



By Richard D. Czerniawski

## WHY CMO TENURE DESERVES TO BE SHORT

According to a MediaPost Weekend report, "CMO Tenure Hits a 10-Year Low." It dropped to 40-months (that's only 3-years and 4-months!), with median tenure falling to <26-months. This contrasts to CEO tenure of about 6 and ½-years. What gives?

One of the key reasons given for the short tenure is that *marketing is changing rapidly*. Okay, so what? The same can be said about the way we conduct and do business. So, shouldn't all functional heads be experiencing a reduction in tenure—including CEOs and CMOs? I guess it's the old saying, "Floodwaters (okay, I chose a different word) flow downhill."

There are some damning CEO attitudes regarding CMOs revealed in the data. Namely:

- Less than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of CEOs trust their CMOs to grow the business.
- Only 34% of CEOs have great confidence in their CMOs.
- Only 4% claim their CMO is the most trusted member of the leadership team.
- 80% of CEOs believe the short tenure is a function of CMOs failing (in their role).

I believe many factors underlie the CEOs' perceptions and contribute to the short and shortening tenure of CMOs, beyond their freedom of choice to move onto greener pastures. The most significant is that CMOs are not creating an evidence-based culture with accountability for direct line of sight from marketing strategies and tactics to sales.

Instead, these CMOs rely on eminence-based marketing. They do the same things in the same way, or how the category does it, or how they've always done it, expecting different results. According to Einstein, that's insanity!

Without creating an evidence-based culture, CMOs cannot demonstrate impact on sales or a favorable ROI (return on investment). In other words, they're gambling with marketing funding, not investing wisely. They're flying blind, running a team of project managers as opposed to business builders.

According to Paladin, a staffing and recruitment firm, "A Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) is responsible for overseeing the planning, development and execution of an organization's marketing and advertising initiatives ... the CMO's primary responsibility is to generate revenue by increasing sales through successful marketing for the entire organization ...".

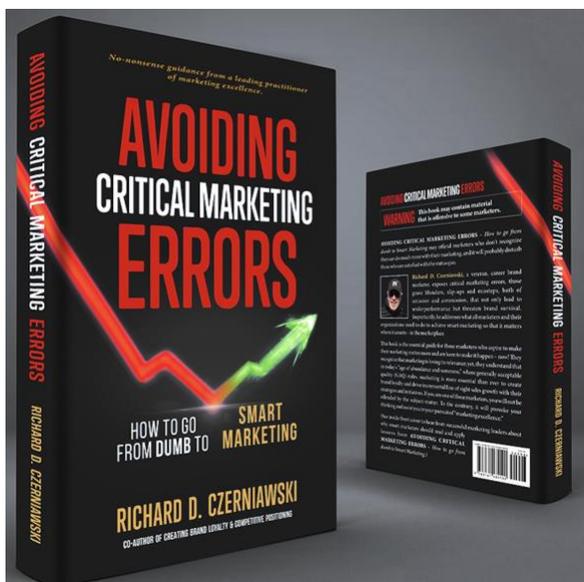
I believe that the role and primary responsibility of the CMO are to build an evidence-based marketing culture that creates brand loyalty AND delivers a direct line of sight to sales. If s/he fails in that role, then s/he will fail in increasing and sustaining sales beyond category and/or price growth. Additionally, when her/his tenure is cut short, s/he will leave behind a weak organization and undermine the importance and contribution of marketing.

On one other note, the failure of the CMO is also the failure of the CEO. Obviously, s/he hired the wrong person for the role of CMO, didn't make it clear what s/he needed, doesn't appreciate the importance and power of evidence-based marketing, and failed to create a learning enterprise.

So, it's not only (some) CMOs whose tenure deserves to be short and shortened but also those CEOs who fail to put the right person in the CMOs role to do the right things in the right way—create an evidence-based culture.

One last thought, Brand Managers need to take up the responsibility of creating an evidence-based brand to demonstrate a line of sight from their strategies and tactics to sales regardless of whether their CMO demands it. There's no excuse for not choosing to do marketing and brand building right!

**Choose evidence-based over eminence-based marketing?** Read Chapter 12 from my most recent book, **AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS: How to Go from Dumb to Smart Marketing**. It will help you in your journey to achieve genuine marketing excellence. Learn more here: <http://bdn-intl.com/avoiding-critical-marketing-errors>



Peace and best wishes,

*Richard Czerniawski*



## **Richard D. Czerniawski**

1812 Yates Avenue

Pensacola, Florida 32503

847-312-8822

[richardcz@bdn-intl.com](mailto:richardcz@bdn-intl.com)

[richardcz@me.com](mailto:richardcz@me.com)

[www.bdn-intl.com](http://www.bdn-intl.com)