

# Top 10 FAQs

## What CEOs Ask Chief Outsiders

*CEOs connect with us because they've been referred by one of our clients, a Vistage or C12 Chair, or have found us by searching for "top strategic marketing consulting firms" or something similar. When we meet, we often find that these CEOs are frustrated with their growth. They have a vision for where they want to take their companies, but don't have a means to turn their vision into actionable plans, and then see them implemented. After a discussion around their specific business challenges and opportunities, they're curious about the specifics of how Chief Outsiders might be able to help.*

## Here are some of the most **common questions**:

### 1. Exactly, what is a fractional or part-time CMO?

One of our experienced, executive-level Chief Marketing Officers joins your company as a part-time member of your executive management team. Clients tell us this fractional approach allows their CMO to provide strategic impact since they are not encumbered with daily administrative distractions.

### 2. What does a typical engagement look like?

We often find that 25% of a CMO's time can have a major impact at our client companies. It's common to "heavy up" on the CMO consulting in the initial month or two if there are specific and pressing opportunities. Most engagements start with, and benefit from, an immediate recalibration with the marketplace. Gaining fresh insights from customers, partners, competitive activity and the company itself will deliver the knowledge required to inform strategic adjustments to plans, value propositions and business objectives. Then with a strategic marketing plan completed, marketing strategy implementation is managed and efficiently executed by your CMO.

### 3. What are specific strategic marketing and tactical deliverables we can expect?

Most companies hire us to develop and execute a business growth strategy. While every company presents a unique situation, quite often CMO consulting deliverables may include some combination of:

- Customer, company, competitive insights report
- Market opportunity assessment
- Messaging framework
- Value propositions for company and product/services
- Strategic marketing plan

- Sales or channels assessment and opportunity plan
- New market opportunity assessment and plan
- New products opportunity assessment and requirements plans
- Launch plans
- Marketing mix plans
- Budget plans and financial impact forecasting
- Sales support requirements, training and deliverables plans
- Implementation measurement dashboards
- Implementation management and weekly reporting

### 4. How long are your typical engagements? What happens when it's complete?

CMO consulting engagements range from 2 months to 12 months or more, depending the complexity of the market and company situation. Typically, the first month or two yield significant insights that shape the strategic context and supporting plans. Subsequent months are more implementation oriented. Having said that, most every company requires their interim CMO to simultaneously serve the strategic role while overseeing tactical, day-to-day needs, or the ability to "ride and shoot." Since our CMOs are experienced executives and not lifelong consultants, this is a well-developed trait.



**Chief Outsiders**  
Fractional CMOs for Accelerating Growth

## **5. We already have a VP of Sales and Marketing. How are you different?**

With products and services defined and ready for sale, a company's priority is to generate revenue. As a result, it's understandable that a growing company will put an executive in charge of the sales function. And that Marketing will play a supporting role for Sales, first and foremost to generate leads. We find that the grand majority of Sales and Marketing VPs are sales leaders. They tend not to have market development experience and they stay focused on immediate sales priorities. Sales has to focus on this quarter's results; Marketing, and typically only when separate from Sales, focuses this quarter's activities for next quarter's sales and beyond. Chief Outsiders CMOs help CEOs address their need to keep appropriate focus on both the short term and long term strategies needed to maximize growth.

## **6. How much will this cost?**

For most growth and mid-sized companies, a full-time experienced Chief Marketing Officer is not an affordable addition to their executive team. However, a part-time or interim CMO may be highly cost-effective. Our clients find our fees competitive with a full-time marketing director or manager at full salary, benefits and overhead. The difference is that a director or manager is often not a strategic contributor on the CEO's staff. And due to their limited experience, may not be trusted with "looking out the window" for the company, or be a confidant to the CEO.

## **7. How should we measure your performance?**

Once an engagement is underway and there's reasonable clarity around the challenges and priorities to address, the CMO and CEO typically agree to a handful of Key Leading or Key Performance Indicators (KLIs or KPIs). It's important to remember that Marketing initiatives typically include a mix of both long-term and shorter-term activities and benefits. Our clients make a significant investment to secure a Chief Outsiders CMO. Our business continues to grow as a result of the results we consistently deliver.

## **8. You sound a lot like a marketing consulting firm. Are there any differences?**

Yes. One difference is consistency of executive experience. Typically, marketing consulting firms have a range of talent and experience. It's common for a senior level principal to sell-in ideas, then staff your projects with less-experienced worker bees. They may also offer a suite of creative, web

or promotional services, so advise you with a clear conflict of interest. We come to each assignment as a team of executive-level marketing strategy consultants, led by your part-time CMO. Our formal Peer Reviews add significant value and reduce the risk when compared to hiring a traditional marketing firm or consultant. Chief Outsiders offers only experienced senior marketing executives with C-level experience. There are no lifelong consultants. No junior level substitutes. We're 100% focused on providing our clients with executive talent to drive the implementation of strategic initiatives. We're told another difference is how we come alongside the CEO and become a part-time member of their executive team with a focus on implementation. While traditional consultants specialize in diagnosis and recommendations, as experienced executives we go beyond presenting game-changing strategic ideas, overseeing the marketing strategy implementation.

## **9. With what industries do you have experience?**

With more than three dozen CMOs on staff, which amounts to over 1,000 years of combined executive experience, Chief Outsiders' industry experience also spans many dozen industry sectors. Scan our roster of interim CMOs here to see for yourself. We've also learned that sometimes a CMO from a different industry, with experience in the problem type, may provide an even fresher outside perspective and lead to even greater impact.

## **10. Where are you located? Will you work from our offices or yours?**

While our CMOs are located in over 20 major markets across the U.S. and work on behalf of our clients from their local offices, we believe face time in your office is very important and valuable in developing trusted relationship with you and your team. Depending upon the scope of engagement, your CMO will tend to spend time each week – sometimes multiple times each week – in your offices.

