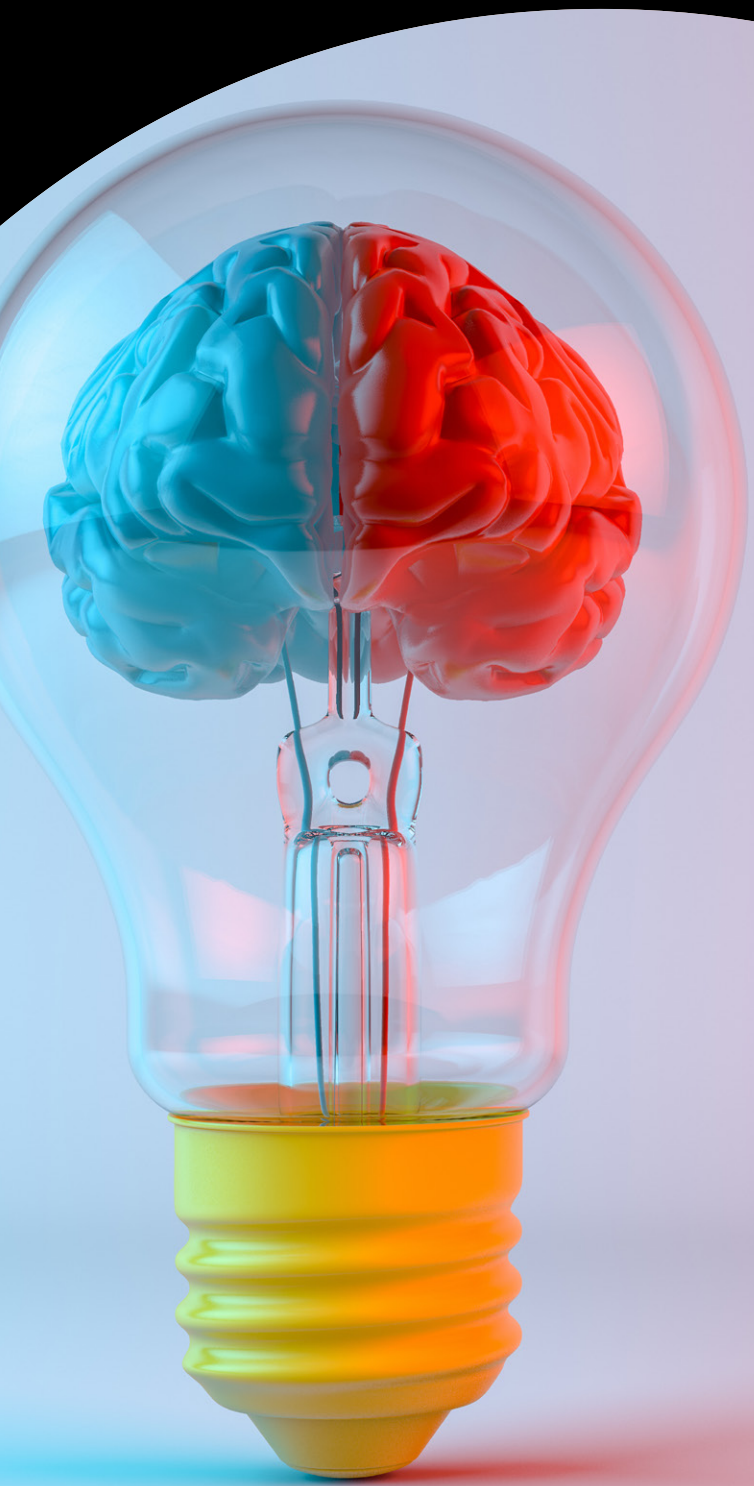
the marketing pod

B2B Marketing
Insight · Development · Training · Events

Evolution to revolution:

How Covid-19 and behavioural trends will shape the role of the CMO, causing a seismic shift towards marketing-led organisations by 2030



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Contents

Introduction
Jenny Hughes, The Marketing Pod 3

Introduction
Looking back and to the future 4

Section 1
The changing role of the CMO 6

Section 2
How to become tomorrow's CMO 17

Section 3
The future of martech and creativity 21

Conclusion
Jenny Hughes, The Marketing Pod 25

Introduction



Jenny Hughes,
co-founder and director,
The Marketing Pod

Even before our worlds were tipped upside down by the Coronavirus crisis, we had become acutely aware that the role of the CMO in today's B2B organisations was gaining in importance and influence. As a specialist agency within the B2B world, we were being increasingly called upon to: support CMOs on projects which would help to lead whole businesses into a new era; present ideas for organisational change to the c-suite; help marketing teams rethink their end-to-end customer journey; input into broader growth strategies; influence behaviour change across multiple departments; and to work more closely with sales, HR and product teams.

And while it's easy to speculate on some of the reasons for all this change, we wanted to validate what we believed to be true, and gain a deeper insight into how all of the pieces fit together. Why exactly are business cultures shifting to become more marketing-led? How much is this being driven by the evolving role of the CMO – and vice versa? And how can today's CMOs prepare to become the business leaders our B2B organisations will need tomorrow?

In the course of the research for this report, B2B Marketing consulted with senior B2B marketers across multiple sectors. These marketers provided insight into their experiences, their attitudes and their expectations for the future; including the skills and resource gaps that CMOs will need to address before they are truly ready to lead. And while much of this research took place before Covid-19 first forced us into lockdown, it has been revisited and requalified since; so that it hopefully provides relevant, up-to-date and useful information for anyone interested in what it's going to take to become tomorrow's CMO.

Introduction

Looking back and to the future

Music got The Beatles, science got the moon landing, businesses got the marketing department. The 1960s was a catalytic decade – and we've come a long way since.

Back then, the embryonic marketing department was a mishmash of sales, promotions, public relations and advertising. Direct mail was the pinnacle of innovation. It all took place with untargeted and unsophisticated aplomb, but it worked.

It worked so well that by the 1970s most major companies had adopted a marketing model. The practice matured and the rate of adoption continued steadily until the 1990s when the internet kicked into gear. That's when things really started to gather pace.

By 1996, 16 million people were using the web. By 1999, that number had risen to 248 million. The unprecedented scale of this newly addressable market and the abundance of new channels through which to target them called for a new kind of marketing. Text-based websites, emails and blogs gave rise to CRM systems, data mining and nascent marketing automation. These digital channels were driving real-life revenue. And, in answer to the late Mr. Wanamaker – it was measurable.

This marketing boom was mirrored by the proliferation of technology companies in industries from finance to energy. As the rate of change increased, so did the opportunities for growth and the number of VCs willing to plough money into projects that could make it. In order to meet that growth, beyond the new shiny marketing tools and impressive acronyms, companies need one thing: customers.

Around the turn of the century, the CMO was born. In the early days, their role revolved around brand management, market research and bringing together all these marketing activities to synergise, analyse and optimise. Now, as we enter the 2020s, chief marketers are becoming increasingly outward looking and customer-centric. Tomorrow's CMO is uniquely positioned to sit at the helm of marketing-led organisations and fuel growth by working cross-functionally to deliver irresistible customer experiences.

But the devil's in the detail. How will CMOs demonstrate commercial credentials? Will success in 2030 be determined by emerging technologies like AI and blockchain? What steps can rising stars take now to land themselves a seat at the top tables of tomorrow's marketing-led organisations? This report examines the CMO's past and present, and explores how the role will evolve by 2030.

The Covid-19 perspective

This introduction described an evolution – and in every evolutionary process, there will be major events which momentarily speed up change. For marketing, one of those events has been Covid-19. The circumstances created by the pandemic have allowed everything tech, digital and ecommerce to thrive, while traditional industries like retail, travel and the arts have had to fight hard to survive.

Contradictory forces are influencing the future of marketing. In times of challenge and change, innovators shape the future. However, marketing spend is often one of the first targets for cost reduction in times of recession. So, to keep their seat at the table, CMOs need to demonstrate that it's in their department where commercials and creation collide, and that businesses simply can't afford not to have them.

After all, customers' needs and expectations are changing and, as the bastion of the customer, it's incumbent on CMOs to give direction. As we enter this brave new world, businesses' chances of success or failure might just depend on the foresight and tenacity of the marketer at their helm.

Methodology

The findings of this report are based on both qualitative and quantitative research. We surveyed 140 senior B2B marketers and conducted in-depth interviews with eight marketing leaders in high-growth tech, fintech and cleantech companies. The result is a 360° view of the CMO past and present, and an exploration of their future. Huge thanks to our contributors:

- **Joe Hyland,** CMO, Greensill
- **Hayley Thompson,** marketing communications manager, SmartestEnergy
- **Lydia Maule,** head of marketing, GEFCO UK
- **Michael Byrne,** digital, marketing and strategy manager, npower Business Solutions
- **Danielle Wrench,** head of marketing, Inspired Energy
- **Laurel Wolfe,** VP marketing, Klarna Bank
- **Dr. Chris Bailey,** CMO, Valitor
- **James Arnall,** marketing director, Perkbox



Section 1

The changing role of the CMO

There's a simple way to separate the past and future CMO. The first is an expert in marketing and developing the function; the second is an expert in the customer and growing the company.

Towards the end of the last decade, when B2B marketers were still making sense of this new technology in their toolkit, CMOs had to be somewhat inward looking. How do we fine-tune demand generation? Where should product marketing sit? What's the organic and paid social strategy? Valid questions, but they're just marketing activities. Tomorrow's CMO needs to look further.

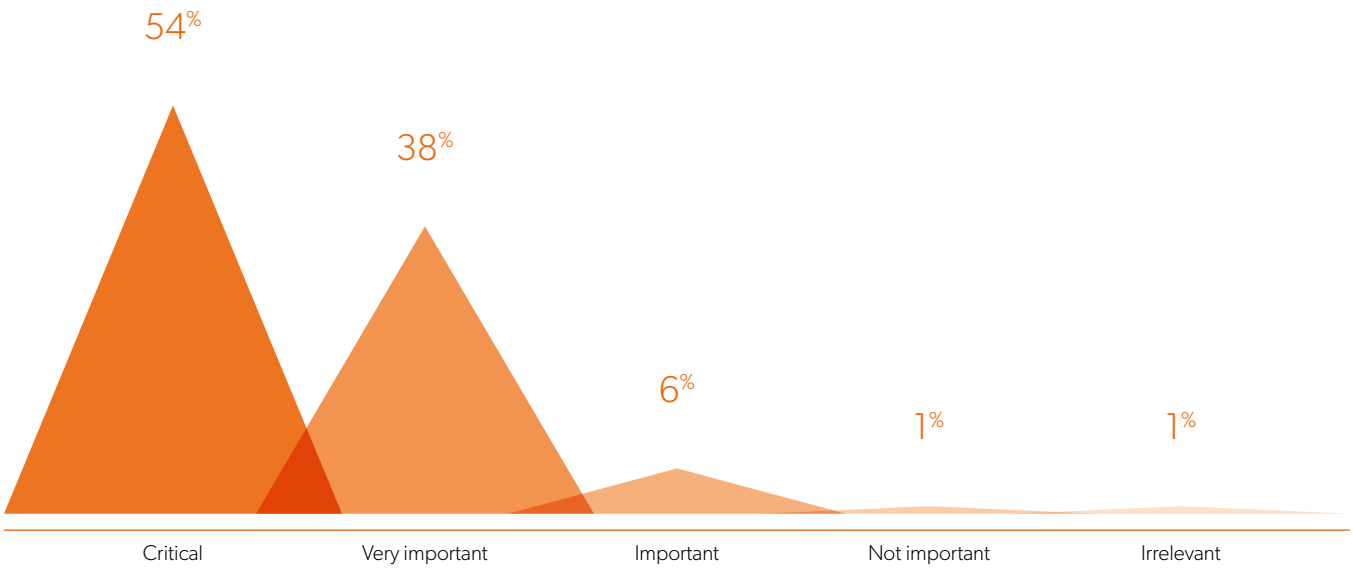
> ***"In the last 10 years, we've seen a seismic shift in the role CMOs play. Particularly in the last five years, marketing has gone from the 'make it pretty' department, to the tip of the spear for revenue growth. I see this trend continuing, with world-class marketers owning more and more revenue responsibilities."***
>
> **Joe Hyland,** CMO, Greensill

A growth mindset

Modern businesses have a growth mindset – especially when there's venture capital and technology involved. And there's no meaningful growth without buyers. This plays into the hands of the CMO, who's uniquely positioned to be the standard-bearer for the customer. But rather than solely reaching for marketing KPIs, tomorrow's CMO needs to focus on business level financials and OKRs, working increasingly cross-functionally to deliver customer engagement, insight, satisfaction, advocacy and experience.

This growing importance of the top marketer's role was reflected by our sample. A staggering 98% of our respondents believe CMOs will be important to critical in the success of B2B organisations over the next 10 years.

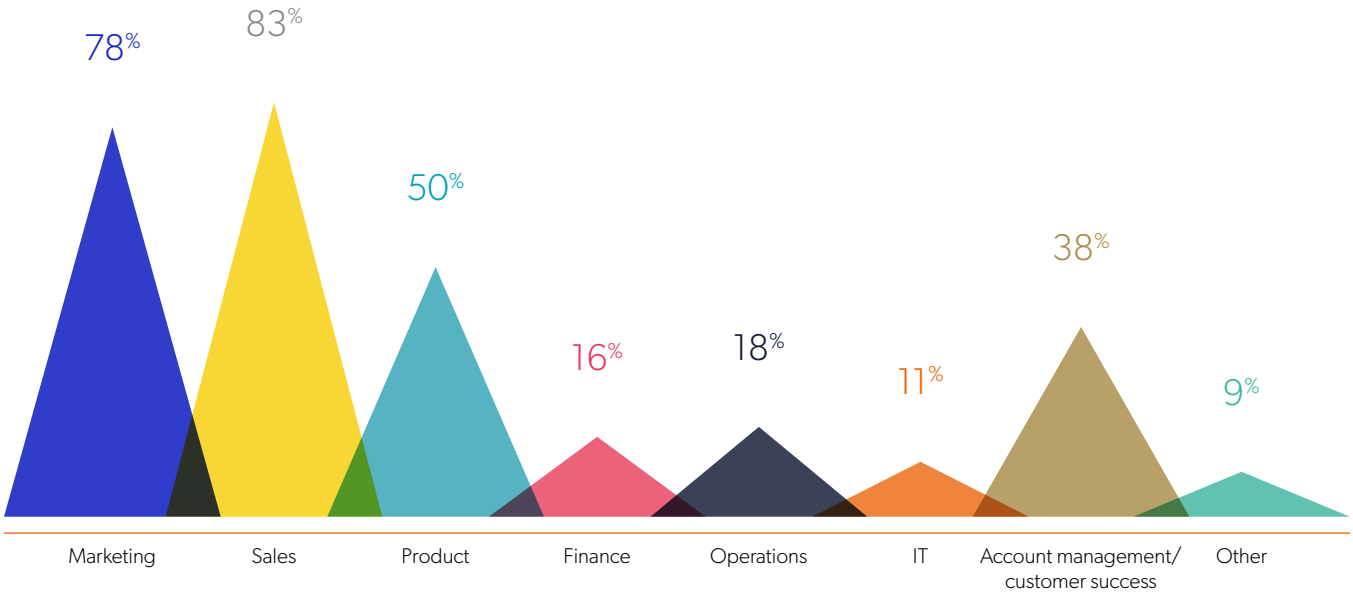
How important do you see the role of the CMO being in the next 10 years?



Raising the stakeholders

Interestingly, when we asked respondents which stakeholders their CMOs worked most closely with, the sales department (83%) out-stripped marketing (78%) itself. These were closely followed by product (50%) and client success (38%). Clearly, the more commercial and customer-obsessed the CMO becomes, the closer they must work with functions serving their needs.

Who are your CMO's top three stakeholders?



Finding the partners

The CMO's success over the coming 10 years will rely on their expertise across many fields. As the chief marketer devotes more time to working cross-functionally to make strategic decisions, technologies like marketing automation can hold the fort to a point, but agencies will become increasingly critical. A trusted multi-disciplinary agency is perhaps the holy grail; able to relieve time pressure and quickly plug skills gaps where needed by supplying the core functions of PR, content creation and copywriting, design and digital marketing support. But the magic ingredient will be a deep and wide understanding of the marketplace and a strong grasp of the CMO's objectives – so that the agency or agencies chosen can become a true extension of the business' internal teams.

> ***"Technology has meant there are many activities that can now be 'in-sourced' that were once the domain of third-party suppliers. However, I believe that building long-term relationships with a small number of key agencies that not only understand the market operated in, but really get where the CMO wants to take their business, will become increasingly important."***
>
> **Michael Byrne,** digital, marketing and strategy manager, npower Business Solutions

Repositioning the CMO

Some 39% of B2B marketers say the CMO's role is evolving to include growth responsibilities, gaining access to growth drivers and resources within other departments. Meanwhile, 33% said that, as an emerging role, the CMO still has to prove themself to the c-suite. Just over a quarter (28%) asserted that the CMO has equal influence as other c-suite members, with clear remit and appropriate resources.

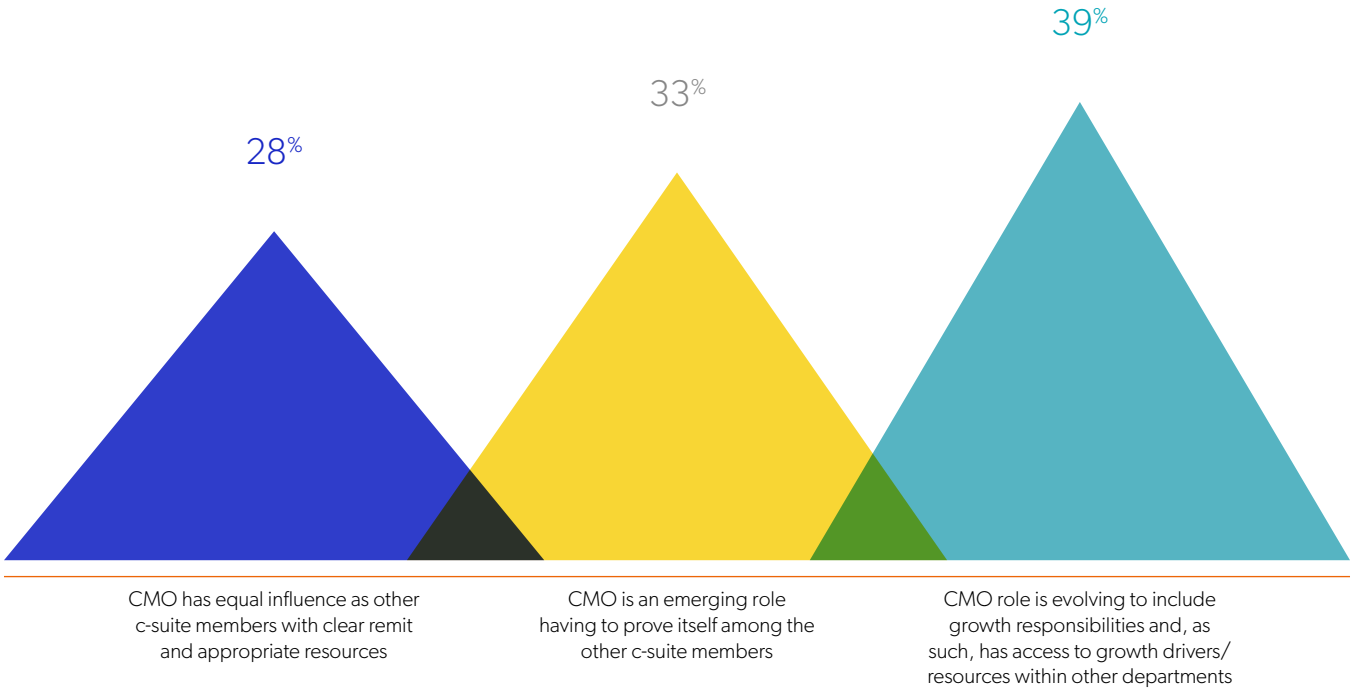
The Marketing Pod's perspective

While the role of the CMO is already expanding and evolving, CMOs who continue to find themselves lacking influence in the c-suite can begin to make headway by calling on an essential and familiar marketing technique: adapting tone of voice and messaging to suit the audience. Speaking the language of the c-suite means demonstrating that you have a full grasp of broader business goals. It means being explicit in how a clearly defined and deliverable set of marketing activities will help to achieve those goals. And it means leaving marketing jargon like engagement metrics at the door, in favour of strategic solutions to key organisational objectives.

Alongside this, external positioning of the CMO as an expert for their sector can also help to alter perceptions of the role among other business leaders. This is where the CMO can take a clever approach to conducting a little PR that benefits them as well as their business. Placing well-written thought leadership pieces that address growth related topics, in trade or national titles, will help to cast the CMO as a commercial mind worth consulting before the big decisions are made.

Agency partners can play a crucial role in repositioning the CMO and in raising the profile of marketing within a business. While their objective distance can lend a little extra credibility when building the business case for campaigns or projects, they are also the internal CMO's closest ally, with a shared interest in positioning marketing as an essential growth function rather than an expendable cost centre.

Which best describes the current position of the CMO?



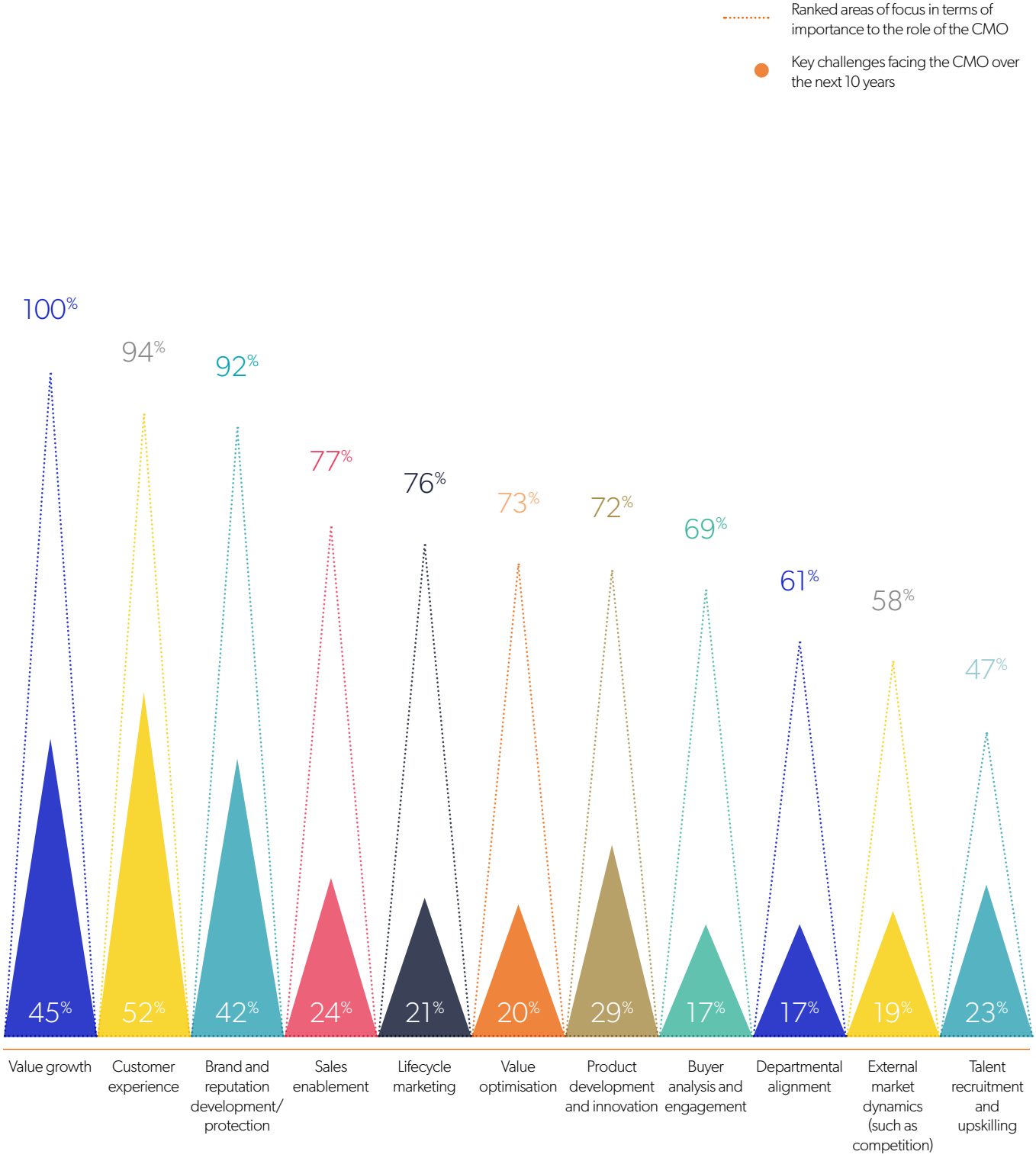
Roles and responsibilities

Clearly, CMOs must continue to prove themselves over the coming decade. But which levers can they pull to do so? According to our sample, the top three most important areas of focus are, in order, value growth, customer experience and brand development. But interestingly, customer experience (52%) out-ranked value growth (45%) in terms of the challenges CMOs will face in the next 10 years.

The Marketing Pod's perspective

There remains a gap to bridge before the role of the CMO can fulfil its true potential. Newly appointed CMOs to long established commercial organisations will often find that their first hurdle is overcoming a false confidence in 'the way it's always been done'. Their appointment to the role acknowledges the need for a marketing mind at board-level, and yet there is a resistance to handing them power equal to other members of the c-suite.

Most important areas of focus, as well as the greatest challenges to overcome



Barriers to success

As value growth and customer experience become pivotal to their success or failure, the ease with which modern buyers can self-educate, shop around and change suppliers will pose significant challenges for CMOs.

The Marketing Pod's perspective

In the future, higher levels of customer loyalty will be key to ensuring not only business resilience, but also business growth. And as consumer expectations change, this can only realistically be achieved with a cohesive, fully-aligned and customer centric approach across the whole business.

A helpful starting point for this is carefully targeted market research, which in turn enables an in-depth review of the customer journey and then identification of any gaps or weaknesses that could lead to a leaky sales funnel. Research should in fact be embedded within the ongoing marketing plan. It's important to recognise, now more than ever before, that any insight will only be relevant for a limited amount of time. With marketplaces across most sectors in a seemingly continual state of flux, only CMOs with their fingers pressed regularly and firmly on the pulse of their customers and prospects are likely to experience long-term success in the areas of customer retention and growth.

And the challenge extends beyond gaining a true understanding of the marketplace. Success will also depend upon sharing those learnings with the rest of the business in a way that is meaningful to them; on using it to shape the tools that the sales teams will use, to help the CFO allocate spend and to help drive operational decision making. It's here that internal communications campaigns become as vital as external ones. In a marketing-led business, there is no place for departmental silos.

> ***"Driving customer loyalty will pose a challenge for CMOs. It's so easy now for a customer to chop and change their product and service providers. Expectations are continually rising, and it's often difficult for an organisation to continue to keep adapting to the pace of change to retain a market leading reputation and loyalty of the customer."***
>
> **Lydia Maule,** head of marketing, GEFCO UK

Enter the marketing-led business

Why marketing?

With pressure to hit growing month-on-month revenue targets and maintain a continuous upward trajectory, it's easy to lapse into a mindset of sales, sales, sales. But when companies become sales-led, strategy is often swapped for tactics and short-term transactional activity, while meaningful long-term goals like customer lifetime value go out the window. No function is better placed to gain a 360° view of the customer than marketing. This has given rise to the marketing-led company.

> ***"[A challenge for CMOs will be] adapting to meet both the needs of the customer and the needs of the business – they are very rarely aligned."***
>
> **Danielle Wrench,** head of marketing, Inspired Energy

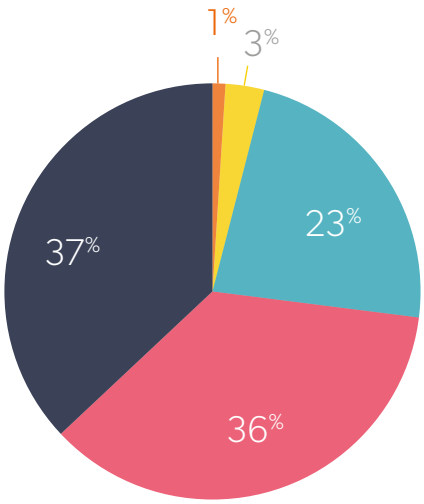
In customer-driven environments, marketing-led companies set their eyes on the long game of customer engagement and retention as well as acquisition. This sustainable approach to business growth requires the input of many functions from sales to customer success to finance to IT. But, as the customer expert, marketing should be the glue.

No function is better placed to gain a 360° view of the customer than marketing. This has given rise to the marketing-led company

Organisational restructure

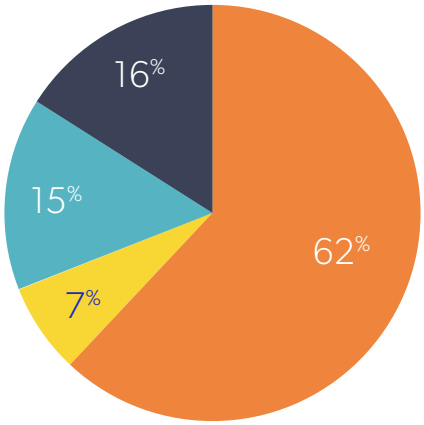
The rise of the CMO has reflected changes in organisational structure. As business focus has increasingly shifted towards growth, marketing has become the engine room. But size matters. According to our sample, the CMO becomes most crucial in organisations scaling from SME upwards, with companies of 1000+ seeing the greatest need.

In which company size is the CMO more critical?



- 1–9 (micro)
- 10–29 (small)
- 30–249 (SME)
- 250–999 (large/mid-market)
- 1000+ (enterprise)

Which best describes your current situation?



- We currently have a CMO (or equivalent) in place
- We're looking to fill a CMO (or equivalent) position in the future
- We're neither actively considering nor closed to the possibility
- We don't have a CMO (or equivalent) in place nor will we likely ever

The majority (62%) of B2B companies have a CMO or equivalent in place, while a further 7% are looking to fill the position in the near future. In fact, only 16% of our sample don't have any intentions to do so. This paints a vivid picture of a marketing-led future for organisations.

Only 16% of our sample don't have a CMO in place, with no intentions to do so

In businesses that are not yet ready to appoint a CMO, finding alternative ways to keep marketing at the heart of growth can be crucial to ensuring that a business stays true to its values as it scales up, and is consistently focused on customer needs and experience. After all, in today's world it is these things that will build in long-term commercial resilience. Specialist agencies and strategic partners can provide invaluable support on this growth journey, whether it's to help identify and address customer pain points, or ensure the value proposition aligns with broader business objectives. Their input can help to make sure marketing remains a 'board-level' focus in the absence of a CMO – and will hopefully prevent silos from forming as everyone else concentrates on their individual goals.

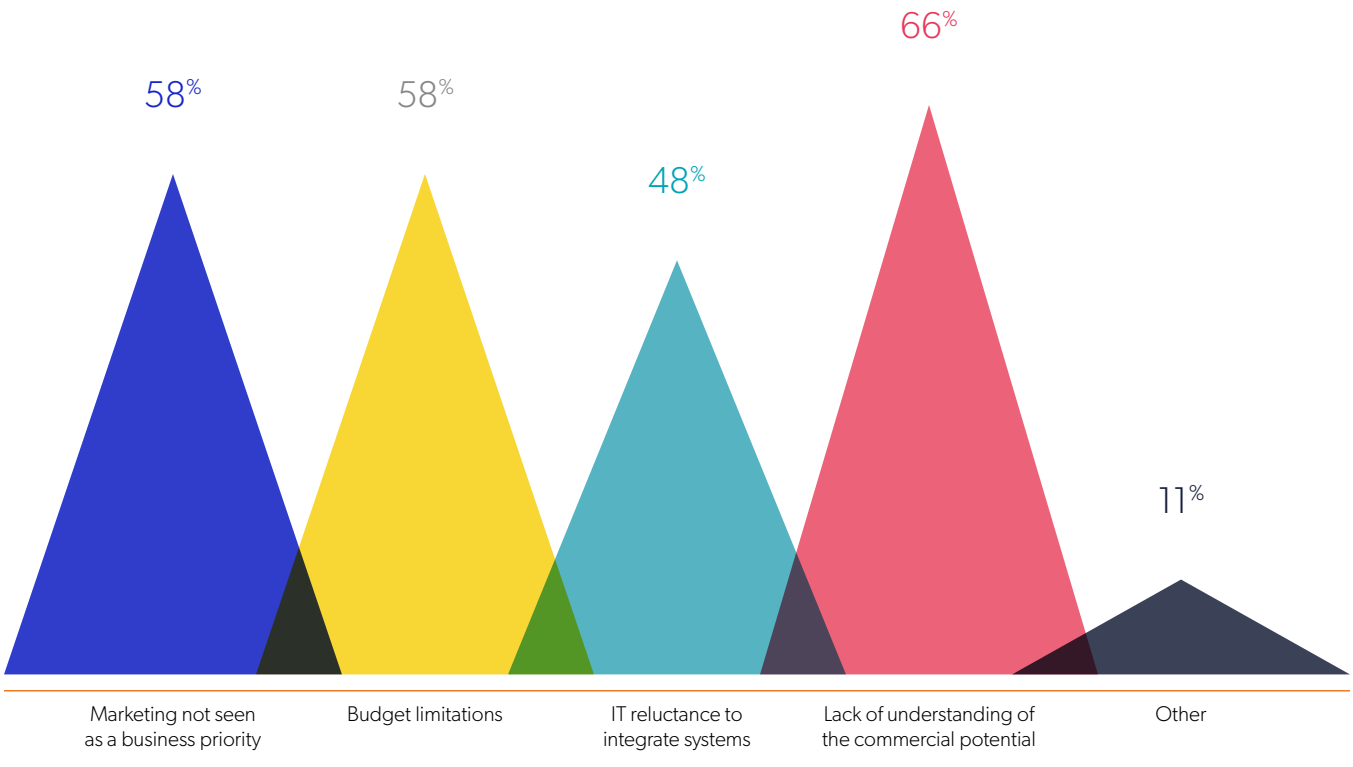
The martech barrier

While some startups are born with marketing at the helm, for the most part, becoming a marketing-led company takes a mindset shift and time. First, you need to embed a mission-led culture that's purpose-driven and customer-centric. This needs to be underpinned by a fully integrated martech stack. And yet, 66% of our sample said there's a company-wide lack of understanding of the commercial potential of martech, while 58% said marketing isn't yet seen as a business priority.

The Marketing Pod's perspective

The martech gap can be a difficult one to bridge because it requires board buy-in for financial investment, as well as reallocation of departmental resource. A good customer relationship management (CRM) platform forms the foundation of a martech stack and is a basic requirement for any business above a certain size, yet many continue to do without. For CMOs uncertain about their requirements, it can be helpful to seek advice and recommendations from a trusted software-agnostic agency partner. They should be able to help CMOs break down exactly what they need from their software and provide a range of options to fit different budget thresholds. They can also help to arrange demonstrations and review performance, to make sure CMOs don't commit to anything unless it supports them in achieving their objectives.

The barriers to organisations embracing martech

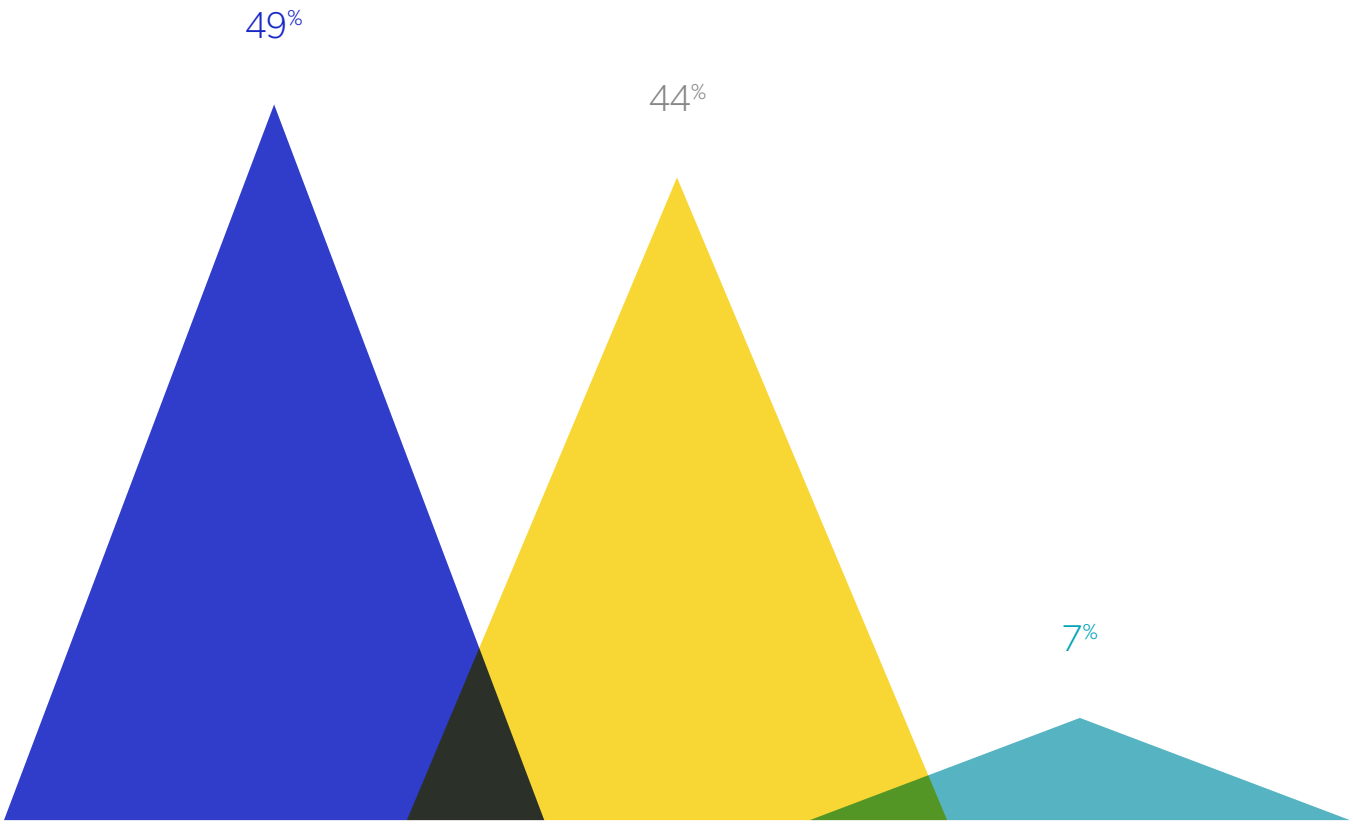


Evolution to revolution © B2B Marketing

2030: The year of the CMO

By and large, our respondents see a pathway for CMOs to get to the top of organisations in the next 10 years. Indeed, 49% of our sample believe the role of CMO will continue to establish and become as prevalent as other c-suite members. Meanwhile 44% see the role evolving sideways, with responsibilities broadening to encompass other areas.

How will the CMO's role change in the next 10 years?



"Marketing will grow in importance with the value-add that data-driven marketing can provide; the need to achieve cut-through in competitive marketplaces; the need to stay on trend, and not look, sound or feel dated."

Hayley Thompson, marketing communications manager, SmartestEnergy

"In more and more organisations, the CMO role not only oversees typical marketing activity and the challenges this brings keeping up to date with the continual change in channels and methods that become available to us to connect with customers – the role also incorporates customer experience. The proactive nature of customer experience and how it differs from customer service brings opportunities for marketeers to really delight customers and go the extra mile. It's more important than ever in this generation CX, that CMOs can work alongside COOs and other senior functional leaders to provide this exceptional experience."

Lydia Maule, head of marketing, GEFCO UK

"If you work outside of a marketing team, a CMO can come across as quite a 'fluffy' position. However, if you really understand marketing, you'll know it's one of the most important roles in an organisation. They build a business's capability, articulate their story, drive growth, provide the best ideas and, most importantly, they are the ones who hold the customer in the highest regard. Today's customer expects so much and as their demands grow, so does the importance of the CMO."

Danielle Wrench, head of marketing, Inspired Energy

"The CMO will continue to play a key – and expanding – role in B2B organisations, especially as competition intensifies and margins shrink. The CMO brings a unique perspective as champion of the total customer experience. B2B buyers are increasingly looking for new and engaging content when decision-making and CMOs have the opportunity to align this to the full journey from awareness, to selection and on to retention"

Laurel Wolfe, VP marketing, Klarna Bank

The Covid-19 perspective

In many ways, the direction the CMO has evolved in over the last decade – towards a customer-centric agent of growth and change, rather than one focused on optimising tools and tactics – has prepared them for the requirements of the new working world. Now it's time to double down in those key areas. CMOs must increase their focus on customer needs – recognising that these have changed and are still changing – and be brave enough to focus on long-term growth and brand building, when quick tactical wins can feel like the safer and more easily measurable option.

How will Covid-19 change the future role of the CMO?

"Marketing needs to get closer to the customer that's for sure. Customer challenges, budgets, and priorities are changing faster than ever in this Covid environment, so playbooks and product-market fit need to be re-evaluated constantly. When it comes to understanding the market, it definitely helps to read research reports and talk to your sales/post-sales teams, but there's no substitute for talking to customers directly. The future CMO will need to be really connected in that way, and feed back into how the product is positioned (and hopefully evolves) to meet those needs too."

James Arnall, marketing director, Perkbox

"I would hope that Covid-19 will ensure CMOs and senior marketing professionals go back to basics and their core purpose – reviewing what the customer actually needs, when they need it and working out how to realise those needs. We may even see a decline in more senior positions as companies recovering from the pandemic look to tighten their purse strings, which would be a real shame – good market insight and solid client analysis will be needed to pull their organisation and their clients into the clear."

Danielle Wrench, head of marketing, Inspired Energy

"I think Covid-19 has changed the future role of the CMO in three key areas:

Communications: Some companies treat marketing and communications as two separate functions, but the future CMO has to be an excellent communicator – both internally and with customers. Communication flow has increased dramatically and CMOs have to be able to connect with customers on their terms, in an authentic and empathetic way. Employees and employers have realised that it's perfectly possible to work effectively from home and people have adapted their communication style to bring their 'whole self' to video calls. Nobody questions the dog barking, the kids interrupting or – in my case – leaping up to kill another wasp that has flown into my log cabin!

Digital: The world had already 'gone digital', but this has accelerated during Covid, especially the amount of people using social media. McKinsey has piled on the evidence with its latest research – B2B companies see digital interactions as two to three times more important to their customers than traditional sales interactions. What's more, over half believe that virtual sales models are equally or more effective than sales models used before Covid-19.

Insights: In an attempt to create more certainty in an uncertain world, the future CMO will have to become more data and insights-driven. There is no such thing as 'normal' anymore, so everyone will need insights to determine how customers are behaving. Especially in a world where contact is more virtual and behaviour is more 'invisible'."

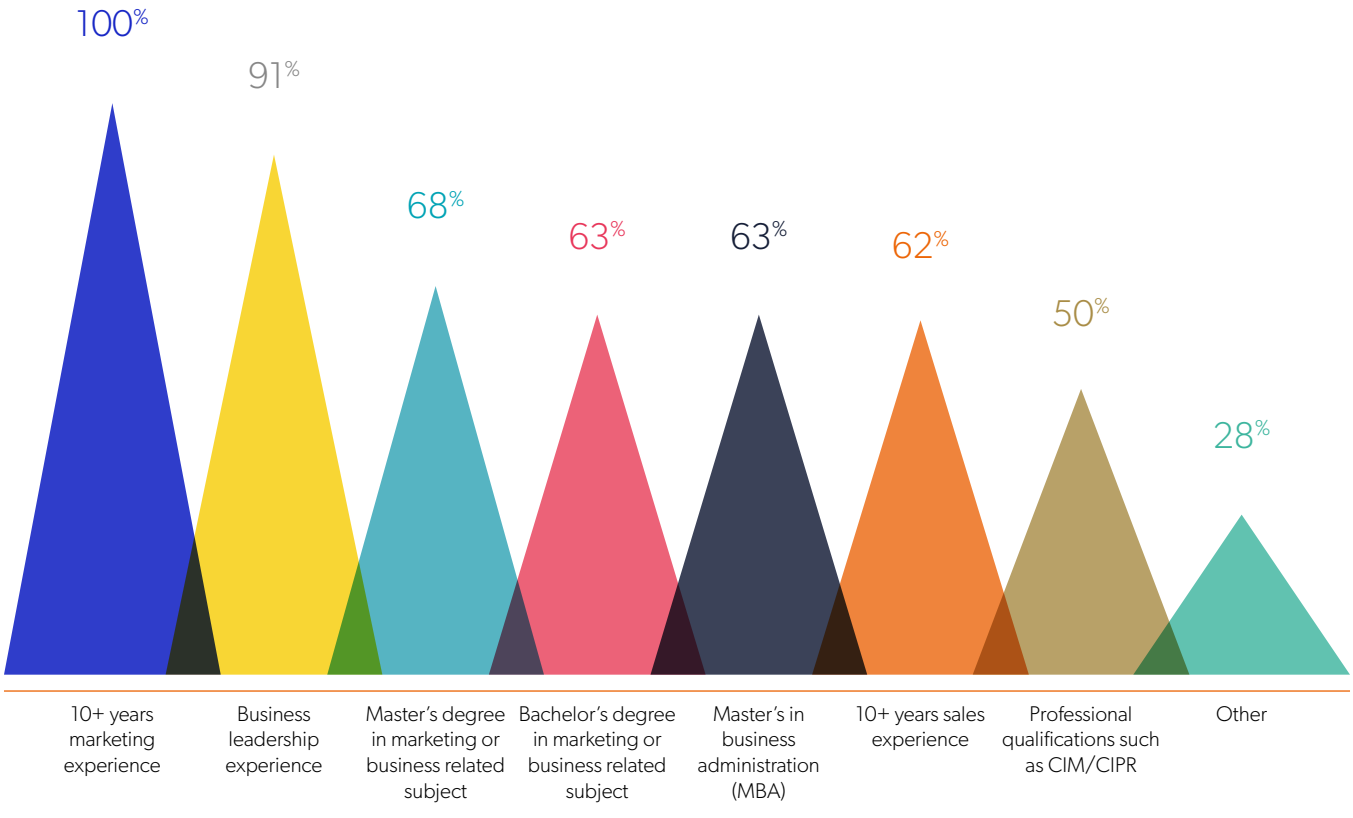
Dr. Chris Bailey, CMO, Valitor

Section 2

How to become tomorrow's CMO

With the business demand for talented CMOs rising, many ambitious marketers coming up the ranks have their sights set on landing the top job. As the role expands horizontally, interlinking closer than ever with other functions, tomorrow's CMO requires a unique blend of competencies and skills. These can broadly be categorised into three buckets: customer, commercial and credibility.

Rate the importance of the following qualifications to the role of CMO



Customer

The first prerequisite is a deep understanding of the customer. They must know what drives them on an emotive level, as well as their rational motivations; understand the dynamics of the decision-making unit; how, where and when to serve them. Part of this comes with experience, but hopeful CMOs shouldn't overlook professional qualifications. Our sample believes that qualifications such as Chartered Institute Marketing (CIM) and Master's degrees are high on the list of desirable accomplishments for hopeful CMOs.

> *"Never forget the most important rule of great marketing: it's always about your audience and never about you. Those who remain true to this absolute truth will have great careers."*
>
> **Joe Hyland,** CMO, Greensill

> *"CMOs need to always be the voice of the customer and a customer advocate. It can be hard when you know a business inside out, to see something from the viewpoint of a customer. It's important for a CMO to be able to take a step back, put themselves in the customer's shoes. Get an understanding of what they need from them first-hand, not try to predict what you think they need."*
>
> **Lydia Maule,** head of marketing, GEFCO UK

10+ years marketing experience ranked as the most important factor in being CMO

Credibility

When it comes to the top job, experience is key. In fact, over a decade's worth of front-line marketing experience ranked as the single most important ingredient required for future CMOs. Similarly, business leadership experience proved to be another near must-have. CMOs will need to hold their own in the boardroom against the c-suite, sales directors and investors.

> *"Work hard, get experience in a variety of industries, but, most importantly, relentlessly relate your activity to the key challenges the business you are working in is facing."*
>
> **Michael Byrne,** digital, marketing and strategy manager, npower Business Solutions

Commercial

> *"One area for development for any B2B marketer is simply being more commercially aware. Seeing the bigger picture, understanding the financials – and not just marketing – will be a necessity to become an integral part of the business."*
>
> **Laurel Wolfe,** VP marketing, Klarna Bank

When asked to rate the most important qualifications for becoming CMO, a Master's degree in marketing or a business-related subject was voted the third highest, with a Bachelor's degree in the same areas closely following. 10 years' sales experience also ranked as a great item on a future CMO's CV.

Hard skills

These three Cs must be accompanied by a range of hard and soft skills. Our sample overwhelmingly believes strategic and commercial thinking is the most critical hard skill to future CMOs. Spotting trends and opportunities was also deemed important, with data management and analytics also worth a mention. Meanwhile, measurement, goal-setting and reporting ranked surprisingly low.

> *"Hard skills are table stakes, the must-haves to instill confidence in ability and expertise. I particularly believe a basic skill – writing – is an overlooked attribute. Being a good writer is seriously undervalued. An excellent turn of phrase, in even the most normal of channels like email, can make a difference."*
>
> **Laurel Wolfe,** VP marketing, Klarna Bank

> *"Digital transformation plays a huge part in the role of a CMO and therefore it's important that they have excellent digital knowledge to ensure they recruit the right team around them with the right digital skills to deliver."*
>
> **Lydia Maule,** head of marketing, GEFCO UK

The most important hard skills for future CMOs

- Strategic and commercial thinking
- Data management and analytics
- Spotting trends and opportunities
- Deployment, implementation and integration of technology
- Measurement, goal setting and reporting
- Improvement of workflow and processes

Soft skills

These must be matched by equally adroit soft skills. Communication was voted the most important, very closely followed by leadership. Problem-solving ranked third, followed neck and neck by adaptability and teamwork.

> *"It's soft skills where leaders are made. Emotional intelligence, empathy, being curious and listening are all essential to climb up the ladder to the c-suite."*
>
> **Laurel Wolfe,** VP marketing, Klarna Bank

> *"Communication across the business, third parties and key external stakeholders, building trust and relationships among leadership will all be crucial soft skills for future CMOs."*
>
> **Hayley Thompson,** marketing communications manager, SmartestEnergy

The most important soft skills for future CMOs

- Communication
- Leadership
- Problem-solving
- Adaptability
- Teamwork
- Interpersonal skills
- Creativity
- Work ethic
- Time management
- Attention to detail

The list of skills required by CMOs is expanding as rapidly as their importance and influence, which might seem a little daunting to some. But it's a requirement that becomes much more manageable when the right partnerships are in place. The CMO of the future won't necessarily need to be an expert in every area identified here. It's more important that they understand what's required and have the skills to build an effective team of people around them, including in-house talent and external agencies, to fill any gaps in their own knowledge, ability or experience.

The Covid-19 perspective

Let's take it as a given that tomorrow's CMO needs to be customer-obsessed. They will have to quickly work out their customers' needs and how to serve them.

As characteristics that'll define the success of the CMO, genuine empathy and compassion will be equally important as a commercial mindset. Not only will this help marketers get to the heart of their customers' pains, it'll also work as an attraction tool as people increasingly want to work with and buy from companies that share their own values. Now more than ever, people need compassionate leaders.

What will set budding CMOs apart in a post-Covid world?

"A good CMO will need to find the right balance between doubling down on what's working and finding new ways to reach and engage customers. Marketers that refuse to adapt to a constantly changing landscape will see limited results over time, but on the other end of the scale, those that panic and ignore the 'tried and tested' in favour of risky new tactics will often find themselves in hot water fast. It's important to make data-driven decisions when it comes to changes in messaging or acquisition strategy rather than knee-jerk reactions based on anecdotal feedback or questionable third-party research. Cool heads and steady hands will always prevail!"

James Arnall, marketing director, Perkbox

"If Covid has taught us anything, it's that we need to be agile and not too consumed and embedded in our pre-existing strategies now that we've seen how quickly things can change. It's those that have reacted quickly to support their customers that will come out on top. We need to be flexible and ready for anything."

Danielle Wrench, head of marketing, Inspired Energy

"Winning CMOs will not only be open and adaptable to change, they will lead change, especially digital transformation. Their communications will be proactive, human and consistent. They will use insights to spot new opportunities and act on them – every obstacle will signal a corresponding opportunity. They will lead their teams virtually."

Dr. Chris Bailey, CMO, Valitor

Section 3

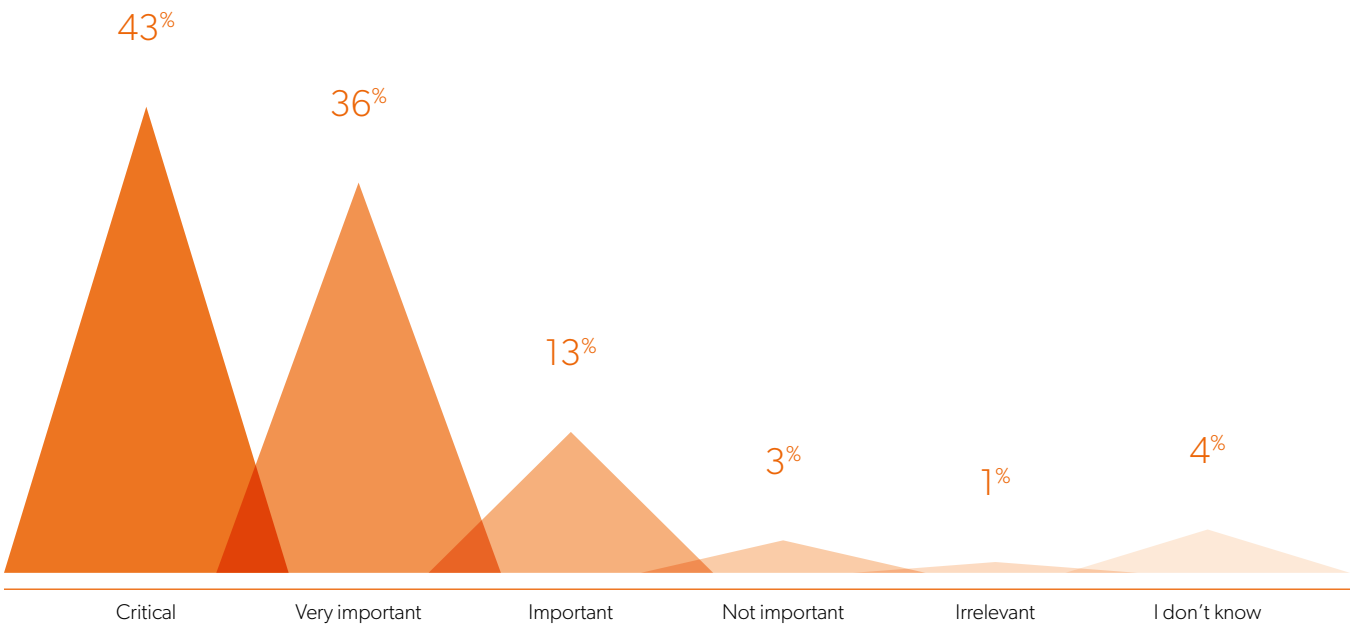
The future of martech and creativity

Progress in B2B marketing is marked by the rise of new technologies and the human ingenuity they unlock. Just 10 years ago, social media, webinars and whitepaper-publishing were the height of sophistication in the B2B space. Now, big data, machine learning and automation are enabling hyper-personalisation, and are opening up endless opportunities to engage with customers. Digital transformation has undoubtedly played a pivotal role in the emergence of the CMO, but amid all the new tools and tech, do we run the risk of losing human creativity?

"It could be seen that martech has streamlined marketing operations, leaving more time for creative thinking. On the other hand, creativity could be limited, if you focus on how your ideas can fit the technology or platform, instead of thinking outside the box. Either way, it's truer than ever that an overarching sense of holistic brand purpose and direction is needed to underpin any strategy, regardless of systems or channels used."

Laurel Wolfe, VP marketing, Klarna Bank

How important has the role of digital transformation been in the emergence of the CMO?



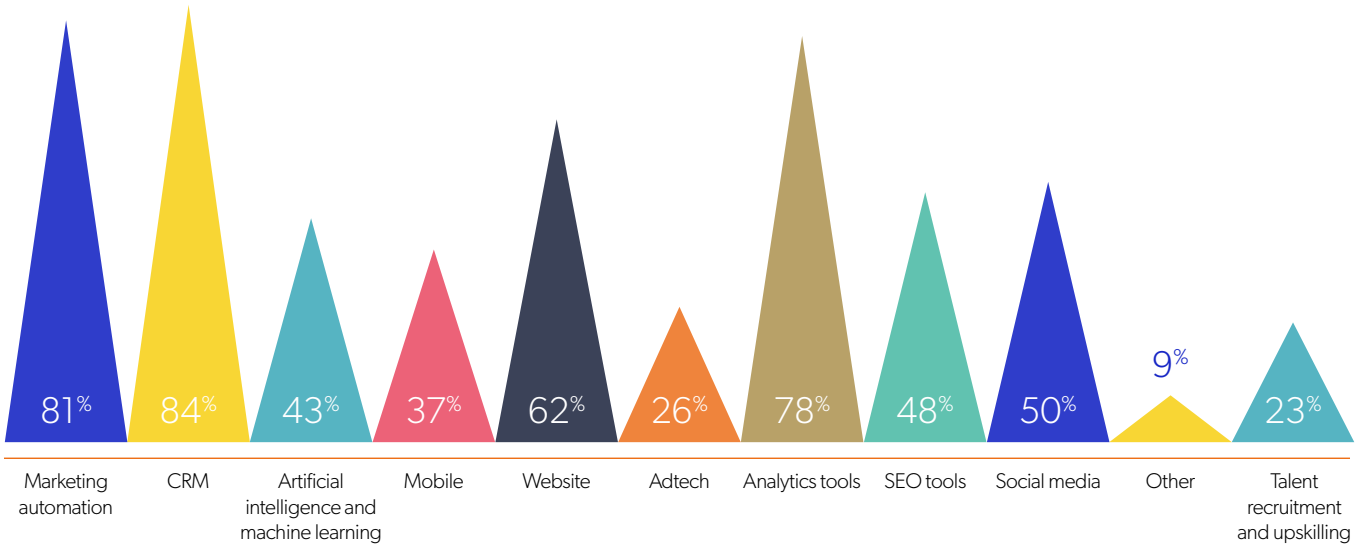
"Martech and creativity need to work together. Having a creative brain in marketing continues to be essential. Martech and data just allow marketeers to be more productive and generate growth faster."

Lydia Maule, head of marketing, GEFCO UK

2030's martech stack

Digital transformation will continue to shape the role of tomorrow's CMO, but which tools and technologies are defining the role today? The stalwart of CRM came out on top (84%), closely followed by marketing automation (81%). Analytics tools (78%), website (62%), and social media (50%) are also definitely worth monitoring. Our respondents were on the fence about AI and machine learning, with a middle-of-the-road 43% believing it's of day-to-day importance to the CMO.

The most important tools and technologies to CMOs



"Martech is expanding boundaries and capabilities, but it's also meaning you need different skill sets in a team to leverage the potential."

Hayley Thompson, marketing communications manager, SmartestEnergy

Marketers increasingly want to understand more about their audiences, and are investing in the technologies that help them achieve this ambition. Take, for example, the rise of AI. The current principle application of the technology is to second-guess the customer by interpreting big data. Meanwhile early adopters are beginning to reap the rewards of integrating martech and adtech, enabling ever-clearer insights into the actions and preferences of customers which paves the way for hyper-personalised, one-to-one relationships with buyers. Marketers are increasingly combining the use of these disruptive technologies for greater impact, and ultimately, greater customer centricity.

"I expect to see far more content automation and programmatic tools become available. The challenge will be increasing personalisation as consumers become increasingly wise to an obvious 'sell'."

Michael Byrne, digital, marketing and strategy manager, npower Business Solutions

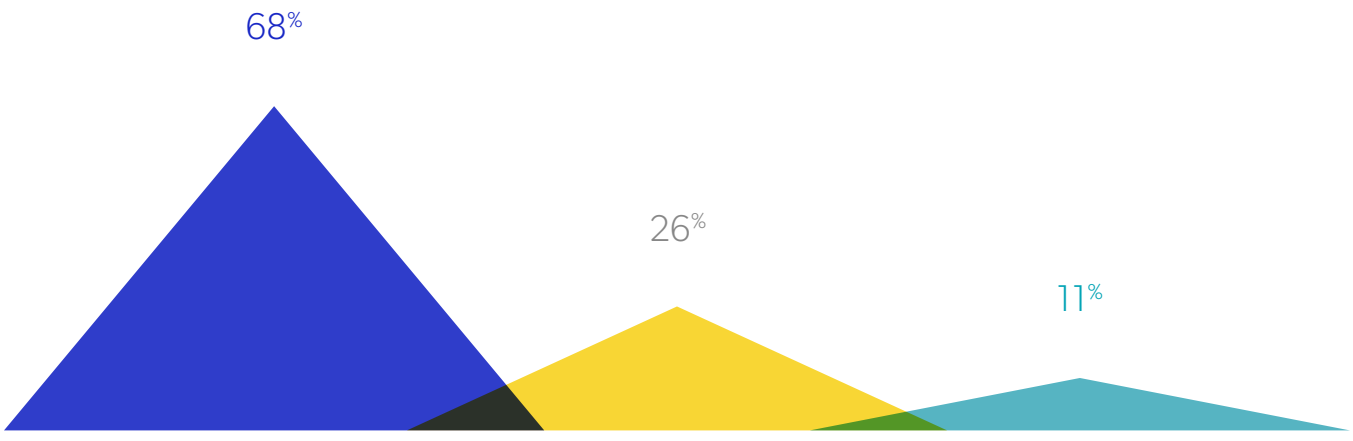
The future is integrated

If business operations are to become successfully marketing-led, over the next 10 years, martech has to integrate more fully with other business systems. Two-thirds (68%) of our sample believe martech will be fully integrated across other business systems, enabling CMOs to make fully informed, commercial decisions to support business growth. A further 26% are more conservative in their estimations, believing martech will continue to evolve and integrate, but with limited systems, and will principally be focused around segmentation and personalisation. Only 11% foresee a decline in specialist martech systems, believing other business technologies will evolve to incorporate functionality currently seen within the martech stack.

Using customer data well will help CMOs to prove the value of martech and of the marketing function as a whole. It begins with a huge stride forward for customer experience – by enabling CMOs to shape the customer journey in a way that proves your business has really been listening and is ready to meet customer needs.

For CMOs, this new level of insight, gleaned from a fully-integrated martech stack, provides the opportunity to plan perfectly pitched marketing activity. But turning insight into action can take a multi-skilled team. For those without the resources to join up all of the martech dots, it can be useful to work with an agency that has both digital know-how and the ability to turn data into powerful customer communications.

What role will martech play in future organisations?



Martech will be fully integrated across other business systems, enabling CMOs to make fully informed, commercial decisions to support business growth

Martech will evolve and integrate, but with limited systems and will principally be focused around segmentation and personalisation

Other business systems will evolve to incorporate functionality currently seen within the martech stack, so we'll see a decline in specialist systems

"Martech has enabled effective collaboration – from which creative thinking comes – and has certainly enabled CMOs to check in on evolving trends, gain competitive advantage, measure metrics and optimise campaigns with ease and efficiency."

Danielle Wrench, head of marketing, Inspired Energy

"Even the most brilliant marketers need to know how to harness the power of the tools at their disposal. The days of marketers not grasping technology are behind us."

Joe Hyland, CMO, Greensill

The Covid-19 perspective

Broadly speaking, technology has been the single most important factor in separating the roles and industries that are thriving from those working harder to survive. From remote-first working to the temporary or permanent closures of physical premises, for better or for worse, Covid-19 has changed the lives of our employees and customers forever. By definition, creativity is about finding innovative new ways of doing things. By necessity, technology is how future CMOs will innovate. With the focus on regeneration and leanness, now is the time for marketers to scrupulously review their tech stacks.

In what ways will CMOs need to be more creative in the context of a post-Covid world? And how can they use martech to help achieve this?

"With restrictions on traditional marketing channels like in-person events and direct mail not looking to go away any time soon, CMOs are turning to new and creative ways to reach their audience in the new working world. Martech can play a big part in both understanding and impacting the buying cycle, from tools to improve conversations and conversions, to new ways of analysing complex data sets. Marketing teams that harness the power of martech can drive innovation and results by finding creative new ways to implement multi-channel strategies. The trick though is to not get too bogged down in the tech until you first understand the messaging and audience. Without the building blocks in place, an impressive tech stack won't move the needle much… and can hurt your ROI more than help it."

James Arnall, marketing director, Perkbox

"Every time something disruptive happens, I often find people take stock and reprioritise. I think in this circumstance, people have gotten used to ordering (even more online) and a contactless shopping experience. People are more tech savvy as they've had to rely on it to keep in contact with the outside world.

For some industries like retail, the arts and travel who have been hit hard, it will take longer to recover – but those who have had an online and ecommerce offering have thrived. With human interaction now lacking, a good digital customer experience will be key. With most companies on a much tighter budget for the time being, marketeers will be looking at martech to discover which tools truly deliver ROI. But those tools that keep their promises, will be considered essential."

Danielle Wrench, head of marketing, Inspired Energy

"As a general rule, marketers have always been more comfortable performing creative tasks than crunching data – the age old 'right brain over left brain' debate. This is a vast generalisation, but it is one of the reasons why, in the past, the creative side of the marketing role was often prioritised over the more analytical, data side.

The explosion of data as a result of digital transformation and the corresponding democratisation of martech tools now allows marketers to derive insight themselves without needing those deep-level personal specific skills around data analysis. The increasing inclusion of AI in products promises marketers insightful reports at the click of a button.

Data points are transactional – it is our ability to be creative and tell stories that sets us apart as human beings. These developments should free up marketers' time so that they can focus on the creative side of their role. In other words, they should have more time to take the insight and deploy it creatively rather than spending hours ferreting around in the data."

Dr. Chris Bailey, CMO, Valitor

Conclusion

Jenny Hughes, co-founder and director, The Marketing Pod



Jenny Hughes,
co-founder and director,
The Marketing Pod

By 2030, the CMO's remit will have expanded far beyond the confines of what has traditionally been thought of as 'marketing', to influence broader business strategies, organisational change and commercial growth. As changing business attitudes lead to more customer-centric organisations, every department gains a responsibility to make the customer experience better. It follows that the CMO, who is perfectly placed to provide a 360° view of the customer, gains responsibilities across every department, thus becoming crucial for the success of the business; an influential and indispensable leader.

But with the evolution already underway, the rate at which businesses are becoming more marketing-led is putting strain on senior marketers and CMOs, rapidly expanding their remit and the skills they will need to achieve success. The increased level of influence and responsibility placed on tomorrow's CMO is recognition that revenue and growth are inextricably linked to a deep understanding of the customer audience. The most successful B2B businesses will also recognise that customer attitudes and behaviours are forever shifting and that informed, agile marketing practices are a must. The CMO they choose to spearhead these practices will therefore need to be a compassionate and empathetic leader; a natural communicator in possession of both 'hard' and 'soft' skills; creative, digitally-fluent and financially astute, and as comfortable on the sales floor as in the boardroom.

With expectations high and demands on their time increasing, it will make sense for tomorrow's CMO to take a more collaborative approach, as they look for ways to boost productivity or streamline processes. They will be able to fill many of the gaps in resource and capability through training and recruitment, and others through technology. But CMOs will also increasingly need close relationships with a small number of carefully chosen strategic partners. These partners should possess a deep understanding of the marketplace and will be committed to working towards the CMO's objectives, providing access to the areas of knowledge and expertise which will best complement the CMO's own abilities. Their role will be to enable and empower the CMOs of the future, as they step up to take their place at the helm of our new breed of marketing-led businesses.

About

B2B Marketing

B2B Marketing is the comprehensive information resource for B2B marketers. Its mission is to provide practitioners with the information they need to perform better and achieve more, whatever sector of the B2B space they are operating in.

Launched in 2004 as *B2B Marketing* magazine, it has since evolved into a multi-faceted resource, delivering a broad range of content in a variety of different forms and formats.

Its key products are:

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