

How to Convince Your CEO That Skimping on Marketing Talent Is No Bargain

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Date : December 6, 2015



If only you could achieve market leadership—and get a huge discount on **marketing** talent to boot—as quickly and easily as you can buy online with just a click on Cyber Monday.

But you know there's no shortcut to finding effective **marketing** leaders, in time for the market opportunity window, on the cheap. Yet... that doesn't stop some **CEOs** from expecting it.

Let's face it, it's never been more challenging to achieve market leadership: Product life cycles are shorter, there is greater price transparency, stockholders as well as customers have higher expectations, and both are less loyal; there are also more channels, more countries, more competition, and more distinct segments to manage on the way to market leadership.

The "mores" also make it extremely challenging to lead the **marketing** function: There are more data to crunch, more silos to tear down, more **marketing** disciplines to manage, and more **marketing** technology to evaluate and implement. And, certainly, there is more pressure from the C-suite to prove and improve the value of **marketing**.

Considering all those challenges, you and every member of your **marketing** team needs to bring more skills and more experience to the business of **marketing** than ever before.

So, Why Do CEOs and Boards of Directors Expect You To...

- Hire part-time **marketing** leaders?
- Transform someone with industry experience, but no **marketing** experience, into a successful marketer—within the market opportunity window?
- Find the right **marketing** candidate on Craigslist "on the cheap"?

By now many of you are nodding your head because you've seen one or more of the above scenarios play out—with poor results.

Here's a real-life example. A friend of mine, who has been a successful **CMO** for 15 years, was recently approached by an executive from a company; its board had decided they needed more **marketing**, now. There were new competitive threats, and the board had set an aggressive

growth plan. In addition to competitive analysis and demand generation, the job's scope included launching product definition and management disciplines, implementing solution and content **marketing** (including a new website), and creating sales and **marketing** assets for all phases of the prospect lifecycle. Such a highly strategic role should be a perfect fit for a seasoned **CMO** with industry experience, right? Wrong. They had only one resource, a junior corporate communications manager, and no plans to add anyone else, and they proposed that she freelance on the weekend to achieve the goals. When the **CMO** told him that what he was asking for could not possibly be delivered by one person on a part-time basis, the exec thanked her for her honesty and shared that the board had suggested that he recruit someone from Craigslist to keep costs low...

You have to wonder: Would the **CEO** or board have suggested that a strategic finance role be done just on weekends, or that the right person be hired via Craigslist? Of course not, there's too much at stake.

Well, how much is market leadership worth? As the **MasterCard** commercial would say: Priceless.

Three Essential Components to Convincing the C-Suite that an Untrained Marketer, or a Craigslist Recruit, Is a *Bad Deal*

Convincing the C-suite to invest in top-quality **marketing** talent and development requires internal **marketing**. Apply the same skills that you use when engaging prospects, and keep in mind the Cicero principle: "If you wish to persuade me, you must think my thoughts, feel my feelings, and speak my words." (**Marcus Tullius Cicero**, 106-43 BC)

- Think and act like a member of the business team. Use your leadership's terminology, and whenever possible tie **Marketing** to what matters to them. Articulate how **Marketing** is creating value for the company and how each investment will help the company achieve its strategic goals (e.g., increased penetration in a market, increased footprint among existing customers, improved profitability or achievement of their exit strategy).
- Document and communicate, in detail, the many technical skills and **marketing** disciplines needed to achieve the desired business outcomes. Be clear about how and why these skills are essential, and also about the "cost" associated with not having these skills.
- Insist that a portion of the **marketing** budget be allocated for upgrading and expanding the skills of everyone on your team—starting with you. Then make sure the outcome of that investment is measured and visible. Embark on the transformation to operate **marketing** as center of excellence.

Marketing as a profession is not as highly valued as it should be, in part because of the misconception that **marketing** is only art. Yet, nothing could be further from the truth.

Marketing as Art *and* Science

From now on, marketers will need a "special mix of talents and attributes" because businesses

increasingly need people who can create "brilliant customer experiences through a fusion of technology, creativity and commercial acumen," The Econsultancy 2014 **Digital Trends Study** emphasized. And Econsultancy **CEO Ashley Friedlein** suggests successful marketers will be those who are "analytical and data-driven, yet understand **brands**, storytelling and experiential **marketing**.

In other words, because **marketing** is a combination of art and science, **marketing** leaders need to have capabilities in both right- and left-brain disciplines.

As marketers, we know this intuitively. But too many others do not. So, during recruiting, performance reviews, ongoing education, promotion, and budget discussions—and in meetings with your manager, the executive team, and board—fully communicate what it takes to achieve required business outcomes, including the following:

- **Technical skills:** Planning, data analysis and modeling, project management, problem solving, technology evaluation, reporting, etc.
- **Strategic and tactical marketing discipline experience:** **Marketing** performance management, **marketing** strategy, **marketing** operations, and functional **marketing** capabilities such as search engine **marketing**, content **marketing**, mobile **marketing**, etc.
- **Understanding of marketing principles:** Cornerstone concepts such as the 5 P's (Price, Place, Product, Promotion, and People), the 5 R's (Relevance, Receptivity, Recognition, Response, Relationship), the 6 C's of Engagement (Contact, Connection, Conversation, Consideration, Consumption, Community), and AIDA (Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action)

The following table shows just some of the skills and experience required within the **Marketing** function to achieve market leadership:

Marketing Discipline	Required Skills and Experience
Marketing Operations	Identify sources to research market trends, new products, and competition. Analyze financial information. Interpret and report information and performance in business context, applying business acumen. Interact with other marketing specialists to turn the information and conclusions into a measurable customer-centric marketing plan. Execute and monitor the plan and budget. Investigate and manage Marketing's infrastructure (processes, systems, and tools).
Marketing Performance Management (MPM)	Understand and manage data—what questions it should answer and how it should be captured. Analyze and turn data into relevant insights. Understand data modeling as well as process and workflow engineering. Choose the right performance metrics. Evaluate MPM technology options, develop both the performance management dashboard and the reporting process.
Demand Generation	Write and edit content for the Web and for emails that tells a story, aligns with the buyer's journey, and converts visitors to prospects and prospects to customers. Understand and apply demand and opportunity management principles. Understand how to set up measurement and analytics for the entire demand generation process using current technology: CRM, MAP, Web Analytics, etc. Interface with and support the field and channel partners.
Strategic Marketing	Conduct market, trend, and competitive analysis; gather and analyze customer insights. Create the go-to-market strategy. Develop the positioning, promise, and message platform.
Product Marketing	Develop pricing models and product road maps. Understand the market requirements and translate them into a market requirements document. Develop personas, segmentation models, and use cases.

Add to and customize that list to justify ongoing education investments or to make the case that The Ladders is a more appropriate recruitment source than Craigslist.

In the case of organizations with a larger number of marketers, establish a **Marketing Leadership Council (MLC)**. To learn more about how to establish and harness an MLC as a vehicle to ramp **marketing** effectiveness and transformation, check out the white paper titled

["The Role of Leadership Councils in Creating **Marketing** Centers of Excellence."](#)

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