



# 5 Tips to Help Your C-Suite View Marketing as an Investment

**L**ike many of my professional peers, I've spent a healthy portion of my career defending the importance of branding and marketing to the C-Suite and boards. While the endeavor can be a bit less trying for an external consultant (me) vs. the in-house client (formerly me), it can still be a challenge

those goals. Be sure to illustrate ROI – both micro (project/campaign) and macro (share of market, brand awareness, etc.) – to gain advocates and convey that you “get” what keeps them up at night. Pro tip: Confirm or reiterate KPIs (key performance indicators).

---

**It can be a challenge to persuade executives that marketing initiatives are investments, not expenses.**

---

to persuade executives that marketing initiatives are investments, not expenses. With this in mind, here are five methods to be more persuasive in asking for resources for your marketing and branding efforts:

## **1 SPEAK THEIR LANGUAGE (BUSINESS TERMS).**

Marketing goals should always be aligned with business objectives. And every marketing strategy or tactic you recommend should have a financial goal associated with it. Incorporate your organization's business goals into your marketing presentations and show how marketing is the roadmap to achieving

## **2 EXPLAIN THE METHOD TO YOUR MADNESS.**

The decision-makers and/or influencers you're working with are likely “process” people who make evidence-based decisions. While you know how you developed your strategic recommendations for a marketing investment, you'll likely need to educate the C-Suite about how you got there. Brevity and clarity are good, but be sure to outline the steps you took to support your recommendations, so nobody can argue that it was simply based on gut instinct. Pro tip: Data is your friend and your decision-makers like it.

### **3 LEVERAGE RESEARCH.**

Market research can truly reinforce your ask and frame your narrative. Use primary research if it's available; if not, secondary research and industry best practices can validate your marketing recommendations. In addition to studies, white papers and trade and consumer publications, there are influential bloggers in every industry who may have content to help build your case.

### **5 OUTLINE SUCCESS METRICS AND SHARE THE RESULTS.**

Know what metrics or KPIs are most important to your leadership team and your business. What matters is aligning against business goals, not every abstract thing you can measure. Be it lead generation, sales, production, cost, retention, enrollment or customer acquisition, be prepared to communicate these with the C-Suite. And don't just communicate

---

## **Do your execs know how the marketing and media landscape has changed?**

---

### **4 SHOW WHAT'S BEHIND THE MARKETING CURTAIN.**

Do your execs know how the marketing and media landscape has changed? It's your job to provide the color commentary around this. Doing so will not only position you as an expert, it contextualizes your proposal and allows you to ask how committed they are to staying relevant. Healthcare example: More than 70% of Americans use social media daily, spending an average of two hours each day on social. Social media advertising budgets are predicted to nearly double by 2023. But as recently as 2018, only 26% of all U.S. hospitals had adopted social media. To remain relevant to current and future patients, they must expand their social presence.

when asking for resources – show results regularly (for example, quarterly or annually) to remind them of the actions taken, objectives reached and any new takeaways gained from the initiative(s).

Pro tip: dashboards.

Former Harvard Business School professors Thomas Steenburgh and Michael Ahearne observed, “Senior leaders have great confidence in their ability to develop innovations but not in their ability to commercialize them.” Now is the time to reclaim marketing as a key driver of business. As business continues to be innovation-driven through 2020 and beyond, marketing must be embraced, developed and valued more than ever.

---

*Diane Doyne is Vice President of Client Services at Villing+Company, a full service marketing communications firm in South Bend, Indiana.  
diane@villing.com / 574-277-0215 / villing.com*