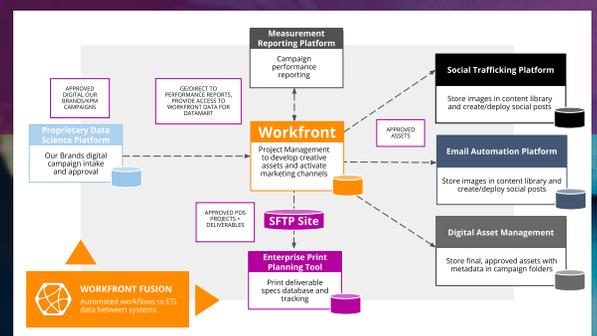




How Kroger achieved super marketing capabilities

Grocery chain takes an aggressive and flexible approach to implementing Workfront—and transforming its 325-person marketing organization



What's it take to transform a large, multi-brand and cross-channel in-house marketing agency on time, despite a pandemic?

Kroger, the largest supermarket chain in the U.S., has first-hand experience. The 2,800-store company took on a marketing transformation initiative in 2020. Rolling out early this year, the effort, undertaken in partnership with marketing consulting firm Zee Jay Digital, anticipates saving 35% of the team's time spent in project management—time that will be redirected toward producing more personalized marketing.

An ambitious work management implementation encompassing a comprehensive people, process and automation plan was launched for the singular purpose of enabling the Cincinnati-based grocery chain to deliver personalized customer experiences at scale needed to better compete in the digital age.

Kroger marketing's Sara Spille managed the effort to connect corporate strategy with marketing process using the Workfront platform and other technologies. "Our team and the Zee Jay team dug in with dozens of key associates to intimately understand their work now, and iterate on new ways of working in the future, to determine the best way forward," Spille said.

"We identified imperatives and best practices up front, and kept on course throughout the one-year plus execution," added Spille, Kroger marketing's third-party systems platform manager. "Our goal was to enable projects to flow smoothly and seamlessly across all teams and systems—to save time, money and help us better serve our customers."

Kroger Marketing Transformation Timeline

Marketing leadership embraces transformation directives

Late
2019

Selects Workfront as platform of choice

Brings Zee Jay Digital on board as consulting, implementation and integration partner

Early
2020

COVID STRIKES!

Management, team members go remote

Mid
2020

Concerted marketing effort continues-- process design, integrations, system design methodology

Pilot launches, training continues

Early
2021

Kroger goes live, marketing's productivity increases

Digital ops competency up, customers benefit

Mid
2021

Expectations point to 100% KPI

Four Success Factors

Kroger marketing leadership and Zee Jay Digital consultants realized that achieving goals required the following: A strong in-house champion; an appetite to invest in process design prior to touching technology; an iterative, hands-on approach to system design methodology; and a commitment to integrate adjacent solutions as part of the initial roll-out.

1. The right people in place. The initiative's success is due in large part to having a leader with a willingness to get into the nitty gritty design issues, and with real authority due to the support of an executive sponsor. Spille worked in concert with a strong cross-functional core team. The core team provided input and expertise from across marketing: from Brand and Lifecycle Marketing, Merchandising, Creative and Print Services, and Channel Activation, including Digital Experience, Media, Social, Affiliate Marketing, all the way through Measurement, Analytics and Insights.

In the general uncertainty in the early days of the pandemic, Spille focused on tactics to not only keep the team's attention while working remotely, but to develop more cohesiveness than would have otherwise been possible. "Normally these implementations would have required hundreds of hours of in-person white board collaboration," she said. "Being remote gave us more focus, providing a more convenient platform to discuss issues as they arrived. In hindsight, working remotely worked on our behalf."

2. A process design-first approach. The core team partnered with the Zee Jay Digital team to design each channel's process work stream, documenting together the needs of the different channels and understanding how they needed to work for cross-channel campaigns.

To provide a fundamental POV of roles across 100s of marketers, executives held closed sessions to build directional RACI models. Once provided to the work team, these RACI models served as guide posts for how work should be performed into the future, helping the work team put meat on the bones to design process.

"We started this project with process silos. Everyone understood how things were done in their area, but rarely understood how their actions affected those up and downstream," Spille said. Workfront gave Kroger the opportunity to build a seamless, end-to-end system.

To ensure the teams had flexible but intuitive workflows, Zee Jay Digital utilized a marketing process model to translate distinct workflows, including Brand, Test & Learn, Social, Promotions, Customer Journeys, Media, and Brand Assets.

3. Technology design. Workfront now provides a single place to connect all Kroger marketing work—across all teams. To keep pace with rapidly moving and complex integrated marketing programs, campaigns, promotions and content, the solution design focused on connecting the work and providing visibility for the internal teams so the end customer experience could become more personalized.

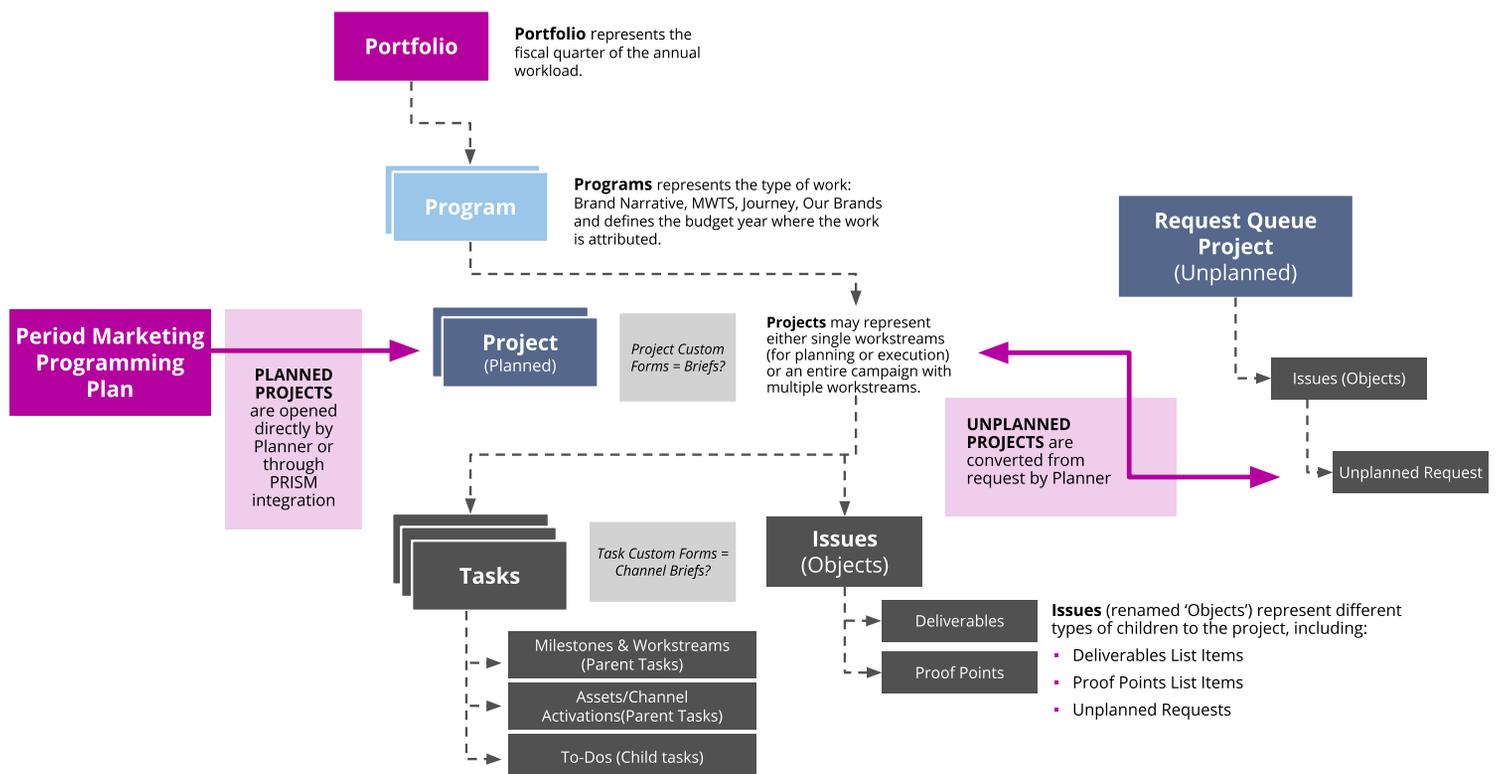
“The integrated design is managing the flow of work in a way that is consistent with out-of-the-box functionality which also allows us the ability to be flexible and evolve workflows as we learn more about the customers,” Spille said.

To improve planning and visualization from a customer view, the Quarterly Roadmap builder Calendar View was introduced. Process workflows were optimized in iterative working sessions with the core team. Customized dashboards and views were

developed allowing teams and users to have the right level of visibility into all the different programs, campaigns, promotions and content within a workflow. Custom forms were created for deliverables' lists and creative briefing and Workfront's Fusion product was used to push deliverable information to the print services team, achieving a common intake process.

Workfront Fusion was also used to automate the activation of channel and creative teams with unique task-based project templates. These flexible project templates are built to be adapted and evolve as Kroger learns more about their customers and process needs change.

Approvals are obtained through the Workfront Proofing tool and additional Workfront Fusion automations used to deploy final assets. And, integration between the Measurement Reporting Platform and Workfront was introduced, connecting results to future work.

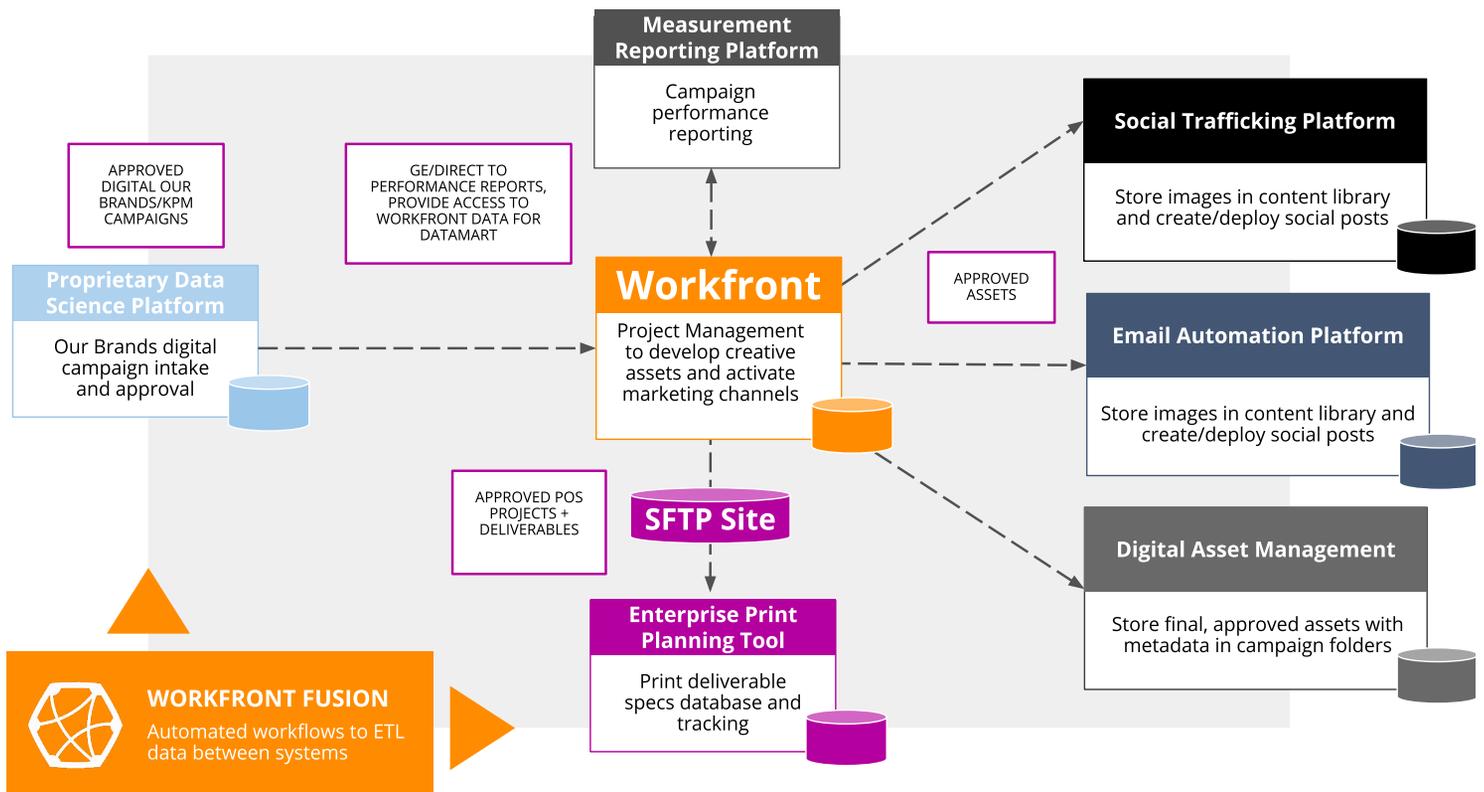


4. Integrations. Specific integrations were prioritized in phase 1 that allowed for a closed loop process, which greatly promoted adoption. “We integrated with the tools already well adopted that people already liked,” Spille said. “This strategy allowed users to get even more value out of those systems.”

“While we were working through process implementation, we also had a track solely focused on integrating with other systems. This focus will automate some of the redundant tasks that our teams complete daily,” she said. “These tasks are centered around asset trafficking, repetitive information transfer from team to team, and enabling the Measurement Reporting Platform to make measurement reporting available.” At the end of the day, the project is about improving the teams’ work life by digitally transforming into a single place for work to happen.

Using Workfront’s Fusion (IPaaS) product, Zee Jay Digital began integrating the familiar solutions. This allowed the Kroger team to expand their comfort zone with Workfront and integrate hundreds of fields of data. Integrations included:

- *Proprietary Data Science Platform* to automate intake for Kroger Precision Marketing for the Our Brands private label brands marketing campaigns.
- *Digital Asset Management* to store final branded content for searchability and repurposing of content.
- *Social Trafficking Platform* to deploy social content.
- *Email Automation Platform* to deploy customer-centric personalized email campaigns.
- *Enterprise Print Planning Tool* to push in-store signage creative deliverable requests out to the stores for customization.
- *Measurement Reporting Platform* to bring visibility into the Workfront solution for measurement, analytics and insights for campaigns.



Taking stock of the way marketing's done at Kroger

Now that the project has been successfully launched, the work to drive adoption continues, including: A Workfront adoptions track; ongoing training; lunch-and-learns; and scheduled releases to introduce new functionality.

Together, Kroger and Zee Jay Digital helped gain footing and build rapport—among marketing, with the technology and PMO teams, and with enterprise leaders. "Zee Jay Digital was the catalyst for our organization's ability to reap the benefits of digital transformation, allowing us to connect corporate strategy with marketing outcomes through technology,



■ ■ *In hindsight, working remotely worked on our behalf.* **■ ■**

Sara Spille,
Marketing's Third-Party Systems
Platform Manager, Kroger

Initiatives Kroger Took to Deliver Personalized Customer Experiences at Scale

- Establish a single operational platform
- Orchestrate CCX intentionally via technologies
- Centralize all projects into a single solution
- Improve visibility and prioritization by overcoming departmental silos
- Improve collaboration across channels
- Improve completeness and quality of requestor information
- Improve resource predictability & utilization
- Automate project approval processes
- Provide measurement whenever possible
- Optimize efficiencies in re-purposing content
- Engage customers meaningfully, build relationships, loyalty

The Four Vs of Kroger's marketing transformation

Zee Jay Digital's clients, including Kroger, use the Four Vs to benchmark the current, complex state of marketing to attain an improved state. Commonly used to describe dimensions of Big Data, the Four Vs—volume, velocity, variety and value—is the accepted framework for capturing the metrics of marketing transformation initiatives as well.

Volume describes the breadth of activity that can be managed.

- # of touches
- # of content chunks
- # of campaigns

Velocity refers to the speed at which campaigns are brought to-market.

- Content cycle time
- Conversion rate
- AI responsiveness
- Decision response time

Variety describes the ability to manage campaigns across all media—and handle both mass and personalized interactions.

- # of media types
- # of channels
- # of platforms

Value relates to overall performance of the marketing organization.

- Revenue per visit
- Shopping cart abandonment
- Customer lifetime value
- Sentiment analysis

A boutique alternative to global consulting firms, Zee Jay Digital transforms marketing's operating model, and the orchestration of work across internal and external teams, to achieve personalized customer experiences at scale. The consultancy was named Workfront Partner of the Year in 2019 & 2020, and is an Allocadia partner. In addition, Zee Jay is a founding member of the Global Work Management Alliance. Clients include Whole Foods + Amazon, John Hancock, Nike, TJX, Anheuser-Busch, UHS, AAA, Brooks Brothers, Fresenius, Ledvance, Kroger, Big Lots, Perkin Elmer, Bright Horizons, Talbots, Charles River, Giant Eagle, and more.

To learn more about how Zee Jay can optimize your marketing organization, visit ZeeJayDigital.com.



How has your marketing organization managed the rapid shift to remote working since the advent of COVID-19?

The host of Good Morning Marketing, Zee Jay's podcast, wants to know.

Contact ZJM@ZeeJayDigital.com and tell us your story.

