

Martech Visionaries Series

# Robert Nicholson

Head of Digital

**What's your role and please describe your career journey to date?**

I'm the Head of Digital at Robert Walters Group. We're a global recruitment company, a specialist recruiter in Marketing, Finance, IT and we're a successful FTSE500 company.

I work across everything digital, from websites where we use Adobe Experience Manager to curate over 50 brand websites, Marketing Automation (MA) using Adobe's Marketo and Momentum by Clevertouch, Digital Events as well as Digital Advertising and the recruitment specific tools where we post job adverts and process applications.

I effectively have three audiences to look after, the job applicants, the hiring companies and Robert Walters Group. Sometimes I get asked if I'm a B2C or B2B marketer whereas in reality I'm a B2B2C marketer.

**"My success criteria is about asking how easy did I make it for us to do business? What time, cost or effort was saved in this round of delivery? What efficiencies has martech found?"**

**How do you measure success?**

In this central role, I'm not exclusively judged on metrics. A large part of my job is enabling the field marketers, and they are judged on metrics, where as my success is more measured by their feedback on my efforts to Senior Directors.

My success criteria is about asking how easy did I make it for us to do business? What time, cost or effort was saved in this round of delivery? What efficiencies has martech found?

A big part of my assessment is from the stakeholders and other directors within the business. They ask 'Is the Digital team delivering for my department?'

I don't focus too heavily on the internal teams, but on the customers. If I deliver good marketing to them, the rest takes care of itself. I am very customer-centric in my approach, or 'Candidate-centric' in my world.

**How important is martech to your company and to your team?**

In Recruitment, the product doesn't change that much, so there is a very strong focus at Robert Walters Group on the experience we provide to the candidate, and to the clients. How you present yourself and the service you deliver is very important.

The key is candidate experience and client experience. What those audiences experience from the recruiters and how Marketing delivers that experience at a brand level and a marketing operations level is our differentiator.

continued overleaf



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It's everything to our brand. It informs our marketing approach and links all the customer touchpoints.

We want to drive better and better candidate and client experiences, and those are tied to your martech, whichever flavour you buy. The Marketing team here know this and constantly seek to iterate and improve our customer journeys using martech.

We work with some brilliant Business Partners here in the UK including Adobe and Clevertouch, to develop a very strong Martech Spine™.

### Which technologies make up your martech spine?

The core of our Martech Spine™ comes from Adobe. We use Marketo and Experience Manager. The eco-system that Adobe are creating is getting to the point of full integration between all their technologies. This leads to a Marketing centre of record for our prospects and customers and we view that as a very valuable resource.

**"In a Covid driven world, martech is everything. It's everything to our brand, it informs our marketing approach and links all the customer touchpoints."**

### When you look to integrate a new technology, how do you balance investment in training against investment in technology?

We consider the T model when assessing the skills within our team. A brief recap, from my experience with it, is the 'T' designates a broad range of skills with limited knowledge in most, but in a select few, you show deep knowledge.

When I structure my teams, I attempt to create marketers with a double 'T', which means they have a good general understanding across the whole marketing function, but are experts in at least two aspects of their role, e.g. Marketing Automation and CRM.

If all members of the team are well rounded in digital technology use, it becomes much easier to level up key members in a new addition to the Spine as their basic knowledge is already strong.

We don't want to be in a position where the Marketer is expected to use 200 tools, or unique pieces of software (everything from MS Office, Social integrators, CMS, CRM, MA etc.) and be world class in all of them. It's unrealistic.

It's time to unburden the Marketer from these expectations and release the value in your key pieces of martech through a dedicated training plan on the core technology which will drive business results.

This could be a dedicated certification program you put Marketers through, or it could be buying in those skills with new hires, or it could be using a dedicated martech consultancy. The choice is yours, but it's one you need to make and not be afraid of or avoid.



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## What does martech success look like for you?

Martech success is very different to each business in the UK, and across the globe. The martech mix is often different between companies and setup with different purposes in mind.

I feel the key ways to define success in martech are being able to answer this question: Are you delivering for your stakeholders and delivering a premium customer experience? If you are doing both those things, whilst finding efficiencies, that's a good way to measure success.

Comparing your lead scoring ability to someone else, or reviewing a technology integration against an industry peer is not a good use of your time. Align your martech, and its use, to the needs of your business.

That is why partners are so important to us. A good consultancy has a breadth of experience across multiple clients, with multiple martech configurations and can quickly identify how to get the best solution from your technology that addresses your needs.

**“Are you delivering for your stakeholders and delivering a premium customer experience? If you are doing both those things, whilst finding efficiencies, that's a good way to measure success.”**

## What advice would you give others looking to deploy and advance their careers in martech?

No one trains to be a recruiter at university, just like no one has previously trained to become a martech operations expert. There are many jobs today which either have no formal training, or simply did not exist until recently.

Therefore, the focus is less on what specific educational credentials you have, and far more on how agile your thinking is. What is your Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and how do you use it? How do you ingest, simplify and take action upon a given dataset?

In martech, people are often hired to add value. That might be in the form of cost/efficiency savings made, or increased performance and output.

In marketing we are in a profession where we can have direct, significant impact on business performance in our work. In martech we deal with all manner of stakeholders, from Sales to Customers. Unlike many other areas of the Marketing department, because martech touches so many parts of the customer journey, frequently you have access and direct contact with Directors and other C-Suite players.

The really amazing martech operatives are of course excellent in their technology use, but they know how to communicate with those key stakeholders, take the demands of the business and provide solutions.



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