

Alex Steer

Email alex@cantab.net LinkedIn /alexsteer

PROFILE

I'm a global marketing data, AI and advanced analytics lead with experience turning data into commercial value for large and complex organisations, most recently in Chief Data Officer roles. My focus is on improving marketing effectiveness through better use of data, advanced analytics and AI, and on scaling global analytics-led marketing services offers. I lead large teams of analysts, data scientists, developers, consultants and strategists, working for some of the world's best-known brands, and am comfortable creating influence in large and complex organisations. I have a strong track record of creating scalable, meaningful change for global brands, leading new business, and transforming offers and operations in analytics, AI, marketing technology and data-driven marketing. I recently completed a postgraduate degree in Artificial Intelligence for Business at the Said Business School, Oxford University.

EMPLOYMENT

2024-present: **Global Chief Data Officer, WPP Media.**

I lead our data strategy and the development of our data solution, Open Intelligence.

2021-24: **Global Chief Data Officer, VML (formerly Wunderman Thompson).**

I led the global data, analytics and AI capability for the world's largest creative and customer experience agency: 1,000 specialists in data strategy, advanced analytics and marketing automation helping major advertisers turn data into a strategic asset, and use it to make better decisions and deliver more effective brand and customer experiences across paid media, creative content, commerce, customer experience and CRM. I led the development of our data proposition and the creation of regional and global centres of excellence in insight and analytics, data-driven marketing activation, AI and marketing effectiveness. I data strategy for major clients and prospects, and developed our thought leadership and approach to data-driven brand and performance marketing.

2020-21: **Chief Data Officer, EMEA, Wunderman Thompson.**

I led the EMEA data practice at Wunderman Thompson, which merged with VMLY&R to form VML (see above).

2018-20: **Chief Product Officer, Wavemaker, London.**

I was responsible for our agency's overall offer strategy and capabilities, especially our specialist practices in data, analytics, technology, programmatic and performance marketing, and ecommerce. I led on marketing transformation projects with key clients and on new business, helping clients design their marketing operations to get more value out of their investments in media, data and technology. I was global product lead for Wavemaker's communications planning, analytics and collaboration software, using cloud machine learning and AI to transform how we work. I wrote and spoke regularly on marketing effectiveness and the role of analytics.

2017: **Chief Strategy Officer, Maxus, London.**

I was responsible for design and execution of the agency's strategy, including management of our offers in strategy, planning, technology and data. I led on overall strategy and structure for key clients and for major new business pitches. My focus was on integrating technology and data into the strategic planning process to make our client work more effective and better able to adapt to change. This included designing a new strategic planning framework focused on understanding sources of growth and outcomes-based planning; retraining our planning community on the new process and tools; and building new cloud-based cross-media planning software which is now used at Wavemaker and Essence. As Maxus merged with MEC to form Wavemaker, I was jointly responsible for the creation of the new Wavemaker global planning process and toolkit, and the restructure of strategic planning teams as they transitioned into the new agency.

2015-17: Head of Technology, Effectiveness and Data, Maxus, London.

I brought together and ran the agency's integrated data and technology practice (known as TED), and led our offer in marketing effectiveness with all clients. TED was the first fully-integrated data and technology team in a UK media agency. Milestones included launching new practices in marketing technology operations (known as Pie), data strategy, and dynamic creative optimisation. I was the senior strategic lead on marketing integration, measurement and effectiveness with key clients and in major new business pitches. Over two years we grew data and technology revenues by four times and created a team of 25 specialists across the disciplines of technology, data platforms, analytics, research and effectiveness.

2011-15: Strategy Director; Head of Product and Analytics, Fabric Worldwide, London.

Fabric was WPP Digital's data-driven marketing startup. We built data lakes, marketing automation platforms and digital marketing capabilities for top-tier WPP clients. I was strategy lead on our biggest digital marketing accounts (KFC, Heineken), then led our product and analytics division building marketing technology capabilities for GSK, Unilever, Colgate-Palmolive and others. I advised global organisations and their agencies on digital content, media and measurement strategy, with a particular focus on precision marketing and social media.

2010-11: Strategy Consultant, Kantar, New York.

Research-based marketing strategy and innovation consulting; future planning, scenario planning and trends consulting with a specific focus on digital and social media, technology and data. I led key client projects and developed research and consulting programmes to inform strategic planning.

2009-10: Strategic Planner, Ogilvy, Cape Town.

Account planning across integrated advertising, PR and digital accounts; developing brand positionings, portfolio strategies and communications plans; monitoring and advising on market and consumer trends; client relations and day-to-day guidance on messaging and positioning.

2009-12: Marketing Fellow, WPP.

WPP's global leadership development programme, consisting of three year-long rotations in WPP group companies across different disciplines and markets (Ogilvy, Kantar, Fabric, above).

2008-09: Tutor in English Language and Linguistics, The Open University, London.

Taught the history, use and theory of the English language to undergraduate students (part-time).

2008-09: Analyst, New Philanthropy Capital, London.

Advised donors, funders and charities on how to achieve and demonstrate greater social impact from their activities; planned and wrote reports on charities' work in the education and young people's sector; analysed charities' activities, results and finances and recommended funding priorities.

2006-08: Tutor in English Language and Literature, Oxford University.

Taught English language and medieval/early modern literature papers to Oxford University undergraduates as an external tutor at Mansfield, Regents Park, St Edmund Hall and Worcester Colleges.

2006-08: Assistant Editor, Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford University Press.

Researched the history and development of the English language; wrote and edited dictionary entries; trained editors and researchers on research methods and new technologies; advised on specialist areas of lexicography and historical bibliography (especially early English).

EDUCATION

Saïd Business School, Oxford University (2021-22).

2022: **PG.Dip. Artificial Intelligence for Business.** Postgraduate degree, funded by WPP, part-time study. Final dissertation: 'Turning the tables in online ad auctions' - development of an AI proof-of-concept to reverse information asymmetry in 'walled garden' programmatic advertising bidding.

Girton College, Cambridge University (2001-05).

2005: **M.Phil. Medieval and Renaissance Literature.** Arts and Humanities Research Council award, 2004-5.

2004: **B.A. (Hons.) English, double 1st class.** M.A. degree awarded March 2008. Graduate Scholarship, 2004-05; Davies Scholarship, 2004; Russell Scholarship, 2003.

Caterham School, Caterham, Surrey (1991-2001).

2001: **A Levels.** English Literature (A), Government and Politics (A), Modern History (A), Latin (A). Academic scholarship, 1994-2001.

1998/99: **GCSEs.** 10 at Grade A*; 1 at Grade A.

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Statistical computing and machine learning in SQL, R and Python. Experienced at using online and desktop computing resources to analyse, manipulate and use data. Working knowledge of HTML, XML flavours, XSL, CSS, PHP, Javascript, Python, Bash, SQL and R. Experienced digital product manager with a focus on big data and analytics products for marketing.

INTERESTS

Improvisation; linguistics and language history; word games; web programming.