

Building a Centre of Excellence to deliver functional digital maturity

 By Johan Walters

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In a previous [article](#), I examined how the operational breakdown between CMOs and CTOs transpires. In this instalment, I explain how setting up a Centre of Excellence can nurture a cohesive team, focused on deliverables that benefit the entire organisation, while moving it closer to real digital maturity.



Johan Walters, Lead Tech Consultant at Incubeta SA

It's a team effort

We work closely with clients who realise that they must begin the journey towards digital maturity or risk losing out to more digitally advanced competitors either locally or internationally.

Using the Google Digital Maturity Framework, we suggest that the best way to achieve success is to set up an operational 'war room' or more appropriately, a Centre of Excellence where a representative team can meet, discuss, strategise and prioritise a practical process to graduate their organisation towards a more competitive, digitally mature company.

We all know that the first step to any form of recovery is to admit that there is a problem. Similarly, the first step in crafting a digitally mature organisation is to admit that there are challenges facing your digital marketing and, more particularly, that any solution will require the commitment and participation of the entire organisation.



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Here are some best practices when setting your Centre of Excellence.

- **Choose your leader**

Like every well-planned journey, an organisation will need to choose a dedicated person to champion the process. While it does not necessarily have to be a C-level decision-maker, it is important to have someone who is willing and excited about stepping up and taking ownership of the project. We are clear that the CMO or marketing leader will need to sponsor the transformation initiative, but they do not necessarily have to lead it on a day to day basis.

- **Get the right people involved**

Like all great epics we have read or watched on screen, the winning team must be representative. We recommend that the marketing (including digital managers of each brand subsector), technology, business intelligence and of course your digital partners like Incubeta are represented in the Centre of Excellence. When choosing you should go for detail-oriented and skilled professionals with a holistic view of the business and its processes.

- **Set boundaries**

We advise that in the first few meetings the group clearly defines what its mandate is. There is nothing worse than creating another level of bureaucracy that devolves into a talk shop. Set up a charter that reflects the outcomes and revisit it every so often to make sure you haven't strayed from the original objectives.

- **Recognising success**

Defining a framework for success and a plan of how to get there is paramount. Defining what success looks like means everyone knows what they are working towards and can pull together. The benefits of using a global gold standard, like the one set by Google, while not essential, can help your organisation reach its outcome far faster, and you will be able to benchmark yourself against your global competitors and peers – something your board member will be very grateful for when it comes to reporting to shareholders.

- **Understand the tech**

Having a top-level understanding of what tech you will be using will help define parameters and also help you better engage with your Centre members. Cloud martech will open doors for use cases that could previously never have been thought of. It would be good to know enough to comfortably chat about the processes you will be moving through.

• Incremental gains can make all the difference

Choosing use cases that are clear and that can be achieved in a relatively short period of time builds confidence and, more importantly, lays the foundation for the work to come. Your Centre of Excellence head will have to prove the worth of the marketing tech they have purchased after all.

A great example is to make your company more mobile-friendly. With a mobile-first customer base, this can make a big impact on your customer experience. As a quick test to see just how you stack up, why not input your company's URL [here](#) and see how mobile-friendly your own website is.

• Evaluate and refine

Finally, as all good developers know, you have to be constantly evaluating and refining to move towards success. We believe that the evaluation needs to take place across people, processes and platforms. Be flexible enough to change and refine your methods if they aren't delivering.

It's not for nothing that we speak of digital 'maturity'. Like all personal growth, moving towards maturity means constant reflection and change. It may not always be a comfortable experience but working with trusted partners who have walked this journey before can make all the difference.

ABOUT JOHAN WALTERS

Johan is a digital marketing transformation specialist helping brands on their transformation towards digital marketing maturity.

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