


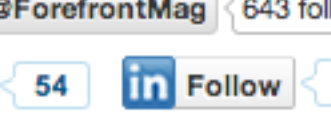
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## RECIPE FOR A MARKETING MASTER: chess, tuna and cable TV

UofM Ross School of Business CMO John Trierweiler says marketing isn't just promotion; it's also problem solving.

BY MATT ALDERTON

### Recipe for a Marketing Master: Chess, Tuna and Cable TV

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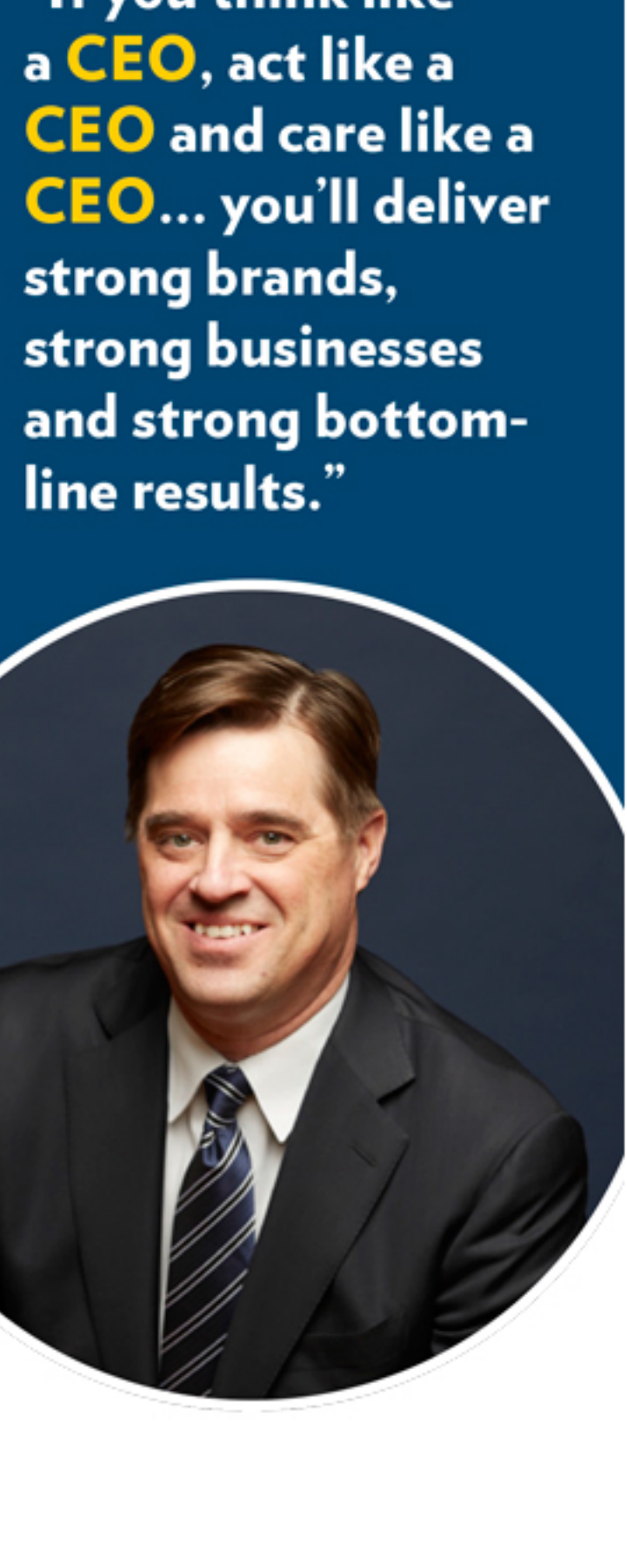
problem solving.

By Matt Alderton

If he were a chess piece, John Trierweiler would be a knight. Sure, an unopposed bishop can cover more distance on the game board, but its moves are predictable and easily foiled by meandering pawns. A knight, however, is more strategic. Unstymied by occupied squares, this piece is unique in its ability to jump others and fork opponents, allowing it to stage surprise attacks that leave even the most skilled players' mouths agape.

"You can do more creative things with a knight than you can with a bishop," said Trierweiler, whose early interest in chess and other games of strategy primed him for a career in marketing, which he considers to be one of an organization's most strategic business functions. "Growing up, I just loved games of strategy. Trying to figure out ways to win was always something that motivated me, and I found that marketing was the highest correlate to creating and affecting strategy in that manner."

Today Trierweiler is flexing his strategic muscles as Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business, where he draws on more than 25 years of business experience to attract and groom the next generation of business leaders.



Trierweiler's solution: Change not only the product, but also consumers' perception of it. "It's very common now, but we added the name 'albacore' to 'solid white tuna' and put out packaging that said, 'America's favorite albacore,'" Trierweiler explained. "Albacore" is a more sophisticated term, and 'America's favorite' demonstrated that not all tuna brands are the same. We also improved product quality and introduced new products such as a ready-to-eat lunch kit and a lower-salt tuna. Our overall market share rose to No. 2, and we became a dominant No. 1 in the white-meat category, with over 40 percent market share."

#### Changing the Channel

The second phase of Trierweiler's career—the telecommunications phase—began in 1998, when he became Vice President (VP) of Marketing and Sales in the Los Angeles Div. of Time Warner Cable. Like many cable companies before and since, Time Warner had a poor reputation—one starting to impact its bottom line.

"Research was showing that Time Warner was considered a monopolist that didn't really care, and we were losing customers because of it," Trierweiler said. In response he developed what was dubbed the Because We Care program, a 360-degree brand renovation that encompassed changes to his division's operations, pricing, packaging, sales and marketing. "We didn't just change what our advertising said. We changed the entire customer experience, which dramatically improved customer loyalty and turned around our bottom-line results. The L.A. Division in a year went from being last to first in customer satisfaction among Time Warner Cable's 32 divisions."

His success in Los Angeles earned Trierweiler a promotion to VP of Marketing and Product Management at Time Warner Cable's headquarters (then located in Stamford, Connecticut; today in New York City), where he spent three years before becoming Executive VP (EVP) of Product Management at Cablevision Systems Corp.

At Cablevision, the new leader's goal was not just changing perception, but also driving innovation. "Cablevision's consumer perception was fine in Internet and phone, but it was falling behind in the video arena," said Trierweiler, who helped launch an exponential increase in new product offerings, including the largest Wi-Fi canopy in the country and one of the industry's first mobile apps. Since its launch in 2011, the latter achievement, the "Optimum App," has allowed Cablevision customers to watch live TV and videos on demand on their mobile devices. "Cablevision has the highest market penetrations in the country for each of its three product categories."

#### From MBA to CMO

Despite its stroll through disparate industries, Trierweiler's career has come full circle, ending up where it began: the University of Michigan, where Trierweiler earned his MBA in 1985.

"It's because of what I was taught, the mentoring I received and the lifelong friends and colleagues I made that I was able to have a pretty successful run in several different industries," said Trierweiler, who became the Ross School of Business' CMO in 2012. "Being able to give back to the institution that helped put me on this trajectory over a quarter century ago has a lot of appeal to me."

Although education has little in common with tuna or cable television, marketing it requires the same commitment to strategic thinking.

"Ironically, [the industry has] some of the greatest marketing faculty in the world," Trierweiler said, "but what it teaches very, very well historically hasn't been practiced by the sector. Unlike cable, education has never been a monopoly, but it's similarly moving into an era of white-hot global competition. It's my job to help create awareness of who we are and what we represent as a way to help people decide where they want to go to school."

To that end, Trierweiler's greatest achievement to date at Ross has been collaborating with Dean Alison Davis-Blake on a new strategic plan, the core of which are four pillars: Positive, Boundaryless, Analytic and Action.

"Our mission is to develop leaders who make a positive difference in the world," Trierweiler said. "Our four pillars define who we are and what we aspire to be in relation to that mission. One of my primary goals is to create awareness around that; I want to improve the global reputation of the Ross School of Business... and increase the quantity and quality of students we attract."

Ultimately, what those students learn at Ross will be just as important as why they enroll there. If he were in the classroom, Trierweiler would impart to them one of his favorite lessons.

"Act like you're the CEO," he advised. "If you think like a CEO, act like a CEO and care like a CEO—with concern for fiduciary responsibilities, employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction—you'll deliver strong brands, strong businesses and strong bottom-line results."

Matt Alderton is a freelance writer based in Chicago, Illinois

### TRIERWEILER'S timeline




John's Key Partners: Behavior Design (Digital Communications Design) | Hile Creative (Integrated Marketing) | Pure Visibility (Integrated Digital Marketing) | Team Detroit (Full-Service Agency)





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