MARKETING (IS NOT) DRIVEN BY DUMMIES

What SMART system integrators need to know to deliver effective marketing without wasting money

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SUMMARY

Introduction

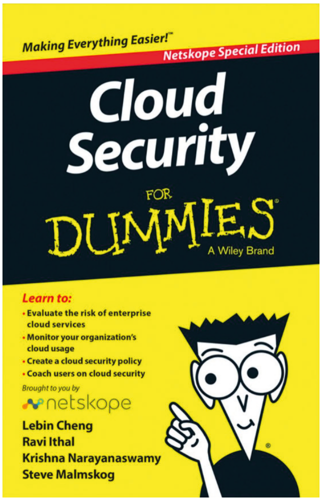
Which Side Do You Want to Be On?

When books present you with "The 5 Rules," "The 3 Steps" or "The 12 Steps to Success," you know damn well it's all bullshit. The coaches behind the various million-dollar academies behind lead generation, reimbursement strategy or network marketing may do very well for themselves, but they won't actually help you make any money.

Yet how many are out there still insisting on using this bait?

Simply because — ever since we were simply strange fish with a desire to get out of the water — we seek the simplest solution to achieve a complex result.

In the past, the guides "Excel for Dummies," "Internet for Fools," "Quantum Physics for Idiots," and so on, saw huge success — as if the contents of an eight-year degree could be summarized in a hundred pages to read before falling asleep.

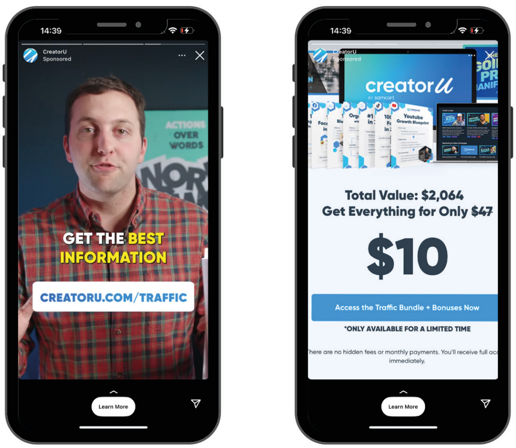


An example of the famous "For Dummies" series

Then we come to the present day, where the current state of the market is only making things worse.

The pandemic has resulted in a variety of experienced online gurus, able to loudly dispense advice in many sectors and ensure you achieve certain results in unlikely periods of time (satisfied or reimbursed — yes, there are people who really talk about it). They run the gamut from network marketers who promise you will make money from home by working an hour a day to the so-called “fluff-gurus” who teach you how to make enough money to afford a penthouse in Dubai in a few months. Too bad when you then discover that they’re wanted for tax fraud in Italy.

Anything goes as long as it requires *no effort*.



Examples of a ‘no effort’ marketing campaign

Yet the Bible clearly states that **pain and fatigue** are the price to pay for eating the apple from the tree of knowledge. At that point, wasn’t it better to be idiots in heaven or fish in an aquarium?

There is no need to study religions all over the world to understand a concept that, unfortunately, is now becoming forgotten: The only way to get good results is through commitment, effort, and pain.

This includes a commitment *not* to follow the “amazing” recipes of fluff-gurus and carnival barkers, and to instead make the effort to learn step by step the pain of making mistakes, of falling and getting up with lactic acid burning in your legs, but staring at the finish line.

What has contributed to the general intolerance toward any kind of commitment?

The advent of the new generation of social media has certainly played an important role. In a world where you see people telling you in 8 seconds how they've built companies with billions in turnover, our brain is no longer willing to believe that behind some well-done transitions, there are years of hard work.

Success has become something immediate, something to flaunt alongside some music track. However, when we return to reality, there are those who question any strategy suggested to them, give in to frustration, and lose all confidence in marketing plans; others immediately think there must have been a shortcut, otherwise that rapid success must be fake.

In a world where we have the attention span of a goldfish, *how can we take back those precious 8 seconds?*

In marketing, there are no shortcuts, just like there are no shortcuts to learning to run 100 meters in less than 10 seconds or to become an architect, astronaut, or surgeon.

Marketing is a complex art, and as such, it must be studied, exercised, and refined. After all, isn't it true that a complex thing is more satisfying than a simple thing? It's like comparing a cake to a teaspoon of sugar — it's still a sweet bite, but otherwise, there's no comparison!

There's an example that always impressed me. In nature, there are living beings called mayflies. They are small insects similar to fruit flies, but with an elongated body and larger wings.

The characteristic of these incredible creatures is that on average the adults only live for one day, sometimes only for a few hours.

Here's their life: The eggs hatch, and the nymphs eat the shell to acquire a little strength. After that, they eventually become adults, their mouth atrophies, and they can no longer eat, so they fly off with one goal: to mate.

Flying in swarms must make it very difficult for a male to find a female. Fortunately, Mother Nature thought about this and endowed one with larger eyes and the other with smaller wings.

Here she is; they recognize her, capture her, impregnate her, and then the males die. The females, on the other hand, still have one more task before falling on the ground: after a few hours they lay their eggs, and that's the end.

Life will start again for future generations, and it will be absurdly fast, just like for their parents.

I always imagined how much adrenaline there must be in those few hours of life. You go out into the world and you don't care if it rains, if it's night or day; you're not afraid to get sick, and to weave social relationships, you don't need social networks or schools. You live with just one goal that you don't even know if you'll be able to reach.

The story of the mayfly is in total antithesis to that of the human species. Not only in terms of time, but above all, complexity.

It's not enough for us to sleep, hunt, feed, breed, and sleep again. We expanded time and space around us by turning the world into a ball in our hands and added, century after century, rules, games, and art, until life found itself a prisoner of a complexity that no individual on earth can comprehend in its entirety.

Maybe this is our secret to escape the fear of death — who knows, perhaps these are thoughts for philosophers — but what matters here is that **complexity is the framework for everything.**

Imagine an accountant in the animal world:

In this complex scenario you have two choices: choose the simple life, trusting consultants who teach you how to become a millionaire in a day following the example of the adult life of mayflies, or face the complicated life that makes you sweat for every grain of wheat, though the bread will then taste of your tenacity.

Pick a side:

1. If you opt for the hyper-simplified life, look for “The 5 Rules,” “The 3 Steps,” or “The 12 Steps” to achieve success.
2. If you accept the challenge of living in this world — with varying weather conditions, in a fixed time frame, on buses, in micro-studios, at school, with the difficulty of cooking fish, at weddings, at funerals, in the syncope of obsessions, with the intense complexity of feelings — then continue reading this book

CHAPTER 1

Marketing Is Not Driven By Dummies

In the last chapter, there was a partial truth: We are not entirely different from our dear mayfly friends. We actually have one thing in common: Our time is limited, we can't do everything, we can't know it all, and we have to choose what to focus on so we don't live in a whirlwind, just like they do.

Since the philosophy of dummies was created to make us become know-it-alls, we must resist the temptation to want to do everything on our own without first acquiring the right skills.

Everything, including a marketing strategy, takes time, and time requires our attention to be channeled.

Dummies, on the other hand, are the mannequins you find in shop windows or those who suffer the 100 mph impact of a car crashing into a tree to show what would happen to a human being

It makes sense to put dummies on display in a window, or in a test car, but dummies can't successfully substitute for us behind the keyboard or on a theatre stage. Dummies are not even suitable for marketing, putting sponsored ads on Facebook or sending cold emails here and there.

Therefore, don't trust the "for dummies" manuals, which, although have the noble intent to simplify difficult knowledge with a hint of humour, cannot be taken as the only source of learning on a specific subject. Especially not by a professional.

Marketing is the art of making a product, a concept, a work, or a performance so desirable that selling it is almost a transactional operation.

Marketing is not about "advertising" or "creating needs," and especially not "deceiving consumers".

Good marketing listens to the buyers' dreams and desires and gives them a safe way to reach them.

Sure, but every once in a while you need a push, otherwise we'd still be riding in horse-drawn carriages, right?

Looking at it from another perspective, you might see marketing as a push that accompanies, more or less forcibly, the consumer to their purchase. Think of it as an attraction, a date.

Imagine having a need and finding the product that can fulfill it exactly where and when you need it: Marketing is just that, the marriage broker between the consumer and the product. It's up to you to broker the times and the means for this meeting.

Marketing must fascinate to be successful. It must enter into the mental dialogue of some people (but not all) and give the answer to the questions that, consciously or unconsciously, appear in their skull.

Marketing can become the company's powerful messenger: Gen. Z, your future buyers a few years from now, are attracted to those brands that defend social values and genuinely have the interests of consumers, the environment, and the community at heart.

Marketing and society become two concepts that merge, creating so-called societing — a theme that we'll explore later.

To us, marketing looks more like an art or a science, rather than a technique or a simple operation that any *dummy* can replicate endlessly.

Well, that's not true. Just go viral on TikTok or Instagram. Just go to a talent show, or just buy four DVDs on how to make money and move to a skyscraper in Dubai.

It's possible, but how many actually make it?

It's like a cake recipe. You can put everything in a bowl, mix and bake, and maybe the product will be decent. But a cake looking like the one in the picture in the recipe book can be made only by respecting the steps and procedures to make it. The more you want to get a cake that looks like the one in the picture, the more you have to consider that it will take effort; but above all, your commitment will never be at the level of a qualified, competent and creative pastry chef (unless you are a pastry chef!). The dishwasher and the waiter are not pastry chefs, not because their professions are less important but simply because they do not currently have the skills of one.

The viral nature of social media is not marketing; it is the most ephemeral thing existing (like our insect friends, who leave us so soon). Since it's a virus that infects quickly, just as quickly, powerful antibodies that can neutralize it are formed in the minds of consumers. Think about all the memes that have come and gone, barely remembered except in the vaults of some internet archive.

Virality works — if it's well programmed and if inserted in a complex campaign for a long time (even up to a year).

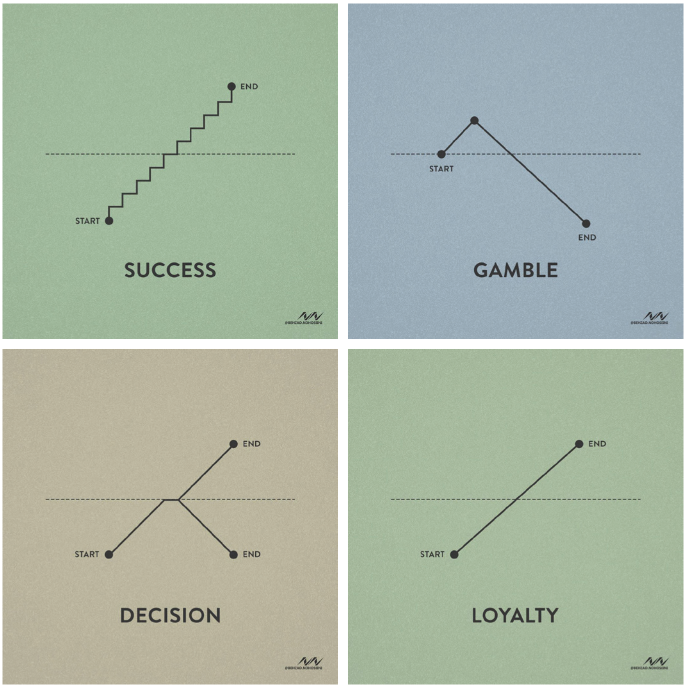
There's another point you have to consider: if you're a small to medium-sized entrepreneur, a video that goes viral doesn't pay your bills at the end of the month. Nine times out of ten, marketing actions done without a strategy will bring you zero results. The fewer tools you have, the more holistic your approach must be, and the more you must adhere to the path you want your potential customer to take when getting to know your company.

We are not saying that BOGO offers, 50% discounts, video campaigns or SEO optimization do not work, but that each individual component must be placed in a broader framework, and that before any action there must come strategic planning.

A single TikTok that goes viral, but that has taken you a day to shoot, is not a good result: making TikToks is not your job, and the fact that you can't schedule this activity into your regular routine will sooner or later compel you to leave that channel — and this applies to all your other media as well.

There's a huge difference between a TikTok made by you, an entrepreneur, and one made by an influencer who has been working their ass off for years to get that degree of notoriety and is managing the platform for a living.

The essence of my argument is mainly this: what is easy produces poor results. In short, you win little.



*Simplification of some aspects of human life, by designer Behzad Nohoseini**

The designer Behzad Nohoseini has graphically represented some aspects of human life, from their starting point to their arrival, to give an idea of the difficulty of achieving a goal: the dotted line represents our social breakeven. This can easily be applied to our working life, entrepreneurship and marketing.

What does this teach us? You have to start walking on this long, complex road. Because the sooner you start, the sooner you get the results you're hoping for.

Now let us begin this journey together.

**https://www.instagram.com/behzad.nohoseini/*

There is one last thing to do.

There are three criteria for creating a successful marketing plan:

1. The product/solution/performance/artwork you sell is well made and brings benefits to the buyer. So if you're a cheater, take the money and run! But you're not the target reader for this book.
2. The company has clear and effective positioning, meaning it knows what, how, and to whom to sell — and the answer is not "we have a high-quality product/service, and our potential customers are everyone". If your answer was just that, take some time to review this placement checklist we have prepared.
3. The company already has paying customers/users of the service or product.

If there are no such criteria, this book is not ideal for you yet.

POSITIONING QUIZ

Take the quiz and receive our personalized comments by email to understand what aspects to improve.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8G89FGQ

CHAPTER 2

Zeno's Dichotomy Paradox Method

In this book, I want to introduce you to some methods that I personally use and find valuable. One of these, I call Zeno's Dichotomy Paradox Method.

Zeno would have become a famous TikToker if he had lived today. Logical and physical, he became famous for the enunciation of his paradoxes, one of which is the Dichotomy one.

The concept is simple, although understanding it is likely to blow your brains out.

Zeno postulates this: An athlete can never get to the finish line of the stadium track because first he must cross the halfway mark, then half of that half, and then another half of that half of the first half … and since space can be halved endlessly, there is no way the athlete can ever reach the finish line because to do so he would have to traverse infinite halves.

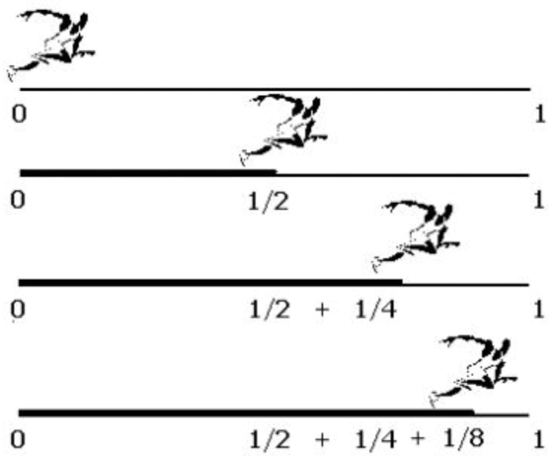


Figure 1: *The Runner's Paradox*

It's obvious that in reality the runner actually does reach the finish line. But the paradox allowed Zeno to discuss the complex issues of movement.

What interests us about this logical game is thinking about who is in charge of marketing in your company — even if it is not a dedicated person — as if they are the athlete, and the stadium is your marketing plan.

To reach the finish line, it's not enough to run (i.e., do an action or a series of actions). Instead, you have to divide the race into small steps, increasingly more precise and detailed.

What's important to understand is that you can dissect, condense, and specialize each marketing action into "infinitely" smaller actions. This is the image that must remain in your mind. There is always something that we could do in more detail than what we are already doing but without losing sight of the goal, our ultimate goal.

An example on the field: *We create a promo together, produced on the basis of Zeno's Dichotomy Paradox Method.*

If the promo is a discount on the price of a particular product, you can act in multiple ways:

0. Just apply the discount.

Or following the method:

1. For the discount, add a time frame for which the offer is valid, creating urgency (which is one of the most powerful driving forces of offers).
2. Also, you offer a discount for a limited time but reserve it for an exclusive target. That means that it's not for all customers! And exclusivity produces prestige (another driving force).
3. Plus, you use discount plus time plus exclusive target, but also add a limit of available pieces. Limiting the parts produces scarcity (perhaps the most powerful driving force).

Here are the two versions:

***Dummy* version**, meaning the guy who runs 100 meters without stretching or training at Zeno's Stadium:

Dear customer,

Please note that the Workforce IP phone is 50% off. Hurry up, and buy it now.

Professional version, meaning the athlete who has trained for shorter distances and sprints countless times before starting the race.

Dear customer,

The IP Workforce phone has a 50% discount only for orders made from today, August 5, to August 15. The offer is reserved for Platinum customers and is valid while stocks last — discounted pieces available as of August 5 at 12:00: 750.

Instructions to claim the promo: ---

To work well, the professional version must be repeated several times — it's not enough to just send a single communication. Our brain begins to be interested in the name of a brand or a communication (for which it had no interest before) starting from the third time we listen.

Before the race, we must consider another important aspect: extending our invitation to those interested in this particular sport. No one is waiting for our email or our call: creating a target — so knowing our audience — is an essential prerequisite to sending our communication to those who are interested.

Golden Rule: Not everyone is a customer.

So, we have to show our promo at least three times to the right people with slightly different content, leveraging one or more driving forces: urgency, prestige, or scarcity.

Let's now see two additional communications structured according to Zeno's Dichotomy Paradox Method.

Second communication: Boosting driving forces

Dear customer,

The IP Workforce phone is discounted by 50% for only 3 days. (enhanced urgency) Please note that only Platinum customers can take advantage of the offer.

Updated discounted parts available (at 12:00 today, August 12): 376. (increased scarcity)

Instructions for claiming the promo: ----

Third communication: Maximum power

Dear customer,

It's the last day to order IP Workforce phones as a service at 50% to save! **(maximum urgency)**

Our Platinum customer Pippo Ltd left us this message: (screenshot from email, complete with name, last name, and company website) "I ordered 45 phones and saved over €XX! I knew I would have needed them at some point, and now I understand the advantage of being a platinum customer." **(envy and prestige)**

Offer reserved for Platinum customers.

Last discounted items: 82. (average sales: 8 per hour)

(maximum scarcity)

Instructions to claim the promo: ---

Always remember the instructions

The instructions section in your promo is as fundamental as how it's launched. Often you find yourself interested in buying something, or just want to inquire about a product, but you don't understand how to proceed. Or, the procedure is so complex that it seems designed to make us give up.

So here's what to consider even before you have sent emails to structure your promo, always in accordance with the method.

Clickbait? Epic fail.

Remember that your customers (and especially potential customers) can dedicate only a tiny portion of their attention to you and, like the eyes of snails, at the first sign of danger or uncertainty, they're ready to close them and send you to the trash bin. Forever.

Sensationalist titles that make you imagine things much more appealing than they are in reality are to be abolished. Remember that marketing shouldn't involve sensational titles to deceive the consumer. Try to attract their attention with hooks that don't create false expectations.

Error 404? Deadly sin.

A link that doesn't work will scare away any interested user.

A link to your homepage inside a tiny banner that forces the visitor to squint to spot it will do the same.

The landing page must contain the contents of the promo and help the customer to purchase or request information.

"Reply to the text or email" also works pretty well.

No surprises

Children like surprises. Adults like them too, but only if they come from people they trust. Being suspicious is normal!

Since you are not a middle-aged gentleman disguised as Santa Claus and not the Riddler in a new Batman story, state upfront what will happen after your potential client has claimed the promo — do not concoct unsolicited surprises.

Use clear instructions and offer reassuring metrics: "You will be contacted by our sales staff within 48 hours". "You'll soon receive a confirmation email. This means that your order has been successful, and you will receive the fantastic Workforce phone within 2 working days".

You have structured a promo from A to Z, but from the beginning, we have repeated that theory and strategy are important.

So let's take a step back and try to understand how to apply Zeno's Method on a larger scale, from the single promotion to the construction of our marketing strategy.

From promo to strategy

We talked about the structure of a promo, but a marketing action does not start from a promotional text: first, there is strategy. We talk about goals to achieve, messages to convey and targets to involve.

Let's treat that promotion as if it were our race: what comes before launching is training, which is necessary if you want to win.

That's why we need to see how to build the fundamental steps for a promo starting from the strategy. In Chapter 6, which is about Marketing Plans, we will go into detail on the strategic programming related to all marketing actions — not only for making a promo but also to understand how every single action is actually the result of a larger plan.

Goals and messages

Setting goals is undoubtedly the first milestone of a marketing strategy. Goals mean measurable results that I want to achieve in a set amount of time to bring value to my marketing actions. Defining the goals in our race is our training plan in preparation for it: Which diet should I follow before running? How many training hours per day do I have to do? Can I measure my progress?

The goals may be defined as follows, under the "SMART" model:

S: Specific

Clear and defined goals: I want to increase my turnover by 25% in 2023.

M: Measurable

Numerical targets by which I can measure progress, such as: To achieve 25% more revenue in 2023, I must increase my customer base by at least 50%.

A: Achievable (Reachable)

Concrete goals that I am actually able to achieve with the resources available: To achieve 25% more revenue in 2023, I will have to add two new staff so that I can manage 50% more customers.

R: Relevant

Smart and important goals for business growth: Achieving an additional 25% turnover is necessary to amortize marketing investments made the previous year.

T: Time

Goals related to a certain period of time: Achieve 25% more revenue by December 2023.

The goals must be transformed into messages and conveyed through different channels — we’ll talk about these channels later. Now, using the example of our promo, we’ll see the evolution of our acquisition goal in a message.

Practical example of goal setting based on promotion

Goal: 3 new customers in March thanks to the “introduce a friend” strategy.

Dummy execution: I ask all customers who I meet or who buy from me in March to introduce a friend, and in exchange, I will give both of them a 10% discount on the next purchase.

Marketing Expert Execution:

1. I choose a type of customer to reserve this promotion for (segmentation). I use the Net Promoter Score (a measure of customer satisfaction and enthusiasm) to identify my most loyal and happy clients. I make a small widget with my brand to invite the person to an event (in person or virtually, according to budget)

where we will give out a bigger prize. The person must participate with a friend. Only if the friend buys a product/service that gets a 30% discount, the customer will get a 50% discount on the next purchase.

2. The discount percentages may be higher because I have limited the number of customers to whom I reserve the offer.
3. Everything is exclusive, like a sip of champagne in a lounge bar that's within reach only for a select few (if your budget allows it). No matter what, I will make a follow-up call three days later to get feedback and to find out the status of the proposal.
4. I send a book (or a USB stick or even an attachment via email) with photos of the event and a special thanks while reiterating the offer and its expiration date. I use social networks with a PPC retargeting campaign (visible only to those who visited the event page) to remind leads of the promo.

The beauty of this is that the more you dig and the more you cut, more factors are added, and the campaign produces more results. It's a breath of fresh air even for budgets because instead of having to cater to — on a precautionary basis — potentially thousands of possible candidates, we can focus on a few selected customers, in particular those who have already proven their willingness to buy more and more. This increases their interest and rewards them more.

Channels and target

There are multiple channels through which we can push our promotion, or more generally tell about our products, services, teams, or initiatives: these can be online and virtual, or offline and physical.

Social media are channels (even if some nihilists argue that the definition of social media marketing is in effect nonsense) as are television, the press, or the web.

If you're a small to medium entrepreneur and are reading this book, there's nothing wrong with creating a selection of channels. However, being everywhere and looking your best is a prerogative only for large companies. For a small business, choosing a select few channels shows the ability to avoid putting forward a bad corporate image (due to abandoning certain channels), especially on the web and social media.

How do I choose my channels?

Based on goals, targets, and budget.

As always, we try to identify the concrete aspect of returning to our promo.

Now that the promo is ready, communications are prepared, and we have the right time and the right driving forces. The instructions on how to claim the promo and indications of what will happen are ready, so it's time to launch the promo using the right channels.

Golden Rule: In marketing, it's never right or wrong. Only the end results lead to a campaign being labeled as good or bad.

How do I understand the best channel for my campaign?

1. Observation
2. Test

Observation

If you have a company that works, you have paying customers. Look at who your customers are and draw a map to identify some constant factors that can help you understand the selling habits of your target customer. (The chapter on marketing plans will help you with that.)

Each target customer has a favorite channel and a suitable time to receive the promo.

Example 1: Female, 40-50 years old, executive manager.

For this demographic, you can try social networks during the weekend or after 6 pm, when her phone is not occupied by the issue of the day and she is relaxing by scrolling through her friends' photos or looking for a meme to have a laugh.

Example 2: Male, 20-30 years old, employee.

You can try Whatsapp (if you have their number), native advertising, or creator support. While Gen Z customers are still in the building stage of their careers, they are less likely to mix work and business than their older counterparts, so choose your time wisely.

Test

A/B testing is a smart practice. You should feel a bit like a scientist who prepares two identical mazes for two similar guinea pigs. Add one variable, then change it to see what happens. Start the guinea pigs, and see which maze is the most effective after the 20th experiment.

A/B testing means just that. Don't know which channel is most suitable for your target? Try two or three on a small sample, and observe the results. Then apply the winning model to all your audience.

As always, don't be seduced by simplicity!

Don't act like a dummy. Get rid of the idea that simplicity avoids fatigue and brings success. That requires luck, and unfortunately, it doesn't happen to everyone.

A *dummy* would send an email promoting an offer with instructions. A marketing expert writes at least three communications designed for a specific audience with metrics, and considers drivers such as scarcity and urgency; they identify the most effective channel by observing the habits of its customers or doing an A/B test, then launch the promo already bearing in mind a forecast of results based on the budget used.

To reach a goal, whether it's in Zeno's Stadium or in the life of an entrepreneur, you need to break down the path into shorter, more controllable, and more specific parts. The more timely and thorough the segmentation of the marketing activity is, the better a prediction of success will reflect reality.

Another example of how to make the achievement of a goal complex:

The Zeno's Dichotomy Paradox Method is the method that I will adopt throughout the rest of the book, where I will show you how to create a marketing plan that a dummy couldn't.

To achieve this level of accuracy, we will have to travel to other territories on our map for intelligent marketing and more human marketing (business to human).

We will see what others in other sectors do, because when in doubt, it's better to copy from the best than invent something new but stupid; we will learn the numbers that can guide us in our choices, not end up with many customers at the door but with arms up, and finally to starting the marketing plan.

Don't give up now.

Let's do some stretching:

QUIZ CHAPTER II

Take the quiz to make sure you have assimilated Zeno's Paradox.

Write your score here:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8MFBNSC

CHAPTER 3:

The *Look At What Is Done In Other Sectors* Method

Every now and then, we need a crowbar to break the barriers that make us prisoners of our beliefs.

And one of the most treacherous prisons is the one that says that an entrepreneur should not do anything different than what everyone else before them has *always* done in your industry.

“Why should a systems integrator have an event with customers? Customers come to you when phones don’t work, or when they want to replace them ... what do you want to get with a posh event? You’ll just throw away a lot of money!”

To the objection: “If no one has ever done it before, there must be a reason!” you must answer: “I should be the first one to do it precisely because no one else has done it.”

Babies laugh hundreds of times at peek-a-boo because the surprise of seeing a face disappear and reappear generates enthusiasm: an instinctive, mechanical enthusiasm.

Surprise is the key that 21st-century marketing must use to get the consumer away from all that they have *already* seen so they can distinguish one supplier from another.

Although surprises are not welcome at the advanced stage when the consumer is close to buying and wants clear and consistent information, in the initial phase of the journey, the customer wants to be won over.

We have already talked about people’s lack of attention and the importance of capturing attention in those crucial 8 seconds. In the initial phase of his journey to our brand, the customer often does not know us, and surprising them is one of the best ways to attract attention.

Surprise can mean anticipating needs or creating experiences — especially if a customer expects to get a service just because it has always been provided in the same way by anyone in that industry, surprise them by customizing it with something different!

The best way to surprise a customer is to copy what is ordinary and natural in other areas and to adapt it to your business. The customer will immediately find their comfort zone (because they have already experienced that feeling) but will be amazed to see it applied in a completely different industry.

There are infinite examples. Observe the grocery store near your house, the department store, amusement parks, the circus, theaters, and so on.

Do you see dentists creating relaxation packages worthy of a spa, or taxi drivers arriving with a stylish, electric, scented car with Wi-Fi and a complimentary bottle of water?

After all, you too are a consumer — think about what your best experiences have been in recent years, where you have felt pampered or safe, or in an exclusive situation.

Experiential marketing

I want to briefly go off-topic to deepen the theme of surprise as an experience.

Experiential marketing leverages the emotional sphere of the consumer to immerse them in the brand: it's a form of contact between the customer and the extremely personalized brand aimed at increasing perceived value and loyalty.

Let's see some iconic examples of this type of marketing.

The Social Swipe by Miseror

Miseror is a nonprofit organization that wants to reduce poverty and hunger in the world. The association created these interactive posters at airports to collect donations: some showed a knife and a loaf, others a pair of tied hands. Each donation — only €2 — received through the point of sale system integrated with the board allowed the donor to virtually "cut" the slice of bread or the rope that tied the hands of the child.

The Elevator Prank by LG

To show off their IPS screens with lifelike coloring, LG created a guerrilla marketing campaign: They installed screens on the bottom of an elevator, inside a building, and, after making some sinister noise, the screens simulated the breaking of the floor, causing passengers to jump into corners.

These are just two examples of how the creation of experiential content can leverage the emotional sphere by generating curiosity, interest, and conversion.

Golden Rule: Assuming that the client must be treated as they have always been treated leads to a missed opportunity.

Let's take an example. You invite a client to the meeting room, but which chair do you offer them? The slightly dirty and creaky one? Or do you decide to invest in a chair that looks like it belongs to the VIP section of an airport business lounge?

When the customer buys your product, do they get a cardboard box full of filthy and dented labels, or does a special courier arrive carrying not only an intact and clean box but maybe also a handwritten message to be delivered to the manager with chocolates?

Starting from the chair, from the welcome message, the follow-up call to know if everything went well, maybe you can even add an incentive for a further purchase (like a voucher for a product that completes the offer).

Often, successful marketing is not a question of investment but of formalizing procedures to guarantee the same treatment in all conditions, regardless of personal choice.

Think about the world of luxury, translate it into your budget, and surprise the customer.

For example, what do large hotel chains teach us?

For each check-in, there is a precise procedure and a series of questions to ask the guest. In the halls of different brands' headquarters, there are often different scents and decor that define that specific brand. In this case, we're not talking about predictability but about expectations; even a guest who checks in for the first time will be surprised by a bad experience.

The ultimate result?

The customer remembers the positive experience and gets attached to the brand.

What does that teach us?

Before you surprise the customer, though, you have to formalize operational standards, since a bad surprise is the worst surprise you can present to a potential buyer.

The *Look At What They Do In Other Sectors* method is simple because you don't have to come up with magic formulas or find the idea of the century.

For example, take large retailers: a 3 for the price of 2 offer doesn't only work with cans of tuna. The same goes for coupons or loyalty cards, "refer a friend" promos, a survey on Instagram, or sweepstakes, to name a few.

Everything is ready and available; you just need to have a little courage to bring that idea into your industry and not mind those who say "those things should not be done".

QUIZ CHAPTER III

Take the quiz and look at what others do.

Write your score here:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8MFBNSC

CHAPTER 4:

Let the Numbers Guide You

Data is like flossing: It seems tiring and complicated, and at night, you just don't want to do it. But as soon as you try it and understand its function, you don't want to do without it anymore.

If you don't do it every night, your teeth feel dirty and uncomfortable.

Data is marketing's hygiene. Of course, you can do campaigns without predicting how much you will spend or how much you could take home. And it can work because you limit your budget so you don't risk too much.

The problem is if you do that, your marketing will not be reproducible. So even if you achieve impressive success the first time, the second might go wrong, even very wrong.

With data ...

Remember that predicting is what sets us apart from animals*, so to be intelligent in marketing, your efforts must be predictable and therefore guided by numbers.

To predict results and costs in marketing, you need to look at the numbers and analyze the data related to your previous actions.

If you have already created marketing campaigns, it becomes easy to trace the data and sort it by seasonality, target, and goal. You have to learn to collect it, understand it, and read it.

It works in our favor that online marketing has made metrics much more measurable, and that they arrive in detail to precisely define each action.

**A dog always eats <u>all</u> the food in the bowl, not thinking that tomorrow's food might not be there. People think about the situation, and if there is scarcity, they ration their food to make it last longer.*

… or without data

What if we're in our first campaign? What can we predict if we don't have data?

We have to start somewhere.

1. **Test:** We'll talk about this in depth later, but for any marketing action that you've never done before, we have to talk about testing. Starting by investing in testing your marketing campaigns; an advertisement, either on the web or offline, or a trade show is the business "risk" that every investor must assume to make the activity take off.
2. **Sector:** Industry knowledge helps. Who knows their target better than an entrepreneur? It is essential to start from the target (first of all, from those who are already our customers), and the dynamics of your industry to avoid shooting in the dark. When we know who we are conversing with and what their pain points are, we can easily pinpoint where to find them.
3. **Training:** This book is entirely focused on training. A minimum level of knowledge of the basics of marketing and platforms is essential to not fall into the trappings of the fluff-guru and believe in every miraculous package these pseudo-professionals offer.

What numbers are we talking about?

Any number that can help us.

If we do social promotions we might consider reach (people reached), impressions (views), CPC (cost per click), CPM (cost per mille, or thousand views), and so on.

If we're talking about offline listings, such as through industry magazines or even at bus stops, we'll have to monitor both the number of advertisements published and the potential audience but also the number of conversions in a unique way.

The macroscopic data can be summarized by the CAC (customer acquisition cost). This figure refers to how much I must spend to acquire a new customer.

The formula is simple: Take the amount you spent on marketing for that specific vertical and divide it by the number of customers you gained from that vertical.

For example: I spent €10,000 and got 100 customers.

The CAC is €10,000/100 = €100.

Therefore, one customer cost me €100.

Is it a lot? Is it too little? It depends. Namely, it depends on how much the customer spends on average. If your customer spends on average €50 (the average spending per customer is data that your administration should be able to give you), the CAC is high. If they typically spend €5,000, the CAC is very good, which means you can also increase your spending to optimize campaigns.

The data gives you the steering wheel, gears, and pedals to steer a car that otherwise will go fast while the road is straight, but at the first corner will crash into the guardrail.

As for your offers, making the deal more complex (in a constructive way!) helps you gather data more effectively as well.

If I diversify the average number of purchases from the customer based on products/services, if I diversify that number with capital expenditures (CapEx) and operational expenses (OpEx), and if this average becomes LTV (lifetime value), you are beginning the game, the serious one.

LTV is an indicator to measure profits based on the way customers buy, and this is the formula.

$$\text{Customer Lifetime Value} = \text{Margin} \times \frac{\text{Retention Rate}}{1 + \text{Discount Rate} - \text{Retention Rate}}$$

You don't have to start with the LTV unless you have all the data sorted and available.

What matters here is that if you want to create marketing campaigns, you have to put in money.

If you want new customers, you have to calculate how much on average a new customer brings you, and spend that amount (or less, depending on the margin you want to keep).

You'll see pretty quickly that if the campaigns are done right, you'll bring home even more customers.

Once you get this raw approach to numbers, start to break it down, like in Zeno's Stadium track, and file, refine, and sanitize your marketing to have more and more predictable numbers.

Think about betting. If you could predict who wins by analyzing the tiniest details of the number stream, you'd be a millionaire.

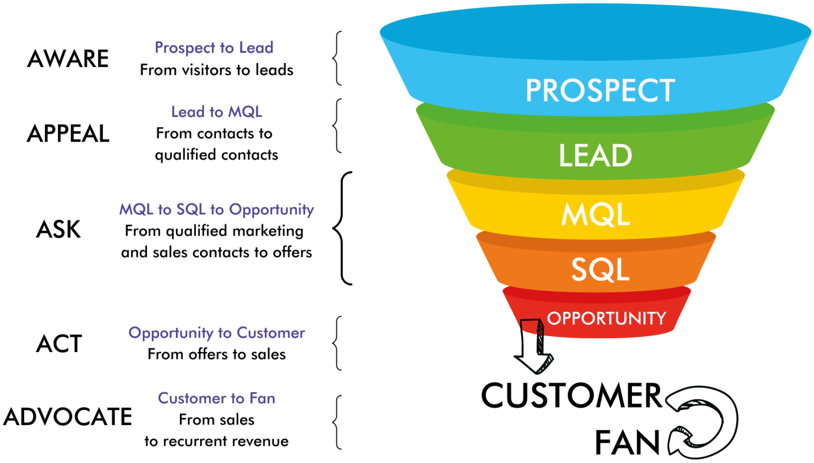
In marketing it is the same: the more predictable it is, the less risk there is, and the more your investments are calibrated and optimized, the more customers will arrive.

Every business has its numbers. If we like digital marketing, Google or Facebook give us dozens of dashboards with charts and numbers. If we like more traditional marketing (letters, leaflets, radio advertising, billboard, phone calls) the conversion capacity is determined by requests coming from a web page created specifically for the campaign.

By the way, converting is a term that in marketing has a very precise meaning: moving a customer or a potential one from one stage to another.

For example, if I attract a customer to my site, and they buy on my ecommerce page, I've converted them. If I send a customer an offer and they buy it, I also converted them.

Let's review the conversion steps:



Scheme of the marketing funnel

Think of conversion in scientific and non-religious terms, and you will find that, thanks to constants, you can convert degrees Celsius to Fahrenheit, meters to inches, pounds to dollars, and so on. The constant of conversion is every marketer's Holy Grail and something you will never own.

The question you have to ask yourself when you approach a marketing plan is not "how many new customers do I want this year?" Rather, it's "how many new customers can I generate with the numbers I have and the budget available?"

If you have a recurring sales model or customers who pay you support fees, if you target customers with marketing campaigns you will surely produce more results and it will be easier to sell than to go looking for new customers.

To help you understand the metrics slang and the meaning of the data you read, at the end of the book you'll find a glossary on advanced marketing metrics.

QUIZ CHAPTER IV

Take the quiz and find out how much you know about data analysis.

Write your score here:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7ML3GGX

CHAPTER 5:

Your Reputation

We all know reputation is something that builds us slowly and keeps us related to others.

It's other people who call us "nerds," "thugs," "Boomers," "influencers," "experts," or "scammers". The problem is that once you get assigned that particular epithet, you're gonna have a hard time getting rid of it.

If you want to sell something, you have to be the perfect provider of the service, not a messy one. You have to be the expert, not a dickhead.

How to become a perfect service/product provider with two deadly moves:

1. **Train those who deliver your processes well**
2. **Let your clients tell you how good you are — don't say it yourself**

Step 1: Train those who deliver your processes well.

These processes involve your customers (technical, commercial and administrative).

The ideal would be to create a behavior manual that not only describes in detail procedures to follow in every circumstance, but also represents the image that your company wants to create.

There are many factors here: customer care response speed, the way to access the company (via web, phone, or in person), how to welcome customers, dress code, the way to ask for feedback following the service provided ... The more details there are, the more effective staff training will be.

If you enter an Apple store in Bangkok or Miami, they look the same; if you enter a McDonald's in Tanzania or in Madrid, they look like the same place. Prices change, the menu changes a bit, but the customer experience doesn't.

We already said it, but here it's necessary to repeat it: *before surprising, learn to formalize*, since the worst surprise you can give to a customer is to not meet their expectations.

The big brands are successful because they are predictable, so customers know exactly the standard of service they must expect. Once you reach this goal, you can go the so-called extra mile, that extra gesture that makes the difference, without worrying about the details.

Golden Rule: Most of the time, it is not the product that makes our customer satisfied, but the way they got it and the guarantee they received that there will be someone to help them if needed. The person who looks only at the product, who buys separate components and puts everything together themselves in a final product that only they can enjoy or is very attentive to the price will look only at the lowest cost, eliminating any connected service.

The vast part of the experience that the customer has with your company is left in the hands of sellers or partners.

Say the product is perfect and the vendor has been good, but (for example) the seller makes the customer nervous through small procedural mistakes or an employee is rude; here, *the seller must also consider their marketing approach as much as the vendor.*

All your customer-focused materials need to be aligned with the way your company has decided to position itself, as this helps build your reputation.

The customer should not be afraid or irritated when contacting you or when you contact them. They must instead have a smile on their face, happy to talk with Greta or Mario because they are kind and treat them as though they will have something important and interesting to say.

Step 2: Let your customers say how good you are — do not say that yourself

Unfortunately, we live in a suspicious society in which a scam is always around the corner, a banana peel is hidden on the floor, and a shitstorm is always ready to descend upon you.

Anything can be an illusion. Have we really arrived at such a level of relativism where there are no truths, and everything fluctuates between conspiracy and rip-off?

In this Matrix-like world, the last thing you should do is to say "I'm good", because it's the best way to make the other person think that *you're not good.* "Any man who says 'I am King' is no true king."

Just get others to say it. As at trials, summon witnesses who can wax lyrical your omnipotence in your specific field — whether it's telephony, squirrel taxidermy, or chocolate making.

Ask them what their problem was and how you solved it. Like scarcity, prestige, or urgency, which we talked about in Chapter 2 (Zeno's Dichotomy Paradox Method applied to the structure of our promotion), the so-called "social proof" is also able to move our customers.

Social proof is a theory developed by US psychologist Robert Cialdini, who argues that people tend to put the most trust in the products/services (and more generally, behaviors) shared by a large number of people.

In essence, phrases such as *"Subscribe to our newsletter" or "Download our free white paper"* have less appeal than these:

Subscribe to our newsletter like 15,000 other users have!

300 people have already downloaded our ebook: hurry up!

So social proof, made concrete in our case through the request for testimony, has enormous persuasive power.

Ask for precise metrics to make the deposition more true. A couple of examples:

"I saved time" → "I saved 3 hours per day per employee"

"I saved on the bill" → "I saved $50 a month"

Finally, remember that witnesses must have true generalities, and not be “Sam” from *Guess Who*, or “Miss Scarlet” from *Cluedo* (or *Clue*, if you’re in the US).

Your witnesses have names, surnames, emails and phone numbers, or social media profiles. I know it’s not easy to get the customer’s permission, but if the number is your company’s phone, and the email is your work one (or even an info@), there shouldn’t be any issues.

It is better to have three testimonials with full details (no customer will contact them, anyway) than 30 with only a first name, for the simple reason that those three seem much more real than the other 30. If those three are your cousin, your daughter-in-law, and your soccer friend, just don’t make it too obvious.

When it comes to reputation, in fact, it is the world’s perception of you that wins against the reality of the state of things.

The more elements you give to the world to look like an excellent provider of services or products, the more the world will perceive you as such.

The principles of persuasion

Marketing is a lever to move needs: a discipline that attracts the consumer toward itself. The stronger our brand’s perception, the more powerful its persuasive power is.

In marketing, by “persuasion” we mean the ability of a brand to attract consumers thanks to the strength of its reputation. Persuasion is a very delicate concept; we never talk about deceiving our customers and potential customers but to convince and motivate them.

Let’s focus briefly on the meaning of the brand: the brand is that set of physical traits (such as name, slogan, and logo) and values (such as mission, history, values, morality, communication, and reputation) that identify and distinguish a label and an enterprise compared to its competitors.

Reputation and persuasion are therefore two concepts closely linked to each other and to the buying path.

In 1984 the weapons of persuasion were theorized by Robert Cialdini. We have already analyzed social proof and scarcity, but it is worth it to understand all the other principles.

1. Reciprocity
2. Consistency
3. Liking
4. Authority
5. Scarcity
6. Social Proof

Reciprocity

If we get something, we feel the need to give something.

Reciprocity in marketing leverages this unconscious need: When, for example, we give away a white paper, webinar, or a guide, we leverage it as a gift to get our visitors to leave us their data.

Consistency

Once we make a decision, we do everything we can to defend it.

Consistency is a social behavior that makes us perceived as reliable. It is the principle on the basis of the free return: We establish confidence in our consumers who will rarely send back goods — or rather, they will do it only if it really does not fit — but will not take advantage of the service for “indecision”. In their mind, once they made the decision of buying, they rarely go back.

Liking

We prefer to trust who we like and those who are like us.

The principle of liking is based on empathy: We prefer to make a purchase from people we perceive as similar to us or who understand us. While not fair, Cialdini shows how good-looking or well groomed people tend to more easily inspire feelings of sympathy, kindness, and trust. Putting yourself in the shoes of your users and making them understand that you have passed through the same experience or that you know their problems is the basis of the principle of liking.

Authority

We're willing to listen to someone if we attribute to them competence and professionalism.

For Cialdini, authority is synonymous with reliability. For example, we tend to listen to someone who has more followers on social media, a university degree, or someone who has proven successful in the industry. For this reason, it is important to communicate authority — through certifications or training paths, for example.

Scarcity

Something seems more desirable to us if it's running out.

We are motivated to act if we think there's a possibility of loss. If the offer of our promo lasts only three days, or there are limited places, the disaster effect will be much stronger.

Social Proof

In case of doubt, we tend to follow the decisions of the majority.

Often, to judge whether something is worthy of attention, we tend to observe the behavior of others. Imagine walking in a city and having to select a restaurant for lunch: Are you more attracted by a full restaurant, or by the one where just two tables are occupied? In our specific case, reviews and testimonials can affect purchasing choices, strengthening our persuasive ability.

Become an expert in your field.

One of Cialdini's principles is that of authority.

Let's go deeper into the question to understand how to become an expert in a field.

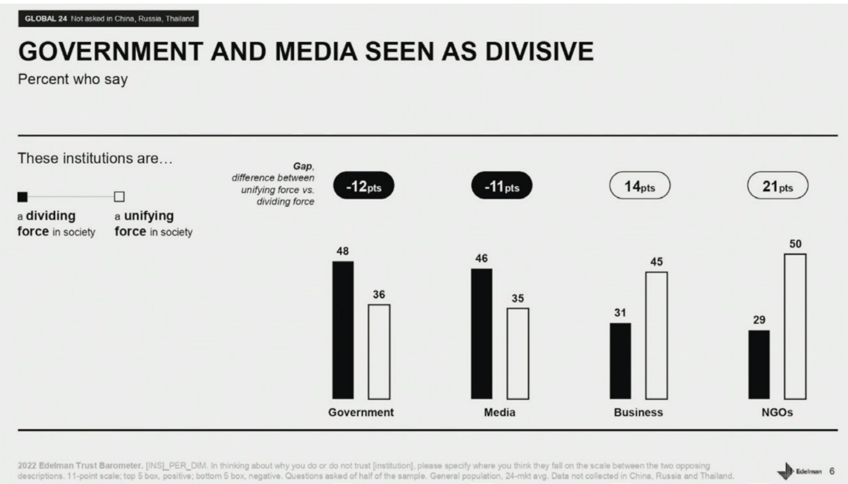
This is an investment of "indefinite" time, which means everything can happen quickly, or it can take years.

There is only one way to become an expert. You need that title (as an expert) to be recognized not only by your customers or colleagues but by other recognized experts or critics (often called influencers today) or credible voices (the media).

The qualification of experts is as authoritative as it is ephemeral: it takes a lot to be considered such, but very little to lose credibility.

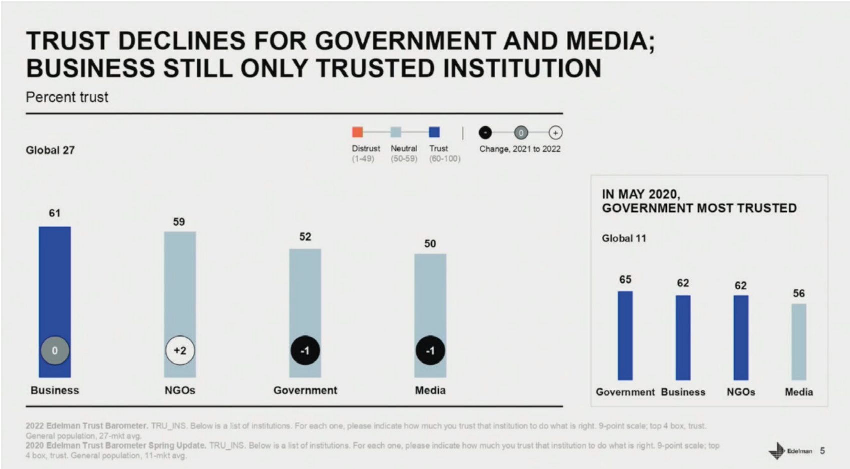
However, there is a positive side to all this: especially for Millennials and Gen Z, things are changing, and the role of companies is becoming increasingly "authoritative" compared to those who, in the past, were considered the expert voices (such as traditional media and governments).

Here is an excerpt from Edelman's Trust Barometer 2022, a global research to measure the level of public confidence in public institutions.



An excerpt from the Edelman's Trust Barometer 2022

Traditional media and governments have been identified as deeply divisive, unlike businesses and NGOs.



An excerpt from the Edelman's Trust Barometer 2022

Businesses are instead the source of information perceived as stronger and more reliable.

This makes us understand how companies are increasingly becoming a means of consistent communication and trust, and how the role of the entrepreneur is more and more moving toward creating value, conducting transparent actions, and inspiring the community.

So how can you, as an entrepreneur, build a credible expert image?

Let's start with a PR plan.

Other experts

Look for experts in fields that are tangent or symbiotic to yours.

If you want to become an expert in unified communications, you can look for cybersecurity experts. If you want to become an expert hairdresser in hair reconstruction, you can look for experts in trichology, pharmacies, doctors, and so on.

It's not difficult to contact these people unless they are so famous that they are not reachable by choice. Contact them via LinkedIn or writing directly to company secretaries and propose what is called a joint venture — the Romans called it *do ut des*, roughly meaning "I give you something, and you give me something else back.”

You have a lot of customers who can take advantage of the services of the other expert, while the other expert can support you and recognize you as an expert in your field.

Are your customers IT managers? You can create an event where you invite a white hat hacker to show how safe your work is against cyberattacks.

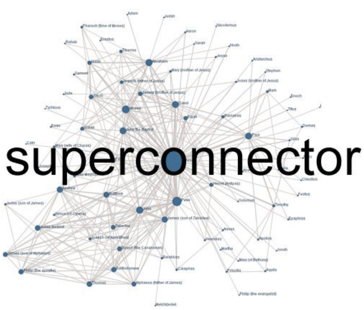
Or use the franchise method like McDonald’s, Hertz (car rental), or 7-Eleven. If you can, use the biggest brands as a light to shine on your own brand.

That’s what Wildix does with its partners: It invites them to present themselves not as “TelecomXYZ” but directly as “Wildix,” because the strength of our brand is incomparably superior to their own.

Influencers and critics

More complex but not impossible: The strategy is called superconnector, and it’s explained in a beautiful book written by Scott Gerber and Ryan Paugh.

The strategy can be visualized as follows:



The principle is this: To reach thousands of people, you need to connect and *nurture* the relationship with 10 — 15 maximum — people who are identifiable as super-connectors, so they trigger a reaction of influence (in the marketing sense of the term) able to infect many of your target customers.

There are three phases:

1. List of potential *superconnectors*
2. Rating of *superconnectors*
3. Relationship with *superconnectors*

The List

How do you find these *superconnectors*? You'll see them at public events within your sector. Normally they are invited as speakers, they are interviewed by journalists, they are the journalists themselves in newspapers, they are in LinkedIn groups within your industry, they appear on television programs, they write books...

The first phase is research, but I guarantee you that it is not wasted time. When looking for *superconnectors*, you'll come across information, news, books, and documents that will enrich your knowledge and give you great stimuli and ideas for improvement.

The Rating

Once you have compiled a list of 30-40 names, choose a criterion to rate their influence. Use a score metric based on *superconnector* performance, from the most mundane to the most important.

For example:

To draw up your rating you can rely on objective tools, such as the H Index, an index of authors that measures their level of authority based on the number of publications and the times they have been cited by others.

You can also create your own way to measure authority based on what you consider most important to evaluate the "usefulness" of your *superconnector*. If they talk at public conferences, add 3 points; if they've written a book, add 5 points; if they write in specialized newspapers, add 2 points. Sort who got the highest scores, and focus on the top 10.

Influencers

If you've identified industry influencers, they can also be on your *superconnector* list. Finding B2B influencers is not easy, but it is not impossible: First of all, consider that we are not talking about the classic Instagram influencers but, like the word implies, of authoritative people who are able to "influence" purchasing decisions.

In the case of B2B companies, the best place to find them is currently LinkedIn, and you should always make a point of looking for people who speak about, review, or use your product without any sponsorship. People notice when the content is forced, and this often gets the unwanted effect of increasing distrust.

The relationship

The best way to start, since they don't know you, is to ask them for advice about your business. Experts and disseminators like to give advice.

Then, according to their first reactions, connect with them on LinkedIn, send materials about you, invite them to an event with your customers, quote them in your articles, and so on.

The goal will be for your *superconnector* to start talking about you, quoting you as an example or successful case of their "influence".

INFLUENCERS LIST

		NAME	Organisation	CONTACT (email or phone)	LINKEDIN	OTHERS (blog, podcast	SCORE	RANKING	Profile	STEPS DONE	COMMENTS
3	1	An	BF		https://www.linkedin.com/in/ar		30	1			Lkd Summit invit
4	2	Th	Be	t	https://www.linkedin.com/in/th		27	2	MSP specialist	Already in contact Webinar organised on 17/11/2020	Summit Invitatio
5	3	Ari	Me		https://www.linkedin.com/in/ar		25	3			Summit invitatio End user focus s
6	4	Va	Le		https://www.linkedin.com/in/va		25	3			Lkd Summit invit
7	5	Mc	IT		https://www.linkedin.com/in/m	https:	23	5	IT specialist / journalist		Lkd Summit invit
8	6	An	E.I	a com	https://www.linkedin.com/in/ar	https:	22	6	IT Press expert		Summit Invitatio
9	7	Da	At		https://www.linkedin.com/in/la		20	7			Summit Invitatio
10	8	Ph	Ne		https://www.linkedin.com/in/pl		20	7			Lkd Summit invit
11	9	Oli	Sc		https://www.linkedin.com/in/ol		20	7			Lkd Summit invit
12	10	Re	Pu		https://www.linkedin.com/in/re		17	10			Lkd Summit invit
13	11	Nc	Ré		https://www.linkedin.com/in/nc		16	11			Summit Invitatio
14		Jé	Ré								
15	12	Jo	Ch		https://www.linkedin.com/in/jo		15	12	IT channel specialist		Lkd Summit invit
16	13	Ni	Sc		https://www.linkedin.com/in/ni		15	12			Lkd Summit invit
17	15	be	L'I		https://www.linkedin.com/in/be		15	12			Lkd Summit invit
18	15	Ya	Le		https://www.linkedin.com/in/ya		15	12			Lkd Summit invit
19	16	Pa	CI		https://www.linkedin.com/in/pa		14	16			
20	17	Je	Cc		https://www.linkedin.com/in/je		14	16			
21	18	jea	Sc		https://www.linkedin.com/in/je		12	18			Lkd Summit invit
22	19	Fr	All		https://www.linkedin.com/in/fr		9	19			

Here is a simple example of Wildix's superconnector list.

Media

To pay or not to pay, that is the question.

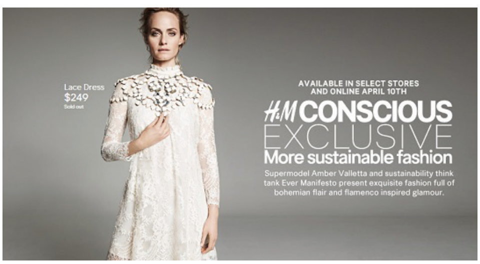
Pay rewards in the short term, but it is not the most advisable method because traditional media is quite expensive and internet visibility has become increasingly complex. The article, service, or editorial will never be able to get off that smell of advertising that repels people. No matter how hard you try to disguise it, it's still a space you bought, and people can tell that from a mile away.

To get "free" attention from the press, you need to commit to creating success stories that really interest journalists.

If you sell PBXs and your customers have a community-focused service center, send an email to local newspaper editors describing the story of how that center optimized services with your installation. The reaction of journalists will surprise you.

You can also engage in a charitable enterprise, such as one addressing minorities, people with disabilities, or victims of some kind, but be careful — that is a slippery slope, and it's easy to go from benefactor to cynical careerist (especially if you trigger envy in your competitors who will do everything to discredit you).

For this reason, charity must be part of the corporate fabric: people are very sensitive to the various issues related to "-washing," like the exploitation of delicate social issues to get visibility. This means that if your company chooses a green communication, it must also be backed up by actions, concretely committing to environmental sustainability — and it can't be just a one-off example.



A bitterly criticized example of greenwashing, where the marketing materials were misleading and the product was anything but actually sustainable.

On the contrary, we can mention a case that concerns us personally. At Wildix, we have always been very attentive to the welfare of our employees. At the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, the company offered to relocate all its employees and their families outside Ukrainian borders. The story soon made the rounds of the press and generated public admiration and support for our brand without anyone pushing it.

Other techniques to gain credibility

Frank Merenda recommends writing a book and/or a monthly magazine in which you tell the story of your satisfied customers or how your service changed the lives of your customers. And it's a very powerful idea.

You can invest in digital campaigns and appear in sponsored content on large newspapers, and you can create events or training courses on the subject in which you are an expert.

There are numerous strategies, but what is usually missing is the time needed to dedicate to them, because building reputation is a full-time job.

My advice is to start collecting and spreading your customers' success stories, and, with a bit of patience and luck, your stories will fall into the right hands, and you can become an expert in your industry.

QUIZ CHAPTER V
Take the brand reputetion quiz.
Write your score here:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7M2NYD7

CHAPTER 6:

Your 4D Marketing Plan

The protagonist of the novel *Flatland* is a square that lives in a two-dimensional world — called Flatland — and meets a sphere that comes from the world of three dimensions.

But how can a square recognize a sphere if it has always been accustomed to "seeing" the world in only two dimensions? The square will only see a circle, and only its imagination can make it guess what that object might look like in three dimensions.

The same thing would happen if today, on earth, we saw a four-dimensional object like a tesseract. We would not recognise it as being different from a three-dimensional object such as a cube. We could not comprehend its nature, as the fourth dimension is denied to our sight.

A good marketing plan must be a complex *object*. It cannot be created by *dummies*; it must be subdivided into increasingly specific components, it must bring experience from other sectors, and it must be guided by numbers.

Therefore, a *dummy* error is to create a one-dimensional marketing plan, usually a time-bound one.

We take a calendar and fill the boxes with our marketing actions: an email here, a message here, a PPC campaign there, a press release in another box.

Filled boxes on the calendar are okay at Christmas to make Advent more appealing to children.

The calendar with tasks is fine if, in addition to the dimension of time, you add four more: Target, Content, Channels and Budget.

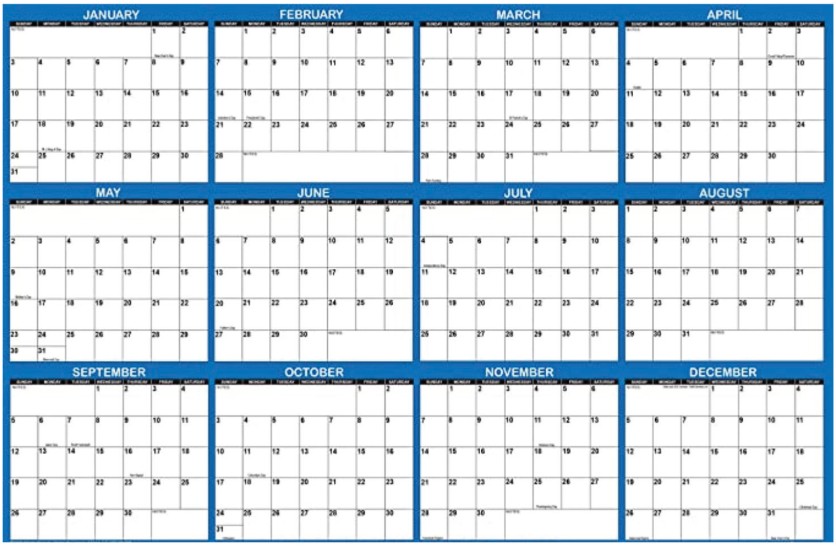
We have already mentioned the strategic aspect in *Chapter 2: Zeno's Dichotomy Paradox Method*, referring to the practical aspect of the construction of a promotion. In this section, we will resume this theme to see how every single marketing action actually has a solid strategic basis and a context within which to be inserted.

Enter time

The first dimension — although not the only one nor the most important — is time. We can start from here.

To start designing your strategic procedure, follow these steps:

1. Take a calendar or planner, one where you can see all 365 (366) days of the year. It can be digital or printed.



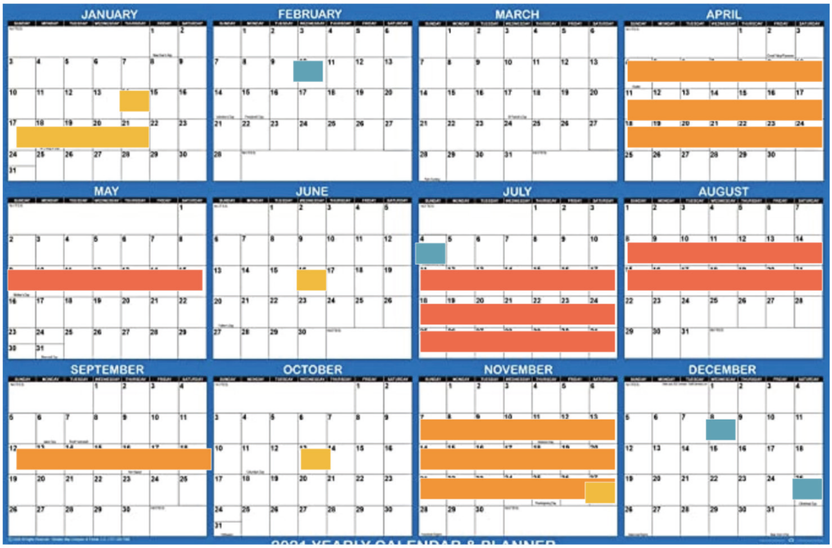
2. Now, based on the data from the last three years, mark the calendar with these things in different colors:

a. The period(s) in which you sell more

b. The period(s) in which you sell less

c. Special events and festivities (Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter)

d. The days when you usually do promos, if there are any (end of season sales, Black Friday, Cyber Monday)



Useful tip:

Not all days are the same.

There are periods that require some actions, others other actions. With this technique, you know in advance when to make a special promotion, and when to raise prices instead.

Segmenting and differentiating time is a great way to plan increasingly effective actions.

Optionally, in the margins, mark down active campaigns throughout the year such as:

a. Customer's birthday

b. Referral (introduce a friend)

c. Social media branding or retargeting

d. Incentives testimonials/reviews

e. Loyalty card promos

Enter the target dimension

The “target” is your goal, the bullseye that your arrow must hit with precision to stun the whole thing.

There is a rather striking example from old television programs when you would see toys advertised during cartoons and advertisements for cars before or after the news.

On the internet, we went further, because the cookies that stick to you every time you surf in the vast ocean of the internet create an algorithm of preferences. They know if you are male or female, if you are thirty or sixty years old, what you listen to, how you look, what you buy, and everything else about you.

Once your profile has been outlined, you are nothing more than a jar of cookies similar to many others. But at the same time, you’re different from everyone else, and you’re presented with advertisements or recommended content designed just for you.

You understand this situation was great for advertisers, but this happy oasis will not last long.

When talking about targets, it’s worth associating this word with the matter of privacy: maybe you’ve wondered why your advertisements perform like crap lately. The reason is very simple: Privacy is becoming increasingly important. However, the relationship between customization and security means that one may be sacrificed for the other. The GDPR has limited the freedom of email marketing, iOS 14 has greatly limited app tracking by Meta (which owns Facebook), and now Google has also announced they’re removing third-party cookies.

Without going further into the technicalities, what does all this mean?

Advertising will become less and less personalized because online user tracking is, and will be, increasingly limited: advertising will not disappear, but it will be less and less interesting, less and less targeted, and therefore annoying.

Future scenario?

Knowing your target will become even more important, and surgical, omnichannel marketing will become the way to bring our users to conversion.

Golden Rule: Your marketing **CANNOT, MUST NOT** speak to everyone. You must have an ideal customer to whom to address your message. This becomes crucial if we think about the negative aspects of *hyper-privacy*.

What could your target be as a telecom entrepreneur?

You sell communication systems. Your target is typically male, between the ages of 35 and 50, an IT manager, medium/high education, technical, interested in the IT world, reads a certain type of forum or magazine, uses a specific set of vocabulary terms, works between 8 and 10 hours a day, uses social networks mostly in the evenings or weekends, who is often frustrated because they deal with complaints from customers and their boss because if there is a problem, they're the one who has to solve it...

I could keep going, pushing myself to observe psychological shades or describe this target's personal life, but we'll leave psycho-marketing to the gurus.

What you need to do is imagine a Mr X who has the most common characteristics of your customers.

How do you know how your customers are? Well, that's easy: Call the ones you already have, ask them some questions, meet them, or send them a questionnaire.

Your target must be a character "in the flesh," meaning you have to physically imagine them. This should be a "mold" — or, perhaps more elegantly, a "prototype" — of your ideal customer.

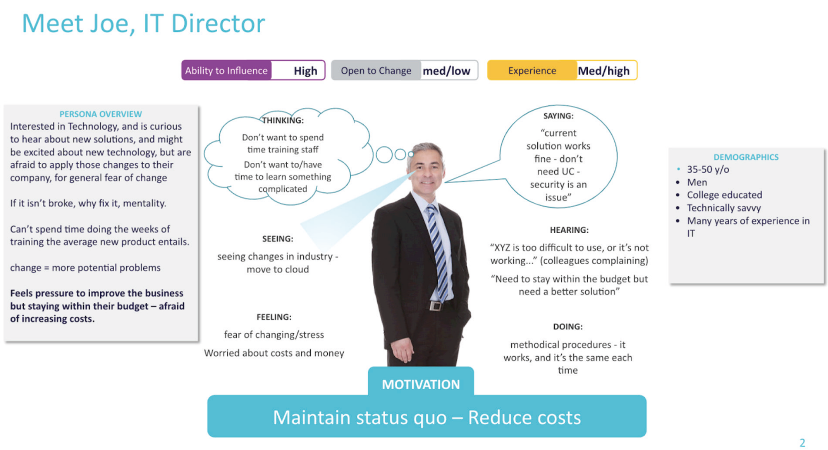
Give them a name, take a picture from the internet, and write below the photo who they are, what they say, what they think, what they do, what they fear, what they look at, what they listen to, and how they feel at work.

If you can't create a single target (which is very likely in many fields), create as many targets and characters as you want to approach — but keep time in mind.

Target 1, 2, 3 ... there's no limit. That is, the more you add characters, the more the marketing plan swells in its complexity because as we will soon see, each target must be given a series of campaigns that change according to the time of year. They have to receive precise content, delivered through an equally precise channel.

Needless to say, the more accurate the portrait of your target(s) the more effective your message will be.

Meet Joe, the IT director I'd like to sell my corporate communications system to:



Enter the content dimension

And now we enter a complex dimension. Here you need a copywriter, an expert in advertising graphics, or experts who have studied sales communication techniques and are able to transform the thoughts and needs of your customers into a powerful mix of texts and images.

Copywriting and graphic design are complex arts, and you often don't have the economic resources to have two separate resources within the company (no, "the marketing guy" often knows just his own things and is not an experienced graphic designer nor an exclusive copywriter — these are figures with extremely different skill sets).

In the meantime, use what you have, especially the knowledge that you have refined over years of (sometimes heated) discussions with customers, and put them down in writing in the best possible form.

Golden Rule: You have to write about what your client cares about, not what you care about. If you are an entrepreneur, it is obvious that you love your product, but rather than convincing a customer, who is skeptical by nature, that your product is the best, try to walk in their shoes, speak their language, and find out how your product can solve their problems.

We can also adopt Zeno's Dichotomy Paradox Method for the contents and write specific messages according to the stage the customer has reached.

a. Is it your client?

b. Is it a potential client?

Content for an existing customer.

If they are already a customer of yours, they have probably had a shopping and/or service experience with you and your company.

As anyone who has worked in a customer-facing role, you likely know that there are customers and … well … *customers*. Here are the most common types:

- The customer who is never happy and never buys anything
- The client who is never happy but keeps buying
- The client who buys and is happy, but does not tell you to have discount power
- The happy client who doesn't buy
- The client who is happy and buys

The customer's happiness is determined by a series of factors. First of all, the quality of your product is paramount. Then there's the purchase experience, the attention received in the post-sale stages, and finally a little luck that everything went well and there were no problems.

You can measure the happiness of your customers using a famous tool: the Net Promoter Score, or simply with three or four questions during a meeting (for example, during routine maintenance).

The *Net Promoter Score* is a simple system — sometimes too simple — to identify the best customers from whom you can "get" something. If you ask an angry customer who's had a lot of problems to leave a review, what do you expect to get?

You need to ask for reviews (over Trustpilot, Capterra, or others) from those customers who are not only satisfied, but are super-happy, so that the customer can become your ambassador, your supporter.

Have you ever seen people line up in front of the Apple stores to buy the new iPhone, in the rain, for hours? They're not especially crazy — they're simply the supporters of Apple.

If you want to use the Net Promoter Score, you have to administer a questionnaire to all customers, although it would be enough to ask just one question:

"On a scale of 1 to 10, how much would you recommend our company (or product) to a family member, friend or colleague/company?"

Then discard everything under 9, and you've found your promoters.

My advice is to differentiate your message at least between promoters and the rest of the customers. The *top* would differentiate it by *promoters, passives,* and *detractors* based on the "vote" they gave you on

your question.

Let’s start with the enthusiastic ones. We create content for them, which can be exclusive promotions, loyalty programs, or incentives to buy or rent products by a certain date.

Do not forget to have a *premium* version that’s very, very expensive. You’ll sell very few of this product, but it is something aspirational, something that allows those who want to differentiate themselves from others to do so (see Chapter 9: Premium Class).

The *Premium* version can only sell to customers who rank 9 or 10 on the Net Promoter Score — customers who trust you so much that they are willing to spend twice as much to stay among your best customers.

To enthusiastic customers, you can propose they attend an event or an open day in which you open your offices or shops and offer them a drink, a special brochure, and an exclusive offer. And while you have them in your house, relaxed by champagne, why not record a video testimony?

For passive customers or detractors, the content can be similar but much less exclusive. You’ll have fewer conversions, for sure, but more contacts to send your promo or proposal to. Or, why not ask them what went wrong and how you could improve? By doing so, their perception of you will change, and they’ll maybe even ask you for a second chance to prove yourself.

Calibrate the two activities well.

Golden Rule: NEVER mix 9-10 customers with the others. Keep them separate. If you host an event where you have both categories, create a VIP space where there’s separation (e.g., an exclusive bar space). Detractors will manage to infect promoters in the long run, and this can cause irreparable damage.

Content for potential customers

Even here, the Zeno’s Dichotomy Paradox Method helps us — or rather, complicates us — but basically, it is what we are looking for.

You can create campaigns for all potential customers (*evolved dummy* version, because you're already segmenting), or you can create campaigns depending on the stage a potential customer is at.

You can't sell a slimming cure to a thin person who feels they are a normal weight. What's more, it will be easier to sell a slimming cure to an obese person who is looking for a slimming method than to an obese person who is not even thinking about it. You'll sell it even more effectively if your treatment is recommended by a doctor whom your client trusts.

The customer may be **aware** or **unaware** of their problem.

They may be **looking** for a solution, or, even though they know there is a problem, they may not be looking for a solution.

They can be searching, and they can already be in the phase of **comparison** between different solutions, or they can not yet have a vision of what is offered on the market.

Finally, they may already be in the phase of choice because they have identified the solution deemed right, but they still have some doubts, perhaps about the price, and will look around to find a counter-proposal.

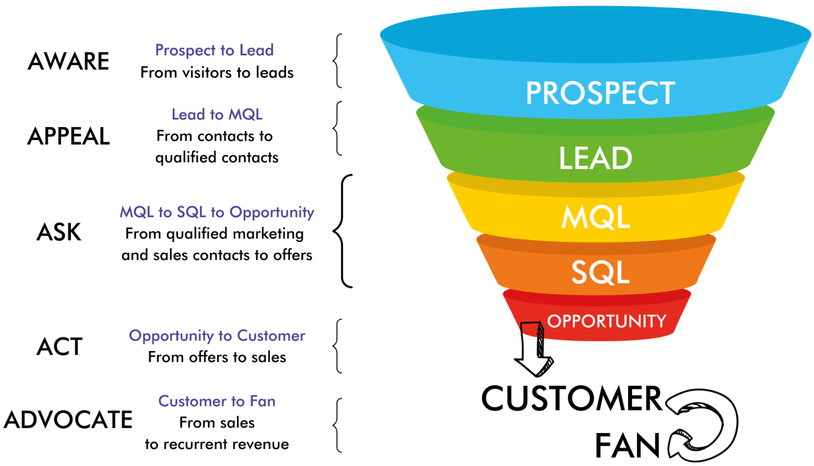
You have to assume that the unaware customers are more common than the conscious ones; these are more than the interested ones; those are more than the ones who are considering and choosing; while these are more than those who are ready to buy.

Market segments are defined as the various segments of our target that lead to different communication methods. The **Ready Market** is precisely the target who knows there is a need, knows the possible solutions that would satisfy it, but does not yet know who to rely on nor the potential suppliers. The **Addressable Market** knows there is a need, but they don't know the possible solutions nor the suppliers. The **Scalable Market** is the most difficult, as they often don't perceive their situation as a problem.

This is why marketing is full of *funnels*: because it starts from a large mass of people to get only those who are really interested in the *hottest* point — the purchase.

The *funnel* of the path that leads the customer to buy starts from awareness ("I know I have a problem"). If there is no such awareness, it is useless for your content to describe how good your product is. You will not get anything out of it. You have to tell an overweight person that their excess weight is harmful to their health for them to do something about it.

Starting from the model AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action) that portrayed the customer's journey toward purchase, Philip Kotler has devised the basis of the modern funnel that we have already seen in Chapter 4. Here is the classic model:



The model of funnel marketing

The various steps make it clear that the targeting process consists of segmenting the market according to how "ready" it is for our products and services. Depending on the readiness of our market, our communication must be different, and the funnel will have a different "duration" and structure once the potential market is funneled down our vortex.

How can we make our market more aware?

If the potential customer is **unaware**, the content that leads to awareness is called **educational** content. You have to talk as an expert speaks to the masses, and explain to everyone that excess fat hurts for 1, 2, 3 reasons, citing 1, 2, 3 real stories.

Exposing the problem does not mean terrorizing (and with fear, you get to a certain point before it becomes ineffective — see the experience governmental health agencies had with COVID-19 and vaccines).

Exposing the problem simply means explaining why you decided to open or continue your business, describing why the founder did it, what their values are, and the benefits for their customers.

Here are the case studies, testimonials, problem-solving, articles in a blog, and advertising on the radio or in the local press. The important thing is to highlight the problem that your company can solve.

If the potential customer is **aware** and is already searching (or even selecting), you have to stake everything on your reputation and positioning.

Tell them why your company is perfect for them, how much your specialization in a particular aspect of that industry can make a difference compared to competitors.

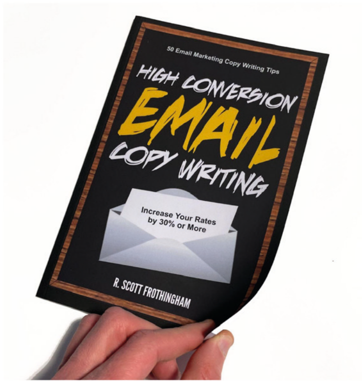
Differentiation helps with choice. I would not know how to choose between two yellow apples from two different brands. But if I were to choose between two yellow apples, knowing one of them is a graft with a Japanese plant and contains 3.5 times the vitamins of an ordinary apple, then my choice can be better oriented.

Testimonials are effective, of course, but so is reputation (awards, certificates, articles in magazines, books, video tutorials — we talked in depth about reputation in Chapter 5).

If the potential customer has already made the first choice but is still undecided, it's time to bring up the ability of the seller to make the customer an irresistible, tailored offer with very high perceived value and a supersonic guarantee.

But marketing here can do little. The relationship and the trust building that a customer looks for in an expert who knows the topic better both come into play.

I recommend a short, very easy book that teaches how to write emails to convert customers. It's a list of 50 tips that you can implement very easily.



High Conversion Email Copywriting by R. Scott Frothingham

Enter the dimension of the channels

We saw in Chapter 2 that there are many channels: social media, websites and landing pages, blog, sales letters, books, magazines, newspapers, advertising on TV or radio or on the internet, podcasts, and videos, to name a small fraction of the avenues available.

The challenge isn't to try them all, because I'm sure some of them won't work for your business.

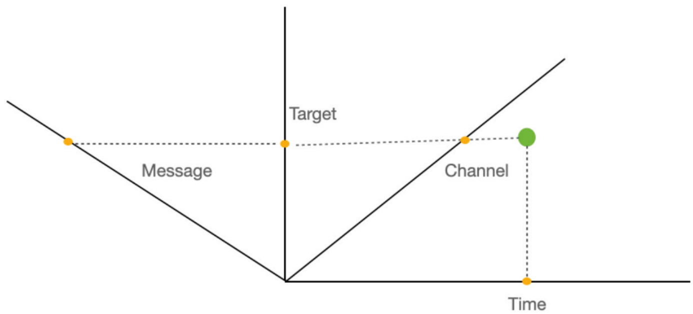
You have to think about your target audience, **where** and **how** it gets informed, and test the channels that work best, maybe through a small sample and an A/B test.

Golden Rule: The closer you get to the funnel spout, the higher your marketing expenses will be, and the more personal your touch must be. This is because in the final phase of "decision" you will find only a few interested potential customers within the target, already holding their wallets open.

Once again, there is no magic formula, but we must proceed calmly by trial and error, by testing and observation.

The four dimensions

The four dimensions, with their subcategories and sub-subcategories, are at your disposal. It's up to you to measure the depth level and the number of replicas you want to generate.



Even if it's impossible to graphically represent four dimensions, we consider the four variables interconnected, and we will find the meeting point between them.

The big dot represents the **message** adhering to the needs of a **specific target** that's **aware** of its problem, through the channel that most uses to inform, in a time period consistent with the **message.**

This is the four aces that all marketers aim to get.

When creating your marketing plan, consider all four of these dimensions, focus on one path and then expand to different targets or different channels or different time periods.

Like in sports, you have to train, and seeing the world in four dimensions is not at all simple. We already have a hard time with three dimensions!

So where do we start?

It's simple: Use your checklist. Let's review it together.

Checklist for Your Marketing Plan

What should the list of your existing customers look like?

Cross the symbol for your answer.

Do you have a database/list of all your customers?
[ ] Yes [ ] No

Do you have everyone's email address?
[ ] Yes [ ] No

Do you have everyone's phone number?
[ ] Yes [ ] No

Do you have everyone's home/office address?
[ ] Yes [ ] No

Have you noted everyone's demographic characteristics?
[ ] Yes [ ] No

Have you split them by rank? (The best, the neutral, the pain in the ass)
[ ] Yes [ ] No

Do you know when they made their last purchase?
[ ] Yes [ ] No

Do you know how much they spend on average per year?
[ ] Yes [ ] No

Do you know who brought you a friend?
[ ] Yes [ ] No

Do you know if they recommended you with a review?
[ ] Yes [ ] No

Do you know what they like about your service?
[ ] Yes [ ] No

Do you communicate with them regularly?
[ ] Yes [ ] No

With this information, you are ready for a marketing close-up. In fact, if you consider only your best customers, and you have their contact information, demographic information (gender, age, geographical area), then you know their activities, buying behavior, what excites them, and you can write your first batch of content and test the most effective channels to deliver them.

If you don't have this information, you better start digging it up. It will take time, but it is a real treasure that will open doors to unexpected gains.

Potential Customers

Cross the symbol for your answer.

Do you have a database of potential customers?
[ ] Yes [ ] No

Do you have permission to communicate with them? (According to GDPR)
[ ] Yes [ ] No

Are they segmented by geographical and/or demographic characteristics?
[ ] Yes [ ] No

Are they identified as target customers? (Meaning that they reflect the characteristics of your ideal customers)
[ ] Yes [ ] No

Do you have their contact information? It's better if it's a physical address, otherwise emails will work.
[ ] Yes [ ] No

Do you know which competitor's products/services they use?
[ ] Yes [ ] No

As for existing customers, the more information you can get, the greater your selection will be. Fewer people to reach means spending less and converting more, provided that those few are the right people. Remember the funnel: If you go off its edges, you lose opportunities and throw away money.

Activate the Net Promoter Score on existing customers

Email your entire customer list, and paraphrase the text below.

Dear Customer,

I'm not going to ask you to answer a very long questionnaire, because I respect that your time is valuable. I just have one question:

On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 10 is absolutely yes), how much would you recommend product X to a colleague, friend or family member who needs it?

Thank you for your response. You helped us understand if we are on the right track to meet the needs and demands of our customers.

Good luck... (blah, blah).

P.S. If you want to download our latest report on [Topic], click here to read it for free.

Regards,

[First and Last Name]

Important notes:

Use the **tone of voice** that distinguishes you, whether formal or familiar (remember a "Hello," doesn't offend anyone).

Send the email from a **"human" address** that has a name and surname — it's even better if it belongs to someone in the company who can answer in case the customer has questions.

Don't use *no-reply/info/customer-care@yourdomain.com* — those repel clients like DEET repels mosquitos.

Use a subject a little more appealing than simply "Questionnaire".

Use your imagination. The subject and the sender significantly affect whether the recipient opens the email.

"Can you give us your vote?" "One question to help us" — use your imagination!

Put a **P.S.**, because studies show that the PS after the subject is the most-read line in emails. So put something, like a call to action (a download, click to get, etc.) or some engine (if it's a promo, you can put urgency or scarcity).

Now you have your *promoters*, who gave you 9 and 10. They can help you with testimonials or their information to attract new customers.

P.S. The 9s and 10s are also the customers who usually create few problems, so I recommend treating them well — better than any other customer! We tend to spend hours with the loud customers who break us to try to hold onto them while we ignoring the good ones who keep quiet. Careful, because they buy quietly. But just as quietly, they will go to your competitor if you do not pay a little attention and recognize them!

QUIZ CHAPTER VI

Take the quiz and find out if you are ready to create your marketing plan.

Write your score here:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/72SCM5Y

CHAPTER 7:

Let's Take the Elevator: Simplify Difficulty

OK, so far we have complicated what is simple. And this is the high road of marketing.

After all, even in everyday life, I don't have great examples of situations where the simplest thing is also the most beneficial thing.

But most importantly, in a global world where "copying" is a breeze, the more complex your marketing model is, the less it can be copied. An additional competitive advantage would be to roll up your sleeves and use the Zeno's Dichotomy Paradox Method for your marketing.

There's one thing that should be simple, even though you can make it incredibly complicated. The only thing, out of many, that **must** remain simple:

"Give me a reason why I should invest $10 million in your company."

Call it Value Proposition, Unique Selling Proposition, Mission, Activity, Corporate Goal ... in essence, it's "who are you, and what you do".

I've seen hundreds of corporate presentations in my career, whether at events, summits, webinars, or in person. Very few people have been able to explain in 30 seconds the gist of their business, why people work every day on that project, and why after so many years, they're still there to carry it out.

There is a great idea called the elevator pitch that distills everything about the company, its leadership, and its employees into a single essence.

Imagine getting into an elevator and you end up with someone who looks at you and says, "I'm an investor with a lot of money, and you only have the time of the elevator ride to convince me to invest in your company."

Obviously, it depends on how many floors the building has, but let's say that somewhere between 30 seconds and 2 minutes is an acceptable time for a proper elevator pitch.

Here is the big issue: Which of my many, many aspects represents me?

Here is the answer: "Why should the investor/client choose me over one of my competitors, who is maybe bigger than me?"

Do you want some help? Think about your company in six months. What are the three elements that you would like to be recognized by a person who knows nothing about the company? Better, what would you like this stranger to highlight on your company if stopped on the street? Think of three features and work in all possible ways to make them come out in all aspects of your communication. This is how you create a strong, recognizable identity.

And that's exactly what the exercise is about: simplicity. Everyone knows that a company is a complex *organism*, that every component is very important, and that on average, there's not a single product that's produced for a specific target to solve a single problem

Nonetheless, this would be enough to win over the financier.

The German architect Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe, in wanting to clean his designs of all superfluous embellishments, coined the famous expression "less is more".

The idea of a perfect home, according to Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe

Instead of getting caught up in a tongue twister of technical terminology, mixing languages like in a centrifuge, and instead of getting into operational processes, you just have to tell why you exist and why people buy from you. This is the ultimate value of your product/solution.

An example? The Apple Watch. If you decide to buy an Apple Watch, paying 30 times more than a normal smartwatch, you don't buy it just to see the time. Maybe you get it because you play sports? To have notifications on your wrist, instead of taking out your phone? You could do all that with a cheap watch that costs a mere $39.

The Apple Watch solves two very important problems. It makes it easy for you to make contactless payments, and it monitors important vital signs (heart rate and oxygen saturation for now).

These two factors alone can justify the price of the device. No one would add their credit card to a toy watch worth a few dollars, and they would not trust their vital signs to be correctly recorded by it either.

The Apple Watch can store two of the most important aspects of your life: your money and your health. You trust that it does this safely, which is where it demonstrates its value.

Then there is the screen, the colors, the pixels, the design, and the technical support for the product certainly has its own attractions, but what would persuade an investor to put $10 million into the project is the perceived value to the customer.

Ultimately, you need to find the specific thing that triggers your investor's imagination. In the end, that investor is the sum of all your customers who persuade themselves to buy your solutions/services.

So how do you write a perfect elevator pitch?

I've always liked the simple solution from Geoffrey Moore (Geoffrey Moore, Crossing the Chasm), where you simply fill in the spaces below:

For ____(specific target)

That ______________________________________(client's needs)

The ______________________________(product/service name)

Is ______________________________(product/service category)

That provides ______________________(benefits when you buy it)

Unlike ______________________________(primary competitor)

[My product] __________(differentiation compared to competitors)

An example of an elevator pitch for x-bees by Wildix.

***For** companies with 200-400 employees*

***That** need a communication system that increases revenue and helps their salespeople sell more*

***The** product x-bees*

***Is** a unified communication as a service solution, created to increase online sales by 32%*

***Unlike** all old communication systems (PBX)*

***x-bees** integrates corporate CRM, live chat on websites, and video conferencing to manage each phase of communication with customers and potential customers, and to accompany them throughout the sales cycle. The smartphone app allows you to maintain longer (+45%) conversations with potential customers. Salesperson availability across all forms of communication (audio, video, chat) and persistent conversations increase conversions by 32%.*

If your company makes different products, you'll need different elevator pitches. Apple has a specific proposal for the Apple Watch that is far different from that for the iPhone or iPad and, within the iPad sector, each element of the family has its own specific audience and strengths.

Try this exercise:

Gather the strategic figures of your company, representatives from the sales, technical and administrative departments, and collectively discuss the value perceived by customers and the elements of differentiation of your proposal against the competition.

Once you've worked on your elevator speech, write it down, and print out a copy for each office. Sometimes a digital document doesn't work as well as a sheet of paper printed and pinned on a wall.

I'm betting that if I were to interview 10 of your people in the morning, when I ask, "How are we different from the competitors?", I'd get ten different answers.

The data is even more unfortunate if you think that your employees are the ones talking to customers. So in the eyes of your customers, you are what your sellers or your marketers say about you. Then the conversation changes and the value changes.

Sharing these strategic angles is essential to align your entire team to a common goal.

An additional advantage of sharing a well-thought-out elevator pitch is that it becomes the backbone of your copywriting and sales strategy.

On the other hand, aren't *Target, Needs, Proposal,* and *Differentiators* the same components that you need to create content and campaigns?

Everything comes back to and revolves around this fateful question: **"Why would a customer choose me over my competitor?"**

Trust me when I tell you that this question is not just about the strategic analysis of small or medium-sized enterprises. This is the question that companies like Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Mercedes, Microsoft, Barilla, and a thousand other brands ask themselves. And if they ask that, why shouldn't you?

Otherwise, why should Coca-Cola invest billions of dollars in advertising if it is already the leader of its market?

QUIZ CHAPTER VII

Take the quiz to find out if you understand the steps to build your elevator pitch.

Write your score here:

https://it.surveymonkey.com/r/72FYLQB

CHAPTER 8:

Quick Summary

Marketing is an art. While it is true that it's a discipline that aims to sell, marketing's method and its ability to be refined, its ability to create a world or culture, and its effectiveness in sharing a message, convincing the unaware, and helping those in need makes it more noble than we believe.

As with every other discipline, marketing is complex and needs techniques, innovation, and training.

Each marketing action can be done in *dummy* mode or expert mode.

Every action that comes to mind can be sectioned into increasingly precise subactions to create a perfect partnership between the person who sends the message and the one who receives it.

Marketing, in essence, must recreate that connection that happens between two long-time friends when one asks the other (who is an expert in photography) which camera to buy and where.

The answer from the friend does not contain only information (which in marketing would correspond to the version for *dummies*, i.e., "this product is the best!"). **The friend's response contains enormous unspoken content**, which is the most powerful weapon of conviction that exists: the Holy Grail of marketing.

If a good friend of mine recommends me a product/service/supplier, I also consider the trust, esteem, respect, and extent of his knowledge to help make that decision.

All this emotional load exists only in me. For a passerby who doesn't know my friend, it obviously has no effect.

But for me, that thing exists, and I will be inclined to follow the advice of my friend, even if many other "experts" propose alternatives to me.

After all, I'm willing to go eat in a restaurant with dozens of negative reviews if a friend tells me it's great, and I'm not willing to go if I read dozens of positive responses but a friend of mine tells me it sucks.

And the reason is, who is writing those reviews? I don't know them — they may have been manipulated.

The perfect job in marketing is to **represent** with the right campaigns and to study the figure of that friend who we trust and believe, beyond any other advice, beyond any bad or good review.

1. Choose one or more specific targets for your campaigns (one campaign for each target!) and write content for that specific target, talking about their specific needs, using clear examples and certain metrics. **Subdivide!**
2. Try to break down each process of your campaigns to make them more and more complex and precise. **Refine!**
3. Find the most convenient time and channels for your target when sharing your content. **Plan!**
4. Add scarcity, exclusivity, and urgency if you want to get them moving. **Power up!**
5. Enrich your message by building and proving your reputation. **Believe in it!**
6. Give clear instructions. **Organize!**
7. Use numbers to predict results and to avoid the risk of a failed campaign. **Analyze!**
8. Watch what they do in other areas to update the way you present yourself/your business and copy it if you can. **Get there before others!**
9. Don't treat all customers the same way, and treat the best customers better to create a *Premium Class*. **Reward!**
10. Don't treat potential customers as if they are all in the same phase; consider whether they are aware, if they are already looking, or if they already have clear ideas. **Specify!**

By pure chance, there are 10 here, but they're not a magic formula nor a hyper-simplified solution to create successful marketing campaigns.

It takes study, analysis, segmentation, controlled attempts, experimentation, refinement, details, and a lot of dedication to create a marketing system that works.

Where do you start?

From large to small. From coarse to microscopic.

Think about the circulatory system. From the heart, large veins and arteries come in and go out; deoxygenated blood enters and goes to the lungs, and oxygenated blood comes back. It gets pumped around into thinner and thinner vessels until they reach organs and tissue that need oxygen and other nutrients.

When in doubt, start from your **customer list**.

Find the characteristics that distinguish good customers from okay customers, and create your ideal customer.

Learn your best customers' vocabulary, their needs, the problem they have solved, and use their stories to attract others similar to them.

Then test, experiment, and find the right channels and the pace, and after a little breaking in, your car will run fast.

When in doubt, start from your existing customers. They have already bought from you and can do it again.

When in doubt, use the simplest channels, the ones you can manage with ease, as long as your actions are inscribed in a long-term plan. Avoid the *one-night stand*.

The perfect seasoning for your marketing is patience

Honoré de Balzac writes: "Patience after all is a man's nearest approach to nature's process of creation."

And since Rome was not built in a day, your marketing plan must be created, tested, and refined with patience.

There are some quite easy operations, like a promo for Black Friday — everyone expects some discount for that day in late November. It costs little to send three emails with an exceptional offer.

But the overall marketing plan needs an organic and meticulous approach that ends in victory through consistency and patience.

That doesn't mean you can't sleep on, postpone, or forgo yourself deadlines to meet.

Marketing absorbs a lot of energy and needs deadlines and a fast pace. Patience lies in the work of refining, in being able to generate the desired results within budget, without any waste.

Definitely not a *dummy's* job!

CHAPTER 9:

Premium Class

Marketing is based on gratification.

To gratify customers, you have to distinguish between "good" and "bad".

Who are the "bad" customers?

There are some parameters you can consider when you decide to mark some of your customers with a red "X":

Financial Parameters:

- They don't buy a lot
- They buy at the lowest price
- They pay late, or they don't pay at all
- They have a low purchase frequency
- They only buy if there are special offers

Parameters of relationship

- They always complain
- They complain publicly (for example, on social media)
- They harass technicians and customer care with absurd requests
- And many other things you know well

In theory, you should remove these customers and let them burden your competitors with their negativity. But before doing so, and since it is difficult to do so, at least consider the risk/benefit ratio in retaining them.

Find your customers' average spending (in Chapter 4: Get Guided By Data, we talked about your customer's lifetime value calculation). If the complaining customers end up spending more than the average from your customers, you may be faced with the fact that they are assholes but the company is healthy — and maybe that person will change jobs or retire. Of course, complaining may be their strategy to keep you in check and get more per purchase.

You can give these customers a chance, but it is healthy for your company to limit the effects of their demands as much as possible. Raise your head (and the stakes) a little and say: “If you want to be with us, these are the rules.”

On the other hand, some parameters are much more significant, like delays in payments or no payment. You would be better off leaving these clients, or at least tightening the contractual conditions, than continue serving them. One method of mitigation? Prepayment.

As for all the others, the “passive” ones, aim to keep them as long as they pay you, but do not spend too much energy trying to sell them new products or services, as they won’t likely be receptive.

Who are the good customers?

Undoubtedly, good customers are those who pay on time, who are open to your business proposals, or who buy a lot and often.

They are the customers you should focus on, devoting the majority of your energy and should proactively look for.

But even more than the economic side, good customers are those who, in the Net Promoter Score, rated you from 9 to 10. This means it only takes a little push for them to become your ambassadors, and supporters (see Chapter 6: Your 4D Marketing Plan).

You can reserve access to the Premium area for them. Naturally, the economic side (how much they spend) is important, but it’s not the only side that matters, and *selectivity* is more about how customers relate to your company.

If marketing must imitate the trust between two friends who exchange advice on a purchase or a restaurant, it can never be effective if done with those who insult you or with those who do not even respond.

Take care of the best customers and put them in a *Premium* program in which you can give them the name you want, differentiate them from others, and reserve for them special offers and services (Club, Elite, Top, Platinum).

Golden Rule: Before you put them in the club, and before you start your campaigns, ask them for permission to do so and explain the benefits and what will happen when they enter.

In *Permission Marketing*, Seth Godin explains how the request for "permission", even in front of a proposal that's "indecently" positive for the customer, has a very important function. Asking permission is an educational practice that will set you apart from others, and your customers will acknowledge it.

Today with the GDPR, we are forced to ask for consent, but it is still a formal practice.

On the other hand, *consent* is very different from permission, because permission is granted and relies on a high-caliber relational aspect, while consent is usually given only to obtain something that, without that consent, the customer cannot obtain.

How do you ask permission? An email with a button to say "yes," a phone call, an email, or sales letter, any of which announces their inclusion in the program with the possibility to *opt-out* by clicking on a specific link. The best option would be if the program were presented in person, perhaps accompanied by the delivery of a card, a pin, or something physical that the customer can boast about.

What can you offer in your Premium class?

Once you ask for permission, treat Premium customers the way you would like to be treated when you pay double or triple for a business class ticket for the best seat in the theater or for an exclusive restaurant.

Look at the other areas (see Chapter 3: Look at What Is Done in Other Sectors Method) to inspire you; there are many ideas.

You can use the **time** factor, and serve Premiums **first**: faster access to technical support, shorter lead times for deliveries, first to buy the new product, or a trial time.

You can use the **quantity** factor and offer Premiums **more**: longer warranty, late payments, or higher discount on particular services.

You can use the **exclusivity** factor and offer Premium people things that **only they can have**: access to you (or a manager of your company who doesn't talk to all customers), a special gadget to show off in front of others (personalized items), invitations to exclusive events, previews of products, and behind-the-scenes looks at your company.

See it this way: a **Premium class is an additional brake that makes it hard for your customer to abandon you for a similar service at a lower price.**

It's difficult to compete on products, given that those in the market aim to maximize functionality. This means what you compete on is the way you sell and deliver these products.

The sense of belonging to a small group with "privileges", although within the business, generates a sense of prestige that people may have never experienced in their lives, and you can be the first to offer it to them.

Also, the sense of belonging to the club produces a group. It can easily happen that, at events or in social media groups, the elites of your customer base get to know each other, strengthen the quality of the service received, and create a common front against the attacks of detractors or competitors.

For this reason, it is essential that only the best customers are allowed in the club, and it's equally essential that as soon as a member starts to poison the environment, they are removed as soon as possible.

QUIZ CHAPTER IX

Take the quiz and find out if you understand the principles of Premium class.

Write your score here:

https://it.surveymonkey.com/r/7M5NSJ6

CHAPTER 10:

CRM, aka Your Vault Filled with Gold

CRM means "customer relationship management", and it's simply a strategy to deal with customers.

But since there is now software for everything, from cleaning floors to simulating the flight of a plane, the software to manage customers is called a CRM.

Whenever you hear the actions "Segment" or "Select" or "Indicate", you should think about performing them in your CRM.

Excel sheets can also work at first, but as in every aspect of marketing, because your CRM strategy works, you should rely on tools created specifically for these goals.

Tell me how you can filter this request on an xls, with thousands of rows:

- (Target 412) Give me all the Platinum women customers, who spent >€100 in recurring fees between March and August, have already received my reference book by mail, have opened my last email about Christmas promos, and are Libras.

The zodiac sign is obviously an exaggeration (although a CRM should allow you to add it or calculate it, if needed), but do you understand the complexity that a well done marketing campaign requires to send effective content to the right target?

Having a rich layer of information about your customers (or potential customers) and being able to use it (the information) to create groups to invite to specific campaigns is the point of CRM.

If the tool also allows you to track or activate campaigns with automation, that's even better.

For example, once you have determined your target (Target 412), ask your CRM:

- Send three emails starting next Tuesday, three days apart from each other, sent by the sales representative of each specific contact. If the customer clicks on the link contained in the email, send a notification to the sales rep to call within 24 hours from the click; if they don't click, send an additional email a month after the end of the campaign with a specific text.

These are the classic features of a marketing automation system, but you can also indulge in more hardcore features, such as:

- Send the link to the latest video about our solution to Target 412. If they watch it for less than a minute, send email B after 24 hours; if they watch it for one to three minutes, send email C after 12 hours; and if they watch the whole video, send email A after 1 hour from Sales Rep X with a timed offer, including a countdown. If they don't click on the offer, enter the contact in the group for a remarketing social campaign focused on Facebook and Google so that they see our ad every time they browse.

Ordering and organizing information is the secret that has allowed us to avoid starting over each time we're trying to understand the world.

A booklet, a recipe, or a manual are the most obvious methods of having information at hand when you want to take action.

The information related to your customers is the guideline that you can use to **understand who your customers are and what they do** (when and how they buy, when and if they are complaining) **and to increase the conversion in terms of sales.**

Imagine your CRM as a garden full of small avatars, each with its hairstyle and clothes, but grouped by specific features.

Which CRM do you choose?

There is something for everyone, depending on the size of your customer portfolio or your commercial network (do you have 30 customers and one employee, or do you have 3,000 customers and 150 sales reps?).

I have two tips: First, **DO NOT choose free programs**. As a rule, free programs lack more powerful functions, or you have to buy a module here and a module there, and additional space, and new users — in the end, you spend as much as you would have spent buying a professional product.

Second, **don't go to the smaller guys in your city** who developed software in the 1980s for the local bank and who never updated it but can make a **customized version for you**!

Golden Rule: Unless your business is really in a hyper-specific and rare niche (I'm talking about being one of two companies in the world), don't look for custom-made software. Because you can use what successful companies already use! It's not the program that needs to change because you have weird processes but you have to adapt to processes from successful software.

Just think that you can use the same software that Microsoft uses for its campaigns. Do you want to tell me that your needs are so specific that the program Microsoft uses doesn't suit you? Do you really need a custom one?

Choose the best there is on the market (that you can afford), and take advantage of it as it was conceived. Then it is obvious that the content, cadences, and segmentation criteria will all be yours and specific to your business!

QUIZ CHAPTER X
Take the quiz and find out if you understand the value of CRM.
Write your score here:
https://it.surveymonkey.com/r/7X7XVSL

CHAPTER 11:

Marketing Can Be the Lighthouse That Shows You the Hidden Rocks

Many think that marketers are extroverted goblins who talk about funnels and get excited to measure CTR in the bathroom. They are at the computer spending money and creating colorful figurines instead of spending hours in the car to sell products directly or in the factory with their hands in dough for production.

© Harvard Business School

P.S. I stole this slide from a presentation by Mark Roberge, creator of Hubspot. And it shows how salespeople and marketers are seen — it made me laugh a lot ...

Yet, if they're capable and serious, the marketer should be seen as a beacon that lights up the coast on misty nights, when the company ship decides to challenge the wind and continue on the established route, despite the dangerous rocks all around.

Yes, because among the goals that marketing should set, one is to save miles of road travel for the sales department, warming up customers' enthusiasm, or educating potential customers before their meeting.

In addition, marketing should help to specialize the product so well that its production could be simplified, and that technical support gets rid of many hassles.

How? With the power of information.

Information is the real power in the business world.

It's no coincidence that the world of information has been called the **fourth power**, arrogantly positioning itself among the legislative, executive, and judicial powers.

We live in the age of infodemics, meaning we live in a world where there is so much information that it risks saturating our capacity for discernment, and that throws us into the danger of not knowing what is true and what is false.

Add to this our famous 8 seconds of attention, and you can well understand how difficult it is to extrapolate exactly what we need.

Marketing, in a company, is the bearer of information. That counts in both ways: information that comes from customers, and information ready to be delivered to customers.

The thesis of this chapter is this: If you collect, order, and use it properly, the information that comes from marketing can help prevent a company from crashing on the rocks or losing the negotiation of the century.

First of all, where do you get the information?

How to retrieve information

Marketing must act like a spy: one of those spies you see in films about the CIA who, unsuspectingly, manages to infiltrate any "top secret" situation and steal crucial secrets for the success of the mission.

The goal is the customers and potential customers, and the mission is to sell or prepare for sale.

Customers must be "questioned", but gently, asking them *permission* and giving them something in return.

There are many ways to do so: interviews (on the phone, in person, or in a video), success cases, involvement in testing a new feature, or satisfaction questionnaires.

If you can *segment* your customers well and do the best customer interviews, you can get the most effective information and then create marketing materials to convince and convert potential customers.

Opening a dialogue with the customer is very beneficial. Keep in mind that customers love to talk. They love to tell how they *used* your product to be better. Ask them to tell you about the value of their company, and you will see their eyes light up with joy — it's almost childish, ancestral.

Warm them up with questions about their successes, and then ask what you want to know, which is the biggest problem that your product has solved.

The information you receive is important not only for the *external* marketing materials you use in your campaigns, but also to create *internal* marketing materials.

Salespeople need to know what problems customers have solved, their concerns, the competing products they have evaluated, what triggered the final decision, and the value they attach to the solution.

Getting in touch with the **mental dialog** of the customer brings a lot of advantages in sales negotiations. This will ease the **investigation** and **discovery** work that the sales department has to do every time it approaches a customer and provides crucial tools for their negotiations.

Golden Rule: Do not interview just the person who actually bought the solution, i.e. the one who made the decision to buy your solution, but also extend your investigation to their superior, to colleagues, and to those who really use the solution. This way, you will have elements to go *direct,* from *above,* and from *below*.

Often, those who make decisions in the company let themselves be influenced in a positive/constructive sense by some collaborators, and they often tell you the truth about how things went before the introduction of your product.

Interview the IT manager but also the secretary, the marketing department, the sellers, and the CEO. You will have a prism of information that you can use as a detonator if you face the same situation with other customers.

Golden Rule: *Do ut des* ... ask, but don't forget to give. Mind you, you don't have to *buy* the interview or the questionnaire's responses, but offer something as recognition — a thank you is always welcome.

It can be anything you can afford, from a gadget to a small discount. Use your imagination, but also choose something that appeals to the customer, not only to you!

Find a way to store all this information, such as a digital *deposit* (either in your CRM or in a shared folder in the cloud) where you can easily retrieve it.

Information for research and development

How many times has it happened that companies bend over backwards to implement a feature that seemed essential for the customer to sign the offer and, after spending a lot of time and money, not only did you lose the client, but you found out that functionality doesn't interest anyone?

Here the discriminator is not who has more power between production, sales, or marketing, but management sensitivity in using data from marketing to make decisions.

Marketing doesn't have to retrieve information from customers alone. Often, customers don't know what they want. Their testimonials are in fact great to learn the **problems** they have, and what we can solve with our product.

Understanding which solution to propose is the greatest challenge, and information plays a predominant role here.

If in the 1800s you asked what people wanted in order to travel faster, they would have said "faster horses", not "a car". Before the iPhone was introduced, customers were asking for more keys on their Blackberry or more powerful touch pens.

It's not enough to do more; you need to do it differently.

I know you're not an Apple engineer, and you might wonder how this concept fits into your business.

Simply do your job differently than all your competitors, add practices that come from other industries, and study the market you are in.

If you're a system integrator, you can sell your services by packaging them in a different way from others and impress the customer. For example, don't discuss licenses and modules, but present a beautiful finished project complete with a certification plan for future developments.

Marketing offers management the necessary information. **Because marketing has to study what competitors do.**

If mobile phone manufacturers keep adding keys to keyboards, the enlightened manager might decide to incorporate a touchscreen instead.

What is the price at which they sell? What is the perceived value?

Marketing must also study the market and point out to management what the buyers' trends are through public research and by talking with consulting and research agencies.

All this contributes to the realization of a different offer and, as such, helps companies to position themselves in a space freer from competitors — because in an ocean full of sharks so aggressive that the water has become red, it's hard to survive, while in a "blue" ocean, there is room for success (Reading Tip: Renée Mauborgne, W. Chan Kim, *Blue Ocean Strategy*).

When you are close to the coast, the ocean is dotted with jagged and often-hidden rocks. Marketing is the beacon you must light to navigate it more safely.

QUIZ CHAPTER XI

Take the quiz and find out if you know the power of marketing.

Write your score here:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7XQBJ3G

CHAPTER 12:

Create Your Marketing Team

Okay, let's say I convinced you.

You understand that you need a marketing department in your company, but you have just a small amount of money to invest both in a salary and in some campaigns.

Golden Rule: The money invested in marketing campaigns **must** aim to bring more money into the company than you spent. You don't do marketing to please your ego. You invest in campaigns to attract new customers or increase sales from your existing customers.

Here are the questions you're probably asking yourself when hiring a person dedicated to marketing:

1. What is the right profile to look for?
2. What are the channels for finding the right person?

The answer to the first question varies based on many factors, so we'll analyze it after we answer the second question.

The channels to find a marketing person

I recommend social networks. If a marketer does not have a good profile on social networks, there are two possibilities: either they are a pre-internet marketer, which means they are not a good fit for you, or they are a kid who does not take themselves seriously yet.

I am not talking about TikTok or Instagram, but there should at least be a LinkedIn profile with a decent photo, a resume, and a couple of written articles.

Here's how to find them.

Note that social platforms change (sometimes substantially) very quickly, so this is what you can do at the time I wrote this book.

LinkedIn allows you to search using very effective filters.

a. Type “marketing” in the top search bar
b. Select the filter “people”; you will be offered other filters, including “connections”, “places”, etc.
c. Select the location, if you want to find a candidate near your company

You should already have a good sample of people. Are there too many?

d. Filter by “connections” and only pick 1st degree or 1st and 2nd degree

You can also consider placing a free ad on LinkedIn, since often even those who have a job have active notifications for new, interesting positions based on their location.

Why go on LinkedIn and not go to an interim agency or place an ad in the newspaper?

Because your goal must be to find people who are already busy and who can bring their experience to your company from day one.

Of course, you can hire a new graduate, an intern, or a “cousin”, but then you’ll find yourself having to give orders, create schedules, and set homework. And you’re already occupied with running your own business.

You should not **look**, but **attract** a person who already works as a marketer and wants to get involved.

Then, if the search on LinkedIn is not good, you can try ads on other social networks or even employment agencies.

Let’s go back to your LinkedIn search. When you find the right profile for you, simply connect and send a very simple message. Below is an example:

"Hello, we are looking for a marketing figure to build a marketing department in the company. Your profile is very interesting, and I was wondering if you are willing/able to chat to evaluate my proposal. What do you think?"

You don't need "Est." or "Dr." formalism — we're on social media.

Use informal language — again, we're on social media.

Don't *tell* them who you are and what the company does because you won't be very good at it (it's hard for everyone), but candidates must be able to understand who you are from your LinkedIn profile (so see how much information you can add) and what your company does from the corporate page on LinkedIn or even from the website.

Now the main question:

What is the right profile to look for?

The most sincere answer is this: "It depends on your business model and what you want to achieve".

For example, if you have an e-commerce site that generates most of your sales, you'll need a figure who knows the online world (social media marketing, web marketing, and SEO). However, if your customers are instead companies that you have to meet in person, you'll need more of a copywriter who can create compelling content that grabs people's attention.

I have adopted a strategy that has so far proved effective.

Make a list of the skills you see as strategic to your marketing, and give precedence to candidates specializing in those that are most difficult to learn.

For example, SEO is a technique you can learn quickly with goodwill and a series of well-done courses; English or German writing skills instead require years of study and practice.

Similarly, social media marketing is much easier to learn than copywriting, as it takes not only years of practice, but also a personal inclination and sensitivity that are difficult to train in those who don't have them.

Here are the main skills for a marketing employee who can take your company to the next level (and, in brackets, the degree of difficulty in gaining experience):

- Copywriting *(very difficult)*
- Branding *(very difficult)*
- PR, public relations *(medium)*
- Marketing automation *(medium)*
- Customer experience *(medium to difficult)*
- Social media marketing *(medium)*
- SEO *(medium)*
- Online marketing, including the PPC campaigns *(medium)*
- Specialist events *(medium)*

What was said in previous chapters is still valid — you and your team do not need to do everything (videos, podcasts, social media, online campaigns, and direct marketing campaigns), because I'm sure that your company has priorities from which to start, and one person wouldn't be able to perform all these actions.

If you have a geographically constrained business model, getting to know the territory becomes a priority, so you'll consider events, direct marketing, geo-localized PPC campaigns, public relations with the press, and copywriting.

If you work on a national scale and compete with many more competitors, branding is a top priority, as are automatic campaigns with copywriting (since you want to reach many contracts) and SEO.

If your priority is to "squeeze" existing customers, events, loyalty campaigns, customer experience, and PR are your go-tos.

Let's say you could afford only two: you could do great things with a copywriter and a marketing expert to whom you could teach the digital or social media part.

If you have to choose one, opt for the role that covers the "uncovered" piece of your company and that answers **one** of these questions:

- How do I find new customers?
- How do I make my company known? (for example to attract investment or large customers)
- How do I leverage existing customers?
- How do I increase my e-commerce sales?

Be in a position to answer the most strategic question among many, and focus on attracting and training the person who can help you solve it.

QUIZ CHAPTER XII

Take the quiz and find out if you are clear about your company's needs in selecting a figure for marketing.

Write your score here:

https://it.surveymonkey.com/r/7XFZSJB

CHAPTER 13:

Conclusions: Business to Human (B2H) and the Domination Over the Zombies

Paradoxes, stadiums, elevators, four-dimensional shapes — I hope I shared the idea that in business, and especially in marketing, the organ that does the most work is the brain.

The crash test *dummies*, the *Dummies* books with whom we started this journey have the appearance of human beings, but they lack organs — notably the brain.

Zombies do not eat Barbies' heads, but go after the most delicious brains, and so do customers.

Think of customers like an army of zombies.

They are slow, they do not listen (or pretend not to listen), they are on the sidelines dangling, and they do not show passion through either facial expressions or actions.

They stand there and walk in deserted cities, full of advertising signs that they no longer see.

But as soon as they smell the scent of beautiful reasoning, a brain that creates connections and creates interest, they wake up, stretch their arms, and come towards you.

Marketing cannot be a billboard in the desert or even a square on page 20 of the local newspaper.

Zombies have stopped reading emails that don't come from others like them.

Marketing must be a refined work of creation, intelligent, and complex — so complex that the customer does not even have to guess the mechanisms that move it. It is an apparent *miracle* that happens to a customer when they wake up with a desire, or a need, and opening a web page or a magazine brings exactly the solution to their issue.

And you don't get there by chance, but with a great research effort in understanding **who you want to sell to, because that person or company wants to buy and have the right message, at the right time, on the right channel.**

It's study, application, and research that make the difference, not miracles or lucky breaks.

If there is a lesson that I wanted to give you in these pages it's this: Any marketing activity that you want to do is fine **as long as** it is inserted in a campaign context and **as long as** you can always refine it, and make it more complex and specific.

It's natural to start from a simple premise, but it's a mistake to think your *first version* is valid forever — it's only by continuous reviewing work that marketing campaigns can lead to success.

Golden Rule: Each time you perform a marketing action, set two reminders on your calendar: one 15 to 20 days after to analyze the results of how it's going, and the other one 30 to 45 days away to process the action. Use this pattern to infinity: analysis reminders and processing reminders.

The "advertising" that is the primordial version of marketing has evolved a lot over time

It comes from word of mouth: "It is said that there is a better butcher in the next town."

It evolves into a "universal" message speaking to an indistinct audience: billboards, radio, TV, and internet.

Today, it is still evolving into an increasingly personal message, once again a word-of-mouth method but digital, social, and viral.

In a world where every consumer can see 1 million advertising messages per year, around 3,000 per day, your advertising message is lost like a drop of fresh water in an ocean (source: Seth Godin, *Permission Marketing*).

Therefore, it's increasingly important that your message is as personal as possible, that your marketing is **business to human**.

What does that mean?

That behind a consumer, or a customer, there is always a person who, as we have seen in the Target section, is a person who thinks, desires, fears, inquires, and trusts.

Marketing is almost ready for this leap, to approach communications one by one. All the algorithms of social media are *learning* every day, refining themselves more and more to understand the tastes of each consumer and then proposing to them what they really need.

And the underlying logic is not bad.

If I'm not interested in electronics, it's useless that I get technical/technological advertising, right?

If advertising offers me what I really care about, it becomes a service instead of an annoying interruption.

This is the goal you need to aim for. Create human marketing that helps customers and consumers improve their lives.

With such refined marketing, zombies will be attracted by your proposal and will want to taste a piece.

Image borrowed from the site: emilydewsnap.wordpress.com

CHAPTER 14:

Golden Rules (Recap)

Golden Rule: Not everyone is a customer.

Golden Rule: In marketing, it is never *right* or *wrong.* Only good results lead to labeling a campaign as good or bad.

Golden Rule: Assuming that the client must be treated as they have always been treated leads to a missed opportunity.

Golden Rule: Most of the time, it is not the product that makes our customer satisfied but the way they got it and the guarantee they received that there will be someone to help them if needed. The person who looks only at the product, who buys separate components and puts everything together themselves in a final product that only they can enjoy or is very attentive to the price will look only at the lowest cost, eliminating any connected service.

Golden Rule: Your marketing **CANNOT, MUST NOT** speak to everyone. You must have an ideal customer to whom to address your message.

Golden Rule: You have to write about what your client cares about, not what you care about. If you are an entrepreneur, it is obvious that you love your product, but rather than convincing a customer, who is skeptical by nature, that your product is the best, try to walk in their shoes, speak their language, and find out how your product can solve their problems.

Golden Rule: NEVER mix 9-10 customers with the others. Keep them separate. If you host an event where you have both categories, create a VIP space where there's separation (e.g., an exclusive bar space). Detractors manage to infect promoters in the long run, and this can cause irreparable damage.

Golden Rule: The closer you get to the funnel spout, the higher your marketing expenses will be, and the more personal your touch will be.

This is because in the final phase of "decision" you will find only a few *interested* potential customers within the target, already holding their wallets open.

Golden Rule: Before you put them in the club, and before you start your campaigns, ask them for permission to do so and explain the benefits and what will happen when they enter.

Golden Rule: Unless your business is really in a hyper-specific and rare niche (I'm talking about being one of two companies in the world), don't look for custom-made software. Because you can use what successful companies already use! It's not the program that needs to change because you have weird processes but you have to adapt to processes from successful software.

Golden Rule: Do not interview just the person who actually bought the solution, i.e. the one who made the decision to buy your solution, but also extend your investigation to their superior, to colleagues, and to those who really use the solution. This way, you will have elements to go *direct*, from *above*, and from *below*.

Golden Rule: *Do ut des* ... ask, but don't forget to give. Mind you, you don't have to *buy* the interview or the questionnaire's responses, but offer something as recognition — a thank you is always welcome.

Golden Rule: The money invested in marketing campaigns must aim to bring more money into the company than you spent. You don't do marketing to please your ego. You invest in campaigns to attract new customers or increase sales from your existing customers.

Golden Rule: Each time you perform a marketing action, set two reminders on your calendar: one 15 to 20 days after to analyze the results of how it's going, and the other one 30 to 45 days away to process the action. Use this pattern to infinity: analysis reminders and processing reminders.

Glossary of the Main Marketing Metrics

KPI: Key Performance Indicator.

The key performance indicator is how a business process is going. It is a different indicator for each business, since it could be a different key indicator of performance for each business. In this case, it may refer to individual campaigns.

ROI: Return On Investment.

If I invest a certain amount to acquire customers, how much can I take home considering the value of the purchases made by those customers? The formula to calculate it is:

Revenue minus Expenses divided by Expenses

R - E/E

ROAS: Return on Advertising Spend

The return on advertising investment, this metric is equivalent to the previous, with a look at advertising performance, and is calculated as follows:

Revenues from the advertising campaign / Campaign costs.

R/C

Funnel

We create funnels when we plan a marketing strategy: it is a structure that includes several steps to analyze and filter users interested in our product or service.

CPL: Cost Per Lead

At this stage, we're not yet talking about customers or prospective customers. We have some references for this user, such as email address, phone, first name, and last name.

CAC: Customer Acquisition Cost

The cost to complete a conversion, compared to the investment we have completed.

You can calculate the CAC by dividing the customer acquisition expenses by the number of customers acquired.

CPO: Cost per Order

All the costs we finally incur to complete an order. You can calculate CPO by dividing customer acquisition fees by the number of orders.

CPI: Cost per Installation

This represents the average cost that must be incurred for each installation of the app, meaning for the number of installations recorded as events and attributed to your listing.

Total amount spent on listings / Number of Installations of your app

C/I

CPV: Cost per View

These calculations are often different depending on the platforms, since each of them calculates the visualization with different minutes counting.

For example, on Facebook, a view is 3 seconds of watched video, and it is calculated as follows.

Total amount spent / Number of continuous 3-second views

T/V3

Views, Coverage, and Impressions

Views are the number of times a person clicked on the link and the landing page — or the target video, or the interactive experience you chose as the end goal — loaded correctly (with or without access to your Facebook profile).

Coverage (or reach) is the number of people who have seen your page's content — or content related to it — at least once (but may have viewed the content more than once).

The organic coverage is the one we talked about above, and that in the count does not take into consideration sponsored posts.

Paid coverage is the number of people to whom paid posts on your page have been shown.

Impressions are the number of times ads appear on the screen, meaning the number of times your ad is visible on the user's screen for the first time.

CPM: Cost per Mille (Thousand Impressions)

This is an average cost calculated on a thousand impressions; it is especially used when pointing to the exposure CPM.

Amount spent in total for a campaign (C) / Number of Impressions (I) x 1,000.

C x 1,000/I

CPM (People), or cost per thousand people reached

The elements that affect coverage or reach are:

- Offer in the auction
- Budget
- Effectiveness of the choice of the target

Here is how it is calculated:

CPM (Persons) = Total amount spent for the Campaign (C) / coverage (c) x 1,000.

C x 1,000/c

CPR: Cost per Result

Usually, in social campaigns the result is the achievement of the goal of the social campaign.

CPR = Total amount spent / Number of Results.

I/R

Click on Link

The number of clicks that were made by users on the ad link that redirected them to the advertiser's scheduled destination.

The link clicks take into account those clicks that have been made by the user on the entire area of the listing: the text, the link, the photo, the video, and the call to action button.

Clicks (All)

The clicks on the link and all the other possible clicks that a user could make. For example, a click on the name of the page, a like to a comment, a like to a post, sharing a post on the page, clicks that open a full photo, or play a full-screen video.

CTR: Click-through rate

The ratio between the number of clicks and the impressions of advertising.

CTR = Clicks on the link / Number of impressions

C/I

CPC: Cost per Click on link

Measure the average cost of every click you make on the link you choose to direct users to the landing page.

CPC = Total amount spent over a certain period of time / Clicks on the link

S/C

LTV: Lifetime Value

This tells us the value of a customer in terms of potential spending over time.

Quiz Results

40 - 48 points

Well done! You have assimilated the main points of the book, and are ready to go!

30 - 40 points

There are definitely some unclear topics but nothing that can't be solved with a quick review of the chapters where you feel more insecure!

20 - 30 points

You didn't do your best! Reread it thoroughly to help fix the concepts.

Less than 20

Put the book down, relax, and rest, try again in a few weeks! And if there is something unclear, contact us :)

Bibliography

Everything I wrote is not my own … It's just a clumsy collage of well-explained concepts I found in the books that I list below, and what I've experienced in my career.

So thanks to all the authors!

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