

HOW TO SELECT A MARKETING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

SUTTLESTRAUS



ABOUT SUTTLE-STRAUS

Suttle-Straus is a marketing solutions provider serving its clients with bundled packages of services ranging from creative development and technology through print and distribution.

Suttle-Straus' S4 Marketing Resource Center (S4 MRC) is a marketing resource management system that provides organizations centralized marketing control across multiple locations and networks. Designed in close collaboration with customers, it is a highly customizable system that empowers users to personalize their marketing materials without compromising brand standards. The S4 MRC, paired with Suttle-Straus' superior in-house product manufacturing, provides organizations increased efficiency and speed to market.



INTRODUCTION

Today's marketers have over 3,600 technology solutions to help them improve processes, increase brand awareness, and drive sales. From email marketing and social media management to website design and SEO, technology continues to advance and offer new ways to streamline marketing, connect with customers and improve ROI.

One category of technology that more and more marketers are turning to is the marketing resource management (MRM) system.

This eGuide will help you understand types of MRM systems and key benefits of them, as well as provide you the necessary resources to make an informed decision about which type of system is the best fit for your company.

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CHAPTER 1: BRAND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS DEFINED

TYPES OF SYSTEMS

A marketing resource management system is a type of brand management system (BMS). At its core, a BMS represents the basic internal management infrastructure necessary to sustain brand-building activities and brand equity creation. In addition to MRMs, you may be familiar with digital asset management systems (DAMs) or distributed marketing platforms (DMPs), which are also variations of brand management systems. Because they can be similar, it's important to understand the differences.

MARKETING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (MRM)

A MRM system centralizes an organization's entire marketing operations into one location. It often features a built-in DAM system, budget/co-op management, template customization and brand definition management. In the absence of a built-in DAM system, some MRM systems feature robust capabilities to integrate with external systems, allowing the client to choose whichever DAM platform best accommodates their needs. Other integration options may also include a CRM or accounting software, enabling all systems to share information and provide more streamlined operations across departments.

DIGITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (DAM)

A DAM system is a valuable tool for organizing, storing, retrieving and managing digital assets such as photos, music, videos, podcasts, or other multimedia content. Like a MRM system, it may also feature template customization. While a DAM system can stand on its own, it's often seen integrating with other systems due to the need for more output capabilities.

DISTRIBUTED MARKETING PLATFORM (DMP)

A DMP is similar to a MRM in that it usually includes a DAM, budget/co-op management, template customization and integrations. It focuses less on brand management and more on marketing collateral creation, however. Materials housed in a DMP can be shared digitally or ordered from an external print shop and are accessible by a variety of individuals such as sales, operations, and local marketers.

When organizations implement any one of these systems, it becomes their central marketing hub – their marketing resource center.

Note: These descriptions are based on the most widely acknowledged functionality of systems. Because the differences are slight and some vendors may classify their system differently, it's more important that you know what you need from a system and can align those needs with what a system offers.

ORGANIZATIONAL BENEFITS

Imagine your marketing team trying to work collaboratively to push content out to your sales and operations teams, but no one in the organization can find the right files they need, when they need it. Without a MRM system, you're limited in how quickly your team can produce results because significant time is spent looking for documents, making one-off edits, and trying to route requests through various systems or departments. As your company grows, this becomes an even larger issue and often creates inconsistencies in how your brand is represented.

35 The number of times the average person in a marketing firm
LOOKS FOR A FILE PER WEEK*

83% of the time they
TO FIND WHAT THEY NEED FAIL*

You may be surprised to learn that 83% of the time employees fail to find what they need. When this happens, they may create their own materials, which increases the risk of deviating from brand standards.

A MRM system streamlines the whole processes by consolidating marketing materials within one system and eliminating any guesswork. Everyone on the team knows where to go and can be confident that they're accessing the most current, marketing approved documents. Brand consistency is achieved and messaging is aligned with current campaigns.

* Source: <http://www.widen.com/business-case-digital-asset-management/>

BENEFITS BY ROLE

When organizations adopt a MRM system, many people will benefit. Here are a few common roles and the outcome of a well-implemented system.

MARKETING MANAGER/CMO

- Maintain brand compliance
- Balance team's workload
- Minimize lost opportunities
- Adhere to legal/regulatory requirements

CFO

- Reduce wasteful spending
- Maximize ROI of marketing materials
- Increase sales

END USER (NON-MARKETERS)

- Save time
- Easy, real-time access to customizable brand-right marketing materials

CUSTOMER

- Consistent messaging of offers
- Positive brand image

Additionally, depending on your role, you may benefit from various reports available in the system to help you:

- Quickly see what assets are available and understand which are being used the most and least
- Gain a better understanding of the overall health of marketing programs
- View the complete order history of assets
- Manage approvals and get real-time inventory reports

REASONS TO IMPLEMENT

According to a 2015 Gleanster report on MRM systems, the following were reasons that companies sought to implement a system:



95%

Decrease marketing costs



86%

Optimize marketing spend across channels
*versus 53% of everyone else



82%

Manage brand consistency



75%

Improve marketing cycle time



65%

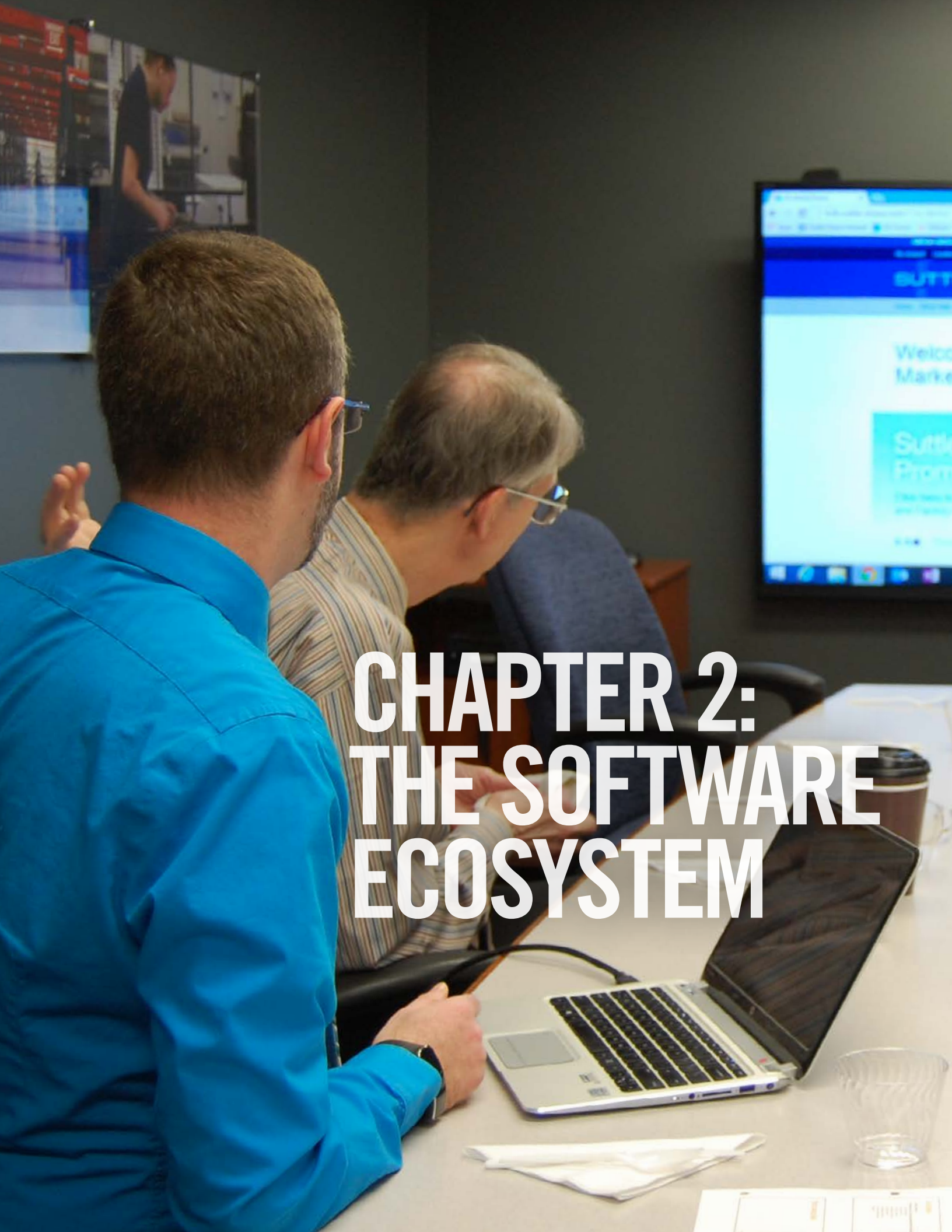
Standardize repetitive marketing processes



60%

Streamline workflow with internal stakeholders

If you can relate to one or more of these reasons, read on and learn how to find the right system for your team.

A photograph of two men in a meeting room. The man in the foreground is wearing a bright blue button-down shirt and glasses, seen from the back. The man behind him is wearing a striped shirt and glasses, also seen from the back. They are both looking at a laptop on a table. In the background, a large screen displays a website with the text 'Welcome Market' and 'Sutthi Prom'. Another screen on the left shows a person working. The room has a modern, professional feel.

CHAPTER 2: THE SOFTWARE ECOSYSTEM

THE WHOLE PRODUCT APPROACH

When reviewing MRM systems, be sure to consider the entire ecosystem that surrounds the product. This is considered the whole product approach and is common among Software as a Service (SaaS) providers. It evaluates the vendor and non-tangible benefits of each system, rather than just looking at the product itself. The success of a system largely depends on these additional factors.

INNOVATION

How will the system evolve to keep pace with your needs and the industry's needs? Does the vendor exhibit forward-thinking approaches to business? Where do they get release ideas? A vendor who's in touch with their customer's needs will heavily base their product's road map on feedback received from its users.

RELEASE MANAGEMENT

Does the vendor have well-defined plans, management controls, and a track record of great performance? When speaking with vendors, be sure to find out which features are coming up in the next release, if upgrades are included in the cost of the system, how often enhancements are released, and how communication and feedback is handled during the release process.

TRAINING

Does the vendor have proven mechanisms for training to ensure users have a solid understanding of the intended use of the software? Consider how the vendor approaches training and what resources are available for ongoing training and support, such as webinars, help documentation, or one-on-one training.

ADOPTION

Implementing a MRM system can be challenging and if user adoption struggles, it can be difficult to receive the maximum value the system could provide. Find out what resources the vendor provides to ensure adoption doesn't become a problem.

THE WHOLE PRODUCT APPROACH

(CONTINUED)

COMMUNITY

Will you be entering a 1:1 relationship with the vendor, or will you become part of a larger community that shares tips and best practices? Find out if the vendor helps facilitate conversation through focus groups, in-person events, or other means.

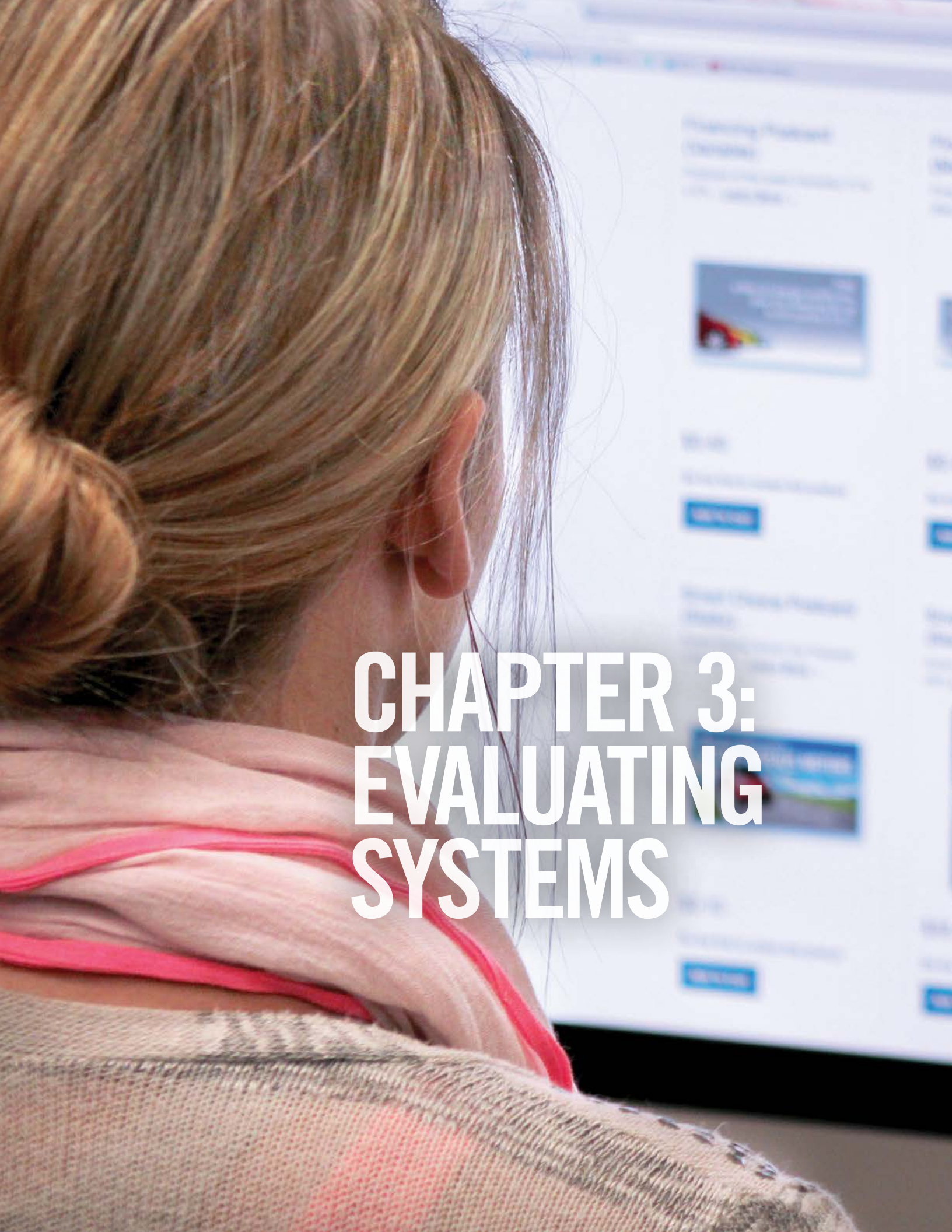
INTEGRATION

It's important that today's technologies are able to share information through integrations. Using several stand-alone systems can end up costing more time and runs the risk of errors. Duplicate effort and fact checking needed from one system to the next can be tedious. Does the vendor have standard integrations or are they willing to work with you to integrate your other systems?

CURRENT PRODUCT

The last element of the whole product approach is the product itself. How does the current product address your needs and how will it change your processes? What features are necessary to you and which ones may be less important?

Download Now: "Applying the Whole Product Approach to the S4 MRC"

A close-up, over-the-shoulder view of a woman with blonde hair tied in a bun, looking at a computer monitor. The monitor displays a website with various elements like text, images, and buttons, though they are out of focus. The woman is wearing a red top and a beige cardigan. The text 'CHAPTER 3: EVALUATING SYSTEMS' is overlaid in large white letters.

CHAPTER 3: EVALUATING SYSTEMS

DETERMINE NEEDS

Before you are able to evaluate systems, you'll need to do a little research into what's available and what your needs are.

To do this, look at your current workflows and challenges. Where are there gaps or inefficiencies? Often, you'll determine one or two, but later, realize that a MRM system can actually increase productivity in areas you hadn't originally anticipated.

Prioritize your needs into features that you must have, ones that would be nice, and ones that will be needed in the future but may not be necessary at the moment.

Here are a few ideas to start:

SOCIAL MEDIA	FULFILLMENT
PRINT ON DEMAND	CRM INTEGRATIONS
WIDE FORMAT	PROMO ITEMS
MULTIPLE LANGUAGES	TEMPLATE CUSTOMIZATION
LOCATION SPECIFIC DATA MANAGEMENT	SCALABILITY
DIRECT MAIL & LIST PROCUREMENT	DAM
OTHER INTEGRATIONS?	

Learn more about the S4 Marketing Resource Center,
Suttle-Straus' MRM solution.

EVALUATING VENDORS

To make a well-informed decision, follow these steps.

1. ASSEMBLE A SELECTION COMMITTEE.

This should be comprised of a representative from each role that will be using the system. For example, your selection committee may include the marketing manager, a graphic designer, an end user, and someone from accounting. Don't forget to also include an IT specialist if you plan to do any integrations or host the system locally (vs. cloud-based).

2. DETERMINE A BUDGET.

There are a variety of systems on the market that range anywhere from free to thousands of dollars. Because of this, it can be challenging to find the right fit for your needs and budget. Remember your "must haves" and how your relationship with the vendor will evolve. Keep in mind that free does not always mean free. Conversely, a system that is \$100,000 may be a poor financial decision if it has several features that you don't need.

3. SET A TIMELINE.

If you want to have a system fully implemented in time for an annual meeting or by the beginning of the new year, work backwards to ensure you have enough time. Keep the implementation timeline in sight as well, since that can take 2-6 months, depending on the vendor you choose and the complexity of the system.

4. DETERMINE EVALUATION CRITERIA.

Review your must haves, nice to haves, and future needs, and make sure everyone on your selection committee is in agreement. Choose which components of the whole product are most important to your organization's success, and make sure they are represented as part of your evaluation criteria.

EVALUATING VENDORS (CONTINUED)

5. DEMO PRODUCTS.

Review a handful of systems and compare their features against your criteria. To avoid any bias on a particular system, only compare a vendor's solution to how it will solve your challenges – not how it compares to other vendors. Different systems may have slightly different ways to accomplish tasks. What's most important is how it will save you time in your current workflows and be easy to understand.

6. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL.

Send the vendors your RFP, and get any additional information that will help you make the decision – pricing, implementation timeline, testimonials or references, etc. This may also include a free trial, if available, so you can test out the system first hand.

7. OBTAIN INTERNAL BUY-IN.

This is an important step not to overlook. If your team doesn't understand the value of implementing a MRM system or they have any questions, be sure to address these before purchasing a system. Getting internal buy-in will go a long way when it comes to implementation.

8. COMPARE VENDORS AND CHOOSE THE BEST FIT.

As a committee, decide which system will best serve your company based on your must have criteria, budget, timeline, etc.

CONCLUSION

A Marketing Resource Management System is a valuable tool for organizations that have numerous assets to manage across various teams, locations, or networks. Finding the right system for your organization is essential to achieving brand consistency, reducing costs, and standardizing processes. Maximize your ROI with a Marketing Resource Management System!

If you've already found a MRM system or are interested in learning about implementation and adoption tips, download our follow up eGuide, "Implementing a Marketing Resource Management System."

Download "Implementing a Marketing Resource Management System"

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