

# CEO Guide to Choosing the Right Executive Model for Marketing Leadership



**Lindsay Ball**  
Fractional CMO,  
Board Advisor

Leadership structure should accelerate growth — not constrain it.

Yet many businesses default to executive models that no longer fit their commercial reality.

This guide compares the four most common C-suite leadership options at CMO / Growth Lead level — and the trade-offs that matter.

[Lindsay@brandessence.net](mailto:Lindsay@brandessence.net) T. 07960493863  
[www.brandessence.net](http://www.brandessence.net)

| Model                | Typical Cost                             | Commitment               | What You Get                                          | Key Trade-Off                                           |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Permanent Executive  | £150k–£200k+ salary (+ bonus & benefits) | Full-time                | Continuity, deep immersion, long-term ownership       | High fixed cost, slower pace, often narrow sector depth |
| Interim Executive    | £1,000–£1,500 per day                    | 4–5 days/week            | Immediate cover, authority, on-site presence          | IR35 complexity, high cumulative cost, short-term focus |
| Consultancy          | £1,500–£3,000+ per day                   | Project-based            | Insight, frameworks, external challenge               | Limited ownership, rarely embedded culturally           |
| Fractional Executive | £1,200–£1,800 per day                    | 2–3 days/week equivalent | Board-level thinking, flexibility, delivery ownership | Not designed for full-time operational cover            |

# What Makes Fractional Leadership Distinct

Fractional executives are not part-time marketers.

They are business leaders and board advisors who:

- Operate at exec and board level
- Influence decisions beyond marketing
- Bring cross-sector pattern recognition
- Balance strategy with hands-on delivery

This model provides senior leadership without full-time cost or rigidity, flexing as the business evolves.

## Why Breadth of Experience Drives Change

Sector specialism delivers familiarity – not transformation.

Leaders with cross-sector experience:

- Challenge embedded assumptions
- Introduce new growth reference points
- Shift culture and consumer behaviour

Executives who have operated across FTSE, private equity, scale-ups and exits bring boardroom gravitas and commercial judgement that ‘single-category careers’ rarely develop.

## Final CEO Perspective

The question isn't which leadership model is best.

It's whether your business is paying for:

- More structure than it needs, or
- Less experience than its ambition demands

Fractional leadership is not a compromise.

Used well, it delivers experience over headcount – and impact without inertia.

**Produced by Brand Essence Limited**

**Fractional executive leadership for businesses that value  
judgement, not just resource.**

[Lindsay@brandessence.net](mailto:Lindsay@brandessence.net). T. 07960493863

[www.brandessence.net](http://www.brandessence.net)