



By Richard D. Czerniawski

HOW TO JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER - POLL

Some say you can judge a book by its cover while others say you cannot. I believe they are both correct. How's that possible? It comes down to who is doing the judging and the criteria used for assessing the book cover.

As you may remember from an earlier Marketing Matters musing, I created a contest on 99designs for designing a cover for my new book, *AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS – How to go from dumb to Smart Marketing*. The response was overwhelming. I received well over 100 unduplicated designs by more than 40-designers. Including the submission of multiple revisions by selected designers, the number of designs jumps to more than 200 "shots on goal!"

Now my time has come to select a winning design. 99design allows me to poll up to 8 designs. I want to engage your marketing acumen in helping me choose a design or, at minimum, rule some out from further consideration. In the process of taking the poll to help me, I'm laying the groundwork on how to judge a book (before reading it) by its cover and providing you with a practice run to further develop your ability to assess creative work.

In taking the poll, you might find yourself rating the field based upon likeability – whether you find its aesthetics pleasing to your eyes. Resist rating creative on likeability. No one should care what we like or don't like for that matter. Instead, the only thing we should care about is whether it will drive sales. Likeability does not correlate with sales. However, no one can guarantee whether something will be a hit or not in promoting sales. 12-publishers rejected a synopsis of J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series. Yet today, worldwide sales top more than 500-million copies.

So how do we judge a book by its cover if not by likeability nor our ability to ascertain sales, particularly given that we don't have a crystal ball to look into the future? The answer is AIDA. Not the opera! AIDA is an acronym for a winning approach in assessing creative

based upon what it should do.

- A – ATTENTION: Does the cover capture your attention?
- I – INTEREST: Does it pique your interest and engage you to learn more (e.g., lead you to read the back cover copy, table of contents, etc.)?
- D – DESIRE: Does it stoke your desire to read the book?

- A – ACTION: Does it lead you to purchase the book?

If you want to give it a try, and I hope you will go to <https://99designs.com/contests/poll/5f39d3a1ce> to take the poll no later than COB Wednesday, 5 June. The copy for each design is virtually identical to the others. It's all about design! Please share any comments you might have to help me hit the high note in AIDA with the book cover.

One final note, despite taking the poll seriously, I will keep my own counsel on the findings and final selection. After all, marketing research is an aid to, not a substitute for our, judgment.

Thank you for your consideration. I will share the results with you in a future Marketing Matters.

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