



WHITEPAPER

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CMO BY DESIGN: THE HUMAN TOUCH

INTRODUCTION

Marketing as a function, a skill, a capability and a discipline has grown and isn't showing signs of stopping: the metaverse, anyone?

With that growth has come specialisms, silos and transformation. Consequently making decisions is overly complicated. This landscape places the CMO under intense scrutiny; articles and research from Forbes and HBR to McKinsey and Gartner all comment on the evolution, transition and fragility of the role. Every person and their dog has an opinion on what 'Marketing' should do.

However, if you combine this with the current climate of ambiguity, the CMO cannot wait for the mist to clear to make decisions – which begs the question:

Do they know what the decisions are, and do they have what they need to make them?

Intro:
Hypothesis

Themes we uncovered:
The challenges of Leadership
Marketing impact and evidence
Resilience at Scale

Summary:
A call to action



OUR HYPOTHESIS

We believe that by understanding the 'human' needs of the CMO, we will find actionable insights that can create impact for their professional (and personal) growth needs.

Our aim was to find ways of empowering the CMO by unlocking clear decision pathways and collaboratively unpicking complexity in order to deliver the change they require.



UNPICKING THE COMPLEXITY BY FOCUSING ON THE CMO AS HUMAN

To do this we commissioned an exclusive piece of research using the principles of human-centered, design-thinking to understand the challenges faced by C-suite marketing leaders and their leadership teams in achieving growth with the aim of uncovering the needs of the CMO as a human, as opposed to those of the organization.



**THEMES WE
UNCOVERED**

LEADERSHIP:

- A SAFE SPACE**
- THE FUTURE OF WORK FROM THEORY TO APPLICATION**
- TALENT, PERFORMANCE AND THE PUSH TO TRANSFORM**

LEADERSHIP: A SAFE SPACE

CMOs don't spend enough time with other CMOs – outside of institutional set ups. They don't have a safe space to seek council and stimulus in a hands-on setting. They don't have opportunities to develop ideas, experiment and gather practical feedback, alongside peers, to understand the true drivers of value and growth.



Surround yourself by people who are better at the things that you are



There's a lot of similarities across sectors that we don't talk about



We want stimulus from other CMOs, from big hitters



CMOs embraced vulnerability and self-reflection on this topic and great value was placed on the ability to access and connect with leaders they wouldn't usually work with. Unsurprisingly, want to collaborate, learn from each other outside of the constraints of their BAU.

LEADERSHIP: THE FUTURE OF WORK FROM THEORY TO APPLICATION

CMOs are feeling their way when it comes to the future of work as they wrangle the unknowns of reorgs, global/local tension, and flexible working as the norm.

The research uncovered a lot of 'I think' and 'I want', yet not a great deal of 'I know how' to design the change and provide evidence of what is and isn't working.

“

We're being incredibly intuitive, I guess, and trying to set people's expectations that we don't know what new working patterns look like until we form them

“

I think, overall, it doesn't matter where a company's headquarters are, it needs to make sure that there's authority and decision making in local markets, as well as at the center of the organization

“

I actually think there's a large cohort of people who would love to get back into the office as quickly as possible because their personal circumstances means that they don't have that space at home...that's headspace, as well as physical space

“

I think it's super important to have connection as a team. Otherwise, work is a bit transactional and misaligned



LEADERSHIP: TALENT, PERFORMANCE AND THE PUSH TO TRANSFORM

A critical and reoccurring challenge highlighted in the research is that the push to transform has created a shortage of talent. The shortage drives up talent costs and crystalises the opportunity cost of not having the talent embedded and operational.

In addition to the shortage, there is a skills gap; marketeers are required (but unable, on the whole) to blend digital skill sets together such as commerce, media, and data.

Adding these new specialisms often fresh from academia comes with a lack of experience and ability to contextually interpret the data, humanise it so that people are compelled to act.

"I think in a marketing context, there's definitely a shortage of good strong data analysts, and more importantly, data scientists who are able to take large swathes of datasets and bring them together with other insights and then interpret them."

"Really, rounded digital skills, that is key, just that, rounded understanding of how digital commerce works, how digital media works - the skills to be able to bring digital, experience and tech together in a way that is relevant and human."

"OK this is quite liberating, we can use this (the push to transform) to attract a completely different type of talent."

"Having data analysts and data scientists are really important but having the experience to know how to put that data into context is I think critical and we don't have that."



Transformation comes at a cost and the investment is usually heavily weighted on the tech and data aspect of the change whilst the humans are left behind. Effort is required for both existing and new roles to gain the behaviours and skills that deliver significant improvements in how people **can** and **will** work with new capabilities.



THEMES WE
UNCOVERED

MARKETING IMPACT AND EVIDENCE:

- THE BLAME GAME
- CUSTOMER STRATEGY



**AT A TIME WHEN WE HAVE MORE DATA THAN WE
KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH, WHY ARE CMOS STILL
WRESTLING TO PROVE THE VALUE MARKETING
DRIVES AND HOW TO BALANCE SHORT VS LONG
TERM RESULTS?**

MARKETING IMPACT AND EVIDENCE: THE BLAME GAME

Marketing is too easy to blame for the business' shortcomings and lacks the evidence to prove otherwise.

The general feeling is that other functions don't really understand what the Marketing function 'does'.

Creativity is subjective and hard to measure especially when short term-ism has driven an expectation to deliver immediate impact and despite the swathes of KPIs, econometrics and reports produced by Marketing, what is measured isn't connected to the rest of the business, therefore its contribution and connection to the desired outcome is unaccounted for.

“

“They can say - I just don't like it, I don't like the advertising.”

“The marketing role is one of the roles in the business that is easy to blame. Issues are rarely anything to do with marketing. It could be the instore experience; it could be prices. But I haven't got anything solid to say - look what I've done! Even with econometrics they can say it's rubbish.”

“If sales are not good, it could/will be marketing's fault, even though in reality, it isn't marketing's fault. It's to do with your prices. It's to do with the you know, a crappy store experience.”

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There is a clear need to support CMOs close the gap between marketing and other areas of the business, make transparent their different performance goals, conflict and provide the connection points. The disproportionate expectation of what Marketing, as a function, contributes to business outcomes must be addressed as the median is 23% of unit sales volume that can be attributed specifically to the impact of marketing*

*Boston Consulting Group

MARKETING IMPACT AND EVIDENCE: CUSTOMER STRATEGY

CMOs have 3 clear needs when they talk about the customer:

1

How do you understand your customer and make decisions when the data that represents them has yet to settle since Covid and is unlikely to with fresh economic challenges?

2

Customer Experience is critical yet an underestimated source of strategic decision making despite the path to purchase becoming increasingly complex.

3

Keeping up with customer needs and emerging trends is now a necessity but how do ensure insights are actionable, connected into the business and have the appropriate measure attached and value accounted for?

"We put more time and effort into emerging trends than we used to. We could get away with not doing it and now it's a bit more inescapable."

"One thing that I have, as an absolute constant, is customer relations/customer experience, the part of it that doesn't matter, until it matters."

"There's a burden on proving that you thought about the customer and everything that you do. I don't think that's a bad thing. There needs to be the right processes."

"What we don't have as CMOS is new data (post covid). So you're an idiot if you look back, but what we don't have is new data, because it's not settled and the studies aren't there."



THEMES WE
UNCOVERED

RESILIENCE AT SCALE

CMOs know uncertainty isn't going away and highlight that marketing, more than any other function, thrive when the situation requires curiosity and insight. However, this seems to be by chance rather than by design.

With uncertainty increasing CMOs need to turn ad hoc resilience and agility into the operational norm.



"I think volatility is where marketers come to the fore because it takes the business away from the very traditional finance-oriented reverse into the numbers and project, to more speculation, more prediction, more curiosity."

"So the constant is the resilience, the ambiguity of whether this is going to be the process for next week or not, doesn't really matter. Let's do what we can do today. Let's try and model it and then you go right down to the resilience. Because next week, something changes it again. So you go straight back to your resilience piece. But then you bring in agility and ambiguity going together are brilliant, but only if you can underpin those with resilience."

"If you need provocative insight based on some new thinking and strategy. I would get an external set of eyes in any day of the week."



The balancing act of approaching short vs long term objectives of Marketing is a form of resilience that can be designed and practiced, if given the space, so external volatility can be navigated, and pathways developed to understand what activities drive what outcomes.

OUR RESEARCH UNCOVERED THAT CMOS UNDERSTAND THE SYMPTOMS, BUT NOT THE ROOT CAUSES FOR WHAT THEY ARE FEELING

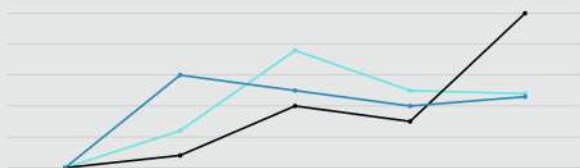
OUR SUMMARY

Entire organisations are shifting in the effort to digitally transform, yet it is not transparent or documented where Marketing sits in those shifts, what shifts they enable as an owner, connector or contributor to an agreed set of business outcomes.

Marketing Transformation has over-indexed on capabilities, structure and process in an effort to digitise organisations at pace. As a result, knowledge has been diluted and the work of change is reduced to a side hustle.

To deliver real value, it is critical to work with both bottom up and top-down change, mapping new decision pathways and behaviours required to operate both collectively and individually

Is more critical than ever to have the ability, and agility, to understand and adapt to customer needs and create valuable brand experience. However, despite heavy investment in the capabilities to do just this, the systems are built in silos and lack the connective tissue and cohesion to unlock decisions that bring about meaningful change.



A CALL TO ACTION: CMO BY DESIGN

This research provides a platform that compels us to act to create specific products and services to empower the CMO as a person.

Understand how to move from running an output led marketing function to outcome led marketing orchestration.

Enable the CMO to connect into the broader business with a **currency of transparent decisions** and evidence led value.

Identify the behaviour change and skills the CMO needs to enable for their teams and agencies to translate business outcomes into customer outcomes that deliver tangible short and long term value.

Offer the tools to create a business cases for investing in the work of change, so the focus, pace and sustainability of transformation delivers.

Co-create measurement frameworks that enable the business to view marketing as an engine for growth pulling the big levers;

- Optimise today (existing operations)
- Make the future real (accelerate transformation)
- Create new possibilities (create and disrupt)



I want to be the connector and design meaningful, scaleable change.

I want to learn, innovate and test in a safe space with my peers.

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