

# How marketing can overcome the talent crunch

Julia Goldin, Chief Marketing Officer at LEGO Group, discusses the talent challenges facing CMOs

---

# How marketing can overcome the talent crunch



---

**Julia Goldin is Chief Marketing Officer at LEGO Group**

---

By Anna Hamill, Senior Editor, Brands, WARC

Marketing as a career choice is struggling to attract the brightest talent away from consulting, big tech, or glamorous start-ups. Chief Marketing Officer tenures are short, and in many companies, marketing is struggling to demonstrate its value at the C-suite level – a particular problem in an age of shrinking budgets. How can the industry turn things around?

Julia Goldin, Chief Marketing Officer at LEGO Group, is co-leading the workstream addressing talent as part of the CMO Growth Council, an initiative by the Association of National Advertisers (ANA) and Cannes Lions (WARC's sister company).

"Over the last couple of decades, the role of marketing has really been marginalised," Goldin said in an exclusive interview with WARC. So tackling the ongoing talent crunch, and ensuring marketers have the right skillsets to ensure the long-term health of their brands, is key to the future of the discipline.

## **Marketing should be a modern and relevant career path**

One of the priorities of the talent

workstream of the CMO Growth Council is to 'reposition' marketing as a career choice in order to attract people to the discipline.

There is, says Goldin, a misunderstanding of the role of the marketer. "Marketing is about much more than just taking a product and figuring out how to advertise it in the most effective way. The role of marketing at its very inception was about creating value. It was about understanding the human psyche, understanding human needs, and figuring out how to provide humans with unique benefits, bring unique benefits and experiences to the product, and then how to tell people about that in a very impactful way," she said.

These values are "as important today as they were 50 to 70 years ago".

"That is the crux of the issue: we need to bring marketing back to what its original purpose was. I feel that will be a much more interesting career for a lot of people."

There's also been massive change in how people manage their careers. The concept of a 'job for life' is long gone – there's a lot more freedom and many will change careers

“Marketing is about much more than just taking a product and figuring out how to advertise it in the most effective way.

several times over the course of their lives. Just because someone hasn't started their career in a marketing role doesn't mean they don't have valuable perspectives to add.

"We have a job to do, which is to reposition marketing: to make it modern, and to shine a light on the core competencies that make marketing so unique. I actually feel that within the current context, in terms of what people are looking for, we have a lot of opportunities to be able to apply the same skillsets in a lot of different settings to build a long-lasting career," Goldin explained.

# How marketing can overcome the talent crunch

“Every business will require great marketing in order to create great value.”

## Foundational skills have been lost

In Goldin’s view, the rise of performance marketing and short-termism has distracted brands from the core principles of brand-building and creating long term value.

And many marketers now lack the confidence and the skills to build brands beyond the next activation.

With so much change in the industry, marketing talent needs to have a broad range of competencies – not just digital skills, but also customer experience, brand building and more. It’s not an either/or situation – Goldin emphasised the need to keep training marketing teams on the newest technology while keeping these foundational skills in mind. Social media ‘likes’ and sales promotions are simply not enough to ensure brand longevity in the modern age.

“Those are the foundations, there are things that we need to be able to lean into... that’s where I think we missed the boat as marketers,” Goldin said.

## LEGO prioritises foundation competencies

At LEGO, Goldin is approaching talent development in three different competencies.

“The first bucket is the foundational skills: they are the same today as they were 50 years ago, and I believe they’ll be the same 50 years from now – for example, obsession with the audience and real customer-centricity,” Goldin said.

“The second is about brand-building: you need to know how to create value. Not just with creative

“ The foundational skills: they are the same today as they were 50 years ago, and I believe they’ll be the same 50 years from now – for example, obsession with the audience and real customer-centricity.

marketing campaigns, but what value you bring to the experiences with the products,” she said.

In LEGO’s case, this means an obsession with how kids engage with the brands. LEGO marketers need to be customer-focused in everything they do, Goldin said, and be dedicated to building a brand with real purpose across all touchpoints.

The magic that brings it all together is creativity: “What is so unique about marketing is it’s a real combination of art and science. It’s a real combination of left brain and right brain systems. You can’t just be fully rational and logical, there’s always a bit of magic that you need to be able to bring to create really interesting, innovative solutions,” Goldin said.

## Tech and finance are areas for personal development

When it comes to providing more on-the-job practical learning, the CMO Growth Council is looking toward the likes of Silicon Valley, such as hands-on learning initiatives, getting students involved with practical knowledge at a younger age, and applying lessons from Silicon Valley and coding schools. These initiatives

will see marketing professionals rise through the ranks equipped with the skills they need to lead a brand into the future. Similarly, an initiative to get more CMOs involved in mentoring is set to make an impact.

Machine learning, artificial intelligence and voice technology are all areas where future marketers will need to be savvy: “We need to embrace and teach people the tools of the future so they feel comfortable operating in that future,” Goldin said.

To make it to the C-suite level, marketers need to be fluent in the language of business – not just the standard metrics of marketing. Goldin pointed out “really strong commercial thinking and integration skills” as imperative skills for marketers to move to the highest level. In an era of shrinking marketing budgets, they also need to be able to demonstrate the value of marketing investment on the company’s bottom line.

“Marketers are massive integrators because they need to make the connection between all of the innovation and value creation at that high level down to what it actually means in terms of results. They need to be able to speak that language.”

# More from WARC

## Our Awards

WARC runs four annual case study competitions:

- ⊗ [The WARC Media Awards](#)
- ⊗ [The WARC Awards](#)
- ⊗ [The WARC Prize for Asian Strategy](#)
- ⊗ [The WARC Prize for MENA Strategy](#)

More about all of WARC Award schemes can be found [here](#).

## Case Finder

You can find all WARC case studies, including those cited in this report, by searching our unrivalled database, which is organised by campaign objective, country, industry sector, audience, media channels, budget and campaign duration. Find a case.

## About WARC

Warc.com is an online service offering advertising best practice, evidence and insights from the world's leading brands. WARC helps clients grow their businesses by using proven approaches to maximise advertising effectiveness.

## Contact Us

**London**  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6UF  
United Kingdom  
+44 (0) 20 7467 8100  
[enquiries@warc.com](mailto:enquiries@warc.com)

**Washington DC**  
2233 Wisconsin Ave NW  
Suite 535  
Washington, DC 20007  
United States  
+1 202 778 0680  
[americas@warc.com](mailto:americas@warc.com)

**Singapore**  
OUE Downtown 1, #44-03  
6 Shenton Way  
Singapore 068809  
+65 3157 6200  
[asiapacific@warc.com](mailto:asiapacific@warc.com)

## Follow Us



**WARC**<sup>^</sup>  
BY ^SCENTIAL