

# AML

ADVANCED MARKETING LEADERSHIP

AML PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW:

**DAVID NORMAN**

SENIOR MANAGER CMI AND  
INNOVATION AT DB BREWERIES



## Meet David

David is one of 30 marketers in the first cohort of the Marketing Association's new Advanced Marketing Leadership Programme.

We sat down with David for a look at his career so far, what working in the FMCG industry here and overseas has taught him, and what he is gaining from the programme.

**Q: David, you have a strong FMCG background, have you always been interested in that industry?**

I've worked in FMCG for over 15 years now, and I love that it's always changing, with new challenges always just around the corner.

In FMCG we work on products and brands that Kiwis interact with more frequently than other industries, and we get to have an in-depth understanding on how, as marketers, we can influence behaviour to drive change. There's an immediacy to it, so you know pretty quickly if the work you've put in is having an impact out in the market, and if it's not, then you get the opportunity to adapt, and go again.

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**Q: You are part of the very first cohort of marketers going through MA's new Advanced Marketing Leadership programme. What made you decide to apply and what was the biggest draw card for you?**

Like many, I'd been a bit neglectful of my personal development since starting a family a few years ago and then COVID. My manager spoke with me about the Advanced Marketing Leadership course.

When I looked into it, I was super impressed at the calibre of presenters, and the range of content. It was such a good combination of technical practitioners, strong leaders and change agents that I knew it would be worth it, if just for the networking.



**Q: You've just completed the first two days of the programme which looked at leadership and saw you pitch yourself as the next CMO. How was that?**

The first couple of days were awesome. I think most of us went into the course with a sense of excitement and trepidation, as the participant list was really strong. Knowing that at the end of day one we would be pitching ourselves, speed-dating style, to 30 of the top CMOs in the country to establish a mentor relationship, also put a bit of extra pressure on early.

John Miles and the team at MA have put together a really broad range of speakers, who bring great perspective on both marketing and leadership skillsets. I know everyone's taken a lot away from both days so far, and I'm really excited about what's yet to come.

**Q: Who is your mentor and what are you hoping to gain from the mentorship?**

I'm stoked to have been matched up with Sarah Sandoval, the GM of Consumer at NZ Post, and NZ Marketer of the year in 2022! I'm looking forward to learning more about evolving brand positioning and embedding strategic directions at scale, to apply that to my own work.

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**Q: What does it mean for you to have your industry body offer a programme like this?**

DB Breweries has been a member of the Marketing Association for years, long before I joined. Being more involved now with the MA content has shone a light on the quality of work they do, and their desire to make marketers brilliant. They have a really important role to keep their finger on the pulse of what's changing and to help us all to stay on top of the trends that will shape consumer behaviour of tomorrow.



**Q: What are some of the changes and trends you're seeing in the beverages sector and wider consumer market right now?**

Consumers of beverage in NZ have never had so much choice, which makes for a really exciting innovation space. With choice, however, comes volatility, as there's a lot of exploration and switching of products going on, so getting loyalty is harder than ever.

There's an increasing lens on health, wellness and moderation, which is seeing lots of growth in the low carb and non-alcoholic space. Consumers are also expecting a breadth of flavour or style and are really wanting to match their drinks to exactly how they're feeling for that moment. The challenge for all of us as marketers now is to make sure we understand how to make our brands the ones that consumers want to pick up, when the discretionary spend is being watched so closely.

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**Q: You worked for Mondelez in the UK for a few years. What did you learn from your experience in a different consumer market?**

I worked on the Green & Black's chocolate brand in the UK, and it made me appreciate how fortunate I was to be spending hour upon hour in a chocolate test kitchen creating new products!

More broadly, the thing that struck me was how large the market was, and how vast the levels of segmentation could be. Knowing the specific times of day and day of week you were seeing results meant that plans could be really targeted to drive results. Access to better quality data is only enhancing this now. I also learned that despite a few cultural nuances, the needs and motivations of consumers are predominantly the same, which means that the education and background we gain here in New Zealand enables us to be effective as marketers all around the world.

**Q: What were your key learnings from the first two days and which topic inspired you the most?**

The range of speakers was vast, so it's hard to pick favourites in terms of content! I really enjoyed hearing about ways to approach cultural context to increase relevance and how to consider the role of biculturalism and authenticity.

Equally, it was inspiring hearing thoughts like that AI could be to our generation what electricity was to generations gone before! It really highlighted the need to be continually learning to ensure we can capitalise on the opportunities that will inevitably present themselves.



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### **Q: What are you most looking forward to in the up-coming sessions of the programme?**

I've been super impressed by what's come so far, and the content has been best in class, but the standout thing has been meeting the other participants. It's a great mix of businesses and people who are all sitting at high levels within their companies, doing great work. Sharing experiences and building networks with those who in the coming years will be the CMOs of our large organisations is truly invaluable, as New Zealand is a pretty small place.

If the calibre of the first couple of days continue it will be awesome. No doubt there's going to be a few gems that come out of every session, so I wouldn't want to prejudge any of the content.