Acing Brand Experience With Mammut CMO Nic Brandenberger

In this episode of Marketing Vanguard, live from the 2026 World Economic Forum in Davos, Nic Brandenberger, CMO of Mammut, the 164-year-old Swiss mountaineering gear company, unpacks why Davos represents a unique opportunity for C-suite marketers and how the experiences brands create matter far more than the products they sell.

What you'll learn:

- How to shift the definition of "brand" from product provider to experience giver
- Why breaking out of the marketing silo is a critical competitive advantage
- The strategic advantage of being a part of Davos
- How to balance wholesale and direct-to-consumer channels
- How consumer-centric foundation separates great marketing from mediocre execution
- Ways to identify and penetrate niche communities in fragmented markets like US mountaineering

With nearly a decade of experience at Procter & Gamble, where Nic built foundational expertise in consumer-centric marketing strategy and brand management, he brings a data-driven approach to the outdoor and adventure market.

His insights on balancing B2B wholesale partnerships (65% of revenue) with direct-to-consumer growth strategies, alongside Mammut's expanding U.S. market presence, offer actionable guidance for marketers navigating the intersection of heritage brand legacy and modern digital transformation.

Introducing: Frontier CMO

In an era where the marketing playbook is being rewritten daily, how can brands stay ahead? Joshua Spanier, Google's VP of AI and Marketing Strategy, pulls back the curtain in Frontier CMO, his new podcast and weekly insights letter featuring the marketers, thought leaders, and industry pioneers who are reinventing marketing.

Josh previews the tough questions and unfiltered conversations featured on Frontier CMO, including:

- **AI as a leadership test:** exploring the "human" side of the AI revolution. As technology and tools advance the challenge becomes equipping marketing teams to leverage these technologies
- **Brand relevance and connection:** writing the next playbook for brand relevance by showing up as a main character in the places and spaces that connect with your audience
- **Agentic Commerce:** understanding the transition from "speed vs. certainty" to a world where shopping is fast and smart
- **The new marketing organization:** knowing where AI makes work faster and smarter and restructuring teams to keep up. Redefining agency partnerships to elevate insights and creativity in real time

Each episode of Frontier CMO features tactical, practical steps all leaders can take to navigate the future of marketing. Find it wherever you get your podcasts: YouTube | Apple | Spotify

Episode highlights:

[04:36] Strategically Balance B2B and Direct-to-Consumer Channels – Nic demonstrates that successful brands don't choose between wholesale and direct-to-consumer strategies,

they strategically balance both to maximize market reach while maintaining key relationships and first-party data. Tension often arises when D2C growth is exponentially faster and more profitable, yet wholesale partnerships provide distribution reach that organic growth alone cannot achieve. The strategic framework would be to maintain a portfolio approach: use wholesale partnerships (60-65% of Mammut's revenue) to dominate distribution and reach mainstream consumers, while simultaneously growing D2C (35% and accelerating) to build direct customer relationships, gather first-party data and test innovation.

[08:09] Position Your Brand as an Enabler, Not Just a Vendor – Nic reveals that successful brands recognize that products are merely a means to an end, not the end itself. CMOs at large companies often lead marketing campaigns centered on product features, specifications, and competitive advantages, missing the deeper human motivation driving purchase decisions. The actionable step is to conduct consumer research that moves beyond "what do you buy" to "what do you actually experience and feel when using our product?"

[09:48] Every Strategy Should Start with Deep Consumer Insights – Nic carries forward from his P&G experience the principle that deep consumer understanding – grounded in true insights rather than surface-level observations – must anchor every marketing decision. CMOs frequently rely on quantitative data, surveys, and focus groups that capture what consumers say they want, but miss the tacit, unspoken motivations driving behavior. The best way to achieve this is to invest in ethnographic research, in-depth interviews and immersive consumer experiences where you directly observe how consumers interact with your category in real-world contexts.

[11:40] Break Cross-Functional Silos Through C-Suite Connectivity – Nic stresses that creating fully integrated, end-to-end consumer experiences requires CMOs to establish critical connectivity with CEOs, CPOs and CFOs, not just other

marketers. Large organizations typically operate in functional silos where marketing campaigns exist separately from product development, operations and financial strategy, resulting in fragmented customer experiences. Nic’s suggestion: initiate regular cross-functional forums where marketing sits alongside product, operations and finance leadership to align on consumer-centric strategies that span all business functions.

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