

TOP 10 CHALLENGES

Marketing Leaders Faced in 2024 & Actionable Paths Forward

GTM 10

Introduction

As part of the GTM10 nomination process, Cello conducted over 200 semi-structured interviews with marketing professionals from Big Tech giants, high-growth scale-ups, and GTM influencers. Based on these GTM10 interviews, Cello's research reveals the ten biggest challenges marketing teams faced in 2024.

By aligning your priorities with GTM10 honorees' proven playbooks, you can transform past hurdles into growth engines:

Core Challenges:

Driving revenue velocity and retention means tackling what matters most: internal alignment, demand creation, and personalized customer experiences. From orchestrating multi-channel campaigns to navigating martech complexity and budget pressures, these challenges shape go-to-market success.

Actionable Playbooks:

Concrete tactics—quota frameworks, organizational designs, and strategic tech investments—that top performers have applied.

Next Steps

A concise three-point roadmap to benchmark your current state, prioritize high-impact initiatives, and set success metrics for continuous progress.

Insights from the Front Line

"By sharing transparent, insightful content on LinkedIn and in podcast episodes, we quickly built credibility and generated a steady inbound demand pipeline."

"We adopted a data-driven marketing approach to align our marketing and SDR teams—focusing on efficiency metrics and measurable impact—to improve both pipeline quality and conversion rates."

— GTM10 Interviewees

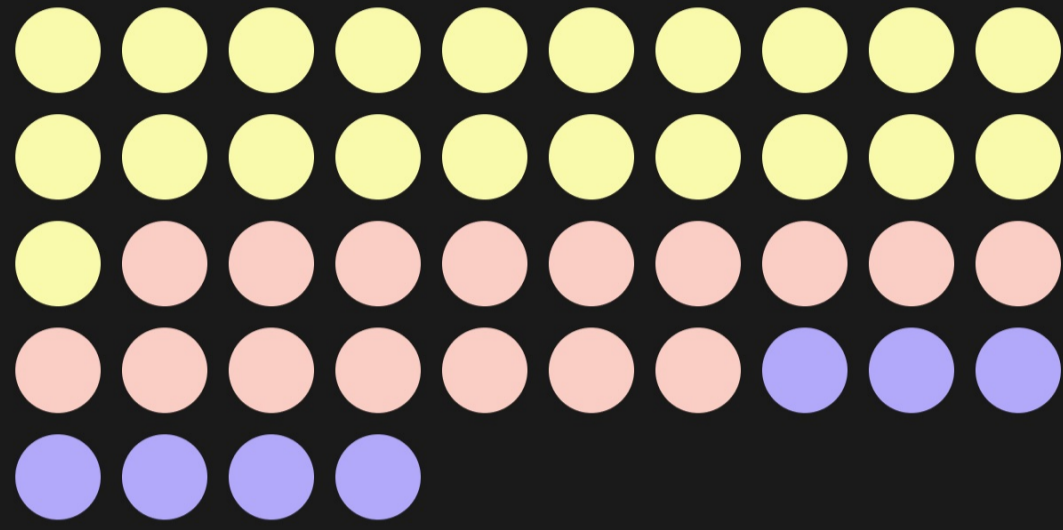
Top Challenges Overview

RANK	CHALLENGE	PREVALENCE	BUSINESS IMPACT
01	INTERNAL ALIGNMENT & COLLABORATION	VERY HIGH	CRITICAL
02	LEAD GENERATION & DEMAND CREATION	VERY HIGH	CRITICAL
03	PERSONALIZATION & CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	VERY HIGH	HIGH
04	MULTI-CHANNEL CAMPAIGN ORCHESTRATION	HIGH	HIGH
05	CONTENT STRATEGY & PRODUCTION AT SCALE	HIGH	MEDIUM
06	MARTECH STACK COMPLEXITY	HIGH	MEDIUM
07	BUDGET CONSTRAINTS & COST EFFICIENCY	MODERATE	MEDIUM
08	AI & EMERGING TECH ADOPTION	MODERATE	MEDIUM
09	MEASUREMENT & ROI ACCOUNTABILITY	MODERATE	MEDIUM
10	DATA PRIVACY & COMPLIANCE	MODERATE	MEDIUM

The GTM10 Awards in Numbers

806

TOTAL NOMINATIONS



386

STARTUP/SCALE UP

276

BIG TECH

144

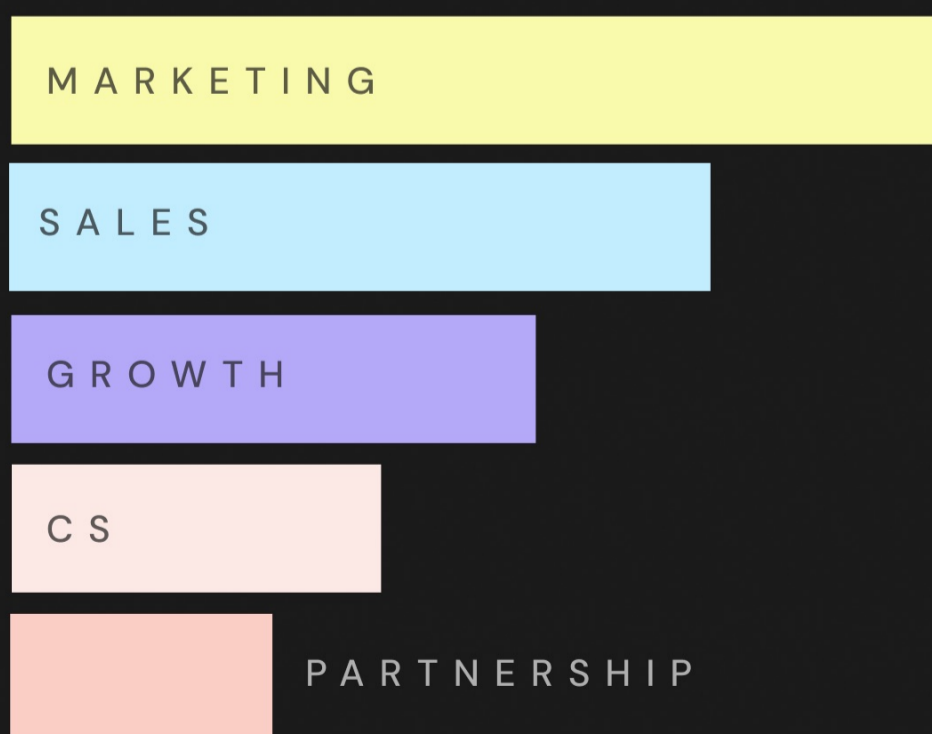
CONTENT CREATOR

Geography Distribution

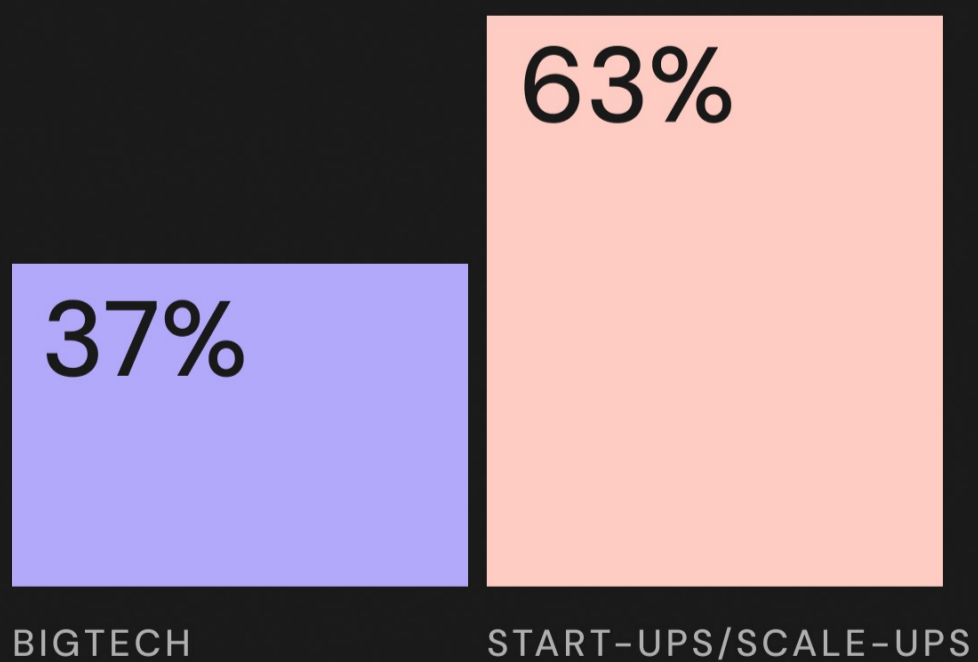
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COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

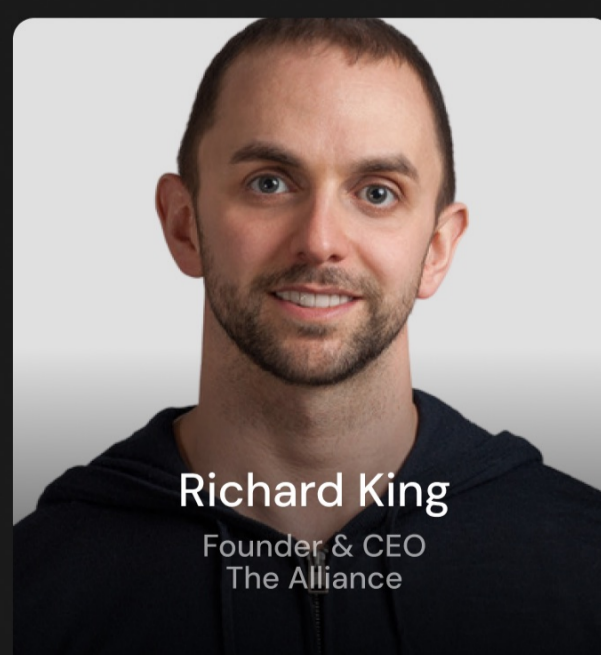
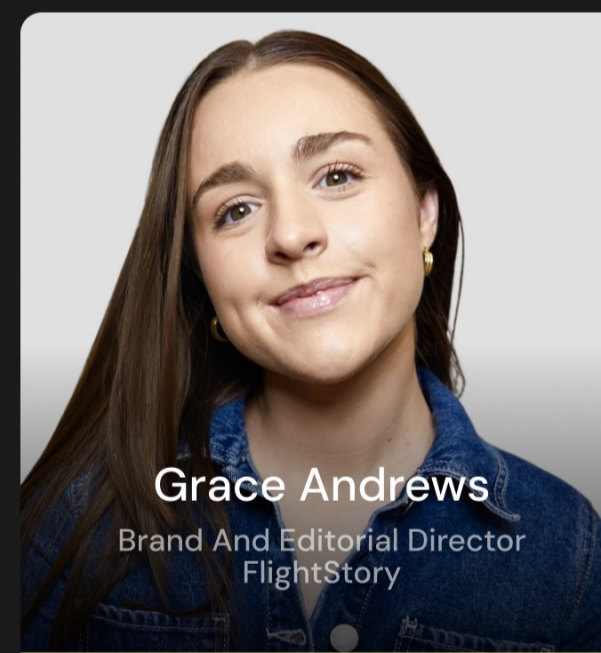
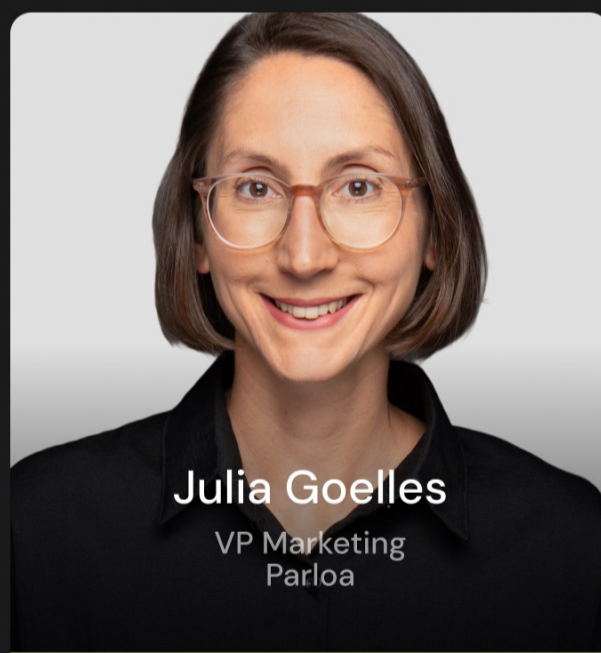
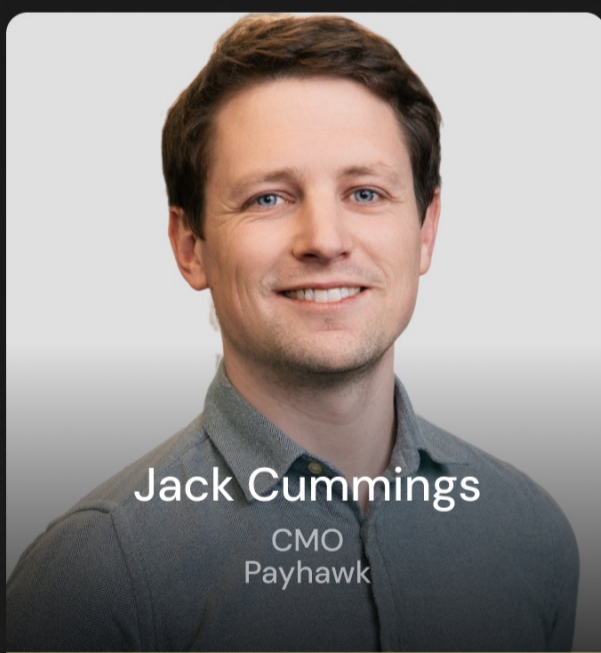
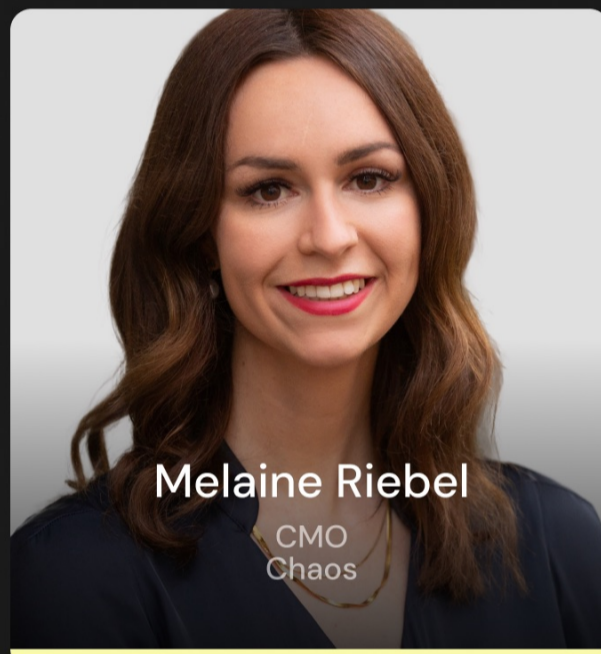
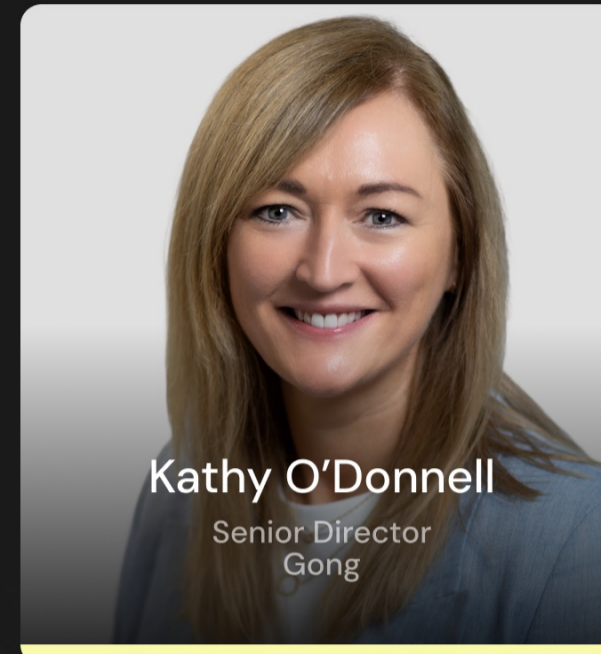
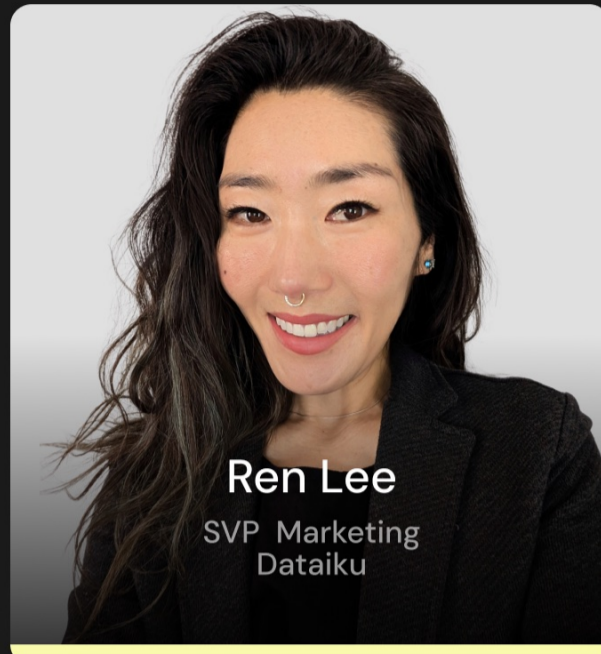
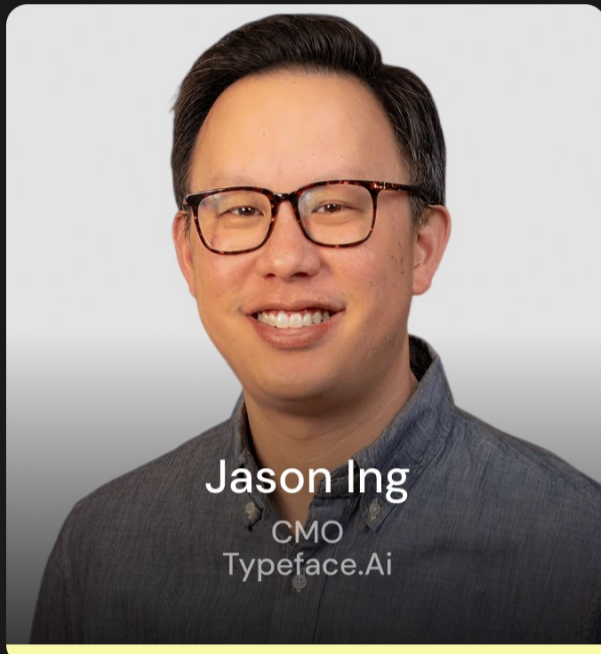
Most competitive category



Startups vs. BigTech



Meet the Marketing Winners



The Marketing Jury



Dave Kellogg

EXECUTIVE IN RESIDENCE • BALDERTON

Dave Kellogg is an EIR at Balderton and a former CEO, CMO, and board member; he advises startups drawing from experience scaling to \$1 B revenue.



Esther Flammer

CMO • LASTPASS

Esther Flammer is CMO at LastPass with 20+ years in B2B tech; named Elite 18 Customer-Led CMO 2023; previously at Wrike, Citrix, and Conga.



Adrianna Burrows

VP MARKETING • SHOPIFY

Adrianna Burrows is VP of Global Marketing at Shopify; a former CMO at PayScale and Cornerstone, she's a seasoned SaaS leader advising Panopto and Stack Overflow.



Alexander Schmitt

PARTNER • LIGHTSPEED

Alexander Schmitt is a partner at Lightspeed investing in B2B and FinTech; MIT-trained, ex-Cherry Ventures, and co-founder of MergerSpot (acquired), focusing on early-stage innovation.

Challenges & Actionable Steps

1. Internal Alignment & Collaboration

The Challenge

- **Metric Mismatch:** Marketing chases MQLs, sales wants SQOs, product tracks activation—driving misaligned incentives.
- **Slow Approvals:** Legal/brand reviews stall launches by weeks.
- **Feedback Void:** Lack of closed-loop insight on lead quality.

Playbook

- **Monthly GTM Council:** VP-level forum reviews one shared dashboard; average asset-approval time shrank 45%.
- **SLA-Driven Hand-offs:** Time-boxed service agreements for MQL disposition & creative reviews, with escalation paths.
- **Live Revenue Dashboards:** CRM + product usage streaming into BI fosters shared narrative and data-driven debates.

Expected Impact

Faster decisions and measurable win-rate gains via unified execution.

Challenges & Actionable Steps

2. Lead Generation & Demand Creation

The Challenge

- **Rising Acquisition Costs:** A majority reported search CPCs and paid-social CPMs up 30-50% YoY, pressuring CAC and payback KPIs.
- **Niche ICP Volume:** Vertical SaaS teams (~20% of sample) struggle to scale pipeline when TAM sits in the low thousands.
- **Lead Stagnation:** 3 in 5 ops heads called out MQL queues bloated with low-intent names due to volume-biased scoring.

Playbook

- **Unified Demand Engine:** Consolidate DSP, search, social and outbound orchestration in one hub; full-funnel retargeting loops lowered CPL by 18% on average.
- **Partner-First Motion:** Co-market with ecosystem vendors through joint webinars and 'account swaps'—27% of net-new pipe in the dataset came from these alliances within two quarters.
- **AI-Driven Segmentation:** Train propensity models to trigger next-best-action cadences; teams saw 3x SAL rates versus static firmographics.

Expected Impact

Expected Impact: Healthier, higher-intent pipeline at lower blended cost—fueling non-linear ARR growth.

Challenges & Actionable Steps

3. Personalization & Customer Experience

The Challenge

- **Data Gaps:** Half the operators lack unified first-/zero-party data, restricting personalisation beyond basic token swaps.
- **Automation Fatigue:** Recipients tune out templated nurture drips; open-source dev-tool firms in the dataset saw click-throughs halved YoY.
- **Regulatory Limits:** 1 in 3 EMEA marketers warn cookie deprecation will wipe 20-30% of behavioural signals.

Playbook

- **Consent-Backed CDP:** Centralise opted-in data in a CDP feeding dynamic content blocks, quadrupling field depth over ESP-only setups.
- **Persona Pods & A/B Loops:** Micro-teams iterate persona journeys each sprint, driving >15% CTR lift.
- **Adaptive Creative:** Inject real-time intent (product usage, support tickets) into offers; activation rates doubled in OSS tools after adoption.

Expected Impact

20-40% engagement and conversion uplift while staying compliant.

Challenges & Actionable Steps

4. Multi-Channel Campaign Orchestration

The Challenge

- **Channel Silos:** Email, paid and event squads run separate calendars—operators logged launch collisions at least twice per quarter.
- **Brand Drift:** Over 40% cited inconsistent creative across channels, eroding trust among longer enterprise cycles.
- **Manual Hand-offs:** Asset approvals and list pulls take days; one enterprise team burnt 300+ PM hours per quarter on spreadsheet merges.

Playbook

- **Campaign Pods:** Cross-functional pods own a customer theme end-to-end, cutting internal handoff time by 40%.
- **Live RACI Calendar:** A single Notion/Asana board with automated Slack alerts reduced collision-driven rework hours by 25%.
- **API-First Automation:** Webhook connectors move assets and performance data across CMS, MAP and BI, eliminating ≈80% of manual merges.

Expected Impact

Faster launches, unified storytelling and a double digit lift in campaign ROI via seamless orchestration.

Challenges & Actionable Steps

5. Content Strategy & Production At Scale

The Challenge

- **Capacity Bottlenecks:** Writer, designer and video bandwidth trail the expanding matrix of formats and funnel stages.
- **Voice Consistency:** 25 % noted freelance/AI drafts drifting from core story, confusing audiences.
- **ROI Blind Spots:** Most teams lack asset-level pipeline attribution, so hero content competes for budget without evidence.

Playbook

- **Pillar-Cluster Framework:** Flagship research pillars spawn 10-15 derivative assets—tripling output per staff hour.
- **Elastic Talent Bench:** Vetted freelancers & agencies on retainer absorb spikes without headcount growth.
- **AI-Accelerated Drafting:** Copy/visual co-pilots slice first-draft time by 60 %; freed hours reinvested in thought-leadership depth.

Expected Impact

Sustained content velocity, consistent voice and trackable pipeline impact.

Challenges & Actionable Steps

6. Marketing Technology Stack Complexity

The Challenge

- **Integration Instability:** API misfires & batch sync delays corrupt campaign data and compliance logs.
- **Shadow IT Overlap:** Uncoordinated purchases produce redundant workflows and wasted licences.
- **Cost Inflation:** SaaS spend creeps beyond the <10% of revenue benchmark.

Playbook

- **Rationalisation Blitz:** Map every tool to a KPI, then sunset or consolidate ≈25% of licences, unlocking six-figure OPEX.
- **Integration Layer:** iPaaS/event bus standardises data & flags sync errors, cutting tickets by 70%.
- **Stack Stewardship:** A RevOps “Stack Steward” owns SLAs, roadmap alignment and adoption.

Expected Impact

Leaner costs, cleaner data and a resilient martech backbone

Challenges & Actionable Steps

7. Budget Constraints & Cost Efficiency

The Challenge

- **Media Trade-Offs:** Deciding between high-cost paid plays and slow-burn organic channels under flat budgets.
- **Short-Termism:** Programs with 6--12-month paybacks (SEO, community) get cut.
- **Reallocation Friction:** Finance processes can't pivot funds mid-cycle.

Playbook

- **Agile Budgeting:** 70% baseline / 30% sprint fund for monthly redeploys based on ROI leaderboards.
- **ROI Locker:** Backlog of low-cost, high-yield tactics (e.g., intent retargeting, micro-influencers) ready for activation.
- **Quarterly Cost Reviews:** Double-down on top-quartile performers, pause bottom-quartile.

Expected Impact

Flexible spend that sustains pipeline even in flat or shrinking budgets.

Challenges & Actionable Steps

8. AI & Emerging Tech Adoption

The Challenge

- **Vendor Noise:** Flood of AI martech claims muddies ROI assessment, risking fatigue & wasted POCs.
- **Quality Drift:** Ungoverned AI outputs degrade brand and data hygiene.
- **Skill Gap:** Marketers lack prompt-engineering & model-evaluation chops.

Playbook

- **AI Pilot Sprints:** 30-day pilots on single use cases (copy drafting, chatbot triage) with hard ROI checkpoints; cycle-time reductions hit 35-50%.
- **Enablement Guild:** Internal community of practice sharing prompt libraries and ethics guidelines; one SaaS team trained 60 marketers in 6 weeks.
- **Governed Integrations:** Route AI outputs through API layers or CMS plugins under version control and human-in-the-loop QA.

Expected Impact

Responsible, measurable efficiency gains and accelerated innovation without quality compromises.

Challenges & Actionable Steps

9. Measurement & ROI Accountability

The Challenge

- **Data Fragmentation:** 1 in 6 leaders highlighted that marketing, product-usage and finance data live in silos, blocking cradle-to-renewal attribution and causing “black-box” budget debates.
- **Board-Level Scrutiny:** Funding headwinds mean every € of brand spend is challenged; several Series B-C CMOs reported losing up to 25% of budget when ROI proof lagged.
- **Last-Click Myopia:** 40% of respondents admitted early-stage programs are chronically under-funded because success is judged on single-channel dashboards.

Key pain points

- **Multi-Touch Attribution Warehouse:** Stand-up a Snowflake / BigQuery layer blending CRM, product and paid logs to achieve ≈90% touch coverage and publish cohort P&Ls monthly.
- **Measurement Center of Excellence:** Set up a cross-functional tiger team (Marketing-/RevOps + Finance) that owns “source-of-truth” dashboards and quarterly data-quality audits.
- **Forecast-Back Planning:** Tie every campaign line-item to pipeline targets in the corporate model; auto-flag CAC/LTV deltas >10% so budget pivots happen in-quarter—not next fiscal.

Expected Impact

Credible, real-time ROI narratives that retain budgets, compress planning cycles and reposition marketing as a revenue co-pilot.

Challenges & Actionable Steps

10. Data Privacy & Compliance

The Challenge

- **Patchwork Consent:** Inconsistent opt-in flows expose gaps that regulators target.
- **Personalisation Trade-Off:** Teams fear stricter consent will cripple targeting precision.
- **Regulation Flux:** Regional laws evolve faster than policy updates, creating moving-target compliance requirements.

Playbook

- **Central Consent Management:** A CMP pushes granular consent states to every activation channel, enforcing lawful-basis checks in real time.
- **Privacy-by-Design Playbook:** Embed compliance checkpoints—data minimisation, purpose limitation, risk assessment—into every campaign brief; one FinTech scaled into five regions with zero DPA issues following this model.
- **Quarterly Reg-Ops Drills:** Live scenario drills keep staff ahead of new legislation and rehearse breach-response protocols, ensuring organisational muscle memory.

Expected Impact

Reduced legal exposure and fines, faster regulator audits, and stronger customer trust through transparent, compliant data practices.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The ten challenges outlined here represent the shared battleground for marketing leaders in 2024, regardless of company size. By embedding these actionable steps into your GTM practice, teams can turn obstacles into competitive advantages.

Next Steps for Your Team

Benchmark

Map your organization against each challenge area to identify strengths and gaps.

Prioritize

Select one "quick win" and one "strategic shift" to tackle in the next quarter.

Measure & Iterate

Establish clear KPIs, review progress quarterly, and refine your steps based on results.

Prepared by the GTM10 Awards Research team at Cello.

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