

THE CMO SHIFT TO GAINING BUSINESS LIFT:

EXECUTIVE PERSPECTIVES

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INTRODUCTION

“The CMO Shift to Gaining Business Lift” research initiative revealed key mandates, opportunities and challenges that some of today’s chief marketing officers are facing. As many CMOs are bidding farewell to old standards of brand-centric advertising roles, our research showed there is a new mandate to serve as the primary custodian of the customer and driver of growth and opportunity. According to the report’s findings, 70 percent of respondents say there is a clear mandate or high level of expectation among their senior management teams and board members for marketing to be a growth driver and change agent.

CMOs surveyed for the research expressed high aspirations, revealing that they are ready to assume a more business-focused leadership role and work closely with C-suite leadership to craft profitable, long-lasting customer relationships to drive opportunity and growth. However, many CMOs also admitted that they are struggling to focus on the task of activating routes to revenue.

As part of the research, the CMO Council and Deloitte identified CMOs across a multitude of industries, interviewing key marketing leaders to better understand where and how these executives have made shifts in responsibilities and priorities to best meet the goal of serving as

the organizational growth driver. What emerged from the interviews was a clear picture of single-minded determination—a belief that it is the role and responsibility of the CMO to advocate for the customer while advancing the business goals of the organization.

Key among the attributes that many of those interviewed for this initiative have developed as core to their CMO tool-kit:

- The ability to gain and maintain support from the CEO, board and executive-level leadership, thereby enabling collaboration devoid of cross-functional friction
- A clear line of sight into the mindset and actions of the customer that includes the lifetime value of a customer’s relationship with the brand and a vision of the customer’s expectations for future engagements
- A desire to step up into the role of growth executive and the tenacity to stay ahead of the technology curve

Each executive interview encapsulates individual leading practices, showcasing how CMOs have realized their own paths to becoming growth drivers. These leading-practice perspectives serve as views into how these 14 individuals from

brands including Acer, Assurant, Atos, Fujitsu, GE, IDG, Jasper, Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group, Nokia, SAP, SREI, Telenor, the Foschini Group and United Rentals have transformed their own roles and, in turn, shifted the very role of marketing across the organization.

EXECUTIVE PERSPECTIVES



S Rajendran
Former Chief Marketing
Officer



Since 1976, Acer has been creating hardware and associated electronics and empowering software for information technology. In 2015, Acer was named the sixth largest computer vendor in the world. The Taiwanese company has expanded to a multi-national, multi-billion-dollar organization that strives to create value and contribute to society through its products and services. As the former Chief Marketing Officer at Acer India, headquartered in Bangalore, S Rajendran helped to pioneer Acer's business in the Indian sub-continent and provides unique insights around building the brand and sustaining its salience in a dynamic market.

“With technology becoming so pervasive and with customers becoming more globally connected, Acer’s expectation of marketing is to be the antenna for the brand,” Rajendran states. “Marketing’s immersive understanding of these changing dynamics has led the marketing function to be the primary driver for aligning the organization’s thinking, policies, strategy and efforts.”

With the growing number of tools available to aid marketers in understanding consumer behavior at a faster rate and a deeper granularity, the digital space is constantly evolving. Rajendran explains that due to this evolution, marketers across multiple industries are still not on the same wavelength when it comes to understanding the potency of digital technology and the changes it can engender. However, Acer recognizes the power of these tools in driving the customer experience and expects the marketing function to work with other senior executive functions in order to drive strategic engagement

and growth through the targeted use of digital technology.

Due to the changes that technology is bringing, marketing is no longer viewed simply as a function to print brochures, interact with agencies and execute ideas that may have stemmed from siloed individuals or departments. Now, it is incumbent upon the marketing function to take accountability for results-oriented outcomes. As time goes on, marketing is evolving with customers’ needs, and as those expectations rise, the department assumes more responsibility.

“Across departments at Acer, we adopted new technologies to maintain our innovative edge,” Rajendran says. “Especially prevalent is a growing respect for data-based decision making across diverse areas such as logistics, inventory management, customer insights, social-media and other related activities. In addition, specific to the marketing function, agencies are being tasked to produce measurable outcomes instead

of being limited to the fuzzy area of ‘creative’ communication and expression. In the function of sales, there is also enhanced granularity in looking at prospects and in the engagement of those prospects.”

Rajendran emphasizes that Acer has already taken steps to involve everyone within the company in utilizing and understanding digital and analytical tools.

“The two key areas of customer experience that are the most fertile right now are social media—which often becomes the first point of the customer experience—and the last mile of the sales cycle, when the purchase is consummated in retail outlets,” he says. “I believe that with proper use of these tools, Acer will increase touchpoints for customer engagement and thereby drive growth not only within the marketing function, but for the organization as a whole.”



Francesca Luthi
Executive Vice President,
Chief Communication
and Marketing Officer



Assurant is currently in the midst of executing a multi-year transformation. Last September, Luthi was appointed Chief Communication and Marketing Officer, a new role within Assurant. At the same time, she was named to the company's management committee. The appointment elevated and underscores the importance of marketing in shaping Assurant's business strategy.

For the first time in the 12 years that Assurant has been a public company, the company has brought marketing and communications together under one umbrella at the enterprise level. Prior to this, each of the company's business segments had its own siloed marketing and communication functions. The goal now is for these teams to work together to build the brand, enhance the company's reputation and improve customer experience: the key building blocks for success in driving business growth.

Since its inception more than 100 years ago, Assurant has transformed from a specialty insurance provider to a global, multi-faceted, dynamic risk manager that continues to evolve along with its customers' changing needs. Specializing in providing global risk management solutions, the company's core values include common sense, common decency, uncommon thinking and uncommon results. With employees in 17 different countries, Assurant's key purpose is to protect what matters most to its customers. Francesca Luthi, Executive Vice President and Chief Communication and Marketing Officer, oversees Assurant's growth agenda by acting as the voice for customers' dynamic requests.

"There is a strong expectation that I will drive profitable growth in my role as CMO at Assurant," Luthi says. "Assurant is not alone in expecting more from the marketing function. Across industries, senior leadership teams increasingly understand that marketing is critical to their growth agenda."

While the company is still in the initial phases of its marketing transformation, it is looking at talent, prioritizing specific and targeted investments, and strengthening key capabilities in areas such as brand, social business and digital marketing. These skills are key to ensuring the success of Assurant's marketing objectives, including driving the growth agenda, developing a brand strategy and building core capabilities.

"Given my broader background in investor relations and communications as well as my mandate, I bring a strong financial focus to my role and am initially concentrating on consolidat-

ing capabilities across the company to reinvest in key priority areas and on driving closer integration between marketing, communications and investor relations," she says. "Most often, marketing and communications compete for what are scarce resources. At Assurant, my goal is to bring those functions together, align our efforts and realize the potential of each discipline in strengthening our brand."

Luthi is particularly passionate about leveraging data analytics to strengthen the customer experience, support customer service operations, and influence product development and modification.

Assurant has used data to help further consumer education about its protection products and services before their time of need by leveraging various tools and channels, such as video and infographics. This results in a better customer experience at the time they need Assurant the most.

"I place significant emphasis on the importance of digital and marketing analytics that will help us to shape, execute and support the growth agenda while delivering on our customer promise," Luthi says. "A good example is what we are doing in social business with regard to social listening and social care. We are listening to capture the voice of the customer and providing feedback to our customer service reps and to the product development team. They consistently refine and modify their efforts to increase their capabilities and improve the overall experience."

First and foremost, however, Luthi believes that it is critical to align with business partners across the company to better understand their product and service strategies and evolve marketing efforts to support changing business needs.

"It is imperative to have strong cross-functional relationships, especially during times of rapid change," she stresses. "During the past few years, Assurant has transitioned from being a pure B2B company to more of a B2B2C model that emphasizes the customer experience and focuses key marketing efforts around improving the customer journey. Having strong relationships throughout the organization has ensured that my team has the information necessary to provide strategic counsel to the management

team and quickly move to align market resources to where they are most needed."

Besides overseeing employees and merging and managing departments, Luthi's role as the CMO means bringing a strong understanding of the customer voice to Assurant's management committee.

"At Assurant, there is a shared accountability in advocating for the customer that extends beyond my specific department," she says. "We spend a lot of time instilling that concept across the organization to ensure that everyone—from our CEO to senior leadership to customer service representatives—is focused on improving the customer journey."

During her career, Luthi has seen a dramatic expansion in CMO responsibilities, which is evidenced by the number of CMOs that are now members of executive management teams. CMOs are expected to earn a seat at the table in recognition of the impact they are having in shaping business strategy and growth agendas for organizations.

"Marketers today wear multiple hats: supporting employee engagement, advocating for the customer experience and driving the growth

agenda," Luthi says. "It is multi-faceted and certainly much broader than it has ever been historically. That makes prioritization one of the greatest challenges for me and requires ongoing dialogue and discussion with my fellow colleagues on the management committee. We have finite resources and time, so I want to make sure that we are aligned, efficient and focused on driving results."

Assurant has brought on many new leaders—the best of the best—to core business areas, which was crucial to the reorganization process. The company has been reenergized by the fresh perspectives provided by the new talent, and everyone is aligned around a common goal of driving profitable growth. Still, Luthi realizes that the company is only at the beginning of its new, dynamic journey toward success.

"At the end of the day, we want to make sure that our customers and business prospects feel confident in the choice they're making by selecting Assurant," she says.



Marianne Hewlett

Chief Marketing Officer

Atos

With 100,000 employees worldwide, Atos Benelux & The Nordics strives to accelerate progress by uniting people, business and technology. Their ambition is to become the trusted partner for their clients' digital journey, and their services include business consulting, systems integration, information management, transaction processing, and big data and cybersecurity services. The Chief Marketing Officer of Atos Benelux & The Nordics, Marianne Hewlett, is responsible for implementing marketing strategies across the region, ensuring a seamless journey through all of the company's touchpoints.

"Over the past few years, we have seen a shift from the backseat—a more reactive marketing role—to the driver's seat, with companies anticipating and analyzing customer needs and translating them into valuable and meaningful solutions and services," Hewlett states.

Hewlett believes that the CMO's role is now changing from a "one for all" marketing approach to a more personalized approach across both B2B and B2C organizations. She predicts that in the future, differences in marketing approaches for B2B and B2C companies will completely disappear in the hyper-personalized digital era.

"While there is a clear strategy, plan and goal in place, marketers and organizations as a whole must remain fluid to move with the rapidly changing market needs and demands," she says. "We have seen that the speed of change has increased tremendously over the last two years

due to mobile, cloud, IoT and social media. Disruptive business models and startups challenge us on a daily basis to rethink our approach to marketing. Now we work with a strategy blueprint that is agile and live."

With advancements in technology and particularly in social media, everyone is more connected, generating personal data that was previously unavailable. Self-service expectations will increase, and CMOs will need to anticipate those expectations to stay ahead of the curve. Measurement will be critical to gain insight into progress and determine where strategies need to improve or adjust, and easy-to-use and agile tools will be essential to operate in today's fast-changing markets. In the future, cognitive and predictive data analytics will become key assets in the CMO's toolkit.

"Innovation is the driver for success, not just in terms of product innovation, but also as it relates

to company culture and mindset," she explains. "Management expects marketing to be the main growth engine for the business. Therefore, beyond strategic use of advanced technology, it is also imperative to have strong relationships with both employees and customers."

Hewlett believes that CMOs should have a close connection with the sales director, HR and communication executives in order to create a culture in which employees feel comfortable to deliver their best work.

"A seat at the board table is crucial in order to be fully engaged in the day-to-day operations of the organization, understand the challenges and opportunities, and become a respected growth-driver," Hewlett explains. "It is important to have the mandate to execute strategic plans and mobilize the whole organization toward a customer-first mindset."

The CMO builds ecosystems within the organization where clients, partners and research institutions work together in order to delight their customers. It requires not only understanding the market and providing insight into future developments and innovations, but also an inquisitive mind to boldly go where no CMO has gone before.

“We work in a true partnership with our customers to deliver a better experience—not working for them but with them,” she says. “The digital era will see a lot of disruption in the industry, from new business models to startups, and many companies will need to reinvent themselves in order to remain successful.”



Ayman Abouseif

Vice President of
Product Marketing



Founded in 1935, Fujitsu is a leading provider of information and communication technology (ICT). A truly global organization and one of Forbes' "World's Most Admired Companies," Fujitsu provides an ICT portfolio to the global marketplace that includes hardware, software, networking, business solutions and services, with more than 97,000 patents worldwide and an annual revenue in excess of \$40 billion. Ayman Abouseif, Vice President of Product Marketing, takes on the challenge of creating a unified voice across numerous products and industries.

"Marketing can only survive today by being a true growth engine," Abouseif says. "Management expects it, shareholders expect it, and real marketers take it on as a personal challenge. Marketing is becoming more of a science and less of an art. Data and data-driven marketing are playing an increasingly important role, and the customer experience is of paramount importance to most organizations."

CMOs have to deliver on these heightened expectations with tighter budgets while responding quickly to changes in the market and adapting to the needs of new generations. Abouseif explains that in tight economic conditions, companies tend to scrutinize every dollar they spend, and that has an especially big impact on the marketing budget. As a result, many marketing departments have stepped up their game by implementing stronger measurement capabilities and by ensuring closer alignment cross-functionally. These tactics result in an approach that is

business-oriented and that focuses market spend based on business priorities.

"The role of the CMO has probably seen more change than any other C-level role in recent history," he says. "We have found a seat at the table and have become a true partner in areas such as strategy, globalization and corporate responsibility."

Abouseif articulates that at Fujitsu, marketing takes the lead in monitoring, measuring, analyzing and determining what actions need to be taken. They then collaborate with all other departments to turn those plans into action.

"No individual senior executive relationship is more or less important than any other for marketing purposes," he says. "We work closely with the CEO, CFO, CHRO and the heads of all strategic business units and geographies. Each of these relationships is important, and the loss

of any one connection automatically affects the ability to play the role of the global growth engine."

At Fujitsu, marketing has a clear role to play within the overall framework of growth at a global level. The team developed and formalized their marketing strategy some time ago, but they revisit it regularly to measure and tune their execution in order to maximize their marketing return on investment.

"Today, technology lies at the heart of marketing," Abouseif says. "Most marketers use marketing automation to map marketing activities along the buyers' journey, and this is just one example. We are constantly investing in marketing technology."

While marketers are responsible for customer experience strategy, at Fujitsu, management truly believes that customer experience is the responsibility of everyone in the company: the

engineers, the designers, the people who answer the phone and even the field engineers who drive hundreds of kilometers to serve small customers in the middle of nowhere.

“It is difficult to generalize about which areas of customer experience are most fertile for differentiation or improvements, but the customer-facing parts of the business tend to be the areas where improvements generally have faster returns,” Abouseif says. “Those returns highlight the significance that a positive customer experience has on our overall growth. For this reason, it is the responsibility of the entire enterprise to ensure that experience continues to improve.”



Marcelo Prado
Chief Marketing Officer



For more than 120 years, GE Oil & Gas has been leading the industry in extracting, transporting and supplying energy globally. While the industry itself remains deeply rooted in traditional methods, the organization constantly looks for new, innovative ways to help customers. This forward-thinking company transforms energy markets with software-defined machines that bring speed, solutions and greater insight to both oil and gas clients. Currently, the main goal for GE Oil & Gas is to reduce equipment downtime, optimize assets and build new partnership models. Marcelo Prado, Chief Marketing Officer, discusses the importance of utilizing data and technology not only for increased efficiency and reliability, but also for advanced strategic marketing.

“We think about growth in the medium-to-long term because we have limited influence in the short term when it comes to growth,” Prado explains. “On the other hand, we have a lot of influence and lead some of the discussions around investments that are going to generate growth within three to five years. The expectations are extremely high for marketing, though they vary depending on product line and region.”

GE Oil & Gas adapts to the continuously changing market but places a lot of emphasis on a formally defined corporate agenda. The strategy of the marketing team is defined by both a bottom-up and a top-down approach to marketing. Within the different regions, teams take a pulse on the marketplace, which has a significant influence on strategy. At the same time, the organization is very data-intensive and forward-looking, and therefore, a large part of strategy comes from the CEO’s outlined objectives at the beginning of each year, which are

based on deep analytics and insights gained from extensive market research.

“We do a lot of market research and buy a lot of data and information from companies, which is significant for us because we are a very horizontal company,” he says. “We target three main industries for five different businesses across nine regions, so it is important that we invest a lot in market research to intimately understand each of those ecosystems.”

The marketing team is learning how to best utilize their data and turn that data into strategic insights. This year, the company plans to enhance the tools they already have to extract more insights from their data. Through analytics, the company reported 25,000 direct customers, with 800,000 to 1 million total transactions per year. They identified close to 5,000 customers across the board that were considered loyal customers. With this data, GE is able to help the

sales team generate more value and think differently about the customer base.

“We also do a lot of demand generation and digital marketing, which is my number-one investment right now,” Prado says. “As a secondary investment strategy, I focus on innovation and analytics, specially tied to enhanced customer insights. I focus on innovation—not product innovation, but business model innovation.

“We need to do a better job of actually helping people within the company realize the role that they play within the value chain and why it’s important to be customer centric,” he acknowledges.

The company is now placing a lot of emphasis on how to successfully craft messages internally to get people to be more thoughtful of customers. Prado explains that a loyal customer generates

28 times more value than a transactional customer. Those are tangible, real insights driven by statistical data, and by sharing those insights, teams have a deeper understanding of the importance behind their actions with regard to the customer.

“I have a strong relationship with the product and technology team, and that’s tied to the way we are organized and to our product-oriented portfolio,” he says. “I have a very strong tie with all of the product GMs and our CTO. One of the roles that the CMO plays is what they call ‘portfolio manager’; this helps the business to look at its portfolio and advancements, so the relationships with the technology and product teams are incredibly important.”

The biggest challenge with Prado’s role is that people think about the CMO in many different ways. He believes that when looking at the role now versus a couple of years ago, there is clearly an increased expectation that the CMO must understand the digital environment.

“Being on top of new technologies and capabilities has been my biggest challenge,” he admits. “I must make sure I am always connected with what’s going on in the marketplace and am aware of how to leverage the different technologies, which requires a lot of time.”

The CMO should be able to sit down with the CIO and talk about hardware, software, data, etc., and he or she should also be able to sit down with the CTO and discuss technology. Because it is such a diverse role, CMOs must be open and adaptable in order to be successful. In addition, marketing teams should be the center of customer advocacy within the organization. Across the board, each department needs to make customers their main priority.

“Until a year ago, we didn’t even have a 1-800 number or web chat to allow customers to reach out to us,” Prado says. “We always heard from customers that we’re too complex and that people don’t always know where they can go and ask for help. We’ve made sound progress in that area, but we are still working on the service delivery side.”

Prado is seeing great success in his role, but he knows that the road ahead is not an easy one. He offers three pieces of advice to his fellow CMOs: “Have better communication internally, find a better way for to get customer insights, and create more aligned goals and objectives.”



Josh London
Chief Marketing Officer



Earlier this year, London and his team rolled out IDG's first-ever corporate brand campaign, which focuses on both culture, brand and product repositioning. Best known for its respected global brands such as CIO, Computerworld, Macworld and PCWorld, IDG made the decision to raise its profile among the millions of tech buyers, advertisers and clients who knew the company primarily through its individual properties.

"Simply put," London explains, "we needed to move from a house of brands to a branded house."

With a limited marketing budget and operations in 97 countries, London decided to leverage the company's footprint by identifying and engaging employee brand ambassadors around the world to drive messaging from the inside out, using employees' relationships with colleagues and their sense of ownership in the business to build awareness and excitement across their personal social channels about the brand campaign.

"The brand ambassadors were crucial in enabling IDG to amplify its brand repositioning, given the company's limited external awareness," London says. "The campaign has been embraced by employees, in large part because their peers helped communicate the need for repositioning. We continue to use the relationships the ambas-

sadors have built with their colleagues to keep the lines of communication open regarding how marketing is serving IDG. It has proven very effective for engaging associates and helping drive culture change forward."

For London, the branding initiative isn't simply an exercise in window dressing. It's a concerted effort to unify and elevate IDG's corporate identity in order to drive growth.

"Growth, as a true measure of business success, is the company's true north," London says. "So the marketing organization is focused on supporting growth across the business by raising visibility and delivering integrated messaging, along with demand and lead gen programs that enable the company to position its broad portfolio of capabilities for its clients."

In advance of launching the new branding, London and his team developed an in-depth

strategy that clearly laid out plans for growth, value creation and business development as well as a system of metrics to evaluate their progress and effectiveness.

"We use both quantitative and qualitative measures to track our success, and both are valuable for different reasons," London says. "Qualitatively, surveys, advisory groups and customer conversations help us understand how we are perceived as well as awareness of the breadth of IDG's portfolio. On the quantitative side, we track conversion to lead, conversion to sale, engagement and message pull through."

For London, part of the challenge was distinguishing between data points that might paint an encouraging picture but don't offer much guidance and those numbers that are truly correlated to the pursuit of engagement and growth.

"I've found that a number of organizations track 'vanity metrics' to no real effect," says London. "First and foremost, I'm an operator, so I need to make sure that anything we do is going to pay off. Wherever possible, we want to tie those numbers together."

Key to London's success at IDG has been a management team that values marketing. "I consider myself very fortunate to work with a CEO who not only empowers his team, but completely trusts his organization to execute on the business's growth strategy," London says. "As a leadership team, we're encouraged to support and drive revenue by identifying and implementing plans and programs we've determined will deliver immediate and longer-term revenue growth. We partner with sales throughout the world to drive revenue."

London believes this kind of partnership with senior management across sales, product, legal, finance and editorial, where everyone is aligned on the importance and function of marketing—is essential not just for IDG, but any organization.

"A CEO that expects his or her CMO to be a contributing member of the leadership team and contribute to strategy and business growth planning lays the groundwork for identifying the

value of marketing across other business functions."

And for London, this experience at IDG is further confirmation that the traditional roles and responsibilities of a CMO are changing.

"More than ever before, CMOs are charged with driving growth," London explains. "In order to do so, CMOs need to have a combination of strategic and tactical skills that span strategy, technology, business operations, sales and product. CMOs are now tasked with being not only the voice of the customer, but the steward of customer experience. This holistic view extends to all customer touch points, not just those historically considered to be marketing functions."

For instance, London spends a lot of his time speaking with customers and acts as a liaison between IDG's clients and IDG's business units.

"In a peer discussion, I'm often able to have a different type of conversation with our customers, as they are more open than they would be in a sales call," London explains. "As a result, I'm able to share the customer's pain points with clients and colleagues from a marketer's point of view. I'm able to validate what's working and

what can be improved and back it up with insight from the customer."

This intimate exposure to what IDG's customers are thinking and experiencing is giving London the information he needs to understand how well the branding initiative is taking root.

"We knew from our research that we needed to more clearly communicate our capabilities, and I'm testing each time I meet with a customer to see how we are doing against that goal," London says. "I spend a lot of time traveling and meeting with customers around the world to understand our customer's business and goals so that I can help recommend relevant solutions. Client feedback is valuable to the entire organization, and I share that as widely as I can."

There are a number of ways that London and his team are measuring and proving the benefits of delivering a superior and gratifying customer experience.

"Benchmarking baseline experience and then regularly testing against the baseline is a good starting point," London says. "NPS tracking and surveys are good analytical measures. For example, as a result of research undertaken before launching our corporate brand campaign,

we learned that many individual employees of IDG were specifically mentioned by their clients as committed partners and valuable advisors.

“Repeatedly and in different countries around the world, IDG individuals would be named as one of the reasons why clients do business with IDG. In my experience, you may see that once, but to see it with the volume that we did around the world was very telling about the soul of IDG. It was important to have that information going into the brand repositioning. It led us to prominently position our ‘trusted advisor’ role within our messaging, since we knew how deeply that resonated with clients.”

“Marketing has gone through so many different permutations in corporate America,” London says. “It went from being holistic to very fragmented and specialized, but I think we’re now seeing a shift from that fragmented landscape to a more cohesive view once again. The importance of customer experience as a key differentiator in the B2B space is a major topic of conversation again. Customer experience can mean a lot of different things. For IDG, the customer experience encompasses all points that the customer comes into contact with us, from pre-sale to sale and post-sale.”



Martyn Etherington

Chief Marketing Officer
and Senior Vice
President of Business
Operations



Etherington stresses that at Cisco Jasper, as with all other organizations, the CMO must become the growth driver for the company.

“Today’s CMOs have to accept the role of both a growth and customer experience champion,” he says. “Being the growth champion means making sure that you really understand the market you are playing in and how you win. You must know the growth rates associated with each region and each market served and then ensure that you are at or above market growth, which means you are taking share. Assuming this role means being the conscience to remind people that growth is the one key metric that matters, be it top line, market share, bottom line, customer satisfaction or NPS.”

Etherington understands that his goals must be aligned with the company strategy and other functions within the company. This includes the

Cisco Jasper is a global internet of things (IoT) company that provides the de facto connectivity management, cloud-based platform that enables companies to launch, manage and monetize IoT services on a global scale. More than 5,000 enterprises in more than 20 vertical markets choose Jasper to fast-track their IoT services. The company is currently partnered with 27 mobile operator networks in 100 countries. Martyn Etherington, Chief Marketing Officer and Senior Vice President of Business Operations, promotes the power of IoT for this up-and-coming company, which was recently acquired by global technology leader Cisco. By 2025, Jasper’s vision is to connect more than 1 billion devices to its platform.

head of product development and engineering to directly influence the product roadmap, as well as sales at both the executive and regional levels to establish credibility and ensure the customer experience journey is fluid from start to finish. It also ensures that they are collectively driving growth and aligned to their strategic objectives.

“We are fortunate that our CEO truly understands the power of marketing as a tool for growth. But in addition to that, we know that all strategic alliances across the enterprise are significant in helping drive our common goals forward,” he says. “Developing those relationships and ensuring we have shared versus common goals is vital to our success.”

Bearing that in mind, when Etherington first became CMO at Cisco Jasper, the quickly growing startup began focusing on distilling strategic

objectives around its core investment areas, and he worked closely with the vice president of strategy to put the processes, procedures and metrics in place. Since measuring success can sometimes be ambiguous, Etherington decided to go back to the classic techniques and enforced a set of strategic KPIs every month to ensure the company was applying resources aligned to their strategic objectives and driving growth against their key performance indicators.

Cisco Jasper has made great strides in maintaining an overall strategic focus, and Etherington’s dual CMO and business operations role primarily focuses on operational rigor and discipline. This not only applies to the marketing team, but also to the general company strategy and turning that into monthly operations across the whole company.

“The marketing team is on a journey, and we know where we need to be,” he says. “We have all of the systems in place; now, it’s up to us to show we can deliver results. For my team, it is now all about execution and being able to truly drive growth.”

Etherington has seen tremendous adoption of new strategic techniques across the whole company, and the marketing team and other cross-functional teams are working together to remain focused on driving their month-to-month business results.

“Our CEO has always been our greatest advocate for the customer,” Etherington says. “When I came here, the company was probably more customer-centric than any other place I’ve worked. Co-championing the customer experience was easy with a supportive CEO.”

Essentially, customers want solutions to drive business outcomes. Cisco Jasper sees marketing’s role in this context to help customers make informed business decisions. Within IoT, Cisco Jasper does not see one buyer; they see an entire buy team. The company designs content that is relevant to each specific team and the buyer’s stage in the journey. The company focuses on minimizing jargon and speaking in the voice of

the customer to be relevant to their audience. This is an ongoing process and will never be complete as both the market and customers evolve.

At this stage of the IoT market evolution, Etherington says they see two discreet segments. Segment one includes the customers who embraced and adopted IoT and other manifestations of IoT many years ago and are leveraging it to deliver new services and business models. Segment two contains the companies that are hearing the hype but fear they may be left behind. This is based on primary customer research, analyzing search results and the predominance of early-stage keyword and phrase searches.

“We realize that many businesses did not know where to look and were hungry for a basic description of what IoT is,” he explains. “At Cisco Jasper, our major value proposition is that we enable the transformation of a static product company to a dynamic, connected service business.”

For Cisco Jasper, the end goal is less about connecting devices or things and more about using IoT to drive business outcomes for customers.

“I think we can do an even better job of clarifying what IoT really is,” Etherington says. “We are fortunate to have many case studies that serve as proof points for what we call real IoT. We realize that many people speak about IoT in the future tense, but we have been in this space for the past 10 years and are focusing on real IoT. Real IoT enables companies to deliver new services via connected devices, which enhance their customers’ experiences and help them to be more efficient while delivering new services and revenue sources. Improved customer experience, reduced operational costs and new business models—all of these are meaningful results.”

And that’s what real IoT is: real business outcomes.

“CEOs have always been multifaceted, and now CMOs have to take steps in that direction,” Etherington says. “I think people know they have a blueprint of expectations to be successful. It is incumbent upon marketers in our space to step up, assume accountability and drive growth. If you deliver results, you will excel. If you don’t, your replacement will!”



Michael Hobson
Chief Marketing Officer



As a member of the board of directors and operating committee, Hobson understands that the marketing function encompasses their top revenue drivers, including brand, positioning, consumer marketing efforts, sales channels, pricing, distribution and revenue management. While the expectations are commensurate with the specific objectives, support is equally evident.

“The entire organization operates on the Kaplan and Norton Balanced Score Card approach,” Hobson explains. “In other words, we outline clear, measurable goals that are aligned with the key objectives of the organization.”

Hobson emphasizes the importance of having good relationships with the executive leaders responsible for operating hotels within their regions in order to have a cohesive strategy and deliver the best guest experience globally. These critical alignments help unify the mission of the organization.

With 29 hotels and eight residences in 19 countries, Mandarin Oriental has been one of the leading luxury hotels for more than 50 years. Their mission is to execute excellent customer service and expand their reach even further around the globe, all while sustaining the environment and taking accountability when needed. Michael Hobson, Chief Marketing Officer, has worked with Mandarin Oriental since 1994 and now, together with a Director of Brand Communications, oversees all global marketing strategies. His team designs and delivers both services and products to best suit their customers across diverse regions and cultures.

Not only are fellow employee relationships crucial to the business, but creating an environment tailored to clients’ needs also keeps Mandarin Oriental ahead of the curve. Because of the significance of both internal and external relationships, the organization is driven by a culture of feedback.

“Given the opportunity to gain consumer feedback instantly, it is first and foremost the CMO’s responsibility to keep the organization informed as to the needs, wants and preferences of the end consumer,” Hobson says. “Additionally, due to the changes in purchasing and consumer habits, it is critical to align all resources across the organization commensurate with consumer trends. It is an iterative process.”

Mandarin Oriental is currently planning significant changes to its operating systems and is re-designing its system architecture in conjunction with their vendors and external enterprise.

“The entire customer journey is very much part of my remit, and it is critical to align ourselves with our operational colleagues who deliver the actual guest experience at our properties,” he says. “We are focused on the opportunities surrounding bespoke recommendations, the ease of the booking process, consumer consumption habits and the ability to perform a variety of guest services from mobile devices while recognizing individual consumer preferences for privacy.”



Boon Lai
Chief Marketing Officer

NOKIA

Nokia's main focus is to design intuitive and dependable technology to help people thrive.

"Naturally when I came to Nokia, the expectation for marketing to be a growth driver was a given," Lai says. "The priority is to understand the overall business goals and develop a strategy to help drive this growth. Our strategy has always been very much from an outside-in perspective, truly understanding who our audience is and making sure that we are not only driving engagement, but ultimately driving sales for the organization."

One of the tools that Nokia often uses is the consumer decision journey. It helps the business drive sales and market share by mapping out the entire process of the customer experience. This tool enables the marketing team to prioritize resources, marketing budget and the amount of time and energy that Lai's team spends on each area of conversion.

Nokia, the Finnish company created in 1865 as a single paper mill, evolved from humble beginnings to become a multinational technology enterprise recognized around the world. Driven by the human aspect of technology, Nokia creates seamless connectivity through network and device technology. The company serves more than 100 different countries around the world, combining infrastructure, software, services, smart devices and sensors. Boon Lai, Chief Marketing Officer, leads the team's brand, design, marketing and communication segments to align with the evolving and expanding business.

"Similar to most blue-chip organizations that I have worked for, we have a formalized, three-year strategic planning process," Lai explains.

"Again, it is very important to emphasize that the marketing goals ultimately help to serve the business goals. On a more tactical level, we regularly review how well marketing is achieving these goals. Having very specific KPIs in mind helps to ensure we are in alignment with the overall business objectives."

Proper training and education plays a crucial role in the success of the marketing team. Lai facilitates this by inviting Nokia's partners, suppliers and agencies to provide training and perspectives to his team. These "lunch and learn" sessions are a way of driving real-world experience and sharing case studies. The featured guests emphasize the importance of the customer experience, and Nokia takes that aspect of its business very seriously.

"Marketing is a big change agent for the organization with regard to driving cultural change," he says. "I think it is really about educating employees on emerging trends, being able to provide the right sort of training for people to understand, and actually providing that guidance on how people internally should be using marketing tools. With every situation, there are risks, but we really try to be proactive and mitigate those risks with the right education within the organization."

As the CMO for Nokia Technologies, which is the startup division of the company, Lai focuses on four key areas: patent licensing, brand licensing, businesses using digital media, and digital health. For digital media, Lai's team focuses on the virtual reality space, particularly with a camera called the OZO (a 3D 360 VR camera). Lai emphasizes that it is very much a B2B2C space where they target customers by using strategic partners, such as producers in Hollywood.

“Recently, we developed a strategic partnership with Disney,” Lai says. “It was something that was absolutely driven from a marketing perspective—by making that connection, we could become Disney’s key technology partner. For example, the new version of The Jungle Book used the OZO VR camera as part of the red carpet experience and for the cast interviews.”

Another successful example is the Alice Through the Looking Glass movie premiere, for which the two businesses collaborated with customers to achieve their joint goals. The Nokia marketing team is always quick to test and learn because Lai believes this is crucial in today’s technology environment, where everything is moving at such a fast pace. The strategic partnership between Nokia and Disney is a prime example of how Lai’s team kept both the partner and the end customer in mind while creating a powerful user experience.

“Customer centricity is crucial for anybody in marketing, but it doesn’t stop with the marketing team,” Lai says. “We use social listening and social engagement within the organization to understand how consumers are interacting with our product, and we then feed that information into the product innovation development process. Through customer feedback, marketing can

help evolve the innovation pipeline for future products.”

Lai believes success lies not only in the ability to think strategically, but also to be agile enough to execute new strategies quickly.

“CMOs should be business leaders that fully understand the goals, strategy and growth of the organization as a whole,” Lai says. “My personal approach is an outside-in customer-centric perspective that involves embracing the changing pace of technology. Marketing has the best platform to do that because we are the closest to the customers. We are setting the strategic direction for the organization based on our analytics research, and understanding of where our target audience is going. We are truly the heart of the business strategy and commercial decisions.”



Maggie Chan Jones

Chief Marketing Officer



As a market leader in enterprise application software, SAP enables more than 335,000 customers in 190 countries to operate profitably, adapt continuously and grow sustainably. Maggie Chan Jones, Chief Marketing Officer at SAP, oversees the development of SAP's marketing strategy around the globe. Some of her responsibilities include global advertising, branding, sponsorships, digital, events and field marketing.

"Customer centricity has always been the anchor for marketing," Jones says. "Nowadays, with all of the technologies at our fingertips, CMOs have much more insight into the customer journey. We have access to live data and can instantly understand whether or not we have a big hit on our hands. That data gives us the agility to continually iterate and refine our campaigns to personalize to our customer needs."

To enable an amazing customer experience, it is key to have a marketing organization that is data driven. This is an essential skill that SAP finds critical for its employees' future success and growth in this digital economy. Jones emphasizes the importance of facilitating development and training programs to expand the team's core capabilities to best serve the company.

"We now have to truly become part artist and part scientist to ensure that we can make decisions based on facts," Jones explains.

"We must also know how to talk to our key stakeholders using data as the driver for those conversations. The credibility of our data is based on the fact that it comes from one source. This ensures C-level alignment, whether in sales or IT."

The marketing team works closely with the development, IT and sales teams to co-innovate.

SAP prides itself not only for its innovative technology, but also for innovation in how they engage customers. The combination of sales' direct interaction with customers and marketing's insights enables SAP to identify which messages are best resonating. Jones feels this collaboration between sales and marketing allows for meaningful, targeted strategies around customer engagement.

As Jones says, "C-level alignment across the board is critical for the success of SAP. The CIO-CMO partnership is imperative because

nowadays, every company is a technology company. For CMOs who may not be as close to the technology side, it is important to create that relationship in order to satisfy customers' evolving needs. The most significant relationship is with the CEO as he or she sets the vision and direction for the company. It is also imperative to have a close connection to all other lines of business."

When asked about the challenges CMOs face, Jones mentions the feedback that she has received from peers when traveling.

"The biggest question I get is about how we can get one view of the customer," she says. "A lot of CMOs are saying that their data is still coming from very fragmented systems, so without a unified view of the customer, it is extremely difficult to understand the differences and similarities between the in-store customer, the online customer and the mobile customer."

Jones advises other CMOs to try to provide a more seamless experience for the customer. In some geographies, CMOs are prioritizing eCommerce and considering implementing omni-channel experiences while, in her opinion, this stems from the varying speeds at which digital transformation is occurring globally. Furthermore, depending on the maturity of the marketing technology, CMOs are trying to solve different parts of the issue. However, the focus must still remain on creating a superior customer experience regardless of your data maturity, geography or industry.

“Another common question I hear is around how to connect the omni-channel experience with the supply chain side,” she says. “It comes back to having the technology in place that enables real-time insights into your business. This is what we at SAP call live businesses. It is the ability to have live data at your fingertips, which enables you to make critical, in-the-moment decisions that effectively support your customers.”

SAP’s vision is to help the world run better and improve people’s lives. As Jones says, “We are an example of a for-profit company that can also have a meaningful purpose. Technology can be incredibly powerful if applied purposefully. Not only is this good for business, but it is also great

from the employee perspective because they love being in a company that has strong values.”



Sanjay Bhattacharji

Vice President–
Marketing, Digital and
Customer Service Retail
Liability



SREI Infrastructure Finance, located in the heart of India, has been driving entrepreneurship for the past 25 years. The company focuses on advisory services for development, alternative investment funds, infrastructure equipment finance, project finance and insurance brokering. Through these valued services, SREI has empowered more than 30,000 entrepreneurs and was the first company in India to be listed on the London Stock Exchange. Vice President of Marketing, Digital and Customer Service Retail Liability, Sanjay Bhattacharji helps develop sustainable approaches to keep the company up to date and deserving of their accomplishments.

“The management’s level of expectation for marketing has seen a paradigm shift in the last few years,” Bhattacharji explains. “Previously, marketing was seen to be an important tool in influencing the perceptions of customers and prospects regarding the products and services of the organization. Today, with the advent of digital technology, the subsequent changes in the forms of social engagement, and increasing competition in financial services, consumers and their peer groups are empowered to make conscious choices and influence opinions in a free-market scenario.”

For this reason, marketing is now expected to be growth-driven and accountable. They are expected to create quality leads, deliver a positive user experience across multiple touchpoints and synergize marketing operations across business units. These changes have

shifted the marketing department from being a cost center to a profit center.

“We have created both one-year and three-year plans encompassing brand-building, product mobilizations, engagement, repeat purchase and customer service,” he says. “We have adopted an approach of incisive segmentation of both prospects and customers using our unique CRM-based SPACER model and advanced analytics that enables us to nurture these segments throughout the entire product lifecycle. Technology and digitization have been the cornerstones of our overall strategy right from the beginning.”

As a dynamic financial services organization, SREI has always been ahead of the curve in deploying unique strategies that differentiate the company from other finance groups. The company also customizes its products depending upon the

needs of customers and channel partners. However, with a vision to scale up the business, marketing is looking at various innovations that create opportunities and value for new segments of distribution channels. These initiatives will help them in acquiring clients. Today, the mantra for marketing is to innovatively increase reach and create differentiation that will lead to rapid product adaptation and repurchase.

“Senior executives play the most important role in creating the vision for marketing, and we have been fortunate to get adequate support in this regard to fully adapt,” Bhattacharji states. “The use of new-age technologies and customer acquisition strategies involves substantial risk-taking and experimentation. The entrepreneurial culture in our organization has fostered innovation and helped marketing to deliver meaningful value that meets business objectives.”

The role of the chief marketing officer has evolved from being a driver of product visibility to a more accountable role of demand generation and customer experience creation. Marketing is transitioning from an environment that was supported by free-flowing budgets to one in which marketers are being held accountable for every penny spent. Bhattacharji believes accountability is something that marketing executives can no longer shy away from. Going forward, as existing businesses mature in their lifecycle, there will be an increased need for marketing executives not only to collaborate with sales teams, but also to create opportunities for synergy across different departments in order to add economic value.

Moving forward, he says that maintaining a focus on the customer as a central component of the business strategy will be key to success.

“Our focus has been to provide unparalleled customer delight, and in this pursuit, we believe that we must leave no stone unturned,” he says. “We have a dynamic call center and a CRM-based service desk that anticipates investor problems and creates resolutions, much to the delight of our customers. It is my firm belief that anticipating customer complaints before they occur and providing proactive solutions to such

problems will be a key area of differentiation. You have to be ubiquitous, merging your presence seamlessly into the lives of customers and silently providing effective resolutions. Ultimately, what matters to the customer is the value that is added to their lives, whether tangibly or otherwise.”



Lars Thomsen
Chief Marketing Officer



Telenor Group is one of the largest mobile operators, with more than 211 million mobile subscriptions. The company has mobile operations in 13 different markets, one of them being Telenor Denmark, which is the second-largest mobile operator and fixed broadband operator in Denmark. Lars Thomsen, Chief Marketing Officer at the Denmark branch, leads general management, commercial strategy, sales, marketing and people development. With more than 1,720 employees in Copenhagen and Aalborg, Thomsen embraces change, takes initiative and assumes responsibility both internally and externally for the success of Telenor.

“The role of the CMO is to drive growth in revenue and customer satisfaction by better understanding and assisting our customer base, developing new services that we can use to attract new subscribers, and also increasing our share of wallet with existing customers,” Thomsen explains. “When we talk about growth, there is no doubt that it starts and ends with the CMO. You can have the world’s best network, processes, IT systems and the best regulatory environment, but it does not mean anything unless you can engage with your clients and develop a strong proposition to increase revenues and customer satisfaction. This is why the CMO role is so crucial.”

Thomsen believes there are three additional roles that are critical within all organizations as key collaborators/contributors for the digital future. One is the data privacy officer because data is key, but data privacy is even more essential. If a

company does not have a strong understanding of data privacy laws, regulations and the legal framework, then they are vulnerable to a number of issues. Another significant role is the security officer. He strongly believes that in the next 10 years, data privacy will be critical for companies, so IT security is of the utmost importance. But most importantly, security and privacy are a key customer need for the CMO to understand and embrace. The third role is the finance officer because in order to move forward, business models need to evolve around an innovator’s mindset and because driving growth in a digital age requires new ways of financially assessing opportunities. The CFO also acts as a facilitator of fruitful collaboration between the CTO and CMO, making that role increasingly important.

“While these roles are critical, employees who think and operate under a startup model are also huge assets to the company,” Thomsen says.

“You need to have people who do not need a huge marketing budget in order to figure out what to do. These are people who simply sit down and look at a business idea or product and work with what is in front of them. We do not limit ourselves to the conventional ways of thinking. I look and strive for more. We try to embed design thinking into our development processes. We are still in the early days, but we have seen really encouraging results so far. Personally, I am very much inspired by Nathan Furr and his great book, *The Innovator’s Method*.

Telenor has built an insight and analytics hub within the CMO area that looks specifically at data analytics, customer behavior and insights. This gives them the power of understanding their customers’ needs and preferences to create tailored, one-to-one solutions. They use contextual marketing in a whole new way and are enabled by technologies that they did not have a

few years ago. However, to create and improve the customer journey, he says big data and technology are worthless if you don't know what to do and what to look for.

In order to create a strong and unique brand, the CMO needs to look at the organization not only from a customer's point of view, but also from an employer perspective. They need to connect these two views and create a brand that is strongly reflected by those respective cultures. Thomsen works closely with the HR team to create company values that transfer into strong brand propositions.

"When customers go to our website, call our customer service centers or go to our stores, they should get the same great experience," he says. "I really think that is what differentiates good companies from great ones. CMOs can no longer build a great brand solely based on good visuals, creative campaigns and brand language; it is much more complex these days. The key is to sift through that complexity and create a simple vision for customers. You need to take those who work with you inside the company and have them understand why they are working, what their strengths are and what needs to be improved upon. This will translate to our customers in an inspiring way."

Being a CMO is a huge responsibility, but it's also an incredibly diverse opportunity. Thomsen views it as a chance to create a brand that is much more honest, transparent and grounded—one that customers actually believe in. The CMO should have excellent customer insights and extensive knowledge on product development and really own and drive the customer journey and experience across all touchpoints.

"I think it is exciting these days to be a CMO because you can work with new technologies and engage your customers in a completely new way," he says. "At the same time, we also need to be very authentic. In a very cluttered world of advertising, my job is to constantly filter through information and find the most relevant data about our customers."

In his role, Thomsen works on both the market-function side and product-function side. He has many options when it comes to pure marketing techniques, which he uses to drive new revenue opportunities. He says that CMOs tend to do larger analyses, so he advocates for more prototyping and use of design thinking. By engaging with his customers, he gets a better understanding of what their problems are and how to present solutions for them.

"I think modern-day advertising and marketing are not very digital, although we claim to be," he says. "We do things on Facebook, Google and the web, but digital should be a way of thinking. It should be a way of working. It should be a way of engaging with your customers. I really think that's one of the biggest challenges we have, but it's also one of the biggest opportunities. As the CMO, it is my job to sprinkle emotion on top of everything and create emotional engagement with our customers—a machine cannot do that for you. That's how you make great experiences and ensure a digital customer journey is more than just digital."

Thomsen trusts that human connection will drive loyalty going forward. He still believes in storytelling and points to the significance of using strong, compelling stories to effectively communicate with customers.

"I think the entire telecom industry is too focused on creating great campaigns that attract customers," Thomsen says. "The difference is that many companies feel as though their campaigns are over once they are launched. To me, the campaign does not end until we have a happy customer that is using our fantastic connectivity services. We need to define our campaign even more and center it on the digital

customer journey to ensure a great experience. Ultimately, I would like to move away from the campaign and into a conversation. Our main differentiator compared to other connectivity services is that we know how to deliver to customers and constantly focus on doing this better than anyone else.”

Telenor Denmark emphasizes the importance of joyful customers, even after they are out of the store. Thomsen believes that in order for that to happen, the company must provide follow-up information after the initial transaction. This goes back to the customer journey, and he says the need to have a meaningful dialogue with prospects and customers along their journeys is really Marketing 2.0.

“Other companies get so caught up in their products that they forget about their subscribers’ needs,” Thomsen explains. “While we are technologically savvy, we are still the champions of the customer experience. There is always room for improvement if we want to remain on top. We have so many opportunities to engage our customers and create value in our services. Telenor wants to make sure that customers understand what we are doing for them so that they never want to leave us.”



Kathryn Sakalis
Chief Marketing Officer



The Foschini Group (TFG) is a South African fashion lifestyle retailer and is comprised of 22 fashion-forward brands with more than 3,125 stores. Since 1924, the company has dedicated its time to ensuring the success of its brands and satisfying its customers. Kathryn Sakalis, Chief Marketing Officer, heads corporate communications, CRM, MI, group marketing and CSI and also manages the company's eCommerce division. The group has successfully expanded to Botswana, Zambia, Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland and more recently Kenya, offering retail and credit card services as well as insurance and a rewards program. TFG has recently acquired two retail brands based in the U.K.: PhaseEight and Whistles.

"We have high expectations for growth development," Sakalis says. "We run the loyalty program for our group, and that is a critical and strategic tool in customer acquisition, growth and retention. Our general CRM campaigns are also growth drivers. We are tasked to gain market share, which drives business growth."

Sakalis explains that there is a highly formalized strategy for growth, with a five-year plan that the company is working toward. In order to accurately measure their specific growth areas, they measure themselves with a set of clearly defined KPIs.

"As the CMO, I have always been customer-driven, but customers are changing at such a rapid rate, and the pockets of customers we target are so different that we need to be even more immersed in customer knowledge," she says. "We need to be obsessive about our customers."

CMOs need to be change agents, meaning they must transform organizations by focusing on improvement and development. Employees look to the CMO to drive change and be completely informed on customer needs. To do this, accurate data analytics is vital.

"CMOs have always been strong in the digital space, but they now need to be even stronger," Sakalis emphasizes. "They need to forge strong alignments with CIOs in order to ensure that they take the lead in the digital space with the backing and support of IT. That way, we can ensure we are using the best tools possible to drive our decisions and engagement tactics."

Data is a crucial part of this process, and CMOs need to immerse themselves in the technology rather than solely rely on a technical team. Since TFG depends on the CIO to enable and implement their strategies, strategic alignment has to be the basis on which they work. The company's

growing analytical team is the key to analyzing and understanding the customer, thereby allowing the marketing team to implement proper communication tactics to engage with their customers.

"The CIO is our main strategic partner, but we also need the backing of the CFO," she says. "The CFO must buy into our growth strategy and authorize the funding needed for us to engage with our customers, so he/she needs to be a part of that ongoing conversation. At the end of the day, it is the entire management team's joint responsibility to be customer-focused. We have seen that customers like to be exclusive, so our loyalty program is evolving to giving our best customers the kinds of experiences that other customers don't have access to."



Chris Hummel

Senior Vice President
and Chief Marketing
Officer



Hummel explains that as the CMO, he must always be looking around the corner to see what's ahead. For United Rentals, a very forward-thinking company, targeted digital engagement is vital for the success of its marketing tactics. In fact, Hummel's role is so strongly geared toward digital engagement that he jokes he may as well hold the title of Chief Digital Officer as well.

"We are building a pretty extensive strategy toward digital transformation," Hummel explains. "We have traditionally been very strong both financially and operationally. Now, by adding the digital element, we are creating a very cohesive brand that is strong not only in terms of operations, but also in customer engagement and brand recognition."

The end goal of utilizing digital marketing techniques is growth, which is the main differentiator between an uncertain market and clear success.

Since 1997, United Rentals has aimed to become the world's largest equipment rental provider. With 880 rental locations across 49 states and 10 Canadian provinces, the company deploys its best people, equipment and solutions to its customers. Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer Chris Hummel strives to expand the company even further by tailoring customer experience and fostering a culture that empowers employees to improve quality and efficiency.

Hummel advocates that everybody on the executive team at United Rentals is completely dedicated to the organization. They have a high level of accountability and expectation of growth. As the CMO, the expectation is no different. Hummel knows that this imperative of growth can only be achieved by a strong team and internal alliances that work together toward the same end-goal.

"All of the relationships that the marketing team have across the organization are important," Hummel says. "We find that everybody has intersection points throughout the company. The interesting aspect of my role in marketing is how I can be an enabler for the entire group to act together. Part of what I most enjoy about my role is how I am able to arrange all of the different pieces and combine different functions to form one cohesive strategy for improvement and sustainable growth."

Driving growth is a function of leadership, revenue, transformation, analytics, performance, management and talent. Long before Hummel joined the company, United Rentals concocted a strong vision that encompassed each of those aspects. Part of what drove Hummel to United Rentals was that strong vision, but in order to truly grow, he realizes it is imperative to prioritize customer devotion within that vision. Now, the company's management team is recognized for their customer-centric culture, which is the ultimate goal for any growing company.

"CMOs today face many challenges, but there are ways to combat those challenges and thrive in the role," he says. "One of the biggest challenges CMOs face is ambiguity and learning to thrive from the chaos. The second is the ability to understand, and this is where strong communication is a powerful tool. It is not necessarily about what you communicate; it is about what people perceive when you communicate."

When it comes to customer interactions, different groups in the company are responsible for the different touchpoints, so to some degree, everyone is involved in shaping the customer experience.

“My role is to orchestrate the overall picture—to look across the whole and see the amalgamation of all of these different points of intersection,” he says. “I look at how the combination of all of these pieces affect the whole of our customer relationships and their perceptions of us. And with the variety of different points of interaction, we can continue to find new ways to delight our customers.”

The ability to centralize many different pieces of one customer journey requires many new techniques that go far beyond traditional communication, branding, product positioning and demand generation. Hummel utilizes cross-business and cross-organizational tactics in order to harmonize the different groups.

Hummel also believes that setting expectations for the customer to be happy with the outcome of his or her experience is crucial for any company. On the surface, this concept may seem elementary, but many organizations accept mere satisfaction from customers without truly striving toward happiness. United Rentals believes in the

customer experience rather than the traditional idea of customer service, and successful customer experience can be achieved when the CMO strives to create higher levels of expectations and actually meets them. Consumerization has set the bar high for companies, and customers are looking to get more out of their experiences today.

“We’re always on the path toward improving the customer experience, and we will never sit back and say that we’re finished,” he says. “We will continue to elevate those experiences and do it with clear messages and expectations. For me, as the CMO, that is the biggest win. If we can do that well, then we will continue to be successful in the marketplace.”

DELOITTE PERSPECTIVE: The CMO'S Challenge: Balancing Priorities



Jennifer Lacks Kaplan

Consumer Products & Retail Principal, Deloitte Consulting LLP

Deloitte.

In today's digital world, in which consumers are always connected, with the ability to engage and shop anywhere, anytime, the role of the CMO has become much more complex. Once tasked primarily with brand building, marketing communications and other top-of-the-funnel activities, today's CMO now owns the customer experience. Because marketing influences the consumer throughout the journey, with traditional boundaries between marketing, innovation, sales and service blurring, the CMO is increasingly responsible for impacting each step—from awareness through post-purchase. In a new survey from Deloitte and the CMO Council, "The CMO Shift to Gaining Business Lift," CMOs said they believe they are the executives primarily responsible for driving growth strategies and revenue generation at their organizations, more so than any other executive—even the CEO.

This new reality sets up some challenges for CMOs. CMOs must now work much more closely

with other functions that touch the customer—from sales and product development to critical enabling functions, such as IT and supply chain partners. Often, this means spending more time in meetings, discussing tactical plans, reviewing budgets and going over campaign elements. And while two-thirds of CMOs surveyed say they would like to spend the majority of their time partnering with other leadership executives on global business and brand strategy, only 16 percent of CMOs are actually doing this.

So what can CMOs do to balance strategic priorities with daily demands and fulfill their mandate to drive growth?

Evaluate Decision-Making Processes

As CMOs take on the role of driving the overall growth agenda, they can consider the decision-making processes in their organizations. In many sectors, digitally native companies are winning—disrupting traditional business models

and taking share. While there are many reasons underlying this growth, speed to market is a key factor. Digital and new technologies are driving an unprecedented pace of change across sectors. Many digitally native companies have flatter, more networked organizations that are responsive, able to quickly galvanize resources to bring solutions to market and "course correct" in real time. Digitally native companies are loosening the tight set of controls that we see in more traditional companies, which often have several layers of oversight and approval. CMOs may not be able to make big changes to their company's organizational structures, but they may be able to free up some time for more growth-driving activities by making adjustments to how they build teams and allocate responsibilities.

Empower Cross-Functional Teams

CMOs can begin to reallocate their time by creating cross-functional teams—often in collab-

oration with their peers—empowering those teams to make decisions for key initiatives. By giving more decision rights to teams, CMOs can not only free up time, but also begin to create a more agile culture. With cross-functional teams, it's important to give the teams very clear goals and outcomes, and put in place the mechanisms to hold teams accountable for decisions.

Define Metrics for Success

To demonstrate marketing's value, it's important for CMOs to determine the "moments that matter" in the journey and the desired customer behaviors for each moment. This typically requires instituting new metrics based on the specific goals marketers want to achieve for each stage of the journey. These include effectiveness metrics, such as conversion or share gain, as well as delivery and efficiency of spend metrics. Some of the top financial, brand and customer metrics CMOs surveyed say they use to prove value and return on spend are revenue growth (74 percent); sales velocity, funnel strength and conversion rates (45 percent); and market share gains (43 percent). While these are important metrics overall, demonstrating the value of marketing often requires going one level deeper to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency for the moments that matter along the journey.

Ultimately, CMOs must become integrators—understanding the responsibilities they are charged with, knowing what's important to senior executives and business partners, collaborating with cross-functional teams and being able to demonstrate how they are adding value to their organizations.

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ABOUT CMO COUNCIL

The Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) Council is the only global network of executives specifically dedicated to high-level knowledge exchange, thought leadership and personal relationship building among senior corporate marketing leaders and brand decision-makers across a wide range of global industries. The CMO Council's 10,500-plus members control more than \$500 billion in aggregated annual marketing expenditures and run complex, distributed marketing and sales operations worldwide. In total, the CMO Council and its strategic interest communities include more than 35,000 global executives in more than 110 countries covering multiple industries, segments and markets. Regional chapters and advisory boards are active in the Americas, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Middle East, India and Africa. The council's strategic interest groups include the Coalition to Leverage and Optimize Sales Effectiveness (CLOSE), Mobile Relationship Marketing (MRM) Strategies, LoyaltyLeaders.org, CMOCIOAlign.org, Marketing Supply Chain Institute, Customer Experience Board, Digital Marketing Performance Institute, GeoBranding Center and the Forum to Advance the Mobile Experience (FAME). For more information, visit the CMO Council at www.cmocouncil.org.

ABOUT DELOITTE

Deloitte invites chief marketing officers to bring their biggest challenges, knowing Deloitte has what it takes to bring a new business vision to life. Deloitte's expanding roster of services and offerings can help clients stand out in their organizations and in their industries, produce impactful results, and influence the next generation of business leaders. Deloitte helps its clients think through questions of expansion, conversion, resilience, and digital transformation. Learn more at cmo.deloitte.com.

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