

The CEO Marketing Diagnostic

10 Questions Every CEO Should Be Able to Answer About Their Marketing



You want marketing to drive sales and market share, yet many executives admit they don't feel confident in their marketing departments' performance. The following assessment is designed to reveal whether you have a true marketing problem or, more critically, a clarity problem. If you can't confidently answer these, you likely need deeper insight and ownership.

How to take this: Answer from memory, with specifics, right now. Don't ask your team first. Their confidence isn't the test; yours is. If your answer is "I'd have to check" or "I think it's something like...," that's a no.

1

What percentage of last quarter's new revenue can you trace, with actual data, to a specific marketing activity? A real number with a path from spend to dollar. Most CEOs can tell you marketing "feels like it's working." Far fewer can show the line from a campaign to a closed deal. If you can't trace it, you're not measuring your marketing.

2

Which three channels are driving a qualified pipeline, not just traffic, and what is our cost per opportunity in each? Almost every CEO can rattle off where the budget goes. Almost none can rank those channels by what they actually produce: qualified pipeline, not clicks or leads. If you're optimizing for traffic instead of cost per opportunity, you may be funding activity that looks like marketing but behaves like noise.

3

If you asked your five best salespeople and your head of marketing to describe your ideal customer in one sentence each, would you get one answer six times or six different answers? This is the question that exposes fragmented messaging before it ever shows up in a CRM report. A company with real clarity says the same thing with five mouths. A company without it has five slightly different companies, all selling under one name.

4

If you doubled your budget tomorrow, where would you invest first, and what outcome would you expect within 90 days? You have to know what's working so you know where to invest.

5

What percentage of your marketing-generated leads convert to paying customers, and how long until they are profitable? Lead volume is the easiest number to feel good about and the least useful one to act on. The real question is quality and payback; how many of those leads actually become revenue, and how long before they're worth more than they cost. Most CEOs know the top of that funnel, but few know the bottom.

6

How quickly can you pivot based on real-time data, and who owns continuous optimization? Every CEO says they're "data-driven." Far fewer can name the person whose job it is to act on the data daily or weekly, rather than discuss it at the next quarterly review. Optimization can't only happen when someone notices a problem.

7

If your marketing budget was cut by 50% tomorrow, could your team tell you exactly what would be cut in five minutes, or would it take a meeting? A real strategy has a ranked order. If trimming the budget would trigger a debate rather than a decision, your marketing strategy isn't fully baked.

8

What's the one number your marketing leader is accountable for that, if missed, you'd notice within 30 days without being told? If it involves impressions, followers, or engagement, you're tracking activity but not impact. A function with real clarity has a single number tied to revenue or retention that the CEO would personally notice moving.

9

Do you know which customer segment converts the most, and what they believe before they buy from you? Most companies can describe their customers demographically, but far fewer can name the specific belief or trigger that moves their best-fit segment to buy. That belief is the actual lever behind every high-performing message and offer, and if you don't know it, your marketing is guessing at persuasion instead of engineering it.

10

Where does your current funnel lose the most revenue, and what have you done in the last 90 days to fix it? Almost every CEO has a vague sense that something leaks somewhere between awareness and closing. Few can name the exact stage, and fewer still can point to a specific action taken to fix it recently.

What Your Answers Mean

0-2 unclear or "no" answers: You have tactical blind spots that are fixable with focused, targeted work. Nothing is structurally broken.

3-5 unclear or "no" answers: You have structural gaps, most likely unclear positioning, fractured ownership, or no real measurement underneath the activity.

6-10 unclear or "no" answers: Marketing in your company is running on momentum, rather than architecture. It may still be producing results today, but you're exposed, and you won't see the failure coming until growth stalls, and nobody can say why.

If one or two specific questions stopped you cold, you need a focused, time-boxed engagement: someone goes in, gets you the specific answer (positioning, attribution, pricing, competitive intel, whatever the gap), and hands it back. You stay in control of the company; you just stop guessing on that one thing.

[Explore Our Marketing Diagnostic](#)

If most of these stopped you, the problem isn't a missing answer; it's a missing owner. No one is holding these ten questions as their actual job. That's what a fractional CMO is for: senior, accountable ownership of the answers and the strategy behind them, at a fraction of the cost and risk of a full-time executive hire.

[Explore Fractional CMO Services](#)

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Not Sure Which One You Need?

That's a fair place to be; most CEOs don't know until someone walks them through their specific answers. Tell us where you got stuck, and we'll tell you whether you need a focused answer or a full-time owner.

[Contact Our Team](#)



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