

Optimising the marketing team's performance

It's tougher than ever before for companies to grow, with marketing increasingly important in helping companies deliver the break through innovation and compelling brand positionings needed to achieve this. Yet, many CEOs and Boards are frustrated by their marketing team, with CMOs having the shortest Boardroom tenure (just over 2 years) and few CEOs coming from a marketing background.

The issue

Marketing is a broad church of activities, requiring both highly analytical as well as inspirational creative thinking, making it difficult for any marketer to cover all aspects well.

Analytically, marketers need to be able to

- Define where they want to play to drive profitable growth
- Select which marketing activities to focus on to maximise ROI

Creatively, marketers need to be able to

- Develop a compelling brand positioning and inspirational communications campaign
- Deliver a steady stream of breakthrough innovation

Given the breadth of analytical and creative activities

- Few CMOs, if any, are strong both creatively and analytically, yet CEOs and Boards expect their CMOs to be
- Few CEOs and Boards know what they want from their marketing team and thus fail to set clear objectives or have reasonable expectation levels

Building a strong marketing team

To build a strong team, it's important for the CMO to work closely with the Board to:

■ Define what the business needs from marketing

To generate growth, does the business need marketing to deliver more creatively led things such as a superior brand or a steady stream of innovation, or does it need more analytically driven things such as defining where to play to maximise profitable share growth or choosing which marketing activities to focus on? By systematically working through the range of options, the Board and marketing can define and agree what marketing needs to focus on, as well as set clear objectives that everyone buys into.

■ Build a marketing team that has the skills to deliver

Where possible, Boards should recruit senior marketers that best match the needs of their business, and surround them with a team of marketing experts who can deliver the other aspects.

For example, if the CMO is more creatively minded, his number 2 should most probably be strong analytically (i.e., good at making choices about where to invest for growth). Similarly, if the CMO is more of a strategic marketer, his number 2 should most probably be strong creatively (i.e., good at building strong brands and innovation pipelines).

Additionally, the marketing team should contain experts in all key creative and analytical functional areas, to deliver the breadth of creative and analytical marketing activities required.

When recruiting a new CMO, the Board should assess what type of marketer best fits their business needs.

There are at least 5 types of CMOs that a Board can employ:

- **A strategic marketer** who drives commercial decision making from the top, by being decisive on where to invest for growth, influential at bringing the Board with them, and inspirational across the business; they tend to be analytically and commercially strong, as well as politically astute
- **A brand marketer** who drives growth by building a strong brand supported by a compelling communications campaign and a steady stream of innovation; they tend to be creatively strong, as well as inspirational at bringing the Board and creative agencies with them, and visionary in identifying bold ideas
- **An entrepreneurial marketer** who grows a local brand into a category leader by identifying, non-traditional ways to engage with consumers, and convincing the Board on the need for marketing investment; they tend to be entrepreneurial and unafraid to challenge the status quo
- **A global brand coordinator** who helps local teams build a compelling and consistent brand worldwide, by defining what the brand should look and feel like across all touch points and helping local markets deliver this; they tend to be empathetic at understanding local needs as well as persuasive influencers
- **A sales marketer** who supports the sales team, typically within a B2B company, with strong brand and customer communications; they tend to be commercially minded as well as empathetic to the sales team's needs

Convincing the Board

To build Board confidence, it is imperative that the CMO is clear about what he or she needs to achieve to help deliver the company objectives, as well as has the skill set within their team to deliver the breadth of analytical and creative challenges demanded of them. Together the Board and CMO can ensure that the marketing team has what they need to drive the level of success required both for the company and for themselves as marketers.

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