

## 5 Lies Marketers Tell (Sometimes)

The idea that a marketer might lie is probably not causing anyone to question their faith in humanity. Marketers, perhaps next to lawyers, are considered to be of flexible moral character. Perhaps unlike lawyers, who demand respect and claim to adhere to a code of ethics, marketers acknowledge the inherent deceit of their trade. In this way, ironically, they are more honest than lawyers. Still, there are lies that marketers (sometimes) tell to their clients and CEOs that account for the misunderstandings that surround marketing. As diehard fans of marketing, Tudog takes offense at dishonest marketers, and therefore dedicates this article to blowing away the secrecy masking the lies marketers tell us.

This article does not expose the tricks and lies marketers use to promote and sell products. Each of us is most likely an expert on identifying and condemning the frauds among us. Rather, this article focuses on the lies marketers tell to those to whom they are supposed to be of service – the lies that inflate the use of marketing services. The issue Tudog has with these lies – other than that they are wrong – is that they backfire and instead of making marketing more critical to companies they serve to reduce confidence because they rarely deliver on their promise. Marketing is a central function of any company and the activities surrounding good marketing can be justified through the results they bring. The same cannot be said for the lies we expose herein.

The lies are:

1. We Can Anticipate Future Trends – some marketers like to believe, or perhaps make others believe, that science has somehow granted us the power to predict the future. We have developed all kinds of statistical tools and tests so we can apply them, all in the name of determining what will happen months, or maybe, years from now. This is not true. We cannot anticipate future trends. The best we can do is tell you what consumers are telling us. Whether or not this actually occurs is anyone's guess.
2. Results Only Come With Time – this is really only half a lie, because it is true that many marketing tactics used require some time before their efficacy can be determined. The half lie can be found in two places; (1) when the marketer knows that the indicators should already be in and is stalling because they aren't showing the desired results, and (2) because no marketing plan should consist of solely long term yielding tactics, but rather should be balanced between long term tactics and those that will drive some more immediate results.
3. Smart and Creative Sells – marketers like to believe that their trade is a refined and dignified art and that the targeted public is just waiting to see how smart and creative they can be. Despite our best wishes, most people do not view marketing as entertainment (Super Bowl commercials notwithstanding). If your marketer presents you with a marketing campaign that shows how smart he is instead of how great your product is, and he tells you his approach will work, stand back – his nose is about to grow.
4. Focus Groups Work – lazy marketers like to use focus groups to measure consumer opinion about new or existing products. Sometimes they work, but just as often the information extracted is useless. The focus group process is too dependent on the strength (or weakness) of the group leader and the results can be influenced through the way questions are asked and the dynamics of the group. The focus group can also be

controlled by determining the profile of who serves in the group. The focus group is therefore an “iffy” tool for measuring opinion and any marketer who tells you differently is a fibber.

5. All We Need is Our Experience – like the disclaimer on a financial services prospectus, past performance is no guarantee of future success. Sure it is better to have an experienced marketer as opposed to someone who is using your company to gain experience. And certainly the marketer’s experience will prove helpful. But that does not mean that we rely solely on our experience to create and implement good marketing. Marketing is a combination of intelligence, strategy, tactics, implementation, and follow-up. Inside these phases is real world data, consumer response, competitive response and a series of other factors. Your marketer needs to focus on the real time response to your campaign and not be set on the last set of circumstances his experience affords him. If he is coasting on his experience he will miss critical steps you should be taking. Any marketer who relies solely on his experience, and tells you that’s the way it needs to be, is stretching the truth – beyond recognition.

Marketers who lie don’t mean to avoid the truth. In many cases they have sunk into a set of bad marketing practices that they genuinely believe are true and effective. The poor state of marketing today is because so many people engaged in marketing do not see it as a tool to promote and sell products, but rather see it as a means to influence people by any means necessary. The use of tricks and lies is a sure sign that they have run out of truthful and meaningful ways to apply their craft. They support their poor habits by lying to their bosses, and worse - to themselves.