

Presented By:  
Renegade LLC  
The CMO Club

# RENEGADE THINKERS

11 Trailblazing CMOs  
Any Business Can  
Learn From

Written by  
Drew Neisser &  
Amy Nielsen



Foreword by

**Pete Krainik**  
Founder, The CMO Club

# Contents

<b>Foreword by Pete Krainik</b>	<b>2</b>
Sheryl Adkins-Green, <i>Mary Kay Cosmetics</i> , <b>How to Empower Three Million Spokeswomen</b>	<b>3</b>
Stephanie Anderson, <i>Time Warner Cable</i> <b>How to Drive Loyalty</b>	<b>6</b>
Loren Angelo, <i>Audi</i> <b>When the Medium is Also the Message</b>	<b>9</b>
Lee Applebaum, <i>Patron</i> <b>How to Get the Marketing Mix Just Right</b>	<b>12</b>
Miki Racine Bernadelli, <i>Chico's</i> <b>How to Get Off to a Really Fast Start</b>	<b>15</b>
Douwe Bergsma, <i>Georgia-Pacific</i> <b>How to Build a Culture of Storytellers</b>	<b>18</b>
Louise Camuto, <i>The Camuto Group</i> <b>How to Fashion a Successful Campaign</b>	<b>21</b>
Phil Clement, <i>Aon</i> <b>How to Build a Global Brand</b>	<b>24</b>
Beth Comstock, <i>GE</i> <b>How to Spin Curiosity Into B2B Marketing Gold</b>	<b>27</b>
Stephen Handmaker, <i>Assurance</i> <b>How to Rock n Roll Your Industry</b>	<b>30</b>
John Hayes, <i>American Express</i> <b>How to Transform Marketing into a Service</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>About the Authors</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>About Renegade</b>	<b>37</b>

# Foreword

By **Pete Krainik**,  
Founder, The CMO Club

“Well, that idea doesn’t apply to my industry,” said no marketing leader, ever.

Chief Marketing Officers and their peers are a group whose job binds them together with shared successes, some familiar failures and a few universal truths, like the importance of keeping a message relevant, knowing your target and—not surprisingly—establishing a solid network of fellow marketers, no matter which field they’re in.

It’s this brotherly (and sisterly) spirit of sharing that inspired me to form The CMO Club in the first place. Because if there’s just one thing that makes CMOs great at what they do, it’s absolutely their endless (and occasionally overwhelming) appetite for learning from each other. If I were to guess, I’d say that’s why you, reader, downloaded this eBook. Am I right?

Over the next eleven chapters, you’ll hear from execs like Stephanie Anderson, Miki Racine Bernadelli, Louise Camuto, Phil Clement and Sheryl Adkins-Green who’ve stepped up what it means to lead change at brands like Time Warner Cable, Chico’s, The Camuto Group, Aon and Mary Kay. Each leadership story is more interesting than the next thanks to long time friend of The CMO Club Drew Neisser and his co-writer Amy Nielsen.

And then we have the CMOs who make innovating look as effortless as breathing pure oxygen like Audi’s Lauren Angelo, Lee Applbaum of Patron, Georgia-Pacific’s Douwe Bergsma, Steve Handmaker of Assurance, Beth Comstock of GE and John Hayes of American Express.

In fact, The CMO Club has bestowed awards on each one of these “Renegade Thinkers” for their marketing brilliance over the past couple of years. So, I say with confidence that you’ll probably credit at least one among them with your next light bulb moment.

That’s the beauty of this curious community of ours.

Stay hungry,

Pete

Sheryl Adkins-Green

**Mary Kay**

# How to Empower Three Million Spokeswomen



**F**or over fifty years, Mary Kay, Inc. has been empowering women around the world to make a difference in their community, conveying this message with an over three million-strong corps of Independent Beauty Consultants. This decentralized business model poses unique challenges for Mary Kay, Inc. CMO Sheryl Adkins-Green, who has to create marketing plans that appeal not just to Mary Kay customers, but also to the people who sell Mary Kay products.

Even though Adkins-Green says that “the ultimate influencer is the Independent Beauty Consultant herself, and this is consistent with how Mary Kay began this business,” she doesn’t intend for her consultants to do all the work. In fact, between standardizing global messaging and breaking the world record for the highest number of makeovers, Adkins-Green and her marketing team have excelled in reaching out to women from all walks of life. But how do you manage and market such a decentralized brand? According to Adkins-Green, the keys to success lie in letting the consultants personalize the brand, instilling company pride and integrating customer loyalty deep into the company itself.

## Personalizing a Brand

Marketing a global company is hard enough, but it's even more complicated when your brand is in the hands of three million Independent Beauty Consultants – each of whom has her own style of communicating with her clients. So how does the Mary Kay brand maintain messaging consistency? By treating the consultants as the client. “The Mary Kay Independent Sales Force is our only customer,” says Adkins-Green. This method of marketing only to their consultants, allowing the consultants to in turn personalize brand messaging, is a unique way to maintain continuity in a brand. Along with this, Mary Kay Inc. focuses on timeliness to increase a message's natural spread. As Adkins-Green puts it, “We definitely provide a best practices example and make sure that the content we provide is timely to new product launches—we incorporate what's trending in the beauty world, whether it's the holiday season, the Oscars, how-to tips, etc.—and then we make it very easy for them to share.”

## Instilling Company Pride

Relying on consultants to share Mary Kay's message means that they have to go beyond just liking their jobs; they must combine work and play and become the face of the brand for their community. In other words, Mary Kay's core messaging has to resonate with their consultants, or there is no messaging at all.

**“the ultimate influencer is the Independent Beauty Consultant herself,**

“It really ties back to the strong values that Mary Kay Ash herself built into the company and into the culture,” Adkins-Green says. “There are core values that

resonate in regards to how the Mary Kay brand is really about more than just cosmetics. It's about empowering women, helping them discover their inner beauty, their confidence, their passion and their special gifts.”

Messaging that goes beyond company positioning and empowers consultants to become leaders in their community increases their morale, and also makes them more willing to share the Mary Kay message with confidence.

## Customer Loyalty as a Business

As most marketers know, customer loyalty and word-of-mouth advertising are amazing assets, but they're notoriously hard to track or properly monetize. In this respect, Mary Kay's biggest strength may be its unusual recruitment process for new hires. Mary Kay Inc. doesn't actually oversee the process; instead, it relies on current Independent Beauty Consultants to recruit new consultants.

This means that all new members are already familiar with and show a passion for the Mary Kay brand, and they're active in the community. "Like attracts like," says Adkins-Green. "In other words, the women who have interacted with an Independent Mary Kay Beauty Consultant have learned about more than the great products. They have learned about what the company is doing in the community."

The Independent Beauty Consultants not only help increase word-of-mouth advertising in a community — oftentimes, they're generating it. With three million motivated, proud Independent Beauty Consultants in communities across the world, it's no wonder that Mary Kay Inc. has grown from a single woman's enterprise to a household name. As Adkins-Green says, "My team and I have been successful in leading the evolution of the overall Mary Kay Brand experience, but I have to say it does take a village!"

For the  
complete interview  
with CMO Award  
Winner Adkins-Green,  
[click here.](#)

**Stephanie Anderson**  
**Time Warner Cable**

# How to Drive Customer Loyalty



**A**t Time Warner Cable Business Class, “the customer knows best” is better rephrased to “the customer shows best.” After overhauling its approach to messaging over the past few years, TWCBC has turned the cameras to its customers, a base of small-to-medium-sized business owners, giving the most loyal among them the opportunity to tell their success stories to an audience of millions.

And it has been working. This B2B arm of Time Warner Cable has seen 18 quarters of consecutive growth following the new program, a truly remarkable benchmark for any established company. Stephanie Anderson, who until recently was CMO, credits this increased acquisition and retention of customers to growing closer to them and their community of small business owners. Read on for a few of her invaluable lessons on nurturing B2B loyalty.

## From Outside, In

When Ms. Anderson began at Time Warner Cable Business Class four years ago, she and her team embarked on somewhat of a

treasure hunt into the company's local portfolios. There were a lot of success stories for the company's customers at this level, with messaging that resonated.

However, Ms. Anderson says that TWCBC had been missing opportunities without an overarching message and communications methodology. The goal of her team was to identify which areas depended most on localism, and then compliment them with a nationwide campaign. "We had to find the best breed of each of those local areas and then pull it up to one common message," says Ms. Anderson.

From there, Ms. Anderson and her team focused on what she calls an "outside-in approach" that would affront the competition by centering squarely on customers. "By always thinking about our clients," she says, "we knew we had a chance of developing programs the competition would fear."

## Living Loyalty

One of these programs, which started in 2014, is an online customer resource called PerkZone. Part loyalty program, part online community, TWCBC customers access PerkZone through their MyAccount portal. It has two areas: "Deals and Discounts" and "Ideas and Community." In the former, small business owners can search for deals from national brands, as well as post their own for local customers.

It was in the first-person narratives in Ideas and Community, however, where Ms. Anderson's team struck storytelling gold. From here, they were able to source "hundreds of stories, a few of which were featured in our TV campaign," says Ms. Anderson.

**"By always thinking about our clients, we knew we had a chance of developing programs the competition would fear."**

Her team engaged not only their most loyal and successful clients, like soap-makers Beekman 1802, but also those who had interesting stories and were resonating with their own customers on social media, "which demonstrated a lot of energy and engagement." This enthusiasm reflected the TWCBC brand in testimonials not only on television, but also in print and digital in a publication called Solve, which took the same focus on customers to larger businesses. "The response has been amazing, and these small business success stories are truly inspiring."



The platform itself has built measurable loyalty for Time Warner Cable Business Class. Using Net Promoter Score (NPS), Ms. Anderson says she and her department have seen a strong correlation between digital engagement and customer satisfaction, both via MyAccount and even more so with PerkZone. "My gut told me that this was the right thing to do, and it was nice to see that the data proved me right," she says. "We're continually trying to think of ways to engage with the customer, and we know we need to continue to invest in these areas."

## Proof Positive

It's also no coincidence that new messaging is built on success stories, as Ms. Anderson is a big believer in the power of "proof." In fact, she contends that it's the fifth "P" in marketing (alongside Product, Price, Promotion and Place). Her experience in sales sparked this revelation. "There was always this moment in the demonstration when the tables turned and the customer says, 'Okay, I get it,' or 'Okay, I'll take it,'" she says, and it was when definitive proof was presented. So, while TWCBC's testimonials resonate with potential customers, they also provide needed proof to help the sales force close their deals.

Ms. Anderson concluded her tenure at the company this June after four productive years, and she has the following advice to impart to her fellow marketers: "It's so easy in marketing to get distracted by the 'stuff' or the creative or the results. Sometimes you need to step back and think, 'Wait a minute: who am I trying to talk to? And if I were them, would I listen? Or if I were the competition, would I be afraid of what they're saying?'" Ultimately, she says, maintaining a focus on the external, whether the competition, brand or prospects, is of the utmost importance. "If you keep that forefront on your mind, you will be successful."

For the  
complete interview  
with CMO Award  
Winner Stephanie  
Anderson,  
[click here.](#)

Loren Angelo

**Audi**

# When the Medium is also the Message



**W**hen you think of stale, repetitive advertising, car ads quickly come to mind. What you don't think of is Audi.

Yes, in a sea of J.D. Power and Associate sameness, one German luxury automaker is reinventing modern marketing. CMO and EVP of Audi Loren Angelo says that shouldn't come as a surprise; after all, Audi has always been a little different. "A challenger spirit is crucial in everything we do at Audi," says Loren. "Therefore, pushing our communication to be anything but traditional drives us internally and is why we seek out clever culturally-relevant storytelling."

So how does Audi stay creative in an industry plagued by copycats, reheated strategies and way too many shots of cars driving on wet streets at night? Loren says that if you're looking for the secret to brand-centric creativity, then true enlightenment must come from within. "Creativity is driven by staying authentic to your brand and your mission. I'm inspired by ideas where I can connect my brand with cultural moments that engage a conversation," says Loren.

## Medium, Well

When Audi sets out to make creative, successful marketing efforts, they don't follow templates. In fact, they take everything into consideration when starting a project, starting with the medium. "Creativity comes in the message as well as the medium in which it's delivered," says Loren. "Building the brand with time-starved, affluent Americas requires us to bring unique ideas to a variety of channels."

This medium-agnostic strategy to building a brand has led Audi into some unusual places, including traffic navigation app Waze and one of the most unusual trio of brands this century: a combined marketing push between TV show *Pretty Little Liars* and Audi, shown exclusively on Snapchat. Letting form define function like this has unique advantages, most notably when trying to reach Millennials, a notoriously marketing-adverse demo that's beginning to enter the entry-level luxury category. As Loren alludes to, making a strong connection with Millennials when they're young can mean a strong body of brand advocates for years to come.

## Rare Messaging

Even though the medium changes depending on the day at Audi, a consistency in messaging is a key point of the overarching strategy. "At Audi, we believe that keeping focus on a single message and finding the most effective way to deliver it within the channel proves most effective," Loren explains. "Staying true to the strategic idea is what drives a successful campaign that is reinforced when consumers interact at various channels."

**"Creativity comes in the message as well as the medium in which it's delivered"**

For every new piece of advertising, Loren takes this overall strategic idea and brainstorms the most effective way to share it, utilizing the unique quirks of each medium and strategizing executions it that aren't just impactful for the overall demo, but also for the audience on that specific channel. "Identifying strategies that connect our message with consumer stories might take a storytelling path in TV, a more eccentric approach in social media or might be encapsulated in a single statement on an outdoor board," says Loren.

## Well Done

Even though Loren's company has shared the Audi experience everywhere from billboards to mobile apps, Loren claims that social media has unique advantages to help Audi pull away from the pack. "We identified an opportunity to engage a conversation with America through social media several years ago," says Loren. "[Social media] was the ideal platform to reinforce our provocative messages while establishing a clear voice for the brand."

While Audi has had great success with its messaging, Loren isn't about to rest on his laurels. "[Digital storytelling] is crucial to bringing a brand into the conversation with today's consumer," says Loren. "While our fan base has grown organically from our engaging content, we've established Audi in over 10 social media channels." By combining a truly impressive amount of social media channels, each offering a unique experience to the audience, with cross-channel and brand-centric messaging, Audi has hit on a marketing plan that will never run out of gas.

For the  
complete interview  
with CMO Award  
Winner Loren Angelo,  
[click here.](#)

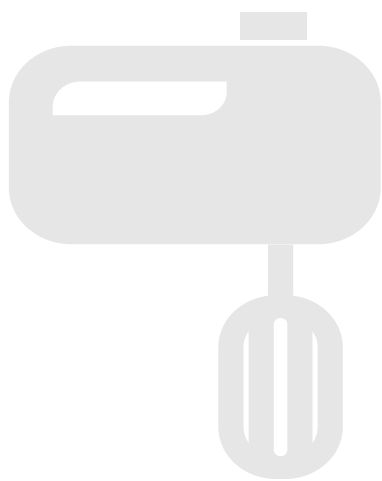
Lee Applbaum,  
**Patrón**

# How to Get the Marketing Mix Just Right



**A**nyone who's ever worked in alcoholic beverage marketing knows that Tequila is a product category unto itself, and certainly a tough cork to pop, so to speak, when it comes to branding. So rather than burst through the saloon doors at Patrón with a mission of revamping the brand, Lee Applbaum initially approached his position as CMO with an "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" mentality. As far as he could tell, there were no broken bottles to be found at Patrón Headquarters.

So what warrants the Creativity Award he won at The CMO Club Awards? What exactly is so creative about adhering to the status quo? Well, much in the way that a classic cocktail can taste fantastic prepared by one bartender and fantastically terrible by another, Applbaum's leadership in launching Patrón Roca proved that he has the magic touch as a marketing mixologist. Read below as he describes the recipe for his perfect product launch.



## 1 Part Digital, 1 Part Mobile

Due to the almost B2B nature of alcohol brand marketing, those who work on new products often take a familiar, passive approach to their launch, Applbaum says. The traditional method of marketing would probably include ads in print or maybe a TV commercial, plus, of course, a snappy slogan — or suggestive, depending on the brand — and clear creative direction. But when it came time to shape the plan for Roca, Applbaum knew that traditional just wasn't going to cut it. "We quickly realized and understood that a majority of media is being consumed digitally, which presented a unique opportunity here," he said. So, step one: focus on the digital, and optimize for mobile.

## 1 Part Storytelling

While all of Patrón's products are technically crafted by hand, an idea much loved by foodies and sophisticated hipster types, Applbaum says that the Roca launch really played up this aspect of the brand. "This particular launch for this particular product line was rooted in this handmade, artisanal, very traditional production process," he says. Marketing this, of course, was done with an eye to the brand's target. "We're talking to a very specific artisanal audience; the same people who follow the farm-to-table movement. This is a garden-to-glass movement."

If you've ever been to a farmer's market, you know that these consumers are endlessly curious about the origins of the products they're about to purchase. "They want to know the history," Applbaum says. "They want to understand the authenticity and integrity of a brand. And maybe equally importantly, they want to share that backstory with others because it gives them inherent credibility." For as many questions as they ask, it turns out that this artisanal audience also loves to talk. Armed with the insight that this kind of consumer no longer wanted just a nice logo, but also a meaningful backstory, Applbaum's team set to work. Storytelling, he says, was to be an essential addition to the Roca campaign mix.

**"This is a garden-to-glass movement."**

## Shake and Strain

Add these ingredients together in a tumbler, shake vigorously for twelve seconds (or maybe it was a little longer?), and you'll end up

with the makings of a well-shaken-up alcohol marketing campaign. How did the ingredients combine for Applbaum and his team? In his own words, those hints of digital and mobile: “We rebuilt all of our web assets, including building experiential microsites (all mobile optimized) for Roca Patrón to help consumers learn about the product.” And the backstory and the share-ability: “We explained the artisanal process that goes into making Roca Patrón through a series of vignettes and then allowed that content to be curated and shared. We also created a tool that allows both consumers and the trade to share and comment on cocktail recipes featuring Roca Patrón.”

## Served Neat

While this marketing mix may sound complicated, the presentation was thoroughly no-frills. After all, it’s the distributors who are the first recipients of Patrón’s marketing efforts. Applbaum says that at the end of the day, he and his company “wanted to inspire confidence for a bar-owner, restaurateur or spirit storeowner that there’s going to be an ample amount of media gravity owned, earned and paid for” to help them, in turn, sell the product to consumers.

Earlier, we mentioned the traditional route to launching an alcohol product, and Applbaum’s handling of Patrón Roca showed clear defiance of that status quo. “We’ve got a very honest, real, great artisanal product, and we developed really great marketing to go with it. We wanted to make sure that everything was really rooted in authenticity, and that we never got accused of just fancy window-dressing,” he says.

And as for Patrón Roca itself, how were the reviews? “The initial response has been nothing short of phenomenal,” Applbaum says. “I absolutely think that having really innovative and contextually relevant messaging helped to drive early acceptance of the new line.” Talk about a campaign that goes down easy.

For the  
complete interview  
with CMO Award  
Winner Lee Applbaum,  
[click here.](#)

**Miki Racine Berardelli**

**Chico's**

# How to Get Off to a Fast Start



**I**t's not unusual for us to chat with marketers who've been in their jobs for years on end. But today we're presenting the perspective of a CMO who, while not short on experience, was only months into her role at Chicos FAS when we spoke following her receipt of a Rising Star award at the CMO Awards and clearly felt she had more ahead of her than behind her to discuss. So take note, seasoned retail marketers: Miki Racine Berardelli's scope is a thing of the future, and you'll more likely than not appreciate the reminder of what it's like to have the attitude of a leader looking ahead from the starting line.

## On challenges:

Prior to her move to Chicos FAS, Racine Berardelli was the CMO of Tory Burch and SVP at Ralph Lauren, meaning she's no stranger to the world of retail marketing. However, attaining CMO status at her new company meant overseeing not one, but four disparate brands: Chico's, White House Black Market, Soma Intimates and Boston Proper.



With aggressive omni-channel growth and innovation goals laid out ahead of her, Racine Berardelli was essentially hired to build the Chico's FAS brands into a thriving e-commerce megapolis "across multiple channels, product categories, touch-points and countries," she says. Overwhelming, you might think, but Racine Berardelli grabbed her slide rule and hammer and started construction. "The experience of working in a multi-brand organization will challenge me," she says. In fact, it's "one of the main reasons I decided to join Chico's FAS."

## On going international:

One of the main points on the horizon at Chico's FAS is its international e-commerce expansion. While the four brands have solid roots in the United States, the marketing game changes, of course, when products become available abroad. Thanks to a new partnership with e-commerce platform Borderfree, the company's reach now extends to new shores. "Thinking globally requires a different mindset than being purely domestic," she says. "It's important to support international efforts with the right amount of marketing support, whether it's SEM or otherwise, to acquire customers from other countries who may or may not know your brand and product offering."

## On creativity:

While digital marketing tools and the algorithms of the sales cycle will no doubt be valuable in reaching a global audience, Racine Berardelli says that a human touch will always be necessary, and that she plans to meld the two in her approach the four Chicos FAS brands. "I have always tried to balance the 'art' with the 'science,'" she says. "I believe brands are most successful when they strike right down the middle. I'm excited about the creative opportunities here, creating a seamless experience for our customer, and continually enhancing our digital presence and marketing touch-points."

**"It's important to support international efforts with the right amount of marketing support, whether it's SEM or otherwise, to acquire customers from other countries who may or may not know your brand and product offering."**

## On goals:

Finally, when we asked Racine Berardelli to describe what she personally hopes to achieve as she digs her heels deeper into her role, she emphatically responds, "Learning!" And as for her goals for advancing Chico's FAS marketing: "If I had to state the top three areas of focus based on my 'fresh eyes,' they would be: customer experience across all channels, mobile sites and applications, and helping to set us up for the future while we continue to build four successful global brands." No doubt we'll be seeing Racine Berardelli in CMO Awards mentions for years to come.

For the  
complete interview  
with CMO Award  
Winner Racine  
Berardelli,  
[click here.](#)

**Douwe Bergsma**  
**Georgia-Pacific**

# How to Build a Culture of Storytellers



**T**oday, we'd like to tell a tale of marketing success that—you guessed it—is all about storytelling. For Douwe Bergsma, CMO of Georgia Pacific, storytelling was a major strategic change that helped Georgia Pacific earn a place among Co.Create's most creative ads and Ad Age's Creativity 50, plus the honors of a Cojones Award and the CMO Club's award for Creativity & Storytelling.

Is storytelling the next wave of marketing? Not necessarily, says Bergsma. The better way to approach it is as a new form of brand communication. "It is not about storytelling as in a different way of labeling or describing advertising," he says. "It's more of a fundamental strategic approach to how to view your communication efforts across all touch points."

## Chapter 1: Build a Story Framework

At Georgia-Pacific, Bergsma and his team now approach brand communication as if they're writing a movie or ballad or onstage with an improv group. The first step? Creating a story framework. "If you

visualize an iceberg, the storytelling part is the part that's above water and the story framework is the larger part that's underneath the water." It's what the author knows but the audience doesn't—yet—and requires what he called a "fundamental human truth." Bergsma tells us that this is similar to what other marketers might call brand purpose, assets or values, but fully explained and perpetuated in a tale that, in theory, never needs to end. In other words, the framework is built around an ongoing conflict. "And like any storyteller would tell you, the conflict is the motor of any story. If the conflict stops, the story stops. It is the element that continues to propel the story forward and drive the intrigue and engagement of your audience."

This is in stark contrast to the era of marketing in which the product was simply the solution to the conflict—and the end of the story. "The next thing you know, you need to start all over again" with your marketing message, says Bergsma. "Instead of embracing a conflict, many brands say, 'we need to avoid them because we don't like conflicts.'"

## Chapter 2: Embrace Conflict

To illustrate how storytelling solves this stop-start effect, let's take Georgia-Pacific brand Brawny. Here, the conflict is between toughness and gentleness, and the "fundamental human truth" is about protecting yourself and loved ones. "This requires you to be understanding and open to what life throws at you, but also have the tenacity, toughness, and strength to tackle any challenge. We were inspired by a quote from Roosevelt: 'speak softly and carry a big stick, you will go far.'" Bergsma and his team translated this idea into a campaign complete with the 1970's Brawny Man, a giant who's both gentle and strong.

**"And like any storyteller would tell you, the conflict is the motor of any story. If the conflict stops, the story stops."**

Bergsma tells us that in an ideal world, the two conflicting sides are positives, like safety and freedom, that sometimes collide but are both desirable. Another classic example is man versus nature. "In the best stories, the main characters are going through a "man vs. himself" internal conflict and, for example, become more brave and take more risk as the story progresses," says Bergsma. "We try to seek those same elements for our brands."

## Chapter 3: Find the Deeper Meaning

Marketing stories, of course, can't be cracked open or held in your hands. In our context, the pages and chapters must exist in multiple

media. Says Bergsma: "If you believe in true storytelling, what you do on Google or Facebook and what you do on network TV help deliver 'chapters' of the story." He offers as an example Georgia-Pacific's partnerships with AOL and Meredith, which, when combined with their Amazon product pages work together to reveal the full story. One of these AOL stories for Brawny highlighted "Everyday Giants" like Khali Sweeney, who started a boxing gym in Detroit which evolved into an after school academic support program for youth. "It's only when you're exposed to multiple touch points that you start to understand the value and the deeper meaning of the story," Bergsma says.

Bergsma rattles off additional touchpoints that partake in the storytelling: video ads, Google searches, social media, eCommerce, the in-store experience and especially package design. "To fully appreciate the value of the brand and the meaning a brand could have in a consumer's life, we have to consider all of these elements as part of the story," he says. "That was a big, big paradigm shift. Without this shift, we would not be able to turn storytelling into a competitive advantage in the marketplace."

## Chapter 4: Have A Strong Finish

We conclude our chapter with several of Bergsma's kernels of wisdom. First, resist the temptation to focus solely on the storytelling. Again, the framework is step one. "Draft a brief; write a Tweet. But before you do the brief, you actually need to know your story's framework," he says. "It's like sending an improv artist on stage who doesn't know what a story framework is."

Second, citing the help of lead storyteller Shari Neumann, a former Coca-Cola employee, Bergsma stresses the value of hiring and retaining natural storytellers. Because what's a story without a skilled author (or several dozen)?

Third, storytelling is not a linear process. In other words, the process of creating a story is a story in itself, with pitfalls and plot twists. "You need to be very agile and experimental and embrace the mistakes and the failures you have along the way and have a very experimental mindset," Bergsma says. "You need to do a lot of trial and error and go down specific pathways to figure out what's going to work for the brand or what doesn't."

For the complete interview with CMO Award Winner Douwe Bergsma, [click here.](#)

Louise Camuto  
**The Camuto Group**

# How to Fashion a Successful Campaign



**H**igh fashion marketing is an extremely specialized subset of advertising, but behind the double-page spreads, ultra-luxe events and breathtaking photo shoots, there's a science to creating compelling marketing that connects with your audience. So to gain insights into this unique corner of business, we turned to Louise Camuto, CMO of The Camuto Group, who shares how her company reaches their audience, making personal connections that never go out of style.

Louise and her company faces a complex marketing challenge, as the Camuto group is in charge of almost a dozen brands, including Vince Camuto, Jessica Simpson, BCBG Max Azria and Arturo Chiang. And even though each of these brands have their own style, all of them share common positioning, which means Louise and her team have to strike a delicate balance between differentiating each while showcasing their common pedigree of excellence.

"I think we constantly need to push the envelope in marketing to be ahead of the curve and innovate so we are always an intriguing-

ing brand for our woman,” says Louise. “At Camuto Group, we spend a lot of time thinking about how we can interpret product – from footwear to apparel – in the most on-brand manner. ”

## Setting Trends

As they say in fashion, you’re only as good as your last look, and Louise Camuto takes this adage to heart creating new looks. “We sit as a team and determine what items are appropriate for each of our brands and we spend a lot of time analyzing the marketplace for trend direction as well as what’s happening at the consumer level,” says Louise.

**“The influence of bloggers in today’s world is a breath of fresh air to me. You really see how the customer actually wears and styles your product.”**

But this always-relevant ethos expands far beyond the runway. For all eleven of The Camuto Group’s brands, keeping the marketing on trend is just as important as creating fashion-forward apparel. “I emphasize the importance of image and brand consistency daily with my team,” says Camuto. “When we work on our campaign looks we collaborate with our marketing team and with PR to ensure we are on trend and delivering something exciting to the customer.”

## Digital Runways

Keeping all of these brands current means The Camuto Group’s brands all excel on social media, where ultra-relevant looks and high-end photography help to increased follower count and greater influence in the industry. This recursive nature has a unique impact in the fashion industry: the better your marketing is, the more on trend the clothes will become; and the more on trend your clothes are, the better your marketing will be. For Louisa and her team, this means that her looks don’t just have to be stylish; they have to be remixable. “The influence of bloggers in today’s world is a breath of fresh air to me. You really see how the customer actually wears and styles your product,” says Louise.

But keeping so many brands, each with slightly different audiences, trendy in fashion means looking backwards as well as forward, and being able to shift strategies based on market forces. “Delving into the online space has really helped with the design process as I continually think about the end use of a skirt, top, pant, dress and what she would be looking for coming up in the next season.” Louisa also

raves about social media specifically, saying: “[Social is] also a great way to share new product and immediately test the response.”

By leveraging a large, vocal online audience, The Camuto Group can test out different approaches they’re thinking of and see how the audience reacts online, completing the marketing cycle and giving the customer an unusually large voice in the design process.

## Versatile Looks

Even though the digital influence on high fashion grows stronger every day, the best piece of marketing for any piece of clothing is the item itself. This has many benefits for a marketer, especially if they use every moment the public is wearing their brand to reinforce fashion bona fides. “I absolutely believe everything is marketing and marketing is everything,” Louise says. “Marketing occurs across every channel and touch point and I think the total experience is what drives a customer to love a brand and become a loyal enthusiast.”

This total-experience focus can be a key differentiator for brands in a field as competitive as fashion. And even though it’s tempting to be envious of another brand’s looks, at the end of the day high-end fashion is about making something relevant and new, giving the customer an experience that they didn’t realize they can’t live without. Or, as Louise puts it, “I believe in always trying to lead and not follow, and I work closely with the team to always be at the forefront of what’s happening with the consumer so we reach her every day, in every way.”

For the  
complete interview  
with CMO Award  
Winner Louise Camuto,  
[click here.](#)



**Phil Clement**

**Aon**

# How to Build a Global Brand



**S**occer fans ought to be familiar with Aon, the B2B risk advisory company whose logo graces the jersey of one of the world's most famous clubs, Manchester United. Phil Clement, Global Chief Marketing and Communications Officer of Aon, and his marketing team have witnessed first hand how supporting a sports team can reap tremendous financial rewards.

Aon's sponsorship of Manchester United has also greatly benefited the company internally. Specifically, it has led to significant improvement in three key areas: connectedness of the global team, employee morale and awareness of the company's message.

## Uniting a Global Team

For brand managers of global companies, coordinating marketing efforts across two separate locations is challenging enough. Aon, meanwhile, has a presence in 120 countries – nearly half the world's territories. How did Clement and his team plan to

unite a brand with such global spread? By putting their company logo on one of the most recognizable soccer jerseys in the world. As Clement puts it, “Manchester United is understood in every country.”

“Having a globally established brand is important,” Clement says. “The Manchester United sponsorship has been a big part of that because we can use the same team, same language, same sponsorship material, same explanation for what we’re doing, how we’re doing it, and why we’re doing it across the world.”

## Restoring Pride in the Company Brand

Before the Manchester United sponsorship, Aon administered a survey to their employees, asking them if they felt Aon had a strong and engaging brand, and whether they were proud to work at the firm. The results were not inspiring – the brand question received the lowest responses, and pride did not fare much better. However, after the sponsorship began, the survey results completely flipped.

“We did extraordinarily well,” Clement says of the post-sponsorship employee survey. “Pride and whether Aon has a strong brand were the two highest responses in the survey.”

**“Manchester United is understood in every country.”**

Through the sponsorship, Clement and his team managed to not only increase Aon’s brand recognition, but also its employee morale – a double-header if ever there were one.

## Building Public Understanding

One of the biggest struggles facing Aon is that the general public often misunderstands the company at a fundamental level. As a risk advisory company, Aon works predominately in the B2B space, advising businesses on their internal insurance practices. However, the public often confuses Aon’s work with consumer insurance.

“Because we’re loosely affiliated with insurance, and people understand insurance as consumer insurance, they don’t really get what we do,” says Clement.

As awareness of the Aon brand continues to grow, due in no small part to the Manchester United sponsorship, Clement sees an excellent opportunity to further the public's comprehension of his company and shine a light on the broader risk advisory category in which it does business.

"We've done a really good job of developing an awareness of our brand. We also need to develop an understanding of what we do," he says. "I'm hoping I can create a global dialogue around what I think is the best profession in the world."

For the  
complete interview  
with CMO Award  
Winner Phil Clement,  
[click here.](#)

**Beth Comstock,**  
**General Electric**

# How to Spin Curiosity Into B2B Marketing Gold



**W**hile “exciting” may not be the first word that comes to mind when you think about industrial technology, it’s the field of expertise at General Electric, one that the company’s marketing team has managed to turn completely on its head. As we learned from our conversation with Beth Comstock, the science behind jet engines, refrigeration and telecommunications (to name just a few of the company’s product categories) is much more than a niche interest for nerds.

The fact that GE is almost exclusively a business-to-business operation presented Comstock and her department with a unique challenge. How to use its own “machinery,” so to speak, to generate interest and engagement without just pushing product on existing customers? The answer they found on a page written by GE itself. By focusing on science, innovating from within and putting imaginations to work, Comstock and her team have connected with consumers’ innate sense of curiosity and have given the rest of us a shining example of B2B engage-

ment done right. “Since when does B2B have to be boring to boring?” she says. “Business people are people too.”

## Become Interested, Be Interesting

First, GE’s marketing department is helping the company grow closer to consumers through what Comstock calls “micro targeting.” Given that purchasers of GE products have very particular and very disparate needs, knowing the various targets well (and as

**“Since when does B2B have to be boring to boring? Business people are people too.”**

you can imagine, there are many) and speaking directly to their unique interests is a necessity. Luckily, there’s no shortage of content to deliver. While daunting to marketers on the outside, the vast product catalogue at GE in fact offers Comstock’s team a gold mine of interesting material to engage with customers and help nurture them into brand advocates.

“The marvels of science, engineering and manufacturing offer good fodder for content,” she says. “We’re constantly seeking out storytellers who get as excited about this as we do.” By championing the nuts and bolts of industrial technology, GE has been able to start unique conversations and prove itself an authority on topics that most brands can’t touch.

## Experiment and Innovate

As GE continues to reach new frontiers in technology, the marketing space has also evolved to be increasingly complex, Comstock says. Communicating with consumers is more complicated than ever, but she and her team have found continued success through maintaining “good partners, room for experimentation and a good dose of curiosity.”

That entrepreneurial spirit permeates Comstock’s department and is perhaps best summed up by GE’s own slogan, “Imagination at work.” Taking this to heart, she oversees a corps of dedicated media staff who constantly explore the digital space, looking for new tools and practices to keep their efforts right on the cusp of innovation. “I’m a big believer in carving out a percentage of your budget to develop new models,” she says.

## Cultivate Curiosity to Inspire Engagement

Take #SixSecondScience, for example — a virtual science fair that lives on Tumblr, with Vine videos as the media of choice. The videos, created first by GE itself and then mingled with user submissions, each showcase one of science’s mini marvels, like the weight of a balloon post-inflation to demonstrate air mass, or how to make a magnet using common household items. The campaign was a success, garnering hundreds of public contributions and putting GE at the forefront of both digital engagement and scientific know-how. #SixSecondScience, Comstock says, “shows how science can be fun,” with the added bonus of connecting GE with a new audience of “tech enthusiasts.”

We can expect even more original thinking from GE as long as Comstock holds the reins. When asked about the future of marketing, she believes that a more holistic customer experience is on the horizon. “We haven’t cracked it yet,” she says, “but I’m looking forward to seeing how we can – and I think digital technology is taking us there very fast.”

For the complete interview with CMO Award Winner Beth Comstock, [click here.](#)

Steven Handmaker

**Assurance**

# How to Rock n Roll Your Industry



**T**hink about the leaders and mentors you've known throughout your life. Could you find just one adjective to tie them together? Probably not. Leaders are who they are because they're not only effective, but unique, as no two styles of leadership are alike. Just ask Steven Handmaker, CMO of Assurance. His role model? Bruce Springsteen—a real boss if ever there were one. In fact, we did have the opportunity to ask Handmaker what makes him tick, and he provided a fresh take on leadership that ought to have any marketer dancing in the dark. So bear with the Springsteen songs hidden in this article and enjoy our enlightening conversation below.

## A Reason To Believe

Assurance stands apart from its competitors thanks to a unique brand positioning by Handmaker and his marketing team. Acknowledging that the insurance broker industry can make one feel lost in the flood of indistinguishable companies, Handmaker's team instead looked inward, using Assurance's "quirky" company culture to define

the brand. The “Happy Employees = Happy Customers” campaign, as it’s called, turns the focus on the employees and provides the marketing team with a wealth of fun, distinctive content, which has earned a good dose of goodwill from customers and staff alike. Not only is Assurance outperforming many of its rivals as a result, it’s also now enjoying its glory days as one of the top 5 places to work in Chicago—a sure sign of outstanding management.

When we posed our initial question about leadership traits to Handmaker, we asked him to get introspective for a moment. His own leadership style, he says, aims for inspirational. It’s important for people to have a hungry heart and want to follow you, after all. “I work hard to have those I lead understand our ultimate vision,” he says, “and allow them the freedom and flexibility to use their talents to help us get there.” A micromanager, Handmaker is not. He tells us that after giving his team a reason to believe, his next priority as a manager is to uplift. “I’m a big believer in consistently showing appreciation,” he says.

**“I work hard to have those I lead understand our ultimate vision, and allow them the freedom and flexibility to use their talents to help us get there.”**

You might say that Handmaker picked up these traits from his idol.

“Personally, I worship at the altar of Bruce Springsteen. I mean, he is the ultimate Boss.” Admitting that he’s one of those superfans, the kind who would drive all night to Nebraska in a pink Cadillac to see him in concert, Handmaker recommends that other marketers—even non-fans—take note of Springsteen’s leadership style. “He’s a master storyteller, first and foremost, with legendary desire to connect with his audience.” He may be onto something. Who else could get both Jon Stewart and Chris Christie to agree on something so passionately?

## The Rising

Aside from inspiring his team, we wondered what other challenges Handmaker has faced while shaping Assurance from the inside out. Instituting new technology, he tells us, is sometimes rocky ground for employees. Being a B2B organization and in an industry that’s “woefully behind-the-times” technologically, he says, new marketing tech is not always embraced by everyone in the company, especially Assurance’s top-ranked salespeople, who of course built their success without it. For his part, Handmaker



instituted a state-of-the-art Eloqua automation system that has helped Assurance establish “an engaged audience of prospects and clients, rich with data.” Getting the whole team one step up, Handmaker says, is an ongoing project.

## Meeting Across The River

And because no leader, no matter how effective, is a jack of all trades, Handmaker says that his peer network has been an invaluable driver of innovation for Assurance. “I’ve learned (stolen) so much from marketing leaders, particularly in other industries,” he says, “which I’ve been able to take back and apply in my own environment.” He mentions again that because the insurance industry is often its own worst enemy in terms of marketing innovation, applying outside strategies in this way has proven immensely helpful. “It’s not too difficult to identify some amazing things we should have probably been doing 4 years ago,” says Handmaker of learning from his network.

Even for those of us not in the CMO’s seat quite yet, Handmaker offers similar advice: to venture outside your area of expertise. He tells us that it’s the best advice he’s ever received. “Anybody can follow a job description, do exactly what is asked, and produce positive results,” says Handmaker. However, standing out and proving yourself as tougher than the rest requires going beyond your job description. “What else should you do to help those around you and the company succeed? Do that, and success will follow,” he says. “If you apply this ideology to your personal life as well, you can expect the same results.” With that, it sounds like Handmaker was simply born to run his marketing team—and that’s why he’s the boss.

For the  
complete interview  
with CMO Award  
Winner Steve  
Handmaker,  
[click here.](#)

**John Hayes**  
**American Express**

# How to Transform Marketing into a Service

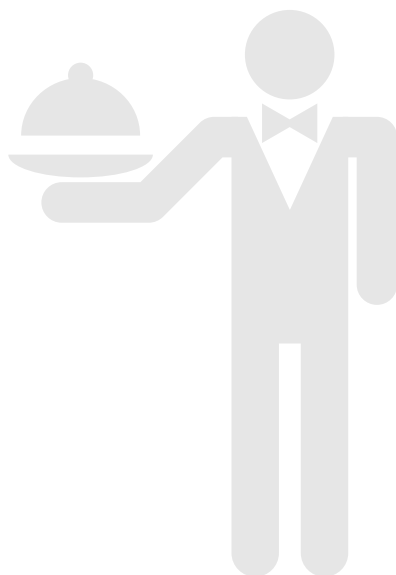


**I**s American Express a credit card company? Yes. But if you speak to John Hayes, he'll tell you that American Express is first and foremost a service company. Not only is it a provider of financial services, but also a purveyor of entertainment, networking and business growth tools for cardholders and potential customers alike. How do Hayes and his marketing team push the boundaries of marketing-as-service? By fostering workplace curiosity, taking up their customers' interests and extending benefits to non-members.

"It starts with understanding what business you are in and understanding that this is a company that believes it's noble to serve," Hayes says. "From that comes the way we go to market."

## Fostering Service Through Creativity

The first step in creating marketing initiatives that lead to great service? According to Hayes, it begins from deep within the company. At American Express, nurturing a working environment



**“You’re going to serve businesses and people. You need to talk to them about their life,” Hayes says. “Not what they’re going to use to pay for something.”**

where inquisitiveness is encouraged has rippled out to the kind of innovative marketing that reaches the customers.

It’s important to “generate a level of curiosity about what’s happening in the world,” Hayes says, “both in terms of the talent you bring into the company as well as the culture that you build and maintain over time.” He continues, “We have been able to build a culture of curiosity where people are curious about how to make things work better.”

Curiosity, Hayes says, leads to bigger and bolder marketing initiatives. At American Express, settling for the tried-and-true is simply not an option, and the team is encouraged to move beyond what worked in previous cycles. “If you’re going to do something,” he says, “We believe it should live up to very high standard of innovation and newness.”

At the same time, Hayes and his team are careful not to abandon past successes. “We are taking the things that worked...and applying [them] all over the place.”

## **Taking Up The Customers’ Interests**

Moving on to exactly how American Express markets differently, Hayes stresses the importance of taking interest in his customers’ lives outside of the their AmEx card use.

Much like a new relationship, talking about yourself too much or serving your own interests often leads to dead ends and disappointment. But actively understanding your customers’ lives outside of your product or service, and finding the footholds where you can be useful, is a mark of true marketing-as-service, says Hayes, and will lead to customer loyalty.

“You’re going to serve businesses and people. You need to talk to them about their life,” Hayes says. “Not what they’re going to use to pay for something.”

This notion not only informs the content that customers see, but also the additional perks that American Express cardholders enjoy, such as live-streamed concerts and pre-sale tickets to events. Hayes says, “If you look at what we do on stage – bringing music to so many people on a live-stream basis – the philosophy is the same. That is our way of

serving customers who we know have a passion for music because of the things they do, because of the way they spend their money.”

## The Value of Inclusiveness

Many of the company’s lifestyle perks are offered not just to existing customers, but also to potential cardholders — a risky move that may not always pay off for most service companies.

Take, for example, American Express’s Open Forum, an online space where business owners and executives can freely exchange ideas. “We don’t require people to be a cardholder to use Open Forum,” Hayes says. Or Small Business Saturday, a widely successful initiative that encourages consumers across the country to do their holiday shopping with small businesses.

Why extend these initiatives to those who aren’t even cardholders? “Many of these experiences are open architecture,” says Hayes, “because we want prospects to know that’s what it feels like to be a member.”

For the complete interview with CMO Award Winner John Hayes, [click here.](#)

“When you’ve contributed in a meaningful way to a small business’ success and then say, ‘Hey, I’ve got some other services for you. I’ve got a card that could help you manage inventory better,’ they are quite open to it because they’ll say, ‘Well, you guys have already been enabling my business, enabling my success,’” he says. “And that’s the philosophy.”

Some might say that these practices are a gamble, but Hayes says that American Express reaps the benefits over time. “We’ve seen the impact that service has on the American Express brand, our customers and their behavior following a positive experience,” he says, adding, “We’re careful not to overvalue the things we can measure or undervalue the things we can’t.”

## About the Authors

### **Drew Neisser**

Entrepreneur, Author, Speaker, Publisher,  
Award-Winning Marketer

A true renegade thinker, Drew has helped dozens of CMOs create marketing programs worth writing about and told the stories of over 250 CMOs via his [AdAge column](#), his first book [The CMO's Periodic Table: A Renegade's Guide to Marketing](#) and through a popular podcast series called [Renegade Thinkers Unite](#). Ranked as a top 10 CMO Influencer and among "50 Thought Leaders over 50" by Brand Quarterly for 3 years in a row, Drew has been a featured marketing expert on ABC News, CNBC, CBS Radio, iHeart Radio and the Tony Robbins podcast series among many others. In the last 3 years, Drew and his merry band of Renegades have focused their attention on B2B storytelling, helping companies like Arrow Electronics, Case Paper, Donnelley Financial Solutions, Empire State Realty Trust, Magento, Tungsten Networks, Utak, and Workforce Software find, enhance and/or tell their stories via content marketing and social media.

### **Amy Nielsen**

Writer, Renegade

Amy is a copywriter and creative at Renegade. In addition to covering CMOs who cut through and eradicating typos from the face of the Earth, she is a regular contributor of music reviews and band interviews to Virgin, Bandsintown and AXS. Amy holds a Master's Degree in Music Business from New York University, where she completed a thesis project about the social media life-cycle of annual music festivals. Before letting her marketing flag fly, Amy worked as an administrative aide to Vice President Joe Biden in Washington, DC. She has a Bachelor's Degree from the University of California Davis.

## About Renegade LLC

Renegade is the NYC-based strategic boutique for B2B innovators. Powered by the insights gleaned from interviews with over 300 CMOs, Renegade helps courageous CMOs simplify both their brand story and go-to-market plans in order to cut through.

To see if we're the right partners for each other, visit [renegade.com](https://renegade.com) or [click here](#) to email our CEO.

