

# New research indicates CMOs struggle to localise creative strategies

The Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) Council has released a study, 'Adaptability in Branded Content Delivery' that indicates that 33% of marketing leaders and agencies are struggling to keep pace with growing demands to localise and adapt their creative strategies.



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Facing a widening range of digital and physical channels that each require rapid adaptation in order to remain relevant to individual geographic, cultural, and customer audiences, too many organisations are failing to take the necessary steps to improve their capacity and agility.

More than two-thirds of marketers rate their organisations and agencies below satisfactory in their capacity to translate and adapt brand marketing content across the markets and channels they serve. This has led to equally lacklustre marks in timeliness as only 30% of marketers rate their in-house and agency teams as either 'advanced' or 'doing well' in their timeliness and capacity to simultaneously support global and local execution.

Marketers admit these failures in addressing rapid adaptation is further challenged by mounting pressure by a variety of forces and factors, led by requirements for geographic localisation, proliferation of new digital formats, the need for more visually enriched and engaging content, and operational cost pressures.

## Step up the game

"At a time when the customer has higher expectations than ever for the relevance and personalisation of content and brand interaction, marketing organisations will need to step up their game when it comes to brand content adaptation to address geographic, cultural, customer and other differences," says Donovan Neale-May, executive director of the CMO Council. "Past research has shown that adaptation of marketing strategy and content can be major enabler of sales and brand success. Yet most companies have a long way to go to get it right."

## Key findings

The study, developed in partnership with HH Global, is based on an online survey of more than 150 senior marketing executives, polled in the second quarter of 2017. Respondents are from global industries that demand an omnichannel

presence including retail, travel, hospitality, technology, consumer goods and telecommunications.

- Only 32% of respondents say their companies are either advanced or doing well in adapting brand content to different markets, partners and geographies. Another 34% say they are at least improving.
- Just 20% are satisfied with their creative delivery process and marketing supply chain effectiveness.
- Respondents point to speed of execution as a major challenge; less than half say they are able to deploy localised content across both physical and digital touchpoints within weeks of a campaign launch.
- Marketers believe their top five process challenge are shortening turnaround times, ensuring quality and uniformity with brand guidelines, end-to-end workflow management, delivering creative on time, and measurement of the creative appeal and impact of content.

## **Change is too slow**

The study also finds that many organisations are failing to take important steps to improve their capacity to adapt and modify branded content. Just 18% have completed a formal assessment of their creative delivery process and marketing supply chain effectiveness; although another 24% say they have begun one.

In addition, many companies are utilising only basic project management and collaboration tools to manage these processes. Just 20% use online approval and proofing systems to accelerate modifications. Even more surprising, 49% of respondents say they spend less than 5% of their marketing budget for creative adaptation and cross-cultural localisation.

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