

BRAND IN THE BOARDROOM



REPORT

THE CONTENDERS

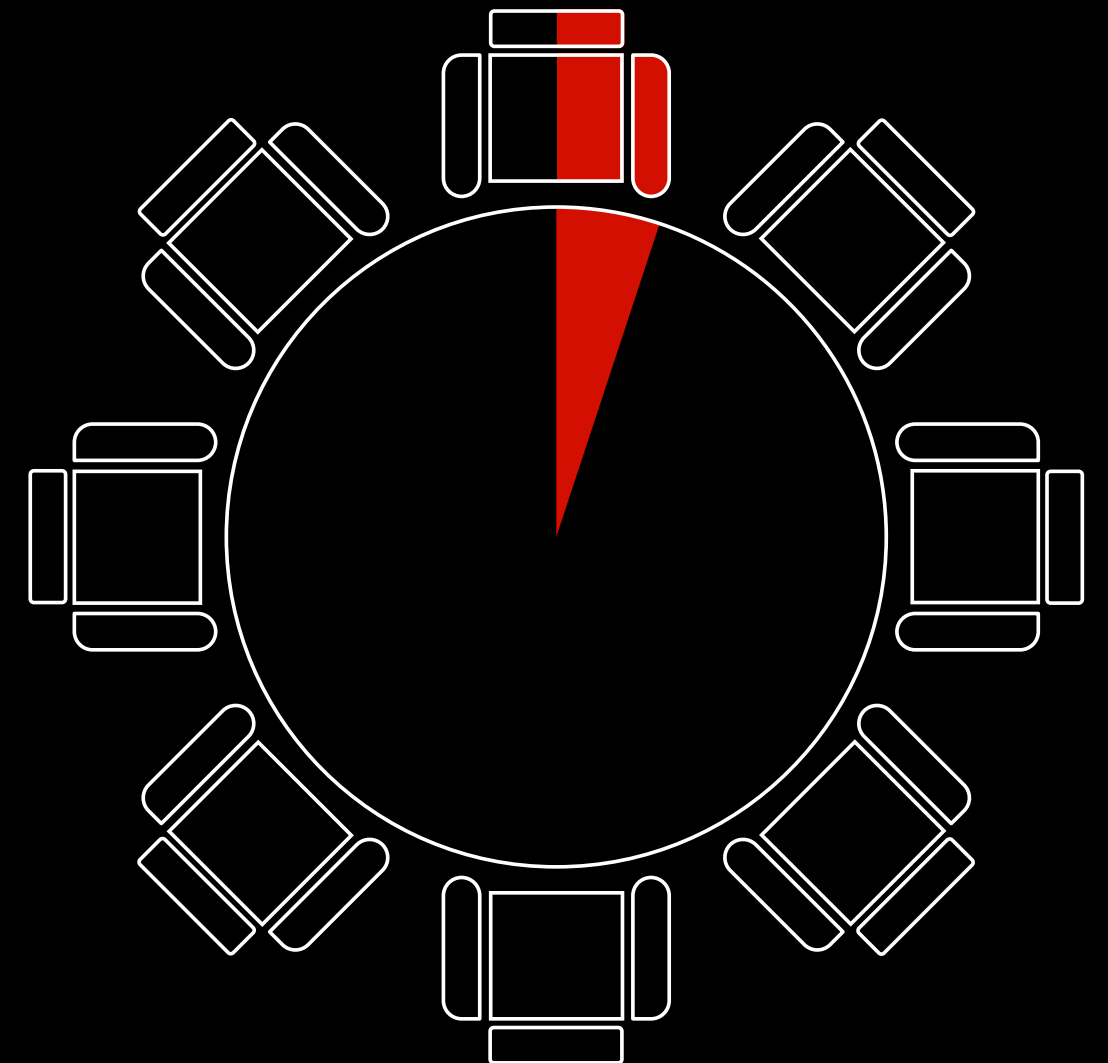
In the age of the customer marketers are under-represented in the boardroom. We wanted to discover why and the facts speak for themselves. Only 5% of us make it when 15% should.*

Most marketers fail to take the step from being the voice of the consumer to running the whole organisation. There are clear reasons why we fail. Here are the five things you need to do from the 5% who have made the transition from CMO to CEO and beyond.

We interviewed executives of leading service, product and experience based businesses. Five key themes emerged about the practical skills and emotional mindset required to go from being a senior marketer to leading an organisation.

The following pages outline what it takes for your brand to deliver in the boardroom. If you have the will this is the way.

** based on the typical construction of an executive leadership team and presuming equal representation at a minimum 15% of marketers should be leading organisations*



Become fluent in the language of business

Marketing comes with a lot of its own language and jargon. It is important but it is not always applicable. Learn how to translate marketing strategy objectives into clear commercial outcomes. What are the numbers that make a difference? What does success look like? Ensure you get to run a P&L before you put up your hand to run a company.



Step sideways to build your skillset

Nearly all the executives we spoke to spent time in other areas of their organisation outside of marketing. It was only by working within other teams that they were able to truly understand other departments and learn how to bring everyone together under one agenda. Importantly, they were given these opportunities by leaders and organisations who trusted them. Prioritise stepping sideways into functions that sit next to marketing such as loyalty, data, e-commerce and digital.



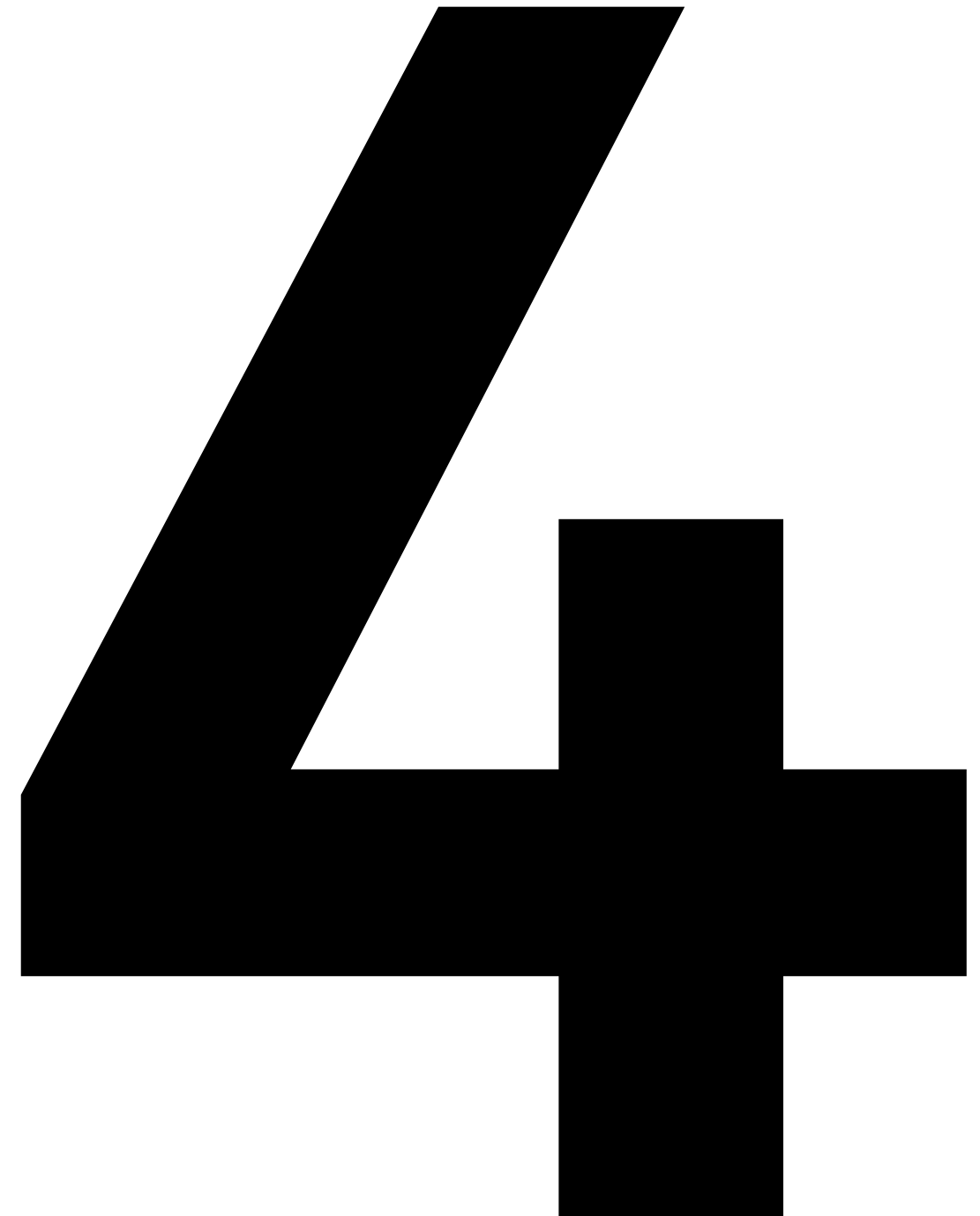
Don't B.S. your Board

Honesty is the only policy. Marketers who take the next step are those who are accountable for the decisions and investments they make. They are straightforward and are able to provide analysis of what is working and more importantly what is not and why that is. They are able to demonstrate the commercial return on their actions across both the short term and the long term. Most importantly they are able to demonstrate to those whose job it is to manage organisational risk how they have taken steps to mitigate reputational risk and communicate why the path forward is the optimal one to take.



Anticipate where the analysis will lead

You must learn and act upon what enables the whole organisation to succeed not just what are the core responsibilities of marketing. This is developed through spending more time across the organisation and less inside your core function. You must know the business to run the business so spend the time to do so. You must be able to articulate the levers that make the whole organisation sing and anticipate the questions a CEO and the CFO will ask. It goes beyond being prepared. Each time you interact at board level you are interviewing for your next job further up the line of command. Focus on demonstrating your competency in what makes the organisation succeed rather than the role that marketing plays in the organisation's success.



Performance matters

At the end of the day, your proposed brand strategy needs to deliver results. Choose your partners carefully and build brands that deliver. The executives we spoke to used two key words when describing the best marketers, ‘performance orientation’. By focussing on how your work can create results, how those numbers align with the organisation’s strategy and integrating learning and improvement into the process, you will position yourself as someone who can think critically and perform when it counts.



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