ROUNDTABLE

B2B LEADERS

Think like your CEO

KEY COMMENTS AND TOP TAKEAWAYS



B2B Marketing

Think like your CEO

1 Appreciate that you'll need to earn your stripes in order to get the respect of the CEO and the rest of the c-suite by delivering something valuable that they don't think of as marketing – particularly if they're sceptical of its role and value in the organisation.

2 The best way to demonstrate this is to do something that adds tangible value to the organisation, something nobody else can do that extends beyond 'comms' and into wider insight and ideally has a direct link to improved profitability.

3 You can't expect the CEO to adapt to your agenda, so it's imperative that you're flexible to theirs. Show how what you're doing contributes to achieving these objectives. However, you should also start to learn their tells so you can understand their immediate concerns, and know the right time to bring up certain subjects.

4 Get into the mindset of your CEO – try to understand where she/he is in their tenure in order to understand what they might be trying to achieve, and how you can contribute towards achieving it. For example, if they're are coming to the end of their tenure, they may be considering their legacy. CEOs are often in the midst of a transition process – understand the direction of travel and the issues that will be faced along the way.

5 The same is true across the rest of the c-suite – they all have different agendas and objectives. If marketers can understand these, they'll be better placed to engage with them effectively and to make their case. Recognise that people have different agendas and act accordingly. Demonstrate a united and cohesive front. Collaborate with other departmental leaders to add extra weight to arguments. In these cases, the use of internal marketing to find mutually beneficial partnerships can be invaluable.

6 Marketing must strive to be the voice of the customer within the organisation – if it can achieve this, its traction will increase enormously. When talking to the board, marketing must use a mix of metrics and anecdotes to prove a point in different ways. This will often require you to contextualise your metrics to dovetail with theirs, or humanise your work through anecdotes. If they object with anecdotal evidence, make sure you have a few great customer stories of your own.

7 When dealing with the c-suite, remember their experience is valuable and highly valued within the business, so keep an open mind. Don't be immediately dismissive of ideas emerging from the c-suite, no matter how little marketing experience they may have. Show you've taken these seriously and done your best to embrace them with good faith, while always sticking to your convictions.

About B2B Leaders

B2B Marketing

The B2B Leaders programme is a network of the most senior figures in the B2B marketing space, from heads of marketing to global CMOs of leading brands.

Members benefit from a unique and invaluable opportunity to regularly network and collaborate with senior-level peers, share insights and discuss strategic challenges.

Membership is by invitation only, and includes:

- Annual Leaders Forum ticket, the only B2B marketing leaders' event of its kind
- Regular roundtables focused on key marketing leadership topics
- Monthly roundtable findings reports
- Annual *B2B Leaders Report,* with key research data and insights.

The B2B Leaders programme counts senior marketing names in Deloitte, Oracle, Atos, Dell, HSBC, KPMG and Adobe among its members, all sharing ideas on topics ranging from team development to board interaction.

To register your interest in the programme call +44 (0)20 7014 4920

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