Mighty Guides

11 CMOS ON DELIVERING QUALITY WORK
CRAZY FAST

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AMY PROTEXTER

Vice President, Marketing, Insight

Amy Protexter has always been fascinated by ideas. As a history major at Augustana College, she noticed the way a single idea expresses itself in different forms through the conduct, art, and culture of society. Her talent for connecting those ideas in a compelling message led Amy to her master's degree in executive leadership from the University of Nebraska. Her success at leading change brought her to Insight, where she built a high-performing marketing team.

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In my time in the workforce, I've experimented with a couple of organizational structures to drive agility, creativity, quality, and—most of all—exceptional outcomes. That's what we're all after, right? Well, here's what I learned:

• **Use squads.** We are a large team with several specialized disciplines. Our breadth of capabilities and ability to execute against them come down to having team members in roles that play to their skill sets. Team roles include:

- *Campaign managers*, who are responsible for the overall strategy and quarterback the squads;

- *Content marketing*, where it's all about the writing;

- *Digital marketing*, where team members have to be adept at creating effective digital campaigns and understand nurture streams, personalization, and automation;

- *Predictive marketing analytics*, where we use data models to predict which clients and prospects have the highest propensity to buy;

- *Marketing specialists*, who are responsible for end-to-end execution; and

- *Traffic*, who uses Workfront to route all our jobs through the various teams.

Always go to the digital asset management system and understand which content has already been created and can be used as is or used as a starting point.

Together, these people form a squad that decides how to approach a campaign and determines who is responsible for what. They look at the data on performance. They make adjustments. They meet one, two, three, four times a week, if necessary, for 15 minutes, and they're able to make changes and work on the fly. They use many sophisticated tools, but success will always come down to having the right person behind those tools.

- **Reconceive roles on the team to be more effective.** In the past, we had graphic designers who were responsible for doing a lot of the heavy lifting when it came to the digital portion of a campaign. Because we've moved to a mostly digital shop, it was critical to recognize the larger role that the person was playing as our marketing ecosystem evolved. We conceived what has now become a standard position for a digital specialist, whose responsibilities encompass both graphic design and digital campaigns.

Although it's important to build a team of specialists who can and like to go deep into their discipline—and are successful doing so—it's equally important to include generalists, or jacks-of-all-trades, on the team. They understand search engine optimization and marketing as well as design. They can write. They understand the marketing automation tools. That generalist role in my squad became the key to getting to market quickly with our campaigns. ⟫⟫

> "
> *People now have a clear idea of what their role is and what they're supposed to be doing.*
> "

- **Don't start from zero.** We coined our own hashtag on the team: #dontstartfromzero. Over the past 18 months, the team has created a lot of content. Solutions are changing, but they're not changing that dramatically. I charged the team to never to start from zero: Always go to the digital asset management system and understand which content has already been created and can be used as-is or used as a starting point so that they're not starting from scratch. Can they update something we created earlier? Add to it or subtract from it? That has helped us get a lot more out of the work we have already done.

Using these three tips, I've seen a distinct increase in creativity. That's been a big benefit. I've seen the collaboration level of the team increase dramatically, and I've seen accountability increase, as well. People now have a clear idea of what their role is and what they're supposed to be doing.

KEY ACTION ITEMS

1 A large team whose members have specialized disciplines ensures that you'll have all the resources necessary to make decisions on the fly.

2 If the current roles in your organization aren't effective, re-imagine them into roles that meet your precise needs.

3 Don't underestimate the value of assets that have already been created. Use existing products as a springboard to create something new.

JOE STAPLES
Chief Marketing Officer, Workfront

Joe Staples is the chief marketing officer of Workfront, a cloud-based work management SaaS solution that helps enterprise teams get great work to market faster and more efficiently. Joe's career includes senior marketing roles at some the fastest-growing tech companies in the world. His expertise centers on building brand and driving awareness, thought leadership, and innovative demand generation.

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It's difficult for a company to deliver marketing material with speed, quality, and efficiency when they're using email to route materials for approval. It's even worse for team members who are forced to print materials, then circulate them in a job jacket for review. There's definitely a better way.

Let's start with what can often be the bottle neck of the getting work done – the review and approval process. Say that my team is approving a new print ad, video, or HTML page. They assess the strategy, consult the messaging, develop the copy, and create the asset. If I use digital review and approval, the people who are part of the workflow can see and comment on the asset electronically, and people outside the immediate team can see those comments, as well. What's more, if a crucial reviewer is not in the office, he or she can still review the necessary elements on the mobile device. Digital review and approval removes boundaries and improves the efficiency of what otherwise can be a time-consuming part of the creative process.

Now let's consider the most costly item for a business – the people you employ. Here, a significant issue comes with assigning resources appropriately. We all have team members that we feel create something faster or better than others, and in a bizarre example of reverse incentives, leaders tend to pile work onto those people. That practice creates an imbalance between individual workloads, and can lead to poor work quality, team member burnout, or employee retention issues. »

> *If you have a team of 10, the only way you'll be truly efficient is if all 10 of those people are performing at maximum productivity.*

To lead effectively, you need a good view into who's working on what. Team efficiency is directly related to team productivity, which means that if you have a team of 10, the only way you'll be truly efficient is if all 10 of those people are performing at maximum productivity. When you overload three team members, correctly load two team members, and underutilize the remaining five, inefficiencies emerge. A robust work management software application allows you to more effectively assign resources based on availability and skill set – thus helping create better balance across the team.

Another area where a good software tool can help is planning for the work that needs to be done. When I think about speed, I'm reminded of the story of the project manager who was asked by a manager to accelerate his project without changing the deliverable or budget. After thinking for a moment, he stood and drew a triangle on the whiteboard with the following three words at its tips: Cost; Speed; and Quality. "Pick any two," he said, "and I'll be happy to make it happen."

As marketers, sometimes we're the manager and sometimes we're the project owner. My tip is to create clear expectations, and then negotiate what *must* be versus what *can* be done. Marketing professionals often fall into the trap of failing to clearly state when things have to be done. Instead, they just put the request into the queue, with all parts being equal, and hope that somebody gets the work done in time. »

> *We use group collaboration early in our process by inviting more people than will be actively involved in the project to help us ideate, gather perspectives, and flesh out the most creative possibilities.*

To work together effectively and efficiently, we need to be willing to negotiate timeframes. Sometimes, marketing leaders say, "I need this a week from Wednesday," and then they walk out the door. The marketing team is left wondering how to get it done. If the marketing team knows the project criteria up front and is given a say about the deadline, it creates an environment where people can do their best work. This can best be accomplished using a software tool that allows you to define each part of a work project and set defined deadlines that can be measured and agreed to.

Finally, quality and creativity are inextricably connected. The best work often comes from out-of-the-box ideas. We use group collaboration early in our process by inviting more people than will be actively involved in the project to help us to ideate, gather perspectives, and flesh out the most creative possibilities. With that in hand, the project owner can take those ideas, distill them, and run with them.

This approach allows people to work on a variety of projects. They still have their specialty, but they're part of the larger environment. The fact that they were there when those ideas were created gives them visibility, allows them to contribute, and helps them feel like they're part of something much greater.

KEY ACTION ITEMS

1 Software tools and automation reduce inefficiencies in the approval process and can help balance workloads among team members.

2 Create clear expectations of turnaround times, and allow for negotiation of deadlines to keep high-priority items on track.

3 Share the creative process with people outside the immediate team to increase the possibility of discovering fresh, innovative ideas.

REMEMBER THAT MARKETING IS BOTH AN ART AND A SCIENCE

IRVING ALBRECHT

Vice President, Marketing and Direct Sales,
Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina

Irving Albrecht has significant experience direct marketing, attribution, and analytics to drive direct conversion. He is responsible for all aspect of marketing, including marketing communication and marketing research as well as direct and retail marketing for the Group and Individual business area. He is responsible for all direct marketing efforts, including direct response TV, direct mail, direct inbound marketing, and paid search.

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We live in a world of immediate marketing gratification, with digital platforms that enable us to monitor campaigns in real time, make adjustments as we go, test multiple pieces simultaneously, and learn a great deal about how the market perceives us. With all this emphasis on speed and responsiveness, I've embraced five best practices to ensure consistent quality in our marketing programs and to make sure that we're hitting the marketing at the right time to achieve our objectives:

- **Begin with the market.** When planning any kind of marketing activity, know as much as possible about your potential customers. You need to know your target markets, how best to reach that audience, the competition, and what customers are actually buying. You need to recognize that the thing you think of as a product may actually be an experience to your customers—they may be buying it because of how it makes them feel. To achieve customer and market understanding, you need to do continuous research to avoid being reactive. This proactive research gives you the knowledge base to launch a campaign quickly.

- **If you fail to plan, you're planning to fail.** This may seem obvious, but the temptation to be reactive in digital engagement, where it's easier to push things out, can result in insufficient planning. Have your team develop strategic and creative briefs based on market knowledge gained from your research so that everyone on the team understands who the customers are, the value you're promoting, why the customers are buying, and what the target markets look like. The brief that spells that out becomes the reference guide the team uses for creative, targeting and messaging, media budgets, images, promotion colors, type style, resources, deadlines, and other project details. »

"" *This proactive research gives you the knowledge base to launch a campaign quickly.*

- **Don't forget that marketing is an art and a science.** Digital engagement provides critical data for quantifying and analyzing your campaigns. But, you also have to understand your customers, their feelings, and why they're making the decisions they make. Over-reliance on engagement data can cause you to miss essential human motivations.

- **Follow a date-driven go-to-market plan.** It's essential to lay out and follow a go-to-market plan that specifies critical paths and deadlines for every contributing piece. Missing a launch deadline can be costly. For example, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act has a 45-day open enrollment period: As an insurance provider, if we miss our open enrollment marketing deadlines by one or two weeks, we've eliminated 30 percent of the time we could have used to market our plan.

- **Test and track all your campaigns.** You need to know what your key performance indicators (KPIs) are and provide attribution all the way to conversion. If you're not tracking all the way to the conversion on the back end, you could be drawing the wrong conclusions from your KPIs. Tracking KPIs, testing, and saving the outcome data provide guidance to the team for future campaigns.

In my first tip, I said that you need to know your customers and market and that you must engage in continuous research. The kind of tracking I described in my last tip provides data to optimize ongoing marketing activities and also becomes research that helps inform and improve future campaigns.

> *Tracking . . . provides data to optimize ongoing marketing activities and also becomes research that helps inform and improve future campaigns.*

KEY ACTION ITEMS

1. Know everything about your markets and customers, and research continuously so that you're not just being reactive.

2. Use a project brief as a shared reference guide for creative, targeting and messaging, media budgets, images, promotion colors, type style, resources, deadlines, and other project details.

3. To ensure timeliness, lay out and follow a go-to-market plan that specifies critical paths and deadlines for every contributing piece.

4. Track KPIs and attribution all the way to conversion on the back end. Use these data to optimize ongoing activities and improve future campaigns.
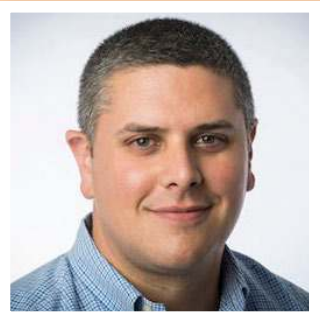
MATT DEWEY

Associate Vice President for Marketing and Communications, Santa Clara University

Matt Dewey is the Associate Vice-President for Marketing and Communications at Santa Clara University. Prior to his appointment at SCU, Dewey was the Senior Director of Marketing and Communications at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Dewey holds a Bachelor's of Business Administration from the University of Notre Dame, a Bachelor's Degree in Management, Marketing, and Entrepreneurship from the Mendoza College of Business at Notre Dame, and a Master's Degree in Integrated Marketing Communications from Northwest University.

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One significant challenge for my marketing team is that we have audiences both inside and outside the university. Internally, we speak to faculty, staff, and students, but most of our efforts have external audiences: prospective students and their parents, alumni, donors, and the community. To execute marketing activities that most effectively serve the university's goals, we have to do three things:

- **Build relationships.** Marketing is a relationships business, but sometimes we neglect our own relationships. In terms of process, workflow, efficiency, and getting a polished product out the door, we rely on having strong relationships with everybody we work with on campus. Here are two ways I've worked to build strong relationships:

   - I spent most of my first six months making sure that I had strong connections and credibility with key university organizations. People need to know you and your team, understand your purpose, and know what you can do.

   - I assign people from my team to manage key relationships. I want them to understand the relationships like they would a client and be that client's advocate. This approach strengthens our relationships and enables our team members to develop special areas of expertise and become invested in that work.

- **Align goals.** We must tie our success as a marketing organization to the outcomes of the university, and this is how we do it:

   - Avoid marketing-centric goals, such as focus group responses to campaigns or numbers of followers on social media. 〉〉〉

> " *In terms of process, workflow, efficiency, and getting a polished product out the door, we rely on having strong relationships with everybody we work with on campus.* "

- Focus on goals that directly affect the organization. In our case, that means student yields, the number of applications we receive, the number of students we have to accept to fill our classes, and the amount and types of engagement we have from alumni.

- Use key relationships to help define the goals that matter most. For example, if I need to define actionable goals for a campaign, I'll dig into the university's strategic plans and put together priorities and goals that that seem right to me. Then, I'll go to the dean and say, "This is how it looks from my perspective. Is that correct?"

- **Always work to a plan.** It's important to have a process for initiating a project, bringing together ideas, building timelines, bringing all that back to the clients for approval, and then working through the process. We always have a plan, and we are always working to that plan. Keep these points in mind:

  - We treat the groups we work with as our clients. They are looking for us to be a trusted advisor and consultant with them. They contribute to building the plan.

  - Always make sure a clear path forward exists. If a project comes up that we don't have time to do, why is that? Did it not fit into our plan? The answer gives us a check to make sure it's not the result of one-off decisions.

> " *We must tie our success as a marketing organization to the outcomes of the university.* "

KEY ACTION ITEMS

1 Assign marketing team members to manage key relationships as if they are clients.

2 Avoid marketing-centric goals, like the number of social media followers. Focus on goals that directly matter to the organization, such as business outcomes.

3 Use key relationships in the organization to help define goals that matter most.

4 Always have a plan, and always work to that plan.

SHELAGH STONEHAM

Senior Vice President, Marketing, Chico's FAS

As senior vice president of Marketing, Shelagh Stoneham is a dynamic and innovative leader with experience and success optimizing shareholder value for top-tier organizations. She is highly collaborative, equally skilled at creating, building, and revitalizing brands as developing, inspiring, coaching and managing strong professional teams. Prior to joining Chico's in 2016, Shelagh was senior vice president, Marketing, for Shoppers Drug Mart, licensor of more than 1,300 full-service drug stores across Canada.

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My experience spans a range of industries, from telecommunications to fashion and retail. Along the way, I've discovered three building blocks that are key to creating an effective, efficient team—the type of team that consistently delivers great work, regardless of the vertical:

- **You must have a strong, compelling brand purpose.** This purpose helps employees understand and rally around the notion of the *why.* This emotional connection is the magic elixir that allows you to build a highly engaged and motivated team. They understand why they are doing the work they're doing.

- **Modern marketers must recognize that they no longer control the customer journey.** We must be pinball wizards: The customer is the silver ball, and the bumpers are the customer touch points. I have no idea where customers are going to go, but I want to make sure that I'm relevant wherever they are so that they stay within our ecosystem. To accomplish this, I begin with a big media-neutral message, and then extend that idea across all customer touch points.

- **You must measure success.** Success is what we're striving for, so why aren't we better at measuring it? This goes back to brand purpose. I measure key metrics that show building sales and the brand over time so that I understand what success looks like in the context of that brand purpose.

A strong brand purpose is the most basic part of a successful marketing program. It provides guidance for creative and operational decisions and becomes the rationale for team building and business strategy. Most people use a brand blueprint or brand pyramid to capture their brand purpose. 》》

> *This emotional connection is the magic elixir that allows you to build a highly engaged and motivated team.*

A COMPELLING BRAND PURPOSE IS ESSENTIAL TO MARKETING SUCCESS

When building a brand pyramid, I begin at the bottom layer and work my way up to define:

• **The core consumer insight:** The unmet needs the brand can best deliver against.

• **Strategic pillars:** This is where the company invests. It may be customer service, or a strong network for delivering a great mobile experience, or a certain store experience.

• **The rational benefits of the brand:** Why would I, as a customer, buy this product or service?

• **The emotional benefit:** Customers don't speak about it, but this is the reason they come back time and again. This is all about how you want to make the customer feel and how they connect with the brand.

• **Brand Values:** Your brand personality and how do you go to market. This speaks to your tone and manner.

• **Brand Purpose:** The ultimate goal of your brand. At Chico's, our brand purpose is to ensure that our customers leave our stores feeling beautiful and confident.

In my experience in building the brand pyramid, the process encourages thoughtful and intense discussion and even heated debate. But, that's a valuable dialogue because it provides a great opportunity to understand where the tension points are, and it ensures that you and your teams are internally aligned across the business.

> " *We must be pinball wizards: The customer is the silver ball, and the bumpers are the customer touch points.* "

KEY ACTION ITEMS

1 Build a brand pyramid that includes core consumer insight, key strategic pillars supporting the business, rational and emotional brand benefits, brand values, and brand purpose.

2 Use the brand pyramid to guide creative and operational decisions.

3 Always start with a big media-neutral idea, and then extend that to all customer touch points.

4 Measure key metrics that show success in the context of your brand purpose.

GARY CLINGER

Vice President, Marketing Campaigns, Workfront

Gary Clinger has more than 20 years of experience managing marketing campaigns for enterprise software companies. He is passionate about creative marketing that creates genuine conversations with existing and potential customers. In his current role, Gary leads the Solutions Marketing and Field Marketing teams in developing marketing strategy and tactics for Workfront. Prior to Workfront, Gary held marketing leadership roles at Novell and NetIQ.

When it comes to the speed and predictability of work, my goal is to make things almost uncomfortably transparent—to make it impossible for anyone to hide their talents or struggles.

The meetings where we don't listen to each other and read email until it's our time to talk are a thing of the past. Work will become faster and more predictable when we can replace the old notion of disconnected, solo team behaviors with the concept of transparency and collaborative effort. Our teams' performance and output improves when we know what every member is working on. Obviously, having the right tool to provide that transparency is important, and our company provides that tool.

We use our own software, and it works well for us because we spend a lot less time sending out status reports and holding meetings. With a centralized work management system that lets us know what everyone's working on, we can also quickly see how we can help each other. We're able to rally around those projects and get them done on time. When you have that level of visibility across all functions and levels, you have everything you need to make good ideas executable and get them out the door.

Throughout my career the idea of making things transparent in a way that feels like we all win together has been really impactful. The act of saying "Let's win together, and if we fail, let's learn from those failures together and move forward" gives team members the confidence to act even when things might feel a little risky. ❯❯

> " My goal is to make things almost uncomfortably transparent—to make it impossible for anyone to hide their talents or struggles. "

I focus on two areas to reach this transparency:

- **People.** I put the right people in the right seats. It's not just about having high-quality individuals who are excited to come to work. It's also about surrounding myself with people who take initiative and want the freedom to exercise their own ideas and expertise. To make this happen I follow the belief that the leader sets the boundaries and then gives his or her people the freedom to work within those boundaries, encouraging along the way. I don't micromanage.

- **Environment.** Environment goes hand in hand with giving team members the freedom to work. I set up an environment for my team members where their ownership is clear, their creativity is valued, and they've been given the tools they need to succeed.

The benefit of this work transparency is that the messaging—the way my teams are communicating internally and externally—is suddenly sharper. As the leader it's not even that I'm providing my teams with all the answers; rather, it's that I'm helping them to sharpen the questions. I'm simply listening and engaging in a way that feels personal, and authenticity is the type of thing that everyone—employees, customers, or prospects—can feel immediately.

> *As the leader it's not even that I'm providing my teams with all the answers; rather, it's that I'm helping them to sharpen the questions.*

KEY ACTION ITEMS

1 Tools are a necessary part of engaging teams in a way that makes them all feel valued.

2 Transparency means making it impossible for status, successes, and even failures to go unseen by other members of the team or organization.

3 Engaging people in an environment where they are free to produce their best work as quickly as possible means sharpening the question each time it is asked by learning from past experiences.

4 Listen and engage with team members and customers in a way that makes the relationship feel personal.

DAVE SCHNEIDER

Chief Marketing Officer,
Red Wing Shoe Company

Dave Schneider is a "next-gen" CMO for Red Wing Shoes who uses equal parts consumer insights, compelling content, and differentiated experiences enabled by technology and informed by data and analytics. Prior to Red Wing, Dave held senior leadership positions at corporate marketing and traditional/digital marketing firms, working with some of the highest-caliber Fortune 500 brands, from MillerCoors, Dell, State Farm, Lowe's, OfficeMax, McDonald's, and AT&T. Dave holds a B.A. from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa.

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My marketing team has a classic structure, with marketing managers and directors who own the brand relationships, including the development and delivery of marketing plans for those business units. We also have a shared services suite with deep subject matter credentials in areas like search, digital, and creative, and the brand management teams draws from that pool of resources as needed for their projects. In addition, we have a corporate communications function as well as a store design and experience team. As manager of all these teams, I believe that marketing has an accountability to do two things at all times: Build long-term brand equity and drive short-term profitable sales. While there are many additional metrics we regularly view, these are the two measures we use to evaluate our team's performance of the marketing team above all else.

In that context, we take several practical steps to ensure that we're delivering the highest-quality output at the right times for our brands:

- When developing marketing content, we think, first and foremost, about who the consumer is and what that customer's content experience expectation might be. For example, customers will have a different expectation about content they consume on Facebook compared with what they would find in a five-minute video or what they would expect from Twitter or Instagram. Cognizance of this consumer experience and what customers are doing when they engage in these places is just as important as the specific messages you intend to convey. It's a mistake to make one common asset and try to push it across every possible channel. A few years ago, I was involved in a content assessment that looked at content through two lenses: content that was meant to inspire and content that was meant to educate. That's an important way to think about it, but it's just as important to consider the format and the experience you're trying to create.

To avoid false starts or surprises along the way, we frequently review the brief to be sure that we understand our objectives for messaging, customer experience, and business goals.

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- Speed to market matters a lot. To avoid false starts or surprises along the way, we frequently review the brief to be sure that we understand our objectives for messaging, customer experience, and business goals. We also make sure that we have the right proficiencies in place to develop the work and understand the process. When that's done, we perform a final check to reiterate the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved.

- Another important point for us is the way we manage our *maker community*, which is our network of vendors and the contractors who work to produce our content. The Makers are our go-to people—folks who understand what we need and can quickly move on requirements, so they're critical to our process. The challenge is maintaining a community that has a deep understanding of our brand voice and sensibilities, and with whom we can work closely. To accomplish this, we have started to build-out resources that are 2-3 deep across a variety of executional media. The maker community needs to be stable enough for us to build those close working relationships, but we also need to have a way to bring in fresh thinking and ideas. Although we like to maintain a tight maker community, we also must constantly vet talent. For example, we are currently planning a Maker Community Day where potentially new resources can come share their work with us and be considered for the short list. Although this is very much a work in progress, we're looking forward to seeing the dividends our Maker Community will continue to pay long-term.

In the end, it all has to come back to the consumers and the value exchange we desire to provide in the form of inspiration, education, and experience.

" *In the end, it all has to come back to the consumers and the value exchange we desire to provide in the form of inspiration, education, and experience.* "

KEY ACTION ITEMS

1 First and foremost, think about who your consumers are and their content experience expectation will be.

2 Be sure you have the right proficiencies in place to develop the work and that you are totally clear on roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in the process.

3 Build out the maker community with resources that are two or three deep across your critical execution media.

4 For speed and quality, your maker community needs to be stable, but you also need to have a process for vetting fresh talent, thinking, and ideas.

BRIAN KARDON

Chief Marketing Officer, Fuze

Brian is the Chief Marketing Officer at Fuze, the leading cloud-based communications platform for the enterprise. Fuze has raised more than $330 million from investors over the past few years and is generally considered amongst the most successful software "unicorns" (companies valued at more than a billion dollars). The Wall Street Journal has named Fuze a likely IPO in the next twelve months. Previously, Brian held executive marketing positions at Eloqua, Forrester Research, and Reed Business Information.

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Let me share a few best practices for improving the speed and quality of marketing processes:

- **Know the tools and how they work.** Even as CMO, I am engaged in the details of all the technologies in our marketing stack. You should invest in training and certifying your team. I invest a lot in training my team on all the marketing technology tools we use.

- **Have monthly reviews.** I host review meetings monthly to look at the best performing campaigns as well as the poorest performers. All campaigns can't be "above average" – we love the transparency and speed at which we can double down on strong campaigns and kill poor ones. It's important that we are continuously learning the "why" from the data.

- **Total transparency leads to high quality.** One reason we can work quickly and with high-quality efficiency is that we openly talk about things that don't work. This idea of quickly exposing things that we tried but that had no engagement is important. Sometimes, organizations sweep their failures under the rug. We hold them up and shine a bright light on them. I get much better programs working that way. »

> " *All campaigns can't be "above average" — we love the transparency and speed at which we can double down on strong campaigns and kill poor ones.* "

- **Any programs you do, do globally.** It's important to understand what's succeeding and to try to do programs globally, wherever possible, for efficiency. You'll still need some localization, whether it's for language or local customs, but generally, I like to run global programs because they go fast and have high quality and efficiency. Sometimes, it takes a bit longer to translate them to Dutch or French, German or Spanish and be sensitive to local cultures, but I love to run global programs.

- **Go slow to go fast.** The biggest thing I've learned over time is that sometimes, you have to go slow to go fast. I've seen marketing teams just speed right along without bringing the sales team with them. Making sure that you partner with sales may occasionally slow you down, but in the end, you'll actually go much faster.

Marketing has become an increasingly siloed organization. You have your content people and your design people; there are field marketing managers, database managers, search experts, and public relations professionals. With the right project management tool, you can bring everybody together to make each project richer and enhance what you do with it. The right tool incorporates a whole team, and I'm finding that if you give everyone exposure and visibility into everything that's going on in marketing, everything gets better. Sometimes, if you do fewer things but you do each one with a full 360-degree view, the result is much more effective.

> " *Sometimes, organizations sweep their failures under the rug. We hold them up and shine a bright light on them. I get much better programs working that way.* "

KEY ACTION ITEMS

1 Total transparency allows team members not only to see successes within the team but also to learn from failures as a team.

2 Create global programs to reduce time spent creating and executing separate and disparate campaigns.

3 Slow down and bring other business units into the marketing process to expand their understanding and ultimately increase speed and quality.

JONATHAN POTTS

Vice President, Public Relations and Marketing,
Robert Morris University in Pittsburgh

Jonathan Potts has worked at Robert Morris University for nearly 10 years, and during that time, the university's reputation and visibility have grown substantially. He leads a team of eight strategic communications professionals whose expertise includes marketing, media relations, media buying, video production, graphic design, and executive communications. Previously, Jonathan worked at Carnegie Mellon University and as a reporter and editor at the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review.*

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As a marketing team leader, I've seen many changes to the way that we deliver work with speed and efficiency. From those experiences, I have five tips for creating quality marketing assets quickly:

- **Every team needs a good project manager.** Teams need someone who is detail oriented and can keep track of things at the 10,000-foot level—someone who knows when the designers need copy, when the video shoots are taking place, when the photo shoots are taking place, when all the deadlines are, and what the lead time is. In higher education (as with may marketing organizations), we don't have the luxury of having someone whose only job is to be project manager, but it's always good to identify the person on your team who is most adept at playing that role.

- **Repurpose your content as much as possible.** I launched a campaign last summer for our online degree programs. The foundation of the campaign was a series of three-minute videos relating stories of working professionals whose life or careers had been changed by our online degree programs. My team cut those videos into 15 second pre-rolls. We used shorter versions for Facebook ads. We cut audio for Pandora ads. Look at how you can repurpose a single piece of content appropriately for the channels you're using.

- **Everybody needs clear deadlines.** Everybody—not just the project manager—needs to know the deadlines. Certainly, the project manager is the one who cracks the whip, but everyone needs clear deadlines, goals, and strategic objectives. How long do we have, What's the story we're telling? What is the outcome we desire? Is it a brand campaign? Are we delivering leads? I don't think any member of the team can go into the project without knowing the answers to those questions. ⟫

Look at how you can repurpose a single piece of content appropriately for the channels you're using.

FIVE TIPS FOR QUICKLY CREATING QUALITY MARKETING ASSETS

- **You never have the luxury of working on just one project at a time.** So, it's critical that you have a plan from the beginning and that you share that plan with everybody on your team. There's no substitute for a good job-start meeting. Some organizations refer to these as Project Kickoff meetings, but the goal is the same: creating a reliable, results-based plan. For example, there's a particular vice provost here who oversees our online degree program. In the job-start meeting, she talks through what she wants to achieve, the messaging she want to speak to, and ensures that everyone on the team understands all the deliverables.

- **Establish a schedule for regular check-ins.** I'm sure that everybody does this differently, and many people have teams that work remotely. There's no substitute for scheduling a time to check in and talk to each other. Plan those meetings into your schedule, and think about how to best utilize them by asking: What do I want to accomplish at each meeting? For example, You can look at a campaign and know if something's not getting good engagement or, if something is getting particularly good engagement, reallocate funds. You can make changes on the fly. We have all these wonderful digital tools at our disposal to measure our progress. It would be a shame not to use them to their potential.

> " *We have all these wonderful digital tools at our disposal to measure our progress. It would be a shame not to use them to their potential.* "

KEY ACTION ITEMS

1 Have a dedicated project manager who knows what's needed, who needs it, and when it should be ready.

2 Establish clear deadlines, goals, and objectives, and then communicate those with everyone involved in a project.

3 Conduct a job-start meeting in which you establish what you're trying to accomplish— the messaging, deliverables, and the timing for the project.

4 Schedule regular check-ins and updates for each project to ensure that they're on track and to address any changes you may need to make.

MATT PRESCHERN

Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer, HCL Technologies

Matt Preschern is the executive vice president and chief marketing officer for HCL Technologies, a $7 billion multinational IT services company. Under Matt's leadership, HCL has been recognized for its marketing excellence and brand strength, achieving inclusion in the elite Brand Finance Global 500 index. Matt was ranked as no. 20 in the Forbes' 2017 list of The World's Most Influential CMOs.

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Marketers now operate in an environment that is always-on, specialized, and personalized. Data drives many of these functions, and quite a few CMOs feel as though they are almost drowning in information. The challenge with data is that it will provide an intricate look into behaviors and choices, but it rarely helps in elevating external brand perception. The push to show your brand's identity must be one that is executive-driven and has deep roots in every aspect of your business. When the external audience knows your brand's values and commitments, you have achieved this authenticity. To get there, a company should consider the following:

· **Realize that your value proposition matters.** Developing a value proposition does more than differentiate your brand in a crowded market. It tells the world who you are, what you value, and why your customers matter to you. These elements, in turn, inspire trust, and people do business with brands they trust.

· **Create a marketing culture in which energy, enthusiasm, and disruption are valued.** Marketing now requires a mobile-first approach and a high degree of personalization. Your team is the key to developing the programs that will cause an even greater connection between your brand and its customers. This team will be most successful when the programs align with business objectives and when the team has the tools to measure the success of campaigns. ≫

> " *The push to show your brand's identity must be one that is executive-driven and has deep roots in every aspect of your business.* "

- **Your brand must show consistency.** A brand has many touchpoints, and each one must inspire the same level of trust for the customer. Employees should exhibit the same values and commitments that the brand claims externally. Each member of your company must know what you value, promise to deliver, and why. Essentially, the brand value must become part of your corporate DNA.

- **Authenticity has to happen all of the time.** Companies operate in world in which a mistake can quickly turn into a public relations crisis, largely due to social media. The formal and limited responses to these crises, which worked in the past, can now exacerbate the issue. Your authenticity is perhaps at its most powerful when a crisis occurs. Accountability and ownership of a mistake as well as showing that the actions do not reflect the company's values go a long way in keeping the trust you have built.

These steps are part of the way that a company can discover, develop, and maintain a sense of authenticity. The process itself is reflective and ongoing. Companies need to have a pulse on whether their stated values now reflect their current phase to maintain authenticity. They must also work to keep their well-earned trust.

> " *Each member of your company must know what you value, promise to deliver, and why. Essentially, the brand value must become part of your corporate DNA.* "

KEY ACTION ITEMS

1 For your customers to see you as a trustworthy brand, tell the world who you are, what you value and how much your customers matter to you.

2 Be sure your marketing objectives align with business goals, and provide the marketing team with the tools they need to measure success.

3 Be sure that everything that goes external, including anything that you do in social media, lives up to whatever the brand promises.

4 Authenticity is the most powerful tool your organization can leverage.

JOEL LAYTON

Vice President, Digital Marketing, rue21

Joel Layton is the vice president of Digital Marketing at rue21, where he's responsible for all digital customer acquisition channels and traffic drivers, including email; search engine optimization, marketing, and positioning; affiliate; comparison shopping engines; product listing ads; and social media. Joel is also responsible for crafting the overall digital marketing strategy to drive revenue and profit growth. Before joining rue21, he was the senior director of Digital Commerce at Lands' End.

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Quality starts with talent. In the world of retail, it's important to have a sharp, motivated staff, and experience doesn't necessarily have to be part of that equation. I'm looking for folks who want to think and act quickly, are motivated to get things done, and don't necessarily wait to be told what to do. With the fast pace of our day-to-day challenges, the ability to take action is the end all, be all.

With talent established, the other piece of quality is creativity. Allow your creative departments to be creative: Don't get in their way. Your team will feel empowered, they'll feel a freedom, they'll feel their creative juices flowing. You do need to build a culture of testing around them, where you let them try things and experiment, but you do it in a way that's always advancing the game by placing it against the backdrop and data of things that have worked.

With testing, creatives see the science of the metrics come back at them. For example, I had several employees in digital marketing whom I pulled out of the pure brand area and put in the digital play because of their expertise in digital.

I wanted to move quickly, so I partnered these creatives with a strong leader. I allowed them to create and introduced them to a culture of testing in which they created, then tested multiple assets. Their volume of raw asset creation went up because they were pumped about being able to do their thing, and I let the math and the science determine what worked. 》》

> *Quality starts with talent. In the world of retail, it's important to have a sharp, motivated staff, and experience doesn't necessarily have to be part of that equation.*

It was just the idea of allowing people—giving them some breath, giving them direction and guidance, and giving them the ability to go ahead and do their thing—that enhanced their productivity. I produce predictability based on the testing schemas. I create the guard rails, and then (depending on the seasons or cycles) start pulling those guard rails in. I train them by allowing them to sow their oats a bit, but then put their ideas through the testing machine to show what works and what doesn't. Then, those creatives naturally begin to create just what works.

In many organizations, the feedback loop isn't as strong as what I've described above, but it can be. If you provide true, valuable feedback, it inspires creative team members to see when they've nailed it. They continue to get fired up, to make more good stuff, to learn and grow, and they end up pulling in their own guard rails because they want to continue to create assets that work.

> *If you provide true, valuable feedback, it inspires creative team members to see when they've nailed it. They continue to get fired up, to make more good stuff, to learn and grow.*

KEY ACTION ITEMS

1 Hire creatives who have the drive and ambition to work independently and the motivation to learn from their mistakes.

2 Give your creative team room to experiment, and then use testing to show them what works and what does not.

3 Choose good testing metrics that create a clear picture of which assets are most successful.

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