

Three Trends That Could Affect Marketing And Communications In 2022



The year 2021 continued to throw some curveballs at CMOs looking to get their feet back under them after a tumultuous 2020 and 2021, **and 2022 doesn't look like it'll be much different.** We believe we'll continue to see the Covid-19 pandemic looming large over marketing next year, and its impact could shape everything from the role and responsibilities of the CMO to the pressure on marketing to effectively support recruiting efforts, sales and lead generation goals, and organizational exit strategies, particularly if we see a red-hot M&A market. **Still there are always opportunities.**

Though the last couple of years have been anything but predictable, I've seen enough over the past few months to make some educated guesses as to where things are headed for CMOs next year. **Here are three trends to pay attention to:**

The Great Resignation

The pandemic caused a lot of people to reconsider their employment options, which led to what many have dubbed "the great resignation." Talents' exodus and priority-shifting will likely continue in 2022 as employees look for jobs that offer greater flexibility in the form of hybrid or remote work, a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I), and more. **As such, companies will want to ensure that their stances on these issues are reflected in their Communications with current and prospective employees.**

This will require marketers to align more closely with their HR counterparts than ever before. CMOs should become vital partners who form a direct link between HR, executive leadership and employees. In this position, they should help HR refine their internal and external communications **to include messaging that appeals to the concerns of a newly energized and empowered workforce.** They can also be instrumental in helping HR evangelize the need for everyone **to get involved in recruiting,** articulating their **company's benefits** to prospects and essentially turning hiring into a company sport that every employee participates in.

To paraphrase what one HR manager recently told me, HR is often focused primarily on promoting corporate benefits or touting the requirements of a job description. CMOs can help **broaden that message** to ensure it includes **visionary statements** about the **company's perspective** on topics that are truly important to today's workers.

The Evolution Of The CMO's Role

We called corporate CMOs "the new company MVPs." That's because they've evolved well beyond traditional corporate marketing practices. Companies are now asking them to work with just about **every facet of their organizations,** from HR to sales and finance and beyond.

CICO believes this evolution will continue — **and likely accelerate** — in 2022. CMOs can expect to find themselves becoming even more deeply ingrained in sales activities, for example, as reps turn to marketers to help them make direct connections with customers and prospects in lieu of big-scale conferences and other traditional tactics. We have already outlined their importance to HR, but they will also play a vital role in articulating the financial prospects and goals of their organizations as companies continue **to reinvent themselves** in the wake of the pandemic.

This brings us to the final prediction:



M&A Activity

We have heard from a lot of companies that intend to acquire other organizations, look for an exit via acquisition, or go public, either through a traditional IPO or Special Purpose Acquisition Company (SPAC). In fact, the chatter is reaching an almost deafening level as companies race to see who can survive in a post-pandemic world. This leads me to believe that while 2021 has been a busy year for M&A activity, 2022 might be off the charts.

Whatever exit path strategies organizations choose — and whether those organizations are on the buy side, sell side or choose to go public — they're likely going to rely on their CMOs to implement **the right communications programs** to ensure those strategies are successful. CMOs can expect to be brought into the planning cycles early as executive leadership turns to them for their **communications counsel** and strategy.

That strategy — and its timing — will depend on **the type of exit** the company is planning. For example, a company that's pursuing a traditional IPO may want to ramp up its communications efforts several months prior to the IPO filing so that, when the quiet period arrives, it is simply business as usual.

Communications around any exit will inevitably lean on that **solid foundational relationship** that CMOs have hopefully already developed with their HR teams. That's because the CMO will likely be heavily involved in creating employee FAQs, working with HR to ensure that Glassdoor and LinkedIn pages are in good shape and updated, and more. **This is already good news.**

We are already feeling a significant uptick in the demand's companies place on the CMOs we talk to every day. But despite the increased pressure they're under, there's an undercurrent of excitement and anticipation that I haven't seen in many years. Many are truly looking forward to what 2022 has to offer and the challenges — **and opportunities** — that lie ahead. The outlook seems to be more positive than it has been in a long time. That's one trend I think we'll all gladly accept.



End of summary

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