

The CMO Reinvented: Operating at the Intersection of Human and Digital

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As the founder of a mobile diagnostics company, the changes I have observed in the role of today's **CMO** represent the most significant transformation in the C-suite in decades—and a potential catalyst for a future rethink of the traditional org structure.

Three powerful trends are driving the **CMO** transformation: data, access and a people-driven economy.

Data

Not too long ago, **CMOs** looked into their crystal balls, anticipated consumer trends and preferences and stewarded **brands** accordingly. Today, the **CMO** is becoming the *de facto* chief data officer. Targeted **digital** ads are improving ROI at the top of the sales funnel while “Big Data” unearths less-obvious correlations. Big Data is particularly helpful for **CMOs** to distinguish between what people say and what they do.

“Fast Data” is a recent addition to the **CMO** data toolkit. **Social** monitoring and mobile crowdsourced feedback solutions are creating instant insights and diagnostics. Properly executed, these inform every **marketing** decision along the customer journey, from **design** and communication to execution. Here the **CMO** pivots from broadcaster to listener.

However, a growing consequence of all these data sources is mind-numbing noise. The **CMO** needs superior data skills just to decide what matters. Creativity, **brand** stewardship and large-scale thematic campaigns will remain part of the **CMO** role.

Access

In a mobile world, access is the new ownership—and consumers believe they share the ownership of **brands**. Customers expect to be heard and empowered. Technology, while perceived to be impersonal, is the key to scaling empathy and providing effective engagement strategies. Now the **CMO** is moving down the sales funnel with a goal of using access to create highly engaged users and customer retention.

In a networked, all-access world, reality will eventually overtake perception. The new breed of **CMO** must therefore scale positive realities rather than create perceptions. This suggests an inside-out approach to **marketing** that ushers in a whole new genre of programs.

For example, consumers are rarely more satisfied than the employees serving them. One fascinating insight is that customers also care deeply about specific employees. In a HundredX survey conducted with Ogilvy and Mather, 86% of consumers felt companies should do more to publicly recognize their good employees. And consumers were 10% more likely to “for sure” recommend a restaurant to a friend when they had recognized an employee by name. This data all suggests that happy employees are critical to reality-based **marketing**, and that a target-rich opportunity for mobile-enabled **innovation** lies at the point of customer-employee connection.

The byproduct of access-driven, inside-out **marketing** is much closer coordination between **CMOs** and the heads of HR, operations and business units. The **CMO** becomes the chief connection officer. This customer-driven overlap is a clear sign that the classic organization structure may need to evolve. Indeed, many enterprise technology vendors struggle with who the purchaser is for customer-centric solutions.

People-Driven Economy

We have now entered the people-driven economy. For example, the Temkin Group estimates that small increases in customer satisfaction can translate into 37% higher revenues over three years. People are an organization’s most valued asset. Talent management is now a \$50 billion annual industry, and turnover costs are estimated to exceed 20% of wage costs.

The stakes are incredibly high to get it right. **Marketing** is about connecting with people. While **marketing** spend will be reallocated, the amount overall should increase.

Each customer and employee has greater potential to help or do harm in a networked world. At the same time, the cost to connect has declined rapidly. For the first time, there is a positive net value per connected individual. This enables coordinated strategies at both the group and individual levels.

Conclusion

The reinvented **CMO** will operate and collaborate at the intersection of human and **digital**. They will use data and access to succeed in the people-driven economy.

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