

What should a modern marketing manager be able to do?

 By [Chemory Gunko](#)

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South Africa has a really strange culture when it comes to business marketing: not only do you get hands on involvement (control?) from business owners and senior management, often to the point of death by democracy, but you also get marketing treated as a junior role.

Accordingly, many marketing people placed in companies are juniors, if they even exist at all - or the role is just not taken seriously at all by anyone internally.

So, if you're in the market for a marketing manager or coordinator, what should you be looking for in today's digital age and what skillsets should an effective marketing person in your organisation have?

Writing effective copy

No one will ever understand your business as well as it can be understood from the inside.

Your marketing manager is the link between what happens internally and how that translates into sales... and that messaging is carried in your copywriting.



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Yes you have agencies and copywriters, but much of your first draft collateral needs to be generated internally by someone who has insider knowledge of your business and the industry you operate in.

The other key reason that this is important is because you need to be able to write in order to proofread and check content - you cannot check for something you do not understand.

The art of proofing any written collateral is really understanding and looking for what is missing and then being able to communicate that effectively to the copywriter who is producing that collateral for you.

Yes, the paid-for professional writer will be able to put a spin and polish onto the writing in a way that the average marketing manager never will, but they first need to understand the information and messaging that needs to be conveyed.

Basic copywriting skills are a direct reflection of a person's ability to verbalise, communicate and convey pertinent information clearly and succinctly.

Understand SEO and how the internet gathers information

Writing skills nowadays really extends to an understanding of the Internet, how it functions, what it searches for and how it catalogues and distributes information.

A very key point to remember here is that once you create a piece of digital collateral, it will largely live on perpetuity - and

it will actually become **more** effective the longer it's been out there.

Gone are the days when you created an ad, paid for one placement and then it disappeared.

Your emailers, digital write ups, web pages and more will live on for a really long time, and as they become better indexed they will actually return better results for you.

A good marketing manager will understand what information and specific words need to be included to ensure that each new piece of collateral builds on the one before.

Likewise they'll understand what pieces of writing are important to focus on in this regard, because some of them don't really matter for this purpose.

Similarly your marketing manager should have his or her finger on the pulse of your industry, so that they know what industry jargon to be utilising.

This helps you develop not only as a brand in your customers' eyes but also as a thought-leader in the eyes of your peers and industry counterparts.

Anticipate your sales and marketing needs

Even today sales and marketing go hand-in-hand - yet often they're treated as distinct and separate entities.

Your marketing manager needs to completely understand your sales process so that they can provide the collateral you need to ensure smooth sailing for your sales team.

PowerPoint presentations and brochures should exist before you have to ask for them; business cards should be readily available to the sales team and every sales initiative should be effectively incorporated into and backed up by the marketing strategy.

If you're running a promotion you should be advertising it on social media, your website and in your properly configured email signatures.

If you have critical new information to get out, marketing should be on top of producing relevant collateral that effectively conveys this information, and reaches all your existing clients as well as any new clients who could benefit from this - and bring profit to your doors.

If you have tension between your marketing and sales departments this will never happen, because the only way a marketing manager can anticipate and generate the collateral you need is if they have a finger in every slice of the company's internal pie.

Utilise modern technology efficiently

I absolutely hate that I even have to write this section, but the truth is that many marketing managers are unable to utilise even the most basic of Internet technology.

For the kinds of imagery that printers, agencies and other suppliers will require, Dropbox or a similar program is crucial - and an industry standard.

Gone are the days when you wrote a CD, sent that to the printer and then had to repeat the whole process because one small error was found.

Now, we upload to Dropbox and invite everyone who is relevant. Changes to be made? Well upload the new file and everyone has access to it. It's that simple really.

Except, it's not.

Time and again you come across marketing managers who are unable to even access a Dropbox folder or process a simple task like sharing it. This causes unending delays in the production of collateral, which is often blamed on the agency, which then gets fired to make way for the new one being appointed.

Likewise social media.

Your marketing manager should be able to effectively set up a social media page, utilise basic copywriting skills to do the informational write-ups and basic design skills to resize logos so that artwork displays correctly.

Yes it's damaging to have no social media presence for your brand, and you're throwing away free marketing, but it's way more damaging - and significantly more embarrassing - to have these platforms setup and utilised incorrectly.

Marketing is not a function - it is the entire company seen from the customer's point of view.

If your marketing platforms look like a dog's breakfast because your logos aren't displaying properly and are incorrectly sized, it's going to leave a bad impression of your entire company.

Basically if you look unprofessional, then people who don't know the inner workings of your business will think you are unprofessional.

Most importantly, they'll never give you the appointment or time of day to prove to them otherwise.

Your marketing is the face of your brand

Your marketing manager is tasked with building a face and persona that people will want to engage with, and crucially, leaves them feeling confident on every level that your brand offers a professional product or service.

The only way that many of them will judge this is by how you look to the outside world.

So get this appointment wrong and your brand will suffer for it. Get it right and you'll be laughing all the way to the bank.

ABOUT CHEMORY GUNKO

Chemory Gunko is a seasoned Creative Director, a certified NLP Practitioner, Ericksonian Hypnotherapy Practitioner, Energy ReSourcing Practitioner & Life Coach, among others. She works as a marketing consultant and provides copywriting, SEO, graphic design and Joomla! website services.
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