

What makes an influential Chief Marketing Officer?

A psychological deep-dive into the language of marketing leaders

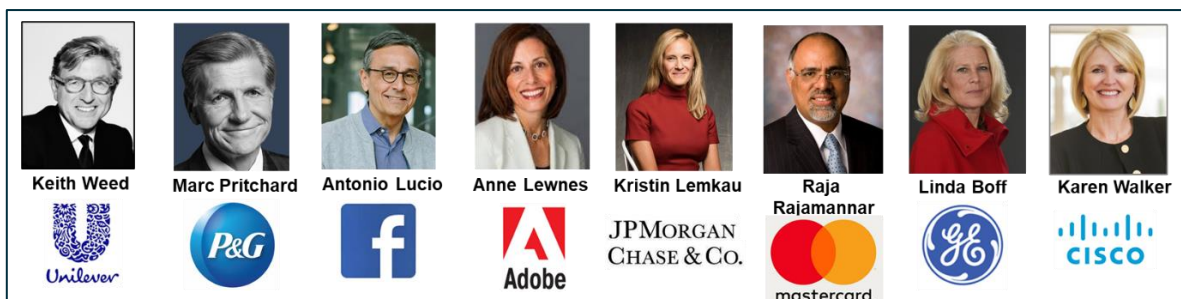
Marketers love listening to the best marketing leaders. When they're speaking our rears hit seats. Our eyeballs fix on the interviews they give. And our minds turn over the thoughts they share in articles and blogs.

So who are the best? What are the 10 ideas that make up over 70% of their working agendas? How do they approach change? What makes a CMO's mindset? And what are the differences between women and men?

The first question is answered by Forbes. They've listed the world's most influential CMOs. The others are answered by our deep-listening robot, Bob. He reads 120x faster than us humans. Bob surfaces what people are talking about, but more importantly he also measures the deeper psychology in how people talk. (He does it for brands like ANZ, Cadbury's and Samsung, too).

Bob has analysed thousands of words from these CMOs' articles and conference speeches. Well, from eight of the top ten. Phil Schiller of Apple and Leslie Berland of Twitter lacked enough up-to-date thought leadership content to make the cut. Perhaps their influence is more about who they're working for rather than what they have to share with others?

Here are the top eight (more communicative) CMOs, listed left to right, by Forbes' ranking:



Keith Weed has since moved on from Unilever after 10 years. Now a non-exec at Sainsbury's and WPP he's still highly influential. Between them they're responsible for spending around \$30bn. So even if you don't recognise them all, the chances are they've been influencing your buying decisions directly. You'll also notice there's an even balance in sexes. And that begs another question:

Are there any psychological differences between female and male CMOs?

It can be a contentious issue, but we're dealing with facts here, rather than opinions. We'll highlight any thoughts on this and leave you to form your own view.

Squeeze into your wetsuit; buckle on your air tank; rinse out your mask and let's do a deep dive into the minds of marketing's greatest thinkers...

What's the CMO Agenda?

On our way to the deeper things, let's take a look at the surface. Bob pulls out what people are talking about by measuring rarity of an idea as well as how often it's used. This enables us to quickly make sense from thousands of words.

We asked him to give us the top 20 things that these CMOs talk about together. The percentages you see are the term's weighting in this top 20.

Here are the top 10:

	% of Top 20
1 brand/branding	11.3
2 know/knowledge	11.0
3 market/marketing	10.2
4 think/thinking	9.6
5 people	6.6
6 company	5.5
7 digital	4.4
8 consumer/customer	4.3
9 world/global	4.1
10 create	3.8

Top 10 Shared/Generic Ideas Among CMOs

These ten are 71% of CMOs' agendas. They're thinking about, and searching for, the **knowledge** they need for **branding** and **marketing**. They're both **people** and **company** focused. They know **digital** has changed things from a **global** perspective. And they're talking about how this affects **creativity** and making things happen.












The next 10 ideas are only 29% of the generic CMO agenda. But they give important clues about how they're seeing their bigger ideas being put to work:

	% of Top 20
11 content	3.7
12 platforms	3.6
13 team	3.4
14 technology	3.3
15 business	3.0
16 work	2.5
17 talking	2.6
18 right	2.6
19 need/s	2.5
20 year	1.9

Bottom 10 Shared/Generic Ideas Among CMOs

Their approach to digital is being driven by **content** across various **platforms**. **Teams** and **technology** need to **work** across the **business**. They do a lot of **talking** and want to do the **right** things the **right** way, while satisfying **needs**. Time scales are based on a **year**.

Of course, as with all averages, there are big variations by individual. *What are the things each CMO is concerned with that isn't on the generic CMO agenda?* You can see the concepts **over-weighted by each CMO as a percentage over their group average here:**

							
Keith Weed	Marc Pritchard	Antonio Lucio	Anne Lewnes	Kristin Lemkau	Raja Rajamannar	Linda Boff	Karen Walker
				JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.			
Unilever %	P&G %	Facebook %	Adobe %	JPMORGAN CHASE & CO. %	Mastercard %	GE %	CISCO %
Need 172	Consumer 197	World 274	Knowledge 168	Content 77	Consumer 127	Content 141	Technology 143
Talking 119	Creating 189	Business 214	Creating 152	People 62	Marketing 108	Brand 100	Team 134
World 105	Digital 82	Need 156	Digital 109	Talking 34	Right 78	Thinking 97	Think 89
Platforms 49	Brand 64	Talking 23	Work 86	Right 27	Company 47	Team 92	Business 82
People 31	Need 47	Platforms 20	Company 72	Knowledge 25	Platforms 47	Platforms 87	Knowledge 46

CMO's Top 5 generic ideas % over-weighting

Have you noticed that three of the four women over-weight 'team' or 'people'? Only one man does. Look at the ideas over 100% above the average and you can work out each CMO's top line agenda...Let's take this further by measuring how distinctive each person is from the generics:

							
Keith Weed	Marc Pritchard	Antonio Lucio	Anne Lewnes	Kristin Lemkau	Raja Rajamannar	Linda Boff	Karen Walker
				JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.			
Unilever	P&G	Facebook	Adobe	JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.	Mastercard	GE	CISCO
49%	49%	35%	10%	25%	35%	34%	23%
Distinctive	Distinctive	Distinctive	Distinctive	Distinctive	Distinctive	Distinctive	Distinctive

Keith Weed's agenda leads with two big distinctive ideas – *advertisers* and *sustainability*. His other distinctive ideas include *'busy'*, *media*, *trust* and *challenge*. "We need to talk to the world about sustainability" is his clear message. Bob has shown us this without even having to read anything.

Marc Pritchard also leads with *advertising*. *Media*, *'view'*, *supply chain* and *behaviour* are other distinctive themes. It's very process-focused.

Antonio Lucio's distinctive ideas are further down his top 20 agenda. They are: *diversity*, *time*, *difference*, *ability* and *women*. He's a man yet he's the only one with diversity and women/female in his top 20 themes.

Anne Lewnes is the least distinctive of the group. Her 10% difference is made up equally of: *product*, *data*, *experience*, *community* and *metrics*. (With the exception of 'product' we at Linguabrand can empathise with these).

Kristin Lemkau's differences are: *job*, *millennial*, *time*, *social media* and *purpose*. And *'compliance'* gets a showing, too.

Raj Rajamannar talks about: *experience*, *purpose*, *CEO*, *starting*, *doing*, *passion* and *awards*.

Linda Boff takes a strong line on *'stories'*. Then: *'love'*, *media*, *innovation* and *science*. Stories and science are a fascinating mix.

Karen Walker is into *engagement*, *'journey'*, *employee* and *change*. And she has made a lot of the Cisco *'Bridge'* logo, extending it as a metaphorical device to make connections. (More on this type of thinking on all the CMOs later in this analysis).

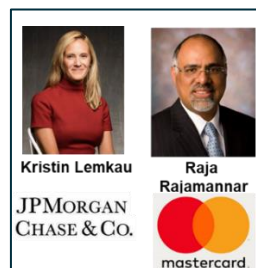
You might have noticed already, but the males are more likely to be different to the generic agenda. The average for the men is 42% and 23% for the women.

Personality Traits

Now let's 'dive' deeper, by looking at some personality traits these CMO's are revealing. Bob maps tone of voice speaking styles, not intonation, but the type of personality we project in the way we choose to present what we're talking or writing about.

Character

First off, **compared to everyday conversations**, *their language is highly egotistical*. In fact, they are 170% more egotistical than most of us. It's well-established that females use many more personal pronouns than men. And that holds good here, too. The women are 38% more egotistical than the men. But they're also 31% more personable – that's talking about 'you' and 'yours'. Let's spare the blushes of the most egotistical. The least is Mastercard's Raj Rajamannar, followed by P&G's Marc Pritchard. Easily the most personable CMO is JP Morgan's Kristin Lemkau, and she's followed by Karen Walker at Cisco.



Kristin is the most personable and Raja the least egotistical (of a highly egotistical sample)

Outlook

The use of the past, present and future tenses shows a 54% uplift on the present. The past is -12%. You might have thought these leading lights would be talking about what *will* be happening – but actually there's a slight dip (-3%) in the use of the future tense.

The women outscore the men on all tenses – including future. This points to a superior ability to deliver a narrative. The male approach is stronger when talking about solving problems (+79%) or finding ways of improving things (+22%). Problem-solving is getting *away from* an issue: 'Take away my pain'. 'Give me peace of mind'.

The biggest problem-solver is Marc Pritchard of P&G. Things like solving the problem of murkiness in media supply chains are high on his agenda.

Thinking Styles



Bob measures these three thinking styles




CMO's demonstrate way higher thinking levels than those in a **normal conversation**. You'd expect that given these are talks and articles. But even compared to business language, it's high: +21% on reasoning, +23% on quant thinking and +143% on action.

And the women outscore the men on two of the three. Have a guess which two...

...it's +13% on reasoning and +11% on action. The men average +14% on quant thinking. And this is especially noticeable with Unilever's Keith Weed and P&G's Marc Pritchard. Their references to numbers, amounts and metrics are over double normal levels. That speaks volumes about the type of thinking in their businesses.

Approach to Change

Business in general, and marketing in particular, is about responding to change or making it happen. Bob measures three approaches to change (usually on brands and consumers):







Tradition (Sameness)	Evolution (Sameness with difference)	Revolution (Difference)
		
Authentic, classic, continuing, established, iconic, thoroughbred...	Add, augment, better, convert, develop, increase, progress...	Disrupt, breakthrough, innovate, overturn, reinvent, transform...

Bob measures these three types of change

You'll have heard a lot about revolutionary change over the last few years. 'Disruption' and 'transformation' have been buzzing around business language. *Do CMOs echo that?*

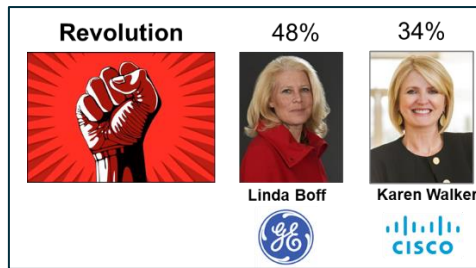
	% Business Average	% CMO Average
Tradition	22	15
Evolution	59	60
Revolution	19	25

As a group, you can see there isn't a massive **variation from business in general**. But you can also see there's a switch from tradition to revolution. That gives it a 32% CMO uplift versus business in general. *Within the group there is one stand out CMO covering change in general.* That's Marc Pritchard of P&G. He's followed by Antonio Lucio and Linda Boff.

		
Marc Pritchard	Antonio Lucio	Linda Boff
		

Three Champions of Change

But there are significant differences between the CMO's in their **% weighting** of approaches to change.



% Change Thinking Around Transformation

Linda Boff and Karen Walker are much more focused around radical change. Is this simply driven by the tech-driven markets they operate in? Or is it a part of their mindset anyway?



% Change Thinking Around Evolutionary Change

Keith Weed and Antonio Lucio have a much greater bias towards evolutionary change – that’s gradual development rather than radical reinvention.

For Tradition (being rooted and continuity) The bigger percentages are both in Financial Services. JPMorgan Chase’s Kristin Lemkau (29%) and Mastercard’s Raja Rajamannar (24%). Bear in mind this over-weighting still leaves them preferring more evolution and/or revolution. *Nevertheless, this does suggest that approach to change is driven by market category.* And that may well attract the talent that’s happy to implement change in the way the category deals with it.

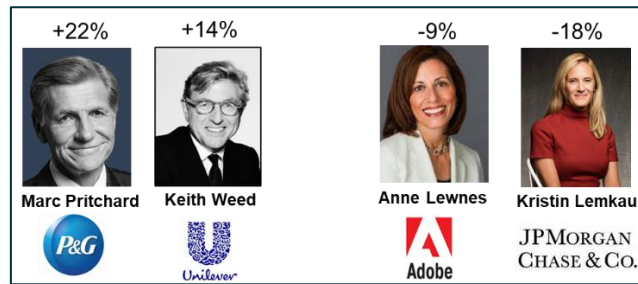
What’s clear is that people have different approaches to change. And our work across over 40 categories shows that change varies by across them. So understanding an individual’s approach to change is an important element in matching talent with the right category and corporate culture.

Persuasive Framing

We’re as deep in the sub-conscious as we’re going to go. Bob measures 70 different persuasion frames. Framing is describing one thing in terms of another. It’s the picture language we use to share our view of the world - and to persuade others to that point of view. It’s effortless to consume as a listener, or reader, because we both give and receive these pictures largely sub-consciously. For example, we picture money as water: ‘drowning’ in debt, ‘splashing’ out, cash ‘flow’, income ‘streams’, ‘dipping’ into your savings... It’s prevalent in every society that’s been brought up with coins. Why? Because coins flow like water, sound like water tinkling and feel cool like water. That’s wired up our brains this way.

So who are the most and least persuasive CMOs? What’s the mindset they have when seeking to persuade their audiences? Finally, are there any secrets Bob can reveal about specific CMO’s and their worldview?

As a group CMOs are 24% more persuasive than we are in **normal spoken conversations**. But that's to be expected – they are being asked for specific points of view, after all.



Forbes' top two influential CMOs are also the most persuasive

Compared to the **group average** Pritchard and Weed stand out as the most persuasive. And there are two laggards, using less picture language than the group- Lewnes and Lemkau.

The CMO Mindset

Bob's analysis of CMO persuasion patterns has quantified the CMO mindset **against the population in general**.

Here's how it works:



The Top CMO mindset quantified

CMO's are primarily wired up to think about making and creating things by applying resources. These are required to deliver change by making connections that build something substantial. All this is underpinned by spatial thinking, primarily becoming *closer*, getting in *front* and rising *above*. It's worth pointing out that none of these CMOs base any of their deeper thinking on marketing or business as a contest. There's no attacking or defending in the way they work as professional people.

Anyone wanting to reach their level must focus relentlessly on a mindset expanding beyond just the literal application of this thinking. It needs to be a world view extending to every aspect of professional - and in all likelihood, personal – life.

Secrets of Specific CMOs...

Before we resurface, it's worth pointing out that Bob's analysis is bottom-up. That means he's listened in depth to each individual CMO's thinking, then aggregated and measured it against background benchmarks. That means we can dive into the thinking of any specific individual...

There are **different levels of individual emphasis** within the CMO Mindset. Keith Weed, for example is +284% on resources. And Karen Walker is +144% on connections. We've delved deeper to surface a highlight for each CMO that says more about them than the job they're doing: **(% is variation versus general population)**



Linda Boff



Linda likes scientific thinking. She uses it over 4.5x as much as most of us. GE marketing has adopted a 'growth hunting formula'. Her people act as catalysts. The company has DNA and equations need balancing. Linda studied Political Science. It seems the science side of it has wired up her thinking to this day.



Kristin Lemkau
JPMORGAN
CHASE & CO.

Kristin thinks big. She uses more than twice the average level of reference to largeness. She makes 'big, big learnings', is a big, big believer in things and also has a 'big life outside work'.

Certain things make a huge difference and she's enormously grateful for the opportunities she's had working at a major company like JP Morgan Chase.



Anne Lewnes



Anne thinks in terms of balance. This is nearly twice standard levels. She often sees things pivoting, being at the hub or needing to be nimble. This also translates into ideas such as parity.

Anne was a journalism major from an engineering-based school. This might explain balance and thinking in terms of things turning around a central point.



Antonio Lucio



Antonio thinks in terms of vertical levels and spatial closeness. He does so more than five times as the rest of us.

His mind frames things as varied as expectations, degree of openness and priorities on a *vertical hierarchy*. Spatial closeness is emphasised further with a focus on locality, as a way of getting closer to consumers.



Marc Pritchard



Marc's wired up for the visual sense. As well as using a lot of environmental framing around the idea of light (eg transparency and murkiness) he's easily the top user of visual references.

He's looking for things and putting a focus on others. He scans things to see what's going on.



Raja
Rajamannar



Raja is a man who talks passion. Emotional forces are a big part of his thinking. Primarily this means that passion and 'being passionate' pepper his delivery.

And he also talks about burning desires. He and Linda Boff are way ahead on this measure. If they share a stage it will be overflowing with emotional forces.



Karen Walker



Karen is on a journey. She refers directly to ‘being on a journey’ in a metaphorical sense, suggesting it may have been picked up as a big idea. But she also shows other thinking around journeys.

Examples include where we’re headed; transitioning, starting out and direction.



Keith Weed



Keith likes the big picture. Where Kristin talks about size, Keith’s preference is for scope. He has the largest gap between favouring big picture over detail of any of the CMOs. Whether it’s across the business, world or value chain he likes to deal with big issues.

Favouring strategies or stereotypes, Keith nearly always thinks broadly; in his public declarations at least.

Summary

An influential CMO spends a lot of time talking about knowledge and thinking. They work around people and creativity.

CMOs are an egotistical bunch, too. They generally don’t differ a great deal from their other business colleagues on approach to change. But there’s some evidence suggesting that attitudes towards change are driven by categories rather than individuals.

CMO’s are persuasive individuals, using more picture language than us ordinary mortals. It’s not surprising that Forbes’ top two most influential CMO’s, Keith Weed and Marc Pritchard, are also the most persuasive. CMO’s are primarily wired up to think about making and creating things by applying resources. These are used to deliver change through making connections that help build something substantial. A big finding is that they don’t think of business as a battle, despite this being a very common business metaphor.

Within this common mindset, each CMO has their own unique perspective on how they’re wired up to perceive the world. This comes from their own individual up-bringing, education and experience. But gender also contributes. The women show a greater ability to talk through a narrative, as witnessed by their greater use of all the tenses - past, present and future. The males are more focused on finding answers and problem-solving. The women out-think the men on logical reasoning and action, with men showing higher levels of quantified thinking than women. Female CMOs are more focused on people than males and are more personable - having a higher ‘you’ focus. But men are less likely to conform with the generic CMO agenda. Knowing these differences means we can all stretch ourselves.

To become a top CMO focus on knowledge, creativity and people. Make connections and build things that last. Be able to deliver a strong narrative and become more persuasive by using plenty of picture language. But don’t forget the most important thing of all...that’s being yourself.