

Adobe: Navigating the martech complexities of M&A

M&A can be a gateway to accelerated growth, new markets, and exciting possibilities. It's also one of the greatest challenges a marketing operations team can face.

When Adobe acquired Magento, Marketo, and Workfront in quick succession, the business synergies were undeniable. But so were the marketing challenges.

For most marketing teams, an M&A is unknown territory, and one they have no roadmap for. With extensive experience supporting M&A transitions for B2B organizations, DemandLab provided guidance that went beyond technical expertise, helping the senior managers on the Magento, Marketo, and Adobe teams anticipate and prepare for the broader operational realities of the acquisition.

SITUATION

A 3X acquisition in just 6 months

DemandLab was a long-time supporter of Magento's marketing operations, and when Magento was acquired by Adobe, they turned to DemandLab for help with integration and change management. Within six months, further acquisitions were made of Marketo and Workfront, creating even more change for the MOPs teams to manage, along with significantly higher lead and campaign volumes.

CHALLENGE

System instability overwhelms MOPs

At the close of this multi-acquisition cycle, the MOPs teams found themselves with an already overburdened system that now had to handle triple the complexity and an exponentially greater lead volume—approximately 20 million leads.

The resulting instability created significant issues, with a high volume of records being dropped between instances. The way the system was set up also obscured visibility, which meant the MOPs team was unable to monitor and proactively address dropped leads before they affected other stakeholders, including sales.



Problem:

A series of acquisitions required MOPs to navigate four different Marketo instances to manage a high volume of leads and campaigns.



Solution:

Identify, rationalize, and implement **the lowest-risk, highest-impact technical approach** to ensure the existing system could handle the stress and complexity of the post-M&A marketing reality.



Result:

The MOPs team achieved full visibility across all four instances and nearly flawless performance and sales handoffs.

WHAT DEMANDLAB DID DIFFERENTLY:

We ensured the MOPs teams were ready to manage change and demonstrate their competence and positive impact on business goals.

- Focus on pragmatic, expedient solutions that were low cost, low effort, and high impact
- Equip the MOPs teams with resources for obtaining executive buy-in
- Ensure marketing initiatives measurably advanced broader business priorities

SOLUTION

Full buy-in and quick wins

Adobe was actively working toward a single, custom Marketo instance capable of every product line and lead lifecycle. But it would take years to build, and in the meantime, the MOPs teams needed to find ways to maintain full functionality and visibility across multiple instances.

Recognizing that this was an interim phase, DemandLab adopted an agile approach that prioritized short-term, low-cost, low-friction solutions capable of delivering the results the Magento team needed to achieve.

STEP 1: AUDIT

We began by conducting an audit to determine where the existing system was breaking down. Our investigation found that the webhooks used to create connections between the instances were unstable and couldn't be remediated. We also identified key redundancies and inconsistencies that were adding marketing costs and preventing marketing insights

STEP 2: REPORT

We presented a full risk report that laid out a series of options along with probability and impact risks, anticipated effort and costs, and anticipated outcomes. This report was used to engage and educate executive stakeholders, pre-empt objections, and obtain buy-in.

STEP 3: IMPLEMENT

The DemandLab technical team implemented the recommended interim solution, which involved replacing webhooks with direct, inter-platform transfers and building a new instance that combined leads for two of the priority companies and supported a multi-product lead and customer lifecycle.

We also set up lead transfer reports that gave MOPs visibility across multiple instances and allowed them to monitor records closely and address issues before external stakeholders, including sales, had a chance to notice them.

But the solution we provided did more than fix system instability. It also enabled us to consolidate vendor purchases across all instances, create a unified strategy for promoting webinar platforms and recordings that met all stakeholder requirements, and provide deeper lead insight by aligning data across instances to provide a single view of sources and geodata.

AHA MOMENTS

Change management is crucial

For most marketing teams, an M&A is unknown territory, and one they have no roadmap for. With extensive experience supporting M&A transitions for B2B organizations, DemandLab was able to provide guidance that went beyond technical expertise and helped the senior managers on the Magento, Marketo, and Adobe teams anticipate and prepare for the broader operational realities of the acquisition.

We made sure the MOPs teams had the resources they needed to get executive buy-in and move forward confidently. We also made sure the integration initiatives were aligned with broader business objectives and demonstrated the marketing team's value. For example, we helped the team build reports that tracked the impact of marketing activities against business goals.

OUTCOMES

Team and business success

DemandLab's approach ensured that throughout a difficult transition, MOPs gained visibility and interoperability across multiple Marketo instances. Despite the system challenges, the solution we implemented was lightweight and could be rolled out quickly. The result was a dramatically reduced error rate for records transferring across instances that ensured SQLs reached the sales team.

Within a short period of time, MOPs was able to maintain pipeline, ramp up campaign activity, and demonstrate their value in the post-acquisition environment. The approach was successful: MOPs saw no layoffs or staff reductions during the post-acquisition period, and several team members were subsequently promoted as a result of their performance during this time.



DemandLab is a technology-focused marketing consultancy that accelerates revenue for its clients through customized strategic solutions. Learn more at demandlab.com.

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