

# An Interview with Ann Lewnes

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## Senior Vice President and CMO at Adobe

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Ann Lewnes is responsible for Adobe's corporate branding, communications and integrated marketing efforts worldwide, as well as leading the company's marketing campaigns, public relations, social media and field marketing programs. Lewnes also oversees Adobe's internal communications and community relations efforts, including the Adobe Foundation, which funds philanthropic initiatives around the world.

Prior to joining Adobe in 2006, Lewnes served as vice president of sales and marketing at Intel, and helped build global demand for the company's brand among consumers, business professionals, retailers and resellers. In that role, she managed the Intel Inside program and oversaw several groundbreaking campaigns, including the launches of the Pentium® and Centrino® processor brands.

**As CMO, you have a fairly broad portfolio of responsibilities. What do you see as your top business priorities?**

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Ann Lewnes: We have pretty hefty goals. First, brand repositioning. Second, demand generation across every single product at the company. And then third—and probably the most interesting priority—is keeping up with the idea and practice of “always-on” marketing.

Brand building is a two-way, 24-hour job. Adobe is in the process of a pretty major transformation from being a creative software leader to being a creative product company that's in the cloud. We're marketing it differently because it's a completely different offering.

We also acquired Omniture and other digital marketing optimization companies that enable businesses to track how their content is performing and how it's converting prospects into customers. But that's not how people think of Adobe. So I'm focused on transforming the perception of our brand.

My organization is also charged with creating demand for all of our products and services, so we work really closely with the businesses. I want to make sure that people have a great experience with us through all the critical touchpoints, and technology today makes that so much easier. We have to keep improving the way we interact with our customers. Is our website sufficiently personalizing content for our visitors? Are we responding quickly enough to comments or complaints we receive via social media? That stuff really matters.

With always-on marketing, you need to know about numbers and marketing technology—whether it's data structure, analytics or content management—and you cannot rest. There's a constant conversation with the customer and constant optimization of what you're doing. The

upside is that always-on marketing and quantitative capabilities have made marketing much more significant and given us a seat at the table.

## Which priority presents the biggest challenge?

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Lewnes: It's getting the marketing organization to become very analytically focused, putting the technology and processes in place, transforming the organization, the people and the staffing. We have new positions like data analyst, web analyst and social media practitioner. Those functions didn't exist several years ago. We constantly have to know what's going on, and we have to make sure that everything is optimized—so we can get the best results and ROI. It's required a complete change in how we work in marketing, and I think that's been the biggest challenge for the whole organization.

## How has the role of the CMO evolved over the past few years?

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Lewnes: I grew up on the PR and editorial side, and wasn't born into the numbers game. As a CMO, you have to become a numbers junkie.

The marketing organization is now part of the business's decision-making process because the information we have is very valuable in determining strategy and understanding customer perceptions. Marketers have become bona fide businesspeople now. I think that's a big change.

There's also a convergence between the CMO role and the CTO or CIO roles. We have the data to be able to see whether what we're doing is resonating and how we can optimize it, but we don't collect customer data from people who have purchased from us—the IT organization has that information. That's what is drawing the CMO and CIO together more. Technology is very important from a marketing standpoint. However, I continue to believe that the distinct capability marketing offers is around creativity, positioning, messaging and storytelling, which are the basics that have always been important—and now we can actually gauge their impact. Interestingly at Adobe—and I know this is true for other companies—that technology is being sold into the marketing organization, not the IT organization.

## How do you and your team use eMarketer, and what role does it play in helping achieve your business goals?

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Lewnes: I think eMarketer does a good job of having a pulse on what's happening. You do a good job across different industries of gleaning insights about what's happening in the marketing world. I like eMarketer's easily consumable format, and you have a really good way of communicating the insights.

We use eMarketer in conjunction with the Adobe Digital Index, which we collect from our web analytics and our customers. But eMarketer offers more depth in terms of what's going on at each company—I can get a better sense of what different companies are doing with their data.

In marketing, we always need justification and validation for why something is a good investment. I have to do that here at Adobe, so eMarketer insights and data help with that.

I retweet nuggets from the newsletter that are interesting to me. There are very few places that I feel like I'm getting interesting information that might spark an idea or get me to rethink what we're doing—and eMarketer is one of them.

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