



4 Marketing Problems You Can Solve With an Exceptional Marketing Leader



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Winning in marketing isn't always about price and promotion. Dysfunction and lack of focus in marketing departments can undermine your ability to grow. These four marketing problems are red flags that your marketing team is struggling and needs help from new leadership.



Problem 1: Confused Marketing Strategy

"Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is I don't know which half" - John Wanamaker (1838-1922)

Bringing together a collection of marketing experts and telling them to generate leads does not always work. The copywriter might emphasize offering a year-end discount coupon to drive action. However, others on the marketing team might not understand what the copywriter is doing and advertise to affluent groups interested in quality. That's not all. The marketing team may not coordinate their schedules which means promotions may be missed. Left managed, a confused marketing strategy makes it much more challenging to win in the marketplace.

Solving Confused Strategy

A professional marketing leader can solve a confused marketing strategy in several ways. First, they will return the marketing team to the fundamentals: who is our customer, and what do they want? Further, the marketing leader can translate high-level company goals (e.g., "increase revenue by 10%") into terms relevant to the marketing team (e.g., increase marketing qualified leads to 100 per quarter). A focused marketing leader can often drive more leads simply by increasing focus throughout the marketing team by improving strategic focus.

Problem 2: The Disconnect Between Marketing and Sales

"Only 28% of salespeople said marketing was their best source of leads" - HubSpot
Marketing and sales departments have a long history of struggling to work together. Sales leaders are concerned with achieving their sales quota. In contrast, marketing may focus on different objectives like attracting ready-to-buy prospects. Ultimately, a lack of coordination between sales and marketing means an increased risk of not meeting its quota. Left unchecked, this disconnect can lead to executive infighting when company goals are not met.

Solving The Disconnect

Solving this disconnect requires a marketing leader who understands the value of relationship building. While the marketing team is focused on executing campaigns, the chief marketing officer can meet regularly with the sales leadership. These regular conversations ensure that sales goals and marketing goals align well together.

Of course, a successful professional relationship takes more than one person. The sales leadership also needs to invest time and energy into working with marketing. For tips on solving this disconnect, see our post: **The 10 Things CMOs Need From The VP of Sales.**



Problem 3: Lack of workflow and process discipline

"You're not an artist. You solve problems." - Don Draper ("Mad Men")

Many marketing professionals come into the profession from a creative background. For example, designers might have a degree in art or design. Creativity is essential to create marketing that stands out from the competition. There's just one problem. Creative marketing needs supporting discipline and direction to achieve results.

When a marketing department lacks good processes and tools, missed deadlines are a constant problem. When missed deadlines add up over time, marketing gets a bad reputation internally. As the department's reputation declines, the department may struggle to get the resources it needs to deliver.

In some cases, disorganization could cause embarrassing mistakes. For example, a marketing team that fails to give proper guidance to their marketing agency might end up suffering criticism like Bloomingdales. In 2015, a Bloomingdale ad was published with the following copy: "Spike your best friend's eggnog when they're not looking." A better workflow process might have detected this awful idea and prevented it from seeing the light of day.



Solving The Discipline Problem

A marketing leader cannot solve the discipline problem on their own. However, they can set standards for the rest of the team to follow. For example, a marketing VP might create a marketing workflow to test copy using a service like PickFu.com to get quick feedback on new ideas. Using external test audiences can reduce the likelihood of embarrassing errors. Successful marketing leaders also know how to strike the balancing act between creativity and deadlines. They will know when to give designers, brand managers, and copywriters time to create new ideas and approaches. However, a marketing VP can also remind their teams that lead time is required to launch a successful Black Friday promotion.

Problem 4: The Marketing Department Ignores Innovation

Keeping pace with innovation has never been more critical in the marketing world:

- **Growth In Marketing Technology.** Over the past decade, there has been an explosion in marketing technology. In 2015, there were over 1800 marketing technology providers in 43 categories, according to the Chief Marketing Technologist Blog. By 2020, there were more than 8,000 marketing technology vendors in the market!
- **New Social Platforms.** While older platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn are well established, there are new opportunities. For example, Clubhouse has more than 10 million active users on Clubhouse (a new audio-based platform). Brands like Chipotle and Walmart have achieved significant wins on TikTok, a video-centric social platform.

The cost of ignoring new marketing opportunities is considerable. You may fall behind your competitors who invest resources in marketing innovation. Further, your marketing employees may leave to join more innovative companies.

A forward-thinking marketing leader has a vital role to play in encouraging innovation. For example, a chief marketing officer could secure a small budget for marketing experiments to explore new platforms while focusing on existing campaigns. Simply tinkering with new opportunities is not enough, however. You also need a marketing leader who knows when to decide when to eliminate failing campaigns or abandon technologies.

Finding The Right Marketing Leader For You

There are two ways you can find a chief marketing officer for your company: promote or recruit.

Promoting an internal marketing employee to a leadership position is an excellent choice in some cases. You may have a senior marketing employee already making traction in solving one of the problems outlined above, like aligning with the sales team. In that case, promotion may be worth considering.

In many other cases, external recruitment is an excellent choice. **CONTACT APEX** today to discuss your marketing leadership needs. We can find potential marketing leaders in a matter of weeks that can start to solve your marketing challenges.



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