



By Richard D. Czerniawski

## THE ROLE OF THE CMO – 4

We need marketing to work more effectively, particularly in this “age of abundance and sameness” where products are interchangeable and generally acceptable quality (GAQ) reigns. CMOs need to accept the responsibility of their role—making marketing work! It’s not about merely overseeing tactics or serving as senior brand (micro)manager. It’s about making marketing matter. Accordingly, the CMO’s responsibilities are threefold:

1. ***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).*** As James Clear, the author of the bestseller *ATOMIC HABITS*, states: “You do not rise to the level of your goals, you fall to the level of your systems.” The CMO must build an “evidence-based system” for the organization and its marketers to implement and grow.
2. ***Hire and staff it with the right people to instill and perpetuate a culture of genuine marketing excellence.*** This entails hiring people with the essential personal characteristics over experiences to field the kind of team (winners!) needed to develop an evidence-based culture and make marketing matter more.
3. ***Provide the leadership and adult supervision required for their team and the marketing function to succeed.*** It’s about doing the right things in the right way! This last responsibility is the subject of this musing.

***Leadership is about providing clear, strategically appropriate direction and resources to achieve the goals of the organization.*** These goals go beyond achieving targeted quarterly Business Objectives to undertaking strategies and actions that will contribute to the long-term health of the business. *It’s about doing the right things.* The CMO needs to influence pipeline development of new technologies, products, and ideas, that advance innovation and create brand loyalty to drive a steady stream of revenue growth. Moreover, the CMO has to ensure her/his marketers have the right priorities (not more than three, please!) that will generate incremental growth. S/he must also determine where to place the chips—namely, what brands, in what geographies, and using what marketing mix elements to support with marketing funding and personnel. The CMO should think like an investment banker to optimize short-term results while maximizing long-term impact. Sacrificing to meet short-term goals is not doing the right thing if it compromises future (i.e., longer-term) organizational performance, competitiveness, and health. Additionally, CMOs need to cultivate their personnel and advance them to where they can continue to add value to the organization in their role as marketers, and well beyond the CMO’s tenure.

**CMOs must also provide “adult supervision.”** Now, we’re about doing things—those right things—in the right way. My dear friend, colleague, and former client, Rod McNealy, who served as Director of the Johnson & Johnson Marketing and Advertising College, came up with this sobriquet, “adult supervision.” To me, it means the CMO must institutionalize and reinforce the proven principles, best practices, and quality processes that are the hallmark of an evidence-based culture and marketing excellence. James Clear, in his blog, also states: “The key, if you want to build habits that last, is to join a group where the desired behavior is the normal behavior.” The desired behavior of an evidence-based marketing organization will not last without the adult supervision of the CMO to demand, reaffirm, and reinforce desired behaviors (i.e., adoption of proven principles et al.). It’s curious to me that far too many senior marketers will fund training for their marketers, but not attend it themselves. They view it as “personnel development” for those who report up to them. However, they need to consider it as “organization (and team) development,” of which CMOs are a critical part. As a consequence of not participating in organization development training, they fail to establish the critical alignment—providing adult supervision through value-added feedback of proven principles, etc.—essential to making marketing excellence the “normal behavior.”

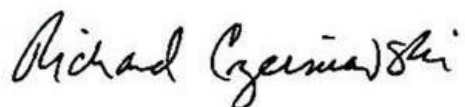
So, CEOs and COOs, demand your CMOs to fulfill the three responsibilities I’ve shared, if you want marketing to function appropriately in adding value to your companies. In the end, you get what you demand and deserve!

CMOs, take your role and responsibilities seriously as faithful stewards of the many assets (e.g., people, brands, financial, etc.) you are entrusted to manage. It is your role and overarching responsibility to make marketing matter (more).

HOWEVER, while I’m holding the CMO accountable for the responsibilities mentioned above, **this is not excusing marketers from these same duties within their sphere of managerial influence.** All marketers should strive to think and behave, at minimum, as CMOs for their brands. The degree of which they can will be a function of the CMO’s appreciation for these roles and the skillset of individual marketers. By the way, I’ve long encouraged marketers to serve as presidents of their brands. If we take this role further, while the marketer may be the president of her/his brand, please note the CMO is a senior member of your board of directors, responsible for ensuring your, and all, marketing matters.

You can and need to make your marketing matter more. Take your marketing to the next level with my new book, **AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS: How to Go from Dumb to Smart Marketing.** Learn more here: <http://bdn-intl.com/avoiding-critical-marketing-errors>

Stay SAFE, and be well!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Czeisler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



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