

# The 27-Month Plan

*Setting standards is critical to CMO success.*

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The reason that the average tenure of chief marketing officers is little more than two years came clear in a recent *Reveries.com* survey.

It's not because they're not great at strategy. Seventy-seven percent of the survey's 306 respondents said they agreed that their marketing organization is "viewed as a key participant in the company's strategic development process."

It's not necessarily because they are lacking the information they need. Sixty-five percent said they were equipped to "leverage market, customer and competitor data through the organization for decision making and planning purposes."

And it's not because they lack the tools to analyze the results of their campaigns. Fifty-seven percent said that they "measure a marketing campaign's impact on lead generation and brand stature."

You've no doubt noticed that the percentages decline as the issues turn from broad, strategic matters to the nitty-gritty of actually implementing and analyzing the results of their marketing programs.

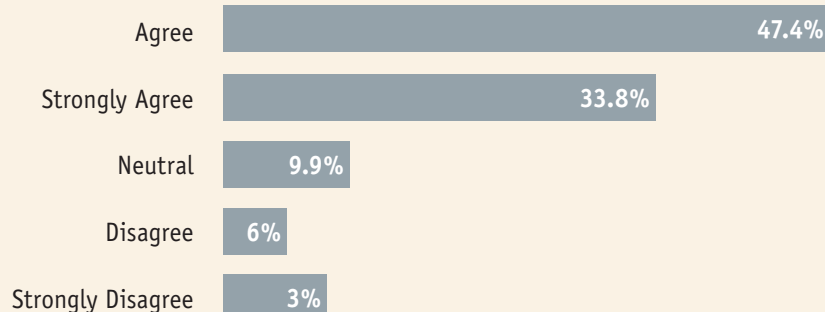
The fall-off is even more dramatic when the questions concern marketing operations and the hard work of establishing best practices. When the question was whether resources were allocated across marketing disciplines "based upon a published, well-understood methodology," the percentages went south.

In fact, a plurality of respondents to that question — 43 percent — said that no such published methodology existed within their organizations. When you add in those who were "neutral" on the question, the total jumps to 72 percent.

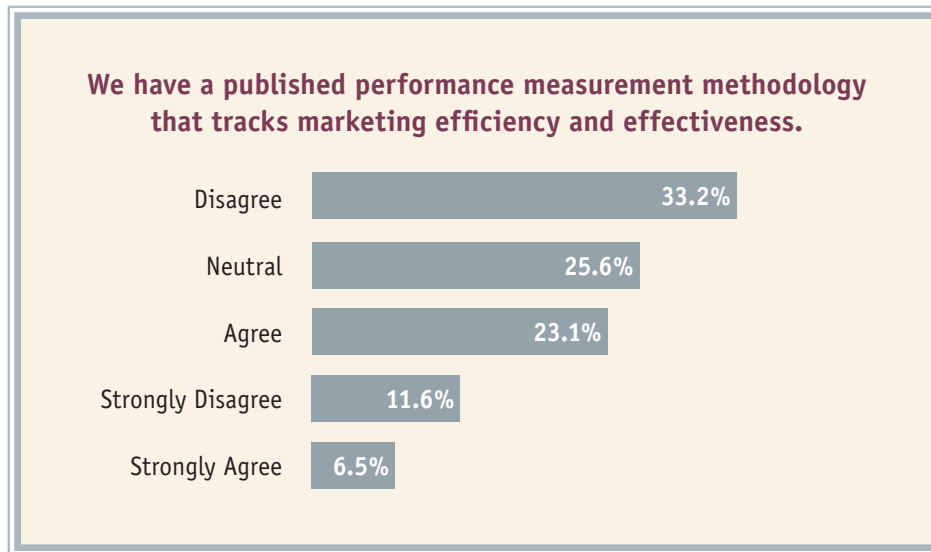
To the question of whether they had "a published performance measurement methodology that tracks marketing efficiency and effectiveness," once again, those who responded in the negative were in the plurality at 45 percent. With the "neutrals" added, the total was 78 percent.

In a related vein, a plurality of 45 percent said their organizations did not have "clear career tracks and paths for advancement" within their marketing organizations. Another 25 percent said they were "neutral" on the issue.

## We develop campaigns that meet strategic business objectives.



SOURCE: *Reveries.com*



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Finally, there's the matter of agency partners. While the results here were not quite as negative, only 43 percent said they "regularly evaluate vendor performance against consistent efficiency and effectiveness measures." Fifty-four percent either said they didn't engage in that type of evaluation or were "neutral" about it.

A few chief marketing officers appear to be responding to these issues simply by changing their job titles to something other than CMO. That's not likely to help.

The pattern is clear: The problem, broadly speaking, is a lack of standards against which to evaluate and improve upon results. The solution is to embrace the principles of Marketing Resource Management (MRM).

MRM has become an unfortunate stepchild in marketing organizations mostly because its banner has been carried by technology and software concerns that see it as an opportunity to create a monolithic architecture much like the infrastructures built for other mission-critical functions.

There is a lot of logic behind this in that the last great bastion that has not been touched by the efficiency revolution is marketing, corporate communications and advertising. So, companies that have had success implementing financial systems, inventory and logistical management, call centers, etc., are lining up to extol the virtues of employing them to extend their track records into marketing.

The problem, of course, is that Six Sigma and zero defects does not apply to something that requires art and science, data and compelling engagement strategies.

Yet, based on the survey's results, a need remains to institutionalize the intent of MRM through the tools and processes that allow for real-time and proactive changes, enhancements and strategic changes while ensuring quality and efficiency.

#### FIVE STEPS TO MRM

Here are five things you can start doing to create an MRM infrastructure and thought process that will work for your company:

**1 Create a marketing COO.** We have to start thinking about the CMO position as the CEO of marketing and communications. The position drives direction, ensures alignment, is the keeper of the vision, and looks to integrate as a key part of the innovation of the company.

The OMO (Office of Marketing Operations, if you will) focuses on the practical, daily needs that affect success across all communications through ensuring tactical marketing architectures that provide the tools and insights to keep score across the many activities that are occurring at once.

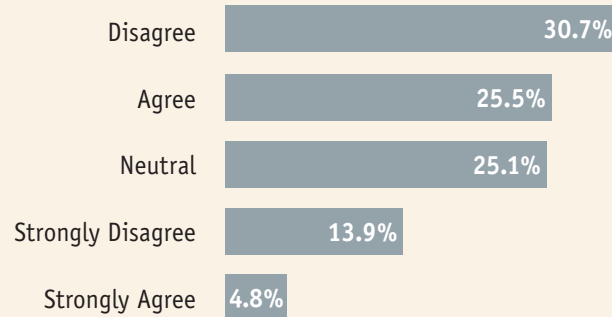
I am always amazed at how marketing organizations set goals for their people that are narrowly focused on their brands, their campaigns and their tactics—but without a nod to a portfolio strategy that shares a knowledge base that shows success, learning and best practices.

The OMO need not be overcomplicated. The way to design something that works for your (or your client's) organization is to concentrate on any of the weaker links as revealed in the survey and drive just that one thing as the starting point of what will become a real-time diagnostic system.

**2 Make MRM doable.** MRM is much more about the culture you create than the technology infrastructure you build. The primary task of marketing and communications is to provide the content, insight and activities that will support and drive sales profitably.

That said, the goal is find ways to utilize automation and technology to align all activities under the banner of sales enablement.

**We have clear career tracks and paths for advancement in our marketing organizations.**



Source: Reveries.com

**3 Re-design training & career management.**

If you are under the age of 30 and interested in marketing communications, you have probably built your own website, mixed your own music and put on your own rave, edited your own movies and music videos, participated in online MMA's (Massively Multiple strategic games), and created a presence on Facebook or MySpace.

And yet you show up for work and are instantly dumbed down. What a de-motivation it is when you find out your boss in her/his mid-forties thinks the BlackBerry is the greatest invention known to humankind and creating neat charts in PowerPoint is their version of solving *Fermat's Theorem*.

Turn the tables on training and career management by learning from and asking more of this next generation of marketing leaders. A client once told me: "The best candidate for any marketing job is a project manager who is also a data analyst."

**4 Think like a portfolio manager.** As it relates to your marketing partners—the agencies and companies that assist with ideation and tactical delivery—hold them accountable as you would a stock in your portfolio. Create quarterly statements that can accurately depict how they are adding value as part of your sales enablement team. Agencies' use and adoption of key MRM technologies is woeful—and the history of investment in marketing automation and realtime systems—is well documented as something that is optional, not mandatory.

Just as clients have had to force so-called integration among their marketing partners to build media-neutral campaigns, clients will and should force a change as it pertains to being an agency that is savvy and a leader in deploying—or at the very least participating in—MRM-like solutions.

**5 Be more than a brand steward.** In this age of the "enlightened consumer", your brand is your content and your goal is to help chaperone consumers through a sales funnel that has radically changed with the advent of self-service research and consumer-generated content.

Your brand is now more complicated. The need to pay off what your brand essence is to a sophisticated, "everyone is capable of editing you out," time-starved audience requires that you have your ear to the ground to a much greater extent.

Concepts like content supply-chain, content-consumption segmentation, self-service sales enablement tools, digital-asset management and real-time data dashboards for partner scoring will have as much to do with your success as brand essence and personality, creative reviews and integrated campaigns.

Turning a two-year tenure into a career would benefit not only the CMO, but would also provide the stability that brands need to grow and build equity.

We know we are getting the strategies right—we have great ideas, we always have—and we will continue to be creative. But we must acknowledge how our business is being professionalized in new ways—process, data, discipline and measurement.

These ideas, along with our creative ideas, round out the capabilities needed by CMOs to be successful in our hyper-competitive marketplace. ■



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