

**Craig Inglis, Chair, The Marketing Society**

2021 was a good year for the Society as its membership grew and the company returned to profit.

Naturally the impact of COVID still caused challenges as it did for so many in our industry, but as summer came, and the economy bounced back, it was fantastic to see the Society continue its recovery under our Chief Executive Sophie Devonshire and new Chief Financial Officer, Penny Hilton-McNerney, who joined the business in January 2021.

As we look back over the achievements and challenges of 2021 for the Society, it seems like an awfully long time ago, considering what has happened since.

2021 was a great year for the Society as it continued to navigate the challenges of COVID and its impact on our different hubs around the world. The Marketing Society Executive team again made the decision not to furlough any staff during 2021. With a lean team and the importance to return the business to growth, it was deemed necessary to keep the full team in place to help manage the activity and membership as it continued to recover from 2020.

The Society's new proposition, focused on helping members **do well; do good** and **feel good** has proved popular with members. We look forward to seeing how this continues in parallel with the Society's 2022 theme of Changemakers Ignite, which has also received positive feedback from members and partners. The Society continues to help inspire members to make positive change in their brands, businesses and wider society.

There were many key moments in the year, but our flagship events were a standout success. Our flagship Annual Conference and Annual Dinner took place a week before the Omicron wave hit in November allowing us to bring members back together at our two biggest events globally with 340 at our Conference and 450 at the dinner. Memorable stories from the Conference included hearing from Mary Portas, Sir Tim Smit, Founder of the Eden Project and Sir Andrew Pollard sharing the background to the creation of the Astra Zeneca/Oxford vaccine in only six months; a story which led to a standing ovation in the auditorium.

Our Awards Ceremony also took place in person again, in partnership with MADfest, with an audience of 250 people. In 2021, we re-branded our Awards to become The Marketing Society Awards, with a shift away from the previous theme of 'bravery' which had run from 2018-2020. 2021 saw our highest number of entries since 2018 with 159 entries.

Winners included:

**Grand Prix** - The National Lottery/Camelot

**Marketing Leader of The Year** - Aline Santos, Unilever

**Future Leader** - Gini Sharvill, Häagen-Dazs

The Society hosted 143 events and training sessions in 2021 – 31 were live, 112 were virtual. We continue to provide members with opportunities to connect, be inspired and accelerate their careers, wherever they are in our global network.

Our 'Accelerate' suite of learning and development went from strength to strength, with the addition of The Marketing Leadership Masterclass, run by Thomas Barta and Syl Saller in partnership with The Society and featuring over 120 delegates in its inaugural year.

This is an accessible impact 'acceleration' programme which runs in addition to our flagship course, The Marketing Leaders Programme as well as 'Ones To Watch' which is for rising stars in our membership. We are also now running monthly 'Learning Lab' sessions which help provide upskilling, interactive experiences which can be accessed virtually.

We also supported the marketing industry 'Sprintathon' in partnership with Stand up to Cancer in September 2021. This industry event saw brands, agencies and media companies nominate 4 of their team to each run 100m around a track - 105 teams, 4 runners per team, each running 100m, equaling the length of a marathon. The Society's members raised over £50K which was split between Cancer Research UK's Stand Up To Cancer campaign, funding life-saving research to help beat cancer faster, and The Marketing Society, to support the rising talent of the future. The 2022 event took place in July, and again was a huge success.

While continuing to look for ways to help connect the Society's global community digitally, the Society launched its 'Coffeehouse' through the Guild App, offering our members the chance to connect, discuss, debate, share ideas and ask for support. This continues to build with over 400 members so far active within the digital community.

### **Our members**

During 2021 the membership grew to 2516 members, up 23% from 2020, reversing the decline of - 18% from 2019 to 2020. Of these members, 47% are based in England, 32% in Scotland and 21% in the hubs outside of the UK.

Membership growth continues to be critical for the team and I'm delighted to say that so far in 2022 the Society is forecast to have 11% growth this year, taking us over 2800 members.

In total, 58% of members are client-side, 26% agency side, 5% media and 11% other (from education etc).

Business team membership (previously referred to as 'corporate') now makes up 63% of the total membership, and continues to be an important driver of membership growth and income.

Throughout 2021, the Society's team along with select members have helped to shape a new membership model that aims to give more opportunity and flexibility to select the benefits that are relevant to members. This model was successfully launched in January 2022.

Along with changes to the model, the Society has also launched a subscription option for those who are not yet at the point in their career to be full members, but still allows access to our virtual event programme, online content and publications. This has proven popular already, with a number of business teams engaging their rising talent.

### **Our International hubs**

Membership in our international hubs grew by +65%, returning to pre-2020 levels.

Through the ability and opportunity to run virtual events, the Society was able to connect members from different corners of the globe more easily, to hear challenges and opportunities of senior marketers globally. In particular, the continuation of the Global Conversations series proved popular, with the ability to hear from senior leaders across the Americas, Europe, MENA and APAC.

We welcomed a new chair of the Society in Dubai, with Mohammed Ismaeel, taking over from Khaled Ismail who moved into a new role of Chair of the UAE, as the Society launched in Abu Dhabi. In our New York hub, we welcomed two co-chairs in Michelle Froah, MetLife and Jason Chebib.

Following the challenges of lockdown, we made the difficult decision to close our India hub, to allow our focus in other areas for now. We hope that the members there will continue to stay involved in the Society as International Members.

## Scotland

Despite the continuing pandemic, 2021 was another successful year for membership in Scotland, rising from 717 to hit the over 800 mark for the first time ever.

There was a review of the three membership levels offered;

First Role (previously Graduate members) - promoting inclusion and diversity and encouraging marketers from all backgrounds and at the start of their careers to get involved with our industry.

Future Leaders (previously Associate members) - membership for those aspiring to senior roles by accelerating their development – helping them go further and faster.

Finally 'Leaders', where we combined the previously titled Executive and Business Leader levels for those who have been in a leadership role for at least five years.

A Future Leader Advisory Group (FLAG) was launched to provide strategic input to our Advisory Board.

With COP 26 in Glasgow in November 2021, we created a Climate Change Committee to help ensure our members were updated and engaged with the various initiatives and events planned across the year as well as helping to ensure there was a legacy.

Following another year of virtual events, we were delighted to get back together again in a packed room at our sell-out St Andrew's Day Dinner, celebrating the vibrant and resilient marketing community in Scotland.

## Financial Performance

A full account of the Society's financial performance during 2021 is contained in the report from our new Treasurer Jason Foo, who took over the role from Dom Grounsell in October 2021.

2021 was a much-improved year for the Society and led to the company reporting a profit of £29.9K, following two years of substantial losses.

The Financial Committee and I are pleased with this return to growth, amidst the backdrop of a challenging year, with lockdown three in the UK and no live events until the summer months, while lockdowns were still happening in many of our hubs around the globe.

Cash flow was challenging throughout the year, and the Executive team of the Society managed this closely day to day. I am delighted to say though that cash flow is now in a more healthy position, although we continue to monitor this closely.

I'd like to thank Dom Grounsell for his outstanding work as Treasurer during the challenges of the last year. His leadership has provided great support to me and to the Executive team.

## My thanks

It is a true privilege to act as Chair of this influential, vibrant community that we are part of.

Many thanks to each and every one of you who have contributed and played your part in making The Marketing Society what it is today.

Thanks also to the many partners who support our activity and in particular Accenture Song, Kantar, Medialink and TikTok.

Thanks to all of my colleagues on the Global Board in London, to all of our regional boards and Chairs, and of course our hard-working executive team led by **Sophie Devonshire**, our CEO; our Chief Finance Officer, **Penny Hilton-McNerney**; our Chief Commercial Officer, **Sarah Woodley** and **Alasdair Hall-Jones** our Global Director.

But most of all, my thanks go to you, our members, for your support during the past year. Together, we are a positive and progressive community and we've never needed that spirit of togetherness more than we do today. I'm looking forward to what more we can do together in the future.

**Craig Inglis**  
**Chair, The Marketing Society**