



## CMOs See Business Strategy & Digital Marketing as Top Priorities

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CHICAGO, Jan 23, 2012 (GlobeNewswire via COMTEX) --Chief marketing officers (CMOs) want to have greater influence in setting business strategy, and they feel an increasing need to raise their technology IQ, according to a new global CMO survey by Heidrick & Struggles (Nasdaq:HSII) and Forrester Research, Inc. (Nasdaq:FORR). "The Evolved CMO 2012" report is based on a survey of nearly 200 global marketing leaders to measure CMOs' influence within the organization, their business objectives, and the skills and competencies necessary to drive a customer-obsessed organization and respond to the technology-empowered customer. The report is available to Forrester Leadership Boards CMO Group members and Heidrick & Struggles clients.

Almost 80 percent of senior marketers said they wanted their influence to grow as business strategy and development leaders. They see improving their relationship with the senior executive team as a critical way to get there, with 38 percent saying C-level relationship building is the skill they most want to improve. But in a world powered by a technology-empowered customer, the number-one skill to improve on is digital: 40 percent of CMOs say increasing their technology savvy is their top self-improvement goal, a dramatic increase from the previous survey in 2008.

"For CMOs to prove the value of their role and justify the marketing investment, they must clearly illustrate the ROI of marketing plans, influence the understanding of their brand strategy across other functional areas of the company, and engage technology and sales peers to create a consolidated vision of how to succeed with customers," said David M. Cooperstein, Forrester vice president and practice leader serving CMO & Marketing Leadership Professionals.

While relationship building with the senior executive team is seen as a top area of improvement, not all relationships are created equal. Despite the rise in importance of technology and digital media, CMOs are still prioritizing relationships with the chief executive officer, chief financial officer, and head of sales ahead of the chief information or technology officer. Only 30 percent of senior marketers see this relationship as important to develop, indicating a wide gap between the two departments. The survey also indicates that CMOs are increasingly recognizing the need to act as company leaders, not just marketing leaders, through trends such as embracing and championing the "voice of the customer" and ensuring that marketing becomes the growth engine for the organization. In fact, 42 percent of CMOs claim that representing the voice of the customer is one of the most critical factors in ensuring personal success as a marketer.

"Companies realize that it is very difficult to defend a competitive advantage mainly based on cost efficiency -- they are now moving to customer intimacy to drive differentiation," said John Abele, global managing partner of Heidrick & Struggles' Marketing, Sales & Strategy Officers Practice. "This shift in focus has to become part of the DNA of leading organizations. It will be a journey, and we see CEOs leaning on the CMO to lead the expedition. This will require visionary leadership and an understanding of functional implications that will need to change to fully embrace this approach."

About "The Evolved CMO 2012"

This is the second joint research project by Forrester Research and Heidrick & Struggles looking at the state of the CMO role. "The Evolved CMO 2012" report is based on a survey of nearly 200 global marketing leaders to measure CMOs' influence within the organization, their business objectives, and the skills and competencies necessary to drive a customer-obsessed organization and respond to the technology-empowered customer.

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