

Brand Building

An Interview with Amy Scissons, Chief Marketing Officer, Mercer International

EDITORS' NOTE Prior to her current position, Amy Scissons served as Global CRM Practice Lead for Mercer. Earlier, she served as the Global Marketing Leader for Moody's Analytics. Scissons' career includes marketing leadership roles at Jackson Hewitt Tax Service, BBDO, and DIRECTV Broadband. She also founded and managed the Spanish activewear firm, Bionik, in Barcelona, Spain. Scissons holds a bachelor's degree in history and an M.B.A. from McGill University as well as a certificate in international business from HEC School of Management.



Amy Scissons

COMPANY BRIEF Mercer (mercer.com) builds brighter futures by redefining the world of work, reshaping retirement and investment outcomes, and unlocking real health and well-being. Mercer's more than 25,000 employees are based in 44 countries and the firm operates in over 130 countries. Mercer is a business of Marsh & McLennan, the world's leading professional services firm in the areas of risk, strategy and people, with 75,000 colleagues and annualized revenue approaching \$17 billion.

How has the role of the CMO evolved?

In B2B companies, surging returns from value-based marketing is forcing CMOs to evolve into technologists and strategic business advisors or perish. Technologists, because technology is about people, processes and data. As the impact of technology continues to evolve, so must marketers' thinking around its use. Strategic business advisors, because it's critical for CMOs to entrench themselves in the business and be seen as critical partners in developing the growth agenda.

Through both roles, CMOs have an opportunity to own the customer experience. AI, automation and advanced technologies are unleashing an overwhelming number of consumer engagement touchpoints that, under the supervision of tech-savvy CMOs, can be used to reach untapped marketplaces. Armed with customer data and insights, marketing can then educate decision-makers within their business on how, and why, to allocate resources to emerging opportunities in growth markets, uniquely positioning themselves to drive the business forward in meaningful ways.

While many marketers are much more comfortable playing to more traditional strengths, which is thinking about the brand, communicating to the market, and hoping that this in itself will move the

business forward, we are seeing more and more CMOs looking to be more proactive about ushering their employers into the age of digital transformation and tapping into the power of data to be a north star for growth.

Are Mercer's marketing efforts consistent globally or do you target your efforts by market?

We take a balanced approach between global and local marketing. The Mercer brand is global but is often perceived as a U.S.-first brand. Roughly half of our business still comes from the U.S.

and Canada while a little bit more than half of it comes from what we call the International Region – all countries except for the U.S. and Canada.

We recognize that our business is sold at a local level so if the brand is not resonating locally, or our go-to-market strategy does not actually speak to the needs of the local market, we know we'll never be successful. From a global perspective, we have consistent messaging globally and our marketers are expected to know where the brand is evolving globally and how it reflects activities locally.

What it drills down to is empowerment. Local marketers need to feel empowered to own messaging within their market. We achieve this by driving thought leadership globally while bringing it alive through localization in five or six primary markets.

How is technology impacting Mercer's marketing efforts?

At Mercer, people are at the heart of everything we do, and we are constantly looking for ways to fuse economics and empathy to maximize our impact. Those principles guide our marketing strategy as well. We focus on tapping into data-driven marketing to positively influence the customer experience through multi-platform touchpoints.

In doing so, we focus our efforts on what the client experience is on our own digital platforms, as well as where they play in the market, to determine where we need to show up digitally. Being able to tap into that data to distinctly articulate our value across different platforms is part of what uniquely sets us apart from our competitors.

How critical has it been to build employee engagement in Mercer's marketing programs?

With over 25,000 employees globally, delivering services to 26,000+ clients, employee engagement is hugely important to us. We need to make sure that our senior leaders are aligned and that our people understand what it is we're trying to do.

Data helps us with these efforts immensely. Our teams conduct analysis through data visualization tools and transcribe and interpret that information into actionable data sets that inform their decision-making processes. Additionally, everyone on Mercer's marketing team is assigned simple metrics and KPIs and can directly access their data to track how effectively they are meeting those assigned goals.

This is something that we have had to evolve over time. We needed to recognize that marketing is on a journey and it has to become a customer-centric, data-driven function for the organization. It is a matter of earning trust, showing wins, and making sure that we're fully aligned to the business strategy.

Will you discuss Mercer's commitment to building a diverse and inclusive workforce?

Diversity and inclusion is very dear to Mercer. Our workplaces are more diverse than ever before and we know that tapping into this breadth of diversity is key to the creative process and the cross-pollination of ideas that drive modern discovery.

We view D&I as a solution, not an issue, and we have been on the forefront of encouraging our clients and industries as a whole to think more about what it means and how to drive progress.

Externally, we recently launched the next generation of our When Women Thrive, Businesses Thrive, to help re-energize the conversation on D&I and the effort to close the gender gap. Internally, we continue to challenge ourselves to think more broadly and more critically about our hiring and team development practices. For example, by creating diverse software teams, we're fostering different perspectives and experiences to solve a problem. The results can be magic.

What do you tell young people about the opportunities that Mercer offers?

As the world's leading professional services firm in the areas of risk, strategy and people, there are a lot of career opportunities at Mercer.

With a diverse workforce based in 44 countries, with operations in over 130 countries, I always emphasize the globality of Mercer. When I go into the markets and meet with my teams, the first thing that they mention is that they would love to work in such-and-such country, or work with such-and-such team. We do everything in our power to give those opportunities to our employees and to give them ways in which they can challenge and stretch themselves.

When I'm speaking to new recruits, I tell them that if they're looking for a challenge that could really open interesting doors for them, considering Mercer is a very intriguing option. ●