

Here's how a learning mindset can propel your marketing career

Andrew Cooper, Associate Director, e-Commerce at Metric Theory.

Andrew Cooper wanted to put himself in his clients' shoes. In his free time, the associate director of e-commerce at digital marketing agency Metric Theory launched a Shopify site and began selling on Amazon. The experience helped him build the Amazon Ads practice area at the agency with a broader perspective on the kinds of issues his clients would be facing.

Learning by immersion

"I wanted to experiment with all things marketing on my own," said Cooper, Search Engine Land's search marketer of the year along with DAC's Felicia DelVecchio. Teaching himself, he launched the Shopify site and began selling niche sports apparel with Amazon as the primary sales channel.

"There are a number of things I learned – and outside of marketing," said Cooper. The emotional highs and lows that come with sales trends helped Cooper gain more empathy with clients.

"You really understand how nerves and emotions can change with the flows of their business. And cash flow can affect your marketing investments very quickly, even if the changes are coming from elsewhere in the business, so you need to learn to be flexible." For an SMB, said Cooper, "Revenue and profit is

a delicate line and can change your marketing mindset pretty quickly.”

Leading by fostering an environment for learning

Cooper started at Metric Theory on its first feed management team. He now leads that team and started the agency’s Amazon Advertising management practice. He is responsible for hiring, training, best practices and process guidelines for the e-commerce department.

I asked how he approaches hiring, whether he prioritizes educational background, experience, mindset or other characteristics. Mindset tops the list. “We look for someone with a willingness to learn and who is open to feedback,” said Cooper. “The industry is always changing, so I’m not looking for someone who can do the work now, because it will soon change. I look for someone who can adapt.”

As far as particular skillsets, Cooper says data analysis skills that go to decision-making are key. The data analysis experience doesn’t have to be in business, it could be in chemistry, for example. Logic and computer programming courses are also good indicators that an applicant has been trained to analyze problems and make decisions in a linear way, says Cooper.

When new hires join his team, they shadow him in a conference room for the first couple of weeks, getting trained from the ground up. “Most of my job is to help problem solve and educate,” says Cooper. “When that person moves up in the agency, they seem to take the same approach with junior employees and it creates a culture of open communication. That has been really effective.”

Cooper says a major factor in his own growth at Metric Theory

has been the feedback he receives from superiors and peers on how to improve. “It’s a big part of the culture of the agency,” said Cooper. Another factor is a perpetual learning mindset. He stays up-to-date with industry news and has taken inexpensive online courses on Facebook Ads and Python, for example, to round out and deepen his skills.

Learning and teaching are fundamental aspects of his day. “Most of my job is to help problem solve and educate,” says Cooper. “I have a lot of flexibility built into my schedule.” That gives him time to be available for people and to jump in and answer questions from across the broader agency on Slack channels dedicated to questions. “We don’t want people to be afraid to ask something or say they don’t know something.”

Cooper will be speaking on Google Shopping at SMX East in New York City this November. To learn more about the event click [here](#).

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About The Author

Ginny Marvin is Third Door Media’s Editor-in-Chief, managing day-to-day editorial operations across all of our publications. Ginny writes about paid online marketing topics including paid search, paid social, display and retargeting for Search Engine Land, Marketing Land and MarTech Today. With more than 15 years of marketing experience, she has held both in-house and agency management positions. She can be found on Twitter as @ginnymarvin.

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