CASE STUDY

**Build and Implement a Marketing Center of Excellence**

Decentralization and siloed processes and business lines are a common bi-product of a growing organization – as new ideas, products, or service needs arise, a new department or process is created to accommodate it. After some time, however, the myriad functional areas and resources wind up performing similar functions for different customers or outcomes, preventing economies of scale and resource optimization and added unwanted and unnecessary risk.

Building centers of excellence to perform like activities across diverse and divided business lines is a tremendous benefit for business that want to maintain diversification while still driving standardization and efficiency. A BMA-built Center of Excellence leverages experts in strategy and execution to drive like activities down faster and less risky process pipelines, freeing up business resources to focus on new innovation and increasing productivity while reducing error exposure. Take a look at this example, where BMA created a customer marketing Center of Excellence that efficiently and effectively combined 8 divergent marketing programs into a nimble yet standardized strategy and execution portal.

**BACKGROUND**

The client is a 150-year old bank; a leading financial institution with a strong retail banking network and a highly competitive credit card portfolio. Successful both in diversification and brand loyalty throughout its rich history, their organization comprises several distinct operational groups, with myriad lines of business under each. While they enjoy continued success and growth in this complex structure, opportunities for standardization and simplification for the sake of efficiency, risk mitigation, and innovation present themselves regularly, and the client needs assistance not only identifying these opportunities, but designing and seamlessly integrating the solution with no business interruption.

One such opportunity arose in the customer marketing area for their retail credit cards. The matrix of potential offers, products, and customers was complicated, and ripe for an organized, streamlined execution process. However, the distinct product lines had been executing their marketing programs in a silo for so long that it was difficult to envision where to begin with a centralized, cross-program approach to customer marketing.
CHALLENGES

BMA’s leading recommendation was to create a centralized team for the development of program strategy and subsequent streamlined execution of said strategy. The educated assumption we were making was that this approach would:

A) Improve Speed to Market by creating an efficient, repeatable engine
B) Reduce risk through standardized, documented procedures
C) Increase resource efficiency through shared responsibilities and fungibility
D) Enhance innovation by refocusing business line experts on new products and services

While the concept was easy to envision, the initial design was a challenge, as the existing siloed model meant multiple different approaches existed. BMA executed a thorough due diligence of existing processes, discovering the following challenges:

1) Limited process documentation existed, and where it did it was fragmented by functional resource area and not end-to-end (most knowledge was in SMEs heads)
2) Each existing product team had unique requirements they “needed” accommodated
3) There were owners of product, owners of programs, and owners of channels, and each had a stake in how the campaigns were designed, executed, and attributed

APPROACH/ SOLUTION

BMA leveraged it’s expertise with effective, best-in-class Marketing Centers of Excellence to identify a model that would work well for the client’s identified challenges AND existing infrastructure nuances. This would mean a centralized team responsible for program-specific strategy across many (all) products and business lines as well as marketing and response channels. The first step was to garner the approval of senior leadership to identify a leader for a newly-formed Customer Marketing COE, so that the team, structure, and processes could be developed in conjunction with the eventual owner. A core team of COE employees was formed as well, and comprised an instant working team for the project. From there, specific, measured steps were taken to stand-up COE:

1) A comprehensive assessment of existing campaigns/programs was conducted to identify those eligible for the COE model.
2) Existing process documentation and tools (were available) were examined to determine best practices, and standardized COE tools were created leveraging the existing wherever possible, for limited disruption to current users.
3) Comprehensive training decks were created to outline approach and justification for the COE model
4) Systematic training and socialization activities occurred to bring all impacted stakeholders up-to-speed
5) A single program was chosen as the “pilot” to test the tools and processes and serve as proof of concept for all other models
6) Additional programs were then brought on to the model, versioning only where critical, viable nuances had been vetted and approved

RESULTS

The Customer Marketing COE for this client went live in 2013 and has created an efficient, less risky engine for existing marketing campaigns while allowing more innovation and product focus to occur without the addition of resources/infrastructure.