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How CMOs can earn CFO confidence and secure long-term investment

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THE CASE FOR BRAND

Brand should be the most powerful commercial asset a business has. It shapes perception, attracts talent, drives preference and builds long-term value. Yet in the rooms where investment decisions are made, brand is too often misunderstood, misrepresented, or missing entirely from the conversation.

To get to the bottom of **why**, we pitched two CMOs against a CFO for a candid discussion at B2B Ignite 2025 a few weeks ago. Alongside this, we launched a live diagnostic quiz with over 60 marketing leaders to test how well brand teams are really speaking the language of commercial performance, where the disconnect lies and what the best way forward is for today's marketer.

This blueprint is for any marketing leader ready to turn creative conviction into commercial credibility. It offers a sharp, honest look at how B2B brands are currently being measured, where the gaps lie and what it takes to build a measurement strategy that earns trust, drives growth and secures long-term love from your CFO!



Alex Segger
Client Director, alan.

THE DISCONNECT

Most CMOs don’t lack conviction. They lack traction. Brand is still viewed in many organisations as something separate from the business model: important, but not essential. The result? Shrinking influence, limited investment and missed opportunities to drive growth and differentiation.

The CFO isn’t the enemy here. They’re just working to a different brief: clarity, predictability, performance. If brand can’t be expressed in those terms, it stays off the strategic radar.

> “We’re not short on ambition in marketing. But too often, we’re short on the proof the CFO needs.”

Georgina Peters Venzano
CMO, Beazley

> “Brand has to earn its seat with evidence, not just energy. It’s not a feeling — it’s a financial strategy.

David Keene
former CMO, Wipro

BRAND LOVE LANGUAGES

Marketers believe in brand, but belief alone won't win investment. CFOs need something else. That's what led us to the concept of Brand Love Languages. A fun way to decode the signals that CFOs actually respond to, and to help marketers reflect on which ones they're fluent in, and which ones they're not.

So, are you satisfying your CFO?

We surveyed over 60 B2B marketers at B2B Ignite this year. We analysed how they score themselves across five critical dimensions: revenue impact, data strength, strategic alignment, emotional connection and trust. And we paired those insights with the on-the-ground experience of our panel, people who've lived this tension on both sides of the table.

We developed a simple diagnostic for CMOs: a five-part self-assessment based on the signals CFOs say they respond to.

We call them the Brand Love Languages:

01

Revenue Romance

Can you link brand to growth (e.g. pipeline, margin, sales)?

02

Data Devotion

Are you measuring what matters, credibly and consistently?

03

Strategic Synchronicity

Does brand clearly support business goals?

04

Return on Intimacy

Are you tracking emotional value: trust, loyalty, pricing power?

05

Trust and Track Record

Have you earned belief through consistency and delivery?

WHY BRAND ISN'T LANDING

These results point to a familiar pattern: marketers believe brand is working, but they haven't built the systems, language or evidence to convince anyone else.

Brand Love Language	Average score (out of 5)	What it shows	High Scorers are...	Low Scorers are...
Strategic Synchronicty	4	Strategy is well understood and often linked to business goals	Linking brand KPIs directly to growth or business OKRs	Treating brand strategy as separate from core business planning
Revenue Romance	3.5	There's belief in brand's value, but proof is sometimes uneven	Showing how brand affects CAC, conversion, margin	Relying on awareness or brand engagement without tying to outcomes
Return on Intimacy	3.3	Emotional value is often unmeasured	Tracking NPS, trust and salience alongside commercial metrics	Talking about connection but not measuring its business impact
Data Devotion	3.2	Measurement remains a weak link for marketers	Using mixed attribution, clear reporting cadence, transparent data assumptions	Still relying on one-off reports or vanity metrics
Trust Track Record	3	Consistency is missing	Reporting regularly, building internal case studies, showing long-term impact	Overclaiming short-term wins without repeatable proof or patterns

"I hear a lot about emotion, connection, awareness... but I need to see impact. Tangible, trackable impact."

Philip Wray
CFO, Workbooks

THE 5-POINT ACTION PLAN

To move from belief to credibility, CMOs need more than strong creative. They need a strategy built for scrutiny and aligned with how CFOs think. Based on what we heard from both CMOs and a CFO, here are five practical shifts that can turn brand into a business case.

01

Move from belief to proof

The problem:

Brand gets attention, but often lacks commercial framing. Inside finance, it's seen as a cost without contribution.

What to do:

Tie brand metrics directly to business outcomes: e.g. conversion rates, CAC, average deal size

Swap out "brand awareness" for "pipeline acceleration" or "margin protection"

Build a story using commercial terms: uplift, cost reduction, revenue contribution

> "If brand doesn't help me hire better, sell more or de-risk exposure, you're not positioning it right."
>
> **Georgina Peters Venzano**

02

Make your tracking CFO-proof

The problem:

Measurement is often ad hoc, surface-level, or built for marketing teams, not financial decision-makers.

What to do:

Use consistent measurement cadence (e.g. monthly or quarterly), not one-offs

Build models that blend short-term performance with longer-term brand equity

Be transparent about confidence levels, assumptions and margins of error

> "I want to see a model that shows where we win, where we lose and how brand fits into that."
>
> **Philip Wray**

03

Speak in shared priorities

The problem:

Brand strategy often feels disconnected from the commercial engine room.

What to do:

Reframe brand plans in terms of business impact: growth, resilience, margin

Embed brand KPIs into company-wide dashboards or OKRs

Schedule regular CMO–CFO check-ins, not just when you need budget

> "Marketers need to be fluent in the language of the business. That's the responsibility."
>
> **David Keene**

04

Show emotional value creates economic value

The problem:

Trust, salience and brand love are often described but rarely measured in ways that travel up the chain.

What to do:

Add NPS, trust, preference or salience scores into your regular reporting

Use benchmarks (category averages, third-party ratings) to show relative performance

Connect emotional value to margin impact, deal velocity or customer lifetime value

> "We stopped talking about awareness and started talking about attraction. That changed the conversation."
>
> **Georgina Peters Venzano**

05

Build belief through repetition

The problem:

One strong campaign doesn't prove anything to a CFO. Patterns do.

What to do:

Create a regular reporting rhythm that shows ongoing progress

Build a small, credible bank of internal case studies, short, evidence-led and commercial

Use a shared marketing–finance dashboard to track progress over time

> "I want to see repeatable success. Not one good story, but a system that shows where we win."
>
> **Philip Wray**

REMEMBER

Build brand like it's infrastructure

This isn't about defending marketing in the boardroom. It's about embedding it in business logic from the start. The strongest brands today don't just win attention, they earn belief, shape strategy and deliver return.

And they do it by speaking in terms everyone around the table understands.

> "When brand is built into the rhythm of the business, you don't need to pitch it. It's already part of the plan.
>
> **Georgina Peters Venzano**

WANT TO TEST YOUR OWN CFO FLUENCY?

TAKE THE QUIZ

It takes five minutes and gives a clear picture of where your brand measurement strategy is helping and where it might be holding you back.

Need help?

At alan. agency, we help B2B brands turn belief into logic, and logic into business results. We believe in bold ideas backed by credible frameworks.

That’s what makes our work effective.

Not just great campaigns, but bulletproof business cases.

Think we can help?

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