



Brand vs. Business Marketers: Is Your Vocabulary Getting in Your Way?

By Laura Patterson

We wouldn't be surprised if you said, 'what brand vs. business metrics?!' What's wrong with these people, brand and business work together, not as opposing forces. And you're correct; the brand represents the promise of your business. The challenge is the C-Suite's perception that marketers whose key performance metrics are primarily brand-related such as measuring awareness, relevance, and interest, are not in touch with the business.

At least that's what our study and others, such as Fournaise and Eloqua reveal. If you're like 80% of the marketers out there, the word "brand" is ever present in your vocabulary. And according to Eloqua, only half (51%) of marketing departments have been set any form of revenue targets, despite revenue growth being cited as the single most important metric for CEOs. How do you know if you're CEO thinks you're a brand rather than a business marketer?

If these phrases echo those you hear from your leadership team then it's likely your CEO perceives you as a brand marketer:

1. "Our marketing organization focuses too much on the creative and doesn't think enough like business people."
2. "We're bombarded by data and reports from marketing, but we can't relate any of it to the company financials or measures of success."
3. "Marketing is always asking for more money, but can never explain how much incremental business the money will generate."
4. "Marketing is always talking about brand, brand value, brand equity, but they never link marketing activities back to revenue, customer acquisition, market share, sales, etc."
5. "Marketing talks about the latest marketing trends and how important it is to leverage these but they can't demonstrate how these trends will help generate more business for the company."
6. "When we ask Marketing to be more accountable and increase ROI, they mainly understand this as reducing costs in some way rather than being more effective."

Sound familiar? If not, you can stop reading now. But if so, then it's time to make some changes. Here are five things you can do right away to help you demonstrate that Marketing is focused on adding value to the business and that you are a revenue focused marketer.

1. Change the conversation from about brand to about customers, such as acquiring customers, retaining customers, and increasing customer value.
2. Collaborate with the leadership team and sales to understand the specific number of new, retained, and customer growth targets and the product/service focus.
3. Exchange the extensive power point slide deck for a visual roadmap that shows a direct link between marketing activities and these business priorities.
4. Focus your metrics on measuring how marketing is impacting these priorities.
5. Use the data and metrics to create an actionable marketing dashboard that help the organization make better decisions faster.

With 2012 planning right around the corner, now is the time to take your marketing accountability and ROI journey to the next level. This may require something as small as changing your vocabulary or bigger steps that entail learning how to leverage data, analytics, process, systems; how to establish the infrastructure and develop the skills to run the marketing organization like a business; and/ or how to create and use dashboards to connect the dots between marketing activities and business results.

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