

Marketing Rules

It's no secret that Tudog views marketing as a critical, perhaps *the* most critical, business function. From the Firm's perspective, the most innovative of products and the most compelling of services will not maximize their market potential if they are not brought through a process that raises awareness, creates interest, and delivers the offer to the targeted market. Moreover, once established and selling well, marketing drives growth by finding ways to sell more product to more people, expanding the buying of existing customers and identifying new markets. With the power to make or break a business, is it any wonder Tudog proclaims, Marketing Rules!

Tudog's tendency to cheerlead for marketing aside, this article isn't really about the centrality of marketing, but rather some actual rules of marketing, so that as we spread the good word we can also be assured that the marketing being implemented is being done superbly.

So here are some marketing rules:

1. It's All About the Customer

Your business sells only when customers buy. The task of your marketing is make potential customers aware of your product and interested in buying it. Once the customer has made the purchase, your task also becomes maintaining the customer. This means you need to understand the customer's motivations. Broadly speaking, customers buy products either to (a) gain something (including the satisfaction of a need or want), (b) avoid losing something, or (c) generate a desired outcome. Gourmet chocolate and pesticides may in fact share the same customer, but the circumstances and motivations are significantly different. Your marketing needs to reflect the customer motivation.

2. It's Not About Your Product

Typically marketers will spend a great deal of time telling us about their products. Yet customers don't buy the products for what they are, rather they buy them *for what they do*. The "what they do" is the benefit the product delivers and customers establish product preferences based on real and perceived perceptions of a products benefits. You cannot promote your product successfully if you do not promote its benefits.

3. Establish Your Value

One of the more challenging tasks marketing must undertake is the establishment of a dollar value for the benefit the product delivers. At the core of this task is the positioning of your product and the value your product can demand based on where it is positioned in the competitive landscape. Often consumers confuse high price with high quality, a predisposition marketers often take advantage of. However, like most aspects of marketing, too many companies tried to peddle non-exclusive products at exclusive prices and the door was left open for value positioning. The value position basically presents an offer to the consumer that has the price/perceived value ratio slightly in favor of value. Whether positioning your product as exclusive, value, or in-between, you need to make certain that the value is established.

4. You Need a Combination of 3

Marketing is successful only when three elements come together; who – the customer, what – the product, and why – the benefit. Without all three of these elements falling into place at the same time, the marketing will fail. Therefore, once again, the emphasis needs to be on (a) who is the right target market, (b) how do we make the product perfect for their needs, (c) how do we communicate, and more importantly, deliver, the benefit.

5. It's Really Simple

Marketers like to depend on statistics and spent a great deal of money on surveys and customer responses that can, at times, be rather suspect in terms of accuracy and usefulness. It really is much simpler than that. In defining the market there are (a) those aware of your product, and (b) those that are unaware of your product. Your task here is to figure out who among the unaware you wish to bring into the aware column. Continuing with the simplicity method, the market can then be further divided; among those aware of your product there are (a) those buying your product, and (b) those not buying your product. Your task as a marketer is to figure out who is not buying your product that should be (because they seek to gain something, avoid losing something, or generate a desired outcome that your product benefit serves) and structure additional marketing to convert them into buyers.

6. It's All About the Marketing

Customer Service, Product Development, Quality Control, and most importantly, Sales are all marketing responsibilities. Customer Service brings the company directly in contact with customers. If their experience does not match the claims the company makes (by way of its commitment to service) then the reputation of the company breaks down. Product Development speaks to the benefit the company needs to deliver in order to be attractive to customers and competitive in the marketplace. Quality Control is again about the promises made to the consumer and the integrity and reputation of the company (and its brand). Finally, sales is the responsibility of marketing because marketing must train the sales force and prepare the market for their efforts. The sales team sells the message the marketing team creates and operates within the environment that the marketing team develops. The marketing team must teach the sales team about the market and make certain that they are selling the right product to the right people at the right time. Marketing must prepare sales for the questions they'll be asked and make certain that the answers are the ones the customer wants to hear.

There is no contradiction in claiming that it's all about the customer (#1) and then also claiming that it is all about the marketing (#6). The reason it is all about the marketing is *because* it is all about the customer. Any company that views marketing from its perspective and not that of the customer is doomed to make calculated and unintentional errors. So, as Tudog sees it, Marketing Rules!