

CMO · HEAD OF DIGITAL / MARKETING LEAD

Marketing Operating Model Sheet

In-house, agency, freelance or automated: who owns what, now that execution costs have fallen and accountability has not.

THE DECISION THIS TEMPLATE PROTECTS

What stays inside, what goes outside, what the machine does, and who is accountable for each.

ROLE	COURSE PLACEMENT	REVISION
CMO / Head of Digital	Main Course Module 7 · Operating model	Version 1.0 Current as of 19 August 2026

Decide by defensibility rather than by cost. The right question for each capability is what happens when it goes wrong and who carries that. Anything where being wrong is expensive belongs close to the organisation, whatever the day rate says.

BEFORE YOU START, YOU NEED

- An honest list of every capability the function needs.
- Current cost and quality of each.
- A view on which capabilities are becoming commoditised.

01 Capability allocation

CAPABILITY	IN-HOUSE	AGENCY	FREELANCE	AUTOMATED	ACCOUNTABLE PERSON
Strategy and positioning					

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Measurement and analysis					
Paid media operation					
Creative concept					
Creative production					
Content writing					
Search and technical					
Community and social					
Lifecycle and CRM					
Data and consent governance					

02 The decision rule

Four questions per capability, in order. The fourth one usually settles it.

1. Is being wrong here expensive or cheap?
2. Does doing it well require knowledge of our business that takes months to acquire?
3. Is the market for this capability commoditising?
4. If this goes wrong at 6pm on a Friday, who picks up the phone?

Execution is commoditising quickly. Judgment, accountability and knowledge of your own business are not, and they are what an operating model should be organised around.

03 What automation genuinely changes

TASK	AUTOMATABLE NOW	WHAT STILL NEEDS A PERSON	RISK IF NOBODY CHECKS

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Automating a task does not remove the accountability for its output. A capability marked automated with no accountable person named is an unowned risk, not an efficiency.

04 The transition

CHANGE	FROM	TO	BY WHEN	RISK	MITIGATION

05 What we will not outsource

AND WHY

Usually: anything that requires knowing our customers, anything with legal exposure, anything where the answer must be defended internally.

JUDGMENT PROMPTS

- Which capability have you outsourced that you no longer understand well enough to evaluate?
- If your main agency resigned tomorrow, what would stop?
- Which task have you automated without naming who is accountable for its output?
- Are you optimising for cost in a function where being wrong is the expensive part?

WHAT THIS TEMPLATE WILL NOT DO FOR YOU

- It will not tell you the right model. It makes the trade-offs explicit and named.
- It has a short half-life while automation capability moves. Check the review date.
- It does not cost the transition. That is a separate finance exercise.

THE DEFENSIBLE OUTPUT

An allocation with a named accountable person for every capability, including the automated ones, and a stated do-not-outsource list.

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H2 · Version 1.0 · Current as of 19 August 2026 · Review cycle: every 90 days