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Keeping up with the times

Marketers must constantly adapt and hone their skills to work effectively in today's changing environment.



Social media, mobile marketing and now, some say we are going full circle and heading back to traditional advertising!

While its already hard enough for a marketing publication to keep on top of the constantly evolving marketing industry, imagine the challenges these changes are bringing to marketers themselves!

A study conducted in New York by *Prophet*, a global branding and marketing consultancy, found that only 38% of marketers interviewed felt that product or service quality was the primary driver of brand equity in a business.

Marketers also feel that their companies are not doing enough to speak to the right target audience, with 75% believing that their companies are not executing their customer targeting strategy effectively.

Christine Khor, director of Carrera Partners tells *Marketing*: "Effective marketers need to have more than just the core marketing skills, they need the business skills to successfully influence and communicate their strategies to their business partners and stakeholders."

"They need to be able to 'talk the business' with their stakeholders, show they understand money, develop innovative ideas and approaches and have a commercial focus."

At present, the top three strategic marketing challenges that marketers face are:

- Creating value propositions that differentiate our brands
- Identifying new paths to growth
- Growing awareness and relevance within new customer segments



By MarketingMag

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In our study, we asked parents of teenagers if they had ever secretly tracked the online activity of their son or daughter.

The study also found that marketers feel more innovative approaches to targeting and marketing, as well as capabilities in digital media strategies were necessary moving forward in the marketing world.

Khor agrees, and says: "Understanding technology and the role it plays today is essential. Its ability to reach customers and build/promote a brand is undoubted. One mistake we often see with companies is the recruitment of a digital marketer with the expectation they can do all things technology. This is not the case and marketers need to understand there are different roles and skill sets; just like there is for other types of marketing roles such as DM, PR, research etc. A one size does not always fit all".

Mike Leiser, a senior partner at Prophet says: "Adjusting to this changing landscape will be a process. Marketers must adapt a more visionary orientation to more effectively guide their organisations through it".

Khor believes that: "Project management skills are essential to respond and execute communications in a short timeframe. Most marketers are strong on the qualitative side, not necessarily the quantitative. They need to be able to conduct research to inform their strategies ensuring their campaigns will connect with their target markets. As customers become more and more savvy, the need for deeper insights is increasing. The successful campaigns we see are backed by research and have worked closely with their customers and other stakeholders. They know what is required and they hit their targets".

Local organisations must encourage their marketers to keep learning and upgrading, advises Khor. "Marketers need to take time out just to think and read. Keeping up on what's going on both locally and internationally, what the trends are in marketing and broader business. Organisations need to encourage time to research and think; it feeds innovation and ultimately growth for the business".

"Involving marketers in the business decisions contributes to the company's knowledge and provides valuable input to the marketing strategy and planning process".

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