



IS  
**MARKETING**  
 THE NEEDED  
**BACKGROUND**  
 FOR NEW  
**CEOs?**

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When it comes to a career in marketing, the role of Chief Marketing Officer has always been the coveted prize. It's what comes after years of hard work and experience, and it means that you've hit the highest level of marketing professionals. But what if that changed? All of a sudden the CMO position is no longer the highest executive level that marketing experts are setting their sights on. There have been significantly more CEO candidates with marketing backgrounds, and they're finding that those years of creative experience might be the tool that brings companies to the next level.

CEOs are often hired based on their ability to offer operational excellence or expansion, and this often means they come from a financial or technological background. However, it seems that marketing professionals have recently been trying their hand at the top position. This transition comes directly behind the shift towards the digital evolution of

customer relationships, and the sudden increase in analytical skills within marketing professionals. Whereas analytics were normally confined to the financial, operational and technological departments, marketing has taken on these new challenges and is now able to compete with the rest of the executives. Marketers have had to change their strategies and analytical methods due to the rise in big data, and it's caused a foundational shift in the way business plans are created. Marketers are no longer focused on creative campaigns that come with high risks; they're now able to run data-driven campaigns that are based on research and testing. New information allows for a much more comprehensive relationship with customers, and therefore strategies are much more customer-focused.

So what is the incoming class of CEOs going to have in common? Besides the usual string of skills that have held strong since the beginning (innovation,

# MARKETING & CEOs



management, passion and vision, etc.), there are a new set of characteristics that may help propel a company forward if they're used at the top level. These include a marketing professional's knowledge of positioning in an industry, branding and public image, customer relations, and creative strategy. However, they also include the new marketing tasks, such as more technological testing and data analysis.

It's no shock that customers have taken control of the market place, leaving it up to companies to work to gain trust and connections. Marketers have the most experience with this conundrum, and they understand more than any other department the lifetime value of a customer. With the changes in the way that customers interact with brands, having a communication strategy that focuses more on developing longer relationships than increasing the number of short ones is vital to bettering a company's ROI, public image, and customer relations.

At the executive level, communication must be at the forefront of every single member's skill sets. Without that necessary tool, they are unable to work as a team, collaborate and connect with other companies, and branch out into new industries. Communication has been and always will be the key the success in the executive level. The marketing department has always been strong in communication, as it's a necessary part of daily tasks, and often goes hand in hand with the marketing portfolio.

Chief Marketing Officers, and other marketing executives, have a variety of skills that set them apart from all other executives. They are also able to communicate and collaborate with other departments, because they're used to having mutually beneficial relationships with the other teams. A CMO is likely going to be someone who promotes passion and a creative mind, that can prove to be invaluable in a CEO role.

Closing the gap between marketing and information is a necessary step towards the new age of marketing. As executives start to take on new responsibilities and portfolios begin to adapt to the changing market trends, there is even more need for collaborations. These changes are best taken on at the foundational level so that cross-platform strategies and ventures become engrained into a company's culture.