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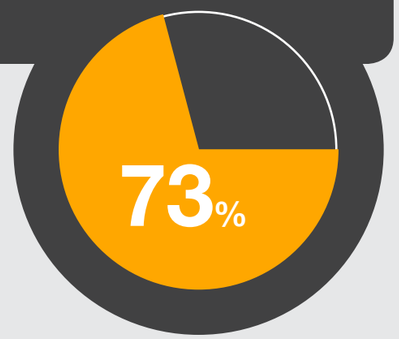
CMO's Guide:
Building Credibility at Board Level



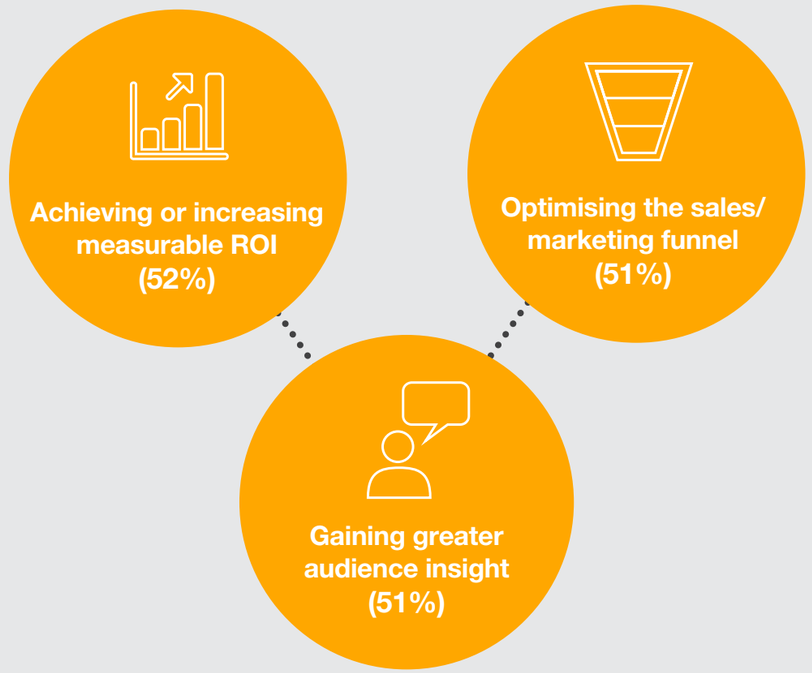
CMO's Guide: Building Credibility at Board Level

Marketing has moved up the strategic agenda in recent years due to the changes that the digital revolution has brought. Gone are the days when it was seen as a nice to have and the first area to cut costs when budgets were tight: the move online means that marketing is now recognised as having a huge role to play in a company's sustainable revenue generation.

Unfortunately, a 2011 report by the Fournaise Marketing Group (FMG) revealed that 73% of the CEOs surveyed thought that their marketers lack credibility and are not the revenue generators that they should be.



With marketing departments recognising that strategies need to change the 2012 Marketing Sherpa Lead Generation Benchmark Report revealed that the top three objectives for CMOs are:



According to research by the Aberdeen Group,

CMOs in the best performing businesses, which use inbound marketing techniques combined with marketing automation and closer alignment with the sales team, are achieving these objectives and proving that 40% of the sales pipeline has been generated by their department.

Achieving these objectives is not without its challenges, though. Many business leaders are unsure about the digital tools now available, particularly in the area of social media, and they need their marketing leads to take control, to show them how they can be used to deliver the value they have the potential to.

So to help CMOs prove credibility at board level, where typically marketing has not been perceived as an important part of the revenue generation cycle, we've come up with these tips.

1 Align marketing strategies to business objectives

Deliver a marketing strategy that shows how it is going to help the business achieve its objectives. Too often marketing strategies just focus on their own department's results – yes, you want to deliver a certain number of leads per campaign, **but what's the bigger picture? How do those leads tie in with the overall business objectives and, most importantly, how do they help move it towards its goals?**



Ensure you have previous analysis on the channels that worked for you last year, then set a realistic goal for how each channel will improve. The transition from outbound channels to inbound channels should be your focus, based on the low cost-per-lead-acquisition. You should also communicate the transition based on channels that you will use less to get a better ratio of spend to revenue.

2 Present the facts

Use the latest stats and research about the marketing industry to show what can be achieved if you are given the right tools and budget to enable you to become a best-performing marketing department. Then show the board exactly what you will do with them to get better results and what the projected results will be. **Give examples of companies of a similar size and show what they have achieved when given the tools needed to succeed in the digital world. Use HubSpot (or similar analytics software) benchmarks to show the conversion rates you should attain being best in class.**



All facts should be presented in the format of a marketing funnel, showing not only the lagging measures such as leads and revenue, but other leading measures such as campaign activity, number of people active in your reach or community, the number of social media nono campaigns and the amount of content you will publish and promote on your blog.

All these measures should then be presented to the board in terms of how they translated at the top of the funnel to convert into leads and revenue.

3 Show them process improvements

Everyone knows that poor sales and marketing processes lead to a lack of visibility and alignment that result in lost revenue. Demonstrate that with the right approach you can help both sales and marketing generate new business opportunities, manage leads better and nurture leads along the sales funnel until they convert. **Make it clear that you can't do it alone, though, and explain that to make the changes needed to deliver improved results the whole company needs to take a different approach to lead management.**

The best way to review the processes is based on

Value stream → **Mapping your lead generation process** → **Ensuring you have a demand waterfall** which can be modelled like a manufacturing supply chain.

This means you should have targets for the stages of your lead management process to ensure the following stage has enough opportunities to work on.

This should be represented such as number of target personas in your reach (opt-in) community, the number of interactions by those personas, the number of conversions of those personas and the number of leads with a score of 0-25, 25-50, 50-75 and 75-100. **Then it's important to have enough marketing qualified leads and sales qualified leads. Ensure you have a lead age on each lead to ensure once passed to sales, the lead must be accepted after a certain time to ensure they are not left on the shelf, or passed back to marketing to nurture.**

4 Talk about the business results that matter

Don't just provide reports that show opens, clicks and response rates. Instead, measure opportunities generated, **"influence on sales pipeline"**, conversion rates and other metrics that directly relate to business outcomes.

Focus on this outcome-oriented data to learn which of your marketing activities produce the best results, then replicate them and show the board how your results are improving campaign by campaign. Take a look at The definitive guide: marketing metrics and analytics to learn more.

5 Use the right language

The FMG report also revealed that 77% of CEOs feel marketers talk too much about brand and the art behind marketing and fail to link this back to results that top management cares about:

Revenue — **Sales** — **Earnings** — **Market Valuation**

You need to get your team thinking more like business people - rather than creative people - when it comes to presenting the results of your activities.

6 Show how you use analytics to spot the buyers among the browsers

Studying customer buying behaviour and interaction with your marketing communications is the micro side of strategy, while understanding wider market and buyer trends is the macro side. Show the board how investing in tools and processes to help gather and analyse data can help you better understand customer segments and purchase patterns.

You can then apply these insights to campaigns and show them how marketing impacts revenue, earnings, and market share. You should use tools such as search metrics to show how your performance against the competition rated and Radian6 or HootSuite to categorise.

7 Manage expectations

Because of the mountain of data that's now available on customers and the new ways to communicate with them, many executive level staff feel that this should automatically **translate into more leads, conversions and revenue.**

However, we all know that making the most of the opportunities the digital world brings is a long-term game. Businesses need to enter into a continuous cycle of watching, learning and improving to deliver better results. It doesn't happen overnight.

8 Highlight the importance of the customer

What the customer needs and wants can often get lost in the board's drive to improve results. Remind them of the importance of understanding your buyer. Without that understanding, it is difficult to engage them and convince them to buy your product or service. Show them how getting to know your buyer by listening to them and learning why and how they buy can help inform future approaches to ensure they deliver the increase in revenue that is the board's ultimate goal.

This is not easy and never ending; to get it right, it has to be an ongoing part of the planning, execution, and measurement process. You need to make sure they understand that without taking the time to do this, you really can't deliver the improvements they want.automatically translate into more leads, conversions and revenue.

Want to learn more about engaging customers? Download our free eGuide **CMO's guide: Building an opt-in community in the technology sector.**

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