

DEVELOPING A CMO GLOBAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

By Allan Steinmetz, CEO | Inward Strategic Consulting

Introduction: What Is a Global Leadership Council?

A Global Leadership Council consists of successful, principle-oriented company CMOs. These leaders, visionaries, and marketing-change proponents demonstrate a powerful commitment to the betterment of marketing across their organization. The Council's purpose is twofold: to enroll, inspire, and align programs and services for marketing units, and to share best practices to increase efficiencies.

Creating a More Strategic Role for Marketing: The Greatest Challenge.

One of the greatest challenges today is to transition marketing from a purely tactical to a more strategic role. With respect to new product development in particular, the need is acute. Marketing must do a better job of identifying unmet needs in the marketplace, offering competitive intelligence, and then assuring that new products are relevant and solve real customer problems. This last objective, identifying the "voice of the customer," is particularly important and often lacking.

When marketing is only involved at the tail end of the process, with a rather limited charter to make products seem desirable to the target audience, chances are that there won't be a desirable product to market.

There are several areas of great interest to global corporations for CMOs to explore in frequent Council meetings, including the major themes and trends outlined below.

Setting Mission and Vision.

One of the Global Leadership Council's first activities must be to draft and achieve agreement on the



group's mission and vision as well as establish guidelines for participation and responsibilities. Clearly defining who is responsible and empowered for what types of actions or decisions is critical. Inward Strategic Consulting recommends a Visioneering® Session, a facilitated workshop to create team-wide mission and vision.

A key topic these days for any marketing organization is effectiveness, promotional payout, etc. Equally important is quickly building an apparatus that measures marketing and advertising impact with speed and efficiency, and has credibility with the entire senior leadership team.

Reviewing Marketing Operations.

Another timely topic for the Council is to address its own marketing operations. How does the Council compare to peers and best practices, and how can its effectiveness be increased? An industry benchmark study would *Going From Selling-In to Selling-Out Internal Branding is Important!*

A major leadership challenge today has to do with employees. Many executives are asking a single overarching question:

"How do we get the most out of our people so that we achieve the company's profit and long-term growth objectives?"

We're not just considering marketing people here but all employees—from the executive councils to mailroom operations and security desks.

The concerns and worries from marketing executives with regards to the employee challenge generally fall under five categories:

1. Inspiring and Influencing: This point relates to the executive's leadership skill itself, the ability to command attention and respect, to draw and inspire followers, and to motivate them towards a vision and a goal.

- How do we instill in our people the same degree of enthusiasm and commitment that we have for the company's vision and mission?

- How do we encourage employees to commit to "stretch" goals, and how do we help them achieve these goals?

- How do we inspire our people to come to the office filled with energy and enthusiasm, ready to take on all the possibilities and opportunities that the day presents? How do we turn our company into a humming, thriving hive of human activity where great ideas pour forth in endless succession amid the din of competing voices and laughter?

2. Teamwork: Executives are faced with the challenge of bringing together people with different backgrounds—academic, technical, cultural and ethnic, political and religious—and getting them to work as a team. This challenge takes on gargantuan proportions in multi-category global settings where executives must lead international teams from several disciplines towards a common goal.

- How do we channel all the intellect and energy coming from so many sources into a single focused

beam?

- It's hard enough to get consensus from a few talented and outspoken people sitting around a conference table. So how do we do this with a hundred people from a dozen countries? How can we get them all to talk as one?

- And then how do we get these people to act as one? How do we do it without over-centralization, without slowing down speed-to-market, without dampening individual and local initiative?

- How can we improve our use of technology for this purpose? And can we do it without losing the human element?



3. Innovation:

Competitive pressure—not just from players within the same industry but from other wholly unexpected sources—has made innovation an imperative to corporate survival. The challenge many marketing managers face is promoting innovation, especially in those large

and successful organizations whose key executives indulge, paradoxically, in feelings of complacency and false invulnerability.

- How do we drive our people to think out of the box? We need scientists who can tweak molecules into breakthrough product formulations. We need production personnel who can consistently make onstandard products at the least cost possible; marketers who can magically differentiate our brands from the competition's. Advertising, PR, and promotions agencies must be able to thrust our brands in the face of consumers and communicate our message in provocative and memorable ways. Salespeople must place our brands wherever our consumers shop, merchandising them in ways that cannot fail to grab attention.

- How can we train our people to think more like entrepreneurs? How can we get them to ask the question: "If this were my own business, what would I do if I was faced with this situation?"

- How do you encourage risk-taking? How do you push people to the edge and give them the courage to jump and find out if they can fly? What if they have a fear of flying?

4. Customer Service: With most competing products offering comparable performance, often the differentiating advantage belongs to the company that gives the best customer service.

- How do we motivate our front-line people to give the best customer service? To provide the most memorable and delightful experience possible, so that customers cannot help but rave and refer us to their friends?

- Likewise, how do we motivate back-office and support teams to help the front-liners in this goal of turning customers into raving fans?

5. People Retention: Many marketing managers are very concerned about the painstaking process and huge cost of screening, hiring, and training people.

- How do we attract the best people in the industry? How do we create a reputation among top university graduates and practicing professionals that our company is the industry Mecca for job challenge and empowerment, compensation and benefits, and skills development?

- How do we retain people once they're in? What environment—cultural and physical—should we create that will encourage them to stay? What is the optimum pay and perks package that will satisfy and keep them from considering a move to another company?

- How do we help our people keep a proper work-life balance, prevent them from burning out, and ensure that they receive support for what they do at our company from the people who matter to them most—their families?

Focusing on Customer Service/Experience (Through the Brand).

CMOs have similar concerns about the teams they manage:

- How well is the team integrating product solutions that will provide a seamless experience for the customer, not just our customers?

- Does the team have a collective view of who the customer is?

- How much do team members know about the health of a well-known brand in each of their markets? Often there is confusion between brand salience and brand comprehension. This could be a particularly important distinction if customers have been affected by the recent mortgage meltdown.

- How well does the team understand the online channel for customer acquisition and customer management? How about strategies for developing alternative business practices, such as collecting payments in developing countries?



Sharing Success Stories.

Sharing success stories and pinpointing strategies that can be leveraged in other geographies have major benefits, helping break down two common syndromes:

- "Not invented here."
- "They didn't come up with it/pay for it, so why should I share what I did? Will I get the credit?"

Identifying Internal Experts.

Identifying the internal experts and best-practice centers for various skills and topics creates a framework for networking internally.

Assessing Competitive Intelligence.

A fairly accepted practice is anticipating the next moves your global competitors are likely to make against you and run an exercise where you actually try to beat yourself. In other words, think like your competitors and create products, strategies, programs, and processes to out compete yourself. This excellent exercise forces you to leave your own comfortable thinking and assumptions and look at your organization and offerings from your competitors' point of view.



Using Analytics, Measurement, and Web 2.0.

Here are three issues for the Council to consider:

- Use marketing analytics to improve marketing ROI and reallocate resources to reflect this mission. Marketing automation should also be explored.
- How do you collectively measure success? Measurement is important! While it has always been on the agenda, it has definitely risen in significance

over the last few years. And, if nothing else, measurement can extend a CMO's tenure in these days of "24-months-and-out" thinking on the part of CEOs.

- There is a lot to share and learn in of all the Web 2.0 activities. Many interesting topics for discussion and analysis can be generated by looking at trend forecasts, such as demographic/firmagraphic and World Future Society.

Playing War Games and Simulations.

Take time out and think of your company as the competition to yourself:

- Examine your strategy. Conduct an exhaustive analysis the same way you do when you plan a new marketing program against your traditional competitive set.

- Reexamine your key unique differentiation, personality traits, leverage points, and messaging platform.

You'll come up with some fresh ideas that can be implemented as brand extensions and product innovations.

Conclusion: What's next for the Global Leadership Council?

In summary, Global Leadership Councils are a wonderful way to incorporate best practices, communicate with peers and your marketing groups, leverage existing talents inside the organization and instill a sense of openness and communications within marketing departments. When they are done right and led from the top, they have the potential to instill change and inspire leadership from all employees.



We hope you have found this thought leadership piece insightful and helpful to your marketing challenges that may lie ahead. If you would like to chat with us about your specific marketing communications issues or would like Inward to help you build a Global Leadership Council, give us a call or email us at any time. We'd be happy to brainstorm unique solutions for your specific situation. If you have any suggestions for future thought leadership topics you would like to see addressed, please let us know and we will do our best to provide you with information that best focuses your challenges.

About The Author:

Allan Steinmetz is the CEO and founder of Inward Strategic Consulting, an internal & external branding, change management, team alignment and market research consulting firm with offices in Boston, Orlando, Chicago and San Francisco.



He has over 30 years' experience in marketing, branding, change management, and advertising/communications. His background includes work for Ford Motor Company, US Postal Service, Ericsson, Pitney Bowes, Campbell's Soup, several High Tech companies and start-ups and professional services firms.

Prior to establishing the firm, he was Senior Vice President and Corporate Director of Marketing for Arthur D. Little, a premium management consulting firm; where he was responsible for the firm's brand identity, business development, lead generation, advertising and communications. Prior to ADL, he was the Worldwide Director of Marketing and Communications for Andersen Consulting (now called Accenture). Prior to Andersen he was with Young and Rubicam for ten years as Senior Vice President and Director of Marketing in a variety of management and new business roles.

Allan has been cited in over 100 business publications such as the Wall Street Journal, Adweek, BtoB Magazine and many others. He has been a featured speaker and presenter at International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), American Learning Institute, American Marketing Association, Information Technology Services Marketing Association (ITSMA) and the American Strategic Management Institute (ASMI).



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