

Culture as a Growth Engine:

The CMO's Role in Internal Brand Leadership

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Why Growth and Great Strategies Fail Inside Banks

Most banks invest heavily in brand campaigns, digital transformation, and customer experience programs — yet many still struggle with inconsistent branch experiences, misalignment between brand promise and staff behavior, and cultural resistance to change.

⚠ The missing link is often **internal alignment**. Growth problems are frequently execution problems. Execution breaks down when the internal brand alignment is weak.



Internal Alignment Drives External Performance

Research shows internal engagement directly impacts performance:

+10%

Higher Customer Loyalty

+18%

Higher Sales Productivity

+23%

Higher Profitability

Source: Gallup workplace engagement research



Bottom line: Employee behavior is one of the most powerful drivers of growth and brand performance.

Internal Marketing is Not Internal Communications

Internal marketing is the discipline of ensuring employees:

1

Understand

The mission, vision, values, products and services

2

Believe

In and are aligned with the brand purpose

3

Deliver

The brand promise and strategy through daily behavior

It's marketing to your employees with the same intentionality, creativity, and consistency as you do your customers — if not more.

❏ **Bottom line:** Internal marketing converts employees into your bank/credit union's best advocates.



Three Forces Reshaping Financial Services

Rising Customer Expectations

Digital Transformation

Increased Competition



Bottom line: Without internal alignment, transformation stalls.

Marketing Leaders Must Expand their Influence

Traditional Marketing Role

- Brand campaigns
- Product marketing
- Customer acquisition

Modern Marketers Must Lead

- Brand clarity across the organisation
- Internal activation of the brand
- Employee brand advocacy

 **Bottom line:** Internal brand alignment is now an organizational responsibility, not just a job for marketing or HR.

Internal Marketing that Creates Internal Brand Alignment



Step 1: Diagnose Internal Alignment

Key Questions to Answer

- Do employees clearly understand the brand promise?
- Do employees believe in the institution's purpose?
- Are customer-facing behaviors consistent across branches and channels?

Common Diagnostic Tools

- Employee engagement surveys
- Internal brand perception surveys
- Branch and call center experience audits
- Leadership interviews and focus groups

 **Bottom line: You cannot align what you have not measured.**

Step 2: Translate Brand Purpose into Observable Behaviors

Brand Promise

"Client's best interest at heart"

Observable Behaviors

- Proactively guiding customers to the right solution
- Transparent communication about fees and risks
- Taking ownership of customer problems until resolved

Leadership Must Define

- The 5–7 behaviors that represent the brand in action
- How those behaviors appear in branch, digital, and advisory environments

 **Bottom line: Employees cannot deliver the brand if it is defined only in abstract language.**



Step 3: Activate the Brand Internally



Leadership Roadshows & Town Halls

Direct engagement from leadership reinforcing the brand narrative



Internal Campaigns

Connecting purpose to daily work through intentional messaging



Storytelling

Highlighting employees delivering the brand promise in action



Recognition Programs

Celebrating brand-aligned actions to reinforce desired behaviors

The goal is not awareness. The goal is belief.



Bottom line: Culture spreads through stories and leadership example.

Step 4: Institutionalize the Behaviors

01

Recruitment

Hire people who naturally align with the brand philosophy.

02

Onboarding

Introduce the brand purpose and expected behaviors from day one.

03

Training

Build skills that support the brand promise.

04

Performance Management

Evaluate employees partly on brand-aligned behaviors.



Bottom line: Culture becomes durable when it is built into organisational systems.

Step 5: Measure and Strengthen Alignment



eNPS Scores



Internal Brand Understanding



**Employee Advocacy & Social
Engagement**



Customer Satisfaction or NPS



Retention and Growth Indicators



Bottom line: What gets measured gets reinforced.



Civista Bank – #SocialStars Employee Advocacy Program

Key Elements

- Voluntary employee participation
- LinkedIn advocacy
- Compliance-approved content workflow
- Recognition and incentives

Impact

- Increased brand visibility
- Stronger employee engagement
- Measurable digital reach and traffic

Lesson: When employees become advocates, brand credibility multiplies.

What Executives Should Track

→ Employee Engagement Scores

→ Employee Advocacy Metrics

→ Customer Satisfaction / NPS

→ Customer Retention

→ Revenue Growth

 **Bottom line: Internal marketing can be measured like any other growth strategy.**

The Most Common Mistakes

✗ Treating Culture/Internal Alignment as an HR Initiative

✗ Campaigns Without Reinforcement

✗ Lack of Leadership Modelling

✗ No Measurable Outcomes

⚠ **Bottom line: Without reinforcement, culture and internal alignment initiatives fade.**



Five Ideas to Remember

- 1** Growth problems are often internal alignment problems.
- 2** Employees are the primary delivery system of your brand.
- 3** Internal marketing converts brand strategy into behavior.
- 4** CMOs must lead internal brand alignment across the organisation.
- 5** The strongest brands are built from the inside out.

Questions?

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