

Starbucks saying goodbye to global CMO role is part of a larger trend

Article

The news: Starbucks is eliminating the global CMO role, following a growing trend among major corporations. After serving four years as executive vice president and chief marketing

officer, **Brady Brewer** was promoted to CEO of Starbucks International.

- The coffee giant will be replacing the CMO role with a "global brand creative leader"—a new role that won't be part of the C-suite.
- This move mirrors actions taken by other Fortune 500 companies, such as **Johnson & Johnson** and **Uber**, which have also recently dropped their CMO positions, opting for more targeted or broadened marketing roles.
- **UPS, Etsy, and AB InBev US** have also eliminated the CMO position.

Why it matters: The elimination of the global CMO role marks a strategic shift in how companies view and integrate marketing within their broader business operations.

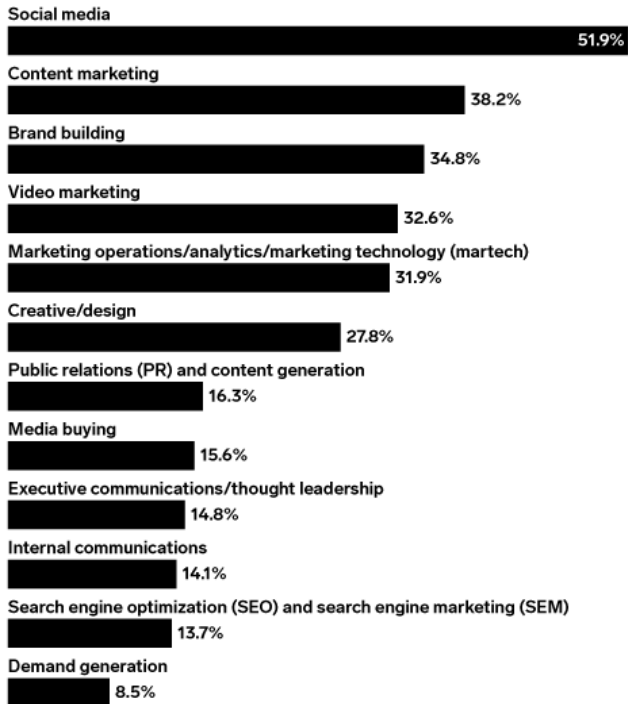
- Only 36% of top marketers at Fortune 500 companies currently hold the traditional CMO title, according to data from Spencer Stuart. The executive search firm notes many organizations are phasing out CMOs for roles that blend marketing with other functions or spread it across regions. This change aims to better align marketing with business goals.
- With the rise of regional CMOs, companies are placing a stronger emphasis on localized strategies that cater to specific geographic needs and preferences—indicating a broader change in the corporate approach to marketing away from a centralized role.
- Today's top marketers need to blend traditional knowledge with broader business acumen and digital expertise, reflecting the evolving nature of the role.

Our take: The redefinition of the CMO role reflects a necessary evolution in a business environment that demands more agile and integrated marketing leadership.

- Marketing remains a critical function for most organizations, and just because something is trendy doesn't mean it always works. **Coca-Cola** is one company that eliminated its CMO position in 2017—a move that lasted just two years.

Areas Where US CMOs Plan to Prioritize Their Marketing/Communications in 2024, Oct 2023

% of respondents



Note: n=270; top 3 responses

Source: Matter Communications, "2024 Marketing Outlook Survey," Nov 2, 2023

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