



B2B CMO Roundtable **Key Insights**

**Marketing's revenue case:
Prove marketing value, justify spend**



Key Insights

Marketing ROI in enterprise B2B is a paradox. Boards and marketing leaders need clear, direct attribution.

But year-long sales cycles, multi-stakeholder buying committees, and ongoing customer engagement make traditional ROI calculations meaningless.

Here's how CMOs are navigating the gap between direct board expectations and what's actually measurable →

This document represents anonymised insights from a B2B CMO roundtable discussion. All participant information has been removed to protect individual privacy while preserving valuable learnings for the broader CMO community.

A modern office interior with glass walls and ceiling lights. The ceiling features exposed ductwork and long, bright fluorescent lights. A security camera is mounted on the ceiling. The glass walls reflect the interior and exterior environment. The floor is a light-colored, textured material.

Topic 1

Reframing success - time to say goodbye to attribution and influence?

Traditional ROI fails for three reasons: fragmented data infrastructure, inherently broken attribution models, and sales cycles that make calculations obsolete by the time they're complete.

Progressive CMOs have stopped fighting this battle. Instead, they're reframing how marketing contribution gets measured and valued.

Topic 1



Measuring marketing influence is nonsense; marketing should influence 100% of deals.

“I think marketing should influence 100% of deals - it's a miracle if someone converted without any marketing touchpoint. So I don't report on influence because of course it's influenced.

Instead, the question becomes: what does marketing bring versus other functions?" The conversation shifts from "did marketing create this opportunity" to "what value does marketing add across all opportunities?"

CMO, enterprise software company

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Own the whole company pipeline and eliminate attribution fights.

“I don't sign up for a singular marketing pipeline number. Instead, I take the whole company pipeline target and work with the CRO on how we can achieve it together.

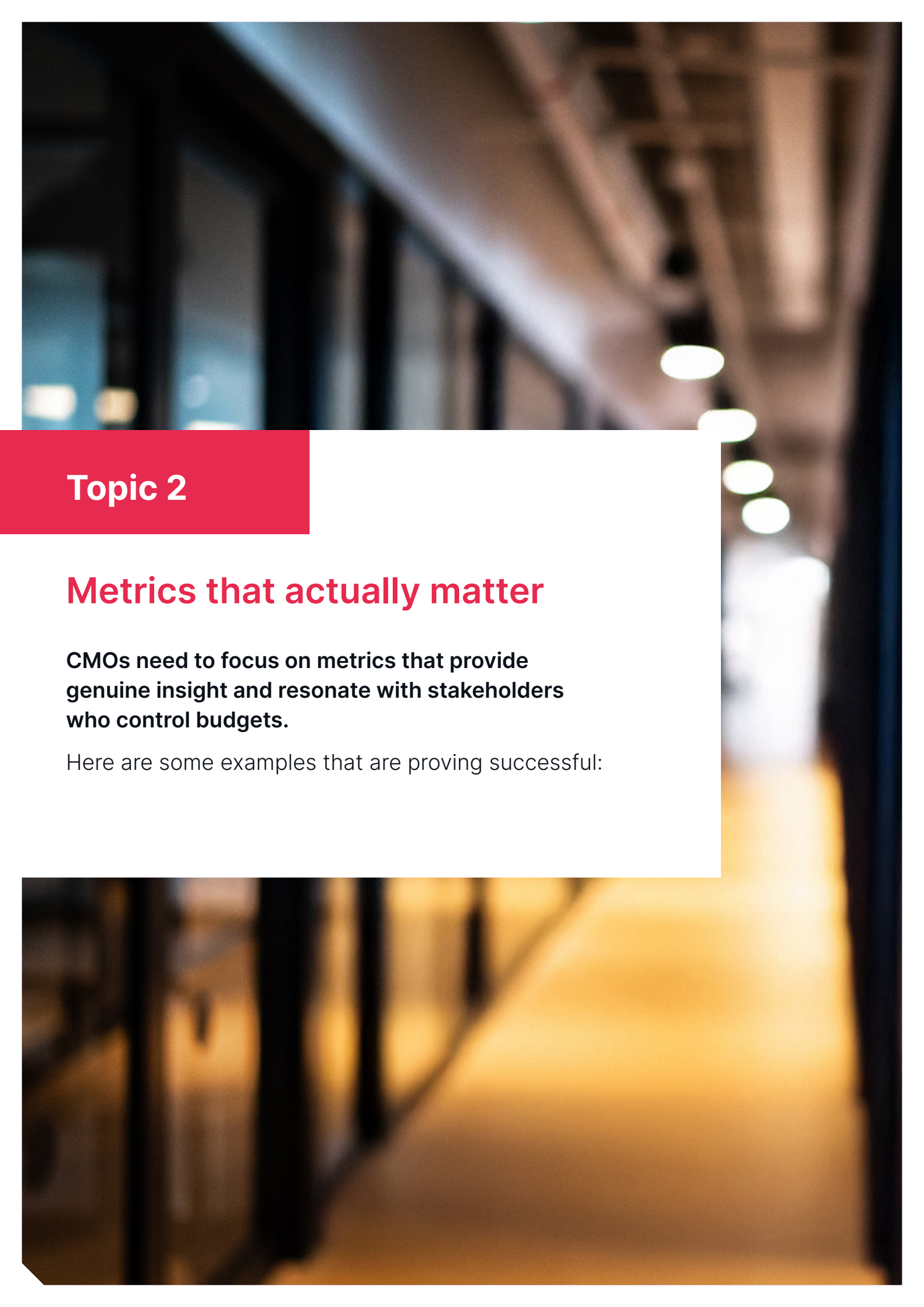
I manage the SDRs, we co-own the number, and that gives me flexibility to move money between channels - partner marketing, events, SDR capacity - based on what's performing.”

This eliminates attribution fights entirely. Marketing becomes accountable for total pipeline, not a subset.”

CMO, enterprise software company

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Topic 2

Metrics that actually matter

CMOs need to focus on metrics that provide genuine insight and resonate with stakeholders who control budgets.

Here are some examples that are proving successful:

Topic 2



Verbal attribution matters too.

“For anything coming inbound, we make sure BDRs ask verbally how they found us.

We discovered huge numbers were coming through analyst reports - there would have been no way to detect this otherwise.

That's how we justified significant analyst investment, because we had direct attribution from prospects themselves.”

Former CMO,
enterprise software companies

Track touchpoints across the full lifecycle.

“You need to track as many touchpoints as possible - not just before the sale but through the entire lifecycle.

We had a client once say he was getting bombarded by competitors but heard nothing from us.

He wanted to see we were succeeding, that we were visible in the market. That's why client marketing touchpoints matter as much as acquisition.”

Former CMO,
enterprise software companies

Marketing doesn't stop at first sale. It's crucial to measure engagement through retention and expansion.



Topic 2

Demonstrate sales efficiency gains.

“If 6sense is set up properly, you can show that opportunities identified through 6sense are eight to ten times more likely to convert. That’s a metric you can use to demonstrate marketing impact - not just that we’re generating activity, but that our intelligence makes sales dramatically more effective.”

Former CMO,
enterprise software companies

Create a narrative that speaks to the board by showing how marketing intelligence improves conversion rates and efficiency.



Argue for lifetime value, not first-year revenue.

“I suggested we look at marketing investment over lifetime value, the same way we evaluate broker commission.

But our lead generation steering committee said no, year one only.

I thought, we’re really going to convince ourselves not to do any marketing if we put all costs in and only look at first year revenue.”

Former CMO,
enterprise software companies

First-year revenue metrics systematically undervalue B2B marketing. Push back. Make the LTV case.



Topic 3

Educate the board - or walk away

It's clear that CMOs must reshape how their organisations think about marketing's role and value.

This requires backbone and skill to educate board members.



Topic 3



Speak the language of competitive advantage.

“Every board understands that marketing needs to unlock opportunities for competitive advantage, position that advantage, and convert it.

This framework works whether you're talking about a new product launch or driving consistency from brand through to sales. It cuts through industries with long sales cycles and discretionary buying processes.”

Former CMO,
asset management

Expect inconsistent understanding and bias.

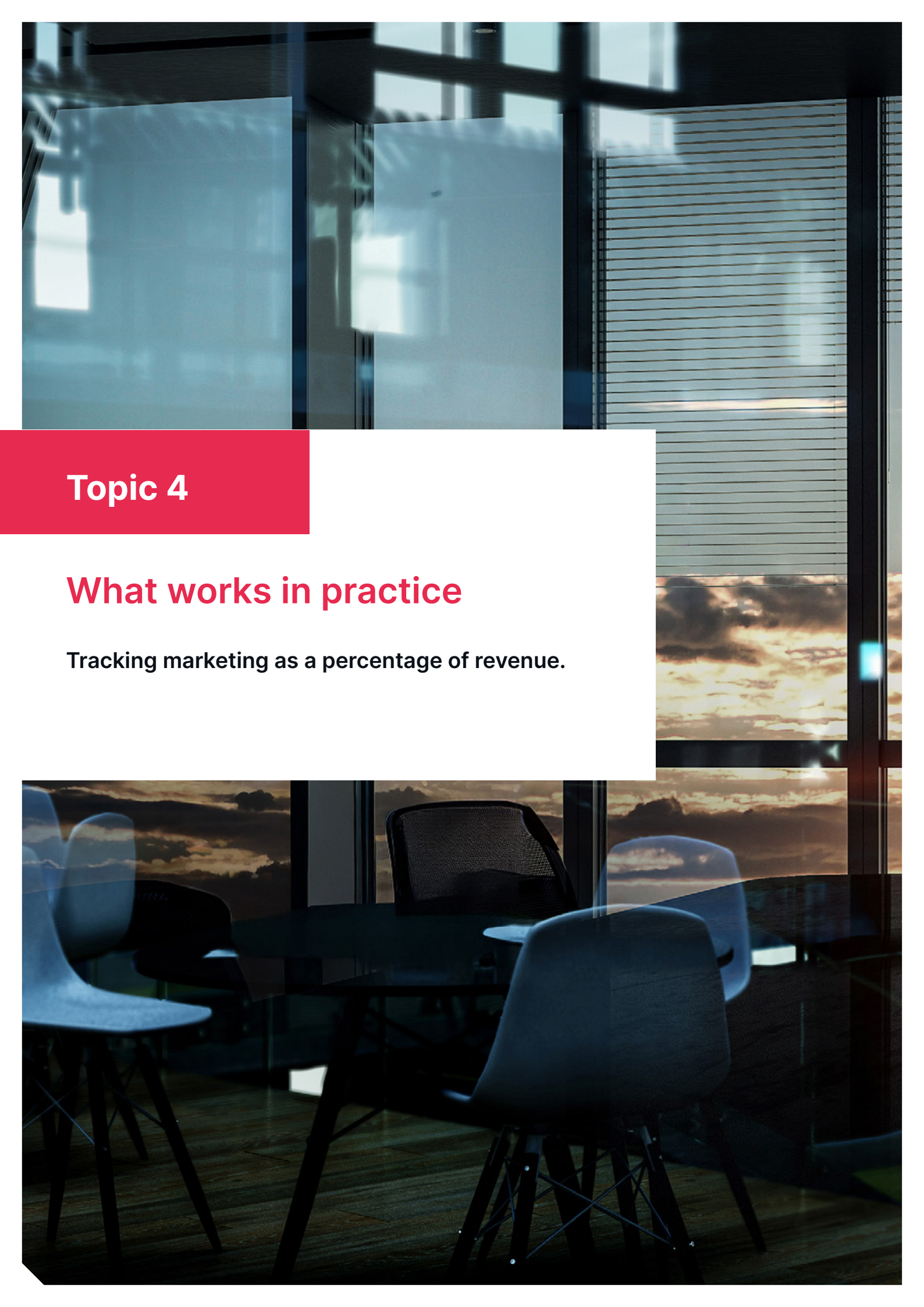
“The extent of board member biases around what marketing should do varies enormously.

You may have some industries with more nuanced, diversified boards, and others where it's tougher. But you're never going to get consistency.”

Former CMO,
asset management

Board members bring different levels of marketing literacy and unconscious biases. Accept this reality. Adapt your communication.





Topic 4

What works in practice

Tracking marketing as a percentage of revenue.

Topic 4



Expect inconsistent understanding and bias.

“Marketing as a percentage of ARR or revenue - that's the metric I like most.

Every company is different, so benchmarks don't help much. You're competing with yourself. As long as your performance keeps improving, you're good.

Then the art is allocating budget across channels with different price points and continuously improving performance in each.”

CMO, enterprise software company

Varied routes are taken by CMOs, some keep it simple and sustainable, focusing on efficiency gains over proving causation.

Mapping complete buying journeys retrospectively.

“Take comprehensive retrospective analysis - map the complete buying journey for won accounts.

Show collaborative engagement across multiple stakeholders over extended periods.

This takes more time but provides compelling evidence of how deals actually happen and the cross-functional value that makes them possible.”

Chief Marketing & Communications Officer, enterprise technology company

Work backward from closed deals. Show the complexity but make it comprehensible through narrative, not spreadsheets.





Key Insights

The bottom line

The ROI challenge isn't just technical - it's cultural. CMOs must reshape how organisations think about marketing's contribution:

Fix data infrastructure first.

Without clean data, all measurement is speculation.

Embrace journey complexity in your operations.

Track multi-touchpoint, multi-stakeholder buying journeys internally to understand what works.

Frame value strategically for boards.

Translate that complexity into competitive advantage language, not campaign metrics or attribution models.

Focus on continuous improvement.

Demonstrate year-over-year efficiency gains rather than attempting to prove precise ROI on individual activities.

Stand firm.

Refuse inappropriate targets. The short-term discomfort enables long-term credibility.

As one CMO noted:

"There's a job to do to make the shift and look at it a different way. It needs a clear narrative."



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