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Chandar Pattabhiram

A Marketer for Life!



Leader of the Month



George Hughes, CMO
The Star Entertainment Group

Imparting Wisdom

Successful Personality Traits
to Learn from Elon Musk

The Art of Leading

Attributes of a
Good Leader





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CMO
Coupa Software

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Be a Greek and a Roman: bring the thoughtfulness and insightfulness of the ancient Greeks while bringing the great building skills of the ancient Romans to create the ultimate marketing machine.

Remember the interview scene from *Wolf of Wall Street*, in which Leonardo DiCaprio asks candidates to sell him a pen? Now, what does that scene stand for? The forty-five seconds scene perfectly portrays the key attribute a marketer requires; an ability to intrigue. In the field of marketing, evoking the buying emotion of a customer by intriguing is the absolute purpose. Whether you are selling a pen or a billion-dollar cruise, you must know how to make the process of selling interesting. However, impressing personnel of different ages, interests, and emotions in a single product is quite a challenge, isn't it? Comprehending the potential customer and need of the hour paves its way here. Someone with these capabilities can be a successful marketer. But becoming a world's leading marketer demands an unwavering and evolving vision beyond all.

With the idea to exhibit the inspiring journey and insights of some of the world's most influential CMO's, Insights Success proudly presents an exclusive edition of 'The 10 Influential Marketing Leaders to watch in 2019'

Driven with the perception, 'In marketing, there aren't markets - there are only buyers', and embedded with the perfect blend of above mentioned abilities, a marketer for life, **Chandar Pattabhiram, CMO of Coupa Software**, is the cover feature of our special issue. In his extensive career, he has held marketing leadership roles at startups like Cast Iron and Badgeville, fast-growth public companies like Coupa and Marketo, and some of the largest and most successful global companies like IBM. The remarkable contribution he brought to the marketing table at all of these companies is recognized by prominent social platforms across the world including LinkedIn. In June 2017, Chandar was recognized by LinkedIn as one of the top 5 CMOs in the world to follow for thought-leadership in the digital marketing domain.

First Little Steps

As Chandar coins it, an influential leader is a combination of training and DNA -- it requires a natural gene for their function, and a passion for it. Some people are born wanting to be doctors, some lawyers, others

engineers. For Chandar, it was his interest in a range of activities, from advertising, to public speaking, to theater, that helped forge his path in marketing.

Early in his life, a family member shared an important piece of advice that shaped his career in marketing: "perception is reality." He learned early in his career that a CMO doesn't have to - and probably shouldn't - be the best at everything but needs to be know how to bring everything together. The job is like a conductor and his orchestra. It is about bringing together the best instrumentalists that are masters at their craft and empowering them to excel and produce a harmonized hymn that ultimately achieves your objectives together. Hence, as a marketing leader he strives to spot and cultivate tomorrow's leaders by identifying the candidates that reflect the core values and attributes that make up to the team's culture.

Being a team player, Chandar claims, *"As a marketer, you have to market your company and the product, of course, but you also have to market your team's work effectively. You can do a lot of marketing activities and look busy, but ultimately you want to focus on the ones that move the needle and then market those wins effectively."*

Enriching Experiences

Beneath the surface of almost every great success story are stories of failures that have laid the foundation. Chandar recalls an experience at Cast Iron Systems where he learned about the challenges of not crystalizing product market fit. Despite having a groundbreaking product (the first appliance offering for integration), the team of marketers did not find early traction because of product market fit: the differentiating attribute for marketing was simplicity, but the customer was Fortune 100 companies looking for comprehensiveness, not simplicity. It turned out they were trying to sell an iPod to a buyer looking for large professional-grade stereo systems to run concerts.

Upon the inception of SaaS and Cloud markets during this timeframe, the team quickly discerned that it is not the Fortune 500 but the "Unfortunate 5000"- the

“ Never confuse
| effort with results.





unfortunately often ignored midmarket companies that couldn't handle the cost or complexity of the traditional integration products - that truly yearned for its differentiation and offered the best product-market fit. By maniacally focusing on this segment, Chandar and his team ensured its success. *"You need to find product market fit where you can target a market that yearns and values the attributes you can offer,"* Chandar asserts. Pertaining to this experience, he learned to pick winners like Coupa Software by making sure there is a large market and real pressing need for the product(s), so it's not a "nice to have" but a "must have."

Chandar states, *"You have to fail fast and know how to lose to win, and I've learned a lot from my failures as well as my success to help shape my journey of today."*

Another key area of learning he witnessed was around talent. He believes everyone has an individual brand that you need to embrace. As a leader, you must live and breathe working to cultivate those brands to help achieve everyone achieve success for themselves, and the greater good of the team. *"True leadership comes when you grasp that and when you wake up in the morning; it's not about powering your brand, but empowering theirs,"* says Chandar. The greatest tool you have as a leader is how to intrinsically motivate by building individuals' reputations and showcasing their success through recognition. Thus, in organizations like Coupa today, the core values are not just words but are intrinsic in the foundational fabric of the company.

Listen, Learn and Enable

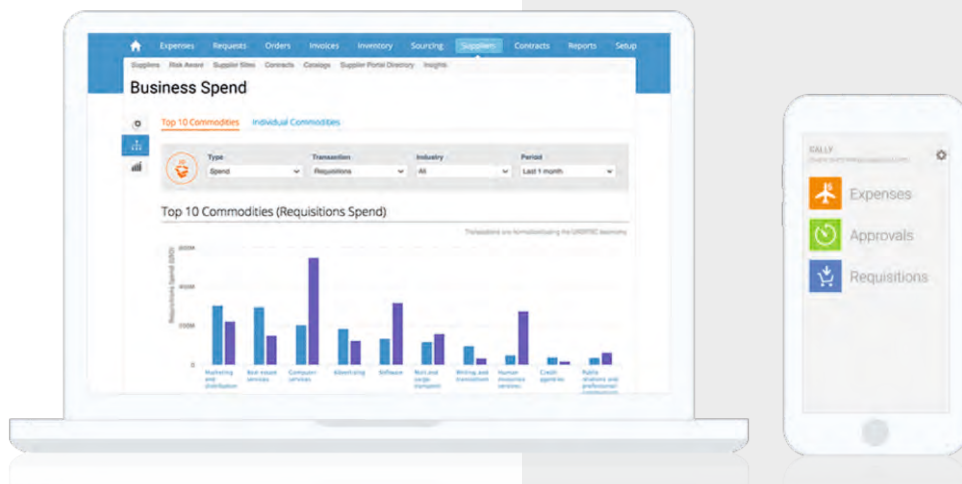
During his career, Chandar has had the privilege of learning from some of the world's best B2B marketers, gaining the practical know how of the three pillars of marketing (product, demand generation, and corporate/brand marketing) and how to build an integrated approach that combines these three elements into the ultimate marketing machine.

For developing and articulating brand value, Chandar suggests listening to customers and prospects to get their perspective. He states, *"Take a listen, learn, and enable approach. It's about developing and articulating your brand by looking from the outside in."*

"Learn and understand the true differentiating attributes that made you win or lose; and enable your team to distill all this insight to design your swords and shields messaging and approach that will help you articulate your differentiation in an engaging way," he adds.

A Combination of Emotion and Intellect

According to Chandar, marketing starts with an understanding of who the buyer persona is and tailoring a message that evokes emotion to influence the decision making of that persona. This requires a combination of Einstein and Spielberg.



“ Use recognition as an intrinsic motivator to instill a sense of purpose in your team while at the same time maniacally showcasing their success.



The Einstein approach is the science of marketing, grounded in quantitative and data-driven analysis of your ideal customer that can be used to determine the “plays” you are targeting. Only then can you fuel rinse and repeat motions that can be driven across distinct product offerings. This data-driven approach extends to a keen understanding of the return on marketing investment across all programs and making sure any available dollar spent on marketing is done so efficiently to drive impact.

The Spielberg approach is getting a personal understanding of your buyer to build and tell emotive stories that resonate with them in a way that’s distinct and meaningful. This practice allows you to build awareness that is relevant, drive influence in their decision making process, and engage them at every point in their journey.

As the CMO at Coupa, Chandar encourages these approaches to address three distinct personas the company’s business spend management platform appeals to -- procurement, finance and IT. There’s a unique anatomy to every deal that Coupa does based on each persona. It is grounded in a value message that resonates with that persona and draws an emotional, meaningful connection.

AI Driven Future

The future of marketing is promising and the implementation of innovative technology is adding more value to the purpose of marketing. Chandar is also

certain about these sustainable shifts, and believes there are two AIs that will lead the marketing revolution.

Firstly, he notes, AI (artificial intelligence) and, more importantly ML (machine learning), are starting to have an exponential impact on the science of marketing - from chat-bot interactions for sales/SDRs, to the ideal customer profile determination, multi-channel orchestration and the social pulse of customers. He highlights how companies like Coupa are applying AI to powerful community intelligence, resulting in AI-driven insights and benchmarking to each customer based on the collective intellect of the entire community of customers.

He also sheds light on another AI, Authentic Interactions. He indicates today is the day of brand authenticity. Brand and culture are not distinct - they are one in the same. Customers are looking to support brands that adhere to the cultural values they hold dear and in order to do that, every brand has to be built inside out - where your company culture permeates to your customer through the product you deliver and the way you market it. He feels advocacy is an important part of “authentic interactions.” Our peer-bound world that hangs on the influence of advocates is impacting the decision making of both B2B and B2C customers. Having a programmatic focus on advocacy on both owned and earned channels (which lend an air of authenticity to your brand) is a key way for companies to drive customer acquisition in the future.

Stairway to Marketing Heaven

At Coupa Marketing, Chandar is focused on the company’s Stairway to Marketing Heaven - Awareness, Acquisition and Advocacy. In the times ahead, he envisions driving awareness and building deep emotional connections with Coupa’s customer community; fostering closer synergies with sales to successfully drive acquisition and incremental business; and introducing (and scaling) the right advocacy programs to build customers for life who express passion about their experience with the brand.

“There is nothing more thrilling than helping a company achieve its greatest potential by telling the right emotive stories to win deals and building a high-impact marketing team. I thrive on achieving the perfect

harmony that enables you to establish an emotional connection that wins the mind of your buyer for life. This is much easier said than done, but central to being influential.” And that’s Chandar Pattabhiram for you.

Want to be a CMO?

Having a disruptive product is not enough to achieve global success - a team of skilled marketers who actually display its uniqueness to customers is equally essential. Be it door-to-door sellers or a digital marketing executive, every marketer plays a crucial part in ensuring the success of the product.

Being one of the world’s most influential CMOs, Chandar has supported exceptional people who are now CMOs in both public and private companies, and he further aims to cultivate great CMOs of tomorrow through nurturing insights. His blogs and interviews have had a great impact on budding CMOs across world. And surely they will be helpful to our readers too.

He particularly advises them to harness storytelling skills as these will be one of the most important skills as a CMO. He highlights understanding that emotion is the precursor to a go-to-market motion. According to him, ultimate success is about making that emotive connection and winning the mind of the buyer. Understand that connection and let that drive everything you do across all aspects of marketing (product, corporate, brand, and demand generation).

Chandar also motivates a data-driven mindset of “show me the romi” (return on marketing investment). As what gets measured gets funded.

Finally, he asks to harness the ability for contextual communication. He exclaims, *‘Become a marketer for marketing, and market your marketing as a brand.’* Learn to communicate the impact of marketing to different constituents based on what they care about. What your CFO cares about is the empirical impacts and what the CRO cares about is how you are driving pipeline sales effectiveness and win rates. Identify their objectives, and align your communication to show how you are driving progress against them. [ia](#)