

## **Can a CFO Run Marketing?**

### **Anyone Can Run Marketing?**

In some industries, the perception of marketing has suffered from being seen as a “easy” area to manage. As a result, it has been somewhat common for senior executives perceived to be on the track to CEO level to be cross trained as the company’s top marketer (CMO). This obviously creates resentment and lack of opportunity for employees exclusively trained and developed in the marketing area.

### **Twitter Moves Marketing to its CFO**

As an example, in 2015, Twitter appointed their CFO (Anthony Noto) to also run the marketing department. In this linked article, Noto explains that the Board’s intention of placing Twitter’s marketing department under him was:

*To elevate the importance of marketing as a key component of everything we do – as marketing really needs to permeate product, it needs to permeate content, and it needs to permeate media, and it’s a really huge opportunity in front of us.*

### **A Logical Fit?**

As you would be probably aware, a CFO is usually quite numbers and data driven employee and is quite interested in getting insights from data. And, as there has been a significant shift in recent years from marketing being considered an art form to becoming more analytically driven – the appointment of the CFO to run marketing, particularly in the online form, may be a logical fit? What do you think?

### **Student Discussion Questions**

1. Other than having numbers and data expertise, is it possible that a CFO could bring other skills to the marketing area?
2. Do you think that marketing has now become a science/data function only, or is creativity still an important factor?
3. To what extent do most/all marketers need to have a strong analytical understanding in today’s technology driven marketing world and related platforms?
4. Do you think that this CFO should come into marketing at a more junior level, or are they ready to run marketing without any prior marketing exposure?
5. Do you think that a reverse situation would apply – that the senior marketing person (CMO) would be appointed to run the finance area (even if they were strong in statistics and analysis)?
6. Based upon this activity, the Twitter situation, and your other knowledge – what skills do you think will be important for you in your marketing (and business) career?