



Marketing Technology Procurement Checklist

Initial Considerations

When it comes to martech procurement, the initial steps prior to vendor selection are the most important. Many common issues that arise in martech, such as dispersed (or siloed) data or integration hiccups, can be prevented by spending time analyzing and evaluating both your existing stack and proposed needs as well as all available vendor options before making purchase decision(s). If you are constructing a stack from scratch, take a considerable amount of time to plan your stack and how the tools/solutions will intermingle, focusing particularly on data flow. If you're adding to your stack, take time to consider your actual needs by evaluating current resources and capabilities (and available options) to confirm what resources or technologies are lacking. Do not rush these initial steps.

Before you start, it is important to have a clear understanding of specific items:

- What are you trying to achieve with the new technology?
- How will you measure the success of the implementation and the usage of the new technology?
- Who are the users going to be, internally and externally?
- Have you aligned all internal stakeholders (users, IT, finance, others) around this initiative?
- What processes will the new technology enable/accelerate/automate?
- What data sources will need to be linked and integrated?
- What legacy core technology will the new technology need to integrate with?
- What other existing martech components will the new technology need to integrate with?
- How will the data flow between all applications?
- Where will the core data be housed and who owns it?



I. Audit your needs

- Design your martech architecture.
- If you're starting out:
 - Design the architecture of your stack to understand and define clearly how you want components to work or operate together and how you want data to flow between them.
 - Work to identify capability gaps in operations that support marketing campaigns and associated data where analysis needs are present.
- If you're re-platforming:
 - If you are replacing a tool/platform, begin by learning from what did and did not work with the existing tool. Use this analysis to determine your requirements for the replacement tool.
- If you're expanding:
 - Visualize and categorize all your martech tools, meaning break down your existing marketing technology configuration and detail how each platform, solution, or tool solves a particular pain point or aids one or more use cases to gain a clear picture of the capabilities of your current martech tools. Draw out the architecture of your stack to clearly show how the individual components work or operate together and how data flows between them.
 - Be on the lookout for siloed data.
 - Outline all of the functionalities of each tool or solution and highlight any overlap.
 - » Too much functionality overlap across a suite of martech tools can create inefficiencies and sunk costs.
 - » You may need to consult with your vendor(s) to ensure you understand all of the functionalities available under your plan.
 - » If necessary, ask for additional training from your martech vendor(s) or seek training from third parties (such as reputable trade organizations, companies, and academic institutions) to ensure you have a full understanding of the existing tools.
 - Determine the ROI for each martech tool/solution.
 - » Does the ROI for each individual tool/solution meet expectations?
 - » Does the ROI for the stack as a whole meet expectations?
 - Create a cost-benefit analysis for each tool.
 - » What are your best performers and your worst performers? Which are the easiest to use or save time?
 - » Weigh the costs and benefits of maintaining use of legacy data systems and evaluate the presence of any tech "debt."
 - Identify gaps in your stack, underutilization, issues with software, and redundancies.
 - » Consider whether you can terminate any existing contracts or particular tools to reduce any overlap or if there are ways to optimize existing tools or data.
 - » Adoption is key. If individuals are not utilizing the tool, consider doing additional training.
 - » If you do not have the necessary expertise in-house, consider hiring a consultant.
 - Consider your current and future martech tool feature needs and gain an understanding of how all of your data is or can be integrated.

- Decide which martech tools you will keep and which will be eliminated. This process should be done at least once per year to make sure you're using all tools and that they are working as promised. But more frequent review (e.g., quarterly) can provide an even better understanding.
- There are many variations on what can make up a martech stack. However, a number of stacks contain several common components. Below are common (primary) pieces of a martech stack, with a brief summary of what each piece means and examples of providers. The following examples are merely to illustrate certain providers and are not an endorsement or statement of approval.
 - Data Management: Data/Content Management System (CMS)
 - » Tools that manage and deploy digital content.
 - » E.g., Adobe or WordPress
 - Customer Management: Customer Management Relationship (CRM)
 - » Tools that manage a company's relationships and interactions with customers and potential customers.
 - » E.g., Salesforce or Insightly
 - Automation: Marketing Automation Platform
 - » Tools that help streamline the marketing process.
 - » E.g., Pardot or Hubspot
 - Analysis: Data Analytics Tools
 - » Tools that allow companies to measure the effectiveness of their marketing.
 - » E.g., Google Analytics, Adobe Analytics, or Tableau
 - Predictive Analytic Decision Engine
 - » Algorithmic tool(s) that determine the next best offer/message to deliver to a customer or prospect within a particular channel
 - » E.g., Pega or Infor
 - Media Buying Platform
 - » Tools that bid on and buy targeted ad impressions (e.g., search and display) in real time by connecting to automated ad exchanges.
 - » E.g., Google or Trade Desk
 - Social Media Management: Social Media Management Tools
 - » Tools for scheduling, monitoring, and analyzing social media marketing.
 - » E.g., Hootsuite or Sprout Social
 - Email: Email Marketing
 - » Tools that provide customer communications through email.
 - » E.g., Mailchimp

II. Plan

- Based on and following your step one audit, clearly define your use case.
 - What is the problem(s) you would like to solve or objective(s) you would like to fulfill with martech? Work to be specific and able to explain from a marketer or customer point of view.
 - Are you replacing an existing costly tool with a more cost-effective tool?
 - Are you trying to manage your own customers better or reach out to a new customer base?
 - If you are starting from scratch, build the martech stack architecture first. Decide how you want things to go together and how you want data to flow before implementing different solutions.
- Define what “success” will look like based on your use case and the criteria necessary to measure it.
 - What do you expect to happen? How long do you expect it to take? Are there any milestones along the timeline you expect to hit?
 - What key performance indicators (KPI) will you use (impressions, clicks, conversions, click through rate, cost per click, etc.)?
 - Try to develop a business case based on best-case outcome(s) or scenario(s) to guide the appropriate level of investment/cost. Even a rough guess is better than nothing.
- Consider what type(s) of data you want to collect with the martech.
 - Will the data have any legal compliance or review needs?
 - What security concerns may be present?
 - Who (or which entity) will process and store the data?
- Evaluate the available annual budget for martech resources.
 - Estimate the cost of the martech offerings.
 - Consider which martech resource(s) will be the biggest expense(s).
 - Consider both renewal and potential upgrade costs of the current stack as well as the cost of new solutions, tools, and resources.
- Plan ahead and on a short-term and long-term basis.
 - Most vendor (or provider) arrangements will last one to three years.
 - Develop a roadmap for internal use and to address marketing and budgeting needs.
 - Consider a one-to-five year time frame for planning purposes.
 - Align your roadmap with your vendor arrangement(s).
 - Consider which tool(s) or solution(s) will need more frequent review and possible updating due to changes in use, approach, or technology.
- Build your team.
 - Identify individuals from various parts of your organization you would like to participate in the project, including finance, marketing, accounting, purchasing, IT, and management.
 - At a minimum, the group should consist of an executive decision-maker, an individual from the group that will use the product the most, and an individual who can understand the technology and manage integration (likely someone from IT).

- Confirm that your objectives cannot be met with your existing martech stack.
 - Before committing to a new martech tool, companies should confirm that their current stack is unable to meet their needs.
 - Don't be afraid to ask the current vendor about available add-ons or options when considering current resources and potential needs.
 - Roll up your sleeves to figure out interoperability in advance.
 - This will be a vendor blind spot despite their sales pitch because they don't engage in marketing, or more specifically, your marketing. Furthermore, they don't work with "your" stack.
 - Have a clear idea of how this new tool or solution will fit into your stack and what resources you will need to accomplish this.
 - "Discuss" the data:
 - Data interoperability, integrity, and legality can be complex issues that will take time and consideration to resolve.
 - What data will you be receiving, or will you be providing to the vendor?
 - In what form?
 - Are you willing to allow the vendor to have any rights to the data you receive or provide?
 - Are there any legal restrictions on how your data can be handled (e.g., does it need to reside and be processed in the U.S.)?
 - Where will the data reside? In what geographic location will the corresponding server(s) be located?
 - Set realistic expectations.
 - Make key stakeholders and management aware of the implementation timeline.
 - How long will it take to implement a new tool and how long will it take before the returns will be seen?
 - These expectations may need to be updated after discussions with the vendor(s).
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Vendor Selection

I. Research

- Consider what types of martech platforms, solutions, or tools your industry is using.
- Ask peers in your network(s) what types of products, services, or vendors they use and what fees are appropriate for the offering(s).
- Read online reviews, third-party analyst reports, and news articles (such as articles on the ANA's website).

II. Initial Considerations (pre-meeting internal considerations)

- Define the territory in which you need the vendor to operate.
- Screen and assess vendors (e.g., financial stability and experience) and vendor sales reps (are they helpful and well-informed?).

- Perform a business risk assessment of the vendor to identify current risks and threats, particularly data risks and information security threats, and their potential impact on business or goodwill.
- Thoroughly review the potential vendor's website. What things are important to them? Is it clear what their product is/what it accomplishes?
- If your company has unique requirements that a vendor must comply with (e.g., HIPAA or enhanced data security), discuss these requirements with vendors prior to meeting to eliminate those who cannot comply.

III. Vendor Evaluation (in person meeting, demonstrations)

- *Request for Proposal* (optional)
 - If you don't have one vendor in mind at this stage, consider more than one. Use an RFP process to receive bids from vendors. This should include requirements and objectives to solicit vendors with the most appropriate offering or solution.
 - You may include your company's contract terms and conditions with the RFP and request the vendors redline the terms. Eliminate vendors which will not accept your non-negotiable contract terms.
- During the meeting, ask for a demonstration of the product tailored to your use case. Go into the demonstration with a list of project objectives and questions. Make sure you have a clear timeline of when results should be seen. Require detailed explanations of the following:
 - *The Vendor's Roadmap.* Where do they think the world of marketing is going to be in a few years, and does this align with your company's view of the future? The landscape changes so quickly. Where vendors see themselves in the future and how they are investing to get there may be more important than what they have right now.
 - *Data Use/Ownership.* Ask the vendor for a detailed explanation of how data will be collected, what type of data will be collected, who will own the data, what rights you will have to use the data, and what analytic tools will be used. Consider if any data will be procured from a third-party source. Be sure answers to the foregoing align with your data expectations, including your intended use for the data and your requirements to measure (related) performance, and that the data is in a form that is usable with your other tools. In addition, ensure that you take into account the related practicalities of integrating and managing the data in accordance with any associated limitations on use from a third-party source(s).
 - *Maintenance and Support:* What are the support models available for the tool(s)? Is a managed service team typical or required? What type of training and orientation are typical or necessary? Does the vendor maintain a vetted list of third-party support options?
 - *Data Storage:* What country will the data be stored in? Is this legal given the type of data you will be collecting/storing? What happens in the event of a data breach? Who will be liable? How much liability will the vendor cover?
 - *Integration.* Explain what products you currently use and ask the vendor for a detailed explanation of how their product can be integrated into your existing stack. Will additional tools/features be necessary for integration? What is the estimated cost of integration? How does the tool "speak" to or work with existing martech tools? Does the product use open API, which allows for maximum flexibility in cross-platform data sharing? Use your specific case to pressure-test the vendor.
 - *Customization Features.* Reliance on the vendor's developers for customization may be costly, so look for martech solutions that provide deep customization/configuration options as standard offering out of the box.

- *Subscription Fees and Hidden Costs.* Never accept pricing that isn't itemized for the product/service offering. Ask for a full list of available products or services, a detailed description of available features, their itemized costs or fees, and any limitations (e.g., maximum monthly usage, maximum permitted users). Insist on a detailed bill from a case study explaining what monthly/yearly fees similar clients pay, including any services the case study used. Start with the pricing of the product(s), and then account for any services you think you may need.
- *Key Performance Indicators.* What KPIs are collected/offered? How often are they measured?
- *Security.* Is security adequate given the type of information the vendor will be handling?
- *Implementation.* How will the vendor help with implementing the product into your existing stack?
- Post-Meeting Considerations
 - *Estimate Return on Investment.* How much will implementation cost and what returns can be expected?
 - *Evaluate Ease of Integration into Existing Stack.* Does the product work on your existing hardware and software environment? To create consistent customer experiences, all martech solutions should operate from a central pool of data, which may require up-front tweaking of existing martech products.
 - *Can You Reduce or Eliminate Inefficiency or Sunken Costs?* Will this solution create any redundancies in your stack? Can this product replace any existing martech you have? Consider whether you can cancel contracts for redundant tools to save money.
- *Case Study.* If you are still interested in the product after the initial demo and internal discussions, ask for case studies based on comparable use cases. These case studies should show a history of meeting objectives like your own. Furthermore, request real-world examples of use or results for use of the tool.
- Ask for a free trial, "sandbox" offering, or proof of concept before negotiation of a longer-term arrangement.

IV. Select a Product and Plan Product Implementation

- Choose an "implementation captain" to oversee the product's integration and success. This person should also be the main contact between the vendor and your company.
- Create a detailed implementation plan. Everyone needs to be on the same page before negotiations begin. How will this product fit into your stack? How will data collected from this tool integrate with your other data? Will you need a CDP to help with orchestration of data? Do you have the right people with the right skill set to execute implementation? If not, consider hiring consultants or contractors.
- Understand the timing for implementation.
- Set realistic goals within your organization. The overall process can take time. Don't rush. Make sure key stakeholders are aware of the implementation timeline and when results can be expected.

I. Initial Considerations

- *Negotiation Timeline.* Bear in mind that longer contracts will take longer to negotiate.
- *Bargaining Power.* What is your relative bargaining power with this vendor? How much is the fee? It's much harder to argue for negotiated changes with a general service provided at a nominal fee. If possible, negotiate from your own contract form. If the vendor has more bargaining power and will require use of their contract form, focus negotiations on provisions that are most critical to your company (such as damages or termination rights).
- *Term Sheets.* Use a term sheet (only) if it will help clarify initial positions. Term sheets don't always expedite discussion and negotiation.
- *Non-Negotiable Terms.* Have internal discussions to be clear on what risk your company is willing to accept and what terms are flexible or inflexible before entering negotiations. These discussions should include individuals from your business team.
- *Services vs. Product.* Negotiate based on the standard offering first (usually a licensed platform, tool, or solution offering) and then add in any services you may need second. Services can be added to the agreement in a statement of work.

II. Negotiating the Terms (Important Terms to Review)

- *Proprietary Rights.* Who will own things created under the agreement? Who will own or at least claim control of the data collected? Making sure you own the outputs from the agreement will make it easier to walk away if you are unhappy. In cases where the vendor (or a third party) will own the associated data, work to obtain an appropriate license to cover the necessary rights for access, use, or modification.
- *Data.* Have clearly defined terms for all types of data, including first-, second-, and third-party data and personally identifiable information (PII). See [ANA's martech glossary](#) for an explanation of key terms. What rights does the vendor have to your data? Will your data be co-mingled with any third-party data? Which third-party sources are making data available? Consider future data use cases and whether any imposed limitations on data use (whether from the vendor or another third-party source) may apply or interfere with data management. What will happen to the data upon termination? Where will the data be stored? Who will comply with applicable data laws? Does the vendor have any responsibility to back up data?
- *Termination Rights.* Termination for convenience is ideal but may be hard to get depending on your bargaining power. Consider negotiating the right to walk away for any reason within six months, or if you are paying the fee annually, the right to walk away at the end of each annual time period. Renewal can be automatic but should be tied to termination rights.
- *Payment/Pricing.* Tie to plans/schedules/benchmarks rather than payment upfront. Push for monthly or quarterly payments. Make sure price increases are limited (e.g., tied to inflation).
- *Fee Type.* Avoid fees tied to volumes, which can be unpredictable and require more oversight. If pricing is tied to active accounts, be surgical about what this means. If payment terms tied to volumes is unavoidable, an MRM tool can be used to help monitor costs. Be on the lookout for additional fees or items that could inflate the cost of the project (e.g., hourly fees for support).
- *Implementation Plan/Schedule.* Are there clearly defined deadlines? Are there consequences for the vendor missing these deadlines?
- *Indemnification.* Don't accept liability or indemnification responsibilities for the vendor's mistakes.

- *Warranties.* Does the vendor warrant that they have all rights necessary to perform under the contract? Do they warrant that any data they provide was lawfully obtained and with appropriate rights clearance? As the recipient of services for which a fee will be paid, your warranties should be minimal or at least less than those of the vendor.
- *Customer Responsibilities.* Be sure you can comply with the responsibilities and that the relevant internal resources, leads, or departments are aware of what is expected of them under the contract.
- *Acceptance.* Do you have a reasonable amount of time to evaluate and reject the product/deliverables? If not, consider adding the ability to walk away, no questions asked, during the first six months of the agreement as discussed above or following an initial evaluation phase.
- *Limitation on Liability.* Always try to get uncapped liability (and particularly as to data security incidents or data misuse), but if a concession on the cap is necessary, then consider calculating around fees or a multiple of the contract value (e.g., amounts paid or payable).
- *Remedies.* Are you entitled to a credit or a refund if the services fall below expectations or the availability requirements? Are you able to withhold payment if deliverables are late or if there are performance issues? Avoid clauses that disregard damages resulting to the business from the vendor's poor performance. Damages caps should never carve out liability for actions brought by third parties due to the vendor's actions. Vendors should be solely responsible for any harm they cause.
 - Consider insurance which may be used in addition to damages.
 - Reserve rights to pursue equitable relief.
 - Be aware that use of offshore vendors may affect your right to enforce dispute resolution process(es) or a judgment.
- *Term.* When will it start and when will it end?
 - *Initial Term.* Long-term contracts can be more cost-effective, but short-term contracts offer more flexibility.
 - *Renewal.* Avoid automatic renewal or term extensions that require notice to terminate (or not renew) more than 60 days in advance of the renewal or extension date.
- *Rights Upon Termination.* Are you entitled to a refund if the vendor terminates for convenience? Are you entitled to a refund if you terminate for a vendor's breach of the agreement?
- *Transition.* Consider adding transition services or assistance upon termination. Consider if there is an additional fee for transition services.
- *SLA/Uptime Requirements.* There should be language specifying how the vendor will track downtime and report it to the client and mitigation (such as credits) for downtime. Push for an uptime requirement of at least 99 percent or greater (as calculated on a monthly basis).

III. Statement(s) of Work (Services)

- Define the scope of the vendor's services.
- Service commitments should be defined in terms of performance, value, or results as opposed to effort.
- Timing and cost tend to be the biggest practical problems. Consider defining in business (not just technical) terms a project's objectives and requirements.
- Define responsibilities including third-party involvement.
- Insert penalties for failure to meet timelines.
- Consider the "how" and "when" of training, support, and disaster recovery.
- Make sure deliverables are described in detail with a timeline for delivery.

Implementation

I. Product Integration and Avoiding Data Fragmentation

- Gaps in the system will prevent your tools from operating efficiently. Data must be integrated quickly so tools can react to each other in real time.
- Have your internal team or consultants ready to go when the product becomes available to integrate as quickly as possible.
- Consider purchasing consulting hours from the vendor if necessary, to assist.

II. Tiger Teams/Education

- Develop a plan for training that includes communication and outreach (across different media or platforms) so that the personnel user base understands the “why” behind the use of the new martech tool(s). Who’s endorsing the new tool, and what benefits will it bring to the individual users?
- Problems arise from people not being educated on what the platform should do, but teaching each person every aspect of the tool is inefficient and can be overwhelming. Instead, “Tiger” teams should be used to train your organization about new tools. The Tiger team will broadly learn the tools and then teach individuals their specific use of the tools. Training should be done no more than two weeks before the tool will be available.
- Work to ensure enrollment with training and address any change management issues with current or prior process(es) or protocol(s).
- Don’t forget to train new hires. How a tool was used at their previous company may not be how it is used at your company, particularly if you have customized the tool.

Periodic Business Reviews

I. Adoption

- Evaluate how well the product has been integrated into your company.
- How many people are using the product? How often are they using it? No matter how amazing a product is, it is worthless to you if no one is using it.

II. Evaluate Product and Supplier Performance

- Have a clearly defined objective(s) and list of criteria necessary to evaluate that objective. Evaluation should occur throughout the product lifetime, not just at renewal.
- Keep a record of the issues you are having with the product throughout the license term.

III. Evaluate the Vendor

- Create a scorecard for the vendor, including how many open items you have with the vendor, response times, and any additional issues you may have.

- Use regular and periodic performance review(s) to track progress against KPIs or other (service, adoption, or result) objectives.
- Continue to consider any associated risk to operation or goodwill from working with the vendor.
- Discuss with the vendor your record of the issues.

IV. Discussion with the Vendor

- Ask the vendor what they think your realized ROI is from the tool, and then tell the vendor what your calculated ROI is.
 - Be candid about how you feel the product is performing and hold the vendor accountable to benchmarks they aren't meeting. This will be a good opportunity for the vendor to discuss any functionalities the product has that you could better utilize to achieve your objectives.
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Renewal

I. Pre-Meeting Considerations

- Manage renewals, as this can hold vendors accountable to the expectations of what a tool is supposed to accomplish for you. If you didn't get the outcomes you expected or were promised, you will have the most leverage during renewal.
- Review the vendor scorecard and product evaluations. Based on the KPI and parameters from your use case, determine whether the tool has met expectations. Have a clear idea of where the vendor and product have fallen short based on the objectives you communicated to the vendor during the procurement process.

II. Renewal Discussions with Vendor

- Use the quarterly/semi-annual business reviews and vendor score cards as negotiation tools.
- If the vendor isn't performing well, negotiate better terms for the renewal. Or, leave for another vendor and solution/tool.