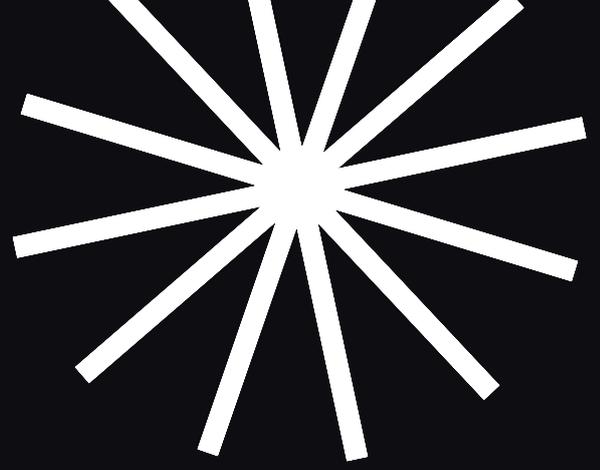


worksome



Fractional executives

**The secret
to finding the
C-level talent
you need**



Introduction

People tend to think of freelancers as a certain type of role. Jobs like graphic designers, software engineers, or copywriters. And there are definitely plenty of freelancers working in these areas. But as workforce trends have evolved in the last few years, more and more high-level workers are choosing to go freelance as well. It's about time that our collective definition of freelancers evolves with the times.

Most people don't tend to think of C-level talent as being freelance, but it ignores a trend that started well before the pandemic arrived: the fractional executive. And many companies are struggling to find the C-level talent they need because they're only looking for full-time talent. This doesn't just limit their talent pool unnecessarily, it also ignores that there

are some benefits to working with fractional executives that don't come with their full-time counterparts.

These C-level executives typically come from decades of full-time experience. And they end up going freelance for the same reasons as any other worker — flexibility, the ability to choose work they're passionate about, and more. But while their reasons for going freelance may be the same as your designers and software engineers, the way that their role is impacted by going freelance couldn't be more different.

We interviewed four Fractional CMOs to learn more about their experiences, their challenges, and where they see the future of fractional work going. Here are our 6 takeaways.

Expert Speakers



Courtney Todd

Fractional CMO

Founder of Umlaut Agency, Courtney works with a variety of clients as Fractional CMO and Creative Director. After spending time in marketing leadership positions in B2B and D2C organizations, she struck out on her own and has been consulting for four years. She loves building brands – their stories, aesthetic and journeys – and is thrilled she gets to spend her days working with talented, kind people and exciting, challenging projects.

Courtney holds an MFA from Columbia University, New York, and a BA from Southern Methodist University, Dallas.



David Atlas

Fractional CMO

David Atlas is a seasoned b2b marketing leader with over 25 years successful experience building high performance teams and scaling new markets. He most recently served as CMO of Signal Labs, the industry-leading disinformation intelligence platform for governments and corporations. Before that he was CMO of Persado, maker of the Motivation AI platform used by the world's top marketers, and SVP of Worldwide Marketing for Goodmail Systems. Over his many years in industry, he has gone back and forth between functional leadership roles and consulting, and currently is serving as fractional CMO for two clients.



William Collins

Fractional CMO

William is a growth-oriented business executive with proven success in delivering profitable revenue and transformation for organizations through the art of data-driven decisions, design thinking principles, and organizational alignment. He helps organizations build sales-aligned marketing capabilities, drive revenue growth, and focus on initiatives that deliver quick time to value. His customer-centric approach to marketing leads to better targeting, clearer messaging, and impactful results.



Jordan Cohen

Fractional CMO

With more than 20 years of experience, Jordan Cohen is a seasoned marketing executive with expertise in leading companies to industry dominance, VC raises, acquisitions, and IPOs. As founder of The Fox Hill Group, a CMO-led marketing management consultancy, he works with B2B tech startups and scale ups to tell better stories, build better marketing strategies, and execute campaigns with precision. He is often tapped by companies gearing up for large VC rounds and/or exits, with a steady track-record of successful client outcomes under his belt.

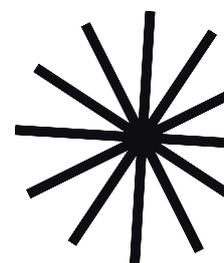
Jordan's insights have been featured in The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and USA Today, and he has appeared live on CNBC and Bloomberg. He is a sought-after speaker on the future of marketing, media, and CMO-related topics, and has presented on global stages including Mobile World Congress, LiveRamp's RampUp!, Oracle's Modern Customer Experience, and DMA Annual.

Table of contents

1	Fractional talent gives companies access to the talent they wouldn't otherwise be able to afford	05
2	Management can be more difficult for fractional executives	06
3	If companies don't go into a fractional relationship with the right mindset, they won't see the benefits of a fractional executive	07
4	There are many benefits to going fractional for C-level executives	08
5	Being a fractional executive comes with challenges and downsides as well	09
6	Contract length looks different for every role	10

#1

Fractional talent gives companies access to the talent they wouldn't otherwise be able to afford



For many companies, it allows them to bring in someone really experienced that they wouldn't be able to afford long term. This person can come in, get them up and running, and put the right people and playbook in place so that they can continue executing on that strategy and enjoying success after the fractional CMO has left.



Jordan Cohen
Fractional CMO

I believe fractional work will continue to grow. More and more organizations need to either supplement their current teams, replace their current marketing leadership or bring in marketing leadership for the first time. The fractional model works well for organizations that need to scale quickly and may not be able to afford a full-time marketing leader under the traditional model.



William Collins
Fractional CMO

I think that companies are intrigued by the financial savings of hiring fractional executives – they may pay a slightly higher salary, but they don't have to pay taxes and benefits. They can also afford a slightly higher rate, because they're bringing the person on for a set amount of time, instead of indefinitely. The savings can be significant for companies.



Courtney Todd
Fractional CMO

#2

Management can be more difficult for fractional executives

Depending upon the client and the type of engagement we may be asked to step in and lead a team. Building trust takes time and sometimes we don't have the luxury of time to ensure we can start to move the needle. So, as fractional marketing leaders, we need to quickly assess the team, listen closely, and lead with empathy but intentionality.



William Collins
Fractional CMO

Team management is so different as a fractional CMO because every company has its own team. Sometimes you get to build out the team and sometimes it's handed to you when you join. Sometimes there isn't a team at all, and you get to pick your own contractors to help you grow a business. Everything is fully remote now as well, so that's exciting and can be a bit more challenging as well. You can't just swing by someone's desk to check up on a project. But it's also easier to find the right people for the right clients.



Courtney Todd
Fractional CMO

Given that as a consulting CMO I may or may not end up joining the company down the road, there's a special kind of alertness, let's call it, that the marketing team will have. Will this be my new boss long-term? Or am I in for another change down the road? It's good to be sensitive to these concerns. In any fractional CMO engagement, I try as much as possible to be a coach for the people I'm managing; I try to set the standard early that we should have an open, high-bandwidth channel of communication. Honesty and feedback help drive great results.



David Atlas
Fractional CMO



#3

If companies don't go into a fractional relationship with the right mindset, they won't see the benefits of a fractional executive



I want to ensure the company is ready to grow and solve the problems they face, but not all companies are. I love it when I can get an organization back on track and get them growing again.



William Collins
Fractional CMO

Sometimes there's less alignment between the fractional CMO and the company because the company isn't always willing to fully get behind a fractional CMO about what they can invest in and how many people they can bring on. This presents a big challenge for a fractional CMO and makes it impossible to deliver the results they were brought on to deliver.



Jordan Cohen
Fractional CMO

#4

There are many benefits to going fractional for C-level executives

It took me more than two years to stop applying for jobs as a safety net, but now I'll never go back to the corporate world. I love the freedom of my own time, working remotely from wherever I want, spending more time with my family, and getting to choose each and every person I work with. It's incredible.



Courtney Todd
Fractional CMO

Schedule flexibility is terrific with freelancing. It's also fun to work in multiple environments, with multiple teams, in multiple market segments. There can be a lot of learning that comes from trying different things in different situations at the same time that you wouldn't get in a full-time role.



David Atlas
Fractional CMO

My first fractional role was an interim CMO gig on a contract basis. They had terminated their VP of marketing and needed someone to come in and take them in a different direction. There were a bunch of A players on the team who were being underutilized or who were in the wrong roles, as well as some people who weren't great performers. They needed someone to come in to get the team in order. It also occurred to me that they couldn't afford the kind of C-level experience that they needed in a full-time capacity. I was able to use my experience and background to help them get access to the direction and guidance they needed in place. For me, the best part of being a fractional CMO has been getting to work on diverse projects with different companies and different challenges. And it's been great to get to use my experience to show these clients big wins and set them up for success with their full-time teams.



Jordan Cohen
Fractional CMO

#5

Being a fractional executive comes with challenges and downsides as well

Sometimes we don't get to see the long-term results of our work. We might be in an engagement for 6 months and have shown a ton of value and quick results, but the long-term impact of our work may show up in 9, 12, or 24 months depending upon the initiatives we are brought on to lead.



William Collins
Fractional CMO

The biggest thing I miss about being an FTE is the connections I formed with my team. I think in a lot of ways I've become a much better marketing manager than a marketer in the past 15 years or so. I'm really good at - and enjoy - finding and developing and managing talent. The people on my team know their areas way better than I do, whether it's a product marketer or a performance marketing pro. The ability to take all those different skills - and all those different people - and work with them over the long term is very satisfying to me. You don't get that in shorter fractional roles.



David Atlas
Fractional CMO

A big challenge is when you're managing multiple clients because they will only be able to pay your rate for X hours a week but often expect you to be full-time helping them. I have dedicated blocks of hours for each client now where I say I'll work for them Mondays and Wednesdays from 9-12 but that's the only time you have me. These boundaries make it easier and I've gotten a lot better about that. Now they know my office hours and respect them. Fractional CMOs and the companies that hire them need good alignment and understanding of this for the partnership to work well.



Jordan Cohen
Fractional CMO

#6

Contract length looks different for every role

Our engagements can vary. I have engagements that can be a quick two-week assessment or engagements that I have been on for a year and will not be ending any time soon. It really depends on the client's needs and how we can continue to show value. Many times we are encouraging a client to bring in a full-time person once we have the organization on the right track because it is the right thing to do for the client.



William Collins
Fractional CMO

My average fractional CMO contract has been 6 months. On more than one occasion I was hired full-time after about 3-4 months. On more than one occasion my contract was extended.

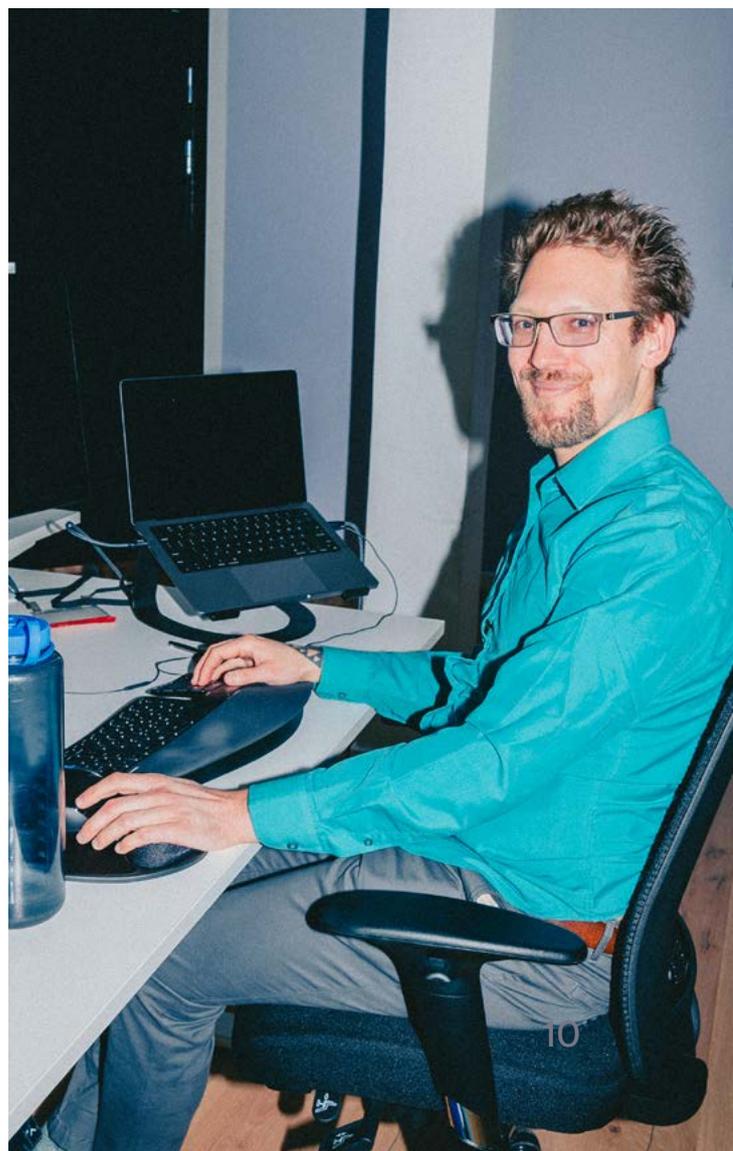


David Atlas
Fractional CMO

My contracts are either month-to-month or project based, and I work with clients as long as they need me. Sometimes clients have to break for one reason or another and might return months later. Some clients I work with continuously in a range of capacities as their needs change.



Courtney Todd
Fractional CMO



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