Chris Curtin is responsible for promoting marketing strategies, customer engagement and Hewlett-Packard’s marketing model throughout the business. His team also shapes HP’s brand presence across all digital media channels and on HP.com—the company’s global web presence. Prior to joining HP, Curtin spent more than a decade at The Walt Disney Co., working on new media, marketing and technology initiatives. In addition, he led global media buying and planning for Disney parks and properties around the world.

(Editor’s note: Chris Curtin was interviewed by eMarketer on June 20, 2013; he was named New Platform Marketing Transformation and Chief Digital Officer at Visa in November 2013.)

**Can you describe your role and mission at HP?**

**Chris Curtin:** I’m responsible for marketing strategy, innovation and operations.

The strategy part involves crafting our three-year plan; determining our upcoming budgets, goals and objectives; and ultimately, helping to develop and design an operating model for the year that implements the strategy.

I’m also involved in digital marketing and innovation through HP.com and other channels. For instance, we’re very interested in and committed to making our physical events digital—expanding the reach of our sales meetings in the digital space. For example, we’ve taken our HP Discover event for business and IT professionals and extended it as a digital brand. We want the digital Discover experience to rival the physical Discover experience. We’re creating content from the event and streaming that through the internet and to mobile devices. Then we’re also figuring out ways to keep the message and relationship alive.

“We’re very interested in and committed to making our physical events digital—expanding the reach of our sales meetings in the digital space.”

In terms of innovation, we have the 538 Fund, an internal kind of incubator for innovative marketing ideas and programs. The 538 ties back to the $538 that Bill [Hewlett] and Dave [Packard] used to fund and start HP.

In my operations role, we’re trying to think about the ways in which we can do things better, faster and with more value. Basically, we try to figure out ways to scale anything that one group within HP may do—and that many other groups may benefit from.
What is your most important business priority?

Curtin: Under the direction of [president and CEO] Meg Whitman, we’re turning HP around. We have a five-year strategy to do so. We believe that we’re uniquely positioned to offer end-to-end technology, services, solutions and software to our partners and consumers. From a marketing perspective, we’re trying to make sure that the overall demand for what we offer, which we consider fairly unique, is sufficient. So we are coming up with global marketing plans that ultimately showcase what we’re doing with personal systems, software and in the enterprise space.

Do you have any advice on staying ahead of digital trends?

Curtin: Our view is that we don’t just want to benefit from new digital trends—we want to help define them. If you’re not conversant in what’s happening, it’s hard to be on the leading edge. So the type of DNA that we’re looking for within marketing at HP is people who feel like they can be comfortably and compatibly on that leading edge.

We’re constantly trying to fine-tune the best social media practices, best mobile practices and best media practices, as well as how and when those things need to be choreographed. We had a discussion recently where we asked the research team whether our owned and earned media strategy should compete with our paid strategies, not just complement them. Those are the types of thought-provoking discussions that we want within our own marketing organization so that we ultimately produce the absolute best work.

In what ways does eMarketer data and content help inform your thinking and planning?

Curtin: All the trend and market data that you offer and best practices that you showcase and promote from other companies are of interest. Sometimes those companies are our competitors, sometimes they’re our partners and sometimes they’re a little bit outside of our industry, but the information is of interest nonetheless. We use it to inform how we design our budgets, strategy and the way we go to market. We look at the forecasts and reports pretty exhaustively. The comparative estimates are extremely helpful. There’s a lot of learning and development that comes through eMarketer, and it’s useful for our company.

"The nice thing about eMarketer is that 90% to 95% of the things I find are useful and intersect with what I’m doing."

What do you like about eMarketer?

Curtin: The nice thing about eMarketer is that 90% to 95% of the things I find are useful and intersect with what I’m doing. It’s also an easy-to-use relationship. Within my own team, there are a number of times where people will cite eMarketer as part of a PowerPoint presentation. They’re citing an industry trend or some type of relevant statistic for the idea they’re trying to advance. eMarketer’s focused content is great.