

## Tricks for the Brave New World of Marketing

Across the brave new world of competitive marketing and customer relationships, the future can be intimidating.

- *Assumptions that once were true can no longer be made.*
- *Marketing that once worked can no longer be counted on.*
- *Guesswork is no longer an option.*

Top Ten Tricks to keep your business growth and sales moving at the pace of change.

**1. Be strategic and expect change at every turn** - The world, your customer and the tools that connect you to your customer are changing with every tick of the clock. New web and digital technologies mean instant connections and instant expectations from your customers. E-commerce, digital advertisements, one-to-one personalized communications, and variable brochures are all part of everyone's marketing future. Use new marketing technology to help you connect personally to customers.

**2. Commit to innovation in your business and customer connections** - Competition is coming both from peers and from directions you never considered. Competitor innovations can redefine your products, your customer relationships and your fundamental business definition. Consider how what you are doing now drives benefits to your changing customer and his redefined needs. What is your competition doing to offer those benefits? How are they vulnerable?

**3. Reinvent your message** - Today, branding is more than the logo on the box. It is the sum of all the customer experiences with your company. Today's marketer must deliver a brand and a message which creatively captures that experience and communicates trust, value and real benefits, while maximizing the cost/benefit equation.

**4. Break through the clutter of messages** - Today, mass media is fine, but it is not the slam dunk it used to be. You must consider your entire arsenal of sales and communications tools. Use them innovatively, selectively and with a focus based on your customer's needs and lifestyles. Direct marketing, web marketing, e-mail and permission marketing, events and sponsorships, promotions, point of sale marketing, network marketing, customer communications, newsletters and public relations are all connections that can be mixed and matched to define your company's real brand.

**5. Know your customer** - Your competition knows his customer and you know yours. How do you use that knowledge? How do you change your sales to take advantage of these insights? How do you maintain and leverage this knowledge into sales and longer client lifetime value? In answering these questions you can move from weak sales to dynamic marketer. Consider building databases

and datamarts that you can use to make business happen. From 100 clients to millions, customer knowledge lets your marketing do all the heavy lifting in making sales happen.

**6. Work in Internet time** - Whether you are on the Net or not, speed and the ability to learn from the market are key to new sales and new opportunities. Commit to continuous change and incorporate that kind of thinking into your planning, sales and business management. What is your communications technology? Marketing and sales technology? Product or service development process? When was the last time you made a move that was a step up from more of the "same old thing"? Look at your offer and your service. Look for ways to make it work better, without a lengthy process. Experiment and test.

**7. Be an entrepreneur. Be a business owner** - Whatever your job, whatever your role, if you are a decision maker, then live the role and make it happen. Use all of your resources to realize your potential and take no prisoners. Don't lose who you are, just make it more than it was before. 'Live the process' of growing and realizing the potential of your business!

**8. Define and achieve tangible results** - This is an era where ROI (Return on Investment) is key. Every marketing and business decision should be seen against current benchmarks, past performance, competitor results and projections for the future. Make it real and make it happen. Check your results against these standards and keep raising the bar on those standards.

**9. Keep your humor, keep your soul** - Don't forget the dynamics of marketing are an extension of your culture, personality, values and dreams. No matter the size of your company or the price of your product or service, let the customer see and feel the real you.

**10. Balance internal resources with external talent** - No matter who you use, balance internal management and expertise with outsourced specialists to maximize your returns. Stay current with the latest thinking and form teams of creative solutions that direct you to places you and your partners may never have anticipated or dreamed of.

These Top Ten Tricks are, of course, not tricks; they are common sense. They build on listening to and knowing your customer and then adapting your message and your tools to that customer. Always start with listening and adapt to what you learn.

**P.S. Here's an eleventh trick** - Always end by asking questions and listening to the answers.

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