

## The top 10 marketing tips and tricks for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

*"Marketing is not the art of finding clever ways of disposing what you make. It is the art of creating genuine customer value." P. Kotler*

Marketing is about placing your brand in the forefront of your customer's hearts and minds. With your company or brand in this prized position, your brand recognition skyrockets and it begins to appear that your company "just markets itself". There is a lot of legwork and preparation that is needed before you are able to establish yourself in this position. Below are 10 marketing tips and tricks to help get you there quickly.

### 3. Understand value creation

The easiest way of understanding value creation is through two simple questions:

What value are we creating?

Who benefits from it?"

There is no shortage of marketing models out there to define your company's value by. The key is to understand your customers and what value you are creating for them. What are your customer's needs? How does your product fulfill these needs? When marketing is approached through providing customer value you begin to create satisfied customers who are a company's greatest asset.

**One way to create a satisfied customer is to become a problem-solver for them.**

### 1. Use a problem / solution approach to marketing

Everyone has problems and everyone wants to have solutions to their problems. In marketing it's no different... actually, it's much easier. Ideally, with a crafty wordsmith and marketing subtlety your marketing message is basically:

Our product is the solution for this particular problem. Buy our product and this problem is solved.

Why not start marketing your product or service as a solution to a problem that pains your customer? To do this effectively, you first must know your customer.

### 2. Know your ideal customer... and be specific!

Do you know what your perfect customer looks like? What their behaviors are? Why they choose your product?

Without a precise understanding of who your ideal customer is, your marketing efforts will remain a shot in the dark. As a general rule of thumb, your ideal customer should have about 12 characteristics: age, income, location, profession, interests, hobbies, behavior etc.



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“With a crystal-clear understanding of who your ideal customer is, you are able to target them and get the highest return on your marketing expenses as well as picking up many other customers who are not perhaps your ideal customers, but customers nonetheless.

### 5. You don't need to reinvent the wheel: replicate past success

When companies do a marketing push, they often target a whole new customer segment based on nothing more than a hunch. This is wrong, especially when you have a clear understanding of your ideal customers based on them actually being your customers! You don't need to start over again. Rather,

- Find out who your current best customers are

- Create a highly defined profile of these customers

- Focus your marketing efforts on targeting this specific customer profile who are not currently your customers

New marketing is not about reinventing the wheel, it is about finding the best match of customers for your company and scaling it up.

### 6. Think of benefits not features

This is a difficult one for the more technically orientated

companies to fully grasp, but it's true and no one benefits more from this concept than technically orientated companies.

Features of a service or on a product are highly important for development and are key aspects that separate you from the competition, but sadly, your company is far more interested in product features than your customer will ever be. All your customer wants to know is:

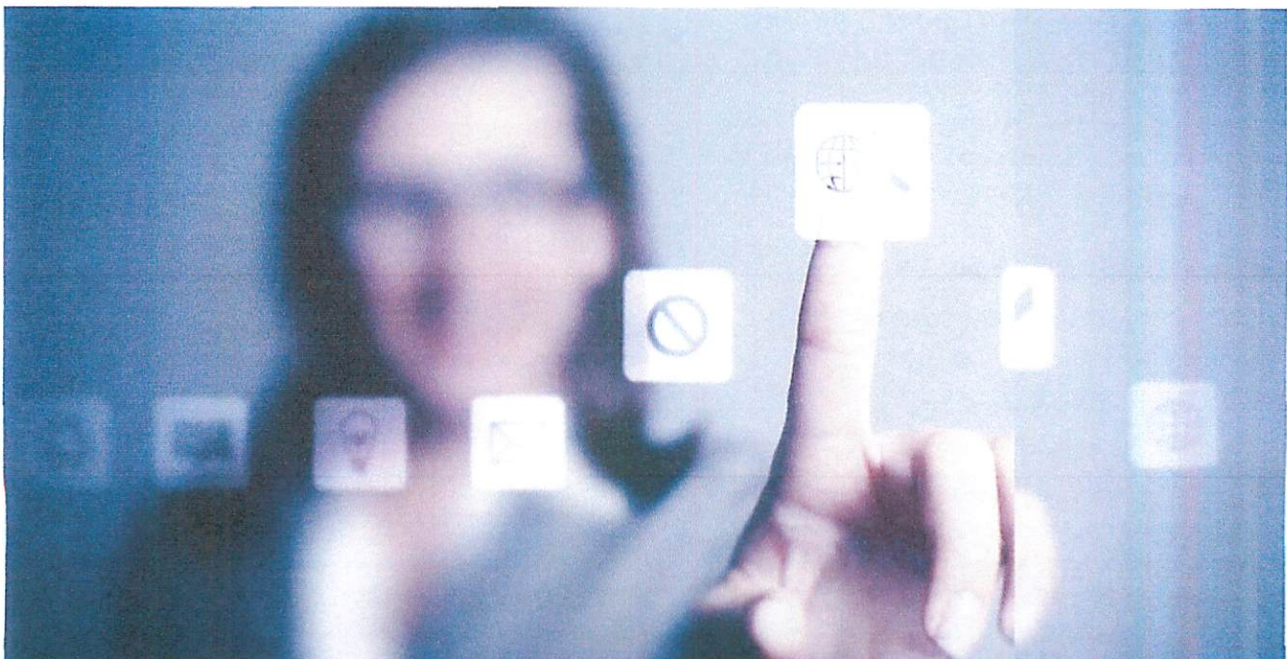
#### How do these features benefit me?

The job of marketing is to answer customer's questions before they even think them. One perfect place to start is by describing the benefits of your product's features instead of just the features themselves.

### 4. Everything starts with a niche

All too often companies want to launch a new product for the mass market, they throw millions of dollars into marketing and advertising, it fails completely after 6 months and everyone is left scratching their heads wondering why it didn't work. This is completely the wrong approach.

All great companies and products, even mass market ones, started by targeting a niche market and growing from there. Being the market leader in a specific niche is





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the ideal setting *to grow* beyond your niche *towards* a mass market position.

## 7. Enable word-of-mouth advertising

The best form of advertising started shortly after humans were able to communicate, that is, word-of-mouth advertising.

We are now living in the digital age and social media for businesses is one of the latest marketing buzzwords. Most companies approach social media with the wrong strategy, namely, that social media requires a new, game-changing strategy.

Social media for companies is merely a tool to enable word-of-mouth advertising. It is an incredibly powerful tool, but a tool nevertheless. The trick to managing this tool is to keep in mind that it enables word-of-mouth advertising. By linking social media to the oldest form of marketing you can see the potential that it has to let satisfied customers share their experience to the world about your company. Use social media networks to make this sharing as easy as possible.

## 8. Testing, testing, and more testing

It is said that marketing is one part art and the other part science. In the digital age, more and more marketing is becoming metrics driven. For marketing a product or service, this helps immensely to get the highest impact out of any marketing campaign.

In marketing, the art/science dualism can be incredibly effective. From the art side, you have a brilliant marketing idea. On the science side, you test the idea to see if it is (in fact) brilliant. For example, to reach the best online advertising copy possible one can use successive A/B split testing. Simply have two similar campaigns running

with one small difference between the two and randomly show half of your visitors one campaign and the other half, the second one. Find the one that converts better, use it and start the process over again with another small difference. After a few months of this testing and changing on a weekly basis, you generally see a massive increase in conversions.

## 9. Keep it simple

Customers don't like complicated. Although you might have an incredibly sophisticated and the back-end is highly complex, the customer should not experience it as complicated. This goes double for marketing. When given a choice over something simple or something complicated, the customer will choose the simple. Give your customer the simplicity that they want.

## 10. Know the value you're creating and who benefits from it

At the end of the article, this point needs to be repeated because it really sums up most of the other tips and tricks. With a clear understanding of who benefits from the value that you are creating, all that is left for marketing to do is to clearly present your value to those who benefit from it in an effective manner.

Marketing in the 21st century has taken much of the control out of the companies' hands and put it into the consumers. People like to buy and not be sold. The best marketing tricks today are those that provide potential customers with all of the tools to become happy and loyal customers. These happy customers will turn into mini sales representatives for your company spreading your message far better than any traditional marketing campaign could ever dream possible.