sponsors, John Toepfer and Emilie Totten – respectively, the CEO and head of marketing for Synthesis Technology.

A big thank you is owed to Synthesis Technology for hosting this event. It's rare that marketers from competing firms get to sit down together in a group and talk about their craft. I'm already excitedly waiting for next year's meeting.

Opening comments from Emilie Totten

Over the past few years, we've seen a growing desire from our clients to learn how other asset managers are approaching today's most pressing sales and marketing challenges. In response, we created this annual roundtable event to provide investment marketers with a unique opportunity to share war stories and learn from peers. It's been a joy and an honor to partake in these discussions with extremely talented marketing and sales professionals, and I've personally learned a great deal. I want to thank the participants for all of the valuable input and feedback on this year's and future meeting agendas. I am looking forward to hosting many more!

Client-Centric vs. Investment-Centric

We started the day by discussing differences between being customer-centric and investment- or product-centric. Roughly half the participants said their firms tend to be investment-centric, while the other half are focused on being more customer-centric. But the trend appears to be moving toward a more client-centric approach.

Firms that are investment-centric tend to let investment teams drive content. The messaging focuses on their investment strategies. One participant summarized this approach, "We're definitely an investment-centric culture. It comes through in the way we talk about our strategies ... which was always nitty gritty about the process, because the investment teams are driving that content." Another participant pointed out the problems with that approach. She said, "We were very product-centric. It was all about the investment process. But people don't care about that. Everybody's got a core bond fund. Everybody's got a large cap value fund. Everybody's already got all this stuff, so what makes you different?"

> *"We were very product-centric. It was all about the investment process. But people don't care about that."*

All of the participants are trying to get their organizations to move to a more customer-centric approach for both marketing and sales. They're beginning to focus more on the "why" and less on the "what." They're asking why a client would be interested in their products and services and focusing their messaging around the answers. One marketer said she's constantly challenging her colleagues, asking, "What does that mean to the customer? How are they going to get interested? Why do they care about that?"

Some of the firms have made more progress in developing a customer-centric mindset than others. For example, one marketer says her group does a lot of business with unions. They try to think the way those customers would think and prioritize what's important to this audience. They're even extending that to thinking through the services they use, making sure they're purchasing services from unionized companies. "Even when we are doing a conference or something, we have to make sure that the shipments are going through a union... like through UPS. We have to make sure everything is union-organized."

Some of the firms are currently working with consultants and hiring new management team members to help them become more customer-centric. Others are trying reduce the involvement portfolio managers have in messaging. For example, a mid-tier bank marketer said, "We have shifted to removing the portfolio management teams from being so integral to the messaging. Because who really wants to go through a 90 page fixed income document? Nobody other than the portfolio manager can explain it. I'm getting them to understand that content [like that] means nothing to a non-fixed-income [expert]."

But the portfolio manager doesn't necessarily need to be cut out of the process in order for a firm to become customer-centric. One marketer said their firm has been shifting from an investment-centric to client-centric approach over the past few years. They've realized that their best revenue opportunities come from existing clients. So they're becoming more relationship-focused. This has changed their portfolio managers' mindset. Now, the portfolio managers are "more excited to come into meetings than they used to be. They're happy to meet and build those relationships with the clients," she said.

But it's not always a smooth road, and old habits die hard. Asset management marketers often don't get direct access to customers. Instead, the feedback is filtered through distribution and sales teams. One marketer says when these teams come to her for content, "my first question is always, why? Who is it for? How are they using it? What do they care about? What are their pain points?".

> *"Sales is not our customer, Sales is our partner."*

She says often the sales team asks for one thing, when another approach would be more effective. "In reality we could be solving that problem in a better way by asking a few questions and learning more about what's driving that customer." She says this shift is proving difficult, because it's hard to get the teams to think about problems differently. She's seeing better success when onboarding new distribution teams and new business leaders. "If I can get in there first, [and influence them] before they start down another path, we're able to be more customer centric.".

Customer-Centric Sales and Support

Firms are struggling to keep the sales approach customer-centric because of the way their businesses are structured. Institutional customers often hear from multiple sales people from the same firm, and this can be confusing. Each sales person carries a bank business card, leaving the customer to figure out who to call for a particular question or request. One participant hopes her firm will eventually provide clients with a single point of contact, who then does the work internally to figure out who can answer the question or address the need. This is an important point and the next step to making the firms more customer-centric.

Who is the Customer?

To develop customer-centric marketing, a firm first has to answer a very critical question…Who really is the customer that Marketing should be targeting? The answer to this question will shape everything that comes out of marketing. But it's not a simple answer. Each firm has multiple audiences they need to target, and they haven't always gotten this right. One participant deadpanned, "In a regulated company, sometimes the customer's believed to be FINRA."

In some firms, marketers say Sales is their client. One marketer commented "In places where there's a very strong CEO or a very strong management team, it feels like that's who the customer is. Will this please him? Will it fly past him?" When a marketer has to navigate through this type of influencer, it's much more difficult to focus on the customer.

Some firms say Marketing's client is Sales. So the functions of the department revolve around meeting requests from Sales, often with little insight into what the customer really needs.

One firm got around that problem by recognizing, "Sales is not our customer, Sales is our partner." This marketer said re-thinking the relationship has led to a huge shift in culture in their firm, "and it's a positive culture, because they're no longer telling us what to deliver, they're partnering with us to have the conversations." She said this has helped them make sure they know who they're targeting, and can have conversations about collateral requests, discussing who it's for, what questions it should answer, and why the client should care. But not every team has reached that point.

Institutional vs. Intermediary vs. Retail Clients

Even when the customer is well-defined, there are still thorny issues to confront because every firm has multiple channels. All of the marketers at the round table serve more than one customer base. They have institutional clients, investment advisors, consultants, intermediaries and a few end-client wealthy investors. Each of these audiences have different needs.

The different channels respond very differently to marketing outreach.

Institutional clients rarely respond to email. They're listening to their consultants. So firms need to target the consultants. One marketer said her firm is looking deeper into this channel, trying to uncover how the buying process works with consultants, identify who the key influencers at consulting firms, get them into the CRM, and figure out how to reach them.

In contrast, the firm's investment advisors are more likely to engage, but they're not always considered in the marketing strategy. One marketer commented, "this is kind of a cliché, but there really should be room at the table for the advisor."

> *"Institutional clients rarely respond to email. They're listening to their consultants."*

One of the marketers has been going through a global exercise to evaluate marketing materials. She said the wealth management team is "all about the richness and the feel, not about the content, which shocks me." These wealth managers are interested in the brand, the richness of the presentation, the packaging. In contrast, she says salespeople on the institutional side, "don't care what the branding looks like, as long as the content is very focused on what the client is requesting."

One of the largest firms in the round table is struggling to translate a high-touch institutional heritage into a retail environment. They started asking themselves, "what are three reasons why financial advisors care to take a call from our firm?" This helped them boil down the value proposition and has guided their messaging, content and sales efforts. But they're still figuring out how to scale the level of engagement. They can't provide the same kind of high-touch attention to advisors that they're used to giving wholesalers.

Geography and culture also need to be considered. Most of the marketers in our group support some level of cross-border marketing. Participants from the larger, global firms run into the most significant challenges. They're dealing with differences in customer expectations, customs, and values; different regulations; and different expectations internally from the various country offices. This makes being customer-centric even more challenging.

Alignment Between Marketing and Other Groups

This year, we discussed the issue of alignment more broadly than last year. We started with Sales/Marketing alignment, and then covered Compliance/Marketing alignment. The big surprise came when we expanded to talk about "Marketing/Marketing alignment." That third area seems to be the most challenging today.

Alignment with Sales has improved.

We did not spend as much time talking about sales/marketing alignment this year, but it was clear to me that the firms are all in various stages of improving the relationships between the two departments. This is especially true in firms that are taking a more customer-centric approach. Marketing appears to be working more closely with Sales to plan content and campaigns. However, these marketers still struggle with limited or no insight into the customer's buying process after a lead is passed to Sales.

In some cases, Marketing has no access to customer records in the CRM. In other cases, the CRM has been implemented without considering Marketing's needs. As a consequence, marketers get almost NO insight into the impact of their marketing programs on driving sales. This problem is endemic across the industry, particularly in larger firms, and it has a significant negative effect on marketing ROI. Marketers can't accurately evaluate the effectiveness of campaigns or know what to optimize if they can't accurately evaluate the impact on sales.

Alignment with Compliance is great.

The entire group strongly agreed that they have great alignment with their Compliance teams. Most of them have Compliance on speed dial and have a good working relationship. Many say their Compliance teammates are extremely accessible, even if they're not located in the same geographic area.

Marketing and Compliance are collaborating earlier in the messaging and planning process to develop marketing programs that meet the needs of both Compliance and Marketing. In many cases, Compliance has become Marketing's ally when confronting unreasonable requests from the Sales team. For example, one marketer says when she gets a request from Sales that she wants to push back on, she'll call her ally in Compliance and ask, "Can I tell them Jason said no?"

Many of the marketers said they have regularly scheduled meetings with Compliance to review plans, talk about what they're trying to achieve, and find a way to craft the content so it won't be flagged by a regulator. This process allows Compliance to address concerns before marketing invests a lot of time going the wrong direction.

Alignment with Corporate Marketing…not so much…

> *"Marketing and Compliance are collaborating earlier in the messaging and planning process."*

Ironically, most of these line-of-business marketers, even at smaller firms, are struggling to align with their bank's corporate marketing and branding groups. In cases where the asset management business is part of a large commercial bank, they have significant conflicts in brand identity and messaging. In other cases, there are cross-border conflicts. One marketer talked about how her firm is well known in its home country, but not well-known across the US. So what works at home won't work in the US market. Another was frustrated with the expectations of their CMO who is located in Germany and who doesn't understand the American market. Almost every marketer at the table is struggling with this issue. One participant joked, "The first step is admitting you have a problem, right? So, I think we're kind of right in the middle of step one."

This problem isn't necessarily fixed by having the line of business report to corporate marketing. The group was split in terms of reporting. Some report up through the asset management line of business, while others report to corporate marketing with a dotted line to the line of business. But both are reporting similar struggles in alignment.

Client Retention

While our participants don't have direct responsibility for client retention, they do provide content to support the departments responsible for client services. Most have multiple client services teams they're supporting.

For the institutional channel, marketers are creating highly customized content for client meetings, including client communications books and custom decks focused on the clients' specific goals. They're also supporting account expansion efforts, providing materials that will help make clients aware of additional product offerings.

One participant described the process at their bank: "One of the things that we've really been focusing on is tying in why they [the client] chose us, how we're delivering on why they chose us, and why it was the best choice. We're constantly reinforcing that. If we know that we've done poorly in a quarter, we try to get in front of it so that they're not surprised at the end of the quarter. In those instances, it's really about developing the right message for them. Marketing partners with Client Services to help them come up with the right words."

> *"Marketing groups lack access to the marketing automation system, and most do not have full visibility into the client lifecycle in the CRM."*

Most of the participants have strategists writing thought leadership for the institutional clients, and some are doing customized commentaries that blend market outlook with what happened in the client's specific portfolio. Demand for these assets varies. Some institutional clients are satisfied with just a strategy commentary, others want more specific monthly and quarterly write-ups. All of this requires a heavy investment in content production. For example, one participant said they pull performance data, the hybrid benchmark, and other commentary into a single client communication book. The books could be anywhere from 10 to 15 to 100 pages.

Some organizations are finding this helpful even in situations when clients are dissatisfied with service or returns. One marketer said in situations where sales people over-promised, and the firm struggles to deliver on that promise, these client communications tools prove very useful. They develop content that breaks down the strategies and demonstrates why they're not meeting the client's objectives. They may still lose that piece of the client's business, but it's less likely that they lose the client for future investments. Other marketers agreed.

Firms are also making better use of their CRM systems to retain clients. Sometimes clients leave because they're making a change in asset allocation or strategy. In these cases, they might return later on as their strategies evolve. Firms are improving the way they track these clients. They're documenting the reasons clients leave in their CRM and keeping in touch with them over time. This is helping them nurture a long-term relationship with the clients and increase lifetime customer value.

Marketing Automation

Last year, the adoption of marketing automation and integration with CRM was relatively immature at most of the participants' firms, compared to other industries. But these organizations have made significant leaps forward in the ensuing 12 months. Last year, the firms were experimenting with automation, but most systems were not fully implemented or integrated with the firm's CRM.

This year, nearly all the participants are now using marketing automation, and it is integrated with their CRM. However, not all the line-of-business marketing groups have access to the marketing automation system, and most do not have full visibility into the client lifecycle in the CRM. This is severely hampering marketers' ability to evaluate the effectiveness of their campaigns in terms of tickets dropped and increasing volume from target accounts.

The marketing automation systems in place include SalesForce Marketing Cloud (ExactTarget), Pardot (also owned by Salesforce.com), Marketo, Eloqua, and Adobe Marketing Cloud. Most of the participants said their CRM is Salesforce.com.

Maturity in terms of optimizing email programs is varied. One participant from a very large investment bank expressed frustration with the political dynamics in her firm around email. Even though she can demonstrate that emails focused on smaller, more targeted audience segments get far better response rates, the organization still thinks about the process from a sheer volume perspective. So instead of doing targeted campaigns, they're sending many emails to nearly 250,000 contacts and getting low engagement rates in response. Most of the marketers appear to be having trouble convincing their organization to stop emailing contacts who are not engaging.

Another challenge hampering marketing effectiveness is the tendency for some market segments to never respond to emails. The participants agreed that institutional clients generally don't respond to emails. Instead, they listen to their consultants, so marketers are looking for ways to influence that channel more effectively.

The group also talked about their efforts to develop content mapped to the client's buying process. They know that the insights they need about what steps a client took before buying are tracked in the CRM, but many don't have access to identify the customers and evaluate their online behaviors that occurred prior to the transaction. This access and insight will be necessary before marketers are able to truly align content with the buying process and optimize their marketing automation efforts.

But before they get there, they'll need to convince their organizations to look at the right metrics. One participant pointed out that her organization is focusing on the wrong metrics, because they still think about marketing the way they did direct mail and print advertising 20 years ago. Expectations are not lining up with the realities of reaching people in a crowded market, nor do they effectively optimize based on the analytics they now have access to.

Another huge hurdle is the tendency for firms to make enterprise-wide decisions about CRM implementation. One marketer said that when Salesforce.com was implemented, Marketing was not included at all in the process of developing requirements. Another firm did involve Marketing in the requirements phase, but later, the management team decided to drop those requirements to reduce costs.

> *"Executive teams making the enterprise-wide decisions are unaware of the tactical needs in the lines of business."*

Frustratingly, expectations don't change when Marketing's requirements are dropped. In most cases, the executive teams making the enterprise-wide decisions are unaware of the tactical needs in the lines of business. The executive team thinks that if the tool is there, Marketing should be able to use it. One marketer expressed her frustration about not being able to access the data or pull the reports that they need. "Enterprise-level implementations end up diluting the tools so much that they become useless at the tactical level. Then Management says 'you have the tools, so who's fault is this?'".

This tendency to not provide Marketing with the information they need has a significant impact on the ability for Marketing to evaluate programs, optimize campaigns and track ROI. Teams run into endless problems when banks focus on efficiency at the cost of effectiveness.

Account-Based Marketing

Account-based marketing (ABM) strategies can actually help marketers have more influence on revenue and deliver a better ROI. However, this topic was relatively unfamiliar to the participants.

Traditionally, marketers target individuals within target firms. But most of the time in a B2B environment, individuals don't make decisions in isolation. They're part of teams, and multiple decision-makers are involved in the process. Account-based marketing essentially leverages and supports strategies long used by Sales in many industries for targeting strategic or enterprise accounts. It's a highly customer-centric method to gain access, generate opportunities, and expand reach in key accounts.

The analyst firm TOPO has done research into the effectiveness of account-based strategies. They have found that firms using an account-based focus are seeing a 171% uplift in revenue within target accounts. While TOPO's research primarily focuses on the technology industry, the model would work very well with both institutional and intermediary targets.

In an ABM world, the marketer and sales person should be working together in lock-step. ABM works best if it's executed as a series of plays over time targeting a group of people in the key account.

Emilie Totten, head of marketing at Synthesis said her team is finding great value in using an ABM approach. "Our sales and marketing teams are more aligned and in-sync about where to spend our time. It's working particularly well to help us uncover opportunities across different departments and business units in existing clients. It also helps us improve customer retention and increase lifetime customer value."

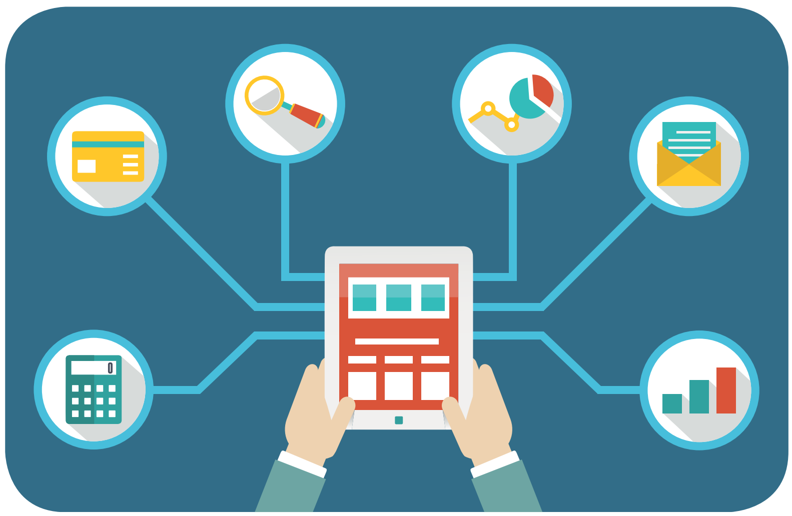
We discuss more about how asset management firms could leverage ABM strategies in this blog post. If you subscribe, we'll notify you as we publish more content on this strategy.

> *"[ABM works] particularly well to help us uncover opportunities across different departments and business units in existing clients."*

Strategies are Shifting and Marketers are Getting More Strategic

Overall, the tone of the event was very hopeful. All of the participants are moving in the right direction, and all are making measurable improvements to marketing effectiveness. But like most marketing organizations, our participants and their firms have a long way to go.

Last year's primary focus for most of the teams was around improving their marketing infrastructure, from improving their analytics and content performance to automating document production so they can focus their team on more strategic work.



They made considerable progress on this goal. So in the next 12 months, I expect to see these marketers get more focused on segmentation, targeted campaigns, customer-centric content, and account-based marketing. My hope is that they will be able to secure more access to the CRM to derive more insights into their performance against real sales results.

It will be very interesting to see what progress everyone has made when we meet again next year.

For more information about Synthesis Technology visit http://www.synthesistechnology.com/.

You can also subscribe to receive updates when new articles about the round table are published.

Closing Comments from John Toepfer, CEO of Synthesis

John Toepfer
Co-Founder and CEO,
Synthesis Technology

Synthesis is committed to serving the asset management community, providing quality solutions for marketing, sales, IT, and compliance professionals. While the primary goal of the event is to help marketers share ideas and learn from each other, it is a learning experience for our team, too.

The takeaways from our discussion help to drive our product vision and enable us to continue developing solutions that truly meet the needs of investment managers. This truly is a two-way street and we are grateful to the participants for allowing us to participate and learn from the discussion as well. I look forward to next year!

Want to Join Us Next Year?

We are currently in the process of inviting sales and marketing professionals to participate to our 2017 Marketing Roundtable in Chicago next May. If you believe you'd be a good fit for this group, we'd love talk to you. Visit the event page to express your interest at http://www.synthesistechnology.com/2018-investment-marketing-roundtable/.

About Synthesis Technology

Synthesis helps investment companies become more efficient, compliant, and customer-centric by automating data management, marketing operations, and sales enablement processes.

We are solely focused on serving the investment management vertical, with 100% of our clients being investment companies. We have a five-star reputation for solving complex operational marketing and sales challenges for global asset managers.

Our hybrid technology + services model allows us to act as a true business partner to our clients, tailoring our solution to each client's unique needs.

Our clients range from some of the world's largest financial services organizations to middle-market and boutique firms, including asset and wealth managers, retirement plan providers, TAMPS, and hedge funds.