



## MARKETING MATTERS

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### WHAT'S "MARKETING?"

I'm a career marketer. I've been at it for more than 45-years. During this time, I have held every position in marketing and handled every kind of marketing situation. So, one might say I know something about marketing.

At the start of my career, my birth family and childhood friends would ask, "Richie, what do you do?" Responding "marketing" didn't help them to understand what I do. While they still don't know what I do in marketing, they no longer ask. (They believe I work for the CIA given my many frequent trips to all parts of the globe.)

I feel certain, many marketers get asked the same question, "what do you do?" And, get a similar reaction to the answer "marketing." So, this brings us to the question, "What's marketing?" How might you answer?

The textbook answers don't help a lot. They're theory. Theory doesn't help us *grasp* the horrors of war. Only surviving war can do that. Theory doesn't help us *grasp* the rage and despair of prejudice and injustice. Only experiencing the helplessness of it can do that. So, we need to get beyond theory and draw on our experience as marketers to answer the question, "What's marketing?"

To me, "*Marketing is the science and art of creating and maintaining customers in a mutually beneficial and compelling relationship.*" It's all about "creating brand loyalty."

- "Create" means to bring a customer into existence. This is what the late Peter Drucker, considered by many to be the father of modern management, referred to as "the purpose of the enterprise."
- The "brand" is a constellation of shared and fulfilled values that create a special relationship, our bond, with customers based upon their experience with it.
- "Loyalty" refers to commanding unswerving customer attachment and devotion to the brand.

Marketing is creating “impact” in the marketplace. Impact is evidenced by achieving specific customer behavior objections such as generating switching or adoption or compliance, among others. If what we do does not drive customer behaviors to create an impact, then it is not marketing.

- Creating a viz-aid is not marketing.
- Developing ads (even Super Bowl ads) is not marketing.
- Enlisting KOL support is not marketing.
- Conducting consumer or retail promotions are not marketing.
- Participating in medical congresses or conducting continuing medical education are not marketing.

None of those activities mentioned above is “marketing” unless it creates impact and leads to creating brand loyalty. They’re merely means to an end. They’re part of our toolbox to help us build our brands.

Implicit in all of this is that marketing is about being transformational in what we do, not transactional. Transactions are the outcome of tactics and are episodic. Transformation is built on strategy and compelling execution that brings the strategy home to target-customers. Transformation is enduring.

The sales team is transactional. They’re about making a sale. The relationship they establish with their customers is less about the brand and organization and more to themselves. If they move to another company, even in the same category of brands, they’ll take that relationship with them. We marketers, on the other hand, are about creating brand loyalty.

So now, what is it you do in marketing?



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