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ENGAGING MARKETING MINDS

JULY/AUGUST 2022



I Write in Cursive

THE CATHARTIC LESSONS OF DAYS PAST

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BEYOND DIGITAL

Referencing the cathartic lessons of days gone by is a product of the idea that we've lost a certain part of ourselves due to the antiseptic nature of technology. In turn, many marketers cannot take the path of least resistance and are unable to escape the digital addiction. The old adage of "being where they are" does not necessarily hold water in the digital world. The problem with that idea is that everybody is there. Your market is not differentiated by being on social networks or in the digital realm.

The entire universe is married to a device and humans tend to fall into certain habitual patterns. So, as we all settle into our comfortable grooves, it becomes increasingly difficult for marketers to make an impression. Research shows that as much as 40% of our days are run according to our subconscious habits, which keeps us sane. The subconscious controls almost every area of our lives. Therefore, if we have any hope of capturing anyone's attention, we must break the pattern of these automated sequences. We must stand out from all the other noise and distraction vying for attention. Hence, the concept that we return to a day when we connected through live interaction or utilized the creativity of print may be extremely valid. To nudge people out of their grooves, it will take something unexpected that shows up at an unexpected place. That's how you stand out.

The sales and marketing process has never changed. We cannot create a compelling relationship until we first grab their attention by getting people out of their patterns. Despite the hold that technology has on all of us, it is a truly marvelous time to meet your target market outside of the digital confines.

In this issue, we aim to remind you of the lessons from years gone by. "I Write in Cursive" is analogous to the healing powers of reading, writing and personal engagement. These are the types of actions that connect us to our human side and can aid us all in standing out with our respective communities. In our second feature, "Full Force," we deconstruct what matters to B2B clients and how they, ultimately, choose their partners. It should follow that those partners may well stand out in interesting ways.

Warmest wishes,

Gina M. Danner CEO



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DESPITE THE HOLD THAT TECHNOLOGY HAS ON ALL OF US, IT IS A TRULY MARVELOUS TIME TO MEET YOUR TARGET MARKET OUTSIDE OF THE DIGITAL CONFINES.

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I WRITE IN CURSIVE

The cathartic lessons of days past

B

ACK WHEN KEVIN ABERGEL was working at MGI on the JETvarnish 3D press, the manufacturer was going to market with its first digital embellishment press. To get some human insight, Abergel wanted to know what people on the street thought of tactile embellishments. Not people who knew printing, marketing or even design, but regular people with no connections to the industry.

He took to the streets of Paris with some samples, randomly asking people for their take. To his surprise, everyone's initial impulse was to reach out and touch



the samples. Man, woman, child, old or young, everyone had the same reaction—a human reaction.

“Our brains are all fundamentally the same,” says Abergel, who today is President of Taktiful Marketing, a firm that specializes in consulting with printers, manufacturers and brands on how to harness the power of Touch Marketing. “What unites us is the subconscious need to touch and connect. I often used this philosophy in sales later. Whenever I would show a sample to a prospective buyer, I would always point

out what their thumbs were doing when they looked at the printed sample. They subconsciously were ‘petting’ the print. I would then tell them the stats around the science of touch—its effect on perceived ownership and affective response, and how powerful of a sales tool that could be for them and for their customers.”

Blink and they’re gone. Think about it. Imagine how it feels as you impatiently watch the timer tick down before you can skip an ad on YouTube. Add to it the ever-crushing mix of overflowing inboxes,

a barrage of internet pop-ups, an overload of social media channels and formats—all vying for your attention. It is no wonder our attention spans have shriveled to under five seconds.

An infographic produced by Two Sides North America points out that the majority of Americans agree that print on paper is preferred for learning and retention. The data shows that 88% believe they understand, retain or use information better when they read it in print. In addition, 80% have a clear preference for reading

complicated materials in print, in contrast to 13% for computer screens and 3% for smartphones. Of 18 to 24 year olds, 69% say it is important to “switch off” and enjoy printed books and magazines once in a while.

You want more proof on the power of haptic marketing? The Association for Psychological Science stresses that taking notes with pen and paper boosts memory and our ability to understand better. “Companies are looking for ways to enhance their customer’s experience by transforming their digital world into a physical one,” says Joanne Gore, President of the full-service B2B marketing agency Joanne Gore Communications Inc. and CMO of Taktiful. “Designers want to transform the digital vision into a tangible one, while marketers mine data to provide a hyper-personal customer experience.”

That’s why brands like Netflix, Amazon, Shopify and Nike are using physical stores, merchandise branding and pop-ups to provide memorable immersive experiences. These “phygital” approaches enable brands of all sizes to bridge the physical-digital gap and engage customers with an experience that transcends platforms, devices and location.

When you make print interactive using QR codes, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR), you bridge analog and digital worlds. You capture the attention of prospects and customers for a longer period of time and foster smoother business operations. Not only do these technologies literally bring print to life, they elevate digital-only tactics with long-lasting, memorable and sensory experiences that only print can provide.

“Interactive print technologies engage the senses by blending the physical and digital, as customers discover your products and services in exciting new ways,” Gore says. “QR codes make it easy to drive customers to pURLs, URLs, landing pages, surveys, videos, contact information, featured promos and more—without having to navigate through website menus and submenus. Adding AR and VR elements help keep them there.”

Haptically speaking

Emotions. That’s the driving force behind why marketers love the strategy behind a haptic approach to marketing. Abergel

“THE MORE PERSONAL THE BETTER. ALL THE THINGS WE DO THESE DAYS TO MAKE OUR DAY QUICKER AND MORE CONVENIENT, LET’S PAUSE AND TAKE A STEP TO BE MORE CONNECTED.”

— JUSTIN AHRENS, CHIEF EVANGELIST, RULE29

says that our ability to connect with each on a physical level, something that was happening even before the pandemic stepped in, makes the strategy even more important today.

“We become more and more reliant on technology,” Abergel says. “The sense of touch is an essential part of human interaction, and by recreating it through haptic technology, we can bridge the gap that has been created by our increasingly digital lives.”

Abergel says that in an age where digital marketing reigns supreme, many marketers are looking for ways to make their campaigns stand out and offer something unique that will capture consumers’ attention. “Haptic marketing provides a way to do just that.”

In addition, haptic marketing can be used to create a sense of urgency or excitement around a product or service. By stimulating the sense of touch, marketers can create a “buzz” that will encourage consumers to take action. Even though we can buy anything and everything online today, 56% of consumers surveyed recently by RetailDive admit to visiting retail stores to see or touch a product before purchasing.

Once they do, the impulse purchase probabilities skyrocket by 62%.

Justin Ahrens and his team of creatives, thinkers and doers at Rule29 continue to take it upon themselves to find ways to intimately connect and engage with today’s fickle consumer. The creative agency, where Ahrens serves as chief evangelist, views the reemergence from the pandemic as a way to reestablish our senses.

“I believe before the pandemic, and even more so now, we as people were collectively searching for more unique and custom experiences, as we have been dulled from the immediacy we can give and receive information,” Ahrens says. “Today we have so many options to connect with a customer. We have found that a well-designed print piece, direct mail and environmental design can still turn a head, create a memorable moment and promote action.”

Ahrens says the whole process comes down to our “connectedness.” How can we be more connected to how we truly feel, then be open to the world around us, nature and the people we come in contact with? In his commitment and passion to building engagement, Ahrens often refers to one of his favorite quotes by Harriet Goldhor Lerner: “Only through our connectedness to others can we really know and enhance the self. And only through working on the self can we begin to enhance our connectedness to others.”

“The more personal the better,” Ahrens says. “Handwritten cards. Emails that are freshly written and do not sound like form emails. Call versus text. All the things we do these days to make our day quicker and more convenient, let’s pause and take a step to be more connected.”

They are lessons from a bygone era—ones that still ring true today.■



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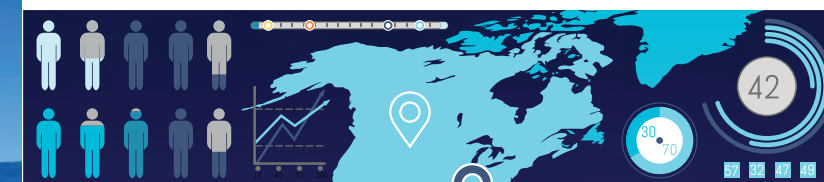
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— KEVIN ABERGEL, PRESIDENT, TAKTIFUL MARKETING



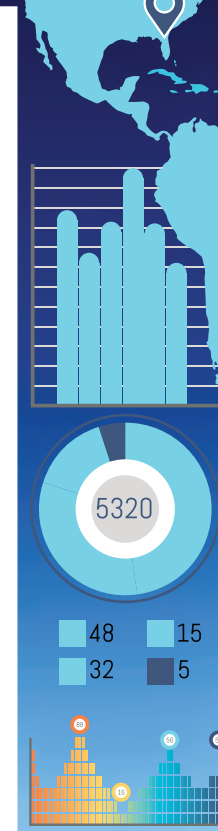
FULL FORCE

What influences B2B purchasing decisions?



“B2B MARKETERS ARE FINALLY REALIZING THAT THEIR BUYERS—WHILE B2B—ARE JUST AS INFLUENCED BY MARKETING AND ADVERTISING THAT ISN’T BORING.”

— ELTON MAYFIELD, FOUNDING PARTNER, ER MARKETING



THE DATA COULD NOT BE ANY CLEARER. From research to renewal, the average technology purchasing journey is longer than many marketers realize. According to a LinkedIn B2B Technology Buying Survey—“The Age of Agility: Expect the Unexpected. Prepare to Adapt”—more than 40% of sales cycles extend beyond one year.

If you realize this, you understand that throughout the journey, there are many inflection points based on various decision-making outcomes—all of which reinforce the importance of marketing to build consideration and consensus throughout the sales funnel.

If you realize that, you understand that to win and retain new business today, you must consistently and continually drive and hold the attention of your customers throughout the buying journey. That starts with building a memorable brand and ends with sustaining awareness and favorability up through the renewal period—which, by the way, is the lengthiest part of the customer journey.

As a founding partner of ER Marketing, Elton Mayfield has spent the past 20-plus years helping improve the marketing channel within the industry. From transforming 150-year-old companies to working with local lumber yards, ER Marketing’s insights encompass all aspects of the building industry. Mayfield’s diverse background has given him some keen insights into how the B2B buying process works today. “B2B marketers are finally realizing that their buyers—while B2B—are just as influenced by marketing and advertising that isn’t boring. I like

to say B2B doesn't have to be 'Boring 2 Boring.' More and more consumer marketers are entering into B2B and it is improving our creative product."

In today's ever-shifting business landscape, one made even more interesting thanks to a once-in-a-lifetime global pandemic, the buying and sales cycle comes down to two important factors: more education, and more technology to track timing and delivery. "You must realize that your customer has a need and your product/service helps to solve a business

challenge," Mayfield says. "Others in their space likely have that same challenge, so you want to help foster a community that makes the industry better."

B2B buyers want the innovation and flexibility offered by challenger brands. But they also seek the reliability that comes from working with well-known and experienced vendors. To move from shortlist to sale, today's buying decisions must meet a vast set of requirements, which can result in a paradox of needs among the person or persons involved in the buy.

“YOU MUST ELIMINATE AS MANY ROADBLOCKS—AKA FRICTION—FOR A POTENTIAL BUYER TO ACCESS ANSWERS TO THE MOST LIKELY QUESTIONS THEY MAY HAVE.”

— **BILLY MITCHELL**, PRESIDENT, MLT CREATIVE



For example, buyers take a broad range of brand, service and product factors into consideration when assessing which solutions can best meet a desired business outcome or customer need.

"A B2B marketer must create opportunity for a potential buyer to 'sell themselves,'" says Billy Mitchell, President of MLT Creative, a B2B marketing agency specializing in content marketing and leveraging the inbound tools that help clients get found, establish thought leadership, generate leads and build lasting customer relationships. "You must eliminate as many roadblocks—aka friction—for a potential buyer to access answers to the most likely questions they may have."

Mitchell says that today's B2B marketers now can implement more immediacy into the engagement with any prospective buyer. And more than anything else, they want to see your credentials. "The more immediately you can respond to any inquiries they have, the better. Testimonials and case studies reinforce your credentials. And the sooner you can discuss pricing, even better. I've always argued that B2B and B2C are two different animals altogether. But having said that, anything any of us expect now as a consumer is similar to what a B2B buyer expects as far as information, pricing, service ahead of the sale, service after the sale, etc."

Prepare. Prepare. Prepare.

From where Frank Magnera sits, the critical components of the B2B purchasing decision in today's landscape are largely the same as they have always been. Problem identification. Solution exploration. Requirements building. Partner selection. Justifying the decision.

Marketing's role as masters of the brand was once clear-cut, including building awareness and loyalty, and helping generate leads for sales to close. But those days are long gone. As are the days where buyers relied on salespeople to be their sole education channel.

"It's no longer a linear process," says Magnera, Director of Marketing for IDI Billing Solutions. "Our buyers control when and where they actively engage with us. Impromptu conversations, interruptions and engagement occur at all stages—and in no predetermined order.

Awareness, consideration, action—all happen in unexpected ways and through channels outside of our control."

Magnera believes that adding complexity is helping decision-making teams continue to grow. "I've been told the industry average for a complex B2B sales is around 10 team members. I can tell you that the number of individual stakeholders involved in most of our deals flex between 15-20. It's incredibly difficult to navigate as each stakeholder seeks to complete very different buying jobs spanning problem identification, solution exploration, requirements building and supplier selection."

You can add to the fact that these buying teams are better informed than ever before. Today's buyers rely more on independent discovery—and are more confident in the resources available at their fingertips. "Their networks are bigger, which means feedback is more abundant and readily available. And they own the engagement process. They expect, or more accurately, demand—a personalized experience."

Adding a human touch

Like so many business owners, Mitchell is inundated with sales solicitations from a variety of software providers, lead gen services, etc. With each, he and his team are able to check out potential vendors via their websites for credentials. Depending on the vendor, the product, etc., MLT Creative may or may not want more info. If they do, and it is even remotely interested in buying, MLT wants to speak to a human.

"This has to happen on my schedule, on my terms," Mitchell says. "I don't think B2B buying decisions are made on impulse. They are based on business. I'm often testing a new solution on behalf of my business and our clients. It's all about multiple touch points and the stages of awareness, consideration, comparison and decision. The prospective vendors that work with me often win my business."

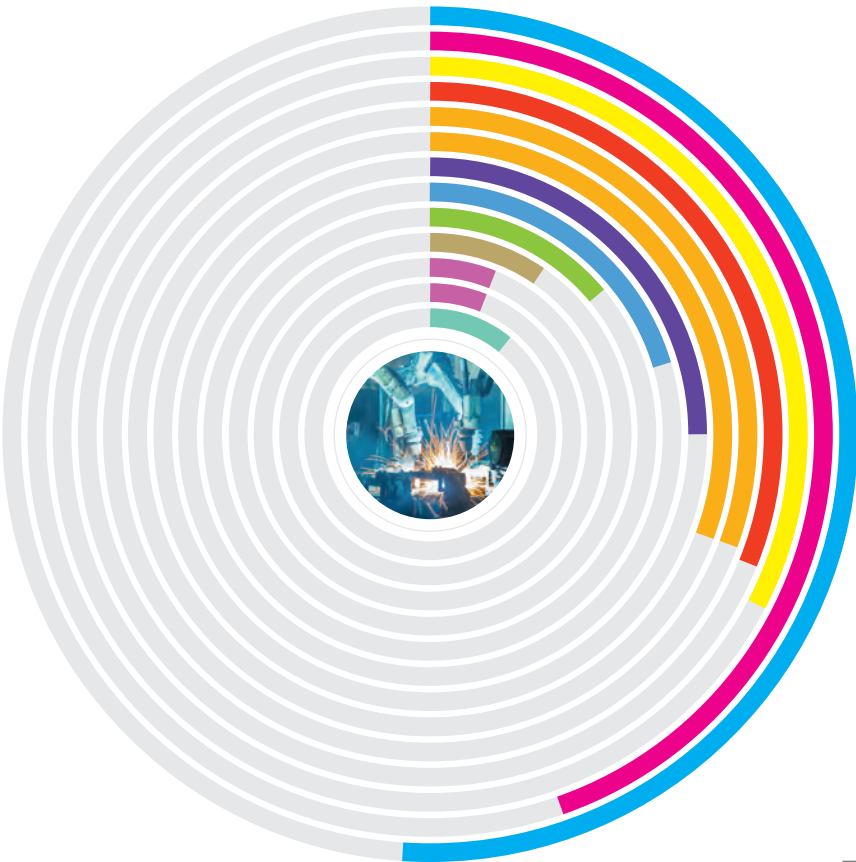
In the end, it is all about taking that first step, particularly asking for positive reviews from customers and clients. "Help them help you," Mitchell says. "Proactively mention what you would appreciate them saying about you. Make it easy for them to help you. They are more than likely very willing to do so, but may not know what you'd like them to say."



BUYERS SAY...

Which resources relate to "increased trust of a new technology product?"

Professional peer reviews (colleagues, thought leaders): 51%	Consultant: 25%
Vendor experience: 45%	Blogs/forums/discussion boards: 21%
Other users: 33%	Company mandate: 14%
Case study: 31%	Agency: 9%
Analyst report: 30%	Advertisement: 6%
Friend/family reviews and recommendations: 30%	Promotion: 6%
	None of the above: 10%



TACTICS

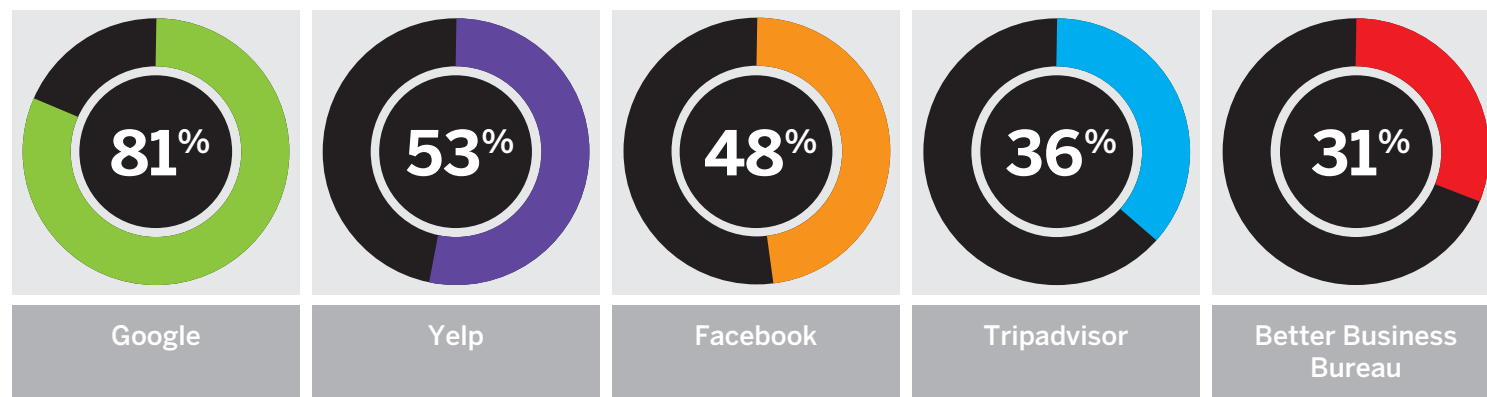


INFLUENCERS

WHICH WEBSITES CUSTOMERS USE TO REVIEW BUSINESSES

We all want to think that customers are saying nice things about our businesses—especially to other potential customers. After all, happy customers can influence others to buy from you, either by word-of-mouth or an online review. According to the

“Local Consumer Review Survey 2022” by BrightLocal, 78% of consumers use the internet at least once a week to find out more information about a business. Here are the top five websites they are using:



5 BEST PRACTICES FOR BALANCING DATA COLLECTION, PRIVACY AND CX

As a result of regular news stories about corporate data breaches to documentaries about how social media uses data, public awareness is increasing around how personal data is collected, stored, protected and used. Businesses have various ways they can use their more unified data to improve the customer experience. Check out these best practices from MarketingProfs:

1. EMPOWER YOUR CUSTOMERS

Give them control over their data. Let them set their preferences over what data is shared and contact channels for shipping notifications and promotions.

2. SHOW CUSTOMERS WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THEM

Be transparent. When customers come to your website, they should be able to see information you already have, such as their purchase history and previously viewed items.

3. MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS TO DO BUSINESS WITH YOU

Think about the cookie policy experience. You don't want to stop customers as soon as they come to

your site. Use data to streamline their experience in your storefront.

4. MAKE YOUR MESSAGES RELEVANT

Only send your customers communications that align with their shopping history, buying patterns and preferences. For example, if a customer wants to get promos only about a certain topic via text, stick to that.

5. BE TRANSPARENT ABOUT DATA COLLECTION

Clearly state to customers what you're collecting, why you're collecting it, how you're going to store it and use it, and how the consumer can change the data they share with your brand.



MARK SCHAEFER is a marketing strategy consultant, keynote speaker and author. In his latest book, “Marketing Rebellion: The Most Human Company Wins,” he highlights the vast chasm between what companies believe to be effective marketing today and what real consumers truly expect from us. Schaefer’s research underscores the need for marketing to connect in an authentic and meaningful way:

› **BUSINESSES** think just 13% of their marketing messages are unsolicited, while consumers feel 85% of the messages they receive from businesses are spam.

› **BUSINESSES** believe 81% of their marketing messages are relevant and useful, in contrast with 84% of consumers who say these communications are **not** useful at all!

› **BUSINESSES** believe that 75% of their corporate communications are personalized, while consumers feel it is more like 17%.

“We need to stay mindful of what distinguishes the different audiences we serve, not just from one industry to the next, but also from one job role to the next. That’s what personalization looks like in B2B marketing—the ability to roll out creative content in a way that’s highly targeted and relevant.”

— **Joerg Hufschmid**, Marketing Manager for Panasonic Business Europe

QA

Why do you think marketing matters so much now?

The world is more competitive than ever before. There are more businesses and more products, so you have to find a way to stand out. Marketing is one of the best ways to do that.

It's also more important than ever to build relationships with customers. In the past, people were loyal to brands and stuck with them for years. Now, people are constantly bombarded with choices, so you have to work hard to earn their loyalty.

Finally, marketing has become more complex as we've moved into the digital age. There are new channels and new technologies, which provide endless opportunities to reach customers in innovative ways. With so much potential, it's essential to have a strong marketing strategy.

Can you speak to the marketing skills gap that exists within small businesses these days?

It seems like everyone is a marketer these days. Social media experts, SEO gurus, and content creators are all over the place, eager to help small businesses grow.

Many business owners simply don't have the time or knowledge to effectively market their products or services. As a result, they end up missing out on valuable opportunities to reach new customers.

The good news is that there are a number of resources available to help small businesses bridge the marketing skills gap, including the tactics outlined in my book. With a little effort, any small business can develop the skills needed to create a winning marketing strategy.

ACTING SMALL AND THINKING LARGE SUSAN TYSON

FRACTIONAL CMO,
ENRICH ENTERPRISES, INC.



For more than 30 years, Susan Tyson has been a marketing and advertising professional, and an independent marketing consultant since 2014. She has worked with a wide range of ad agencies and corporate entities for an impressively diverse client base including Enrich Enterprises, Inc. (EEI) management consulting, Cars.com, Chicago Sun-Times, Budget Rent a Car and the College of American Pathologists (CAP).

Recently, Tyson authored her first book, "Business Marketing Strategy: Your Step-by-Step Guide to Marketing Success for Your Small Business." While she has endeavored to support small businesses with marketing, her simple approach works for entrepreneurial and marketing personalities in organizations of all sizes. For more information, visit Susan@SGTyson.com.

What are some of the most critical action items for brand owners to get started?

Your brand is not your logo, website, nor your product.

Your brand is the perception that your customers have of you. And in today's competitive marketplace, perception is everything. As a result, it's essential for brand owners to carefully control their own narratives.

The first step is to define what your core values are and what message you want to communicate to your target audience. Once you have a clear understanding of your brand identity, you can begin to craft strategic marketing campaigns that will help to shape public perception.

It's important to remember that your brand is your most valuable asset. By taking the time to define and nurture it, you can create a powerful competitive advantage that will help your business thrive.

What kind of resistance do you see when it comes to clients embracing marketing?

Some clients believe that marketing

is too expensive. They don't want to invest the money required to create a campaign that will reach their target audience. Other clients think that marketing is unnecessary because they believe that the product or service will speak for itself and that they don't need to go to the trouble of creating a marketing campaign. And some clients simply don't understand marketing. They don't know how to create a campaign or what kind of results to expect and they resist getting started. Overcoming these objections, however, is essential to success.

You talk about brand "tone." Can you share what you mean by that?

I'm referring to the overall attitude and personality of a brand. This includes everything from the language used in marketing materials to the design of the website to the way customer service is handled.

Every element of a brand's communication should be carefully considered to create a consistent tone that accurately reflects the brand's identity. For example, a luxury fashion brand would want to communicate

with customers in a sophisticated, elegant tone, while a young, hip clothing company might use edgy, irreverent language. The tone of a brand can have a big impact on how customers perceive the company, so it's important to get it right.

A strong brand tone can communicate a lot about the values of a company and help to build an emotional connection with its customers. Of course, crafting the perfect brand tone is no easy task, and it takes a lot of thought and experimentation to get it right. But when you find that perfect

balance, it can make all the difference in helping your brand to stand out from the crowd.

What advice would you give someone who has yet to define their Unique Selling Proposition?

Your Unique Selling Proposition is what sets you apart from the competition and makes you essential to your customer. It's what makes people want to do business with you instead of someone else. Without a USP, you're just another faceless company vying for attention in a noisy marketplace.

Establish your USP by detailing the unique benefits of your offering along with the needs of the target market. Determining what sets you apart from competitors is a great way to determine why they should choose you.

Once you have defined your unique selling proposition, everything else will fall into place. Your marketing will be targeted and effective, and you'll be able to charge a premium price for your product or service. So, take the time to really think about what makes your business unique, and you'll be well on your way to success.



When marketing doesn't matter...

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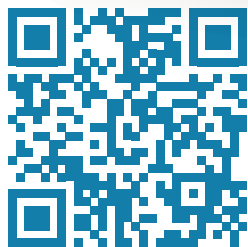


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