

# BRAND<sup>TM</sup> QUARTERLY

## GET YOUR BRAND INTO POLE POSITION

ISSUE #24 | NOV 2016

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5 Ways To Identify And Motivate Your Social Employee Champions

Meet Your 2016, '50 Marketing Thought Leaders Over 50'

Curing The New Marketing Personality Disorder

Your Marketing Team Is Larger Than You Think

Successful Content Marketing In 8 Steps

...and much more inside.



# BRAND<sup>TM</sup> QUARTERLY





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## Mantras For Marketers To Live By

Meet Our 2016  
'50 Marketing  
Thought Leaders  
Over 50'



**Use This Simple Button To  
Come Back Here Anytime**

*At the top right of page spreads*

## From The Editor

Get your brand into pole position...

...and gain a competitive advantage in the race for your market's hearts and minds.

To do that, you need the right crew around you - and you'll find plenty of them here in this very special, 5th Anniversary issue of Brand Quarterly. Thanks for joining us as we celebrate five amazing (and very quick) years and launch forward into our 6th.

Are you B2B focused? Well, there's plenty here for you. More interested in B2C? We've got you covered too. You can also learn about B2B4C, GenZ, CX, CMOs, TDSR, and the 4 T's, to name but a few letters of the alphabet. Add to that, brand fitness, strategic marketing, campaign building, social champions, content marketing, creativity and innovation, and multi-location marketing, and I'm sure you will find more than a couple of things of real value in this issue.

Speaking of valuable insights - we're on the lookout for fresh viewpoints, educational editorial, and discussion generating thought pieces for 2017. So, if you'd love to share your wisdom with your fellow Brand Quarterly readers, I encourage you to [check out our editorial guidelines](#) and consider submitting an article.

And finally, we unveil 2016's '50 Marketing Leaders Over 50' list (pg 68), offering well over 1000 years of marketing experience, as our finalists share their marketing mantras. Congratulations to all our finalists and thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with us.

Enjoy this issue, and I'll see you again soon.  
Let's make 2017 one to remember ;)

*Fiona*



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# Customer Experience: Measure What People Do, Not What They Say

*Gerry McGovern*

In observing thousands of customers over a 10-year period as they try to complete tasks online, I have noticed a very significant gap between what people say and what they do.

Firstly, people are generally not good at predicting their own behavior. Time and time again, I've had people say they do A, B, and C online connected with a specific task, only to observe them do X, Y, and Z. Secondly, people have failed miserably at a whole range of tasks on a website or app, only to say they were very satisfied with their experience.

These findings lead to the conclusion that it's essential to observe online behavior if you want to find out about the true experience customers are having.





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experience customers are having**

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Millions of customers go online every day to complete tasks. Online is a much more active medium than television or print. For example, with Search, the customer, not the brand, is the broadcaster. The customer is active - the brand, reactive. The customer is creating an advertisement as they type: "cheap flights Dublin". The brand needs to listen and respond. So, online we really need to know: Are customers completing their tasks?

## Speed Is The Essence Of The Online Experience

Time is everything online, and this is particularly true for mobile. Therefore, if we want to measure what customers actually experience online, we must measure the time they spend.

"Subconsciously, you don't like to wait," Arvind Jain, a Google speed engineer told The New York Times in 2012. "Every millisecond matters." Google found that if your pages are 250 milliseconds (a quarter of a second) slower than your competitors, you will lose customers to those competitors. "Two hundred fifty milliseconds, either slower or faster, is close to the magic number now for competitive advantage on the Web," Harry Shum, a computer scientist and speed specialist at Microsoft, told the Times. A quarter of a second is not a lot of time.

Fast-downloading pages are critical to online success:

1. Every second faster Walmart.com made its pages load, saw a 2% lift in conversions.
2. Firefox reduced page load times by 2.2 seconds and saw 10 million extra downloads as a result.
3. The Financial Times found that a 1-second delay in page downloads caused a 4.9% drop in the number of articles read.
4. The 2012 Obama campaign made their website 60% faster, and this resulted in a 14% increase in donation conversions.

However, as important as page download speed is, it is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the overall time involved in completing a task online. It is estimated that page download speed accounts for between 10% and 20% of overall task time. The vast majority of the time a typical customer spends online is taken up by scanning, reading, clicking, typing, selecting. In other words, much more time is taken up using the page than it waiting for it to download.

Thus, to truly understand customer time, you must measure the entire effort involved in completing a task.

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## Identify Customer Top Tasks

To create the best possible customer experience online you need to do four things:

1. Clearly identify the top tasks customers are seeking to complete.
2. Observe whether, in fact, they are successful in completing these top tasks.
3. Of those who are successful, measure how long it is taking them.
4. Use the insights gained from these observations to relentlessly focus on maximizing task completion and minimizing time-on-task.

Having analyzed the task preferences of more 300,000 customers in more than 30 languages and countries in a wide variety of sectors, my team has found a constant pattern. Typically, a task environment, say for dealing with your health, buying a car, deciding on a university, etc., will have between 60 and 100 tasks.



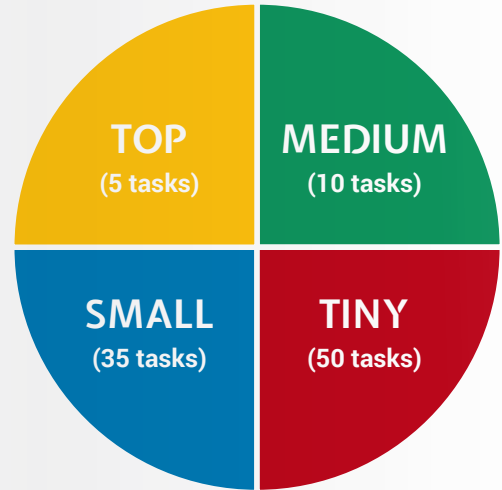
What do I mean by a task? In relation to your health, a task would be checking systems or getting treatment. For buying a car, it would be getting a price or comparing brands. For choosing a university, it would be finding a specific course or getting information on fees.

We have found a constantly repeated pattern when we do task identification research (fig. 1). When customers identify what is most important to them in a particular task environment with 100 tasks, for example, 15 tasks (top and medium) will get the first 50% of the vote.

The top 5 tasks will get as much of the vote as the bottom 50. This pattern has occurred like clockwork in over 400 completed top task surveys.

If you truly want to understand customer effort and experience, you must measure the performance of their top and medium tasks.

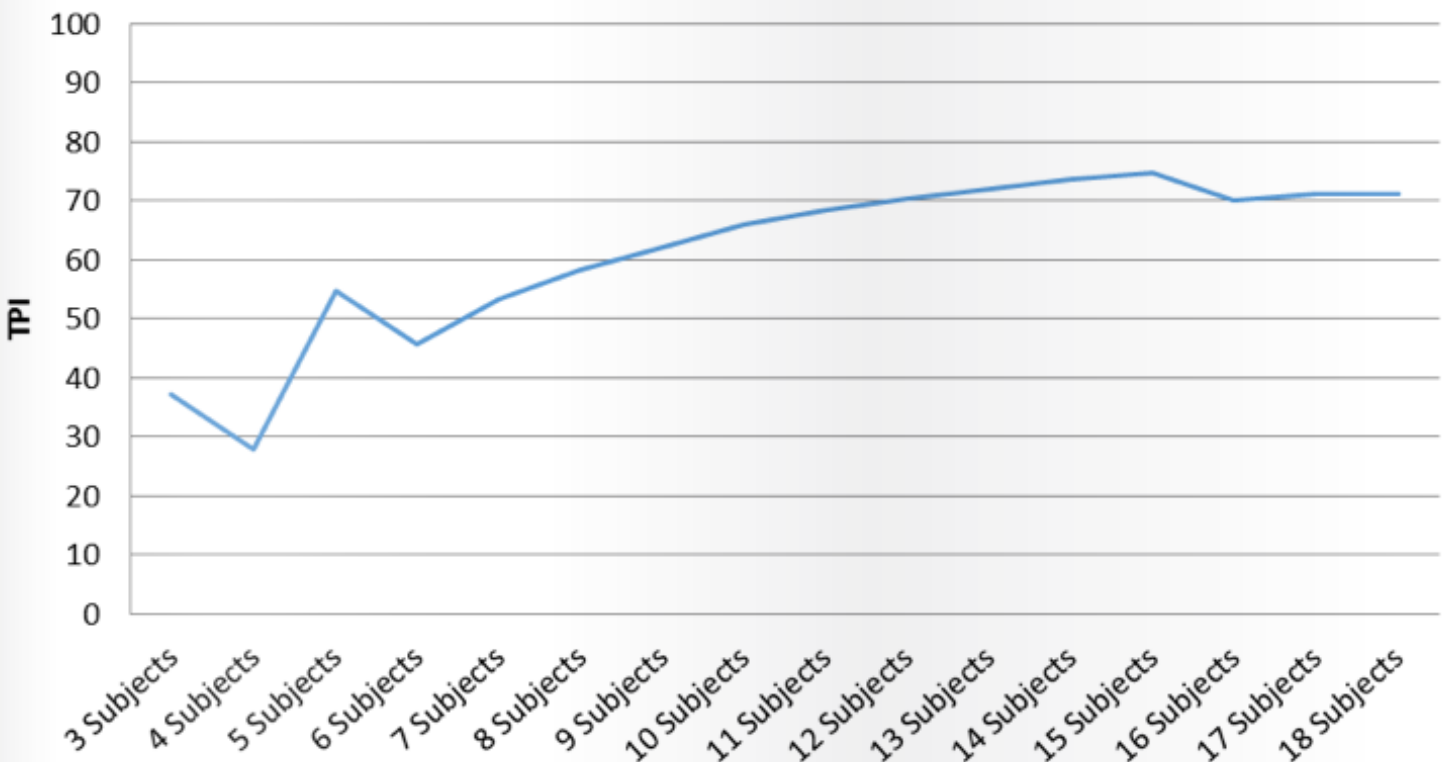
(fig. 1) Each task grouping receives 25% of votes



### Measure Top Task Performance

If you carefully observe between 15-20 customers as they seek to complete their top tasks, you will get reliable management metrics for task success rates and time-on-task.

## Example of TPI Scores Stabilizing as more Participants are Tested



(fig. 2) At about 13 subjects / customers, the success rate begins to stabilize

Over the years we have observed thousands of people seek to complete tasks online. We found that once you carefully observe between 13-18 people, you begin to get stable and reliable task completion metrics (fig. 2). Observation should occur remotely, using tools such as GoToMeeting or Webex, in a carefully controlled and professionally moderated manner.

While reducing time is how you win online, task failure is where you most definitely lose. You would be surprised how many top customer tasks fail. When we carry out a typical task performance exercise, we can find failure rates ranging from 30% to 70%.

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## While reducing time is how you win online, task failure is where you most definitely lose

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“Nearly 60% of all phone interactions saw the customer start on the company’s website,” according to *The Effortless Experience*. So, a great many customer top tasks aren’t even getting to the starting blocks!

Google is a good example of an organization that is obsessed with reducing customer effort and time-on-task. Five years ago, if you searched for “London weather”, you received

ten search results, and ideally, you clicked on the first one. The task took you about 20 seconds to complete two years ago, the weather appeared on the search results page itself, so you didn’t have to click on any search results. The task now took you about nine seconds to complete. Today, if you’re using Google Chrome and you start typing “London wea...” the weather information pops up. You don’t even need to complete the word ‘weather’. The task now takes you less than five seconds.

That’s why Google is so successful; because they understand that if you maximize task completion, and minimize time-on-task, you win online.



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## If you maximize task completion, and minimize time-on-task, you win online

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(Gerry McGovern)

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## Gerry McGovern

Founder, CEO | Customer Carewords

Gerry has published six books about the need for customer-centricity in the online world. In 2016, he published his sixth book, *Transform*, which shows that digital transformation is far more about culture change than technology change. Gerry has spoken and consulted on online customer experience in 35 countries. His company, Customer Carewords, specializes in helping large organizations (such as Microsoft, Cisco, European Commission, and VMware) deliver a better customer experience online through focusing on making the top customer tasks easier to find and simpler to do.

[www.customercarewords.com](http://www.customercarewords.com)







# Listening is important. But it's only part of the solution.

## Turn Insight Into Action

Really understanding your customers is more important than ever. They demand to be heard — and they want to see action. Whether it's a negative post gone viral or a fleeting sales opportunity, reacting quickly is critical to keeping relationships alive. Knowing before things happen is even better.

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**With the right boot camp  
regiment, almost any brand  
can regain its fighting fitness**

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# Getting Your Brand Fighting Fit

*Andrew Vesey*

The research has spoken. Your brand is performing well below acceptable levels, and that's hurting sales and business performance - it's time to overhaul it into something new and fresh!

Wait a minute.

Is your brand that out of shape or crippled that surgery is the only viable option? Or, as is often the case, would a short stint in boot camp trim the fat, build the strength, and instill the discipline required for your brand to drive business forward?

Just because your brand doesn't seem to be producing results, it isn't a sure sign that it needs to go. Sometimes, it's just a case of poor execution - which is something you can definitely fix with a little elbow grease and the right brand fitness plan.

To set up a brand plan, we first need to establish a performance baseline, similar to how a personal trainer would put you through your paces when you first start a new program. This baseline exam should be a constructive, positive experience, not a fault finding mission. Sure, you are looking at where your brand is struggling, but you're also looking at what it does well. And with each weakness you discover, it means you have found another way you can improve.

There is a chance that, at this point, you may come to the realisation that putting your brand out to pasture and starting anew is your best option. And, that's fine.

But, while you send your old brand off 'to the farm,' keep the results of its baseline exam handy. The brand may be done for, but understanding where it was working and where it fell apart can be valuable in the development of your future (and future-proofed) brand. It will help you to avoid previous mistakes and further excel in your most successful areas.

Now, let's get back to the situation at hand - a brand that, with a little help, can be brought back to a competitive level.

With athletes, the difference between winning and losing, being good and being world-class, is often their mindset. And I believe the same goes for brands. Are you pretending to be a certain way because it will allegedly get customers onboard, or do you truly believe? Do your staff - your potential brand champions - believe? Have you been trying to mimic the thoughts of your 'target' audience, or have you gone out and found an audience that your brand resonates with?

If those behind the brand don't believe in it, no one ever will. If they don't understand it, no one ever will. Just as a world champion needs to visualise that moment of winning, your brand champions need to be able to visualise a brand promise successfully (over-)delivered.

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**If those behind the brand don't believe in it, no one ever will.  
If they don't understand it, no one ever will**

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To fix a broken brand mindset, ask yourself: Do we value the right things? Are we in it for the right reasons? Are we walking the walk, not just talking it? Are we communicating things clearly?

Many times, it's a matter of communication, rather than incorrect values or audience. So, once you have that winning mindset, it's time to work on strengthening your core. And, for a brand, this means how your brand is being communicated - visually, verbally, and physically.

While a brand is only as good as its promise delivery, don't lose sight of the fact that it first needs to communicate that promise. And this is where your branding comes into play. For me, your brand is the promise you make; your branding is how you communicate that promise. Your visual identity, tone of voice, brand scripts, and key messages - these form your core. And, as any trainer will tell you, the stronger your core, the better off you are.

How do you build core brand strength? With consistency, quality training, and repetition of those 'exercises' that resonate most for your brand.

With strength training being a pillar of success, let us not overlook another major boon for modern brand marketers

- maximising agility. Strength alone will limit you to focusing on one tactic, hoping to overpower the competition. Once you add agility to the mix, you open up the brand and marketing playbook and utilise the entire playing field (as well as your entire team).

One key thing to keep an eye on here is finding the right balance between brand consistency and agility. It is possible to be consistent and quite agile at the same time, similar to working the same muscle group on the same day every week, using a different exercise. The consistency will help build strength and keep you on target for your growth goals; while hitting those muscles from different angles, challenging them, and adjusting to more effective techniques, will power you towards your goals that much faster.

And while you're at it, don't forget to stretch and take a breath. Those small moments of rest between brand communications are opportune times to reflect on how it 'felt,' what sort of gains you can expect, and how you can improve it the next time around.

One-size-fits-all is definitely not an option here. Every brand needs to look at what areas of brand communication are of extra importance to them. A marathon runner focuses on different training aspects than a sprinter, a boxer's day-to-day regime differs significantly from a powerlifter's, and a digital-first brand based in Germany needs a vastly different training and execution plan than a primarily in-person brand experience delivered in New Zealand.

Where is your biggest competition? Who is your audience - and where do they want to hear from you? What innate 'talents' does your brand have - and how can you harness those to stand out from the crowd?

The final (and a vital) piece of your brand's journey back to world-class status is to have someone to watch over it. Be it a coach, trainer, or training buddy, any world champion will tell you that you can't do it alone - you need a support team. For a brand, this means having a support crew in place to help your various functions to understand, communicate and deliver on the brand promise as effectively as possible.

The make-up and size of this team will vary from organisation to organisation - they may even be external experts, brought in to 'take your squad to the big game'. What is important here, is that they understand your brand (intimately), can communicate it well, and have the ability to look at your organisation and develop a game plan that works towards its strengths.

With the right boot camp regiment, almost any brand can regain its fighting fitness. Instead of needing to 'cut your losses' and start from scratch in the future, develop a game plan now and work towards a long term, fit and healthy brand.



## Andrew Vesey

*Chief BrandMan, Founder | Vesey Creative & Brand Quarterly*

Andrew is an experienced brand and marketing professional with over 15 years in the industry - a majority of those have been as the Chief BrandMan at Vesey Creative, which he co-founded in 2003. In 2011, driven by his passion for branding, business and education, Andrew made the move into publishing by launching Brand Quarterly - this very magazine - and in 2014 Brand Quarterly Online. When not writing or developing partnerships and new initiatives for Brand Quarterly, Andrew works with a select number of clients - spanning the globe, from New Zealand through to the United Kingdom and the United States - developing, refreshing and implementing brands for both products and companies.

[www.BrandQuarterly.com](http://www.BrandQuarterly.com)





# Successful Content Marketing In 8 Steps

*Arnie Kuenn*

Nearly 3 billion people worldwide are online.

When they want a product or service, they don't wait for an ad to appear on television, scour magazine ads, or heaven forbid, pick up a phone book. They go to the Internet and search via search engines or social sites, because these methods promise fast results and relevant content - and generally deliver on that promise.

With customer attention shifting online, so too has the focus of marketers, requiring new marketing strategies as we begin to understand how the Internet works for users and how those users interact with it.



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**Smart content marketing begins  
with understanding what the  
customer needs rather than  
what you want to offer**

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Simply put, web users are consumers of content. Therefore, you need to deliver useful content that will engage your customers and keep them coming back for more. Of most significance, web users are searching for content to consume. This is key for every business' relevance and branding.

Let's dive in and see how you can generate more traffic, more leads, and more conversions for your business.

Below are eight crucial steps for a successful online marketing campaign.

## 1. Creating A Content Marketing Strategy

Today's leading websites provide more than just information about their company and product offerings. They now deliver resources for solving frequent customer problems and create fresh, engaging content that is continuously updated so that visitors return often and build trust with the brand. Your business should develop a content strategy because:

- Content provides the customer easy, reasonable access to products and services.
- Useful content should funnel the audience to the site's conversion pages.
- Quality content provides information that answers some of the toughest problems your customers face.
- Authoritative content positions your brand as the trusted expert in its industry.

By consistently producing useful content, you can establish your company as an industry leader, and work to *help* your audience - not *sell* to them. Smart content marketing begins with understanding what the customer *needs* rather than what you want to offer.

## 2. Research The Audience's Needs

When developing an effective content marketing strategy, it's vital to first create content that answers your audience's questions. People ask all types of questions, on nearly every topic imaginable, and as you analyze what people are asking, you can spot trends that you can create content around. Think about it this way, the people asking questions about your industry are actually doing the work for you! Track these inquiries and answer them with useful content!

By searching for inquiries that include your targeted keywords, you can discover what people are asking about and create content that answers those questions. To make it even easier, you can title your content in the form of the very question people are asking. This gives your content the best chance to be found in the SERPs when someone enters that question.

## 3. Using An Editorial Calendar And Creating Content

Editorial calendars have been used to manage the publication of content since the very beginning. Just as traditional print publications have an editor who manages their calendar, your company should include a content strategist who governs an editorial calendar. This calendar is essential because a lot of content will be published on different dates and areas - including websites, social media profiles (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), distribution channels (YouTube, Slideshare, Vimeo), your blog, and more - the editorial calendar is a must-have.

An editorial calendar should be a guideline that helps plan your content publications out a year in advance. This should include all of the content that your business plans to publish; not only the date of launch but also the steps included in meeting those goals. Your appointed content marketing strategist or creative team needs to review



the calendar continuously and brainstorm for upcoming projects. This way, they can make adjustments based on the successes and failures of your content.

## 4. Optimizing Your Content For Search

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the process of making your web content “search-engine-friendly”. Search engines have advanced algorithms that reward content that is clear and user-friendly, and content that comes from a respected (or trusted) source.

For your content marketing strategy to succeed, you must understand the basic principles of content optimization. Every piece of content you create should be optimized for organic search; this includes written content, images, or video. In its most basic terms, SEO optimization helps make content appear relevant or authoritative to the search engine’s algorithm. If you correctly optimize your content, it will likely appear high in the search results.

## 5. Promoting Your Content Through Social Media

Once your content has been created, it’s time to focus on drawing attention to the piece from the largest, relevant audience possible. The purpose of content marketing is to engage customers with things they’re already interested in and searching for, often providing them creative solutions to their common challenges.

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**The purpose of content marketing is to engage customers with things they’re already interested in and searching for**

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Every business will have a unique approach to how it promotes content, based on the industry and customer profiles.

That’s why it’s important to decide what social media profiles are most relevant to your industry. To do this, take a look at your competition’s activity in social media and ask the following questions:

- What channels are they using?
- How many friends do they have on Facebook?
- How many followers do they have on Twitter?
- Are they working in blogs and forums? (If not, why?)

By leveraging social media, you can promote and circulate your content and put your brand in front of potential customers or new audiences.

## 6. Distributing Your Content

Distribution channels create more opportunities to deliver content to potential customers. While promoting your content through social media is all about generating interest around your content, distribution helps find different ways to get your content to appear in the search results.

To boost the distribution of your content, try repurposing it so you can reach a variety of channels. For example, you can take an existing article from your blog to create a video that will live on YouTube. Or, take talking points from an already created video, and produce slides that can be published to Slideshare.

Diversifying your distribution channels gives you the opportunity to fill the search results with all of your best content. In fact, a branded profile on Slideshare or YouTube might just outrank similar content on your website. If you implement a diverse distribution strategy for your content and

target the right keywords, your brand could potentially fill several slots on the search results page!

## 7. Nurturing Those New Leads

Lead nurture is one of the most important steps in a content marketing strategy because it capitalizes on all the work you've already done: you created great content, optimized it to be found online, promoted and distributed it to the right channels, and you've even gained leads. Real, live, and (hopefully) qualified leads!

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### Lead nurture is one of the most important steps in a content marketing strategy

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According to Gleanster Research, 50% of leads are qualified but not yet ready to buy. Think about that for a second - half of all the people that come through your digital door are the people you want to be working with. They just aren't ready yet. Now is your chance to build a relationship with those leads, growing their loyalty to you, and if all goes well, one day win their business.

## 8. Measuring Your Content Marketing Progress

To measure the success of your content marketing strategy, you need to set specific objectives. You can't fully grasp what's working and what's failing if you haven't established benchmarks for your content. Successful content should:

- Generate more traffic to your site.
- Attract new customer leads and/or sales.
- Help boost your brand awareness.
- Develop your online reputation.
- Encourage natural links and optimize search engine ranking.

All content you develop should work toward measurable business / brand goals. By both establishing your goal and measuring your efforts using analytics, you can be smart about each new effort; which will actually free you up to follow bold, creative ideas with confidence.

Follow these eight steps and build a culture of content marketing within your organization. The businesses that understand and follow these principles will be the ones who win over the next several years.



### Arnie Kuenn

*CEO | Vertical Measures*

Arnie Kuenn is an internationally recognized SEO and Content Marketing expert, speaker and author. He is the co-author of Content Marketing Works and author of Accelerate. Arnie speaks to and trains thousands of people every year all around the world. In 2006, Arnie founded Vertical Measures, a highly respected PPC, SEO and Content Marketing agency.

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## **Big Promises, Small Promises: Can Your Organization Keep Both?**

*Kerry Bodine*

JetBlue built its brand on being a different kind of airline. At a time when other US-based airlines were cutting leg room, eliminating meals, and charging for bags, JetBlue gave flyers room to stretch, provided free yummy snacks, and resisted financial pressure to nickel and dime its customers with fees.



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**Small promises, when broken  
again and again over time,  
can kill your brand by death  
from a thousand cuts**

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The airline seemed to know it had a good thing going. Its marketing team flaunted JetBlue's differentiated customer experience with cheeky ad lines like "Someone has to stand up for tall people." and "Trays. Knees. Never the two shall meet." They launched a series of videos showcasing the reactions of unsuspecting New Yorkers as taxi drivers tried to charge them for putting their luggage in the trunk, and hot dog vendors sold them tiny plastic cups of Coke.

But that's not all. One of JetBlue's most memorable ads simply read, "Not a tagline. A promise." Unfortunately, it wasn't a promise that JetBlue could keep.

In November 2014, JetBlue announced that it would be adding baggage fees and reducing leg room - and on June 30, 2015, the airline kept that promise to investors. I'm not a financial analyst, but it seems as though investors were initially bullish about the potential revenue boost JetBlue's broken customer promises would deliver; the stock price surged after the November 2014 announcement. But are customers sticking with JetBlue? The answer is questionable, as JetBlue's stock price has fallen sharply from an all-time high of nearly \$27 per share in September 2015 to roughly \$17 at press time.

Every Chief Marketing Officer should take heed of this lesson. When you make a big promise - the kind on which the character of your brand is built - will your CEO and Board of Directors have your back? Not tomorrow, not next week, and not next year - but for the life of your brand. Or will they shift their alliances, forgetting that it's indeed happy customers who create happy shareholders?

Marketers need to make their big promises thoughtfully and with a full understanding of the kind of experience the organization is prepared to deliver today and down the road. But marketers aren't the only people who make promises to customers.

Your sales agents promise that your product or service will deliver certain benefits. Your website promises that a specific car or hotel room will be available. Your delivery drivers promise to be there between 1:00 and 3:00pm. Your customer service reps promise to call the customer with an answer. Your wait staff promises to be right back with that pinot noir. Your Facebook links promise to change readers' lives in three simple steps.

Your organization makes thousands of small promises to customers every day. These promises flow naturally from your employees as they talk, email, or chat with your customers. And they're designed into all of your digital touchpoints. Your employees and partners - both those on the front line and those who work behind the scenes - make these small promises with good intentions and the sincere belief that they (or someone else in the organization) will deliver on them.

On some level, these small promises don't seem as important as the big ones. After all, they can't destroy your brand or alienate a large number of customers in one fell swoop. But these small promises, when broken again and again over time, can kill your brand by death from a thousand cuts. To complicate matters, they get lost in the bigger picture of customer interactions and transactions, which makes them nearly invisible to Chief Customer Officers or others trying to manage and improve the customer experience.

Here are three simple steps to ensure that your organization can keep its promises, both big and small:

## 1. **Set Realistic Expectations For Big Promises**

No one in an organization should work in a vacuum. The people making big promises (marketers, mostly) should be in constant communication with development, operations, and any other part of the



organization responsible for delivering on promises that form the backbone of the brand. Marketers should ask, “Are we prepared to deliver on this promise today? And if not, when?” United Airlines did this well in its September 2015 Hemispheres magazine: “Our fresh and healthy food menu is now available to United Club members and guests at all 22 United Club locations in our seven domestic airport hubs. By the end of 2015, the new menu will be available at all United Club locations in the U.S.”

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**Marketers should ask,  
“Are we prepared to deliver on this promise today? And if not, when?”**

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**2. Surface Organizational Awareness Of Small Promises**

It’s often hard for us to see our own bad habits, but as luck would have it, we generally don’t have a hard time noticing others. Take advantage of this human quirk by asking employees to point out when they hear their colleagues making (or designing, or developing) small promises.

Make the discussion of small promises a topic of weekly team meetings. Ask for examples of promises kept - but perhaps most importantly, ask employees to reflect on promises that they didn’t keep and why.

Did they simply forget to respond to that customer email? Or are there more systemic problems that keep them from delivering on certain promises on a regular basis?

**3. Keep Your Promises Through Greater Transparency**

In the days before Uber, I would often call for a taxi that never arrived. This left me stressed and sweating to find another way to get to my favorite restaurant across town - or worse, to the airport. Uber’s certainly not perfect. But the transparency that it offers into its driver locations, projected fares, and surge pricing makes customers perceive that Uber is keeping its small promises.

As you look at your customer interactions, determine if there’s any underlying data - like inventory or timing - that you could present in real time to further help you set realistic expectations with customers.

Don’t forget: Customers have long memories. Make sure the promises you make today, are ones you can keep tomorrow.




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**Make sure the promises you make today, are ones you can keep tomorrow**

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**Kerry Bodine**

*Co-author of Outside In | Kerry Bodine & Co.*

Kerry Bodine is an independent customer experience consultant and the co-author of *Outside In: The Power of Putting Customers at the Center of Your Business*. Her ideas, analysis, and opinions have appeared on sites like *The Wall Street Journal*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Fast Company*, *Forbes*, *USA Today*, and *Advertising Age*. She holds a master’s degree in human-computer interaction and has designed interfaces for websites, mobile apps, wearable devices, and robots.

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# Curing The New Marketing Personality Disorder: Be More Human, Less Analytical

*Geoffrey Colon*

The world is filled with process, efficiency, and order.

The overburden of technology in our lives and a world of connected devices have washed us over with a discipline we supposedly didn't have when life was less connected. But what if I were to tell you that all that order and efficiency is not what will make you successful as a marketer in the 21st Century? What if I were to tell you the illogical motivations of being human is what you should work toward enhancing?

Yes, I know what you're thinking, why am I telling you to be less efficient, less process oriented and less, um, digital and analytical in a growing digital world?

Because, with all this talk of digital transformation, marketers have become less human, more analytical, and less interesting. And when you're less interesting, you matter less to people, including your customers and potential customers.

Besides, machines can do analytics better than any of us will be able to do.

But empathy? That's more difficult for machine learning to mimic.

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## **Machines can do analytics better than any of us will be able to do. But empathy? That's more difficult**

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Right now, in our digitized world, people want to speak to more people when they are dealing with transactions. But that's not where we're moving toward at all. No, instead we're moving to a world full of bots, automated phones, fewer people, and less customer relationship management. Yet, for some reason, marketing people with 25 plus years of experience think more ads and more transactional language is a good thing.

Just ask your customers how they really feel about this.

I even discuss how ads don't matter anymore in *'Disruptive Marketing'*, where I share:

*"We have become accustomed to tuning out the advertising and marketing messages because we don't like interruptions in our habit-formed lives. And we're skeptical of the messages ads bring us. In fact, most of us feel ads don't bring much value to our lives, just more distractions."*

Yet, marketers think the more they learn about targeted ad buying, the better they will perform at their job. The more "modern" they will become.

What a croc.

Being a modern marketer means not getting caught up on the bandwagon of bright, shiny things. While many have rushed to be part of this digital transformative world, they are missing what customers want. They are transforming based on what they think will be best for their company or business using technology as their impetus, not what will be best for their customers.

This is a grave mistake.

While I love the ease of mobile payments, transactions that don't require people, and the ease of most digital customer experiences, I'm still a person. A human. And by design, we are pack animals that are social in nature.

We like people; we can't survive without others.

So why have modern marketers shunned what will make them stand apart and define the new century by becoming cold, calculated, and analytical to the point where creativity has been ostracized?

In this creative age we are crossing the chasm and entering, creativity is the main differentiator. Yet, more job postings for marketing roles have the dreaded and clueless terminology (sorry job recruiters but it's true) like "seeking data-driven digital native marketers."

If I could operate my own agency, here are the four characteristics I would look to hire for my firm. These are the four that will define the new century marketer. It would be good for all of you reading this to acknowledge this is a very different world from the one that exists now. But this new normal is going to destroy the old hierarchy and move away from tired marketer skill descriptions that are ageist, classist, racist and sexist by subliminal design.



## 1. Intellectually Curious

It's hard to teach people curiosity. But it is a learnable trait. The reason it's so important is that while many marketers tout the mantra you simply must be digital to be able to excel in this new era, that just isn't true.

What happens when the Internet of Things, Augmented Reality and Artificial Intelligence come into dominant play in our world? What happens then? A person with a fixed mindset believes labeling themselves digital is enough.

Those with a growth mindset and who are always open to experiences realize things change day-to-day, not year-to-year or quarter-to-quarter. How you think about the world around you based on the people in it will keep you sharp. Not how you think about honing your marketing skills. Marketing now is driven by customers, not marketers. What drives customers is what you should be focused on - how they change, evolve, and adapt.

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**What drives customers is what you should be focused on - how they change, evolve, and adapt**

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## 2. Always Listening

Marketing has always been ruled by loud and obnoxious men (there I said it), who just won't shut up. Amplification seems to be their rule of thumb. But in a two-way communication world, it pays more to listen than talk. To be more immersive than extroverted. Why? Because if you stay quiet long enough your customers will tell you what you're doing right and what you're doing wrong. Marketers who don't use this excellent user data to their advantage will simply be shunned, when customers move to a company that listens to them rather than (I'll say it again) advertises to them.

## 3. Empathetic, Inclusive, And Ethical

What do I mean by this? Well, you need to have feelings for customers currently. Not necessarily how they relate to you but how they relate to the world at large. Remember, even though you think about the company, product, solution, or brand you work for 100% of your day, they do not. They may only think about you 1 to 2% of the year! So be aware of what bothers them, what motivates them, why they turn to you or why they turn to your competitors. In addition, what bothers them depends on who they are; where they live; what their interests are for a living.

That's why inclusive teams of marketers are a must. I can't possibly understand what people different from me go through in their situations. But people who are different on my team that I've created can. Inclusivity is a big part of understanding the beautifully diverse world all around us. Also, while you think it doesn't matter how your company behaves outside of its core proposition, that is simply untrue with emerging audiences.

Generation Z will not support companies that pillage the Earth, don't stand for social justice, or don't believe in paying their female employees the same as their male counterparts. The role of marketer now is ensuring your company has an ethical compass. And not simply a compass for public relations purposes, but because those same customers believe you should give back to society and give back often!

## 4. Learns, Unlearns, And Relearns

If there are two terms I cannot stand in marketer verbiage it is "expert" and "native." What does it mean to be an expert in a world changing by the minute? The best marketers are constant learners even if considered deep experts in their field. The other term "native" makes it seem that because people have only lived in an era where the Internet existed they

are business savvy and people-friendly. This is false. In a world where customers want more socialization, face-to-face conversation, and feedback loops, natives who spend too much time building impersonal and efficient processes aren't paying attention to the fact we are ultimately coming full circle.

Personalization, humanization, experiences, and transformation; customers want all these rolled into one. A native doesn't necessarily

understand this because, in the pre-Internet era, things were way more humanized. You had to speak to people to get anything done or get questions you had answered. The fragmentation of communication channels has changed all of this. But if anyone, including natives, is open to learning, unlearning and relearning, then they can adapt and do just fine in this new normal.



## Geoffrey Colon

*Author, Communications Designer | Microsoft*

Geoffrey Colon is a Communications Designer at Microsoft for the Search Advertising Group (Bing) in Bellevue, Washington. He is also author of the 2016 book "Disruptive Marketing: What Growth Hackers, Data Punks, and Other Hybrid Thinkers Can Teach Us About Navigating the New Normal." He has appeared in several media outlets including The Guardian, The Huffington Post, Forbes, Cheddar TV, NPR and AdWeek. He hosts a weekly podcast Disruptive FM and is a contributor to Search Engine Journal and Brand Strategy Insider. He is a graduate of Lehigh University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism and Mass Communication. Follow him on Twitter @djgeoffe.

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# 5 Ways To Identify And Motivate Your Social Employee Champions

*Deirdre Breakenridge*

Because social media is 24/7, you need an army of employee champions to be your eyes and ears, and your passionate amplifiers. However, you can't simply tell people to be your social champions. You have to earn their ambassadorship.

The process begins with education and inclusion; getting your own employees to become a part of the social brand building process. Education and inclusion will get your employees understanding what you're trying to accomplish and how they can be an instrumental part. Suddenly, their communication will not be exclusive to what they do on the job, but it will extend outside of the workday and into their social lives.

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**Every person in the company has the potential to be a social champion - if they're a brand champion first**

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Here's the catch...

Every person in the company has the potential to be a social champion - if they're a brand champion first. I've had conversations with employees from small through to large companies who think you're only designated an employee social champion if you're in PR and marketing. This is absolutely not the case. Every single person, in every single department, can be a champion.

PR and marketing may spearhead an employee champion effort, but it requires many employees coming together. They all become part of your organization's vision and strategy, understanding the best ways to share information (especially through social media) and learning how they, too, can be a part of content sharing, engagement and exciting conversations about the company.

If you decide you want more employee champions, then you have to open up the opportunity beyond marketing and PR. It's time to go across the organization. You need to invite people to participate in your efforts.

Remember, these new champions may take on different ambassador roles. Some will be active listeners for your company, or maybe they will be conversationalists in social communities. Others may turn out to be great promoters and diligent sharers of content. But, no matter the level of their participation, the company actively builds more ambassadors in different communities and on a much larger scale.

One big question you need to answer is "how do you get your employees to be more interested in becoming social champions?" In many cases, your employees are already collaborating online in their social media communities. However, they're not choosing to participate with you or on your behalf. It's not because they don't like to use social media. On the contrary, it's because the company has not taken the time to educate or involve them. Now is the time to start.

## Here Are Five Ways To Identify And Motivate Your Social Employee Champions:

### 1. Survey Your Employee Base To Gauge Their Level Of Understanding, Perception And Use Of Social Media

Use open-ended questions to allow these champions to stand out when they answer questions about their personal social preferences. In many cases, you will uncover employees who want to learn more about social media for the company, doubling or even tripling your expectations.

### 2. Conduct Informal In-Depth Interviews With Potential Champions Who Stand Out In Your Company

Look in your customer service, sales, HR, IT, and other departments for hidden brand champions who want to share their thoughts about their own social involvement, conversations and engagement. Many employees will happily offer ideas and opinions on what your company could do to ignite deeper social media interactions with employees as well as with your stakeholders. Ask for an opinion and then be ready to take notes and make some changes.

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**Look in your customer service, sales, HR, IT, and other departments for hidden brand champions**

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### 3. Create Opportunities To Brainstorm Across The Organization

You can invite your employees to participate in different internal contests, asking them to submit their social media ideas on how they



would increase stakeholder engagement and community growth. You may be surprised at the creative ideas generated and which areas of the company actually produced those ideas. Brainstorming should not be limited to a small group of employees. Creativity may be where you least expect it, and small prizes also help to motivate and “sweeten the pot”.

#### 4. Use A Social Media Platform For Good Communication Within Your Own Four Walls

You can invite people to share, collaborate and innovate together on an internal social media platform. These platforms are designed for brainstorming, real-time discussion, and document sharing, etc. When people come together, there is synergy and learning. Not only will you find great ideas, but also employee champions who will take the time to guide and educate their peers.

#### 5. Recognize Or Incentivize Your Employees To Get Them Social For You

There are internal sharing platforms that help companies create healthy competition among employees who share approved social media messages. The more they share the company stories, the more they are recognized or rewarded. These rewards can include anything from nominal gift certificates to lunch with an executive. When you can

recognize and reward your employees for their efforts, you boost morale and get employees more eager to participate in your programs.

There are many ways to find and ignite the passion of your social champions, moving beyond your marketing and PR departments. You have an army of champions within your own four walls. You just need to educate and include them. Once you tap into their champion power, they will raise the participation bar and share the very best of what your company is doing. The most meaningful stories will be from the heart and in the words of your own people.

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**You have an army of champions within your own four walls. You just need to educate and include them**

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So now ask yourself...

What are you doing to find your social employee champions?

How are you educating them about your brand and including them in your social media programs?



## Deirdre Breakenridge

*Author & Trainer, CEO | Pure Performance Communications*

Deirdre Breakenridge is an author and the CEO of Pure Performance Communications. A 25+ year veteran in PR and marketing, she has published five Prentice Hall and Financial Times Press books including her latest titles, “Social Media and Public Relations: Eight New Practices for the PR Professional” and “Putting the Public Back in Public Relations.” Breakenridge speaks nationally and internationally on the topics of PR, branding, and social media. She is an adjunct professor at UMASS and Rutgers University. She is also a Lynda.com video author with three PR courses released in 2015 / 2016. Breakenridge has been blogging since 2007 and is the host of the podcast show, Women Worldwide.

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**Marketing shouldn't just be in the job description of your CMO - it must be at least 1% of everyone's job**

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# Your Marketing Team Is Larger Than You Think

*Dana DiTomaso*

How can multi-location businesses deliver consistent but customized brand experiences at scale? The people working in each of your locations have the potential to be a part of your marketing team - can you trust them with your brand?

Consistent brand experiences establish trust and turn customers into loyal, engaged supporters. People crave consistency from interactions with companies and organizations. They don't like surprises - they like comfort. If your business has multiple locations, brand consistency is an even more important trust signal. For example, when a person walks into a Chipotle, they already have an expectation of what their brand experience should be. If that experience falls short, they're unhappy with Chipotle the brand, not just that one Chipotle location.

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## **Consistent brand experiences establish trust and turn customers into loyal, engaged supporters**

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Starbucks is the gold standard of brand consistency. This is their brand mission: "To inspire and nurture the human spirit - one person, one cup, and one neighborhood at a time."

Starbucks has many brand touchpoints and standards that are managed by a corporate team. How the pastries are arranged; where in the cafe the newspapers are stacked; when it's the right time to ask for a customer's name; how long a barista spends in training - these things are consistent between all Starbucks locations. Individual locations are required to follow brand guidelines, but they are also empowered to carry out the brand mission and cater to the neighborhoods they operate in.

Starbucks understands that coffee is important to people, but they put more emphasis on providing strong brand experiences at each of their locations. There is a Starbucks in my hometown of Edmonton, Alberta that hosts a board games night once a month. Why? To encourage community interaction, and of course,

more evening business. It makes sense because their mission is about nurturing and neighbourhood involvement. No one from head office called them and said, "have a board game night". The team at this location lives the Starbucks' brand promise and knew that a board game night would make sense for their patrons.

That is how you end up with a marketing team that's larger than you think.

This isn't an easy process. How do you give freedom and flexibility for your locations to adapt to local conditions and habits, while still supporting and strengthening your brand consistency? Comprehensive brand training and clearly communicated standards are required, but not everything can be rigid. Trusting your locations to deliver spontaneous on-brand extensions is the key. Spontaneity can establish a deep and lasting connection with current and potential customers.

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## **Trusting your locations to deliver spontaneous on-brand extensions is the key**

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Trader Joe's turned a snowstorm and a phone call into a memorable brand experience.

The trick here is that the person on the phone didn't have to say, "Oh, hang on, I'm gonna check with my manager. Oh, hang on, I'm gonna check with corporate." They said, "Yes, we'll do it. No problem. We have delicious salt-free tortilla chips! Oh, and hey, by the way, it's free." Imagine each of your locations knowing your brand so well that in the moment, they can make smart, spontaneous decisions like that one with confidence.

There are two major keys to building this kind of experience - communications infrastructure and trust.



When is the last time you spoke to someone working on the floor at one of your locations? What about the last time your store managers in the same city talked to each other about common issues or successes? This might seem like a daunting task, but it is a valuable exercise in strengthening your brand across your multiple locations.

Maybe you have an antagonistic history with some of your locations. Perhaps they resent being told what to do because they know it isn't working, and they feel like their concerns about first-hand experiences are not being heard. In order to develop collaboration-based marketing, you need to have strong relationships with your locations. If your corporate management style is very top-down, this method will likely not work. Top-down direction doesn't play well with location empowerment. Brand empowerment is not about asserting control over every interaction. You must establish the framework for a strong brand experience and then encourage locations to personalize individual customer interactions within that framework.

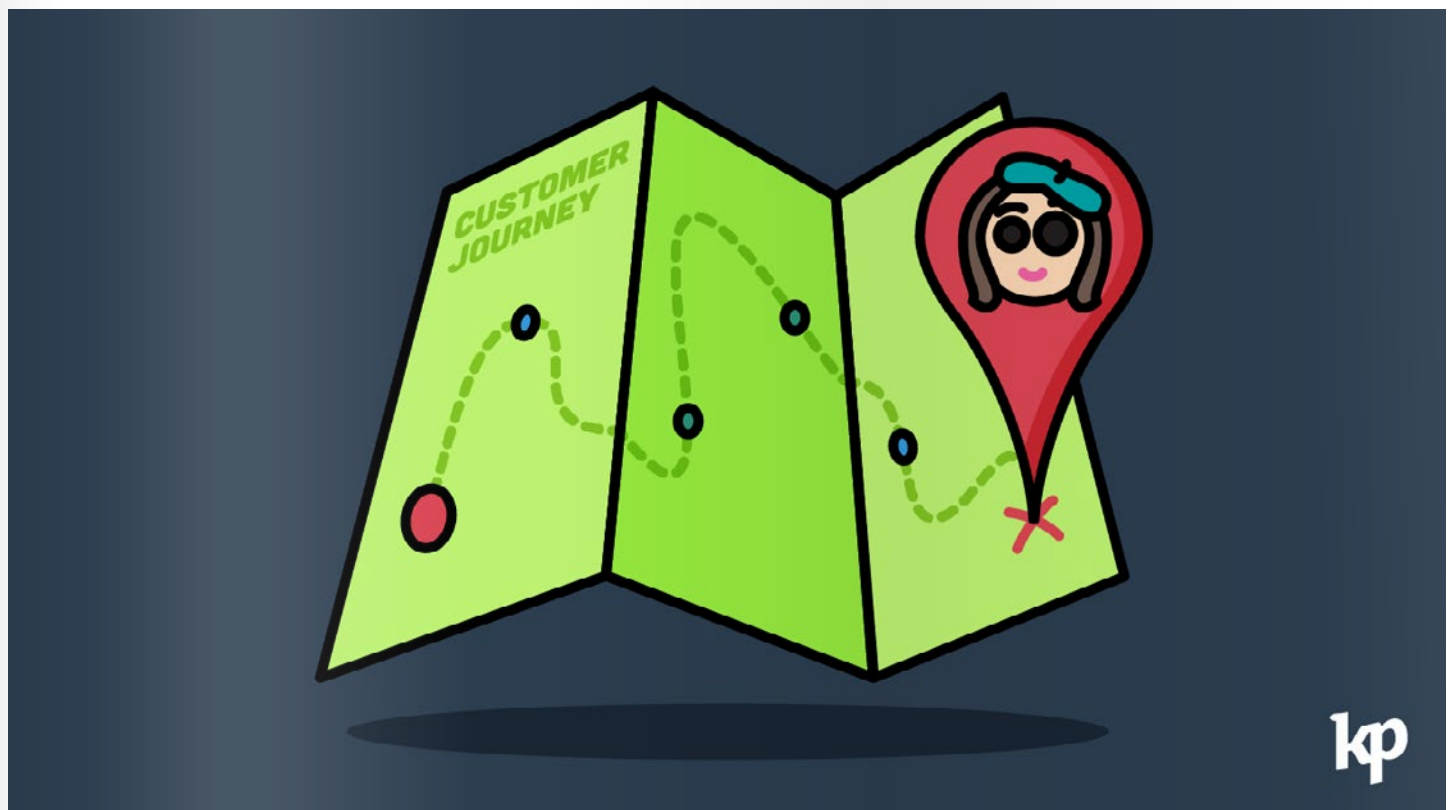
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## In order to develop collaboration-based marketing, you need to have strong relationships with your locations

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It's helpful to investigate customer journeys to identify the points where brand extensions can happen. You'll learn whether or not your brand guidelines currently have a foundation that locations can build on to deliver unscripted, but on-brand, customer experiences. Again, remember to go beyond a top-down approach - ask people working in your locations to contribute their customer-facing knowledge to this endeavor.

A real-time communication solution between your corporate marketing team and your locations, such as 'Slack', can have a significant impact on your business. Email doesn't provide a real-time, engaged experience the way a company-wide chat



program does. A real-time communications tool also makes reacting to current events more consistent across your entire brand. Imagine your individual locations comparing stories and helping each other get better without you having to guide every moment. Sharing best practices, successes, and failures becomes easier because everyone will see your conversations and learn from shared experiences.

You can dig further into real-time communications by integrating a tool such as 'Zapier' into your Slack channels. For example, Zapier could capture any tweets made within a certain radius of a location that mention certain keywords, such as "cell service" or "bank", and push it to the Slack channel for that specific location so they can respond if needed. Your CRM should also become more robust - if you have a customer's email address, you can use 'FullContact' to associate that email to social profiles and monitor for poor sentiment along with the product or service your company provides. Don't wait for an angry customer to call you out on social media before taking steps to fix their issue.

When you strengthen communications and empower more location-based employees to contribute, your marketing team is better prepared to scale. If you have a small team managing your social, each member of that team is subject to Dunbar's number. Your ability to engage and understand your biggest

fans is limited by the number of people on your team. If you allow your individual locations to get involved in social media, you can scale Dunbar's number - 150 people can become 15,000 people. By decentralizing communications and social media, you open up the possibilities of how many people your company can engage with meaningfully.

This entire concept requires a great deal of trust. If you already know you can't trust the people working in your locations, fix that first. Your brand voice needs to serve as a basis for your hiring decisions - like Starbucks does. It's much easier to have your employees manage your brand properly if your values resonate with them.

Marketing shouldn't just be in the job description of your CMO - it must be at least 1% of everyone's job. Everything you do needs to be on-brand - specifically hiring and training, because you need to provide the right resources to establish trust for location-specific, spontaneous brand extensions.

This does not happen quickly. Create one-year, five-year, and ten-year plans that are tied to the goals of strengthening your brand and growing your marketing team across all of your locations. If you unlock marketing on a local level as well as a national or international level, while maintaining a seamless brand experience throughout all customer interactions, you will win.



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## Dana DiTomaso

*President & Partner | Kick Point*

Dana is President & Partner at Kick Point, where she applies marketing into strategies to grow clients' businesses, in particular, to ensure that digital and traditional play well together. With her deep experience in digital, Dana can separate real solutions from wastes of time (and budget). Dana was born in a steel mill but overcame these humble beginnings to move to Edmonton in 2010. In her spare time, Dana is the past-president of the Advertising Club of Edmonton, co-leads Ladies Learning Code Edmonton and is the weekly technology columnist on CBC Edmonton AM. She also enjoys drinking beer and yelling at the Hamilton Tiger-Cats.

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# Killer Ideas Without Tears

*Chris Lewis*

So, where are you when you get your best ideas?

At work, with others, trying hard?

If you're like 90% of the leaders I recently interviewed, you will be answering no.

Most people have their best ideas on their own, away from work, when they're not trying. So much for that gravestone of creativity, the brainstorm.





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**Creativity feeds on positivity and optimism. Cynicism is like green kryptonite**

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If the ideas come when you're not trying, we know the subconscious of the brain plays a big part. Yet, this is precisely what we ignore when consciously trying to think about a solution to a problem. Our brains are great at working on problems even when we're not aware of it.

There are those who think creativity is about new ideas, but really, there's no such thing. The best ideas have been done before, so creativity could be described as 'the history which you are ignorant of'. This is where reading is a key skill. Knowledge of the world and an ability to create are linear relationships.

The research part of the creative process is often foregone because, well, frankly it's a bit dull. Yet, hindsight is the parent of insight. Its purpose is twofold. Firstly, it educates you about the challenge and secondly it allows you to convince the recipient. It also makes the subsequent stages more efficient. It is the foundations upon which the house of creativity is built. A creative strategy without research is merely an opinion. Sadly, an arrogant and ignorant opinion sold with force of character alone can still convince people.

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## **A creative strategy without research is merely an opinion**

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The research conducted for 'Too Fast To Think' taxonomized the process into the 4I's - Induction, Incubation, Inspiration and Ignition. The ratio of each diminishes in the ratio 40/30/20/10. This suggests the majority of the creative process (Induction and Incubation) is not consciously thinking about the problem. It's about research and then it's about doing absolutely nothing. So when you're doing nothing, you really are doing quite a lot.

If the ideas verifiably come when we are doing something else, we must learn to trust our minds to come up with the solution. The alternative is self-accusatory creative block or white page syndrome. This is just the evidence of the analytical mind at work - comparing, contrasting, analyzing and criticizing. It can be brutal.

If creative provenance is subconscious, then that tells us it's coming from the synthetic, conceptual or right brain process. Our exact state when we are subconsciously preoccupied with routine tasks.

If we allow ourselves this space at all, we don't take it seriously. Mostly, we allow ourselves to be constantly interrupted. Research suggests the average business user in the United States sent and received on average 121 emails a day in 2014, and this is expected to grow to 140 emails a day by 2018. If we assume a 10-hour day at work, even at today's levels, that's 12 an hour or one every six minutes. The number of worldwide email accounts is expected to grow from over 4.1 billion in 2014 to over 5.2 billion by the end of 2018. The total number of worldwide email users, including both business and consumer users, will increase from over 2.5 billion in 2014 to over 2.8 billion in 2018.

Interestingly, email is still not the most frequently used communication. WhatsApp has recently eclipsed SMS messaging with the company handling a whopping 30 billion messages every day from 800 million users. SMS (texting) is around half this number and declining.

When we allow interruption on this scale, we allow ourselves to be dragged back into the left-brain analytical process. You may enjoy looking at Ten Cats That Look Like Hitler, but at what cost, if you lose your epiphany? No ship can dock until one has sailed.

It gets worse. There's evidence to say that the overload also forces us to filter news. Thus you may hear that your Cousin Kevin



in Coventry has baked a cake. You may also hear of every terrorist attack on the planet. You will also hear of scandal and corruption and death and famine. You will not hear that some diseases have been almost eradicated however, or that the numbers of those living in poverty are declining.

Most people hearing the news perceive a world that has become immeasurably worse. The converse is true. Steven Pinker has written extensively on this in 'The Better Angels of Our Nature'. Why does this matter? Because creativity feeds on positivity and optimism. Cynicism is like green kryptonite.

Perhaps the worst possible filtering of all is that which deprives us of other people's opinions. No platforming has removed those perceived to be beyond the pale. Social media has allowed a thousand flowers to bloom provided that there are no tall poppies.

So how do we improve the creative process painlessly? Firstly, by recognizing all competence follows preference. We get good at stuff we like. We, therefore, have to learn to like the solitude because this is the provenance of deep insight.

This is Friedrich Nietzsche: "I go in solitude, so as not to drink out of everybody's cistern. When I am among the many I live as the many do, and I do not really think; after a time, it always seems as if they want to banish me from myself and rob me of my soul."

If we try to think without tapping into our subconscious, then creativity becomes like fire - a good servant but an evil master. When we become victims of creativity, we face burnout and ultimately the destruction of our creative potential. Creatives are paid to think. To do this sustainably, we need to recognize and harness the power of the subconscious.

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**Creatives are paid to think.  
To do this sustainably, we need  
to recognize and harness the  
power of the subconscious**

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We know this but we don't practice it, and we definitely don't teach it. It's time that creative people stopped with the self-flagellation and started to trust themselves. We can start by understanding the creative process and affording it the same status as Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths. This is not new thinking. It was one of the greatest scientists Einstein who said that: "Creativity is the residue of time wasted."

After all, if we can't access our own potential to solve problems, what hope does our planet have?

Our future depends on it.



## Chris Lewis

*Author, Grand Enchilada (CEO) | LEWIS*

Chris Lewis is author of 'Too Fast To Think', and the founder and CEO of LEWIS, one of the world largest digital communications agencies with 27 offices worldwide. He is a skilled media trainer who coaches senior politicians, business people and celebrities. Chris works closely with Chelsea College of Arts and the Royal Society. He is also a published author and journalist who has written for the Financial Times, Daily Telegraph, The Times and The Guardian. Since founding LEWIS in 1995, it has grown at an average rate in excess of 25 per cent per annum to become one of the largest marketing and communications agencies in the world.

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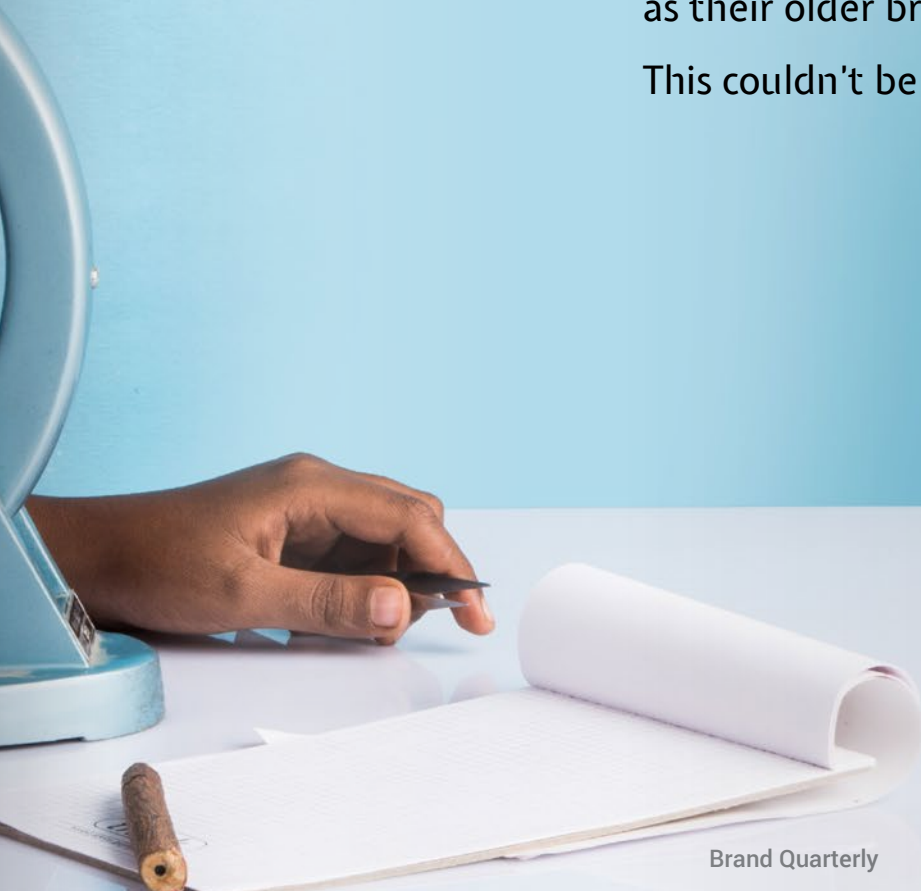
# After The Optimism: How Cynicism Is Shaping Generation Z

*Allison O'Keefe Wright*

The marketing field has long had an obsession with Millennials - worrying about them, over-analyzing them, complaining about them, even making fun of them. As such, the world has been indoctrinated with the concept that young people are overly optimistic, trophy-getters with an unrealistic view of fame, future success and the value of their own opinion.

Problematically, many marketers have a habit of assuming that the insights about one generation of youth apply to the next... that attitudes have more to do with life stage than anything else. This mentality would lead many to assume that Gen Z is approaching the world with the same unabashed optimism and inflated sense of self as their older brothers and sisters.

This couldn't be more wrong.



Sure, there are many attitudes and behaviors that do have to do with life stage, and there are also many ways that Gen Zers act like “Millennials on steroids”; taking on certain key traits like digital nativity and diversity, and even stepping them up to a whole new level. However, there are also many ways in which Gen Zers are in fact Anti-Millennials, and at the heart of these differences is a complete reversal of Millennials’ trademark optimism. Gen Z is a generation that is not only more realistic; they are downright cynical.

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## **Gen Z is a generation that is not only more realistic; they are downright cynical**

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### **A Cynical Take On Life**

It is not very surprising that Gen Z has such a cynical take on life. A significant percentage are being raised by Gen X parents - latch-key kids with a snarky take on society, that watched in horror as the world chose to obsess over the blue-sky youngsters behind them. The younger set of Gen Z is coming into the world with Millennial parents - Millennials who have now realized that believing in their own ‘greatness’ does not actually result in fame and fortune.

So, yeah, Gen Z’s cynicism isn’t that surprising. But, surprising or not, their cynical take on life, on their potential future and the world at large is at the heart of many of their generation’s defining traits. Here are a few of the Gen Z attitudes and behaviors driven by their “glass is three-quarters empty” POV.

### **Specializing Early**

Millennials, as kids, were known for their “over-scheduled” lives - they had more opportunities at their avail than any

generation before, and this made them a generation that revered eclectic passions and people with a diverse portfolio of hobbies and experiences. Gen Z is no less scheduled. In fact, their days may be even more regimented, but while their extra-curricular options remain varied, many are choosing to transfer more eggs into one basket at an earlier age (or their parents are making the transfer for them).

With more pragmatism seeping into activity selection, Gen Z does not see the point in spending time on something unless they are among the best at it. Playing softball because you enjoy the game and the camaraderie? Come on; you haven’t made the travel team yet, and you are in third grade! Time to put more emphasis on lacrosse... At very early ages, Gen Z is working hard to figure out the avenues in which they excel, and focusing their full schedules accordingly. It’s a rough world; don’t waste your time on things that won’t give you a leg up!

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### **Seeking Passions That Pay**

Aligned with their early specialization, is Gen Z’s increasing appreciation of the side hustle. As youth, Millennials were a generation that was highly focused on passion simply for passion’s sake. As the first generation reared on social networking, they strove to project their many interests to the world and used these passions to present their personas. Gen Zers also want to find a passion they can pursue, that they can both excel at and enjoy.

The difference is Gen Z wants to make sure their passion PAYS.



They have seen the impact that a weak economy has had on their parents. They have watched as smart millennial relatives graduated from top universities only to move back home and remain jobless for a year or more. They still believe in the dream of living your passion and loving what you do, but their pragmatism and cynicism remind them that this just may never happen. As such, they are focusing very early on developing a plan A, B, or even C. They don't want to leave their future up to chance. If their ultimate passion isn't profitable, they know they'll need to find a side hustle that is.

On the flip side, some even acknowledge at an early age that they have skills that may support them better financially than their dream will, so they plan to take the stable route - to become an accountant - while keeping their photography app going as the side hustle until it can really pay. It's all about multiple streams of wealth to gain true financial freedom!

## **They Do NOT Agree That Everyone Is Cool**

Young Millennials were known for their all-accepting, "shades of grey" mentality. As teens they scoffed at Gen X's cliquish approach to growing up and led the charge on "geek chic", and an "everyone is welcome" point of view. They were pro-soldier, anti-war and passionately proclaimed their personal beliefs while simultaneously believing that those of a differing inclination were absolutely "right" as well.

Gen Z, not so much.

While they do embrace the belief that everyone should strive to be an individual and, like Millennials, their digital lifestyle offers access to the pursuit of a broad array of interests and perspectives - they don't actually believe that everyone is cool.

They are more siloed in their take on social interaction, while simultaneously having a diverse array of tribes. They certainly don't prescribe to the dated Gen X concept that one clique is "the cool clique" and that everyone else should die trying to get into it, but they also don't believe that everyone should be invited to everything. You can have a wide array of friendship groups, just don't expect all your groups to get along, or to even notice that the others exist.

Gen Z is ushering in the return of cool and totally uncool... it's just a more eclectic version. Unlike Millennials, Gen Z does believe that "this" is cool and "that" isn't. They also believe that "this" is right and "that" is wrong - they live in a political world that makes it nearly impossible not to feel this way.

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## **Gen Z is ushering in the return of cool and totally uncool... it's just a more eclectic version**

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## **They Don't Assume You Want The Key To Their Diary; They Aren't Gonna Give It To You Anyway**

Gen Z is pretty grossed-out by the approach that Millennials took when it came to social networking. They've not only heard the war-stories of college acceptances and job offers rescinded due to inappropriate online behavior, but they also don't support the idea that every detail of one's life is worth sharing.

They acknowledge that both their mom and their grandmother are online (and they sometimes wish they'd shut up there!), so they aren't exactly dying to showcase their wildest nights for all to see. Additionally, their cool/uncool take on social dynamics means that they don't think their every idea needs to be broadcast for the world to see - they just want the RIGHT people to see them.

Gen Z prescribes to a significantly more curated and “walls up” approach to social networking. This doesn’t mean they are shrinking violets. In fact, they are really happy to share raw, unfiltered details publicly. They just prefer channels like Snapchat that allows them to broadcast certain ideas to certain people only.

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Additionally, they are so concerned that the version of themselves that they project to the world is a cool one, that they reserve only the “best” images/videos on channels like Instagram and keep the fun, stupid, “I look like a total wreck” moments to channels like Snapchat where they’ll disappear promptly. Why on earth would you want that horrific post-party image of yourself preserved for all posterity? If it’s funny, send it. But make sure that thing vanishes quickly. In some ways, Gen Z’s digital stories are more reminiscent of Gen X’s high school tales - there was one Polaroid, but I ripped it up, so maybe it happened, maybe it didn’t.

## They Are More Tempered In Their Expectations Of Happily Ever After

As seen in the examples above, Gen Z’s cynicism runs deep. They do not believe everything will definitely work out, though they are apter than Millennials to believe that their own generation will solve many of the world’s problems. They believe you need to work extremely hard and they’ve got their guard up and are ready for a fight.

This more guarded perspective extends to their feelings about true love. Gen Zers are significantly less apt to believe in true love than Millennials. They have grown up in a world where divorce is a common reality, as is the increasing number of couples opting out of “the marriage thing” altogether. Most Gen Zers still want to find that perfect partner, but they don’t assume it will just happen. Once again, they have hope, but they aren’t counting on it.

Gen Z is still young. While much of the above would lead one to believe they are a somber, serious bunch, they are actually still fun-loving, crazy kids. Just kids who have witnessed a lot of hard, even scary, times in the world and they have had to cope with a healthy dose of “real” at a young age. As such, they are snarkier, more skeptical, and a bit less accepting. Hey Gen X, sound familiar?

Get ready for a generation of youth that won’t be so easy to hate.



### Allison O'Keefe Wright

*EVP, Managing Director, Research and Strategy | Open Mind Strategy, LLC*

As Executive VP, Managing Director, Research and Strategy at Open Mind Strategy, Allison consults major brands on positioning, product development and marketing. Allison has received global recognition for her expertise in the millennial market. She authored the book *D\_Code 5*, an investigation of leading edge youth culture around the globe, and ran research and planning divisions at both MTV and EMI (Capitol) Music, where young consumers, passion and fandom were focal points of many research endeavors. She is now increasing her focus on the next wave of youth consumers, Gen Z, and has worked with brands like MTV, iHeart and ESPN in cultivating a deeper understanding of this generation.

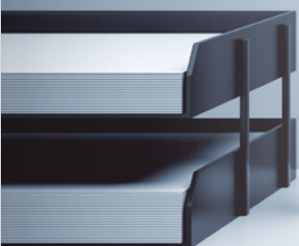
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**Many B2B companies see themselves as a different animal than consumer-facing brands. But they're not**

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## The B2B4C Evolution: Building Relevance With End-Users For B2B Brands

*Tony Gardner*

B2B rules are changing, lines are blurring, and the business models that once fueled B2B growth are no longer producing the same results. With a primary focus on selling to intermediary customers, many have lost touch with the end-user, which can lead to commoditization.

The solution?

Evolve to a B2B4C model, which emphasizes a healthy obsession with the market and end-users.



Companies that embrace this role can rapidly transform from a commodity supplier to a strategic partner, and drastically increase their value proposition. The ultimate goal is to progress even further and become an indispensable ally to their customers - and *their* customers.

This shift requires a deeper understanding of what a brand is, and isn't. It's not the logo or the company name. A brand is your promise, value, people, products, services, and experiences. It should create an emotional connection with consumers, while will lead to engagement and loyalty. Without this connection, growth will remain elusive because the brand will be just one of many in the intermediary's crowded portfolio.

## Owning The End-User Experience

B2B companies have often dismissed brand relevance and customer experience as the concerns of consumer-facing brands, the ones that favor primetime TV spots and artsy social media campaigns. But the new reality in this commoditized environment is that becoming relevant to end-users will define B2B success. It is one of the fastest routes to sustainable B2B growth, creating stickiness and paving the way for new opportunities.

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## Becoming relevant to end-users will define B2B success

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It's also important to realize that becoming relevant to B2B customers is powered by the same four forces that drive consumer relevance - customer obsession, pragmatism, inspiration, and innovation.

The most relevant B2B brands possess a steady focus on the customer; they push themselves to earn and re-earn customer loyalty across many different channels by

leveraging market insights, innovation, and engaging customer experiences. They know that if each customer interaction is a meaningful, brand-building, business-expanding experience, they will be able to ward off the pressures of commoditization.

The last few decades have produced a handful of highly recognizable B2B2C successes. Intel famously used this approach to make itself one of the most important names in computing. The brand appeal of Intel's processor and performance rose above the PC brands, driving consumer preference for anything with "Intel Inside." BASF, which put itself on the consumer-awareness map with its "We don't make the things you buy - we make the things you buy better" ads, certainly demonstrated B2B4C orientation.

The cotton and, more recently, the glass industries are also great examples, each adopting a B2B4C approach to revitalize their categories and renew their relevance as new competitors entered the market. The award-winning "Cotton, the fabric of our lives," and Owens-Illinois' "Glass is Life" campaigns are benchmarks for using marketing to connect directly with consumers. Both drove new awareness and interest for the products by directly providing the facts to consumers in an appealing way.

So what holds B2B companies back from the B2B4C transformation? Interestingly, it's doubt and misperception. Many B2B companies see themselves as a different animal than consumer-facing brands. But they're not. It's just a matter of positioning, mindset and point of view.

Procter & Gamble, for example, is a large and successful B2C consumer packaged goods company. Yet, in many ways, it is similar to large B2B companies. It is just as asset and capital intensive as any manufacturer. It sells through a variety of channels and intermediaries to get its products to end-users. So what makes it one of the most



successful B2C companies? Obsession with the consumer, and the intermediary customers' businesses. P&G's outside-in orientation ensures its offerings are driven by demand signals, unmet needs, customer experiences, and new opportunities. It markets to both its direct customers and the end consumer, which has made it an indispensable ally to each.

The path for B2B brands to become indispensable must include a renewed urgency for market research, consumer insights, actionable analytics, coupled with a rich innovation pipeline and advanced commercial skills. B2B businesses that lean into this B2B4C approach will be rewarded with robust growth.

## The Roadmap To Relevance

Does that mean that B2B companies need a fundamental shake-up in their thinking? Often, it does, or at least a reinvention of their business processes.

Many companies still rely on relatively dated business models, developed in an era before technology's fluid economy made disruption a daily occurrence. They harken back to times when B2B companies built fortunes by making products to stock or order, or churned out millions of the things they knew their customers would sell. In short, they made what they liked to make. The less variation in product, the better. Longer runs with minimal changes led to optimal manufacturing

metrics. But to be relevant today, B2B companies must be both highly efficient manufacturers and consumer advocates, who possess a deep understanding of customers' preferences, behaviors and motivations.

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## To be relevant today, B2B companies must be both highly efficient manufacturers and consumer advocates

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This move often requires a company to ask itself tough questions. For starters, what business are you in, and what could or should you be in? What friction points exist for your customer's customer and how can you help? What kinds of company orthodoxy must be overcome to build a new roadmap?

In short, gaining brand relevance means becoming an outside-in company, not one that functions inside-out. It calls for the ability to step back and objectively size up the market, find the gaps and emerging opportunities, and then fill them. Companies that embrace end-user obsession, ruthless pragmatism, distinctive inspiration and persistent innovation will become more relevant. Even indispensable. It's what makes the difference between a brand that's one in a list of commodity providers, and one that consumers ask for by name.



### Tony Gardner

*Senior Partner | Prophet*

Tony is a senior partner in Prophet's Chicago office and an expert at sparking growth in global consumer goods, packaging and industrial manufacturing companies. Before joining Prophet, he was the chief commercial officer at Libbey Inc., one of the world's largest glass tableware companies, and held the same post at Owens-Illinois, a global leader in glass packaging. His extensive consulting experience includes Accenture, where he specialized in innovation, brand management, and strategy, defining billions in growth opportunities for food, telecom and technology companies. He also spent six years in finance and marketing at Procter & Gamble.

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Running a successful, impactful campaign is a talent that comes with years of experience

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# CMOs Share Their Secrets To Building Successful Marketing Campaigns

*Josh Steimle*

Nike's "Just Do It" or Dove's "Real Beauty," are just two examples of unforgettable campaigns any marketer would dream of adding to their portfolio. But running a successful, impactful campaign is a talent that comes with years of experience.

While doing research for '*Chief Marketing Officers at Work*', I had the opportunity to ask 29 top CMOs how they put together great marketing campaigns. I would like to share with you some of the insights from the CMOs of GoDaddy, HireVue, and SurveyMonkey.

Editor's Note: Phil Bienert and Ada Chen Reghi of GoDaddy and SurveyMonkey, respectively, have moved on to roles at other companies.

## Localize And Customize

For global businesses like GoDaddy, former Executive Vice-president and CMO Phil Bienert explains the importance of customizing for the local audience, and the challenges in finding out what works for any given market.

“There’s no one thing, because there’s not any one campaign,” Bienert says. “If you look at the way we’re operationalizing marketing, at any one time, we’re doing hundreds and hundreds of things around the world.” He uses a number of markets around the world, where GoDaddy has localized their campaigns, as examples.

“I can point to the impact of social media on our marketing in Brazil, or I can point to some of the things we’ve been doing specifically with localized language in marketing in India, where they have multiple languages. Although Hindi and English are common, those regional languages are important to take advantage of. We’ve done some things with social and PR in Turkey,” he said.

In all, Bienert said that his team has seen success by connecting the dots across many touch points and focusing more on conventional advertising tactics such as radio, print and television.



Phil Bienert, former EVP and CMO at GoDaddy

“As we’ve been more explicitly connecting the dots between the addressable touch points and the math touch points with messaging and implicitly building campaigns to feed different parts, different stages in the funnel, we’ve seen those results. I’m happy about where we’re going with programmatic TV in those markets where we can do it, particularly in the US,” he said.

## Running Expert Virtual Events Then Repackaging Content Into Ebooks And Webinars

For HireVue, their target market segment is a little narrower than GoDaddy’s, as CMO Kevin Marasco shares, they mainly focus on reaching Fortune 100 companies.

“There’s a lot of regional and field marketing to go find those people versus a more broader-based digital approach that you’d normally do for small businesses or consumer marketing. We’re trying to find out how can we take some of the principles of digital and apply them to what’s historically worked for this high end of the market. There are more field events, and it’s more network-based,” he said.



Kevin Marasco, CMO at HireVue



As an example, Marasco talks about a series of virtual events that HireVue has created. “It varies across market segments, but we try to maximize reach while keeping our costs per marketing-qualified lead under fifty bucks. We blended some traditional webinar concepts with content marketing and built virtual events where we’ll get a group of subject-matter experts together - authors, bloggers, customers, a lot of whom are great brands - and have them talk on a topic.”

Using the events as a jump-off point, Marasco shares that they’ll then create content like an ebook or a webinar, then package and market it through social media and email marketing channels. Partners are then brought on to fund the project. The campaign has proved to be successful not just in terms of engaging with industry thought leaders, but also in generating revenue through sponsorships.

“It’s generated a ton of great content that’s ‘marketing on a shelf.’ We continue to market. It’s been great from a cost, economic, and reach standpoint and still drives some quality leads. Social campaigns would be a second example. Some have been more hands-on, like working with our outbound ADM team and empowering them with social tools where they’re not just doing blind emails and cold calls and things like that,” he said.



Ada Chen Rekhi, former VP of Marketing at SurveyMonkey

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## **It’s generated a ton of great content that’s ‘marketing on a shelf’**

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### **Using Search And Display Channels To Hyper-Target Customers**

At SurveyMonkey, former VP of Marketing Ada Chen Rekhi shared how she put together scalable marketing campaigns using surveys (of course). She explains that a lot of the expansion they’ve seen has been in search and display channels, and helping capture mid-funnel intent. “You have this idea, and you think you want to create a survey, but how do we show up in the right place at the right time when you’re looking for it? ...whether it’s a search result or a display ad ...and then, also target you with the right messages?” Chen Rekhi asks.

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### **How do we show up in the right place at the right time when you’re looking for it?**

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“Based on the contents of what you searched for or what parts of the site you browsed, what are the different messages we can show you later on? That and the expansion of our ability to hyper-target customers based off of the information we have about them have been huge areas of gain for us.”

On top of using search and display channels, Chen Rekhi also said that they’ve been looking more at social networks.

“Facebook is a great way for us to reach those customers. That’s been a huge win for us, and we’ve been learning quite a lot about how you engage with those channels, whether it’s through our mobile applications or to drive

a broader awareness of SurveyMonkey,” she said. She also uses one of their products ‘Question Bank’ as an example, which is tied to customer insights and decreases the friction in the decision-making process for users when they’re taking surveys.

“The second thing we’ve done besides Question Bank is our marketing campaigns introducing the concept of templates. If you’re trying to measure customer satisfaction, or you’re an HR leader of a small company and are trying to measure

employee engagement, there are preexisting templates,” she said and uses employment engagement surveys in partnership with the Society of Human Resource Professionals as an example.

“In addition to that, we can benchmark and tell you if forty-four percent of your employees said such and such, is that good or bad, relative to others? That becomes powerful because you’re not only measuring it but putting it into context.”



## Josh Steimle

CEO | MWI

Josh Steimle is the CEO of MWI, a digital marketing agency with offices in Hong Kong, China, and the US. He is the author of Chief Marketing Officers at Work, which includes 29 interviews with CMOs from organizations like GE, the Harvard Business School, Spotify, Target, and PayPal. Entrepreneur magazine recognized Josh as one of 50 Online Marketing Influencers To Watch in 2016, and data from social media research firm Leadtail recently ranked Josh #11 on their list of People Most Mentioned and Retweeted by CMOs.



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# How To Build A Strategic B2B Marketing Function

*Rachel Klein*

Once upon a time (and it may still be that time in your organization) the marketing function in business-to-business companies wasn't marketing in the fullest sense. It was, at best, sales support communications.

But as the B2B customer journey shifts away from one-to-one contact with a sales rep and toward an omnichannel path to purchase, marketers must shift, too.

To explore just how they're changing, I spoke with Julie Springer, CMO of TransUnion, the global information and risk solutions provider. She has recently reshaped her company's brand, and also its approach to marketing, and she shared a number of insights that should help any B2B marketer.

**Rachel Klein, for Brand Quarterly:**

*Where should you start when creating a B2B marketing capability today?*

**Julie Springer:** Start by thinking beyond marketing; consider the overall business strategy. What does the organization need to achieve? Answer that, and you'll know what your marketing organization should look like.

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## Start by thinking beyond marketing; consider the overall business strategy

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Additionally, you must plan ahead. Where is the company going? How can marketing help it get there? Think out 18-24 months, and start socializing your plan now to avoid surprises later.

And while it's marketing's responsibility to support the company strategy, you also need to push those who are responsible for P&L if you really want to help them achieve their goals. For instance, it's not unusual in B2B to simply be asked to fill requests: "This is my budget, and this is what I need from you." However, it's marketing's job to watch trends, interpret data and make recommendations based on that knowledge.

We may see engagement coming from a particular channel that the division leader doesn't, or notice that social activities are driving unanticipated revenue, and

therefore recommend a different strategy. We must stay on top of what's working, what's changing, and have consultative conversations with business leaders.

**BQ:** *So, how do you build a team of marketing consultants rather than order-takers?*

**JS:** Every person on my team must understand business strategy and how it translates to marketing.

Along with strategic expertise, I look for an attribute that transcends marketing. It's an attitude, a sense of urgency and entrepreneurial passion. I'll tell my team, "Pretend that it's just you and the division president you support. You're partners in a start-up. You're brainstorming in the kitchen, and you have ten bucks. What the hell are you going to do with it?"

Marketing leaders need to be able to think that way. If they have a passionate connection to the business and are conveying it, then they become a true strategic partner.



Julie Springer, CMO of TransUnion



**BQ:** *What other challenges does your team face?*

**JS:** First, there's the sheer number of channels and tools available to marketers (that's not a negative, it's exciting). Along with that goes an unbelievable need for and expectation of speed. Speed of execution, speed of results – those are huge challenges.

Then there's the realization (finally) in B2B that the customer is human, just like the rest of us. They're influenced by the magnificence of Apple or Netflix marketing and the like. And because they don't separate B2C expectations from their B2B lives, they won't settle for dry, functional marketing anymore – they need to be engaged. They expect the whole customer experience to be different.

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## **There's the realization (finally) in B2B that the customer is human, just like the rest of us**

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**BQ:** *In a large organization like TransUnion, how do you ensure marketing's consistent, productive impact across the entire company?*

**JS:** It helps when the organization is run via matrix, as ours is. We have lines of business that own the P&L, but our centers of excellence, including marketing, support them across the board. That prevents waste and, perhaps more importantly, ensures that the company has one voice, one sense of who it is.

**BQ:** *Doesn't "one sense of who it is" come down to brand? How do you create a unified brand culture?*

**JS:** You get brand synergy across the culture when you have a brand that resonates throughout it. That resonance is a must; because without it, you're left in a state of enforcement, which rarely works.

I'm in the enviable position of having relaunched a brand that is now adored internally. If I never walked back in this door again, it wouldn't matter because the brand is owned by all of our people, who feel as passionately about it as I do.

**BQ:** *How did you get that passion to catch on?*

**JS:** For starters, we didn't invent a brand and serve it up to employees. We uncovered our brand, like in an archeological dig. We teased it out of the bedrock, we dusted it off and helped package it for everybody at TransUnion. But it's what was already in their hearts, so they own it.

On top of that, our internal communications are scary good: prolific, consistent, and loud.

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## **We uncovered our brand, like in an archeological dig**

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**BQ:** *And people buy in?*

**JS:** Do they buy in? I have photos of employees mountain climbing while waving their TU badges, or flying video drones over birthday parties and having their kids hold up the TransUnion logo. You can't buy this sort of engagement.

And when your brand story completely resonates you can afford to be a little free with it, because people love it the way it is and don't want to damage it. It's like leaving your children under the watch of your siblings

- they may not do everything exactly the way you ask, but they try because they love your kids.

The same applies here; the key is unearthing a brand that your people love and want to protect.

## Three Steps To Creating A More Strategic Marketing Function

After talking with Julie, and reflecting on my own experience in B2B, three factors stood out in terms of building a more strategic B2B marketing function.

### 1. You're Not Building A Marketing Department - You're Creating A Strategic, Cross-Functional Organizational Asset

Hiring for state-of-the-art capabilities is required today, but it also amounts to the new table stakes. Marketing teams should excel first and foremost in business acumen and consultative skills, to ensure that marketing aligns with and contributes to business goals.

### 2. A Successful Marketing Function Requires A Solid Brand Foundation

You can hire for skills. But you must inspire for performance.

That's why discovering your true brand and nurturing a corporate culture around it is key to B2B marketing success, particularly among the new generation of movers and shakers (for more on this, see "Millennials and the New Push for Purpose in B2B Branding").

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## Discovering your true brand and nurturing a corporate culture around it is key to B2B marketing success

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### 3. It's As Much About Passion As It Is Process

All the analytics, marketing automation, and one-to-one segmentation in the world aren't going to supplant the very human, emotional dimension required to reach buyers in our consumerized B2B environment.

As a Google-sponsored study noted, while only 14% of B2B buyers "see enough difference between suppliers' ability to provide business value," most buyers can be moved to action when your marketing focuses "on moments of emotional intensity."

In short, it takes passion - on top of a thorough command of current best practices - to get to the heart of today's B2B buyer.



## Rachel Klein

*Director of Strategy | Avenue*

Rachel is Director of Strategy for Avenue, a Chicago-based marketing strategy and activation firm that partners with B2B leaders to transform their businesses and brands. She leads the development and execution of brand and go-to-market strategies, campaigns and messaging platforms. Rachel has worked with some of the world's leading companies, including Boeing, Experian, IBM, and Sun Microsystems. Prior to joining Avenue, she co-founded The Red Group, a B2B marketing consultancy. Rachel holds a BA in Marketing from Columbia, has been recognized with many industry awards, and is a frequent author on the topics of strategy, marketing and branding in B2B.

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## Mantras For Marketers To Live By

We're nearing the end of the year, which means it's time for the 2016 edition of your '50 Marketing Thought Leaders Over 50'.

Each of the Marketing Thought Leaders highlighted on the following pages, have a wealth of experience and knowledge to share; and have gained the respect of their peers through their words, actions and achievements, in print, in person and online.

Combining their well-deserved recognition with some added value for our readers, we asked each finalist to share their own Marketing Mantra, and let us know why they believe it creates better marketers.





Thanks to each of the 50 experts on this year's list, for taking the time to share your insights! And for those readers out there who would like to hear more from this fab 50, you can easily keep up-to-date with them by following our '50 Marketing Thought Leaders Over 50' Twitter List [HERE](#).

Remember - To make the list, a person must have been nominated. So, if there's someone you think should make next year's list, be sure to [stay tuned](#) for when nominations open next year.

So without further ado... please join us in congratulating:

**[Brand Quarterly's 2016 '50 Marketing Thought Leaders Over 50'](#)**



### Danny Sullivan

Founding Editor - Marketing Land & Search Engine Land

#### Always question and explore.



It's important to always be testing, always be watching, always be asking how something works with marketing, how it can be improved or what new thing you should be trying.



### Joel Comm

Chief Shenanigizer - Joel Comm, Inc.

#### "Do good stuff"

#### is my mantra for all things in life.

When we seek to bring value to the world around us using our passions, talents, skills, abilities and personality, without expecting anything in return, we can expect our good seed to return a harvest. When brands and businesses make delivering value a priority and not placing so much focus on ROI, they'll discover that the ROI occurs as a natural consequence.



### Shep Hyken

Chief Amazement Officer - Shepard Presentations

#### Always be amazing!



Teaching our clients to deliver amazing customer service (and CX) is all about delivering on our "mantra." We want to deliver amazing service to our clients, and we want to help our clients deliver an amazing customer service experience to their customers (clients, guests, etc.) as well as their internal customers (employees, team members, etc.). This has been our consistent message for 30+ years.



### Marsha Collier

Author | Futurist | Radio Host - The Collier Company, Inc.

#### Respect the customer!

#### Follow psychographics, not demographics!

You really can't make someone a loyal customer without making them feel a welcome user of a brand. Don't blow smoke; appeal with honesty and transparency. This means a marketer needs to partner with various departments to assure that what you're selling is what the customer wants. Find commonalities across generations to give your marketing a holistic and recognizable approach.



### David Meerman Scott

Marketing Strategist - Freshspot Marketing LLC

#### Educate and inform instead of interrupt and sell.



Many marketers steeped in the tradition of product promotion naturally feel drawn to prattle on and on about their products and services. But nobody cares. What people do care about are themselves and how you can solve their problems.







### Shelly Kramer

CEO - V3B | President - Broadsuite Media Group



**My marketing mantra is simple: Serve your customers. Focus on what they need, not what you sell.**



Understanding your customers, what drives them, what their pain points are, and who their target audience is, then helping develop strategies that genuinely help them be more successful, is what marketing is all about - that's service. That is not about selling them what you want to sell them. Don't lead with the sale, lead with the idea that great customer service leads to successful relationships.

### Jon Ferrara

CEO - Nimble Inc.

**Stop talking about your products and services. Talk about how you make others better, smarter, faster.**

Instead of talking about how great our company, products, and services are, we tell stories to inspire and educate others about how they can be great. If you "teach people to fish, they'll figure out you sell fishing poles." This results in other people telling our stories for us enabling us to become trusted advisors to our prospects, customers and most importantly their influencers.



### Robert Rose

Chief Strategy Advisor - Content Marketing Institute



**"Make your heartbeat match the heartbeat of the universe; your nature match nature" - J. Campbell**



Our goal as marketers is simple. It is to create and deliver value to customers - from the first time we meet, to the ongoing relationship we have with them after they purchase our product or service. If we can always match their needs and wants, with our goals, then we have a much higher chance of true, lasting success.

### Mark W. Schaefer

Executive Director - Schaefer Marketing Solutions

**Focus on trust, not traffic.**

Too many internet marketers are focused on "massive traffic" instead of building trust that leads to brand loyalty. We've become a bit complacent in that sense. Of course for some, there is a business case for "traffic," but for most of us, we need customers who stick around and actually take some action. To do that, we need to dig behind our dashboards for data that can produce real insights.



### Lee Odden

CEO - TopRank Marketing



**If you want your marketing to be great, ask your community, customers and influencers to participate.**



Customers are overloaded with information and mistrust ads. But they do trust peers, experts and influencers. By collaborating with industry and community experts with active networks, brands can co-create content that resonates, is trusted and inspires action.



### David Aaker

Vice Chairman - Prophet



**The best route to growth: go from “my brand is better than your brand” to subcategory competition.**



The best way to grow is to develop functional, emotional, or relationship customer “must haves” that create new subcategories and, as the exemplar, manage those subcategories to be winners and position your brand as the most relevant. Moving from brand to subcategory competition will require a mindset and tools that are different than “my brand is better than your brand” competition.

### Dr. Shawne Duperon

Founder - Project Forgive

**Take risks.**

**Grieve your inevitable mistakes, forge ahead.**

Smart business leaders take risks. When you stretch and take risks, you’re going to make mistakes. The game is to take ownership of a business choice that didn’t work out, grieve that decision and loss (forgiving yourself), which allows new solutions to emerge. When you don’t embrace the grief, you keep repeating the same mistakes over and over. Moving through a business loss catapults success.



### Jeff Sheehan

President - Sheehan Marketing Strategies



**Quite simply:**

**“People buy from those they know, like, and trust.”**



It is something that has been around since commerce started, and still extremely relevant today. I try to ensure that everything I do for myself or clients aligns with this philosophy, namely: 1. Creating awareness via media and FTF meetings to facilitate knowledge. 2. Having empathy for others and helping them to further admiration for what I do. 3. Instilling trust by nurturing relationships.

### Matt Sweetwood

U.S. CEO - beBee

**Social media is not just something you do.**

**To be successful at it, make it your lifestyle.**

Social media is a highly effective way for marketers to build brands and business. Once marketers realize that it isn’t just an occasional or daily activity but needs to be an integrated part of their lives and their business’ lives - they can start interacting in a way with customers and clients that is deeper, longer lasting and ultimately more successful.



### Tim Hughes

Co-Founder - Digital Leadership Associates



**In the connected economy we all need a personal brand - this is not a tool but a change in behaviour.**



The buying process has changed - marketers and brands have to transform to meet this change. Marketing has to be less ‘me’ focused and more personalised to the customer. This means stopping the 1950s broadcast marketing (even on social media) and creating communities where customers can live and engage.





**Janet Fouts**

CEO - Tatu Digital Media | Author | Speaker | Corporate Trainer

**Be a compassionate marketer and lead with their truth, not ours.**

Compassion means we not only feel the pain of the people in our markets, but we honestly wish to help them resolve the issues causing that pain. Listening to what they need and really hearing it helps us deliver marketing and services from a mindful, considered place rather than trying to force them to take whatever we want them to have.

**Tiffani Bova**

Global Customer Growth & Innovation Evangelist - Salesforce

**The experience customers have with your brand is made up of either the intentional or unintentional decisions you make.**

Customer experience is the sum of all the various touch points a customer has with a brand. High performing organizations have tight collaboration between sales, marketing and service. Without it, decisions get made in a vacuum, and the disconnect between groups manifests itself in poor customer experience. Fix? Use technology to enable seamless collaboration, align the people and metrics and put the customer at the center.



**Gerry Moran**

Global Head of Social Media - Cognizant

**You need to 'build the plane and fly the plane' at the same time to be an effective marketer.**

Knowing how to 'build the plane and fly the plane' at the same time ensures successful marketers get their strategy off the ground to deliver results - while improving it along the way. Simultaneously building and evolving programs enables immediate business impact and the ability to stay on your customers' radar and improve results.

**Drew Neisser**

Founder | CEO - Renegade LLC

**Cut through.**

To truly cut through, marketers need to differentiate everything, from the purpose they embrace to the employees they hire, from the service they provide to the experience they deliver, from the stories they share to the influencers they engage. This commitment to uniqueness must be deliberate and relentless. Anything less is like trying to cut down a forest with a butter knife.



**Bernie Borges**

CEO - Find and Convert

**Know thy customer... Keep your message simple... Meet the customer where they are... Be useful.**

We live in the age of the 5-second attention span. The daily volume of messages thrown at the customer is unmanageable. The marketer must be clear on key message points, useful, human in the manner of interaction, and responsive to the customer. Engaging one-on-one (real or perceived) creates loyalty. This mantra must be lived by the marketer every day because loyalty must be earned every day.



### Teresa de Grosbois

President - Wildfire Workshops, Inc.



**Influence-based marketing has one simple truth: To get influence, you must give influence.**



In a world where only 14% of buying decisions are now informed by paid advertising, top marketers must master word of mouth and influence marketing. Relationships become key - relationships with your following, and with other influential people who have followings. Building relationships on the exchange of influence is a skill that has become to marketing, as breathing is to staying alive.

### Gary R. Schirr

Associate Professor - Radford University

**Just do it!**

**Try, observe, and then iterate or pivot.**

It is cheap - and quick - to fail online and on social media: a marketer can test a multitude of ideas quickly. Lean startup and design thinking processes should be applied throughout marketing. We should observe our target clients, customers, and audience to learn as much as possible about them; then we should experiment and learn. The goal is more good ideas implemented more rapidly.



### Deborah Weinstein

President - Strategic Objectives



**Big ideas deliver big results.**

**Bigger ideas deliver bigger results**



Be bold! In the words of the great German philosopher, Goethe, "Boldness has genius, power and magic in it." Marketers get limited by the medium or tools at their disposal. If you let big ideas lead and apply creative problem solving, with a moonshot approach, you and your clients will reap the reward.

### Alan See

Chief Marketing Officer - Alan See CMO Temps, LLC

**Tell them a story. A good story or strong symbol is more compelling than facts and figures.**

People don't think in terms of information. They think in terms of narratives. They focus on the story, and data merely comes along for the ride. Tap their emotion, if you're not speaking to the emotional side of the brain, you're not talking to the decision maker, emotion makes people take action. And remember, when you are telling your brand's story, you aren't spending money, you are investing.



### Susan Borst

Sr. Director of Industry Initiatives - IAB (Interactive Advertising Bureau)



**Only the curious have something to find.**



Being curious is the only way to stay relevant in today's ever-changing marketing world. This mantra suggests that without a strong desire to learn more about something, the very definition of curiosity, new ideas will simply not be found. A curious mindset allows for agility and potential innovation that can lead to better, more informed choices relative to your strategic goals.





**Cheryl Burgess**

CEO - Blue Focus Marketing

**Social employees are the new authentic marketing channel.**

Success in the digital bazaar depends on branding from the inside out. Social employees drive this process through authentic storytelling, helpful content, and community engagement. This works for two reasons: 1. social employees are more trusted than branded channels (and even CEOs!), and 2. employee engagement exponentially grows a brand's digital footprint.

**Kirby Wadsworth**

CMO - Bayshore Networks

**The Internet murdered the 4 P's. Now 4 T's create sustainable advantage; Trust, Tribe, Treatment, Transaction**

Building Trust = understanding target, honesty, and helping first. Building Tribes = Trust at scale. Treatment at every touchpoint must strengthen tribal bond. Transactions must occur naturally to keep focus on relationships. By measuring the Four T's, marketers avoid deathtraps of promoting features as benefits, selling on price, generating mountains of marketing bullshiteam, and spraying / praying spam



**Rebecca Lieb**

Analyst | Author | Advisor - Conglomotron LLC

- 1. Strategy before tactics.**
- 2. There is no marketing without content.**

Digital marketing brings with it a plethora of new media and new channels. Again and again, marketers feel the need to embrace - with great alacrity - the newest shiny object without first asking "why"? How will this fulfill business goals? How will we sustain the initiative? Measure it? What will we measure? This is where strategy comes in - addressing the 'why' before the 'what'.

**Jeff Swystun**

CEO - Swystun Communications

**Marketing has a 'golden rule', always ask yourself, "How would I like to be marketed to?"**

This keeps the focus on reciprocity. Marketing is a relationship, a two-way street, a process to achieve mutual benefit between people and brands. People expect marketing but do not want to be sold. They want to be valued, heard, and feel special. If you practice this golden rule, you will be that much closer to finding relevant truths that meaningfully and beneficially connect people and brands.



**Colin Shaw**

Founder | CEO - Beyond Philosophy

**Customer experience (CX) is the new marketing.**

This mantra makes marketers realize the experience the organization provides is the best form of marketing. The mantra implies customers see through the hype that marketing can create. In outlines that by marketing owning and leading the organization to provide a great customer experience, it will produce positive word of mouth that is the best form of marketing.



### Ardath Albee

CEO - Marketing Interactions, Inc. | B2B Marketing Strategist

#### Relevance is table stakes.



A focus on going beyond relevance insists that B2B marketers really know and understand their target markets; what they need, what they care about, and what they struggle with. Producing marketing programs that resonate will help to build more profitable relationships, as well as to validate contribution to downstream revenues. Both are critically important.



### Gordon Plutsky

Director, Applied Intelligence, Strategic Marketing Services - International Data Group

#### Successful brands think customer first, placing the customer at the center of everything.

By thinking customer-first companies will design successful products, and create campaigns that draw insight from customer data. Marketers must remember it is about the customer, not their brand. Effective marketing must meet the customer's emotional and rational needs to change behavior; true for B2C and B2B. Marketing's goal is driving sales, and you need to think customer-first to be successful.



### Joel Book

Sr. Director, Digital Marketing Insight - Salesforce

#### Smart marketing "serves" the customer by personalizing their product purchase and usage experience.



By using data, analytics and technology to deliver personalized offers and information to customers, smart marketers are accelerating sales and improving customer retention. Research from McKinsey & Company reveals that marketers who personalize the customer's product purchase and usage journeys increase revenue by 15% and improve customer satisfaction by 20%!

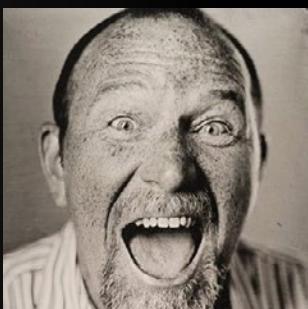


### Judy Shapiro

CEO | Founder - engageSimply

#### Great content engages. Great tech simplifies. But great marketing rests entirely on great execution.

The power of content is to engage audiences with passion and purpose. The promise of ad tech is to simplify marketing engagements. But the next innovation wave in ad tech will be all about next-gen execution technologies; inspiring and empowering marketers to create trusted and welcome user experiences - the gold standard for advertising excellence.



### Scott Abel

CEO | Chief Wrangler - The Content Wrangler

#### Content is a business asset worthy of being managed efficiently and effectively.



Factories use components. They assemble them into products using a repeatable, systematic process. This allows them to quickly adapt existing products for different markets. Marketers can mimic this approach by setting up intelligent content factories, designed to create and deliver customized content experiences automatically to various audiences on-demand. Intelligent content makes this possible.







**Debra M Ruh**  
CEO - Ruh Global Communications



**Brands need to engage with clients, use social media for positive social impact and focus on message.**



We work on cause marketing for disability inclusion and accessibility. We find brands often mix up social impact messages by moving too far away from their brand identity. Remember that 85% of videos viewed on Facebook are viewed with the sound off. Caption your videos to assure viewers can comprehend your message. Brands must engage clients on social media. Do not talk 'at' us - talk 'to' us!

**Laura Patterson**

President - VisionEdge Marketing

**It's the question "why" that makes your marketing count.**

To effectively measure the impact, contribution, and effectiveness of marketing on business decisions, you need to think in terms of markets, customers, and business priorities. However, each measurement must begin with you asking why and how. When you start asking these questions, you quickly make marketing's data more relevant, credible, and influential to both your customers and the business.



**Terry Brock**  
President | CEO - Achievement Systems, Inc



**Creating amazing, problem-solving solutions for others to continue growing.**



We grow by focusing on helping others. ...It's that simple.

**Mark Burgess**

President - Blue Focus Marketing

**Employee-driven content marketing is the new authentic branding channel.**

The shift to online marketing communications has put a new emphasis on inbound marketing and less on intrusive outbound models. With this, the value of storytelling and authenticity has skyrocketed. People don't want to talk to a brand; they want to talk to other people. Let your employees drive your content and advocacy efforts, and watch your brand value skyrocket.



**Adele Revella**  
CEO - Buyer Persona Institute



**Stop making stuff up. Act like a journalist, lose the scripts and ask buyers to reveal what matters.**



Buyers always prefer their peer networks and reviews for advice. As we compete for influence, we can't rely on creatively communicating our unique value. Through careful probing in unscripted 1:1 interviews, buyers will reveal why they abandon the status quo and what causes them to believe one option is better than another. By focusing on the levers buyers reveal, we earn their trust and business.



### Ken Rutsky

Consultant | Author | Mentor | Speaker - KJR Associates, Inc.



#### Context over content.



#### Their story, not ours.

Marketers today over focus on value and content, and sadly forget that the context of the market conversation between themselves and buyers exists in the customer's context, not theirs. Your product and solution are a minor character in your customer's story. To break through and lead, marketers must align their story and start and end their content in the customer's context, not their own.

### Eric Fletcher

CMO - Liskow & Lewis

#### TDSR:

#### Targets + Drivers + Solution = ROI

TDSR is a marketing roadmap. It begins with strategic identification of the Target(s) we want to reach. Research and data analysis inform as to the target's Drivers - the needs and aspirations likely to prompt action. This provides a basis for the creation of a Solution - from product / service innovation to specific deliverable. This kind of connection builds brand equity and generates ROI.



### Vince Ferraro

Managing Partner - C-Level Partners LLC



#### You don't have to be 100% right in marketing and branding so... fast speed, near perfect execution!



To use a sailing metaphor, you must often tack to the right answer for your business. You must use the wind to go from point A to B to C, etc. It is also true when you make branding and marketing decisions. My goal is to move teams to quicker with more frequent decisions. The idea being, accomplishments every three months are better for a business than waiting a year for 100 percent of a decision.

### Adrian C. Ott

Award-Winning Author | CEO - Exponential Edge Inc.

#### Next-generation CMOs lead with a 4 A's mindset:

#### 1. Analytics, 2. Agile, 3. Automation, 4, Access.

Next-generation CMOs embrace a mindset of the "4 A's" for their organization: Analytics: Mining data beyond traditional demographics to understand customer behavior, and time-ographics. Agile Methods: Creating a culture of teamwork and measurable results. Rinse, repeat, improve. Automation: Embracing new technology. Access: Content is key, but customer reviews and responsiveness also matter.



### Shaun Smith

Founder - Smith+Co



#### 'Above the line' is becoming 'below the radar' for many customers today.



Consumers are bombarded with ads from print, pop-ups and TV. The emergence of new technologies mean they can screen many of them out, but those they do see, they take with a very large 'pinch of salt' in the wake of corporate scandals like VW, Wells Fargo and Barclays. So marketing messages are now often ignored unless they are authentic, entertaining and experiential. Think Lego movie.





### Trevor Young

Speaker | Author | Strategist + Adviser - PR Warrior



**Deepen the connection with people who matter most to the success of your business, cause or issue.**



Today's marketplace is hopelessly cluttered and it's only going to get worse. This being the case, we're going to gravitate to those brands we have an affinity or emotional connection with. Deepening this connection requires organisations to focus on the people they serve rather than make it all about their products and services. Be useful, helpful, relevant, interesting, human and authentic.

### Tony Zambito

Originator of Buyer Personas | Market Strategist - TonyZambito.Com

**"Think customers first!"**

**A mantra for the new digital age and economy.**

The importance of thinking of customers first has never been greater. This is different than just putting customers first. Thinking implies having cognitive skills to understand, assess, and be informed. Better marketers are informed marketers. They are informed by deep customer and buyer insights that help inform and shape effective marketing strategies. Thinking of customers first always!



### Lori Moreno

Co-Founder | CDO - AmbassadorsVIP.com



**"It's all about our clients!" and you can quote me on that!**



When our clients are asked, "What has your brand influencer done for you lately?" They proudly answer, "They did an unbelievable job spreading the message about my brand." We listen. We listen some more. We fine-tune our course of action from the micro to the macro. Then we deliver exactly the results our clients ask for. We go the extra mile and do even more than our clients ask of us!

### Keith Keller

Global Twitter Marketing Specialist - Global Social Media Coaching

**You are already awesome**

**- my job is to make you world famous.**

Twitter and other social media sites allow us to "share our brilliance" with the world. By tapping into the various platforms available, you can spread the word about what you do and share your wisdom with a global audience. I work with amazing people every single day now, and I still get such a thrill from sharing their messages with people around the planet.



### David Newberry

Executive - LeanPie

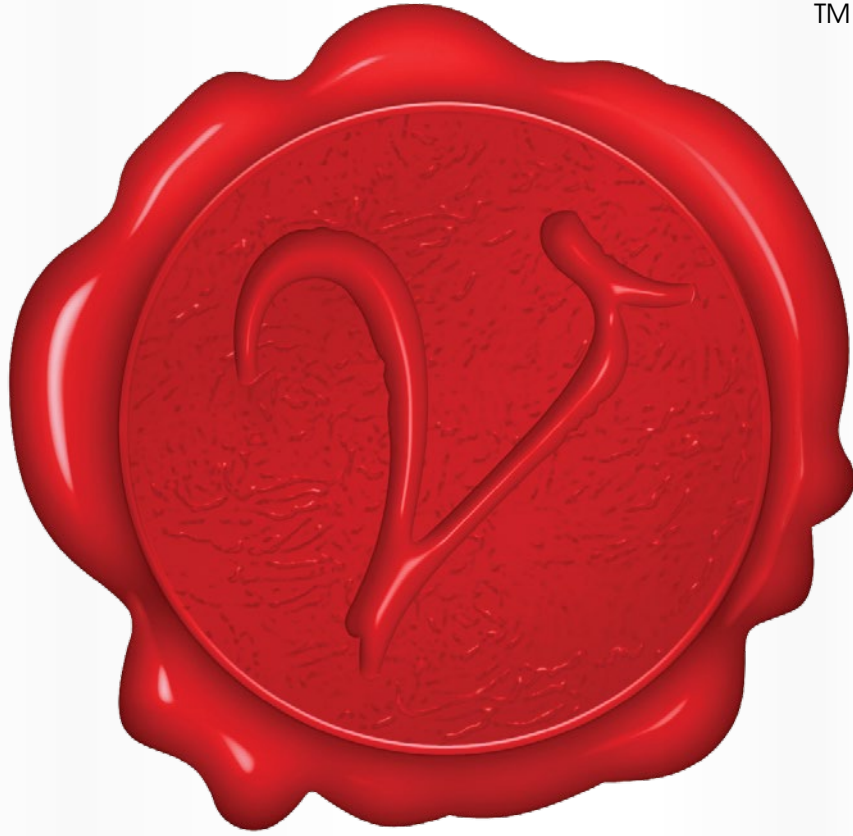


**"Pay it forward" - always put the recipient first and focus on how you can enhance their life.**



It helps you to always consider the status, feelings, needs, expectations and aspirations of the people you are seeking to engage. Empathy sits at the heart of being human, and to be a great marketer it is critical to focus first and foremost on emotional wellbeing, as it is the emotional connection that you create that drives long-term brand loyalty.

TM



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