

2025 Chief Marketing Officer Award Submission

Nominee: Raja Rajamannar

Title: Chief Marketing & Communications Officer, Mastercard

Raja Rajamannar exemplifies the modern CMO who blends human ingenuity with robust data infrastructure to create meaningful impact. Since stepping into Mastercard's CMO role in 2013, and later expanding his remit to found Mastercard's Healthcare Division, he has spearheaded an organization-wide transformation by deeply embedding research, analytics, and neuroscience into marketing and innovation.

Under his leadership, Mastercard became the world's top audio brand for five consecutive years. Raja's visionary rollout of a multi-layered sonic identity was crafted with neurology, musicology, and psychological insights that began in 2019. Its signature 30-second melody, three-second audio logo, and 1.6-second sonic acceptance checkout experience now appear in billions of touchpoints worldwide. This was created through research Raja conducted which showed this transaction sound quadruples consumer trust.

Beyond audio, Raja drove a strategic rebrand, removing the Mastercard name from the logo after consumer testing across 26 countries demonstrated that over 80 percent could identify the symbol alone. This bold move showcased his willingness to act on market feedback and rise to data signals about visual brand equity.

Raja's data-led ethos extends to inclusive innovation. He invested in a proprietary AI-powered sonic studio, integrating real-time music generation tools for employees and partners, underscoring the infrastructure he built to scale data-informed creative experimentation. He also pioneered the True Name™ Credit Card, allowing transgender and nonbinary cardholders to use their chosen names based on in-depth qualitative research and consumer feedback. Similarly, Raja launched the Touch Card and Wildlife Impact Card, which were both developed through partnerships with underrepresented communities, ensuring Mastercard's products were both inclusive and insightful and led through data and insights.

As a thought leader, Raja authored the Wall Street Journal bestseller *Quantum Marketing*, now a cornerstone in MBA curricula worldwide, including being made into case studies at Harvard and Yale. He is a frequent keynote voice at Cannes, World Economic Forum, CES, and Advertising Week, where he consistently illustrates how art and science intersect in modern marketing. He serves as member of the ANA Executive Committee, Yale's Consumer Insights Council, and teaches at numerous business schools.

Raja's data-led transformation has produced tangible growth, elevated brand trust, and set a new standard for evidence-based marketing. He fostered a culture where consumer

research, analytics, and insight are not static tools, but dynamic forces shaping Mastercard's global strategy and creative vitality. For seamlessly integrating empathetic storytelling, scientific rigor, and ethical data practices, while delivering measurable business impact, Raja Rajamannar is a truly deserving candidate for the 2025 ARF Chief Marketing Officer Award.