PROPOLIS
FROM B2B MARKETING

How This Award-Winning Commercial Marketer, Gursaran Marjara, Increased Revenue by 900%.

COMMUNITY SPRINT CASE STUDY

Propolis equips B2B marketers with strategies, frameworks, and skills to drive growth and demonstrate clear business impact. Offering practical insights from experts and real-world testing, Propolis provides the tools and benchmarks needed to tackle major B2B challenges. In a recent community sprint, we discussed becoming a "commercial marketer" to build trust with the board, with insights from Gursaran Marjara.



Introduction

This case study highlights the remarkable achievements of Gursaran Marjara, a seasoned B2B marketer who transformed Access Group into a revenue powerhouse. With over 35 years of experience in B2B marketing, primarily in the tech industry, Gursaran shares his insights on the critical aspects of being a commercial marketer. This case study covers his journey, strategies, and the culture he fostered to drive unprecedented growth.

Background

Gursaran Marjara, a highly experienced marketing professional, has a rich history in the tech industry, focusing on software. Early in his career, he worked in sales, a foundation he finds crucial for B2B marketers. This experience gave him a deep understanding of quotas and targets, which he believes are increasingly important for marketers.

In 2017, Gursaran joined Access Group, one of the largest independent software companies in the UK, as the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO). At that time, the company had a revenue of £100 million. Under his leadership, Access Group's revenue grew to over £1 billion, with nearly £400 million in profit by the time he retired. Gursaran now serves as a non-executive board member for several software companies, focusing on their marketing activities.

Strategic Approach

Aligning Marketing with Business Objectives

Gursaran emphasized the importance of aligning marketing metrics with board-level priorities such as revenue, margins, profitability, and returns to shareholders. He believes that marketers need to understand and align their metrics with these critical business metrics. This alignment helps marketing gain credibility and expand beyond just being a communications function.

Collaboration and Communication

A key component of Gursaran's strategy was fostering a culture of collaboration and communication. He worked closely with sales, customer success, and finance leaders, maintaining an open-door philosophy. Transparency in marketing results and targets was crucial. High emotional intelligence was necessary for effective collaboration and team dynamics. Gursaran ensured that marketers were educated on key financial metrics and worked closely with the CFO to understand the financial impact of their activities.

> *You cannot become a true commercial marketer without understanding the data within your business.*

Data-Driven Decision Making

Gursaran highlighted the importance of analytics and being data-driven. He stressed that marketers must understand business data and key metrics like customer acquisition cost, lifetime value, churn, and retention rates. Supporting other functions like customer success to ensure high retention rates and expand the footprint of existing customers was also vital.

Integrating Traditional and Modern Metrics

While traditional marketing metrics like impressions and share of voice were still important, Gursaran emphasized the need to focus on business outcomes like pipeline creation and revenue. Every marketer should understand their role in delivering these outcomes. Performance marketing, driven by digital channels, was crucial, and brand building was equally important for medium-term growth.

Overcoming Challenges

Short Tenure of CMOs

Gursaran noted the challenge of the short average tenure of CMOs, which is around 18 months. He explained that transformation succeeds if CMOs deliver the metrics the board cares about. Within six months, marketers should start proving their value through incremental steps rather than big bang transformations. He emphasized the need for quick impact and credibility to ensure long-term success.

Implementing Change

When Gursaran joined Access Group, the marketing function was in its infancy. He focused on people, process, technology, and culture. Introducing the right skills, data-driven marketing operations, and a target-driven culture were key elements of his strategy. Collaboration with the sales function ensured shared goals and joint performance reviews. Sales and marketing alignment was crucial for their success.

Results

Under Gursaran's leadership, Access Group saw a dramatic increase in revenue from £100 million to over £1 billion, with nearly £400 million in profit. This 900% increase in revenue is a testament to his effective marketing strategies and leadership. By fostering a culture of collaboration, data-driven decision making, and aligning marketing with business objectives, Gursaran successfully transformed Access Group into a revenue powerhouse.

Conclusion

Gursaran Marjara's story is a powerful example of how being an effective commercial marketer can drive business growth. His emphasis on aligning marketing metrics with business objectives, fostering collaboration, leveraging data, and integrating traditional and modern marketing metrics were key to his success. Marketers at all levels can learn from his approach to become more commercially focused and drive significant business outcomes.

LEARN HOW TO BECOME A COMMERCIAL MARKETER

Watch our exclusive 2-part Best Practice Briefing to transform into a commercial marketer and effectively showcase your contributions to revenue.

