

# Top 20 marketing 'nightmares': What keeps CMOs and brand managers up at night?

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Return on media investment, big data and brand trust are among the top concerns that bother Chief Marketing Officers at major firms, according to new research.



Those concerns, the need to accommodate emerging technologies like AI, and the unrelenting demand to continually prove marketing's value are some of the concerns keeping marketers up at night, according a new Marketing On My Mind survey conducted by [Brand Keys](#).

"CMOs and brand managers have plenty to keep them up at night," said Robert Passikoff, president of Brand Keys, "and, given the start of a new year, we thought we'd see which issues were most responsible for their loss of sleep."

## Top Marketing 'Nightmares'

Brand Keys asked 558 CMOs and brand managers, "What issues keep you up at night?" and asked 3,900 consumers to provides some insights and solutions. Percentages indicate the frequency of mention among the professionals interviewed. "Problem" areas that received

mentions by 75%+ of participants include:

1. ROI and ROMI (97%)
2. Big data, big tech, and big security issues (95%)
3. Establishing trust between my brand the consumer (95%)
4. Addressing innovation, AI, technology, and marketing automation (92%)
5. Consumer expectations regarding privacy and transparency (90%)
6. Better managing social networking (89%)
7. Creating relevant and engaging advertising content and storytelling (88%)
8. Deployment of predictive consumer behavior analytics and technologies (86%)
9. Dealing with consumer advocacy, social activism like #MeToo & issues like gun violence (85%)
10. Growing consumer expectations and gap between brand promise and expectations (82%)
11. Developing a long-term strategy that aligns with corporate growth goals (80%)
12. Ability to engage my audiences, not just identify and find them (80%)
13. The democratization of the digital world and protecting my brand's equity (79%)
14. Political Tribalism and how it affects my brand (77%)
15. Being relevant and tweeted, not just tweeted (75%)
16. Keeping consumers engaged with my brand (75%)
17. Create better cross-platform synergy for my marketing campaigns (75%)
18. Being replaced by a Chief Revenue Officer (75%)
19. Creating an 'unlearning curve' to move away from legacy marketing metrics (75%)
20. Creating marketing synergy among different generational age cohorts (75%)

#### Consumer Insights For Insomnia-Inducing Issues

"Brand and marketing professionals talk about the need to be 'customer-centric' and to represent the 'voice of the customer,' so we decided to provide a little help," noted Passikoff. "Who better than the consumer – via emotional engagement evaluations – to better point the way to effective brand solutions."

Insights from 3,900 consumers were used to examine issue areas that keep CMOs up at night. Recorded brand activities, solutions, and actual, what-happened market results were collected for sectors and categories including:

- Social Networking,
- Social Activism,
- Retail (Apparel, Sporting Goods, & Department Stores),
- Beverages (Coffee & Beer),
- Food (Fast, Natural, & Supermarkets),
- Major League Sports,
- Technological Innovation & New Product Development, and
- Consumer responses to Politics, Patriotism, and Binge-Watching in marketing's brave new world.

Those insights can be accessed free at: <http://brandkeys.com/what-happened/>

“With a new year ahead, it is our hope that these problem-solution insights will help them better manage their day-to-day activities, and the long-term issues that will define success over the coming year,” said Passikoff.

### Methodology

Brand Keys uses an independently-validated research methodology that fuses emotional and rational aspects of brand categories, identifies four category-specific path-to-purchase behavioral drivers, and identifies what consumers really expect from brands versus how brands are perceived to deliver against those expectations. These assessments are leading-indicators of future consumer behavior, identifying activities 12 to 18 months before they appear in traditional brand tracking surveys or in focus groups.

Brand Keys’ research technique, a combination of psychological inquiry and higher-order statistical analyses, has a test/re-test reliability of 0.93, and produces results generalizable at the 95% confidence level. It has been successfully used in B2B and B2C categories in 35 countries.

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