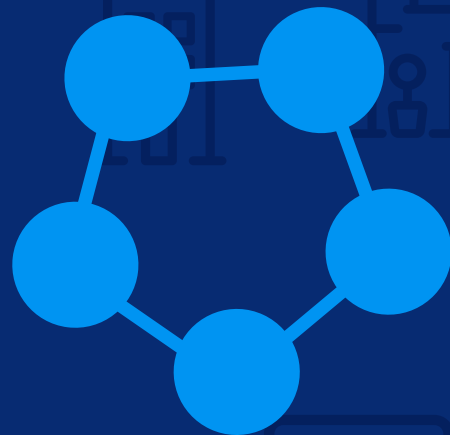
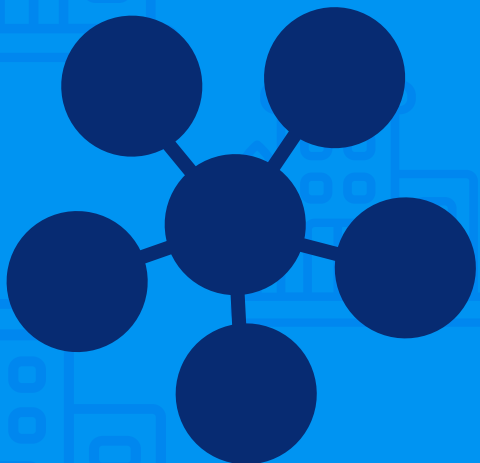


Centralization or Decentralization:

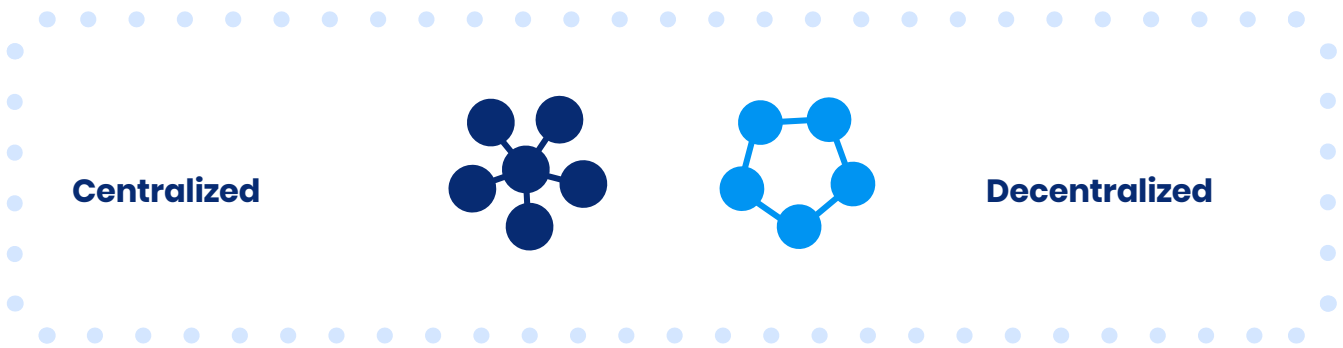
WHICH MODEL IS RIGHT FOR YOUR
MULTIFAMILY MARKETING TEAM?



THE DELIBERATION OVER CENTRALIZATION

Driven by COVID, remote work, staffing shortages, and a highly competitive, inflationary market, centralization of marketing operations has now become one of the most discussed topics in multifamily housing. Despite being a full-service, multifamily marketing team that helps our clients centralize, we're not here to champion centralization or provide a how-to guide – in fact, quite the opposite.

At [Roof](#), we believe centralization isn't always the answer. Some marketing activities should actually stay decentralized, and a hybrid model is often most effective and realistic. How do you evaluate the options and organize your marketing operations for excellence? Let's dive in.



LOOKING BEYOND LEASING

Most of the centralization conversation in the multifamily industry has been focused on leasing. It's the obvious choice given the inherently decentralized relationship between management and individual properties, as well as dependency on property assets to deliver value (NOI). The recent rise in remote work, digital transformation, and the availability of new leasing technologies (like virtual tours) have also accelerated and enabled the shift to a more centralized leasing model.

However, centralization can apply to many other parts of a multifamily business too.

“Centralizing” means bringing people, processes, and/or platforms together to accomplish a certain goal. A centralized function can operate autonomously (such as sales teams providing tours or service to prospective renters across portfolio or ownership groups) or help serve other areas of the organization (such as a shared service or center of excellence).

While centralizing leasing is resoundingly beneficial, the decision on whether to centralize parts or all of marketing doesn't have as obvious of an answer.

(Source: [Gartner Inc.](#))

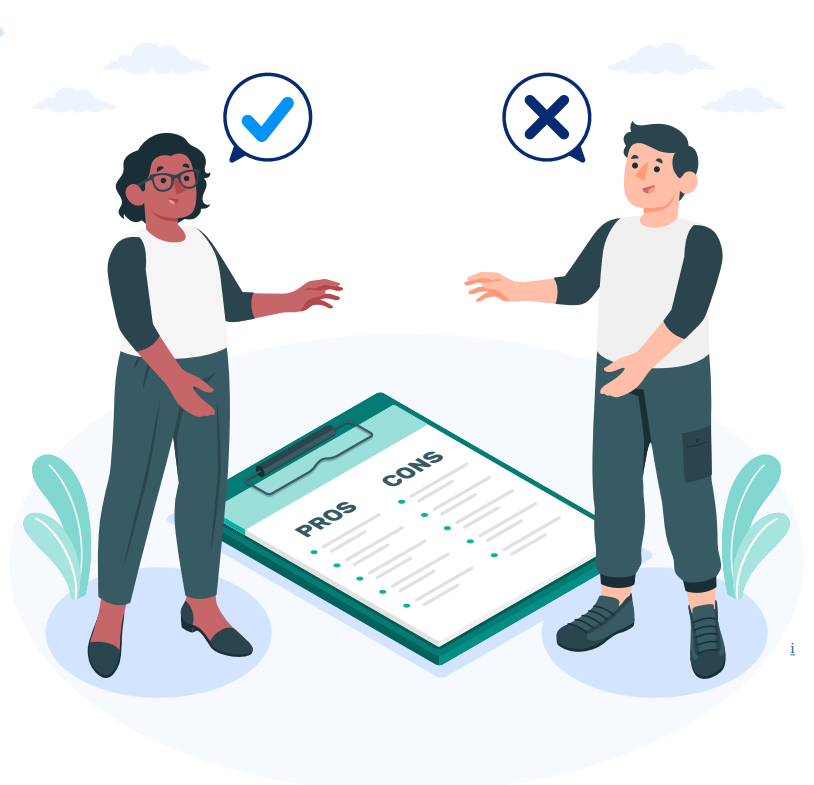
THE PROS AND CONS OF CENTRALIZING MULTIFAMILY MARKETING

Although there is much discussion and information published on this subject, along with numerous ways to implement a centralization strategy, there is also plenty of uncertainty and questions surrounding if and how to do so within multifamily marketing.

- Will the benefits of centralization be worth the tradeoffs?
- What if centralization stifles the team's ambitions, creativity, innovation, and ability to deliver high-quality services locally?
- Does it burden the corporate office with higher costs and lower accountability or responsiveness locally?
- How does technology fit into the equation?
- Where do you even start?

On the flip side, if marketing operations are decentralized – either partially or fully – the organization may face higher costs, complexity, inefficiency, and inconsistencies. Without the economies of scale or orchestration that comes with centralization, it can be difficult to stay competitive.

When evaluating whether to centralize or not, it's crucial to consider all of the pros and cons.



The Pros and Cons of Centralizing Marketing Operations

Pros	Cons
Brand consistency by standardizing processes and policies	Less ability to customize based on local or regional needs , which could make local staff feel left out and put the property at a competitive disadvantage
Higher work quality by standardizing policies and centralizing accountability	
Lower costs by eliminating duplicate effort and responsibilities	Less agility to respond quickly or take advantage of new opportunities
Higher productivity and output by taking advantage of efficiencies, specializing more, and freeing up time and resources to focus on other valuable work	
Increased competence by boosting capacity to hire specialized skill sets and build internal capabilities	Slower decisions and delivery , because decisions are not made locally
Improved customer experience by freeing up local/frontline employees to spend more time with prospects and residents	Loss of autonomy , which can hurt morale, service, and innovation
Greater scalability by streamlining the process for deploying programs or campaigns quickly and regularly	Competence gap between the corporate and local levels

If your organization is leaning toward centralization, consulting and research firm [Gartner](#) suggests using a [basic framework](#) to evaluate whether it's the right move.

A Simple Framework to Determine if Centralizing Marketing is Right for You

Accountability:	Credibility:	Productivity:	Value Creation:
Would it help to deliver against a specific goal or metric?	Would it provide higher-quality service across the organization?	Is the centralized function productive enough to warrant its existence?	Would it deliver additional value for the business unit/department and organization?

Some of the answers to these questions may be clear for your organization, while others may not. And in those cases, it's smart to look at "what's behind door #3."

Reality Check:

IT'S NOT "EITHER/OR." IT'S "BOTH/AND."

"In my opinion, it's time for us to move away from this pendular debate [centralize vs. decentralize]. It's unhelpful, muddles the conversation, and orients too many marketing leaders to think in "either/or" terms. What they need to understand is that modern marketing organizations require a 'both/and' approach."

— Marc Brown for Gartner

As a firm supporting multifamily marketing teams, our team at Roof has seen the

benefits and challenges of centralization among hundreds of organizations across the U.S. and learned this is not an all-or-nothing debate. **When the question is whether to choose centralization or decentralization, the right answer is often "both."**

Striking the right balance begins with understanding the marketing department's needs and aligning those needs with the overall goals of your organization. Only then can you get the best of both worlds.

HOW A HYBRID MODEL CAN GIVE YOU AN UPPER HAND

"Marketing leaders want both the efficiency, productivity and brand consistency offered by centralization — for scale. But they also want the fast adaptability, autonomy and experimentation of decentralization — for agility."

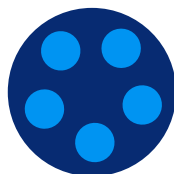
— Scott Brinker, Chiefmartec.com

Given the tradeoffs of centralization and the constantly changing business environment around us, many marketers find that embracing a hybrid model delivers some of the benefits of centralization, while avoiding some of the pitfalls.



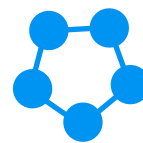
Centralized

Concentrates delivery power within the organization



Hybrid

Combination of both delivery models



Decentralized

Distributes delivery power across the organization

For example, let's consider what it would look like to create a hybrid model for graphic design. This approach can help save money, boost efficiency, and increase brand consistency, while keeping local teams (who have the best pulse on the market) in control. Here's how it could work.

Sample Hybrid Model

Workflow: Graphic Design



In this case, centralizing graphic design would reduce costs, increase efficiency, free up frontline employees to focus on prospects and residents, and create more consistency since brand standards and quality are governed by one core team of design specialists. However, keeping local teams responsible for approvals and implementation ensures they maintain ultimate control, feel empowered, and can deliver materials to the market quickly.

Another advantage – perhaps the biggest one – of this type of hybrid structure is flexibility. For instance, with a blend of centralization and decentralization, short-staffed teams can quickly rebalance workloads and transfer resources from one area or project to another, rather than overburdening one resource or group while underutilizing others. Instead of being delayed or blocked by skillset or resource shortages, frontline employees can stay agile by offloading non-core or specialized work, while maintaining control over their local marketing plan. At the same time, campaigns are more consistent and aligned

with brand standards because design is centrally managed.

As HubSpot's VP of Platform Ecosystem Scott Brinker not-so-ironically recommends, "Centralize everything you can" and "Decentralize everything you can." (Source: [Chiefmartec](#)) Slightly confusing? Yes. But his point rings true: **Rather than taking an all-or-nothing approach, the best results come when you carefully evaluate each aspect of your marketing technology and operations, identify which areas make the most sense to centralize vs. manage locally, and work toward achieving the best of both worlds.**



ENABLING SUCCESS WITH MARKETING TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMATION

Regardless of whether marketing is decentralized, centralized, or both, technology and digital automation are instrumental in making marketing more efficient. Technologies such as CRM and PMS solutions help people connect across organizations and with customers, streamline processes, and optimize campaigns and reporting. Automation solutions like virtual touring, chatbots, as well as social or [ad posting tools](#) eliminate

time-consuming and repetitive tasks to free up time for more meaningful, valuable work.

The PropTech industry is expected to grow almost 16% from 2022-2030, and automation will no doubt continue to advance. By exploring these technologies and embracing the ones that are the best fit for your needs, your multifamily marketing team will be well positioned to operate smarter, empower employees, and adapt to the one constant in our industry: rapid change.

OPTIMIZE, DON'T COMPROMISE

Despite its trendiness and undeniable benefits, centralizing marketing operations is not a magic remedy or the ideal solution for everyone. Rather than jumping into one operating model, take a step back, and ask how your team can gain a competitive advantage by focusing on better managing costs, not just driving revenue.

Some of the most effective strategies for cost containment are optimizing operations, taking advantage

of technology and automation, and creating the right marketing organization structure. While it may seem like you have to go all-in on centralization or stick with legacy decentralization, the best route may be a hybrid model – a smart solution that can help optimize without compromise.

Curious whether centralization, decentralization, or a blend of both is right for your marketing team? [Reach out to Rooof](#) for recommendations from our multifamily marketing experts.

ABOUT ROOF

Roof's patented PostEngine software is designed uniquely for multifamily. Our flagship software has been the industry's best performing and most fully automated solution for posting apartment ads on Craigslist since 2012. PostEngine seamlessly integrates with your existing systems and doesn't put any burden on your site teams.

For those who want Craigslist ads, but zero effort, we have a dedicated team who will do everything for you.

Learn more about our offerings:

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