



Fractional CMOs: The growth-minded CEO's secret ingredient

Brand development. Competitive positioning. Go-to-market strategy. Communications. Business development. No matter what form it takes, or what they choose to call it, every business needs marketing in some form.

But not every company needs marketing leadership in the same way, or all the time. Fortunately, as demand for experienced marketing leaders has grown, so too have your options for accessing this kind of talent.

Enter: the fractional CMO.

What is a fractional CMO, and what can they do for you?

A fractional CMO (Chief Marketing Officer) is a seasoned professional providing marketing

expertise and consulting on an interim, part-time or project basis.

They can help you create, execute and measure the results of your marketing strategy, campaigns, and initiatives.

These experts offer a range of skills and knowledge that you may not have in-house, in areas including digital marketing, strategic planning and analysis, customer acquisition strategies, brand positioning and content marketing.

A fractional CMO can also provide guidance on how to manage resources and budgets so that you get the best return on your marketing investment. They stay up with current trends in the marketplace so that

you get the best return on your marketing investment. They stay up with current trends in the marketplace so that your business is always ahead of the innovation curve.

A fractional CMO is often a great option for getting insights and leadership from an executive marketer without the expense of a full-time hire.

What is so unique about fractional CMOs is they can be put in at any point in the game, are flexible depending on each specific need, and can address issues and solve problems from the start given their level of experience. They can be completely customizable to your business needs, down to very specific industry knowledge, perfect personality matches for teams and in any location.

For example, a golf club manufacturer was introducing a new iron to their well-known line of club products. This product used a new manufacturing technology that promised to improve performance for amateur players.

The company had a sales team but their marketing director had recently left and the product launch was imminent.

Freeman+Leonard suggested a fractional CMO to lead development of the launch from product positioning and branding to website copy, sales materials and experiential marketing at trade shows and on-site golf events. The CMO even trained the sales team on how to position and discuss the new club in a very compelling way to their retailers and golf course clients. Following the very successful launch, the fractional CMO was no longer required and the company continued with the plan for sales support.

With a leader like this dedicated to planning and overseeing your marketing efforts, you can know that all aspects of your strategy are being handled effectively — even if you don't engage their services all the time.

Who needs a fractional CMO?

Most companies can benefit from an occasional infusion of marketing leadership, but fractional





CMOs are perhaps most suited to smaller to mid-size companies who don't already have a strong marketing presence. They may have a good product or service and a top-notch sales team, but lack leadership in areas like lead generation, market opportunity evaluation, brand development, competitive positioning and pricing.

Fractional CMOs can accelerate growth by fine-tuning a company's marketing – and they can be pinch hitters at key times in your business' trajectory, when strategies are pivoting, and extra thought leaders are needed to ensure successful growth and outcomes.

Is there a void in your executive or C-suite?

That's often a great time to bring in a fractional CMO. They can serve as a temporary and neutral third party to provide leadership to your employees and ensure momentum is maintained and progress moves forward with your brand and products. These marketing executives can also be instrumental in bringing teams together to

make sure everyone's aligned and working towards the same goals. The productivity and morale boost a fractional CMO can inspire will far outlast their tenure!

Do you need a big idea for an advertising or promotional campaign?

Fractional CMOs don't just provide strategy and marketing operations leadership — they can also provide creativity and ingenuity. Many have decades of experience (and a few awards) from working with national and global brands at creative agencies, or from leading creative teams at major corporations.

With this experience comes a unique understanding of what works and what doesn't in various sectors and target markets, allowing them to generate powerful ideas that will engage potential customers and convert them into loyal ones.

Are you launching a new product?

Consider hiring a fractional CMO to map out your go-to-market (GTM) strategy. They can help you define and communicate your value proposition; identify the target customers,

determine the channels, content and tactics you'll use for marketing and sales; and finally, measure results. Of course, this plan must also be implemented. A fractional CMO can operationalize your GTM strategy from start to finish with an actionable plan that all teams can follow.

A credit company in the prepaid card arena planned to expand their business by creating a line of products aimed at consumers, a dramatic addition to their established B2B model. The effort to build brand awareness and sales among consumers was no small task. They needed to quickly make a significant shift in their go-to-market strategy and establish a compelling brand consumers would recognize and demand.

Freeman+Leonard, with a strong bench of CMO talent, hand-picked the perfectly qualified leader to take on this challenge for the company, developing the brand positioning, messaging and launch plan, and uniting the existing corporate leadership to support the plan.

When the launch and initial oversight were complete, this company was able to

continue the GTM plan internally and their Freeman+Leonard fractional CMO became a resource to consult as needed.

In short, anytime you're pivoting, launching or needing a big idea or extra leadership, but don't require it year-round, a fractional CMO should be your solution.

How do you work with a fractional CMO?

There are many flexible and affordable ways to engage the services of a fractional CMO.

One approach, which we at Freeman+Leonard call a "Recurring CMO," is to bring them in for an annual planning meeting or a project to develop your marketing strategy. They can then return for a monthly or quarterly meeting to ensure that strategy is successfully implemented. Your "Recurring CMO" can also be retained for a certain number of hours per month.

With fractional CMOs, you can get a \$400K marketing leader without the \$400K salary.





There is no limit to the number of ways you can design your own fractional CMO engagement. At Freeman+Leonard, we can find the ideal fractional CMO for your needs and package their services in the way that works best for your business.

How do you know whether you need a fractional or full-time CMO?

With so many ways to access marketing talent, it can be tough to know which model best suits your needs. Is it to hire and build out a full-time marketing team? Hire an agency? Or do you really need to just bite the bullet and hire a full-time CMO?

To help you decide, our team recommends first reviewing your 2023 goals, broken down by quarter. What are your pain points? What do you want to achieve? Do you know how you'll get there?

A fractional CMO can help you review these objectives and determine the timelines, budgets, team members, strategies and tactics needed to achieve them — so we often recommend bringing one in immediately for this planning phase.

If your goals seem shorter-term, a fractional CMO can quickly help you make real progress and see you across the finish line, so don't hesitate to engage the services of one.

But if your goals are much longer-term, a permanent role may be most effective. A fractional CMO can help you get the wheels turning while you start searching for a permanent hire.

No matter what you decide, the talent experts at Freeman+Leonard can help. We have access to many thousands of experienced marketers across the country, including dozens of executive-level consultants, many of whom are former CMOs themselves.

Don't hesitate to reach out to our team for more information. [Contact us](#) to start a conversation today, no strings attached.

Get in touch today.

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