Making It Matter

FOR CMO **MARTY HOMLISH,**

MARKETING IS THE DRIVER THAT KEEPS HP ON TOP

BY TODD WILKINSON PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOSHUA PAUL

Hewlett-Packard CMO
Marty Homlish is
leading his team with
the new HP way.

Make it fast. Make it work. Make it awesome. powerful. Make it simple. it move. Make it better. Make it Make it great. Make it happen. Make it proud. Make it true. it thrilling. Make powerful. Make it Make it simple. it move. Make it better. Make it Make it great. Make it happen. Make it true. Make it thrilling. Make powerful. Make it Make it simple. better. Make it t

"Corporate reorganizations should be made for cultural reasons more than financial ones."

— Bill Hewlett (left) and Dave Packard

WHEN MARTY HOMLISH came to work for Hewlett-Packard in 2011, he knew that past performance of any company — including the reigning No. 1 maker of PCs, printers, and servers in the world — offered no guarantee of future success.

But it was the legendary "HP Way," he says, that convinced him a business founded in 1939 could still be a trailblazer in today's age of advanced information technology.

Though Homlish is the first to admit that the past decade has been challenging for the Palo Alto, Calif., multinational, HP's executive vice president and chief marketing officer vows that those eager to sell HP short, given the company's recent public relations travails, are in for a surprise.

Adapting to the New Playing Field

The fact that Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard famously began as entrepreneurs in a one-car garage — investing $538 in a start-up that last year posted $120 billion in revenue — is indeed the stuff of legend. More influential, Homlish explains, is HP's "culture of innovation" that not only helped build Silicon Valley but remains HP's durable cornerstone in the 21st century.

"Bill and Dave instilled a working philosophy, an approach to nurturing and rewarding innovation that took hold over decades and exerted itself at scale, which isn't easy to do," Homlish says. "Creative capacity isn't something you can just invent overnight. It's embedded in HP's

DNA, and it's our competitive advantage as we strive to be a better, more nimble company."

Within that mission is a tough challenge. The rapid proliferation of mobile communication devices and the emergence of cloud computing have transformed the old playing field. Stiff competition for market share confronts HP in every corner of its business. And HP is dealing with the lingering effects of the Great Recession and the intense media scrutiny applied to a series of high-profile management shakeups. The result has been humbling introspection.

Under the command of CEO Meg Whitman, who led eBay during its spectacular ascent as an e-commerce company, HP is rallying around a new global marketing campaign called "Make It Matter."

MARTY HOMLISH'S EIGHT MARKETING PEARLS

1 **Communicate with your team.** Never assume everybody understands what you're trying to do and how you intend to get there. Always make yourself available for questions and feedback.

2 **Reach out to your peers.** Successful marketing is a team effort across many disciplines — creative, IT, web development, just to name a few. Make sure you understand their requirements, limitations, and priorities — and establish a foundation of trust and good working relationships.

3 **Agility matters.** Plans and circumstances can change in no time. When that happens, embrace the change and get the job done.

4 **Be authentic.** Nobody knows your brand better than your fans. Don't disappoint them by trying to be something you're not.

5 **Approach the bandwagon with caution.** The "next big thing" may or may not be just that. Do your homework before jumping aboard.

6 **Focus on what's essential.** Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard said that investing in new product development and expanding the product catalog are the most difficult things to do in hard times, and also among the most important. But don't let the quest to be innovative cause you to forget your business's core competency.

7 **Have a story to tell.** And make sure the story illustrates how you add value to your customers' lives.

8 **Content matters.** Create compelling content. Then package, distribute, and syndicate it.

In 2012, HP kicked off a "Make It Matter" ad campaign, with ads airing on television, YouTube, HP platforms, and mobile devices. The spots feature the myriad ways HP assists customers, replete with the message: "At HP, we don't just believe in the power of technology. We believe in the power of people when the technology works for you." Throughout 2013, these ads will continue to run and also be complemented by product-specific advertisements in both traditional and digital media.

Known for his kinetic energy, Homlish is a straight talker who doesn't mince words. Before the unifying theme of "Make It Matter" started picking up steam in 2012, he says, HP was many things to many people. "The brand wasn't broken. It was a little tarnished and neglected, and I think misunderstood," he explains. "There wasn't one HP but hundreds of HPs, and the aggregate of that caused more confusion than clarity."

On top of everything, lesser competitors were arguably out-marketing HP. The brand, Homlish says, took its licks. (Read the compelling lessons Homlish has learned over the past half decade in "Marty Homlish's Eight Marketing Pearls," at left.)

"We were not keeping it simple for our customers, partners, and suppliers. We didn't have a unified point of view, we lacked a consistent look and feel, and we lacked an overarching message," Homlish says. "Despite all that, our research showed that people really like HP, and that what we do for people actually matters. Our customers want us to win because when we win, they win — and vice versa."

Everywhere, All the Time

Putting the customer at the center of everything remains a marketing mantra for HP. "What has changed for us in the technology industry is that 15 years ago we pretty much knew the customer would use our products and services in two places — at home and at work," Homlish says, "but now customers expect your products and services to be available, reliable, and secure — everywhere, all the time."

HP is expanding its own ecosystem of hardware, software, and network offerings in response to that demand for ubiquitous accessibility — and to enhance the functionality of its own systems and services. One example is HP's pending push to be a serious smartphone player, following its 2010 acquisition of Palm and ill-fated attempts to make serious inroads into the cell phone market.

Whitman told *Wired* that there are many markets around the world, including billions of consumers in the BRIC countries, whose citizens and offspring may leapfrog PCs in favor of a smartphone as their first computer. As demand for traditional desktop computers wanes, Whitman sees mobile devices as a huge opportunity to drive profit growth. "We're a computing company," she says. "We have to take advantage of that form factor."

Because of Whitman's previous expertise in marketing and her refusal to relinquish any of HP's market share without a

fight, Homlish says it's an exciting time to be with the company. He will not say how much HP is investing to bolster its marketing capabilities, but he does acknowledge the amount is significant and will extend to every product line.

Long a titan of premier printers, HP is forging relationships with other companies to make its offerings more versatile. "We just launched HP Giving Cards, a greeting card and gift card all in one," Homlish says. "You create it at home on your own printer. You can use the cards at stores ranging from L.L. Bean to Barnes & Noble to Amazon. And you can create a card for just about any occasion."

As for cloud computing, which represents another HP profit center, Homlish says: "I'm not sure anyone can match our range and depth in storage and platform solutions, and in infrastructure, our applications and software for developers. Our ability to scale up or down to match a customer's needs, plus our unparalleled security, make our cloud offering so unique."

He adds: "The key takeaway is that we are innovative in ways large and small that actually help people in their daily lives; unfortunately, though, that doesn't always get the publicity." (See "In His Own Words …," at right, for how HP is helping enterprise customers.)

"For me and those on our team, the opportunity to go on the offensive with the different kinds of products we have is really a marketer's dream. Our stories are about touching everything from the end consumer all the way to the biggest businesses in the world," he says. "HP isn't a gadget company. It's a people company."

Breaking Down Barriers

More than ever before, technology and the human experience are emerging in ways that blur former lines between work, play, and commerce, yielding breakthroughs that save time and money, and reduce stress.

"It's not just the technology that's changing, it's the operating models and delivery systems that go with it," Homlish says. "Borders are going away, so how you market now has to be truly global. If you think about the world our children will

" To many, we are mostly known as a printing company, but a large part of what we do is actually making technology work for enterprises.

Our enterprise services team just signed a five-year contract to begin delivering a real-time location system to 152 Veterans Affairs medical centers, hundreds of clinics and community living centers, and seven pharmacies. We've been a leader in this technology, and this is the largest deployment of its kind.

In health care especially, little things mean a lot — and can have major implications. This technology can help track everything from patient care to asset management — and can even remind people to wash their hands when they enter a particular part of the health-care facility.

Because technology changes so fast, our enterprise team will be working with HP Labs to bring other innovations to the VA system and its patients.

The VA has long been recognized as a leader in using digital technology to improve patient care and reduce expenses — and HP has been a big part of that.

And the VA is only one example. There are many more examples that illustrate just how HP helps our enterprise customers 'make it matter.' "

inherit, borders go away, and commerce is going to be on a very different platform."

Like every tech company, he says, HP has had to adapt, and it's a work in progress. Although HP is a manufacturer of hardware and software, a purveyor of smart communications networks, a noted forerunner in creating business systems, a data storage specialist, and a content provider, Homlish admits that HP needed to be more effective at showing what it can do.

Early in 2013, commercials promoting HP's hybrid Envy x2 laptop/detachable tablet began appearing under the slogan "The Magic of Touch." As entertainment vehicles, the spots feature renowned illusionist Dan White and are intended to illustrate how the stationary PCs of old are being dramatically reinvented. "The thing about advertising geared to technology products is it needs to be authentic and simple even though it completes complicated tasks," Homlish says. "If it requires a user's manual to comprehend, you don't have a great ad."

Integrating marketing with HP's other divisions has happened at breakneck speed. "I believe in tearing down silos," Homlish says. "But it's not just me. Breaking down silos is now ingrained in the HP culture."

In recent months, HP's marketing team entered into a strategic confluence with the company's IT division, led by John Hinshaw, executive vice president of global technology and operations. It is also closely allied with the management team of Tracy Keogh, executive vice president of HR, and the deep bench of engineers affiliated with the company's venerable HP Labs. The intent: to tap into and harness HP's creative human capital that previously was organized across separate divisions.

The "HP Way," originally adopted the aspirational ethic of fostering "a deep respect for the individual, a dedication to affordable quality and reliability, a commitment to community responsibility, and a view that the company exists to make technical contributions for the advancement and welfare of humanity."

Homlish says the company isn't nostalgically trying to rekindle the past but has embraced a new iteration called "the HP Way *Now*," essentially recasting Hewlett and Packard's original mantra with an emphasis on giving employees and trusted client partners the freedom to innovate together in ways they didn't do before.

The logic is simple: Talented people inside the organization, Homlish says, need to be able to talk to each other because regular contact yields unexpected synergies and cross-pollination of ideas. It's hard to do, however, with a company that has a workforce of more than 300,000 scattered around the globe.

To ease the challenge, HP recently launched a new internal social media platform called "OneHP," which is custom designed to encourage employees worldwide to share insights gleaned in real time, with the knowledge they have the support and attention of management behind them.

The tool is just one example of how HP is transforming itself from the inside. If HP is going to remain a leader in providing enterprise solutions to business clients and continue to earn the trust of consumers both in their homes and on the fly, the most powerful stories to tell, Homlish says, are the examples happening within the company.

Homlish is seeing the effects firsthand. Since his arrival, Homlish has circled the planet to meet with his marketers. At every stop, he says, he holds informal gatherings with HP employees, asking them this question: If they had three wishes, what would they do to make their jobs better, improve management, and spur creativity that forges a deeper relationship with a customer? "It's been quite fascinating. As marketers, you need to feel that you have permission to dream," Homlish says. "But if I'm asking employees what their dreams are for making HP a better company, I also have the responsibility to actually deliver on trying to make their ideas happen."

In an attempt to rekindle the entrepreneurial spirit, HP recently launched what it calls the "538 Fund" for HP marketers.

It is named after Hewlett and Packard's original $538 investment in the company. The pool is a budget set aside to reward those who have big ideas and can carry them to fruition.

"Any HP marketer can submit ideas to a review board," Homlish says, noting that some of the reviewers are top executives in the company. "If an idea is accepted, that individual or group of individuals is given the funding to go make it happen."

Externally, several other initiatives have been unleashed. On the enterprise front, HP knows its most successful marketing tool is face-to-face contact. In recent years, HP's annual Discover events have attracted a diverse corporate and government clientele under one roof and enabled HP to show off its services.

"At the same time, we have invested in digital complements to these in-person events, through mobile applications, engaging social media outreach, and sharing select content through an online platform," Homlish says. "Not only are we offering solutions, we're using technology as listening posts so that we can better respond to customer needs in a landscape that seems to change almost daily."

Putting Core Values to Work

Throughout Silicon Valley, the most inventive companies, Homlish says, are those actively recruiting the best and brightest of the millennial generation into their ranks. Today's youth growing up with an inherent fluency in technology have a natural proclivity for pressing its boundaries. They're a powerful force for creativity, but invaluable wisdom also comes with age and hard-earned business savvy, Homlish says.

"We know we have a lot of smart people — and yes, the younger employees tend to be in the forefront of the digital frontier," Homlish explains. "We know there are a lot of good ideas out there, but people sometimes get frustrated because they don't have the time or resources to try them out. That's why our 538 Fund holds such tremendous promise."

HP also has a focus on mentoring. "We have formal and informal mentoring programs in place. Not just older employees mentoring younger ones," he says. "We also ask younger employees to mentor some of the folks who've been around awhile." Sometimes, it has led to "aha" insights about how technology can be better applied and adapted.

In addition, Homlish says that HP has always embraced diversity, and tapping into multicultural groups for new hires has resulted in more impactful engagement. "Walk the halls in any part of the company, in any part of the world, and you'll see quite a mix of age groups, a true melting pot of cultural influences," he says.

From inside HP to the cutting-edge clients it serves, Homlish says that "Make It Matter" is the battle cry of a company determined to remain a change agent in Silicon Valley. "No one group or individual in this company has all the ideas or answers," he says. "We're trying to harness everyone's creativity and experience, putting it to work for our customers. That's not spin. It's what we believe." ∎