

MVMT's CMO on What It Takes to Be a Successful D2C Marketer

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When CMO Ryan Dell joined MVMT in 2016, the fashion brand was primarily a direct-to-consumer (D2C) watch seller with little retail presence. After establishing the brand—largely through building a strong following on social media—MVMT caught the attention of watch giant Movado Group, which acquired the company last year.

Now MVMT is following the path of other successful D2C companies **by expanding further into retail**, and Dell is tasked with expanding the brand's digital presence into physical locations.

For our upcoming report on the future of the CMO, we spoke with Dell about his pathway to becoming CMO, building a brand through social media and taking D2C marketing tactics to the realm of retail.

What are your main priorities as MVMT's CMO?

I'm responsible for several things. I'm driving profitable revenue growth, delivering marketing efficiency, acquiring new customers and building retention efforts through repeat purchases and loyalty. I'm also in charge of brand strategy, establishing the MVMT brand persona and delivering that persona in all forms of advertising and creative content.

Finally, as a digital-first brand, I'm responsible for the ecommerce storefront—driving the store's look and feel and conversion.

What did your path to this position look like?

My path happens to be more on the digital, measurement-focused side, but I've had chances throughout my career to also own pieces that are brand-building, communications and creative-focused. For me, it was having the right people on a team that I could learn from. I was lucky enough to work with merchandisers and creative teams to understand their point of view and the best way to communicate that point of view in all kinds of advertising media.

My advice would be to throw yourself into the things you don't have experience with already, to build that skill set. If you're coming from a traditional brand-building pedigree, that's super valuable in today's CMO role. But you also need to understand how to go direct to the consumer digitally and how to measure, test and learn in that environment.

Does the CMO of a D2C company need both brand and performance marketing skills to succeed?

You need to have a point of view and experience in all of those things. I don't know that you necessarily need to be an expert in all of them, but you need to know enough to hire the right people—to focus on them—and make conscious efforts to build all of those things.

Doing digital marketing, having an ecommerce storefront and delivering the product in a D2C network isn't really a strategic advantage anymore. We've got that combination of understanding direct response and paid media, but that alone wouldn't work in our space. We're a fashion product and lifestyle brand. We built that brand on social media but also need to translate that in our advertising. That's based on understanding who your target customer is, as well as what their needs and behaviors are. What is the persona that we want to project to that target customer? And then making sure we translate that in all our communications.

What does MVMT's retail presence look like right now?

We now have quite a bit of retail presence, as a result of the Movado Group acquisition and the help of their global sales team. In the US right now, that's primarily just Nordstrom and Bloomingdale's—but the biggest reach we're getting is through global wholesale distribution.

What's been top of mind this year and next?

Having started digitally, our focus this year, and largely next year, will be communicating the brand value proposition and lifestyle—that we've done largely through social media—to have the same look, feel and emotional tie-in when somebody walks into a store. The nice thing about digitally native brands is, once you've established a brand connection, it's easier to maintain because they're following you on Instagram or you have an email address. So, how do you build that relationship with somebody in the physical sense?

As CMO, how are you leading this digital “de-transformation”?

A lot of D2C brands are opening up their own stores, but we're partnering with retailers that have their own brand identity. So priority No. 1 is making sure that what happens in retail—at these stores across the globe—is owned by us. That's certainly difficult, but that's what we've got to do. Then, we have to translate the success we've had digitally into driving physical traffic. That might be something like retail-partnered influencer events and contests or joint content creation that is on-brand. Creating a level of awareness of MVMT's presence in the physical.

For additional insights from more than 60 CMOs, look for eMarketer's report publishing next month.