

Marketing career ladder

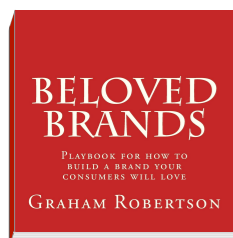
- 1. Assistant Brand Manager**
- 2. Brand Manager**
- 3. Marketing Director**
- 4. VP/CMO.**

I have hired, observed and managed hundreds of marketers at each level, and promoted many.

For each job level, I will tell you the 5 factors that separated out the best from the rest. And what went into my decision for promoting them to the next level.

My advice to Assistant Brand Managers

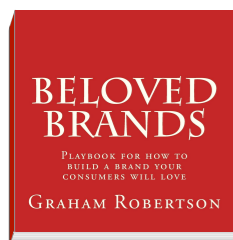
- The most eager first-time marketers want to change the world. The role is a reality check where you learn before you can run. Too many new marketers want to focus on strategy right away, but the ABM is a “doing” role. You will be executing programs, analyzing results and learning how to be a project manager. Through the execution, send signals you are capable of thinking and leading in the future.
- What separates the average from the great ones that get promoted? The best seem to figure out the right thing to do and then make it happen.
 - ✓ Some figure out the right thing to do but struggle to work the system to make it happen.
 - ✓ Other can work the system, but they forget to think through what is the right thing to do.
- The Assistant Brand Manager role can feel frustrating. Many times, it will inhibit your creativity and even your ideas. Fight through it. It provides a foundation and discipline you will use throughout your career.



The playbook for how to create a brand your consumers will love

How to be the best Assistant Brand Manager

1. Turn data into analytical stories
2. Take action before being asked.
3. Make it happen through others
4. Speak out to challenge the strategy
5. Be accountable for your work

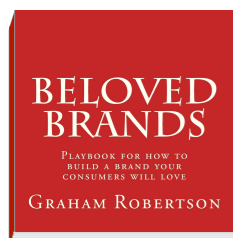


**The playbook for how to create a
brand your consumers will love**

How to be the best ABM

1. Turn data into analytical stories

- The role has a ton of data with market share results, tracking scores or test results. Look for patterns or data breaks, ask questions and start putting together stories.
- The analytical stories show you know what it means, helps sell recommendations, and supports the action you will take.
- Never give a data point without a story or a recommended action, or you risk letting someone else (your boss) take your data and decide.

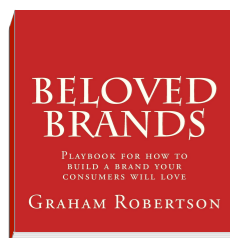


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How to be the best ABM

2. Take action before being asked

- On day one, your manager will set most of the projects for Assistant Brand Managers. When you are new, it is comfortable to wait for your projects. But don't get in the habit of waiting for someone to create your project list.
- As you mature, start to push your own ideas into the system and create your own project list.
- Start making smart decisions, on your own, and communicate those choices with your boss.
- Don't ask permission, but tell them what you want to do and look for the head nod. Know what's in your scope and align with your manager.

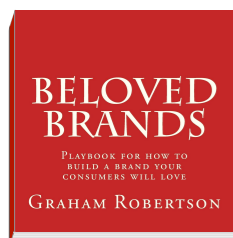


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How to be the best ABM

3. Make it happen through others

- Instead of just functionally managing the steps of the project, find ways to make each project better, faster, or deliver more significant results.
- You need to understand each critical milestones to hit, and manage bottlenecks. Every marketer meets resistance; the best knock can down those resistance points.
- Figure out the task with the longest completion time and the element that is most important, as both will impact the entire project.
- You will need to push people to get things done. You need to find a bit of magic by inspiring people to give their best ideas, put in their best effort and deliver their best work.

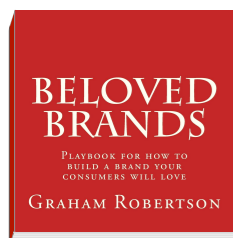


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How to be the best ABM

4. Speak out to challenge the strategy

- Stay on strategy. Show you are always thinking, and feel confident in your strategic thoughts. Avoid just falling in love with an execution tactic that is not aligned with your brand's strategy. It is so easy to get lost in your own “cool” projects.
- Ask the right questions. Challenge the strategy to make sure you understand. Silent marketers never last. Show you are always thinking, and feel confident in your strategic thoughts.

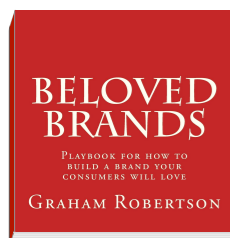


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How to be the best ABM

5. Be accountable for your work

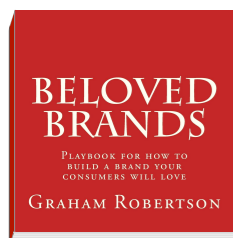
- Accountability is the first stepping stone to ownership, which sends a signal you are ready to be a Brand Manager.
- You have to find the right balance by motivating experts to give their best and knowing when to step in to avoid letting things slip or miss. Never allow your team to get stuck. Stay on top of timelines and lead your project teams. Be action-oriented, and solution-focused.
- Be the hub of communication for all team members, and keep your manager aware.



The playbook for how to create a brand your consumers will love

Ten reasons ABMs fail

1. Can't do the analytical story telling.
2. Struggle to deal with the ambiguity of marketing.
3. Slow at moving projects through.
4. Selfishly think about themselves.
5. Don't work well through others.
6. Miss answers by not being flexible.
7. Fall for tactical programs that are off strategy.
8. Hold back from making contributions to the strategy.
9. Settle for "OK" rather than pushing for "great".
10. Poor communicators with their manager.



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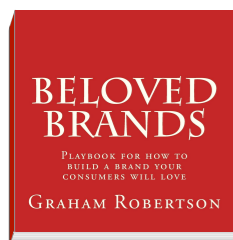
Listen to the subject matter experts you are supposed to be leading



As you move up in marketing, you will learn more from those subject matter experts than you will from any manager in marketing. Ask them what would make you more successful?

How to be the best Brand Manager

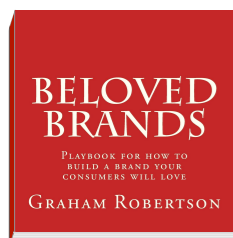
1. Take ownership of your brand.
2. Provide the strategic direction
3. Work the system
4. Handle the pressure
5. Get the most of your direct report



**The playbook for how to create a
brand your consumers will love**

My advice to Brand Managers

- Most new Brand Managers mistakenly think this role is about managing others because they finally get a chance to manage a direct report. However, the bigger role is the **transition from doer to owner**.
- Yes, you will get your first chance to manage someone, but many times that effort can be a distraction from your chance to continue to learn and grow. Many brand managers are disheartened to find out they are a disaster with their first direct report. Try to improve with each new direct report and then they will feel more comfortable around the fifth direct report.
- I hope you love the magic of Marketing. It is easy to lose your passion and try to do what your boss wants or do things to make short-term numbers so you can get promoted. Don't just go through the motion the job, but do it with all your passion. If you do not love the work you do, then how can you ever expect your consumer to love your brand? Leave your legacy.

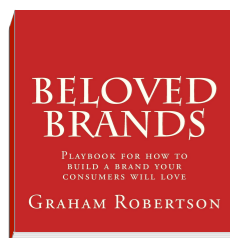


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How to be the best Brand Manager

1. Take ownership of your brand

- Many Brand Managers struggle are with the transition from being the helper to now being the owner. As you move into the job, you have to get away the idea that someone will hand you a project list. Not only will you make the project list, but you should also come up with the strategies that set up the need for the projects.
- Make a shift in how you speak with your boss. Speak with a telling voice, rather than an asking voice. It is ok to ask questions as feelers, but a great boss will want you to tell them what you want to do, and let the debate begin from there. They do not want to do your job.
- People on your team will look to you for the decisions. While they want to be heard and have their expertise recognized, but they want you to make the decisions.

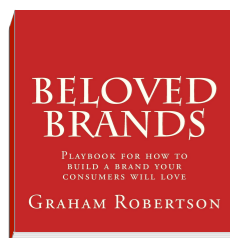


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How to be the best Brand Manager

2. Provide strategic direction

- Create a vision for the brand that can serve as a rallying cry for your team. Let everyone know where you want to go. Make sure the strategic choices and your brand's execution matches up with your vision.
- As the brand owner, you become the steward of the strategy. Reject everything that does not line up to your vision. Think with three strategic pillars, so you can steer a consistent delivery of the brand through the various functions and agencies who support your brand.



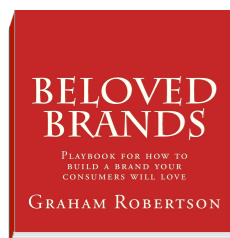
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How to be the best Brand Manager

3. Work the system

Know what you want, and then make it happen.

- See how your organization works and appreciate the motivations of various key stakeholders. Understand the layers of your organization, with varying goals and motivations. Use that knowledge to begin to work the system.
- Inspire, challenge and push your key subject matter experts to deliver their best on your brand. Understand their motivations and tap into those motivations as a way to ask people for their best. And yes, you should ask.

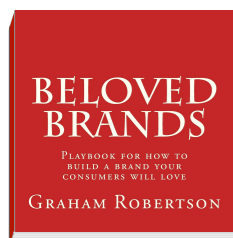


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How to be the best Brand Manager

4. Handle the pressure

- The unknown of **ambiguity** and the **time pressure** of deadlines can work against each other. Figure out how to work them to our advantage, as they evoke the right balance of patience with ambiguity and persistence in getting things done. Be organized, disciplined and work the system, so it does not get in your way.
- Another significant pressure for Marketers is when the **results** do not come in. It can be frustrating but is a reality we face. Force yourself to course correct, re-examine the underlying issues, and regroup with your team to look at other options, rather than continuing to repeat and repeat and repeat.
- There is **pressure in relationships** that many Marketers feel, but are unable to fix. Be pro-active in making the first move to build a relationship. Try to figure out the motivations and frustration points in those you work with before they become a problem. Common ground is usually not that far away.

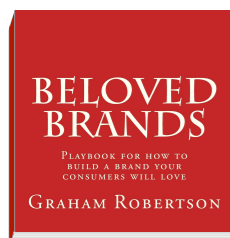


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How to be the best Brand Manager

5. Get the most of your direct report

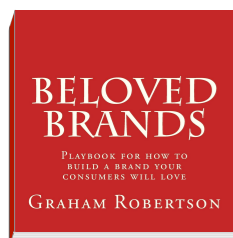
- Most Brand Managers struggle with their first five direct reports. The key is to keep self-evaluating and looking for ways to improve with each direct report.
- It can be a struggle to shift from “do-er” to coach, as it is tempting to think you can do something faster, so you may as well do it. The problem is you just become the “super ABM.”
- Many Brand Managers fail to share the spotlight, so it becomes hard for you to showcase your Assistant Brand Manager. You must believe the work of your Assistant Brand Manager will reflect positively on how good of a manager you are.
- Provide your direct report with positive and negative feedback, delivered in a timely fashion. Too many new managers are afraid to “go negative” so their ABM is left in the dark or left believing they are doing a good job. Take the time to teach up front, give them room to try it out and then provide hands-on feedback in real time.




The playbook for how to create a brand your consumers will love

Ten reasons brand managers fail

1. Struggle to make decisions.
2. Not analytical enough.
3. Can't get along with others.
4. Not good with ambiguity.
5. Bad people manager.
6. Poor communicators with management or partners.
7. Never follow your instincts.
8. Can't think or write strategically
9. You don't run the brand; you let the brand run you.
10. Sloppy with budgets and timelines.



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The best Brand Managers figure out how to work the system. They know what they want, and know how to make it happen.

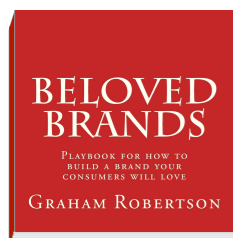
Logistics

INDUSTRY
Manufacturing
Supply chain
Product
Cargo
Customer
Delivery
Inventory
Management
Freight

How to be outstanding as a Marketing Director

1. Set a consistently high standard for your team
2. Behave predictably and consistently
3. Be a consistent people leader
4. Show up as the consistent voice to your sales team
5. Consistently deliver great work and strong results

Shape the **consistent** leader you see for yourself in the future.

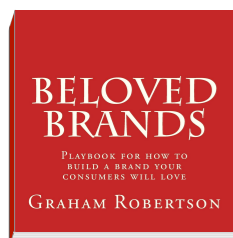


The playbook for how to create a brand your consumers will love

How to be a great Marketing Director

1. Set a consistently high standard

- Hold your team to a **consistently high standard of work**: Rather than being the leader by example, I'd rather see you establish a high standard and hold everyone and yourself to that standard.
- Shift your style to a more **process orientation** so you can organize the team to stay focused, hit deadlines, keep things moving and produce consistent output. Consistent quality of brand plans, execution and interactions with everyone.
- It's about how to **balance the freedom you give with the standard you demand**. Delegate so you motivate your stars, but never abdicate ownership of how your overall team shows up.

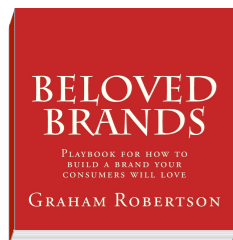


The playbook for how to create a brand your consumers will love

How to be a great Marketing Director

2. Behave predictably and consistently

- A great Marketing Director becomes the **consistent voice of reason** to any potential influencers, acting on behalf of the brand team.
- The director becomes the usual point person that the VP, sales team, agency, each turn to offering their thoughts on the brands. Yet the Director has to allow their BM to own the brand.
- As the team's voice of reason, a great marketing director must continue to ground all potential influencers in the brand plan with the strategy choices, consistently communicate the brand's direction and back up any tactical choices being made by the team.

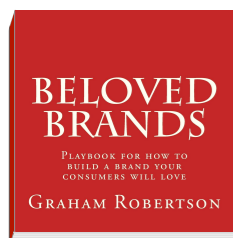


The playbook for how to create a brand your consumers will love

How to be a great Marketing Director

3. Be a consistent people leader

- Newly appointed directors have to **stop acting like a "Senior Senior Brand Manager"** and let your team breathe and grow. We know you can write a brand plan, roll out a promotion super fast and make decisions on creative. But can you inspire your team to do the same?
- It becomes the director's role to **manage and cultivate the talent**. Most Brand Managers have high ambitions--constantly wanting praise, but equally seeking out advice for how to get better. Be passionate about people's careers--anything less they'll see it as merely a duty you are fulfilling.
- A great Marketing Director should be meeting quarterly with each team member one on one to take them through a quarterly performance review. Waiting for year-end is just not enough.

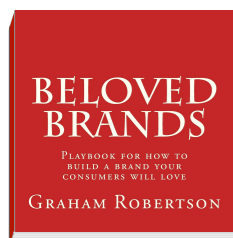


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How to be a great Marketing Director

4. Show up as the consistent voice to the sales team

- **Marketing Directors become the go to marketing person for the sales team to approach.** Great sales people challenge marketers to make sure their account wins. I've seen many sales teams destroy the Marketing Director because the director refused to listen and stubbornly put forward their plan without sales input.
- Be the director that **consistently reaches out and listens.** They'll be in shock, and stand behind your business. If sales people feel they've been heard, they are more apt to follow the directors vision and direction.
- A great Marketing Director should **informally meet with all key senior sales leaders** on a quarterly basis, to get to know them and listen to their problems. This informal forum allows problems to bubble up of problems and be heard, before they become a problem.

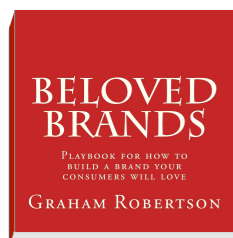


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How to be a great Marketing Director

5. Consistently deliver great work and strong results

- As it is a business, a great marketing director is expected to make the numbers. They have a knack for finding growth where others can't. And yet when they don't, they are the first to own the miss and put forward a recovery plan before being asked.
- You must have an entrepreneurial spirit of ownership, create goals that “scare you a little but excite you a lot”. They reach out for help across the organization, making those goals public and keep the results perfectly transparent. And everyone will follow you.



The playbook for how to create a brand your consumers will love

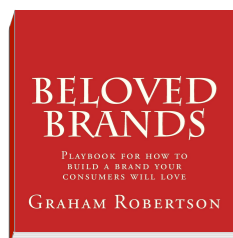
At the marketing director level, think about the leader you want to be, and then focus every day on the consistency in how you deliver.



How to be successful at the VP Marketing/CMO level

1. Your people come first
2. Bring a vision to the role
3. Put the spotlight on your team
4. Be an approachable leader
5. Run the process and the numbers

The best VPs and CMOs realize they don't really do anything by themselves. Everything is done through the greatness of other people.

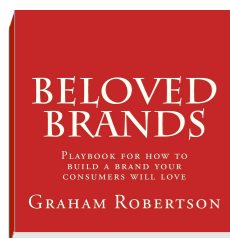


The playbook for how to create a brand your consumers will love

How to be at your best at the VP/CMO level

1. Your people come first

- The best VP/CMO understands that the smarter your people, the better the work they produce and in turn the stronger your results will be.
- Have a regular review of the talent with your directors, with systemic way to get feedback to everyone on the team on a quarterly basis.
- Invest in training and development. Marketing training is not just on the job, but in the classroom to challenge their thinking and give them the necessary skills to be better in their jobs.
- Marketing fundamentals matter. The classic fundamentals are falling, whether it is strategic thinking, writing a brand plan, writing a creative brief or judging great advertising. People are NOT getting the same development they did in prior generations. Investing in training, not only makes them better, but it is also motivating for them to know that you are investing in them.

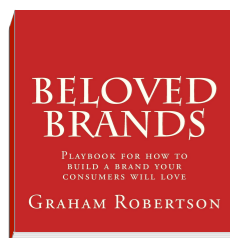


The playbook for how to create a brand your consumers will love

How to be at your best at the VP/CMO level

2. Bring a vision to the role

- Bring an inspiring vision to the role, that everyone can follow and push themselves to achieve. Look at what needs fixing on your team, and create your own vision statements that relevant to your situation.
- Bring a human side to the role. Get up, walk around and engage with everyone on your team. Make someone's day. Your role is to motivate and encourage them to do great work.
- Influence behind the scenes to clear roadblocks. Know when you need to back your team up, whether it's an internal struggle, selling the work into your boss or with a conflict with an agency.
- Do they love it? When they put their great work up for approval, and it's fundamentally sound, approve it. Don't do the constant spin of pushing for better, because then you look indecisive.

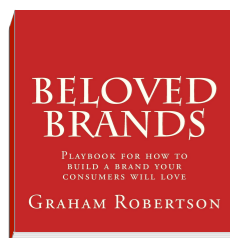


The playbook for how to create a brand your consumers will love

How to be at your best at the VP/CMO level

3. Put the spotlight on your team

- Let them own it and let them shine: It has to be about them, not you.
- Don't be the super-duper Brand Manger. It's not easy to balance giving them to freedom to lead you and yet knowing when to step in and make a decision. By making all the decisions, you bring yourself down a level or two and you take over their job.
- Instead of telling, you need to start asking. Ask good questions to challenge or push your team into a certain direction without them knowing you're pushing them is more enlightening than coming up with statements of direction.
- Challenge your team and recognize the great work.

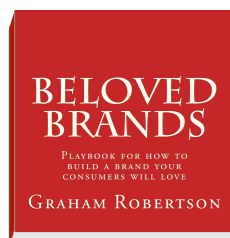


The playbook for how to create a brand your consumers will love

How to be at your best at the VP/CMO level

4. Be an approachable leader

- Your people have to know how to act around you. Make it comfortable enough for them to approach you, to communicate the good and bad. A scary leader discourages people from sharing bad results, leaving you in the dark. Open dialogue keeps you more knowledgeable.
- Inconsistent behavior by a leader does not “keep them on their toes”. It inhibits creativity and creates tension. Be consistent in how you think, how you act in meetings and how you approve.
- Leadership assumes “follower-ship”. Creating a good atmosphere on the team will make people go the extra mile for you.

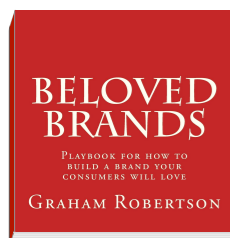


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How to be at your best at the VP/CMO level

5. Run the process and the numbers

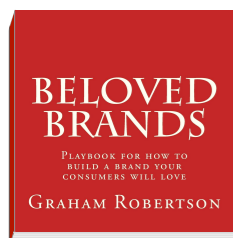
- The best VP/CMO runs the profit statement and the marketing processes, so your people can focus on what they need to be their best; running the brands and the execution
- Run the P&L and make investment choices. Bring an ROI and ROE (return on investment and effort) mindset to decisions.
- Great processes in place—brand plans, advertising, creative briefs, sales execution—is not restrictive but rather provides freedom to your people. Focus your team's creative energy on great work that gets in the marketplace, not trying to figure out what slide looks really cool in the brand plan presentation.



The playbook for how to create a brand your consumers will love

VPs and CMOs have to deliver

- Quintessentially, rule #1 is you have to make the numbers. As the VP, your main role is to create demand for your brands. What's expected of you is to gain share and drive sales growth to help drive profit for the company?
- The results come from making the right strategic choices, executing at a level beyond the competitors and motivating your team to do great work. But how you do it, and the balances you place in key areas are choices you need to make.
- Making the numbers gives you more freedom on how you wish to run things. Without the numbers, the rest might not matter.



The playbook for how to create a brand your consumers will love

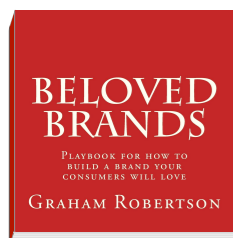
Marketing Leaders need to develop smart people who produce exceptional work that drives stronger results.

A silhouette of a man in a suit and tie stands in the center of a room. He is surrounded by many empty chairs, suggesting a large gathering or a meeting. The background is a plain, light color.

Never do it alone. CMOs who put more into people development creates more loyalty and stronger business results.

The VP/CMO role can be a rather lonely job.

- I remember when I first took the job as VP, I found it surprisingly a bit lonely. Everyone in marketing tries to be “on” whenever you are around. And you don’t always experience the “real” side of the people on your team. That’s ok. Just be ready for it.
- The distance from your new peers (the head of sales, HR, operations or finance) is far greater than you’re used to. And it might feel daunting at first. Your peers expect you to run marketing and let them run their own functional area. And the specific problems you face, they might not appreciate or even understand the subtleties of the role.
- Your boss also gives you a lot of rope (good and bad) and there’s usually less coaching than you might be used to. It’s important for you to have a good mentor or even an executive coach to give you someone to talk with that understands what you’re going through.



The playbook for how to create a brand your consumers will love

How to be a great Marketing Communications Manager

1. Challenge the brand strategy

- Bring an active voice to the table that challenges the brand team on the strategy.

2. Distill the brand strategy into a creative brief

- Distill the brand positioning and brand plan into a focused and inspiring creative brief.

3. Achieve great work through experts

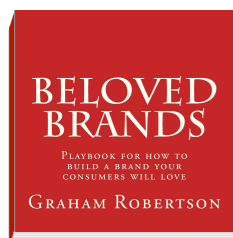
- Achieve great work through the greatness of expert strategic planners, creative talent and media experts.

4. Make decisions on behalf of the brand

- Make decisions that steer the creative and media, and then build their recommendations back to the brand.

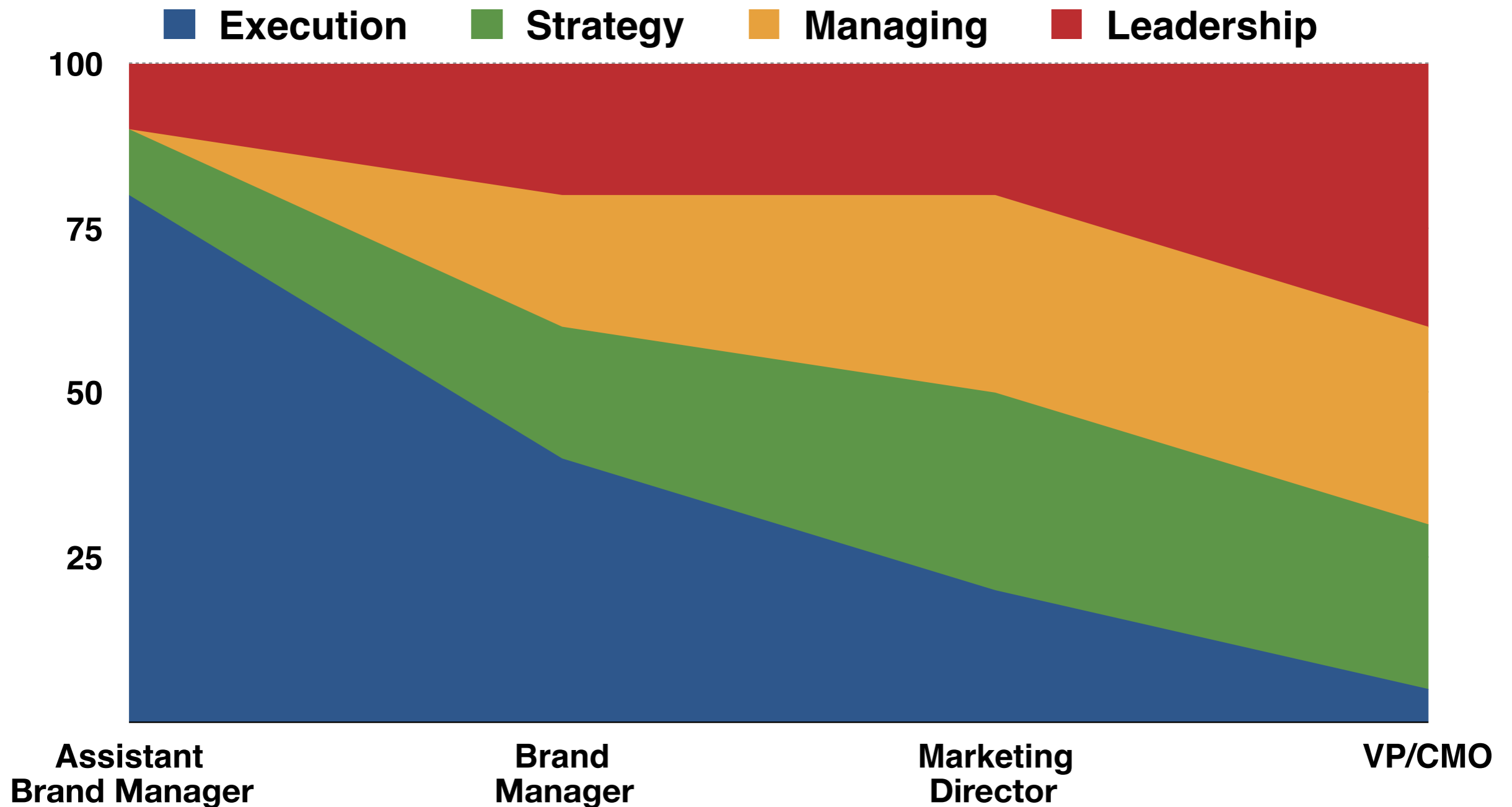
5. Understand every new media choice

- Take a leadership position on understanding consumer media usage trends and new media choices.



The playbook for how to create a brand your consumers will love

As you move up in marketing, your focus must change



Success factors at each level of marketing

Assistant Brand Manager	Brand Manager	Marketing Director	VP Marketing/ CMO
1. Turn data into analytical stories	1. Take ownership of the brand	1. Set a consistently high standards	1. Understand great people deliver great
2. Take action before being asked	2. Provide the strategic direction	2. Behave predictably and consistently	2. Bring a vision to the role
3. Make it happen through others	3. Work the system	3. Be a consistent people leader	3. Put the spotlight on your team
4. Speak out to challenge strategy	4. Handle the Pressure	4. Show up as consistent voice to sales team	4. Be an approachable leader
5. Be accountable for your work	5. Get the most of your direct report	5. Consistently deliver great work and strong results	5. Run the process and the numbers

■ Analytical ■ Strategic ■ Execution ■ Ownership ■ Management ■ Leadership

There is a cumulative effect in how you build your skillset. Once a skill is acquired, keep harnessing and take those skill improvements with you to the next level.