

Can Marketers become CEOs?

One of the career challenges in the marketing field is the progression through the ranks into the executive team (as the CMO) and then finally onto CEO. Marketers who break through to CEO level are becoming more common, but it is generally more challenging for someone with a marketing background.

Your initial task is to review the following article by Jill McDonald: '[I don't see any reason more CMOs can't become CEO](#)'. Here are two quotes from her article:

To be a successful marketer in the boardroom you have to get their language, and your intent must align with what the boardroom holds dear. Marketing isn't a science, but the more grounded you can be in your recommendations the better.

When I joined McDonald's, the first thing I did was to visit the restaurants. You have to understand the reality of the experience for employees and customers. You have to start at ground level. McDonald's is all about the people and, as a leader, you have to connect with them early on.

Student Discussion Questions

Your task is to review the above information and answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do you agree with the above quote?
2. What does she mean by "what the boardroom holds dear"?
3. What are some of the specific challenges that marketers face in progressing to the CEO role?
4. What advantages do CEOs with a marketing background have when running a company?