Foreword: Marketing Thought Leaders: Pioneers at the Growth Frontier

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by Randall Rothenberg and Robert Liodice

IN JANUARY 2007, as in most Januarys for the past decade, advertising and marketing news was dominated by Super Bowl Sunday. The advertising again rivaled the game itself in drawing media and public attention, with the blockbuster television commercials the subject of TV specials, front-page newspaper stories, and breathless magazine commentary classifying ads as winners or losers. But as we looked over the 15 interviews in this book — interviews conducted with noted chief marketing officers from some of the world's most successful corporations in a variety of industries — an odd but intriguing realization emerged: The phrase "Super Bowl advertising" did not come up once.

Super Bowl advertising is yesterday's news. Indeed, advertising itself — if defined traditionally as marketing communications products constructed by agencies to fit in predefined paper spaces or electronic time slots — is looking somewhat long in the tooth. The most articulate CMOs one meets today, including but not limited to those interviewed in this book, are testifying to a broader shift in the advertising and marketing landscape. Globalization, the rise of sophisticated new media, demographic shifts in the customer base of many countries, and the evolution of analytic and managerial tools have not-so-quietly progressed and combined. In part as a consequence of that shift, we are seeing the reinvigoration and reinvention of the craft and science of marketing by a select group of professionals from many disciplines and backgrounds. In their view, marketing is meaningless unless it does one thing beautifully and provably — drive their company's growth.

Both of us have long been champions of this idea — and we saw it reinforced in the research that helped inspire this volume. For the last four years, Booz Allen Hamilton and the Association of National Advertisers (ANA) have teamed to study the rise of marketing as a core function in the operations of consumer and business-to-business companies.

The research found many marketers who did not link their work with growth very explicitly or completely. They saw themselves involved primarily with overseeing conventional advertising, managing external communications agencies, or generating greater awareness for their firms' brands or wares through mass media exposure. They persisted in this view despite the rising importance of the Internet, the newfound ability to track marketing performance, the escalating speed of technology transfer and product commoditization, and the increasing fickleness of consumers with almost unlimited access to product and pricing information. As the study grew to encompass several surveys, an expanding group of benchmarking interviews, and research into Booz Allen's "organizational DNA" database of 100,000 entries, we discovered that this "Marketing Services Provider" approach was correlated with lower overall performance by companies — certainly a source of leadership frustration and a shortener of CMO tenure.

But the study also discerned a strikingly different model emerging from the chaos of modern media and marketing: marketing organizations that had better alignment with their firm's leadership, greater responsibilities, more advanced decision rights, capabilities different from those of their traditionalist peers, and, most importantly, a greater correlation with company growth and profitability.

A report about this study dubbed these marketing teams "Growth Champions," and, borrowing a term from Harvard Business School Professors John A. Quelch and Gail J. McGovern, it labeled their leaders "Super-CMOs." (See "Growth Champions" by Edward Landry, Andrew Tipping, and Jay Kumar, *strategy+business,* Summer 2006, www.strategy-business.com/press/article/06206.)

Whatever the industry, companies today have little choice but to embrace the Growth Champion marketing model — to become, as Rob Malcolm, president of global marketing, sales, and innovation at the $18 billion liquor giant Diageo PLC puts it, "the engine room of demand creation."

As you peruse these interviews, you will find a host of observations that help explain why growth, not the production of communications products, has become marketing's goal. The trends our subjects highlight are artifacts of the changing economic and media environment. We see them playing out every day in the organizations we lead, the Interactive Advertising Bureau and the Association of National Advertisers. And in these interviews, we see a variety of illuminating ways that they have contributed to a shift in marketers' attitudes.

Five critical trends are worth particular attention in the new landscape of the Growth Champion marketer:

- **The consumer is not an idiot; she is your boss.** That consumers have near-total control of communications channels, choices, and content is now the principal underpinning of companies' marketing strategy.
- **The "purchase funnel" has Web feet.** Interactive media are perceived as central to marketers' new growth mission, capable of supporting brand awareness, retail traffic generation, product trial, loyalty programs, and other needs.
- **Marketing experimentation is accelerating,** along with the need for new metrics, as communications cost barriers continue to plunge.

- **Marketers' arsenal is expanding.** The definition of "advertising" is changing to include multi-platform campaigns, marketer in-sourced infotainment, user-generated content, complex CRM programs, and other activities rarely associated with traditional advertising.
- **There is a race for new capabilities** among media, agencies, and marketers as the marketing-media value chain grows more tangled and competitive.

Consumers in Charge

Companies have long paid homage to the consumer, of course. But most longtime marketers would concede that during the decades in which marketing was premised largely on communicating mass products to mass audiences via mass media, consumers (and even B2B customers) became, in executives' eyes, research constructs — soulless aggregations of demographic or psychographic data, made real at best through the one-way mirrors at focus-group facilities. That they were reduced routinely to caricature is evidenced by the equally routine, if vain, admonitions by marketing leaders *not* to reduce them to caricature. "The consumer is not an idiot," advertising legend David Ogilvy famously wrote. "She is your wife."

Marketers could persist in pushing communications to consumers without regard to their interests because media shelf space was very limited. In a media environment where high tech has created both myriad outbound communications channels and equivalent opportunities for high-touch interactions with the audience, power clearly has shifted to consumers. Once statistical abstractions, "consumers" and "customers" are becoming more tangible focal points of marketers' and companies' interests. Moreover, consumers are rejecting irrelevant information, entertainment, and marketing communications, exercising their option to seek more personal satisfaction wherever they can. "Engagement," "relevance," and "results" are moving closer to the center of marketing energy, as consumers increasingly avoid commodity advertising. If Ogilvy were alive today, no doubt he'd be saying, "The consumer is not an idiot; she is your boss."

This rising consumer-centricity is driving the marketing organization's increased influence over other functions, even in companies whose historic emphases have excluded marketing. At FedEx Corporation, Executive Vice President for Market Development Mike Glenn sits on the executive committee with the delivery giant's CEO, CFO, CIO, and general counsel. At their Friday morning meetings, he says, "My principal responsibility…is to keep the organization focused on the customer and ensure that we are always striving to exceed customer expectations."

The importance of the consumer is also embodied in Keith Pardy's job title: senior vice president for strategic marketing, brand management, and consumer relationships at the Finnish mobile communications company Nokia. He tells us that the balance of power between technology and marketing, once 80/20 in favor of technology, is now at 50/50. "Decisions were made about what technology to add in a device based on what was invented," he says. Today, "we believe in our heart and soul that technology exists for the benefit of people. If our products or services do not make people's lives easier or more enjoyable, then we have missed the mark. It's people first, technology second."

Unsurprisingly, this notion — that the brand promise begins with customers, is realized through customer experiences, and is shepherded by the marketing team — has led Growth Champion marketers in many companies to take informal, and often formal, charge of cultural leadership. "HP knows the top 10 factors that drive customer loyalty, and it measures them constantly," says Cathy Lyons, who recently completed a two-year stint as CMO of Hewlett-Packard Company. "Corporate marketing can then go back to each business and say, 'Here's where you're falling behind in terms of the customer experience you're providing, and here's how it relates to market share and margin growth.'"

Such consumer-centric corporate cultures are rejecting the one-way marketing conventions of the last century, and for good reason: There is ample evidence that consumers are tuning out traditional advertising. Studies by Forrester Research, Yankelovich, and others show widespread adoption of many media-manipulation devices — digital video recorders, MP3 music players, satellite radios, and the like — specifically for the purpose of advertising control.

Yet this same research doesn't indicate a rebuff to marketing itself; on the contrary, more than half of consumers have indicated they would spend more to receive personally relevant marketing messages. Research by Google Inc. — whose robust search engine has proved among the most personalized and disruptive forces in modern marketing — indicates that pertinent marketing communications remain highly valuable to consumers.

"We have always viewed advertising as information," says Omid Kordestani, senior vice president for global sales and business development at Google. "We've been doing lots of studies on how video works into this mix. Do you put ads on as sponsorships? Do you let ads interrupt the streaming? Do they appear at the end of a video clip? Or do you use a subscription model? In every case we have studied, the ad models win. The usage is higher — and the playbacks are higher — when the content is ad-supported."

The culprit, even from the consumer perspective, isn't advertising per se. It is irrelevant advertising that interrupts, interferes, or disturbs. Unfortunately, this has been the central weapon in the arsenal of mass marketing, at least since the dawn of broadcasting. This form of commodity advertising — it is bought in bulk and its pricing is based on the volume of impressions it delivers, a standard known as gross rating points (GRPs) — has for years been known in the advertising trade, derisively but tellingly, as "tonnage." Its doyen was a 1950s advertising industry leader named Rosser Reeves, whose famous campaigns for Wonder Bread, M&M candies, and Anacin analgesics flooded the airwaves during the early years of television. "If 90 percent [of the audience] do not remember it," Reeves once counseled a client about a campaign, "then the story is not worn out."

Following their consumers, contemporary Super-CMOs are supplanting tonnage advertising with communications tools and techniques that promise to engage, or be more directly relevant to, their audiences. "In the 1900s, we did monologue marketing. We did most — if not all — of the talking. And we expected the consumer to listen," says John Hayes, the chief marketing officer of American Express Company, the global travel- and financial-services giant. "Now, in the 21st century, we've moved to a dialogue. Consumers want to be heard. In fact, they will not tolerate *not* being heard.... The world is in the middle of an ongoing conversation."

Hayes continues: "A marketer's challenge (and job) is to enter that conversation, to be a part of the conversation. And when you do join in, you had better be prepared to add value. If your attitude is, 'We're going to pound away with this many GRPs talking about our new product,' all you're doing is interrupting the conversation. People don't like that."

The Interactive Core

Experiments in creating more relevant and engaging marketing are rampant in advanced marketing organizations. Some marketers are trying their hand at working with user-generated content; in conjunction with American Express's support for the Tribeca Film Festival, Hayes's team held a competition for 15-second movies "shot" on cell phones, with finalists featured on the company's Web site. Other companies are introducing technologies that allow consumers to customize products. Nokia, for example, launched a Web site through which its customers can choose exactly which information and entertainment services flow through their handsets.

Indeed, it's no exaggeration to say that the Internet has replaced television, if not at the center of marketing activity, then certainly at the center of the marketing imagination. Whereas once the "purchase funnel" — the visual realization of the distinct stages of and channels for marketing communications — clearly distinguished different media for different purposes, today Internet-enabled devices, tools, and vehicles are deemed essential to every stage of marketing activity, from awareness generation to purchase consideration to customer retention.

To be sure, television remains important. "We haven't walked away from more traditional media like TV," says Anne M. Finucane, chief marketing officer and president, Northeast, of Bank of America. "Yes, there is fragmentation, and yes, there is overall less viewership relative to the total number of people. But it is still the number one medium to get your message out." But for many companies, budgets are beginning to follow marketers' imaginations online, away from television. American Express says its allocation to television has declined to less than 50 percent of its advertising budget from 80 percent in 1994, with the non-television funds going to new media and events. During her term as CMO, HP's Lyons says the PC and peripherals maker shifted money out of television — with startling speed. At the beginning of 2006, only 10 percent of its marketing spend was in new media; by year-end, the figure stood at 25 percent. Mercedes-Benz Vice President for Brand Communications Olaf Göttgens goes so far as to declare that television is "no longer a primary medium for us."

More important is how the definition of television is changing, evolving away from the default reliance on the 30-second spot and toward a wider array of formats and distribution platforms. FedEx is adapting traditional sponsorship techniques to Internet channels —

by, for example, sponsoring Internet distribution of the television show *The Office* — and abandoning many traditions entirely. "We are developing creative new ways to get FedEx embedded in programming, as opposed to buying a 30-second commercial," says FedEx CMO Glenn, who adds that prime-time television, once a key component of the company's media plan, now accounts for less than 10 percent of its marketing spend.

Falling Cost Barriers

It's not hard to discern why. In addition to commending the Internet's draw of personalization and customization, Super-CMOs cite the ability to use this new medium to create rapid feedback loops that funnel consumer insights back into marketing (to make it more relevant), and even into the development of products and services (to make them more "sticky").

But perhaps the greatest appeal of the Web is that it is reducing the native costs of content creation and distribution to nearly zero, radically transforming the ability of marketers to test advertising ideas, programming concepts, and product and service innovations.

Marketing format experimentation today is widespread. One of Pepsi-Cola's proudest recent initiatives is called *The 9* — a "vlog," or daily compilation of video clips of "the nine coolest things" found by Yahoo the night before, according to Pepsi-Cola North America CMO Cie Nicholson. It is as scalable as it is inexpensive, garnering about 5 million new visitors per month.

"Pepsi people want to do things first," Nicholson tells us. "We wanted to be first with Apple iTunes and we always want to be first to do a tie-in with the latest movie or with companies like Yahoo. We want to push the envelope."

Developing an innovation capability inside the marketing organization is a hard test for marketers. Say what you will about the 30-second television spot, it certainly helped focus marketers' capabilities and channel their efforts. Today, faced with myriad new opportunities, cheap tools, a global distribution medium with low-cost scale, and pressure from various constituencies to be the first-to-market or the most engaging communicator, marketers find themselves forced to find new processes or organization constructs to help.

Some are simple. Yahoo instituted "Hack Day," a 24-hour open collaboration competition bringing engineers, designers, and product developers together to develop, test, and present new communications products and tools. Some are necessarily bureaucratic. GE, whose reliance on process discipline has been central to its growth for decades, developed a framework it calls CECOR — for calibrate, explore, create, organize, and realize — to focus marketing creativity and productivity.

But some leading marketers are grappling with their new marketing-innovation opportunities through striking changes in organizational design or development. Procter & Gamble, for example, is lengthening senior marketers' tenure in their positions. "When you do that, the leaders become a lot more confident, and they become a lot more willing to take risks because they understand their consumer on many levels, in a deep way," says Procter & Gamble CMO Jim Stengel. "They develop an implicit knowledge, and they become more intuitive."

The ability to experiment on the cheap challenges traditional marketing time frames; lead times for program development are being reduced from months to weeks, or even days. That, in turn, pressures the long-standing conventions in which programs, campaigns, and individual ads were subjected to painstaking batteries of quantitative and qualitative tests, most of them premised on traditional reach and frequency metrics ("how many people saw it, and how many times did it hit them?"). "That's why judgment and right-brain skills are back in style," Jerri DeVard, who earned her marketing stripes at Citigroup and, most recently, at Verizon Communications, tells us. "As we encountered new technologies and new audience segments, we couldn't always wait for the metrics to tell us what to do," DeVard explains.

The tension between innovation and accountability was one of the more surprising conflicts we found in our conversations with Super-CMOs and their teams this past year. The ability to pull "real" results from online programs clearly has been at the heart of interactive marketing's promise during its decade of growth, prompting many marketers to subordinate, even abandon, the reach-and-frequency metrics and ratings systems they were forced to accept during the days of mass media.

"A pivotal point for us was when we realized that reach and frequency and other passive measurements were not going to be sufficient because they did not reflect whether or not we were really *engaging* our customers," says Hayes of American Express, a company whose TV commercials, tagged by the slogan "Don't leave home without it," were among the most memorable of the television era. "Without engaged customers, we are not going to get what we need in terms of business outcomes. We stopped looking at awareness as an important measure."

But as imprecise as the old metrics were, they provided a discrete and comfortable set of standards by which marketers, media companies, and agencies could agree to do business. The new era of accountability has yet to settle on a similar set of metrics that matter. So the contest between speed of innovation and the need for exact return-on-investment calculations may prove a trial for marketers adjusting to new media and to the era *Advertising Age* magazine has labeled "Chaos 2.0."

The landscape already is scarred. Some third-party companies that deliver online advertisements to Web sites define and count impressions differently than the online media companies do. There also are discrepancies between the exact counts online media companies can provide and the estimates third-party measurement companies offer up for online audience sizes and composition, which in some cases are still based on sampling techniques devised in the 1930s for radio audience measurement.

This stew of instability and accountability is prompting top companies to force a once-heretical marriage inside their organizations, between marketing and finance. We found in our early Booz Allen–ANA research that the traditional marketing organization model, the Service Provider team, had limited interaction with finance. Among Growth Champion marketing teams, however, that gap is closed. To cite one example, the 2001 merger of First Union Corporation and Wachovia Corporation, which created one of the largest retail banking empires in the U.S., was facilitated in no small part by the "strong partnership of three organizations: analytics, finance, and marketing," says Wachovia's recently retired CMO, Jim Garrity. That marriage enabled the company to identify for the first time the drivers of customer retention and value, and to develop ROI models that have allowed it to look at marketing not as an expense, but as an investment.

"Wachovia today has more of a rifle-shot approach to media," Garrity says, "and the marketing group is asking itself some long-term questions for which it can reasonably project answers: 'Do we want to grow twice as many new accounts by investing in a market like Charlotte or Atlanta, or would it make better financial sense to invest the same money in New York, where we may get half as many accounts, but gain more of a presence in that market?' They know what it costs to gain an account in New York City. They know what it costs to do the same thing in certain southeast states where Wachovia has much stronger brand equity. The difference is literally two to one."

"I can't imagine doing a marketing job without connecting with the CFO," says Beth Comstock, who was CMO of GE, the world's largest industrial company, before taking the position of president of Integrated Media at NBC Universal (NBCU). "Marketing must be a finance team partner. In fact, the worst thing a marketer — or, for that matter, a business leader — can do is say, 'Just trust me; I'll show you when I make my numbers.' You need to have some progress report. You need benchmarks that force you to ask, 'Are we giving it enough juice? Are we really being successful? Should we pull back?' "

Enduring Platforms

From all this ferment, a collection of consistently fine wines is beginning to develop. Although they are too new to be declared marketing's equivalent of first-growth Bordeaux, it is a fair bet that this set of innovative new marketing concepts will endure. Some, such as search marketing, are rapidly becoming embedded marketing capabilities, central weapons in the arsenal of all sophisticated marketers. Others, such as mobile platforms, are too new for us to reliably predict how they will influence marketing, although their eventual ubiquity and influence is presumed by virtually all marketers. Among the other innovations cited repeatedly during our work with senior marketers:

- **360-Degree Campaigns.** The coordinated convergence of multiple online and offline channels to drive results in a single, continuous marketing campaign is increasingly the norm, not the exception. Marketers who once would have defined integrated marketing as simply the coordination of broadcast, print, outdoor, and possibly direct marketing and in-store efforts now find themselves additionally developing brand-specific Web sites; viral, video-based executions; targeted print and demo-specific online destinations; unique live events, including concerts or art shows; and revenue-generating ancillary products, such as cell phone ringtones. "Back in 1995, we would have made a TV buy for the U.S. Open and put up some onsite posters," says American Express's Hayes. "Now, we're weaving together more and more of the pieces…. By weaving all these things together, we grow the value geometrically. Our customers start to feel the whole thing."

• **Marketer In-Sourced Infotainment.** Consumer marketers are increasingly developing information, and even pure entertainment, programming and channels on the Web, in some cases competing directly with the media companies that for decades have been among their core suppliers. Johnson & Johnson's www.babycenter.com is among the largest destination sites for new mothers. To promote its Axe body spray, Unilever created a Web video series featuring two improbably successful young ladies' men named Evan and Gareth; the series has attracted about 10 million viewers and helped the company build an 80 percent share of the male body spray market. "We have been in the content business for a long time," says Procter & Gamble marketing chief Stengel, whose company helped invent the soap opera in the 1920s, and, with popular Web sites like www.homemadesimple.com, has been instrumental in shaping marketer-driven destination sites today. "What's changed is that the engagement level we can have with our consumers is just so much higher. We can have a dialogue and build a relationship."

• **Harnessing Social Networks.** Web sites focused on the generation and maintenance of extended groups of friends and acquaintances have proved during the past three years to be perhaps the largest and most durable new communications segment since the introduction of broadcast television in 1949. The networking site MySpace, for example, now is about half as big as television itself, and registers an astonishing 12 billion page views a month — some 70 page views per user. "That's how strong the power of this network of users can become," says Google's Kordestani. "When you think from a global perspective, there still are a lot of opportunities for multiple players." Those include marketers, many of which, in addition to advertising on the branded social networking sites, are launching sites of their own to mold, maintain, and engage in two-way communications with their audiences. "Word-of-mouth [marketing]" and "influence marketing" eventually will become "a discipline that's part of every marketer's job," predicts Cammie Dunaway, chief marketing officer of Yahoo.

- **Complex CRM Solutions.** Companies have been implementing customer relationship management applications of increasing complexity for several decades, but they tended to be the domain of the sales or customer service departments. In recent years, marketing has taken interest in, and in some cases has led, loyalty or relationship programs, especially in companies where the sales and marketing functions themselves are drawing closer together. For so-called conventional media companies, especially in the print business, CRM may provide a lifeline. Their audience databases can be mined on behalf of marketers or channeled into new product development; they can even become the centerpiece of a consumer-insights capability that most marketers have lacked. Meredith Corporation, the venerable magazine publisher, last year purchased an agency that specializes in CRM and Web site development for these reasons.

- **The "Liberation" of Video.** Once tethered to the television set and its handful of formats, video has now been unleashed and is the object of the Web's — and marketers' — most vibrant innovation. Programming formats are proliferating; user-generated video content is garnering audience numbers that rival cable TV, if not mainstream broadcast. Although marketers are experimenting with variations on standardized television advertising — debating, for example, the optimum length and placement of "preroll," "midroll," and "postroll" — many others are hoping to find video marketing options that depart completely from the offline advertising experience. "I think the easy thing right now in a video, at least, is just to put your 30-second spot up there and say, 'Great, I'm connecting.' But I don't think many of us believe that's the future. In fact, NBCU is no longer accepting 30-second spots for online short-form video," says Comstock. "If I were in a marketing role, I would use this opportunity in a different way. I wouldn't just put a bunch of disparate ads in there. I would create a different kind of experience; I would tell my story."

The Capabilities Conundrum

The frenetic pace of marketing innovation and the opening of new fields of opportunity have forced marketers to identify the new capabilities that they need to acquire and to integrate into their organizations.

Some of the new capabilities are still developing, amid the complexity of a changing marketing-media ecosystem. Large swaths of advertising buy/sell processes are being automated by providers like Google, eBay, and the large online ad networks. The ability to identify, manage, price, and optimize media inventory in real time; traffic advertising and other communications insertions; guarantee their delivery; and measure results promises to become more and more mechanized. Although it is hard to predict the ultimate impact on media pricing — some prices are sure to decline in the face of real-time auction models, but some inventory prices are bound to rise dramatically as engagement levels and ROI are proved — process automation will routinize, simplify, and take cost out of many tasks in the marketing-media value chain. But it will also encourage agencies, media, and marketers to add sophisticated advertising operations capabilities and staff, including engineers and mathematicians experienced in yield management, to what had been simpler trafficking and supply chain management teams in their marketing units.

Enhancing marketing supply chain skills is a work in progress, but the CMOs we interviewed agreed on a core set of capabilities that marketers need in order to tame the growth frontier. Consistent with their focus on consumer-centricity, Growth Champion marketers say a *consumer insights capability* is central to their operations. Nokia, for example, has aligned its Consumer Insights function with Nokia Design and Strategic Marketing, and this year co-located the two groups.

An *analytical capability,* too, is central. "Whether you were a mathematics major or not, the ability to penetrate both hard and soft data — to synthesize and draw meaning, conclusions, and priorities — is an essential foundation," says Diageo's Malcolm.

Although their terminology may differ, Super-CMOs say the proliferation of media vehicles and formats requires them to instantiate a *connections planning capability* in their teams. They describe it as a combination of advanced qualitative and quantitative research skills, strategic abilities, understanding of consumption patterns, and programming artistry.

Because the pressures of dealing with an increasingly concentrated and demanding set of channel partners is putting a premium on cost-effective, creative program customization, a *retail relationships capability* is also becoming mandatory for marketing teams, certainly at large consumer packaged-goods (CPG) companies. So is a *knowledge management capability* that can organize such complexity and provide access to insights, expertise, and solutions across institutional, market, and geographic boundaries.

But perhaps the most frequently cited capability need among the Super-CMOs we interviewed is *intellectual curiosity.*

"Four years ago, when I was still at Frito-Lay, I attended an Interactive Advertising Bureau conference," Yahoo CMO Dunaway recalls for us. "The room was filled with people who were at the center of interactive marketing in their companies. One of the speakers asked how many people in the room were doing search marketing.

Maybe 15 percent of the people in the room raised their hand. Today, if you don't understand search marketing, you can't consider yourself a marketer…. You have to have fire in your gut to be a good marketer. Imagine the world of marketing five years from now. It will look dramatically different than it does today. We don't want people who have deep functional excellence in one area if they don't also have the skills to completely abandon that core expertise and do something different when a new tool emerges."

Pepsi's Nicholson agrees: "Which marketing skills will be most important in the future? It's hard to say, but adaptability will be important."

Super-Sized Marketers

Exultant flexibility is, in fact, a consistent strain that you will find among the super-CMOs interviewed in this book. They emerge from strikingly different backgrounds. True, several of our subjects, including Cie Nicholson, Cammie Dunaway, and Jim Stengel, were trained traditionally, with the discipline of MBA programs and consumer packaged-goods (CPG) companies. Yet there are those, developed in that same way, who find CPG conventions limiting. "What traditional packaged-goods marketers fail to understand is the real complexity of moving 100 billion components in a 12-month period; where the value of that component was X at the beginning of the year, it's X divided by two at the end of the year," says Keith Pardy, who spent most of his career at Coca-Cola before joining Nokia in 2004. "Getting your head around the complexity in our business or the number of moving parts is key to being successful."

Comfort with complexity and bottom-line decision making is contributing to new marketing career paths. More senior general managers are moving into marketing than ever before, especially in companies or industries that do not have a marketing tradition. Cathy Lyons, for example, spent nearly a decade running HP's imaging, printing, and inkjet supply businesses before management called on her to oversee a delicate transition in the company's global marketing program.

Conversely, general managers are emerging from the marketing side — also at companies that have not necessarily prized marketing in the past. Beth Comstock started out as a public relations executive, then rose through the ranks at media companies before becoming GE's CMO and, later, one of the most senior operating executives at NBC Universal.

On inspection, though, it is not just their adaptability that distinguishes Super-CMOs and Growth Champion marketing teams: It is their confidence and experience as business executives and accountable decision makers. As Pepsi's Nicholson says: "A lot of marketing people seem to ask, 'How can I get a seat at the table?'… My perspective is probably skewed by having worked for two marketing-driven companies. When you're at that table, don't just limit yourself to marketing. Have a point of view on *everything* — from sales and operations to innovation."

On Super Bowl advertising, too? We can't say. Growth Champion marketers have other things on their minds. +