

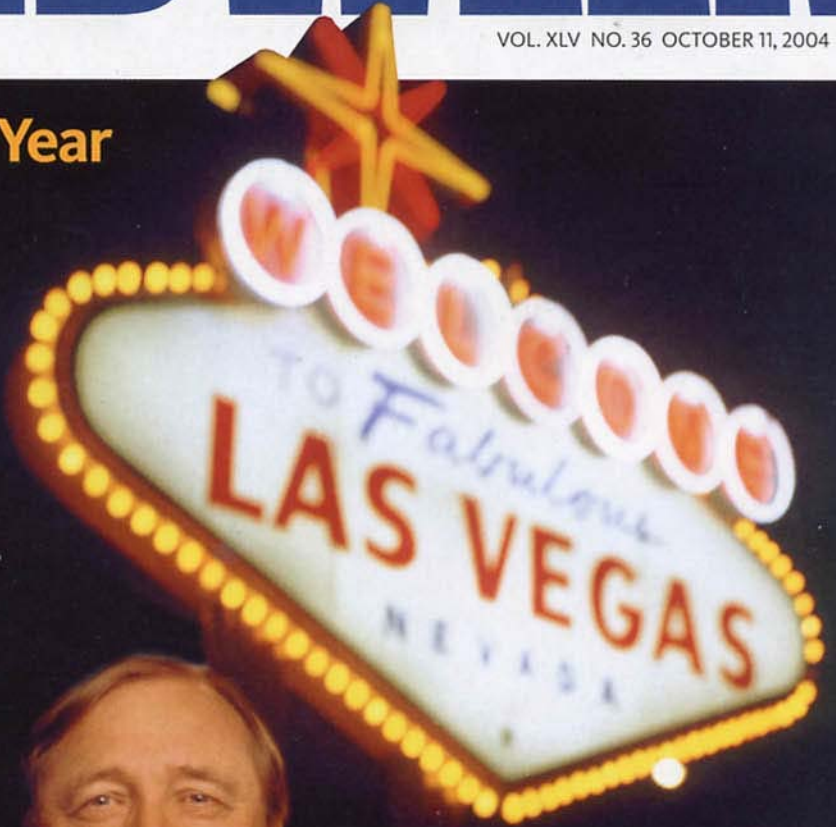
BRANDWEEK

THE NEWSWEEKLY OF MARKETING

VOL. XLV NO. 36 OCTOBER 11, 2004 \$3.95

Grand Marketers of the Year

**Roll 'em,
Baby!**



They added sizzle to Sin City, promising adults a guilt-free fun zone—and kept visitors coming against all odds.

Meet Billy Vassiliadis, Rossi Ralenkotter, plus 13 other stars.

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Vassiliadis (l.) of R&R Partners and Ralenkotter of the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority.

CMOs: Be a Chief Growth Officer

TODAY'S CMO is a hot commodity, even replacing the COO as the position to have when you're being groomed for chief executive. Yet, even as they enjoy the limelight, there's disturbing evidence to suggest that too many Chief Marketing

Officers are modeling their careers on James Dean—living fast and dying young. According to a recent survey by executive recruiter Spencer Stuart, the average tenure for a CMO is 23.6 months. In some industries, such as apparel, that number drops to as little as 10 months.

Many new CMOs try to make their mark by implementing quick changes—reorganizing the marketing department, bringing in agencies for review or freshening the logo—to tell the world that there's a new sheriff in town. But the whole idea of having a CMO isn't just to elevate the marketing function within the corporate hierarchy; it reflects an underlying shift in philosophy. Often, by the time a CMO comes on board, a company has already cut operations to the bone and is finding that it can no longer rely on increased efficiencies to drive profitability. Looking for answers, CEOs then appoint a marketing officer in an attempt to "fix the growth thing."

But what does a sustainable growth effort look like? A few patterns of success are emerging about what it takes to make it past the first six months of quick hits.

1. GET BACK TO YOUR ESSENCE

Most CMOs find themselves dealing with brands that have long outlived the people that first made them great. While that's a testament to the extensibility of modern corporations, it may also be part of the reason a company has lost its previous magic. The brand power behind Starbucks, Nike, Apple, Virgin, Amazon and JetBlue is as much the stories of Howard Schultz, Phil Knight, Steve Jobs, Richard Branson, Jeff Bezos and David Neeleman.

Charismatic founders provide a gut-level sense of mission and focus that can energize a company and create passion around a brand. But what happens when your visionary leader gets hit by a bus? Or when

your company's brand is 100 years old? It's then up to the CMO to help refocus the company on what continues to make a brand great.

It's the CMO's job to help a company get back to its essence. That means more than doing a positioning or brand essence study. It means delving deep into the company's DNA and uncovering the soul of what makes it great. CMOs need to spend time listening to folks in their marketing organization; they often have great ideas that will yield quick results and have been waiting for someone to help them pull the trigger. These same folks can alert a new CMO to potential pitfalls down the road, and might even become allies for change.

When Michael Eisner first became CEO of Disney, he spent time walking the halls, hanging out at the amusement parks and touring the studios. To every animator, salesperson and custodian he met, he asked the same question: "How did we do this when Walt was still alive?" Getting back to that essence can help a CMO focus on the particular recipe that makes a brand great.

By Dev Patnaik

It's up to you to refocus the company on what made its brand great.

2. CREATE WIDESPREAD EMPATHY

Sustained success is going to require the CMO to get every person in the organization focused on creating value in the eyes of customers. That's where real growth resides. Too often, though, that sense of what matters most to customers gets lost in a forest of confusing data, distracted by contradictory consumer insight work, or strained out through the filter of a bad PowerPoint deck.

What's really needed is an intuitive sense of empathy—a collective gut feel where every person in an organization has a sense of what matters most to the folks who pay the bills. Empathy is what helps companies like Harley-Davidson and

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Top of Mind

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Nike stay in lockstep with how their customers view the world. In part, a CMO's long-term success rests on his or her ability to shape the culture of the company as much as any Human Resources vp.

When Kathy Tierney took over as head of Smith & Hawken, one of the first things she did was to get employees to spend time in the gardens planted behind the corporate headquarters. The idea was to get everyone, from the folks in purchasing to the people in design, to have a better gut sense about how real gardeners see the world.

Creating a widespread sense of empathy goes beyond the traditional voice of the customer work. It pervades the company's culture, allowing individuals to make better business decisions at all levels in the organization.

3. DEVELOP NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Having planted the seeds of sustainable success, CMOs need to focus on developing new sources of revenue. Some of that growth will come from new product development, but much of it lies beyond new products.

As the de facto Chief Growth Officer, the CMO needs to see new businesses that their company might not be in, but should be. The CMO needs to move beyond thinking about new products to consider new opportunity spaces: new markets, new categories adjacent to existing ones and even new businesses that could result from collaboration with strategic partners.

For instance, at Nike, the Explore group is dedicated to looking beyond the rest of the company's current product horizon. They've helped Nike move into areas like watches, sunglasses and even MP3 players. The fact is, most folks don't have the bandwidth to consider new initiatives. It's therefore critical that a CMO ensure a few people are dedicated to scoping out outlying opportunities.

CMOs are called on to drive top-line growth in a sustainable way. While a few quick tactical moves can prove that you have what it takes, savvy CMOs move rapidly to plant the seeds for long-term change. By getting to know their company, their customer and the best sources of potential growth, successful CMOs ensure that they'll hold onto their jobs long enough to see lasting results.

Dev Patnaik is a principal of Jump Associates, a San Mateo, Calif.-based firm that specializes in helping companies discover new opportunities for growth. Clients include Target, Clorox and Hewlett-Packard. He is an adjunct professor in the product design program at Stanford University. Contact: (650) 401-6300 or dev@jumpassociates.com.