

CEOs invigorate your marketing teams to achieve your 2017 marketing objectives

A recent study from [Stein IAS](#), in partnership with the [Chief Executive Group](#), revealed that CEOs have evolved their expectations for marketing. But they don't think their CMOs are evolving with them.

 By [Bandile Ndzisho](#) 22 Aug 2016

GREAT EXPECTATIONS:

What CEOs expect from their CMOs

Credit: [steinias.com](#)

For many CEOs, the importance of marketing has increased significantly in recent years, as has their involvement and expectations. Unfortunately, in many cases CEO expectations are not being met by marketing.

How can the chief marketing officers change this for the best? What are the necessary lightning turnaround reflexes?

It all starts with the chief marketing officer's great (or not so great) leadership qualities and management abilities, which are reflected by the motivational levels and performance results of his/her marketing team.

Why it is imperative to motivate marketing teams for high performance?

Dangerous failures by marketing teams to deliver profits and returns on marketing Investment have deadly implications for your business. ***The business will literally die if it does not have steady leads, sustained sales, repeat business and continuous stream of new customers, which marketing teams are entrusted with generating.***

Marketing teams need considerable insights, vision and leadership from the CMO. If the chief marketing officer, as a formidable business leader in the corporation, demonstrates half-baked marketing leadership their marketing teams, with no real vision and insights, but only ill-considered ideas, he is as good as an absent chief marketing officer.

Here are some interesting numbers and CEOs' views from the survey of 320 CEOs conducted by the Chi

Executive Group and Stein IAS. The study examined the challenges and opportunities for today's CMO from the perspective that matters the most – the CEOs' views on marketing revealed that:

- 47% of CEOs are unsatisfied with the level of agility demonstrated by their CMOs.
- 51% of CEOs are looking for better customer insights from their marketing organisations.
- 53% of CEOs feel they aren't getting the strategic thinking they need from marketing.
- 61% of CEOs are not satisfied with the innovation shown by their CMOs.



85% of CEOs want more marketing agility. Sadly, nearly **50%** think their CMOs are about as agile as manatees.

In a groundbreaking study of CEOs' involvement in and expectations of marketing, two things stand out. First, many CEOs believe marketing is considerably more important than in years gone by – and as a result are much more involved in it. Second, CEOs' expectations of their marketers are considerably higher – but in some cases aren't being met. See how your views align with those of more than 320 CEOs nationally.

Image credit: steinias.com

The study concluded that **“CEOs who are unhappy with marketing have no one to blame but themselves for creating or maintaining an untenable situation. ‘That is a failure of executive management including the CEO’.”**

Marketing teams need the CMOs strong and decisive marketing leadership to set the tone for the high-performance marketing department that delivers higher VALUE, ROI and PROFITS.

BUT HOW?

A CMO must think like a CEO and perform as such. He must also think like a CMO, in the manner he is supposed to, and deliver as such. This is how you begin:

6. Banish marketing productivity killers to the outer reaches: This paves the way toward marketing greatness

To get more done in a day, your marketing team must be mindful of everyday choices. Marketing team members who constantly identify and acknowledge their distractions, and take care to avoid them, achieve a great deal of work each day.

The never-ending search for ideas, creativity and productivity goes hand in hand with identifying and destroying marketing workplace attention destroyers. Attention and focus destroyers constantly creep up on marketers camouflaged as urgent work matters to be dealt with immediately. List the diversions and plot a strategy of avoidance. To add to your existing list of distractions, here are some of the most obvious productivity killers to avoid:

- Mobile phones and texting.
- Internet.
- Gossip.
- Social media.

- Email.
- Way too many chain-smokers' breaks.
- Too many pointless meetings which seem to achieve nothing.
- Do not allow office personal melodramas and meltdowns:
 - Employees on perpetual meltdown tend to want colleagues rallying around them. They seek and crave attention.
 - This is an unnecessary disruption which should never be allowed. It takes time away from marketing plan execution and productivity.
 - It is also emotionally taxing and energy draining to the rest of the marketing team to have such high soap opera drama unfolding in the office full of emotions and tears

5. Great morale boosters for marketing teams: Motivate, inspire and offer 'Feel Good' rhetoric.

- Make your team motivation a part of strategic and operational marketing planning: Motivated marketing team members tend to generate the best results when they contribute to strategic and operational marketing planning.
- Never underestimate the power of incentives to change behaviour. Offer financial incentives because doing so often influences behaviour in a positive way.
Marketing employees respond more favourably to intrinsic rewards than extrinsic ones. Offer your team rewarding reasons for pushing harder, pedalling harder and working even harder.
- Incentives keep team members focused on achieving their goals and encourage them to work to their optimum levels. Align commissions, bonuses and other pay for performance to your marketing team's goals.
- Provide even greater incentives to teams whose marketing campaigns win new business. For example offer a bonus for an online marketing campaign that generates an above-average website usage rate.
- Encourage discussion with employees about what incentives would best motivate them rather than imposing an incentive plan that causes unintended or undesirable results.
- Motivated marketing team members tend to generate the best results when they are fairly compensated for their efforts on an ongoing basis. The magic trick is to offer the right incentive – give them what they want, not what you think they want.
- When setting quantifiable goals and objectives for your team you must first share with them the percentage of corporate objectives. From the percentage of corporate objectives set the realistic percentage of overall marketing team objectives. Finally, you must set the individual marketer's percentage of the overall marketing objectives.
- Promoting mentor relationships between new and experienced employees cannot only boost performance, it can also lead to much higher satisfaction and retention of top talent.
- Offer your marketing team all the necessary resources and tools of trade they need in order to be successful in their roles and do a good job. 'Tools of trade' means everything from equipment and supplies to improved processes and better training. Russel Honore, a retired US Lieutenant General, once said, "**Leadership means forming a team and working toward common objectives that are tied to time, metrics, and resources.**"
- Show employee recognition and appreciation to the marketing team members who impact overall marketing performance such as increasing sales and improving customer satisfaction rates. In addition foster peer motivation and recognition by encouraging your team to cheer each other on and pat one another on the back after a job well done.
- Foster a positive work culture with employee engagement and satisfaction. Ask your team what they

need to foster strong team camaraderie. Ask about how happy, frustrated, or burnt out they are. Probe and discover what about your workplace irks your employees, what gets them energised, and what they need to be successful.

4. Align marketing team members to specific tasks through division of workloads.

Offer actionable, high-quality feedback. Pay personalised attention to individual marketers with specified individual tasks.

- **Omni-channel strategies:** Evaluate where the team is on the omni-channel maturity curve. Specifically:

1. Who is responsible for it and how they are progressing?
2. How is your team driving accountability around the omni-channel customer experience?
3. Ask what your team could be doing more and better?
4. What about comparing single and multichannel interactions?
5. How is targeting with customer data?
6. Coach on methodologies for measuring omni-channel ROI.
7. Help and show how cross functional collaboration is managed.

- **Coach poor performers.** When your marketing initiatives lack cohesion and direction, coaching and mentoring can help get the team back on track. Measure the marketing campaign progress in real time in order to react fast if there is a need for intervention.

- **Align your marketing team members with campaign objectives and executions** at every milestone or task involved in getting campaigns to market. This allows your team to keep focusing on what counts in terms of yielding key results. Above all, it also ensures that the team keeps working on the most effective actions rather than futile exercises.

- **When managing your Inbound Marketing Team, manage them by metrics and focus on results. Ask your SEO (Search Engine Optimization) team** to demonstrate how user-friendly your customers and prospects find your website to be:

- Is it easy to navigate and interact with?
- Has your SEO team populated your company website adequately?
- Is it full of engaging content?
- Has your team made it easy for Google to find your website?
- Have they developed effective methodology of strategies, techniques and tactics effective to increase the number of visitors to your website by obtaining a high-ranking placement in the search results page of a search engine (SERP) - including Google, Bing, Yahoo and other search engines?

- **Is your social media team connecting with audiences in social settings?** Do they have strong social networks with the ability to spread the word quickly and authentically? Authenticity and engagement are key and people can tell if you're checked out.

- **What about your content marketing?** Are your content marketers creating steady flow of outstanding and useful content of various types including blogs, articles, ebooks, infographics, Slideshares, etc.

- **Mentor your email marketing team to grow your list of email subscribers** who actually open and click on your emails.

• **Coach your team on using metrics** and get them interested in judging their own successes that way. It is absolutely vital to have strong understanding of all the metrics for inbound success.

• Lead your mobile marketing team in having guiding conversations about mobile marketing. Confront the shift to the mobile consumer head on by learning about how the best global organisations have adapted their marketing efforts for mobile devices. Lead and guide your team's discussion about mobile marketing evolution and how your team can:

- Optimize content for mobile.
- Manage the mobile channel.
- Measure the ROI of mobile.

• Have frank conversations about your customer engagements. Explore how your team understands your customers in today's hyper-connected world, and develop a team dialogue to effectively communicate with your customers. You could have the following as your talking points:

- Understanding of audience fragmentation.
- Connecting emotionally with customers.
- Communicating across multiple touch points.
- Integrating new media with traditional strategy.

3. What are the big marketing productivity secrets?

- **On the job perpetual marketing training** to improve marketing skills, competencies and aptitude.
- **Offer your team useful daily tips** on how to tackle certain challenges quicker, faster and efficiently.
- **Stop the team from reinventing the wheel:** Once you've cracked the code share secrets to success with the rest of the team to stop them from spending time trying to solve the same problem.
- **You might want to reconsider your strategy of having way too many marketing experts in your marketing team,** a balancing act is key. The greater the proportion of highly educated and experienced marketing experts a team has, the more likely it is to disintegrate into non-productive conflict or stalemate. Once again, you must manage a good balance of leading experts with some rising stars. You do not want constant conflict of colliding egos.
- **Encourage the team to share** market and marketing knowledge freely and to learn from one another.
- **Collaborate and share marketing resources.** View your marketing goals as compatible and push for one another to succeed rather than cannibalism.
- **Shift workloads flexibly to break up unexpected bottlenecks.** This helps other team members not fall behind and fail, but rather to complete jobs on time and meet deadlines.
- **Teach your team how to communicate well with each other,** how to respect one another, how to build relationships, and how to resolve conflict creatively in a way that results in innovation rather than infighting.
- **Foster a strong sense of family and community.** Once individual team members feel that they belong it is much easier for them to trust others, to reach out to others and more likely to share knowledge with others.

2. Establish and give clear instructions with straightforward direction.

Clearly explain to your marketing team the outcomes and key results you want and why the business needs those profitable results. For each marketing objective set the following for individual marketers and the entire team:

- Set realistic goals.
- Set realistic targets.
- Set realistic deadlines.
- Set realistic metrics (Let the metrics crack the whip for you).
- Give consistent and timely actionable feedback, whilst coaching and mentoring in the process:
 - Here the emphasis is on timely - meaning at a moment when it is useful, effective and relevant to give feedback.
 - Offer advice, context and perspective.
 - Mentoring and coaching individual team members on an informal basis helps them build the networks they need to work across marketing and corporate boundaries.
- Do not micro-manage. It is counter-productive to do so:

Yes, it's not enough to set a goal and only wait for the outcome at the end of the month or a quarter. At the same time, you want to avoid micro-managing. Get out of the way. Rarely tell your team members what to do. Let them surprise you. Allow them to be creative. Let them show initiative. Let them be. There's a big difference between micro-management and providing support, leadership, mentorship and getting your hands dirty at the right time and in the right place. Choose appropriate interventions rather than being a bit a nuisance.

1. CEOs and CMOs must believe and accept this hard reality:

The fundamental reason for marketing's existence in an organisation, and the marketing team's permanent priority number one objectives are to:

- **Grow leads.**
- **Make sales.**
- **Cause repeat business.**
- **Generate new customers.**
- **Grow customer equity.**

Together with your marketing team, find a way to translate this number one marketing objective into specific decisions about the mix of marketing activities your team will pursue. Lead and coach your team to build models that facilitate the incremental impact that each of the following marketing variables will have on customer acquisition, customer attrition, lead generation, sales increment, revenue, profits and follow-on effect on the customer base. Lead and coach on the following:

- Media advertising.
- Ad Spending.
- Internet advertising.
- News coverage.
- Public Relations.
- Direct mail to prospects and customers.
- Sales Team Per Branch.
- Branches Per Capita.

- Rate Ratios.
- Sponsorships.

Focus your team on customers, but in a way that is profitable in the long term. The cost of customer focus should not exceed customer's lifetime value. Isolate your team's marketing impact from that of other performance factors. When marketing performance is up or down relative to expectations, the marketing team should know the degree to which this is due to marketing versus external conditions. That knowledge places the appropriate level of accountability on marketing decision makers, so their performance is better connected to skill than to luck.

Let me leave you with some food for thought:

It is my strongly held belief that a real marketing powerhouse will always provoke equal amounts of admiration and fear from competitors! High performance marketing teams exist to shame their organisational chief competitors whilst delivering intrinsic and tangible value to the CEO and Shareholders through achieving sustained market share, never-ending market leadership and unceasing market dominance.

ABOUT BANDILE NDZISHE

CEO, Founder & Global Consulting CMO at Bandzisho Group | CMO-Level Marketing Mastermind Bandile is a Prolific Growth Driver, a seasoned CMO-level global growth master marketer with 25+ years' practical marketing strategy experience, a multi-faceted EXCO-level Chief Marketing Officer, a board-level marketing mastermind and a consumer psychologist who delivers a broad range of strategic marketing planning, marketing management initiatives and digital marketing efforts that guarantee measurable sales results for businesses. Bandile generates a constant upsurge in new leads, sales and repeat business.
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