

B2B Tech CMOs on Leveraging Data to Strategically Cater to Buyers

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The transformation of technology and systems has given rise to a host of new responsibilities for B2B tech CMOs, but most will tell you that the future of the role will be about providing a holistic customer experience that ensures growth and loyalty.

Once a position focused on blind creative and top-of-funnel executions, the role of the CMO has evolved to that of a data whisperer. Striking a balance between art and science is key to providing real-time strategic results that enable internal collaboration and external execution.

For our upcoming report on the future of the CMO, we asked current B2B tech CMOs about how data and technology affect their tenures, and how that evolution enables them to better cater to their buyers today.

Jen Grant, CMO of data platform company Looker

Over the past 10 years, advancements in technology and systems have given us the ability to get accurate data and to really understand what's happening. While the CMO role used to be more creative, it was difficult to prove that what you were doing mattered, unless you had a believer in a CEO. But now, in real time, you can say exactly how every single campaign you run is performing and what it's producing for the

business. This shift to data-focused results has fundamentally changed what it means to be a successful CMO. The role has really become a strategic linkage between what we have to sell, how we sell it and what we get to market.

John Nash, CMO of customer engagement and marketing solutions company RedPoint Global

One of the big macro shifts that's happening in the marketing space is the evolution of B2B customers. A lot of B2B customers are conducting their own research of your company and product. I've heard that upwards of 50% of their buying process is done by the time you know that they're even engaging with you. Instead of the brand being in charge of campaigns, our customers are in charge of their own journeys, and you have to be able to react in real time to consumer context, react in their cadence and know where they are and where they're going.

Todd Krautkremer, CMO of 5G network solutions company Cradlepoint

The future holds three important things for CMOs. One is owning and enabling revenue contribution, and using analytics to understand pockets of opportunity and what campaigns are winning or not. Second is understanding full business strategy. As marketers, we have so much knowledge about the customers, markets and partners. We can bring the numbers and relevant market issues together to make business decisions. Third is the CMO's growing responsibility to market internally as much as externally to help employee transformation to align around the customer and be educated.

Steve Gershik, CMO of Product Information Management (PIM) solutions company inRiver

A successful CMO is able to translate the obscure and sometimes archaic language of data science into real insights, and eventually turn those insights into relatable wisdom. We're naturally wired to be receptive to those stories, and when you tell them, you need to focus on community because it is so important to today's customers. The way to create a durable competitive advantage as a technology CMO is

to focus on your community. Focus on the community's needs and desires, far beyond the capability of your products. If you can coalesce a community of interest around what your company stands for and what you believe in, you'll be successful.

Luanne Tierney, CMO of SaaS company Open Systems

Nowadays, there's this pressure of marketing always being on its toes. There's so much data and AI, I can't even name how many marketing technology tools there are. Ultimately, marketing is a combination of art and science, so unless you have a compelling story, what good is all the other stuff? And when I'm thinking about crafting that story, I don't just look at customers and prospects. I also focus on our employees because they articulate our culture, and our culture is our differentiator. Who we are is special. Every company is different. People buy from people.