

## 16.6: 16. The Marketing Plan

The average tenure of a chief marketing officer (CMO) can be measured in months—about twenty-six months or less, in fact (Mummert, 2008). Why? Because marketing is one of those areas in a company in which performance is obvious. If sales go up, the CMO can be lured away by a larger company or promoted.

Indeed, successful marketing experience can be a ticket to the top. The experience of Paul Polman, a former marketing director at Procter & Gamble (P&G), illustrates as much. Polman parlayed his success at P&G into a division president's position at Nestlé. Two years later, he became the CEO (chief executive officer) of Unilever (Benady, 2008).

However, if sales go down, CMOs can find themselves fired. Oftentimes nonmarketing executives have unrealistic expectations of their marketing departments and what they can accomplish<sup>1</sup>. “Sometimes CEOs don’t know what they really want, and in some cases CMOs don’t really understand what the CEOs want,” says Keith Pigues, a former CMO for Cemex, the world’s largest cement company. “As a result, it’s not surprising that there is a misalignment of expectations, and that has certainly led to the short duration of the tenure of CMOs.”

Moreover, many CMOs are under pressure to set rosy sales forecasts in order to satisfy not only their executive teams but also investors and Wall Street analysts. “The core underpinning challenge is being able to demonstrate you’re adding value to the bottom line,” explains Jim Murphy, former CMO of the consulting firm Accenture. The problem is that when CMOs overpromise and underdeliver, they set themselves up for a fall.

Much as firms must set their customers’ expectations, CMOs must set their organization’s marketing expectations. Marketing plans help them do that. A well-designed marketing plan should communicate realistic expectations to a firm’s CEO and other stakeholders. Another function of the [marketing plan](#) is to communicate to everyone in the organization who has what marketing-related responsibilities and how they should execute those responsibilities.

### Audio Clip

Katie Scallan-Sarantakes

<http://app.wistia.com/embed/medias/cd405f66d4>

Katie Scallan-Sarantakes develops and executes marketing plans for the Gulf States region of Toyota. Her path to this position is not unusual. Listen as she describes what she did to prepare herself for a position running a regional marketing office of a major global automaker.

<sup>1</sup>Quotes in this paragraph are from Kate Maddox, “Bottom-Line Pressure Forcing CMO Turnover,” *B2B* 92, no. 17 (December 10, 2007): 3–4.

### References

Benady, D., “Working with the Enemy,” *Marketing Week*, September 11, 2008, 18.

Mummert, H., “Sitting Chickens,” *Target Marketing* 31, no. 4 (April 2008): 11.

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