

Elevate the Stature of Marketing inside Your Company

Recent surveys have found that marketing professionals feel undervalued¹ and CEOs are dissatisfied with their marketing organizations².

That means it's up to you to make sure others inside your organization fully understand the contribution and the promise of Marketing. Are you taking the necessary steps now to elevate the stature of Marketing as the engine of your organization?

The first step is to know where you stand with "internal customers." A great way to find out is to conduct an assessment in two parts: an opinion survey and a self-assessment.

An opinion survey produces results you can use when you include questions covering the three dimensions of marketing:

- *Managing outward*: creating equity in the marketplace
- *Managing inward*: creating equity in the organization
- *Managing forward*: creating future equity for the organization

You should give all employees in other major functional areas a chance to provide input. You may also want to survey the marketing staff using the same survey instrument. This helps you identify gaps or differences in the perceptions of marketing between marketing staff and those in other functional areas.

Below is a partial example of a survey instrument that is used to conduct an assessment for senior marketing clients.

Sample Survey Instrument to Assess Internal Perceptions of Marketing

Distribute this survey instrument throughout your organization. Explain that the survey is being conducted to help marketing better meet the needs of its internal constituencies.

Ask staff to rate the marketing staff or function in the organization on each item, such as those listed below, on a scale of 1 to 7, where 7 means "strongly agree" and 1 means "strongly disagree." Ask respondents to report their functional area only if the number of employees is large enough so that respondents will trust that their identity will not be known.

1. Managing Outward: Creating Equity in the Marketplace

- ___ Keeps the organization focused on customers
- ___ Makes decisions based on analysis and testing
- ___ Produces results in earnings for the business in the short term
- ___ Produces results that grow revenues in the long term
- ___ Drives speed to market
- ___ Develops breakthrough ideas for selling products/services

- ___ Produces winning new product/service concepts
- ___ Creates effective communications with customers and prospects
- ___ Establishes strong relationships with vendors and supply chain partners
- ___ Applies the best marketing tools and techniques

2. Managing Inward: Creating Equity in the Organization

- ___ Works effectively across organizational boundaries
- ___ Is trustworthy and credible
- ___ Applies hard evidence to communicate or sell ideas
- ___ Uses soft evidence to communicate or sell ideas
- ___ Uses effective work processes
- ___ Develops meaningful measures to determine its effectiveness
- ___ Helps me in my work
- ___ Works productively
- ___ Provides input to customer-related issues throughout the organization
- ___ Uses information effectively to make decisions and communicate to others

3. Managing Forward: Creating Future Equity

- ___ Takes risks for future returns
- ___ Identifies changes in the market and consequences for the organization
- ___ Evolves in anticipation of changes and plans accordingly
- ___ Leads new product development teams effectively
- ___ Provides valuable input on new product development teams
- ___ Initiates new ideas for future growth strategies
- ___ Communicates future scenarios throughout the organization
- ___ Evaluates long-term profit potential of different customer segments
- ___ Grooms and mentors key staff for the future
- ___ Learns from successes and failures of the organization and other organizations

A thorough analysis of the data from the survey provides useful insight into perceptions of Marketing's strengths and weaknesses. You should certainly distribute a summary version of the survey results throughout the organization, indicating some elements of an action plan to strengthen relationships.

The second part of the assessment is a systematic self-assessment. Below is a sample from the questions often used for this part of the assessment.

Self-Assessment Questions

1. How much time each week on average does each member of your staff spend now with staff in other functional areas? How does this compare to last year?
2. What functional areas have strong connections to marketing? What functional areas have weak connections to marketing? Why? What can be done to improve the weak connections? How can you use the strong connections more effectively?
3. Rate your CFO's marketing intelligence, using indicators like the following:

- a. Thinks of marketing only as a set of inputs (expense) to help sell products and services
 - b. Believes marketing is accountable for plans and implementation
 - c. Understands marketing as a professional discipline
 - d. Values marketing's insight about customers
 - e. Values marketing's insight to help set the company apart from the competition
 - f. Understands marketing as the driver of cash flow
 - g. Understands marketing as an important voice in discussions of profitable growth
4. Has the organization adopted the use of customer-focused metrics? How is this working/not working to educate the CFO? Are campaign performance measures applied appropriately?
 5. What needs to be done to improve the relationship of Marketing and Sales? Consider:
 - a. Top-management oversight
 - b. Willingness to share customer information
 - c. Divergent assessment of the competition and the changing marketplace
 - d. Servicing key accounts
 - e. New customer acquisition versus customer retention

A recent study by Spencer Stuart, the global executive search firm, recommends that marketers "build allies across the organization" if they want to make a mark in their organization.³

The way to start to build strong relationships is to understand where you stand now. A thorough assessment will show you the way.

Notes:

¹ *BtoB: The Magazine for Marketing Strategists*, June 7, 2004, reports that findings from two different surveys "indicate the marketing profession is struggling with something of an inferiority complex."

² *Chief Executive*, June 2004, where the CEO Confidence Index found that only 18% of CEOs surveyed are "very satisfied" with their marketing organizations.

³ A new study by Spencer Stuart, the global executive search firm, found that chief marketing officers (CMOs) at the largest companies have a relatively short tenure.