What grade would your CEO give your marketing organization for its ability to demonstrate its impact on the business?

For more than a decade, we at VisionEdge Marketing have been examining that question and asking what it takes to make the grade. Over the years, our annual study has provided insight into what marketers do better and differently. The marketers receiving a grade of 90 or higher on a 100-point scale have been classified as "A" marketers.

This year, VEM partnered with ITSMA for its annual survey, and more than 400 business executives and marketers participated in the 2012 Marketing Performance Management Study. In addition to best-practices identified over the years, new ones emerged.

Today's "A" marketers demonstrate six best-practice competencies: alignment, accountability, analytics, automation, alliances, and assessment. We call these the Six A's of Marketing Performance Management.

By mastering the Six A's, your marketing organization will be able to better measure and improve its performance and demonstrate how marketing is helping the business achieve its strategic objectives.
The 6 A’s of Marketing Performance Management

from ITSMA/VEM’s 2012 Marketing Performance Management Survey

1. Alignment

A’s create direct line-of-sight between marketing activities and business results

- Strongly Agree or Agree
  - 96% The “A’s”
  - 89% Middle of the Pack
  - 67% Laggards

“It is clear to the leadership team how marketing is impacting the business.”

2. Accountability

A’s use metrics and dashboards to make fact-based decisions and strategic recommendations

- Strongly Agree or Agree
  - 84% Course adjustments
  - 82% Strategic recommendations
  - 63% Middle of the Pack
  - 64% Laggards
  - 45% Laggards

“Marketing is good at using data and analytics to make...”
3. Analytics

A’s leverage data, analytics, and modeling to discern patterns, glean insights, and predict outcomes

"Marketing uses statistical analysis tools to create marketing optimization models."

57% The “A’s”
42% Middle of the Pack
30% Laggards

4. Automation

A’s invest in systems, processes, and tools to track, measure, and report results

The Marketing Organizations that Have Demonstrated Use of Mechanism to Improve Performance

Tools
- The “A’s” 67% (systems that collect and store data)
- Middle of the Pack 23% (30%)
- Laggards 30% (20%)

Processes
- The “A’s” 61% (ability to monitor and manage tasks for marketing performance management)
- Middle of the Pack 26%
- Laggards 20%
5) Alliances
A’s formally collaborate with the sales, finance, and IT organizations
Relationships are Strong or Exceptional

6) Assessment
A’s benchmark and audit marketing performance with an eye toward continuous improvement

Source: ITSMC-VEM Marketing Performance Management Survey July 2013
N=183 Marketers and Corporate Executives