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Marketing Rule Book

Marketing rules.....

- 1 You reap what you sow
- 2 Stop pursuing a weak universal appeal
- 3 Don't fear customer rejection but customer indifference
- 4 Become three or even four dimensional
- 5 Stop copying or worrying about the competition
- 6 Make no assumptions
- 7 Be ideas centred not just customer centred
- 8 Stop wasting even more time

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Rule # 1 You reap what YOU SOW.....

Abandon everything you have been taught about marketing before. Take a cold quantitative look at your marketing activity and start again. All marketing should bring a return on your investment.

Break from the past and think about:

- Beginning again – we feel a truly clean sheet of paper works well
- Start solving the root cause of why your marketing is not working as well as it should
- Create a strategy, yes we know it's dull, but it will help shape your marketing and keep you on track when it inevitably gets tough
- Put a budget aside, you are going to need it
- Get a design company to develop a fantastic brand identity or logo

Don't be fooled, changing the marketing of your business is not going to be easy. You need a new marketing framework that will help you make sense of a new business environment where success is judged on more complex, sophisticated, less financially driven factors and more on human customer relationships and new ideas that not have been used in the past.



Rule # 2 Stop pursuing a weak universal appeal...

Increasingly the middle ground is becoming extremely vulnerable and that's generally where we position ourselves! Targeting your marketing at everyone usually just gets you that – everyone; low interest, passive, mundane, price sensitive customers. You now need to:

- Have an intense emotional relationship with your top 20% existing/potential customers
- Segment your market carefully. Target them with specific different offerings
- Your marketing has got to be better, not necessarily more expensive, but far better than your competitors
- Use design as a differential because even if your product/service isn't different, designers can make it look that way
- Make phone calls to your top customers today. Ask them what works, what doesn't, how you can deal with and market them better
- Can you customise any product/service you offer to your top 20% of customer ?

There is just no point in advertising to everyone.



Rule # 3 Don't fear customer rejection but customer indifference....

You've got to create major value added differences and if we hear you say quality and/or it's the way we treat your customers...well it's just not good enough anymore. If you have lost your ability to offer something special you have lost your right to market.

- People in your sector expect you to market in a particular way. Leave this dead end behind and try something different
- Make yourselves the centre of curiosity an inquisitive edge
- Ensure your marketing provokes a response
- Nothing short of wow will do...we know it's a cliché but we're serious!!!!
- 70% of customers reject businesses not because of price but because they didn't like the human side of doing business with their previous provider/supplier
- Look and feel different at every stage of the process

It's down to this, if your customers need a microscope to identify what makes you different you have a problem.....



Rule # 4 Become three or even four dimensional

Most marketing bores us stiff it's so piece meal. We get a brochure printed at huge cost yet badly designed, send it out and then expect our customers to come rolling in. And that's all we do. Several years later we put a website together and expect the same. No wonder it doesn't work. Most marketing is either average, boring or a copy!

- Never ever underestimate the customer experience. They pay a premium for it even if it is only a few pounds!
- You have to have a very, very good reason to advertise nowadays
- Marketing to your segmented customer base needs to be constant and you need to communicate in three or four different ways each year
- Even if you go out now and spend money on marketing to your existing customer base with some Public Relations, promotions, or even a visit you'd see a significant improvement in your marketing effort
- Think seriously about some good website optimisation

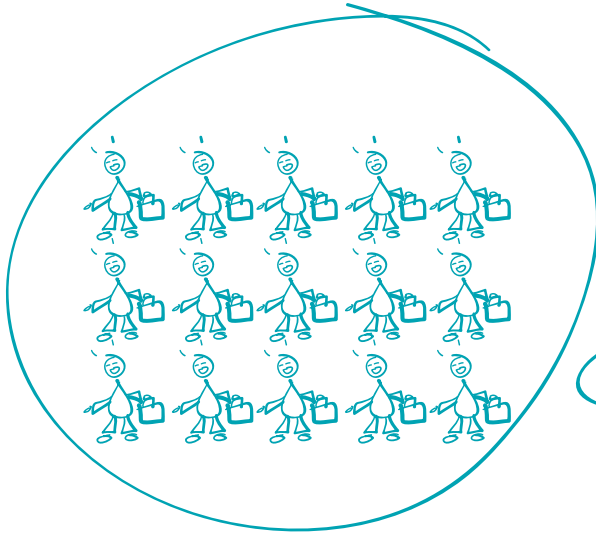
Your marketing should cater to the specific customer segment not the masses.



Rule # 5 Stop copying or worrying about the competition.....

There is nowhere to hide today. Customers are more informed than ever before and if you're only as good as your competition and you continue to compete on price or what we call 'sameness', someone will come along and squash your grapes!

- Go against what the competition boasts, it's probably out of date anyway
- What's the worst bit of the customer experience in your sector? Go and change it!
- Think about Starbucks.....they didn't invent coffee but just created a new experience and charged us more for the privilege!
- Try going the extra mile with just one customer today. In fact do it once a week. Imagine the impact on 52 customers! And it costs relatively nothing
- There is a thought that if your product is tangible (cups, cars, boats, books) distinguish yourself from the competition by intangibles (service). If your product is intangible (travel services, estate agents) distinguish yourself from the herd by emphasising the tangible (design, packaging)



Rule # 6 Make no assumptions.....

Perception is all there is. There is no reality only perceived reality. Learn to manage it. We assume people are listening to us. Customers are tired. They are sick of being marketed to. There's too much competition. They are bombarded by information and as a result they are closing their eyes and ears.

- Have a profound understanding of your customer. We've seen lots of clients spend money on marketing based on their perception of what the client wants
- Ensure your databases are cleansed as they are integral to your marketing effort
- Please don't ever think your sector/business is different. Its not believe us.
- Grade your existing customer into those you want to do business with and those you don't. Then create a strategy around those that you do!
- Make a customer not a sale and ensure your staff do the same

Lets be honest, most of the service we receive is about just fulfilling the basic needs of the customer.

blah blah blah



Rule # 7 Be ideas centred as well as customer centred.....

We get a hard time when we say this but it's just not good enough nowadays dealing with the customer in a merely effective way. We have to create huge heaps of imagination, creative thought and fantastic ideas. It's almost like we have to reinvent ourselves every two years. Phew!! Here's a few thoughts:

- Lack of ideas isn't the problem, executing them is
- Find new uses for old ideas
- Show customers an old idea they don't know about
- Create new combinations of existing ideas
- In the future it will be those that create trends that will be successful
- Playing safe is extremely risky. Meritocracy is the greatest form of camouflage
- You will need to constantly adapt the way in which you deliver to the changing needs of your top 20% of customers



Rule # 8 Don't just stand there.....

"Okay, sit down right now, grab a coffee and a clean sheet of paper and have a think about what marketing you can do over the next six months that's going to bring you a better return on investment than you have had before. Try and think about doing things differently and certainly more appealing than your competition is doing.

Even if you just pick up the phone and talk to your top 20% of customers over the next week, you have started down the road of a more focused marketing approach.

Good luck!

Speak to you soon

for more information
visit Ann's blog at
annaholman.co.uk



