
Advice On Hiring Marketers: Don't Hook The Wrong Fish

Posted by [Derek A. Lackey, Editor](#) / August 06, 2018

The feature in a recent Harvard Business Review centers on why CMOs never last and what to do about it. To gain insight on CMO churn from a CEO perspective, I talked with Kevin Akeroyd, CEO of Cision, the leading platform provider for PR and earned media. Below is a combination of our thoughts on how CEOs (and firms) can do a better job landing the right CMO.



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1. Understand that the CMO role is arguably the most complex in the C-suite outside of the CEO role. Because it is so varied (see the HBR article for the types of CMO roles that exist), it requires strategic thought. Just like a flute player is different from a drummer who is different from the orchestra conductor, CMO roles are equally varied with some requiring deep specialist experience and others requiring broad experience. As Akeroyd indicates: Today, the CMO has to understand the data science needed to understand the business, the artistry required to help impact customers, and the technology understanding to have the vision to build the right enabling systems. Most functions are left or right brained. The CMO has to be whole-brained. Or they can be a specialist. Either way, you have to choose before you hire somebody.

2. Right size the role for the company. When Akeroyd joined Cision, he believed that the CMO role was too narrow: It was very narrow in scope a very small swim lane. The CMO was mostly working on marketing communication and trying to drive some leads. I believe that marketing is more of a revenue driving, strategy setting role. Its as important as sales in driving business results.

Another way to look at it is that marketing was lifting 15 pound dumbbells and I needed a CMO who could lead an organization to lift 400 pounds every day. To achieve their goals, Akeroyd changed both the nature of the CMO role and the CMO individual.

Of note, in my research...

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