



By Richard D. Czerniawski

## THE ROLE OF THE CMO - 1

Marketing is losing its relevance. It is becoming small “m” marketing, focused on sales support, project management, and/or tactics. It is becoming transactional versus transformational. There isn’t a line-of-sight to sales from what activities marketers engage in. Yet, in this age of abundance and sameness, where generally acceptable quality (GAQ) reigns, it is more important than ever.

Why has marketing slipped in relevance? Is it a function that is no longer essential to the organization? No, I believe, as Peter Drucker professed years ago and, in my opinion, is still true today, "Because the purpose of business is to create a customer, the business enterprise has two—and only two—basic functions: **marketing and innovation**. Marketing and innovation produce results; all the rest are costs. Marketing is the distinguishing, unique function of the business."

Is it because marketing no longer attracts the best people? While one may argue that some may not be right for marketing, I don’t question the intelligence or ability of marketers to learn.

Then is it because products have become commodities? If they’ve become commodities, it’s because marketing hasn’t fulfilled its potential and done its job! Professor Theodore Levitt, writing for the January issue of the *Harvard Business Review*, *Marketing Success Through Differentiation—Of Anything*, wrote, “There is no such thing as a commodity. All goods and services are differentiable.”

Then why is it that marketing is losing its relevance? Why doesn't it matter more when we need it more—than ever? And, what will it take to turn marketing around?

The problem is not at the bottom of the marketing hierarchy. Like most organizational problems, the problem starts at the head or, if you prefer, the top. It’s a failure of Chief Marketing Officers (CMOs) that is leading to the devaluation of marketing and its loss of relevance. CMOs are not fulfilling their role and responsibility to the enterprise. The role and responsibilities of the CMO are to:

- Create an evidence-based marketing culture with clear line-of-sight from strategies and tactics to targeted Business Objectives (i.e., sales, market share, and profit);
- Hire the right people for the culture; and
- Provide the leadership and adult supervision needed for their team and the marketing function to succeed.

These next few Marketing Matters will delve into the role of CMOs in making their organization's marketing matter more. If you are not a CMO, you might still find this relevant to you and what you do. We marketers need to think and behave as CMOs for our brands. So, tune in for more!

Learn more about how to make your marketing matter more. Check out my new book: <http://bdn-intl.com/avoiding-critical-marketing-errors>

Stay SAFE and be well!

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