



SHAUN CEDRIC THOMAS

DIRECTOR, PARTNER MARKETING · PERFORMANCE & GROWTH LEADER

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Marketing leader with over a decade of experience driving performance and growth for global higher-education partners, including UCT, MIT, Yale, LSE, and Harvard. Currently Director of Partner Marketing at 2U, with a track record of stewarding multi-million-dollar advertising portfolios, building data-driven acquisition strategies, and translating analytics into board-level decisions. Combines commercial rigour with academic depth as a peer-reviewed researcher, Master of Marketing, and part-time university lecturer, alongside a leadership style anchored in clarity, alignment, and people.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Director, Partner Marketing · 2U

Sep 2025 to Present

- Lead partner marketing across a portfolio of world-class university partners, owning the strategic relationship between 2U and institutional stakeholders to drive enrolment growth and brand equity.
- Set the direction for full-funnel acquisition strategy, from brand positioning and demand generation through to nurture, conversion, and revenue forecasting, across multiple programme portfolios.
- Partner with executive leadership on portfolio performance, advertising investment decisions, and growth planning, translating commercial and marketing data into clear, board-ready narratives.
- Steward cross-functional teams across performance marketing, analytics, creative, and partner success to deliver integrated marketing programmes at scale.

Manager, Performance Marketing · 2U

2023 to Sep 2025

- Directed the end-to-end performance marketing cycle, covering lead generation, nurture, and conversion for university partners, with full accountability for portfolio targets and revenue outcomes.
- Oversaw an annual advertising portfolio in excess of **USD \$50 million**, optimising ROI across paid search, paid social, programmatic, and partner channels.
- Built forecasting and KPI reporting frameworks used by senior leadership to align advertising spend with revenue strategy and to brief the executive team on portfolio health.
- Used Tableau and the broader marketing data stack to run deep-dive analyses on funnel efficiency, channel attribution, and regional performance, converting insight into prioritised growth tactics.
- Coached analysts and performance marketers, lifting team capability in data-driven decision-making and stakeholder communication.

Lead, Performance Marketing · 2U

2022 to 2023

- Led performance marketing strategy for prestigious institutions including UCT, MIT, Yale, LSE, and Harvard, managing a substantial digital marketing budget across the partner portfolio.
- Owned the full marketing cycle, from lead generation through nurture to conversion, with a strong data-driven approach focused on qualified prospect volume and cost efficiency.
- Delivered performance forecasts and portfolio reviews to senior leadership, paired with summaries of recent activity and forward-looking growth opportunities.
- Engaged directly with executives on advertising investment and revenue trade-offs, ensuring strategic alignment between marketing and commercial outcomes.

Senior Analyst, Digital Marketing & Analysis · 2U

2021 to 2022

- Led marketing analytics and reporting for the strategy team, surfacing critical insights that informed channel investment, regional prioritisation, and campaign optimisation.
- Owned attribution, campaign performance, and revenue prediction models, strengthening the link between marketing activity and financial outcomes.
- Improved campaign effectiveness by identifying inefficiencies in paid media and reallocating spend to higher-yield channels and geographies.

Marketing Analyst · 2U

2020 to 2021

- Supported the marketing strategy team with data analysis, reporting, and ROI optimisation across paid media, with an emphasis on data integrity and decision-ready insights.

Lead, Digital Marketing · Unilever Food Solutions SA

2019 to 2020

- Led B2B digital marketing for Unilever Food Solutions, building tailored programmes for chefs, delis, and canteens, and strengthening digital visibility across the foodservice channel.

Manager, Digital Marketing · ehospice (also Digital Marketing Consultant, 2020 to 2022) 2017 to 2019

- Led global digital marketing for an international hospice-care platform; later returned as consultant to guide hospices through their Covid-19 digital pivot.

Marketing Communications Officer · Hospice Palliative Care Association of South Africa 2015 to 2020

- Built integrated marketing and communications strategies, combining digital campaigns and traditional channels into a cohesive brand narrative for the national umbrella body of South African hospices.

Earlier roles: Communications Assistant, HPCA (2014) · Marketing Intern, Berge Farrell Strategic Brand Design (2014).

ACADEMIC & INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP

- **Chair, Marketing Advisory Committee**, Cape Peninsula University of Technology (Dec 2025 to Present)
- **Member, Industry Advisory Board, Marketing Department**, Cape Peninsula University of Technology (2024 to Present)
- **Part-time Lecturer in Marketing**, Cape Peninsula University of Technology (2024 to Present)

EDUCATION

Master of Marketing

Cape Peninsula University of Technology · 2023

Diploma, Marketing

Cape Peninsula University of Technology · 2015

Bachelor of Technology, Marketing

Cape Peninsula University of Technology · 2017

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS

MIT Sloan School of Management, Digital Marketing Analytics

UCT Graduate School of Business, Digital Transformation Strategy

University of Cape Town, Marketing Analytics: Strategy & Decision Making · Search Engine Optimisation · Social Media Marketing

edX, AI Foundations for Business Leaders

Google, Digital Skills for Africa

CORE SKILLS

Performance & Growth: Multi-million-dollar paid media management, full-funnel acquisition, ROI/ROAS optimisation, marketing-led revenue forecasting

Tech Stack: Google Ads, Meta Ads, Google Marketing Platform, marketing automation, CRM-integrated funnels

Leadership: Executive stakeholder management, cross-functional team leadership, coaching analysts and marketers

Data & Analytics: Tableau, Google Analytics, attribution modelling, revenue prediction, marketing-mix analysis

Strategy & Brand: Brand strategy, integrated marketing communications, partner and portfolio marketing

Languages: English (native) · Afrikaans (professional) · isiXhosa (elementary)

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Thomas, S., & Duffett, R. G. (2024). Using social media as a marketing communication strategy: Perspectives from health-related non-profit organizations. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*, 37(3), 373 to 397. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10495142.2024.2361342>

Duffett, R. G., & Thomas, S. (2024). Health nonprofit organizations use of social media communication and marketing during COVID-19: A qualitative Technology Acceptance Model viewpoint. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 10, 101042. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.101042>

Thomas, S., & Duffett, R. G. Leveraging social media marketing in healthcare-based non-profit organisations: Insights from the Technology Acceptance Model.

Thomas, S., & Duffett, R. G. Social media as a marketing communication strategy among health-related non-profit organisations in the Western Cape, South Africa.

REFERENCES

Available on request.