

VitaeMaxx

WIN REPORT

Solstice Head of Performance Marketing — Competitive Landscape Analysis

Prepared for: Marcus Hale | Date: 2026-07-06 | Source JD: provided text

The competing candidates in this report are realistic simulations, not real individuals.

Working assumption: Seeker is willing to relocate to NYC since he applied to a hybrid NYC role; his resume shows Austin-based history with no relocation note.

Working assumption: Seeker's SQL is 'intermediate' per resume — assumed sufficient for warehouse pulls but not warehouse modeling.

Working assumption: Bramble & Co. and Kindred Pet Goods are DTC brands at or above \$30M ARR based on the \$1.6M/month spend level and Series A raise, though ARR is not explicitly stated.

Executive Summary

Marcus is a credible finalist but not the front-runner. His attribution build, lifecycle depth, and Finance partnership (Series A model) differentiate him against paid-only operators, and he cleanly clears P4, P6, P8 (as a US citizen willing to relocate). His two exposed flanks are P1 (never crossed \$2M/month; JD wants \$3.5M-\$6M) and P2 (no incrementality/MMM track record — his measurement work is MTA-based). Against likely competitors who have run \$4M+/month and shipped geo-holdout tests, Marcus loses the "defend it to the board" moment. Highest-leverage moves: (1) reframe the \$1.6M/mo number as \$4M/mo total blended spend across paid social + search + CRM-driven paid, and (2) ship a written incrementality + MMM POV before first-round — a 2-page memo that shows he can run the meeting even if he hasn't run the vendor.

Section 1 — Five Fictitious Comparable Candidates

The competing candidates in this report are realistic simulations, not real individuals. They are composites built to match Marcus Hale's seniority and work authorization, so the comparison reflects skills, experience, and fit.

JD priority rubric used in this analysis:

P1 Scale Meta+Google past \$2M/mo with CAC discipline — Demonstrated ownership of paid spend >\$2M/month across Meta+Google with CAC held to target; ideally has crossed \$3M+.

- P2 Incrementality + MMM fluency** — Has run geo/holdout incrementality tests and managed an MMM vendor relationship; can defend budget allocation to a board.
- P3 Hired & led team of 4+ (target 5)** — Directly hired and managed e4 performance marketers; evidence of building a function, not just running one.
- P4 DTC e-commerce at \$30M+ ARR** — 6+ years in DTC performance marketing at brands e\$30M ARR, ideally in sleep/wellness/home adjacencies.
- P5 SQL fluency for self-serve warehouse pulls** — Writes own SQL against warehouse (Snowflake/Big-Query/Redshift) without data-team dependency.
- P6 Finance partnership & unit economics** — Has built payback / contribution-margin / LTV models jointly with Finance and presented to CEO/CFO.
- P7 Measurement stack build (GA4, server-side, CAPI)** — Has implemented or owned GA4 + server-side event pipeline / CAPI, not just consumed dashboards.
- P8 NYC in-person 3 days/week** — Located in or committed to relocating to NYC for a 3-day hybrid schedule.

Candidate A — Priya Raman [FICTITIOUS]

Location: Brooklyn, NY | **Visa Status:** US citizen | **Email:** priya.raman@example.com

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Performance marketing lead at a \$120M ARR DTC apparel brand, running \$4.2M/month across Meta, Google, and TikTok. Known for a rigorous geo-incrementality program run quarterly with a Nielsen MMM overlay. Currently manages a team of 6.

CORE SKILLS

Meta/Google/TikTok at \$4M+/mo, Geo-holdout incrementality testing, MMM (Nielsen) vendor management, SQL (Snowflake), Team leadership (6 reports), Payback + LTV modeling

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Director, Performance Marketing — Lumen Apparel (DTC apparel, \$120M ARR) (Aug 2021 – Present)

- Owns \$4.2M/month paid budget across Meta, Google, TikTok, and Pinterest; held blended CAC flat YoY while growing spend 68%.
- Instituted quarterly geo-holdout incrementality tests; used results to cut Google Brand spend 40% with no revenue impact.
- Manages MMM engagement with Nielsen; presents monthly attribution reconciliation to CFO and board.
- Hired and manages team of 6 (3 paid, 1 analyst, 1 creative ops, 1 lifecycle).

Senior Performance Marketing Manager — Harper & Vine (DTC beauty, \$45M ARR) (Jun 2018 – Aug 2021)

- Scaled Meta from \$400K to \$2.1M/month over 24 months.
- Built first SQL-based reporting stack on BigQuery.

EDUCATION

BS Economics, NYU, 2016

CERTIFICATIONS

Google Ads Search & Display · Meta Blueprint

Candidate B — Daniel Ostrowski [FICTITIOUS]

Location: Manhattan, NY | **Visa Status:** US citizen | **Email:** daniel.ostrowski@example.com

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Employee #4 at a DTC supplements brand he helped scale from \$6M to \$70M ARR over 5 years. Owns both paid and lifecycle. Comfortable in the CEO's office, less rigorous on incrementality science.

CORE SKILLS

Paid social + search scaling, Founder-adjacent decisioning, P&L ownership, Klaviyo lifecycle, Retail/wholesale attribution, SQL (intermediate)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

VP Marketing (Employee #4) — Northwind Supplements (Feb 2020 – Present)

- Joined at \$6M ARR; brand now \$70M ARR, profitable — owns performance, lifecycle, and brand.
- Scaled paid budget from \$150K to \$3.1M/month across Meta, Google, TikTok.
- Launched into Target and Whole Foods; built the retail-vs-DTC attribution split with Finance.
- Hired and manages team of 5.

Senior Growth Manager — Grove & Oak (DTC home) (Aug 2017 – Feb 2020)

- Ran Meta + Google at \$600K/month.
- Built first cohort payback model.

EDUCATION

BA Communications, Fordham University, 2015

CERTIFICATIONS

Google Ads

Candidate C — Wei-Lin Chen [FICTITIOUS]

Location: Jersey City, NJ | **Visa Status:** US citizen | **Email:** weilin.chen@example.com

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Performance marketing lead with a data-science bent. Built in-house MMM at two DTC brands. SQL and Python are native. Weaker on team leadership scale and creative partnership.

CORE SKILLS

In-house MMM (Python, PyMC), Incrementality testing (geo + PSA holdouts), SQL (advanced, Snowflake), Server-side events / CAPI implementation, Meta + Google at \$2.5M/mo, GA4 + BigQuery pipelines

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Head of Growth Analytics & Paid — Rell Sleep Co. (DTC mattress, \$40M ARR) (Jan 2022 – Present)

- Owns \$2.5M/month Meta + Google; built in-house Bayesian MMM in PyMC that replaced \$180K/yr Nielsen contract.
- Runs monthly geo-holdout incrementality tests; publishes internal reconciliation vs MTA.
- Implemented server-side GA4 + Meta CAPI end-to-end.
- Manages team of 3 (2 paid, 1 analyst).

Senior Growth Marketing Manager — Ferndale Wellness (DTC vitamins) (Sep 2018 – Jan 2022)

- Scaled Meta from \$200K to \$1.4M/month.
- Wrote the SQL stack Finance used for cohort payback.

EDUCATION

MS Statistics, Columbia University, 2018; BS Math, UCLA, 2016

CERTIFICATIONS

dbt Fundamentals · Google Cloud Data Engineer (associate)

Candidate D — Amara Okonkwo [FICTITIOUS]

Location: Manhattan, NY | **Visa Status:** US citizen | **Email:** amara.okonkwo@example.com

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Performance marketing leader at a \$90M ARR DTC wellness brand with a UK launch under her belt. Strong on category insight and international expansion; her measurement is competent but not cutting-edge.

CORE SKILLS

Sleep/wellness DTC category expertise, UK market launch, Meta + Google at \$3M/mo, Klaviyo + Attentive lifecycle, Team leadership (5 reports), Weekly CEO/CFO business reviews

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Director of Performance Marketing — Nocturne Wellness (DTC sleep supplements, \$90M ARR) (May 2021 – Present)

- Owns \$3M/month paid across Meta, Google, TikTok; blended CAC down 12% YoY.
- Led UK market launch — first international expansion; hit \$6M UK ARR in 18 months.
- Runs weekly performance review with CEO and CFO; owns marketing P&L line.
- Manages team of 5 (2 paid, 1 lifecycle, 1 analyst, 1 creative ops).

Senior Growth Manager — Bright Path (DTC skincare) (Jun 2018 – May 2021)

- Scaled Meta + Google from \$300K to \$1.8M/month.
- Built lifecycle from zero in Klaviyo.

EDUCATION

BA Economics, Georgetown University, 2016

CERTIFICATIONS

Meta Blueprint

Candidate E — Ryan Callahan [FICTITIOUS]

Location: Hoboken, NJ | **Visa Status:** US citizen | **Email:** ryan.callahan@example.com

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Performance marketer who came up through marketing engineering. Owns paid at \$2.2M/month and has built the GA4 + server-side + warehouse stack at two brands. Weaker on Finance and unit economics.

CORE SKILLS

GA4 server-side + Meta CAPI implementation, dbt + Snowflake modeling, Meta + Google at \$2.2M/mo, Incrementality (Meta lift tests), SQL (advanced), Team leadership (4 reports)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Head of Growth — Cardinal Pet (DTC pet food, \$55M ARR) (Nov 2021 – Present)

- Owns \$2.2M/month Meta + Google + TikTok; brand grew 40% YoY.
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Built full measurement stack: GA4 server-side, Meta CAPI, dbt models in Snowflake, Hightouch reverse-ETL to Klaviyo.

- Runs Meta conversion-lift tests quarterly; used results to defend a \$400K/mo Meta budget expansion.
- Hired and manages team of 4.

Senior Growth Marketing Manager — Halden Home Goods (DTC) (Feb 2018 – Nov 2021)

- Scaled paid social from \$100K to \$1M/month.
- Built the SQL reporting layer that replaced a Looker consultant.

EDUCATION

BS Computer Science, Rutgers, 2015

CERTIFICATIONS

dbt Analytics Engineering · Google Analytics 4

Section 2 — Why Each Candidate Is More Attractive

Candidate A vs. Marcus Hale

WINS ON

- P1 — Currently runs \$4.2M/month across Meta+Google+TikTok — 2.6x Marcus's owned spend.
- P2 — Runs quarterly geo-holdout incrementality tests and manages a Nielsen MMM engagement — exactly the JD language.
- P3 — Manages a team of 6, one seat above the JD's target of 5.
- P8 — Already lives in Brooklyn — zero relocation risk.

MARCUS HALE STILL WINS ON

- P6 — Priya presents to CFO but no evidence of building the model from scratch or of a Series A raise contribution; Marcus built the model the CFO took into the \$12M round.

Net verdict: *The front-runner on paper — beats Marcus on scale, measurement, and NYC location; Marcus can only compete by out-performing her on Finance intimacy and lifecycle.*

Candidate B vs. Marcus Hale

WINS ON

- P1 — Scaled paid to \$3.1M/month, comfortably past Marcus's \$1.6M and past the JD's \$2M threshold.
- P3 — Hired and manages team of 5 — exactly the JD's 9-month target.
- P4 — Founder-adjacent <\$10M ' \$50M+ story — the JD's explicit bonus, plus profitability.

MARCUS HALE STILL WINS ON

- P2 — Daniel's resume is thin on incrementality testing and MMM — 'founder-adjacent decisioning' isn't the boardroom rigor the JD demands, and Marcus's Looker MTA model is closer to that muscle.

- P7 — No mention of GA4 or server-side/CAPI build; Marcus explicitly built on GA4 + Meta API.

Net verdict: *Dangerous because he matches Solstice's founder DNA and hit the scale story; Marcus can chip at him on measurement rigor.*

Candidate C vs. Marcus Hale

WINS ON

- P2 — Built an in-house Bayesian MMM and runs monthly geo incrementality tests — deepest measurement candidate in the pool.
- P5 — MS Statistics + advanced Snowflake SQL + Python — Marcus is intermediate SQL, basic Python.
- P7 — Implemented server-side GA4 + Meta CAPI end-to-end; Marcus has GA4 + Meta API but no CAPI on resume.

MARCUS HALE STILL WINS ON

- P3 — Wei-Lin manages a team of 3, below the JD's floor of 4+; Marcus already manages 4.
- P1 — Wei-Lin owns \$2.5M/mo — meets the JD floor but Marcus can credibly claim comparable blended scale once paid social + CRM are counted together.

Net verdict: *Wins the boardroom-defense narrative but loses on leadership scale — Solstice may hire him as an analyst-lead, not the Head.*

Candidate D vs. Marcus Hale

WINS ON

- P1 — Runs \$3M/month in the exact sleep/wellness category — 1.9x Marcus's spend and category-adjacent.
- P4 — Sleep supplements DTC at \$90M ARR — the closest possible match to Solstice's business.
- P3 — Manages a team of 5 with the exact composition the JD asks for.

MARCUS HALE STILL WINS ON

- P5 — Amara's resume shows no SQL — Marcus has intermediate SQL and a data bootcamp.
- P2 — No mention of incrementality testing or MMM — 'blended CAC down 12%' is a last-click framing; Marcus's Looker MTA model is comparable rigor.

Net verdict: *The category-fit candidate — beats Marcus on scale, team, and domain but leaves the measurement seat open for a stronger analytical challenger.*

Candidate E vs. Marcus Hale

WINS ON

- P5 — CS degree + advanced SQL + dbt + Snowflake — Marcus's intermediate SQL cannot match.
- P7 — Built GA4 server-side, Meta CAPI, and dbt models end-to-end — exactly the measurement stack Solstice wants built.
- P2 — Runs quarterly Meta conversion-lift tests and has used them to defend budget — Marcus has no incrementality artifacts.

MARCUS HALE STILL WINS ON

- P6 — Ryan's resume shows no unit-economics or Series A / P&L partnership work with Finance; Marcus built the model taken into a \$12M round.
- P4 — Pet food and home goods, not sleep/wellness — category adjacency roughly equal to Marcus's, and both are non-wellness.

Net verdict: *Beats Marcus on the measurement build but under-indexes on Finance and CEO/CFO fluency — Solstice may prefer him as a #2, not the Head.*

Section 3 — Action Plan: How Marcus Hale Can Win

Tactical (next 2 weeks)

- Write a 2-page 'Solstice Measurement POV' memo before first-round: propose a quarterly geo-holdout incrementality cadence, a shortlist of MMM vendors (Recast, Prescient, Measured), and a 90-day server-side/CAPI hardening plan.

Addresses P2, P7 · neutralizes Priya Raman [FICTITIOUS]

Turns Marcus's biggest gap into a demonstrated point of view; Priya has done it, Marcus can show he'd run it.

- Reframe the top-line spend number in the resume and screener: 'led \$4M+/month blended acquisition + retention program' (paid social \$1.6M + paid search + CRM-driven paid) rather than the \$1.6M paid-social-only figure.

Addresses P1 · neutralizes Amara Okonkwo [FICTITIOUS]

Closes the optical gap vs Amara's \$3M/mo without inflating any single-channel claim.

- Rewrite the Bramble bullet on the Looker attribution model to explicitly name it a 'pre-MMM MTA model' and quantify the board-facing decision it drove (the 22% reallocation).

Addresses P2, P6 · neutralizes Wei-Lin Chen [FICTITIOUS]

Signals measurement seriousness in the same vocabulary Wei-Lin uses without overclaiming.

- Book a NYC trip in the next 2 weeks and put 'Relocating to NYC, available on-site week of [date]' on the resume header.

Addresses P8 · neutralizes Priya Raman [FICTITIOUS]

Removes the location tiebreaker vs Priya and Amara who already live there.

Strategic (next 1-3 months)

- Design and run one geo-holdout incrementality test at Bramble in the next 60 days (pause Meta in 3 matched DMAs for 2 weeks); document the read-out as a case study.

Addresses P2 · neutralizes Wei-Lin Chen [FICTITIOUS]

Creates a real artifact Marcus can walk into the Solstice interview with — the exact thing Wei-Lin has and Marcus doesn't.

- Take the Meta Conversions API + server-side GA4 implementation at Bramble across the finish line (or ship a written spec for it) so it's on the resume.

Addresses P7 · neutralizes Ryan Callahan [FICTITIOUS]

Closes the biggest technical stack gap vs Ryan; a spec doc is a credible substitute if implementation isn't finished.

- Propose to Bramble's CEO a 3-hire plan for the next two quarters (analyst + creative ops + second paid manager) and get the analyst hire committed on paper.

Addresses P3 · neutralizes Amara Okonkwo [FICTITIOUS]

Moves Marcus from 'led team of 4' to 'hiring toward 5+' — matches the JD's 9-month build plan.

- Run a 4-week self-taught SQL sprint on Snowflake fundamentals (windows, cohort SQL, dbt basics) and add one warehouse-model artifact to a public gist or write-up.

Addresses P5 · neutralizes Ryan Callahan [FICTITIOUS]

'Intermediate SQL' won't survive the technical screen; a visible artifact will.

Reframing moves

- Lead the interview narrative with the Series A model story: 'the CFO took my unit-economics model into a \$12M round' — position as CEO/CFO-fluent operator, not just a paid buyer.

Addresses P6 · neutralizes Ryan Callahan [FICTITIOUS]

This is Marcus's strongest single differentiator vs the technical challengers who lack Finance intimacy.

- Frame lifecycle depth (repeat rate 22%'38%) as 'LTV lever ownership' rather than 'email/SMS' — ties directly to the JD's LTV / contribution-margin language.

Addresses P6, P4 · neutralizes Priya Raman [FICTITIOUS]

Priya is paid-only; Marcus's lifecycle experience directly moves the CAC:LTV math Solstice's board cares about.

- Position the Kindred 'Bramble arc as 'took two DTC brands through the \$30M ARR wall as the growth owner' rather than as two separate manager roles.

Addresses P4 · neutralizes Daniel Ostrowski [FICTITIOUS]

Narrows Daniel's founder-adjacent scale-story advantage into 'similar arc, different seat.'

Structural gaps to acknowledge

- Never personally owned \$3M+/month paid budget (JD wants \$3.5M scaling to \$6M)

Held by Priya Raman [FICTITIOUS], Daniel Ostrowski [FICTITIOUS], Amara Okonkwo [FICTITIOUS]

Closest substitute: Blended-spend reframing (\$4M+ across paid + CRM) plus a written 90-day scale plan for Solstice from \$3.5M to \$6M with channel-by-channel budget logic — brought to the interview as a leave-behind.

- No MMM vendor relationship or in-house MMM built

Held by Priya Raman [FICTITIOUS], Wei-Lin Chen [FICTITIOUS]

Closest substitute: Vendor-shortlist memo (Recast / Prescient / Measured) with pros/cons, expected cost, and a 6-month rollout plan; pair with the geo-holdout case study above.

- No international geo-expansion (UK/CA/AU) experience

Held by **Amara Okonkwo [FICTITIOUS]**

Closest substitute: Bonus, not a must — acknowledge in the interview and propose a 'Canada-first, 2026' framework rather than fake experience.

- No retail/wholesale attribution experience

Held by **Daniel Ostrowski [FICTITIOUS]**

Closest substitute: Bonus item — do not oversell; acknowledge and note the Bramble MTA model architecture would extend to retail with a wholesale-panel data feed.

'Single highest-leverage move

- Ship the 2-page Solstice Measurement POV memo (quarterly geo-incrementality cadence + MMM vendor shortlist + server-side/CAPI plan) and bring it to the first-round call as a leave-behind.

Addresses **P2, P7** · neutralizes **Priya Raman [FICTITIOUS]**, **Wei-Lin Chen [FICTITIOUS]**, **Ryan Callahan [FICTITIOUS]**

P2 is the single hardest priority to fake and the one three of five competitors beat Marcus on; a written POV converts a resume gap into a demonstrated point of view before the hiring manager can screen him out.