

CMO Forum / First Edition

Marketing Leadership Under Pressure

A CMO Perspective from the ABG Forum



EDITION

First Edition

FORMAT

Closed-Door Roundtables

REGION

Middle East & GCC

The Central Challenge



How to drive measurable business growth while protecting long-term brand equity in an increasingly complex environment.

Across four closed-door roundtables, senior marketing leaders came together to explore what should continue, what must stop, and where greater focus is required. Industries varied, but a clear set of priorities emerged.

TOPIC 1

DRIVING MEASURABLE
BUSINESS GROWTH

TOPIC 2

BRAND BUILDING &
LONG-TERM EQUITY

1st

EDITION

12

INDUSTRIES

51

ATTENDEES

Keep Doing This

Customer-centric decisions

Customer focus as a practical filter — not just a principle — across marketing, operations, and experience.

Strategic clarity

A clearly defined direction, consistently executed. Without alignment, even strong strategies fail in execution.

Brand consistency

Consistent value proposition, quality, and experience. Inconsistency is one of the fastest routes to brand erosion.

Measurement discipline

Clear frameworks must be maintained. Reactive decisions driven purely by short-term signals must be avoided.

Innovation readiness

Investment in innovation must continue, even in uncertainty, to ensure long-term competitiveness.

Stop Doing This

Non-value complexity

Unnecessary processes and overly complex decision structures slow organizations down and dilute impact.

Analysis paralysis

Excessive re-forecasting and over-reliance on data without clear action hinders agility and responsiveness.

Short-termism

Over-indexing on immediate returns through aggressive promotions or reactive decisions risks long-term brand erosion.

Generic influencer tactics

Generic influencer activity and excessive discounting: widely challenged as low-impact and potentially damaging.

Internal misalignment

Lack of alignment across teams weakens execution and reduces the effectiveness of strategic direction.

Where greater focus is required

Focus Here



Resource agility

The ability to dynamically shift budgets, priorities, and resources across functions as conditions change.

Marketing fundamentals

A full-funnel approach must be maintained — not an over-reliance on lower-funnel performance tactics.

Data and personalization

CRM, data infrastructure, and customer experience investment enables more relevant and effective engagement.

Brand action over messaging

What brands do matters more than what they say. Delivery and behavior are central to building trust.

Talent and capability

Retention, capability building, and clear communication are increasingly seen as critical performance drivers.

Long-term infrastructure

Investment in technology, infrastructure, and organizational capabilities is essential for sustainable growth.

The shift underway

One Defining Direction



FROM

**Communication-
Led**



TO

**Experience-
Led**

This requires

Stronger cross-functional integration

Greater operational alignment

A broader definition of brand building

The priority remains

Growth.

*What is changing is the level of discipline required to deliver it —
balancing immediate performance with long-term brand strength.*

The direction is clear:

Simplify

Align

Stay customer-focused

Build for the long term



The Evolving CMO Role

Greater responsibility for aligning growth, experience, and long-term value creation across the organization.

To learn more about the ABG, visit: abg-me.com

Or email us at secretariat@abg-me.com

