Patterns of Marketing Genius

How top Chief Marketing Officers generate innovative ideas that get big results.

Special Report
Created for members of The CMO CLUB

By Taryn Voget and Tim Hallbom
Welcome.
Step inside the minds of top marketers and discover how they generate innovative ideas that get big results.

Grab a front-row seat and see how the top minds in marketing play the game.

Could you use a sprinkling of marketing genius in your life? Most marketers are happy to achieve a 5% response rate or 300,000 YouTube hits. We’re going to show you the real-life strategies used by top Chief Marketing Officers to achieve 60%+ response rates, 50%+ sales close rates, and have CBS announcers mentioning their brands 50+ times in a week. By the time you’ve read this strategy blueprint, you’ll learn how you, too, can achieve these results – and more – in your own organization.

This is no ordinary ‘How To’ marketing book.

We studied five top Chief Marketing Officers who have had long, successful careers generating marketing hit after hit. These weren’t ordinary interviews. Using a cutting-edge, behavioral science approach, we unpacked how these CMOs think and what they do to be among the best in the world. We’ll show you what it takes, step by step, to achieve results far beyond what most marketers expect.

This is an extraordinary strategic blueprint that contains insights into the top marketing minds in the business. When you put these patterns of genius into practice in your own organization, you, too, will have customers coming back for more.

Let’s get started.
Discover the Five Patterns of Marketing Genius

How do top CMOs hit it out of the park, time and time again?

If you were to ask these CMOs if they have a formula for success, they would say, “No, I don't have a formula. I just have a sense for what's going to work, and I do it.” The power of our behavioral interviewing process is that we can carefully deconstruct these CMOs’ activities, step by step, to understand why they achieved results. There is, as it turns out, a series of subconscious processes they use to create marketing hits over and over again.

The science of success.

The overarching question we explored in our interviews is, “How do you come up with innovative ideas that get big results?” We wanted to know:

- How do these CMOs achieve success, step by step?
- What strategies do these CMOs have in common?
- What does each CMO do that is particularly brilliant?

We spent hours diving deep into their thinking processes, habits and strategies. We analyzed their goals, actions and language patterns. We looked at eye movements, voice tonality and body language. All of these things gave us clues into their deeper subconscious patterns and behaviors.

There is a structure to intuition.

During our interviews, the CMOs shared more about one of their wildly successful marketing ideas. When we asked, “How did you know the idea was going to work?”, they answered, “I just knew it would be a huge hit. It was intuition.” What most people don’t realize is that intuition has a structure – a set of mental steps a person follows that ultimately results in a “gut feel” that something is going to work (or not). In our modeling process, we take that split-second gut feel and unpack the thinking behind it. There is actually a structure to intuition when you peel back the layers of the mind.
We took all of this information, analyzed it, and then built a model of what these CMOs do to achieve success. We discovered five patterns of marketing genius. Each of these patterns contains a series of steps that need to be completed for the marketing jackpot to come up allcherries.

**Five Patterns of Marketing Genius**

1. Operate from big dreams, high-quality goals and laser focus.
2. Act only after getting to know customers personally.
3. Foster an environment where creativity thrives. Explore ideas, and pounce on good ones when you hear them.
4. Play smart politics.
5. Milk great ideas for all they’re worth.

If these patterns sound simple, keep reading. It’s *how* these CMOs move through each of these patterns that’s extraordinary.

**Enhance your own genius.**

As a successful marketer, you’re probably already doing many of the same things as these CMOs. We hope this report highlights patterns of effectiveness that you already employ, either consciously or subconsciously. Use this as an opportunity to feel validated that you are doing the right things, and keep on doing more of them! Also, notice things you can improve upon or adopt into your own approach to get even better results.

In the pages that follow, you’ll discover how each CMO applied the five patterns of genius. In the Appendix, we’ll discuss how you can replicate these patterns for yourself.
Meet the five top Chief Marketing Officers.

In October of 2011, we set up a Genius Lab at The CMO CLUB Thought Leadership Summit in Beverly Hills, CA. In extensive interviews over the course of a few days, we crawled inside the minds of five top CMOs. We chose these CMOs based on their long track records of extraordinary marketing success. Inside our lab, we asked the CMOs to think back over their careers and talk about their biggest marketing wins – times when they were at their best. Meet these marketers. They all have extraordinary stories.

Meet Phil Clement.
Global CMO of Aon Corporation

Phil is Global CMO of Aon Corporation, and leads the team responsible for the extraordinary success of the firm's Manchester United soccer team sponsorship. You’ll learn all about how, in one sweet move, he united 435 acquisitions and diverse business units around the world, driving Aon to become one of the top financial services companies worldwide (amidst a recession, no less). Before joining Aon in 2005, Phil founded The Clement Group, a boutique management consultancy, and served in marketing and business development roles at Inforte Corporation and Wizdom Systems. As an instructor at the University of Chicago and the Kellstadt Graduate School of Business at DePaul University, Phil evangelized topics such as Managing Innovation & Technology. He loves art, statistics and the occasional cigar. He refers to CMOs as "business Shaman – seeking the whole landscape of an issue and finding the magic in things that can point to a future others can't see yet.”

Meet Gina Sandon.
Global Healthcare & Life Sciences Marketing Leader of IBM

Gina has been a marketer in the software space since 1998. She is known for her self-described “whacko marketing campaigns that rock the response rates at 60%+. As she says, “I have done some pretty wild things in my marketing career.” She has worked at companies Arasys Technologies, Click Commerce, Initiate Systems (later bought by IBM) and IBM. Gina relies on “gut feel" more than market research and says the only big professional mistakes she’s made occurred when she ignored her instinct. We unpacked her “instinct,” and you will soon learn how she “just knows what will work.” (Oh, and her cool name is pronounced JIN-ah, not JEEN-ah).
Meet David Cumberbatch.
**Chief Strategy and Marketing Officer of ACT**
David is the Chief Strategy and Marketing Officer of ACT, an education and testing company. He has held top marketing positions at Microsoft, Proctor & Gamble and Imagitas, A Pitney Bowes Company. David explains, “I wanted to work in the biggest businesses in the world with Microsoft and P&G. Then I had a passion for start-ups. Now I have a passion for education, and I want to part of the team that changes how our kids are educated and enter the workforce.” From 1997 to 2003, he was a key player in redefining Microsoft Office’s business productivity marketplace from $10 billion to $40 billion in annual sales, which led the software product’s accelerated growth and expansion into adjacent segments. His business development work was featured in *FORTUNE Magazine*, and he won Microsoft's coveted Innovation Award. David is like a walking encyclopedia of marketing strategies and methodologies. He thinks smart, fast and big.

Meet Jeffrey Hayzlett.
**Head of The Hayzlett Group, Former CMO of Kodak**
Jeffrey is an award-winning C-level executive who became famous during his four-year tenure as CMO of Kodak. He was largely responsible for bringing the brand back into popularity. He is a frequently cited business pundit on TV, radio and in print. Jeffrey is a lot like the custom-made jackets he wears: The soft, velvety exterior opens up to a wild party pattern on the inside, and you'll find all kinds of fun, unique and unexpected touches on the cuffs. He has a gift for launching ventures that create excitement. Even though Jeffrey has 100 different projects going on at once, there’s a remarkable organizational efficiency amidst his creativity and output. As you get to know Jeffrey, you’ll discover he is both a clear thinker and a creative genius who loves to “think big and add zeroes to things.”

Meet Cammie Dunaway.
**U.S. President and Global CMO of KidZania**
Cammie is a top marketer who, with understated and powerful leadership, led Yahoo! to galactic success as CMO in 2003. In 2007, she joined Nintendo as EVP of Sales and Marketing and was responsible for the marketing campaigns that made the Pokemon games and the Wii two of the biggest successes in the gaming industry. In 2010, Cammie joined KidZania, an interactive entertainment experience for kids. When we interviewed her, she said right off the bat, “I’m uncomfortable being called a genius. I don’t see myself that way.”

We’re here to share some of Cammie’s genius. She knows when to rely on her instinct, when to rely on market research, and how to create an environment where creativity thrives.
Meet Tim Hallbom.
Chief Scientist and Genius Modeler with the Everyday Genius Institute.

Tim is the world-renowned behavioral scientist with the Everyday Genius Institute. He has mastered the process of deconstructing how geniuses think.

Tim gets inside the minds of geniuses by asking a series of unique questions that bring out conscious and subconscious behaviors, patterns and actions. He observes eye movements, body language, speech patterns and voice tonality. He gets geniuses to slow down their thought processes so that he can understand their strategies, step by step.

By using this proven process, Tim unpacked what, exactly, these CMO geniuses do that makes them successful.

When you meet Tim, you’ll discover that he hates talking about himself and would much rather learn about you. You’ll have to really push him to tell you about the great views from his Salt Lake City house, and how he loves to go hiking in the nearby mountains every morning. His dog, Jett, may be the cutest schnauzer you’ve ever met, and Tim spoils him rotten (though he won’t admit it).

Meet Taryn Voget.
CEO and Co-founder of the Everyday Genius Institute, Modeler and Author of this report.

Hi. I am the CEO and Co-founder of the Everyday Genius Institute. Tim and I worked together to deconstruct how these top marketers come up with innovative marketing ideas that get big results. In addition to being an entrepreneur, business adviser and speaker, I authored all of the titles in the Think Like a Genius series and I wrote the words you are reading here.

Before designing my dream job rubbing elbows with geniuses, I spent 13 years as a strategy and operations consultant for the top companies in the world. Out of sheer necessity while consulting with the Fortune 100, I developed an uncanny knack for unpacking and streamlining complex processes. Through my years of working with dozens of business and thousands of people, I’ve developed the unwavering belief that genius is always in the simplicity. My desire to reveal strategies of genius and make them accessible to everyone ignited my inspiration for the Everyday Genius Institute.

When you meet me, I’ll probably make you look at iPhone pictures of my adorable niece and nephews in lederhosen at my family’s annual Oktoberfest party. I’ll likely invite you over for coffee blended with butter – my specialty – and will want to hear all about your travels so I can get ideas for my next exotic trip.
Pattern #1:

Operate from big dreams, high-quality goals and laser focus.

Buzz? You want to build buzz?! Tell me how creating 'buzz' generates revenue or meets any of the other five goals on our list. Until then, I’m not interested in buzz.

– Jeffrey Hayzlett, Kodak

CMOs don’t get lucky. They get goals.

The difference between highly effective people and others is the quality of their goals and their focus on achieving them. We’ve interviewed hundreds of highly successful people, and they all have one thing in common: They all operate from clear, high-quality goals, and they exercise intense focus on achieving those goals. They don’t get distracted by shiny objects or outside activities. Simple? Yes. Easy to do? Not always. In short, top CMOs have discipline.

Jeffrey explains it more vividly. “I only focus on activities that meet my goals. If I am taking a junior college football team to the Super Bowl, I gotta get them in shape. If they are doing exercises that aren’t going to lead them where they need to go... what the hell am I doing? I’m wasting everyone’s time. I’m like a coach – driving, driving, driving. I have to have extreme focus to get this team to the Super Bowl.”
Top CMOs set two types of goals.

Setting goals isn’t just something these CMOs do once a year at an annual strategy retreat or in performance reviews. They do it constantly as part of their daily jobs, and they operate from two strategic perspectives:

1. Overall business goals
2. Specific campaign goals

Note: The term “campaign” in this blueprint refers to any specific campaign, marketing project, product development project, sponsorship or bucket of marketing spend.

In the pages that follow, you will read about specific business and campaign goals. Once the goals are set, these CMOs measure every marketing activity against these goals. It’s important to note that these are not just any goals – they are high-quality goals.

What is a high-quality goal?

You may be wondering, “What exactly is a high-quality goal?” We’re glad you asked. High-quality goals exhibit a set of defined characteristics. They are:

• **Stated in the positive.** These CMOs state what they do want instead of what they don’t.

• **Big enough and exciting enough to motivate.** The goals move them toward something they really want for themselves personally and for the organization. They aren’t simply mandated by company leadership. And they aren’t so small that they lack excitement.

• **Initiated and controlled by the CMO.** The CMO is in the driver’s seat in setting the goals and making them happen. And he or she has the ability to achieve the goals.

• **Specific and measurable.** These goals can be clearly visualized. Saying, “I want to make more money,” is not specific enough. Saying, “I want to sell $100 million in products this year,” is specific and can be measured.

• **Manageable.** They aren’t too big and broad, but rather in chunks that feel manageable to the CMO and team. For example, it’s overwhelming to “solve world hunger.” It’s manageable to “consistently feed 1,000 needy people in our local community this year.”

• **Experienced through the five senses.** CMOs know exactly what they – and others – will see, hear and feel when they have achieved the desired outcome.

Now that we’ve characterized high-quality goals, let’s take a look at some of the business and campaign goals set by these CMOs.
It starts with clear business goals.

Nearly all of the CMOs said, “I'm a business person who happens to run Marketing.” So, it makes sense that they operate from clearly defined business goals. They use these goals as the compass by which to steer the ship, and they set them as an imperative first step.

I always make sure I take my boss to lunch and spend time with him to get clear on the goals. I make sure to check in, and that his goals and my goals are the same.

–David Cumberbatch, Microsoft and ACT

The bigger the goal, the bigger the result.

These five CMOs dream big. They set big goals that excite them and their organizations. For example, David didn’t just want to grow the Microsoft Office space by 15% a year. He wanted to redefine the product and marketplace from $10 billion to $40 billion a year. Gina wanted to fill the sales pipeline in a record two weeks, and drive enough sales that her company could get acquired. These are big goals. As you'll discover, these goals were the bright stars they reached for, and ultimately what inspired the ideas for hugely successful marketing campaigns.

On the next few pages, you read some examples of these goals. Notice the size of the CMOs’ dreams, the quality of their goals, and their laser focus in achieving them.
Jeffrey Hayzlett’s business goals for Kodak:
I made five promises to my boss. I was measured against these promises.
1. Drive $XB in sales
2. Drive $XB in margin
3. Achieve X level of customer satisfaction
4. Achieve X level of brand satisfaction and brand value
5. Achieve X growth in each business unit

I had other business and personal goals, such as:
• Move from 50% B2B to 90% B2B in three years (the business was at 50-50 B2B/B2C).
• Reallocate a huge chunk of the budget to A-level spend, which is to move it from overhead spend to advertising and promotion spend.
• Build an effective marketing architecture that supports a lot of different businesses at different phases.
• Change the mood of the company. Everybody thought our best days were behind us. We needed to change that.
• Be in a position to grow professionally, create wealth, and have fun.

We put everything in my department through the filters of these goals. If it didn’t meet one of the goals, we scratched it off the list. Get it out of here.

David Cumberbatch’s business goals for Microsoft:
I never lose sight of the goals, which are not about the coolest ads, but about the biggest results and the bottom line. The role of the marketer is to be another general manager. I can’t get caught up in and enamored by cool creative, because if I do, I am not growing the business and adding value to the company.

At Microsoft, my first goal was to get clear on the business strategy. Marketing strategies come from business strategies. So, my top priority was to get clear on the strategic direction of the business. Once I did that, my goals were to:

• **Make a real impact. Make a difference in the world with these software products.** I was passionate about transforming the way people work – to make work more fun when people come show up in the morning. My goal was to address the gaps in the product based on the day-in-the-life of an office worker.

• **Grow a market space from $10 billion per year to $30-to-$40 billion per year.** My goal was to come up with something that completely redefined the market space and the product.

• **Ensure solid research supported the change.** I needed strong data to support the big changes I planned to propose.
Phil Clement’s business goals for Aon:

When I arrived at Aon, we had a big challenge. We needed to unite a global company that was a patchwork of 435 acquisitions. As a result, marketing needed to do something bold that would bring the entire company together under one common, recognizable brand. Over the past six years, my goals have been to:

• Create a well-known global brand that will help us grow by being recognized by masses of potential clients and potential colleagues around the globe.
• Become a recognized market leader, #1 in each of the markets we serve.
• Unite the firm. Create one firm out of the 435 companies that came together through global acquisitions.
• Grow revenue and profitability to X; reduce costs by Y.
• Come up with an efficient global marketing and branding solution that meets the needs of all businesses in 120 countries.
• My personal goal was to facilitate the process and feel like my life was being spent on something worthwhile – something with a valuable mission.

In each case, these CMOs came up with campaigns that directly met their business goals. In the next section, you will read about the sub-goals the CMOs laid out to meet their business goals. These are the campaign goals. Again, pay close attention. Setting proper goals is a common theme throughout this blueprint. And for good reason – goals are the foundation for everything else.
Every campaign, sponsorship or project has clearly defined goals. And they tie back to the business goals.

The obvious goal is to maximize marketing dollars. But how do you do that in an efficient way? Your objective may be to create an innovative, clever ad. Or get 1 million Twitter followers. Or get your company’s name on the jerseys of a major sports team. But do those marketing activities create measurable results that advance your business goals?

Every CMO we interviewed set clear goals and criteria for each major campaign or bucket of marketing spend. They then ran each marketing idea through the filters of their goals. And by establishing clear campaign goals, their teams knew what types of opportunities to look for. Again, high-quality results come from clearly communicated, high-quality goals. Here’s how Jeffery and Gina set campaign goals.

**Jeffrey Hayzlett’s sponsorship goals.**

I looked at all of Kodak’s sports sponsorships. Sponsorships are expensive, and my job was to make sure they were returning more in revenue than they cost. One of my business goals was to move the company to a 90% B2B business (from 50% B2B/B2C), so I looked at sponsorships where we could meet this goal. I set the criteria so my team could go out and look opportunities that met my criteria.

Keeping my revenue goal in mind, I wanted to find sponsorships that allowed us to host events in which:

- I could have a good conversation with a well-qualified B2B sales lead. I wanted an opportunity to build friendships and create relationship-based selling opportunities.
- Our customers and executives could spend quality time together.
- We offered an entertaining experience and people had a lot of fun.
- Customers could bring spouses (our customers were often husband-wife teams).
- There was star quality and pizzazz – something people could brag about to friends and say, ‘I was there.’ Or there was a chance to do something special, like walk all day on the course with Tiger Woods.
- We could ‘step and repeat’ the event, which is to create the same event throughout the year at different venues. I did not want a one-time thing.
- We were within budget, and it was a real value from a cost perspective. (e.g., We make 10x+ more in revenue than the event costs.)
Gina Sandon’s goals to fill the sales pipeline in two weeks.

We had a 12-month sales cycle for our $850,000 enterprise software products, and looking nine months down the road, we weren’t going to hit our Q4 numbers. We had just pulled our IPO offering and were trying desperately to get acquired, so the pressure was on to make sure our revenue was strong.

In a meeting with the CEO and VP of Sales, I was given an impossible challenge: Implement a campaign in two weeks that fills the sales pipeline in such a way that we hit our Q4 numbers. I thought, ‘Ohmigod, now is the time for my team to do its best work yet.’

Here are the goals I laid out to my team:

- Do something that ‘rocks’ the response rate, something that gets an unprecedented 60%+ response rate.
- Come up with something bold. Something that returns immediate results to fill the pipeline. Something that’s never been done before.
- Develop a direct mail piece people open, no matter what – something that passes the ‘weight test’ (e.g., be heavy enough to be opened by a gatekeeper or executive).
- Do something that gets past the gatekeeper and/or raises the interest of gatekeepers so they bring the mailed item to the executive.
- Create chatter at an executive level. Send the item to multiple executives and ensure they ‘chatter’ about it.
- Get the sales team to buy into the campaign.
- Create a campaign that can be executed in two weeks.
- Use our own internal resources – our own team – and not a creative agency.
- Do something that won’t burn out my resources or myself; something that can be done in a reasonable work week.
- Motivate my team to pull out their best work in this moment.
- Make the financial formula work.
- Test and confirm my hypothesis that ‘less is more.’ Create bigger impact by focusing on doing less – but doing it well.

Guess what? In 24 hours, we came up with something that hit every one of our goals.
Put Pattern #1 Into Practice:
Operate from big dreams, high-quality goals and laser focus.

- Write down your top five to eight business goals. Include some personal goals that motivate you. How is your success as a marketer measured? Do you have goals to increase revenue, decrease costs, enter new markets, or change the perception of the brand? Are your goals written down, and do you and your boss agree on them? Do your personal goals excite you enough?
  - For each of your business goals, write down the metric. How will each goal be measured? For example, if your goal is to build brand awareness, determine how you will measure the increase. Does an increase in brand awareness translate into increased revenue? Or put another way, does each metric meet some business goal of increasing revenue, decreasing expenses, or improving customer satisfaction? Do you and your boss agree on the metrics?
  - Take a full inventory of your marketing campaigns and write down your campaign goals. Create a list of goals for any new campaign you plan to launch.

- For each marketing campaign, clearly articulate how each of these projects directly ties back to your business goals. If you can’t determine a direct and measurable relationship to your business goals, scratch the project off your list. For example, if one of your goals is to have 1 million YouTube views on a new viral video, determine how that maps back to your business goals of generating revenue or increasing customer satisfaction. If all you can measure is “buzz,” scratch it off the list, even if it’s fun and clever.

- Look at your list of goals and decide if they are big enough, clear enough, and exciting enough. Do your goals reflect your passion for the future of your company? Or are they the ‘same ol’ same ol’”? Share your goals with your team so they know what opportunities to look for.

- Find examples of where the seemingly impossible has been done before. It is possible to get a 60%+ response rate. It is possible to grow the market from $10 billion to $40 billion a year by redefining a product and market space. It is possible to make a 50x return on a sports sponsorship. These CMOs have achieved these results and you can, too. Find examples of where the “impossible” has been done before, and operate from a place of belief that you can do the same. Big results come from big goals. Are you dreaming big enough?
Pattern #2.

Act only after getting to know your customers personally.

Know your customers and you will know what ‘just works.’

These CMO got to know their customers personally. None of them relied on second-hand information or market research. They shook hands with customers and got their feedback firsthand. Their campaigns worked because they knew exactly what would appeal to their customers.

Whenever I go to a new company, the very first thing I do is educate myself on the customer. I spend the first few months on this. I never cease to be amazed by how many companies don’t know who their customers are. How can you make any kind of big impact if you don’t know exactly who your customers are?

–David Cumberbatch, Microsoft and ACT

Do you know what motivates your customers? Do you know how they spend their time?

Each CMO had his or her own strategy for understanding what makes customers tick. Their strategies ranged from walking the sales floor to hiring psychologists to study how people spend their time at work. One CMO traveled around the world with a market researcher and a translator to meet with parents and kids in person.

In this section, you will discover several real-life strategies used by these CMOs to gain a deep understanding of their customers.

Knowing your customer is what makes you valuable as a CMO. If you don’t know, you go find out.

–Jeffrey Hayzlett, Kodak
Tactic #1: Walk the floor and dress the part.

Where do your customers shop and how can you get to know them in real-life situations? How can you hide your identity and meet your customers in the purchase decision-making process? Being a neutral sales associate gives you free reign to ask a man why he’s carrying a diaper bag while he shops for a cigar box. It provides the perfect opportunity to discover what’s important to your customers and why they make the decisions they do. What’s more, it’s just as interesting to understand why a customer buys a competitor’s product.

How can you step into a real-life lab and meet your customers personally?

You can’t just sit behind your desk the whole time. On the consumer side at Kodak – the side of the business I didn’t know as well – I went to the local Best Buy and asked the manager if I could put on a shirt and work on the floor. Then, I did that at Staples, Office Max – a bunch of places. I did it because, then, no one could pull the wool over my eyes to say what would work and what wouldn’t work. I knew what customers wanted from firsthand experience.

–Jeffrey Hayzlett, Kodak

Tactic #2: Get in the trenches with researchers.

Each CMO has his or her own thoughts about how to leverage market research. David operated from a strong base of market research. Gina relied more on her intuition than on research, though she did pay attention to it. The pattern that holds true across all of these CMOs is that they only believed the research – and acted on it – when they had a key role in collecting the data. When they worked side-by-side, in the trenches with researchers, they felt the research had validity. They had a high degree of faith in the research when they heard customer feedback firsthand.

Impact is the goal. Research is the foundation. It informs everything. You can’t be a successful marketer unless you can sit in the trenches with market researchers.

–David Cumberbatch, Microsoft and ACT

If a market research report crossed their desk, and they weren’t involved in the data collection, they acted on it only some of the time.

Here’s how Cammie and David think about market research, and how they got involved in the process directly.
"My goal is to make sure the voice of the consumer is the voice we listen to. I listen with my pen."

KidZania runs themed entertainment centers where kids role-play real-life jobs like doctor, policeman and firefighter. They earn and spend money inside kid-sized ‘cities,’ and learn valuable lessons about work ethic and collaboration.

A cast of themed characters are part of the KidZania experience. My job was to figure out what role our themed characters would play in the future of the company. They are a big part of our branding and merchandising. I needed to figure out not just what we are doing today, but how the characters fit into future plans for our online presence and merchandising. I had to look at how the character would both evolve and stay relevant over time.

On something like this, it’s easy to have internal folks make the call. I really wanted to bring in an outside voice. My opinion doesn’t really matter here. What matters is the opinion of the kids. My job is to facilitate hearing their voice.

I had to think about what criteria I would use to structure the problem – break down the big question of, ‘What is the future of these characters?’ to more specific questions in bite-sized chunks. For example, I asked:

• Do we need characters at all?
• Are these the right characters?
• If not, what should we do with them?
• Would these characters be the same around the globe?
• Would they be relevant over time?

I figured it was possible to come up with characters that are globally relevant. But I knew I couldn’t decide that from San Jose, CA. I had to get out in the market, talk to kids, and test my theories.

I made sure the voice we heard was something I really heard myself, directly from the kids we interviewed in a number of countries. I listened with my pen. I spent a lot of time after the meetings with kids talking to the researcher to ask what she thought. I wanted to make sure I wasn’t biased by my own viewpoint. It was a check and balance. After each set of research, I communicated the results to the most important stakeholders in the process.

–Cammie Dunaway, KidZania
At Microsoft, we started with qualitative research on our Office products. We met with students and heard what they had to say. We hired psychologists and watched workers. I saw firsthand how these workers defined their day. We observed what the customer did in his or her own habitat. We did the first ever ‘real-world lab.’

Based on the qualitative research, the team and I met and came up with five or six hypothesis – or parameters – on how these people organized their days. Our goal was to get it down to one or two hypotheses, so the team and I went through an elimination process and boiled it down to the most essential hypotheses.

I then asked the market research firm to draft questions that would test my hypotheses. I checked that the questions would capture everything in my hypothesis. Then we put those questions out to the masses and verified the research quantitatively from tens of thousands of people.

–David Cumberbatch, Microsoft and ACT

Tactic #3: Put something out there and iterate quickly.

Every good marketer will tell you it’s all about customer insight. These CMOs told us one of the best ways to get customer insights is to put something out there quickly, get feedback, and then iterate. Some did this through a product prototyping process, while others did it by establishing feedback loops during a campaign.

My job is to translate customer product requirements into business requirements. The business requirements are things like achieving a certain level of sales, growth, etc. I tell management that if we address these X product requirements, we will be able to make Y more dollars. I then turn the customer requirements into technical requirements that make sense, and I hold the IT team accountable for delivering. Prototyping is huge. We see far greater rates of success when the insights come from customers. Marketers don’t know what the customer wants more than the customer does. Let them tell you what they need. Prototyping and concept testing are very quick ways to get a concept in front of people and see firsthand how they respond.

–David Cumberbatch, Microsoft and ACT
Tactic #4: Walk a mile in the customer’s shoes.

One thing we’ve discovered about all geniuses is that they’re exceptional at stepping into others’ shoes and seeing the world through their eyes. Top marketers are especially good at this. By actually becoming the customer for a moment, they get a significant amount of information quickly, without ever talking to anyone.

There are three “perceptual positions” to consider:

- **First Position:** Seeing, hearing and feeling the situation through your own eyes, ears and feelings. You think in terms of what is important to you, what you want to achieve.

- **Second Position:** Stepping into the shoes of the other person and experiencing (seeing, hearing and feeling) the situation as if you are that person. You think in terms of how this situation would appear – or be interpreted by – someone else.

- **Third Position:** Standing back from a situation and experiencing it as if you were a detached observer. In your mind, you are able to see and hear yourself and the other person, as if you were a third person. You think in terms of what opinion, observations and advice you would hear from an outsider.

In each case, these CMOs had a typical customer in mind, and then imagined they were in the shoes of that customer. They visualized their company, product and marketing campaign through the eyes of that customer. And as that customer, they asked, “Does this excite me? Make me respond to your call to action?” The best CMOs know what will work before they roll it out because they have thought carefully about how the customer will respond. If you can’t ask your customer directly, this is a great strategy to use.

Jeffrey literally changed his perceptual position when he put on a Best Buy T-shirt and engaged in the purchasing experience through the eyes of a sales associate. Being on the floor helped Jeffrey get closer to the customer so he see the world from that perspective.
But it doesn’t have to be such a literal exercise. You can also shift perceptual positions in your mind. By imaging that you are an ideal customer and becoming that customer as fully as possible, you can gather a lot of information about how your campaign will be received.

You will see evidence of how these CMOs walk a mile in customers’ shoes in additional examples we feature later in this blueprint.

**Tactic #5: Follow your ‘gut feel.’**

A good “gut feel” may be all you need. When we asked the CMOs, “How did you know your marketing campaign would work?” they said, “I just knew – it was a gut feel.” Gut feel is nothing more than years of experience communicating with you subconsciously in the form of intuition.

When we unpacked this “gut feel,” we discovered that there is a structure to this intuition. The reason these CMOs “just know” something will work is that when they hear an idea, they rapidly run the idea through a subconscious checklist of criteria. When the idea hits all of the criteria on the list, they “just know” it will work. The entire process happens in a split second for a seasoned marketer.

When we modeled Gina, we discovered that when she hears a marketing idea, she literally watches a mental “movie” of a customer interacting with the marketing campaign. For example, she sees an admin and an executive receiving the direct mail at the office. Then she runs through a mental checklist of criteria to see if the experience meets those criteria. For example:

- Will the admin open it? Does it pass the ‘weight test’? (Does it weigh enough to be perceived as important and opened?)
- Will it be interesting enough for the admin to pass along to the executive?
- Will the executive think the piece is clever?
- Will the piece make enough of an impression that we’ll get a meeting when our sales people call?

If the “movie” meets all of the criteria on her mental checklist, she then “just knows” the idea will work. This all happens in a split second in her mind. By slowing down Gina’s process, we could clearly understand how, exactly, she arrives at her “gut feel” that something will work. In the case studies later in this blueprint, you will see more examples of how these CMOs “just knew” an idea would work.
That said, when the CMOs weren’t 100% sure about their customers, they did not simply rely on gut feel. Cammie Dunaway says it best: “I’m surprised by how often what I think the customer will respond to, and what they actually respond to, are completely different. Based on this, the voice of the customer is the voice I always listen to.”

The lesson: Follow your gut feel if you have the ability (like Gina) to visualize a customer interacting with your brand, and you have a checklist to hold the experience against.

**Everything boils down to B2C.**

It may seem obvious that everything boils down to B2C, but when you look at the vast majority of marketing campaigns targeted toward corporate buyers, you notice how dry and boring and, well, corporate they are. Top CMOs remember there are always real people behind the corporate veil.

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**As a marketer of any product, it begins and ends with a B2C focus, regardless of who actually purchases the product. With Microsoft Office, the main purchasers are IT buyers in companies and schools. But we would have a revolt on our hands if our customers – our users – didn’t like the product. Everything boils down to B2C.**

–David Cumberbatch, Microsoft and ACT
Put Pattern #2 Into Practice:
Act only after getting to know your customers personally.

- **Where can you meet your customers in person?** There is no substitute for seeing firsthand how customers interact with your products and brand. Where can you go to interact with customers in a real-world environment?

- **Build profiles of typical customers, and then run ideas by those profiled people.** At Old Navy, for example, they use life-sized cutouts of their typical customers and “ask” these customers if they like the new clothing designs. When sports equipment company TRX has a new marketing or product idea, they imagine which of their four or five profiled customers would like it and why. Putting a real face to a customer and using that person as a focus group is a powerful way to get insights quickly.

- **Consciously shift your perceptual position.** Analyze a marketing idea or product through the eyes of a sales rep, a customer, and a neutral observer. Become each of these people as completely as you can and interact with your marketing idea or product as that person. Have your team do this consciously, too. You’ll be amazed at the quality of insight you’ll get quickly.

- **Establish your criteria for “trusting” market research.** What convinces you that the research is valid? How do you know when to ignore it? Slow down your own thinking and determine what makes market research credible to you. Do you need to be actively involved in the gathering of the research to believe it 100%? When you’ve trusted research you haven’t been involved in, why did you trust it? What criteria did you use to evaluate the veracity of the data?

- **Unpack your own intuition.** Think about a time when you were really intuitive about a marketing campaign – something you “just knew” would work, and it did. How did you know it would work? Put yourself back in the moment when you had the “gut feel.” What caused you to have that gut feel? Did you see something in your mind’s eye? Were you evaluating the idea against some set of criteria? Slow down your own thinking and gain insights into how you “just know” something will work.

- **Determine if an idea will work before you launch it.** Once you hear a marketing idea, create a mental movie of an ideal customer experiencing your marketing campaign. How does the campaign look? How does the customer respond? What’s good about this movie? What’s not working? What emotion did you generate? Does the customer experience meet your business goals? Does the customer experience meet your criteria for success? Do this consciously, and train your staff to do it, too.
Pattern #3.

Foster an environment where creativity thrives. Explore ideas and pounce on good ones when you hear them.

Winning ideas come from anywhere.

What separates good CMOs from great ones is their ability to notice the golden needle in the haystack of marketing ideas. In most cases, CMOs aren't the ones generating the ideas. They are the geniuses who identify good ideas when they hear them, and then bring them to life.

Jeffrey said, “When I got to Kodak, someone on my team suggested the idea of a ‘tournament within a tournament’ on the PGA golf tour. The minute I heard the idea, I knew it was brilliant. The former CMO rejected the idea. I have no idea why. I told my guy to hold that idea in his back pocket for a few weeks until the time was right to propose it to our Brand Council.”

Phil from Aon said, “I kept hearing people around the globe talking about how we should sponsor a soccer team. At first, I discounted it. Sports sponsorships are known to be marketing boondoggles. But then I heard the idea enough that I started paying attention to it.”

As we learned earlier, when Gina needed to come up with a truly genius marketing campaign, she met with her team in the morning and gave them the challenge of building the sales pipeline for a million-dollar software product in just two weeks. After brainstorming ideas together, she asked the team to return the next day with proposed solutions. One of her teammates had an epiphany in the shower, and that idea became the game changer.

David was in a conference room when someone said, “Let’s look at what people are actually trying to do during a day at the office.” It was a big ah-ha moment that sparked an entire redefinition of the product.

I have never had a great idea in my office – it's always through interacting with people.

– Cammie Dunaway, KidZania
Cammie took a directive from KidZania’s founder to make sure the themed characters were the best long-term branding choices for the company. She involved researchers, employees and customers in the analysis, and ultimately arrived at the answer after a very iterative process.

Big ideas come from anywhere and everywhere. These top CMOs had clear goals, so when an idea rose to the surface, they compared it against those goals and evaluated whether it would be a success. Without clear goals, marketers are stabbing in the dark. Or they get caught up in untested creative ideas that sound fun but may not deliver results.

**Create a place for creativity to thrive.**

The way these CMOs decide on winning ideas varies dramatically. However, they all create an environment where ideas flow freely and creativity thrives. Creating this culture within the organization is critical to fostering the team’s best work. We also noticed that these CMOs know they can be both intimidating and wrong. That awareness sets a tone among the team that new ideas and risk-taking is welcome and encouraged.

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My job is to create a safe place for people to present ideas and share conflicting opinions. I allow people to fail and make it totally acceptable.

I try not to respond immediately when I don’t agree with an idea. Sometimes I will even tell people, ‘I want you to tell me what you really think. Even if I don’t jump on board immediately, keep pushing because I am someone who will change my mind if there is a good reason.’

I hold a big space in which to let things unfold, and I iterate a lot along the way. With marketing, there is a big area with a lot of possibilities. With some things, you go out and research, and with others, you just make the call. I keep the realm of possibility open, and then shut possibilities down when there is enough evidence that something will or won’t work.

–Cammie Dunaway, KidZania

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In the next example, you’ll see how Gina’s management style sparked genius on her team. It also perfectly illustrates the creative process.
“I laid the framework and then relied on my team to deliver.”

I invited my team to a morning meeting and told them in the invite, ‘We have to be creative and come up with something bold that is going to drive the sales pipeline immediately. Come ready to brainstorm at the top of your game.’

I settled on the idea that we had to do a bold direct mail campaign. It had to be so big and different that everyone opened it, no matter what. It couldn’t be a letter, postcard or small box.

I kicked off the meeting by putting up an idea first. It was a crazy, bold idea I implemented in a former life that got a 60%+ response rate. I shared this outrageous story with the team about a time I sent life size cut-outs of our CEO shaking hands with the CEO of the company we were trying to do business with, and we all had a good laugh about it. It was outrageous but did get the response rate (and not all the responses were good!) With this idea, I laid the framework and challenged the team to think.

Then people started coming up with ideas. It was a free-for-all – no bad ideas; no judgment. At the end of the hour, I knew the option we needed was not on the table. At the end of the day, I sent out an email to the team saying, ‘When you come in tomorrow, each one of you needs to have a proposed solution that can get the results we need in the timeframe we have. Do whatever you have to do to get creative.’

I didn’t plan on bringing an idea to the table myself— I built the framework and relied on the team to deliver. I’m much better at that, and they are much better at being creative.

The next morning, before the meeting started, Andrea came barreling into my office and said, ‘As you know, Gina, I do my best thinking in the shower. I have an idea.’ She told me about going to a soccer game and seeing ‘Soccer Mom’ chairs. She said, ‘I think we should send people Soccer Mom chairs, and the tagline is: Let’s have a sit down.’ (The discussion the day before was about sitting down with our clients, so Andrea was playing on that.) My instinct was, ‘This is the right thing. Let’s do it!’

I didn’t overact to the excitement because I was careful to make sure everyone had the chance to present their ideas in the meeting. Otherwise, people feel squashed. So, we did the round-robin, and everyone presented their ideas. When the team heard Andrea’s idea, they also just knew it was the right one. I didn’t have to say anything.

–Gina Sandon, IBM
Honor the creative process.

Do you ever notice that your best ideas come to you in the shower? Or when you’re driving? Or when you’re working out? It’s a well-documented phenomenon that the best ideas come to us when we’re relaxed and not over-thinking the situation. They come when our mind has a chance to relax enough for the best ideas to float through the clutter. The stories from Cammie and Gina highlight that genius CMOs know that the best ideas come naturally, and they create space for those ideas to come to the surface.

The creative process has four steps:

1. **Preparation & Absorption.** In this step, we focus on the problem and explore its dimensions. Outline the problem; state the goals for a desired solution; and explore how to solve it. The seed of an idea has been planted.

2. **Incubation.** Then, like a hen sitting on an egg, the subconscious mind sits with the problem and noodles on it in the background. The seed is growing even though we aren’t aware of it.

3. **Illumination.** The *Eureka!* moment hits, and the idea explodes into our conscious awareness when we least expect it. The egg has hatched.

4. **Verification.** We consciously process our genius idea and refine it, elaborate on it, and then apply it. The little chick waddles, then grows into a big, juicy hen.

You’ll note that in these examples, “big ideas” came only after the CMOs outlined the goals and incubated the problem. They created space for the idea to hatch. With Phil, the big idea took several months to hatch. With Gina, it took less than 24 hours. Time is not the driver. Outlining the problem clearly and creating a space for an idea to unfold is far more important.

Decide where growth will come from.

Growth is the cornerstone goal of every business. Marketers know that growth can come from three places:

- New markets/customers for existing products
- New products to existing markets/customers
- New products to new markets/customers

Most of our CMOs said that, generally, you can’t win big on better features. To make a huge impact, you need to capture excitement and passion. You need radical insights. These genius CMOs didn’t focus on building a better widget. Instead, they tried something totally new. They were very clear about their growth strategies. They were conscious about what it would take to create something big.
This may be more obvious than genius, but we mention it because this clarity of thinking allowed these CMOs to focus their attention on big spaces, and later to present their ideas to the organization.

How do you determine where growth will come from?

**Decide where the excitement will come from.**

The best companies and marketing campaigns are exciting. Just look at Apple. Great brands are surrounded by excitement, and people are eager to be a part of them. According to Phil, “It’s easier to recruit for companies with excitement. It’s about the people, and I want them to be excited to work here. It’s as much about selling our firm inside the company as it is the products or services to customers.”

All of our CMOs' campaigns had a high degree of excitement. When developing your own campaigns, ask if you can:

- Create excitement internally?
- Latch on to other’s excitement?

If I can identify something that a large number of people are excited about, and my internal team can get excited about it, and I can tie my product to it, I know the campaign is going to work. And then I ask, ‘When we monetize that excitement, is it worth the cost of creating it?’

In the insurance business, it’s hard to create excitement, so we latched onto the global excitement around soccer and the Manchester United. The enthusiasm that soccer generates around the world is unlike anything in the U.S. – not even a rock concert. By tying ourselves to this kind of excitement, we created a lot of excitement internally and with our customers.

–Phil Clement, Aon
View the situation through multiple lenses.

Coming up with big ideas often requires looking at the same thing in a different way. An effective way to generate new insights is to look at your products through different lenses. These lenses could include:

- **Macro factors of market.** Look at the broader factors impacting the marketplace. What is going on with the economy? Are we in a recession; seeing a lot of layoffs; dealing with high unemployment? What is going on, broadly, in your customer’s daily life?

- **Adjacent people.** Who else is invested in the success of the customer (e.g., parents invested in the success of kids)? Who else touches the customer (e.g., vets and dog groomers touch dog owners)?

- **Adjacent markets.** What are people doing before and after they buy my product? What else do they buy at the same time?

- **Urgency around what’s next.** What is blowing up traditional brick-and-mortar offices? What are competitors doing? Who else in the market might be a competitor soon?

- **Trends.** What’s hot right now? What are people talking about? Spending time on? What start-up companies are getting the most funding and why? What topics appear most online, in books, magazines and TV? What is working in other industries, and how can it apply to mine?

**How did we come up with the $30-billion to $40-billion insight?** We were sitting in the room, looking at Microsoft Office, and saying, ‘We need to redefine this market. We just can’t grow the existing market enough.’

An important question we asked was, ‘What new lens can we use to look at this in a different way?’ We started looking at adjacent markets to our software products.

The big ah-ha was when we decided to look at what people were trying to do in a day at work. We were making productivity software on the desktop, but people were doing all this stuff on the Web. We started asking, ‘What can we do that integrates the Web?’ The Web was our adjacent market. We asked, ‘What are people doing right before they use us? Right after they use us?’ This provided a lot of information. We then asked, ‘How can we observe what they are doing on the Web?’

All of these insights ultimately led us to totally redefine the market, and ultimately, our product.

–David Cumberbatch, Microsoft and ACT
Be bold.

These top CMOs think big. They believe that they can come up with and implement big ideas. And because they operate from big dreams, high-quality goals, and a deep understanding of their customers, these big ideas are not big risks to them. They know their bold ideas will work. Top CMOs aren’t content with playing the same game as everyone else. They thrive on being bold.

I’ve launched a string of whacko campaigns… a string of things in my career that turned out to be game changers. They all had the ‘be bold’ theme.

~Gina Sandon, IBM

Sponsoring the most well-known soccer team in the world was the completely counterintuitive decision for our insurance based company. But the math was clear and the decision would actually accomplish our goals. However, it was a bold move.

~Phil Clement, Aon

Run ideas through the filter of your goals.

As we’ve discovered, what separates top marketers from everyone else is their ability to articulate their goals, and then run ideas through the filter of those goals. When top marketers say, “I just knew it would work,” what they’re really saying is, “I very, very quickly – in the blink of an eye – ran that idea through my list of goals, and it met all my criteria. That’s how I knew it would work.” That inner ding that says “Yes!” is really just super-fast mental processing. There is a structure to intuition.

Our genius CMOs illustrate this point beautifully. You’ll notice that while they initially said, “I just knew it would work,” when we unpacked their thinking, we found they were actually running ideas through a set of criteria.
The PGA “Tournament Inside a Tournament”

When I heard the idea for the PGA ‘Tournament Inside a Tournament’, I thought, ‘This is a brilliant idea.’ It was brilliant because it met every one of our business objectives, which were to:

- raise brand awareness
- build the B2B and B2C businesses
- spend a fraction of the dollars of something else – and save millions
- look big, even when we spend small
- drive customer satisfaction
- host closing events with customers
- tie in to a choice fan-base of consumers

I heard the idea, and in a flash of a second, I thought through how it would work. I saw who would come, how the press release would be written and issued. I imagined a typical customer – a sort of amalgamation of a lot of our customers – going through that golf event experience. This customer is the owner of a print business between $2 million to $100 million, runs a successful operation, has lots of time for leisure because he is 40-60 years old. I saw how this guy would show up, how we would interact with him – everything. It was a movie in my mind, and once I saw it, I knew it would work.

– Jeffrey Hayzlett, Kodak

As you read on, notice how these CMOs create “mental movies” of campaign ideas. They have a vision of the entire event – the customers, the excitement, the closing opportunities – and if the pieces come together in a way that meets their goals, they “just know” the campaign will work.

On the next page, you’ll hear more about how Gina created a mental movie of the direct mail campaign idea. It’s a key part of the process in knowing an idea will work.
“Let’s have a sit down.”

I have learned over the years to trust my instinct and gut. I’m listening to this really clever campaign idea. I can see it. I can see Ed Zander, CEO of Motorola. His admin places a box on his desk that says, ‘Let’s have a sit down.’ And the box is big enough that he’ll open it. Or maybe his admin opens it and tells him, ‘Someone sent you a chair.’ Then he asks, ‘What is this company? Who sent this chair?’

Getting past the gatekeeper is key. The gatekeeper needs to think what I sent is clever enough to pass along to her boss. Otherwise, she will take it home for herself or be too embarrassed to show it to her boss. I could see the gatekeeper chuckling, ‘Oh this crazy company sent you a chair. What do you want to do with it?’ It may only be 30 seconds in front of the prospect, but that’s OK, because when the sales team follows up, we can build rapport with either the gatekeeper or the executive and get a meeting on calendar.

Our goal was to fill the sales pipeline. This campaign went right after our goal – to have a ‘sit down.’ It’s literal. It’s a call to action. It’s what we marketers are trying to figure out.

I also knew that delivering boxes to multiple executives at the same company on the same day would create chatter and elevate the discussion in their minds. If the CIO, CMO, CEO and CFO all get a big box, they’ll talk to each other. ‘Did you get that crazy chair? What is this company? Has anyone heard of them before?’ Then someone has to look into it.

I brought a lot of examples together from my past, ran this idea through my checklist, and it felt right in my gut because it met all of the criteria. The campaign ultimately got a 60%+ response rate.

–Gina Sandon, IBM

If you go back to Gina’s campaign goals, you’ll see that her team came up with an idea that met every one of them. You’ll also notice that she arrived at her “gut feel” by quickly visualizing the experience and running it through her mental checklist.
Put Pattern #3 Into Practice: Foster an environment where creativity thrives. Explore ideas, and pounce on good ones when you hear them.

- **Evaluate your creative culture and make adjustments to create a place where big ideas thrive.** Creativity thrives when people feel safe to share ideas – and safe to fail. If these two elements don’t exist in your culture, consciously make a shift. It may mean you’re the one who needs to shift. Notice the language you use. Is it inviting? Does it encourage people to push back against you? How can you help good ideas rise to the surface?

- **Look at the same thing in new ways.** If you are looking for big ideas, then bring your best, most innovative people together. Get ideas flowing by discussing:
  - Where will big growth come from?
  - Where will the excitement come from? Can we latch on to others’ excitement, or should we create our own?
  - What different lenses can be applied? How can we look at this differently?
  - What is working in other industries or places that we can bring to our world?

- **Provide your team with criteria, and send them out to find big ideas that meet it.** If you want to launch a big idea, have your team find examples of where it has been done before (e.g., examples of where companies have achieved a 60%+ response rate). What can you learn and take from those examples?

- **Honor the creative process.** To get the best ideas, honor the creative process. Clearly frame the challenge to your team; outline what you want to achieve. Spend at least an hour (many times, even longer) brainstorming ideas. Then walk away. Let people relax. Create a process for people to come back and share the ideas, and have the entire team to build on those ideas.
Pattern #4.
Play smart politics.

You want to do what?

Once these CMOs nailed down a bold idea that met their goals, they next needed to figure out how to get their game-changing, counterintuitive, “whacko” ideas approved by their conservative bosses.

These CMOs expect resistance and are smart about how they pitch bold ideas to senior executives. Before they barge into their bosses offices, excited and out of breath about their genius ideas, they take a deep breath and come up with a plan.

Top CMOs are great at building creative, undaunted environments among their teams. But often, the rest of the organization has a lower tolerance for risk and can be skeptical that marketing campaigns can make a real impact. As Gina said, “The sales team usually distrusts that marketing activities will impact the bottom line. The first thing I have to do is sell the sales people on our big idea, and salespeople are the hardest to sell to.”

I think big, but I also make sure I play the political game well. I do a lot of check-ins with my boss and business-division leaders. I get lots of negative feedback when I first pitch an idea. And then the resistance lessens as I start to show results, and then I start getting positive feedback. It’s a process.

–David Cumberbatch, Microsoft and ACT

I am always balancing two things at once: building the brand and getting support of the organization.

–Phil Clement, Aon
What are the corporate politics? Who is going to be against the idea? It’s a process to get a big idea approved.

Good politicians count the votes before they bring a bill to the floor. CMOs do the same. They figure out who will be for and against the idea. They come up with a strategy to win over the opposition. And they treat the opposition as a key part of the process.

I ask myself, ‘Why didn’t the guy before me do this PGA Tournament sponsorship idea?’ Then I start thinking about the politics in the company. Who in the company is going to fight me because it’s golf? How do I sell around it?

There are people who are going to be obstructionist. People give permission to you to launch these ideas, and then they all line up against you and fight you. You have to run the gauntlet and fight all these people and get beat up. If you survive, then you get to do the idea.

–Jeffrey Hayzlett, Kodak

Opposition is a good thing.

Rather than get annoyed by people who don’t like their ideas, these CMOs treat the approval process as a chance to further evangelize the company’s strategy, goals and branding mission. They use the opposition to their advantage.

For executives who questioned the decision to sponsor Manchester United, it was a chance to talk about the strategy. We also had executives deeply committed to making it work even more than me.

We let people self-discover. People were quick to have opinions, and we let them. We were respectful of all the different viewpoints. I saw the questioning as a chance to talk about our strategy and remind people of what we were trying to accomplish. Healthy opposition gave us a chance to have good conversations in the organization and say to ourselves, “if not this – how will we reach our goals?”

–Phil Clement, Aon
Outline success metrics.

A clear pattern among these CMOs is determining how to measure success ahead of time. They used these success metrics to drive approval of the idea. Laying out the criteria for success, and then tracking progress against those metrics, is exceptionally smart politics. Conservative executives feel much more comfortable with and confident in an idea when they can quantify a CMO’s “gut feel.”

**How did I know the idea was working? I laid out the criteria ahead of time. I sat down with my team and asked, ‘How will we know if this is successful?’**

- How many customers will we get?
- How many closing events will we have?
- How many deals will we close?
- Is the customer within X% of ability to close?

You’ll have to report if your campaign is successful, especially in a big corporation. So, you’re better off laying out the success criteria as early as possible. Do it before you announce the campaign and kick it off.

> – Jeffrey Hayzlett, Kodak

Create transparency.

Marketers sometimes have a reputation for sponsoring boondoggles – throwing lavish parties under the guise of generating revenue. The CMOs in this blueprint were hyper-conscious of this, and they played smart politics to avoid any negative perceptions.

When Jeffrey presented the PGA sponsorship idea, he also asserted that during the campaign, he wouldn't play a single round of golf. He wanted people to know this was about business – not about fun for the marketing team.

When Phil launched the Manchester United sponsorship, he put an open application on the company intranet for tickets and then announced which clients were invited to the box seats and how much revenue those clients were worth to the business.

This type of transparency built a sense of trust that the marketing team was focused on generating results for the business, not throwing a fun party.
Put Pattern #4 Into Practice: Play smart politics.

- **Count the votes.** You’ve come up with a really brilliant marketing idea, and now you need buy-in from the organization. Count the votes. Make a list of who may be for and against the idea. Anticipate the resistance before it happens, and come up with answers before concerns are voiced.

- **Use opposition to your advantage.** Since you’ve mapped out clear goals and marketing objectives, opposition to your marketing idea is really just a chance to remind the organization about those goals and objectives. Consciously use these conversations as an opportunity to get the organization on the same page. Come prepared for meetings with your goals, and always tie the campaign idea back to those goals.

- **Establish success metrics and communicate them clearly.** Decide the success metrics of the campaign with your team. How many new customers will you acquire? How much additional revenue will you generate? How much more satisfied will customers be after the experience? How much additional market share will you gain? Be very clear about how you will measure the impact of the campaign and the ROI. Share these criteria with senior management, and hold yourself accountable to them. Once you’ve achieved these metrics, tell everyone who will listen about the wildly successful campaign.

- **Create transparency.** If you’re launching an idea that may appear to others as a “boondoggle,” create transparency around the campaign. If you sponsor a sports team or event, broadly share who has attended and how much revenue these guests bring to the organization. Clearly communicate the policies about who attends these big events and why.
Pattern #5.

Milk great ideas for all they’re worth.

How can we make this idea even bigger – even more exciting?

Once the idea is approved, the CMOs next ask, “How can we make this idea even bigger – even more exciting?” Launching the campaign to customers is the first step. Next, these CMOs work to generate more momentum, energy and excitement to the campaign to extend its reach and effectiveness.

I like adding zeroes to things. I like making things as massive as possible. I’m always asking myself, ‘How can I make this bigger? How can I get a bigger return on this? How can I make it both big and successful?’

– Jeffrey Hayzlett, Kodak
Add zeroes.

Jeffrey said more than once, “I like to add zeroes to things.” He takes the nugget of an idea and builds out every possible extension of the idea. The question he asks is, “How can I make this even bigger?” Once the campaign has a theme, our genius CMOs look for ways to extend it further. They ask questions like:

- Can I create an internal campaign for employees around this theme?
- What’s another use for an existing product that ties into our theme? (e.g., selling cameras to golf pros to analyze their swings)
- What audiences are related to the customer we’re reaching, and how can we get to them, too? (e.g., the wives of pro golfers)
- Can I add partners to the idea? Do co-marketing opportunities exist? (e.g., package a camera with Calloway golf clubs for a Father’s Day promotion)
- Can we repeat this idea in multiple venues? (e.g., host the same event at each of the 24 golf games)
- What can we feature on the company website, in social media campaigns, and in other communications to support the theme?
- Which celebrities are related to the theme? Can they share the message with customers and employees? (e.g., get a former pro golfer to come speak at events)

With the PGA Tournament sponsorship, I thought about all of the different ways to make it cool. Maybe we can have software. Golf pros can take photos of people’s golf swings with our cameras and analyze them. They can print the analysis on our printers. I can sell that into every pro shop in the country, which is a new market for our existing products.

–Jeffrey Hayzlett, Kodak

Target secondary audiences.

Sometimes it takes a village to create excitement. The question to ask is, “Who is my target audience, and who can get them excited about this idea?” Who are the people related to the audience you’re targeting? The following story from Jeffrey illustrates this clever marketing strategy beautifully.
“Wives control the guys.”

The PGA Tournament Inside a Tournament campaign was a big story because the Tour’s prize was $1 million, and that would be won by a pro golfer who was just slugging it out. Tiger Woods and the big names only play 13 games a year. The rest of the guys on the Tour play 18 of 24 games in the season. So, I asked, ‘How do we get these pro golfers interested in this special tournament?’

I knew that we’d get to them through their wives. So, we got a hold of their wives and told them their husbands have a chance of winning a million bucks. So, what’s the wife doing? She’s saying to her husband ‘Get out there!’

Wives control the guys. I know what that’s like.

Years ago, when I ran sales contests at my company, I gave away a free trip to the South of France. Who do I tell about that? I tell the wives. (At that time, nearly everyone on my sales team was male.) One month, I sent French scarves to the wives. The next month, champagne. I did this to remind the sales people and their wives that they have a shot. The wives got excited and said, ‘I don’t mind if you’re on the road. You have a chance to win us a trip to the south of France!’

I sent every one of the players’ wives free cameras and printers, along with talking points so they could educate their husbands. Many of the wives traveled with their husbands, so they could take pictures with their new Kodak cameras. I also gave them free Kodak Gallery accounts and free book credits so they could create a book of photos of their husbands. I also gave the video camera guys at CBS and NBC free cameras. Why? Because the camera guy on the course could work the camera angle to capture the scoreboard – with the Kodak logo in the shot.

My goal was to get the players excited and involved. The more they knew about the contest, the more they talked about it. So, when someone put a mic in front of them, they talked about it.

– Jeffrey Hayzlett, Kodak
Create excitement from the inside, out.

Our genius CMOs used their campaign themes to create excitement inside the company at the same time as creating excitement with customers. The theory being that if people inside the company are excited about a campaign, that excitement will spill over into everything the company does, and the overall energy of the company improves. Several CMOs made it an equal priority to create internal campaigns that mirrored the external ones.

Phil and Jeffrey wanted to energize employees and generate enthusiasm about the future. They both created internal campaigns that mirrored their sports sponsorship campaigns, and they said creating internal excitement around a campaign translated into excitement about the external messaging.

As Jeffrey said, “I implemented the program internally for employees before it launched to the public. For example, employees had their own golf challenge. Each floor got to play and compete against each other. I really wanted to have the buy-in of team. And I wanted to remind people that Kodak is a fun brand, and we can have a lot of fun at work. I also had ambassadors internally that talked about the campaign and its objectives.”

Motivating talent is critical and it’s important to promote the company internally just as we promote our services externally. It’s VERY important to sell internal employees on the idea in addition to the product or service. We do a lot of fun things with soccer. We have our employees carrying three soccer balls around the world, like the Olympic torch, and get them all to London. When the ball arrives in your office you have events with clients and explore what it means to be on the Aon team. Fun things like that created internal excitement and drove home the message.

– Phil Clement, Aon

I promoted the heck out the PGA Tournament internally. At town hall meetings, I showed clips of what happened the week before in the Tournament. The week before, there were 51 mentions of Kodak on national television, where a CBS announcer talked about a picturesque hole and said, ‘Isn’t this a Kodak moment!’ I shared those clips with our staff, and I told them we didn’t have to pay for any of it. I reminded them of how what we did generated such awesome coverage.

– Jeffrey Hayzlett, Kodak
Tie your company values to the values of the campaign.

Another way to milk ideas for all they’re worth is to build ties between the campaign themes and the company values. These CMOs asked, “What qualities of the campaign can I leverage to spread a message internally?” Phil describes this strategy below.

Just putting your company name on team jersey isn’t enough to get people believing in it. Our marketing campaign has to point out that our company focuses on the same things that the soccer team does, like teamwork, developing talent, and winning.

I worked to tie our company to all of the great things about the team. For example, the coach of Manchester United starts recruiting players when they are nine years old and makes a point of building young talent over time. That same metaphor works for our company because we believe in the team and we develop people over time. People could relate to this guiding metaphor.

In marketing, I listen for the words people say after they hear our message. When I hear things like, ‘Aon is uniting in a way I have never seen us uniting,’ I hear the word “uniting” and amplify that word because it works. Or maybe I start hearing the word “teamwork” and then I amplify that word in headlines and other marketing materials. Every conversation is a chance to test what words work and which don’t resonate.

–Phil Clement, Aon
Step and repeat.

Like most things, the greatest expense is at the outset of a campaign. Once an idea or concept is in place, it's cost-efficient to multiply it in other venues. Once CMOs see the campaign is working, they find areas where they can repeat the concept. They ask:

- **Can this campaign apply to other products? Other divisions of the company? Other countries?** For example, can I use the same themes from the PGA sponsorship for something equivalent in Europe?

- **Can I repeat the event in other places or at other times throughout the year?** For example, can I take what I did with the men's PGA and do it with the women's PGA?

- **Will this idea work with a different set of customers?** For example, can we take our marketing campaign for consumers and apply it to our B2B customers, like golf pro shops?

- **Can I replicate the campaign to generate excitement with employees and partners?** For example, can I host an internal golf tournament with our employees that mirrors the PGA tournament we are sponsoring?

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How do I take this idea and take it other places. Where else do the characteristics and processes of that campaign fit other things I could also do? And yet I could wrap a rope around it and tie it all together?

–Jeffrey Hayzlett, Kodak
### Put Pattern #5 Into Practice: Milk great ideas for all they’re worth.

- **Add zeroes.** Make the idea even bigger by expanding on the theme and creating different spokes from the core. How can you take the themes of an idea and create internal campaigns for employees? How can you take existing products and come up with another use for them (e.g., selling cameras to golf pros to analyze their swings)? How can you repeat this idea in multiple venues? What can be included on the company website and in social media campaigns to support the theme? What famous people related to the campaign theme can share stories with customers or employees?

- **Target secondary audiences.** Determine who else influences your customer, and get them excited, too. Include them in your campaign. What people are related to the target audience, and how can you get to them, too?

- **Create excitement from the inside, out.** Look for ways to replicate the external campaign to internal customers and employees. Do this before launching the campaign to generate excitement. Keep the momentum going by creating ongoing events for employees. Be sure and share the success of the campaign with employees via town halls and other internal initiatives.

- **Tie your company’s values to the values of the campaign.** Use the campaign as a way to reinforce the values of your company. If you are sponsoring a team, talk about teamwork internally. Look at the attributes of the campaign and tie them to attributes of your company. The goal is to make as many connections as possible to the campaign.

- **Step and repeat.** Look for ways you can repeat the campaign. Can the theme apply to other products or divisions of the company? Other countries? Can you repeat the event in other places or at other times throughout the year? Would this idea work with a different set of customers? Can you replicate the campaign and get excitement going internally?
You are on the path to marketing genius.

Take these ideas and create something truly genius in your organization.

Which patterns of genius are you already using in your organization? Which could you add to your strategy to generate even better results? We hope we illustrated that the key to marketing success is starting off with big dreams, clear goals and laser focus. These five CMOs get results because they operate from great goals. And they do a lot of other smart things along the way. Take these patterns and make them your own.

Send this blueprint out to members of your team and work through each of the five patterns in your organization. You'll be amazed at what you can accomplish when you model the thinking patterns of highly creative and successful people!
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At the Everyday Genius Institute, we take people who are exceptional at what they do, deconstruct their processes, and then teach you exactly how you can get the same results.

We reveal, for the first time, exactly how geniuses think, then teach you how to do the same. By modeling the strategies of the best in the world, you will unlock your inner genius, cut years off your learning curve, and achieve mastery easier than you ever imagined.

To learn more about us and the strategies of genius we've deconstructed on topics ranging from wine-tasting to sales, visit www.everydaygeniusinstitute.com.

We love speaking about genius.
We love sharing genius thinking with audiences around the world. Let us show your audience how to get immediately smarter by employing the five key strategies of genius. Or let us share genius thinking on specific topics ranging from marketing to parenting.

We love training people to be geniuses.
What excites us most is making people smarter and more effective. We offer half-day, full-day and multi-day training courses on topics such as, “Walt Disney’s Creative Strategy,” “Unleashing Your Own Inner Genius” and “How to Model Your Top Talent.”

We love modeling the geniuses in your world.
How awesome would it be if everyone in your company was as good as your very best talent? If you have top talent in your organization and would like to know exactly what they are doing to achieve top-tier results, we’ll model your those individuals (e.g., sales associates, customer service reps, engineers), and then teach your team exactly how they can get the same results.

Contact Taryn Voget at taryn@everydaygeniusinstitute.com to discuss ideas on how we can unleash the genius in your world.

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About the The CMO CLUB

Where the best CMO conversations happen.

The CMO CLUB brings chief marketing officers together in a private, exclusive environment of openness and contribution, enabling them to become better leaders, marketers, officers and deal-makers. Tailored exclusively for top marketing executives, the CLUB hosts dinners and events, and shares reports and research from leaders in the marketing industry. The CLUB also hosts the premier “Heads of Marketing-only” online community for idea-sharing, collaboration and career opportunities. Founded by seasoned marketing executive Pete Krainik in 2007, The CMO CLUB currently has more than 800 members worldwide.

Visit The CMO CLUB today at www.TheCMOCLUB.com.
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Jackie Ross, who helped organize the interviews, provided valuable input to the project, and edited the final report. Jackie is a consummate professional match-maker and avid collector of people, stories and ideas. Currently VP of Account Management with Gerson Lehrman Group, she connects executives to experts for highly specific and relevant insights. Previous roles with World 50, Corporate Executive Board and Ping Partners gave Jackie the opportunity to build an unrivaled network of CMO friends and colleagues. She is an active member of The CMO CLUB and always eager to be surrounded by marketing genius.

Xavier Lee, who actively participated in the genius interviews and provided key insights into this report. Xavier draws from a rich global leadership experience and has led various business units in Fortune 100 companies like American Express, where he developed new market strategies for both U.S. and International markets, and Cigna, where he managed the Strategic Marketing team, New Product Development and Internet Business Group. Xavier specializes in building high-performance teams. Learn more about Xavier at the Centered Leadership Institute.  
http://centeredleadershipinstitute.com/

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http://www.michaelalbans.com

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