



By Richard D. Czerniawski

## **WORKING TOWARDS A BETTER (MARKETING) FUTURE**

The coronavirus pandemic is the cause of significant disruptions in all aspects of daily living around the world. Many countries and states are demanding, if not enforcing, social distancing by closing restaurants, bars, spectator events, and non-essential businesses. My clients, and you, my subscribers to DISPATCHES and Marketing Matters, are all working from home, as am I.

My daughter and her family, living in Barcelona, are in their third week of lockdown. Her restaurant is closed, and her family shuttered indoors. The Spanish government is expected to lay down even more stringent regulations beginning tomorrow. Here in Florida, we are in our second week of self-quarantine, and the Governor has already extended it to a third week. When will all this end? I don't think anyone knows other than it will continue for a while. Weeks? Months are probably more realistic.

What does the future hold? Many businesses will not survive—particularly the small and mid-sized ones. Your favorite restaurant, apparel store, entertainment venue may never reopen. Dreams will be shattered, and friends you gained from utilizing those businesses will be gone from your life. Our unemployment rolls are exploding and will continue swelling for many more weeks and, perhaps, months. Marketing, which has been losing its relevance for years, will become more critical for companies to survive and remain competitive. However, it's not just about conducting marketing as usual but instituting smart marketing.

Unfortunately, many organizations perceive marketing as a cost center as opposed to a profit center or investment in the future. This perception is the result of many factors highlighted in my new book, *AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS: How to Go from Dumb to Smart Marketing*. Perhaps, the most significant error, to my thinking, is the current practice of eminence-versus evidence-based marketing. Marketers do what their category competitors do, what their company has always done, and what their senior managers expect them to do—eminence-based marketing. There is no evidence that anything marketing is doing is working to generate line-of-sight sales and, indeed, not incremental sales.

The lack of evidence-based marketing leads to cutting already inadequate marketing budgets, which will become even more limited. Cutting, and in many cases, slashing, marketing budgets brings more to the profit line than boosting sales by the same amount. Profits are the lifeblood of the corporation. Without profit, companies and their brands shrink. Without sufficient profit, companies will not have the resources to invest in building the business beyond, at best, expected category

growth. They will fall prey to competitors that make smart investments in marketing.

This article is not a clarion call for spending more on marketing. Au contraire! It's about instituting and investing in evidence-based marketing. It's about generating and presenting proof that the strategies and initiatives you are proposing will have a direct, that is, line-of-sight, impact on sales, market share, and, yes, profit growth. Without such proof, we're requesting that the company gamble its precious resources and ability to grow by doing the same old things in the same old ways. If I put my CMO hat on again, only the brands in my company's portfolio that can demonstrate proven line-of-sight to sales will receive funding for marketing. It's that simple!

If you haven't been practicing evidence-based marketing, your brand and company are behind the proverbial power curve. The more you spend on marketing, the more adversely impacted will be profit. Consequently, your company or brand will likely become another victim of the coronavirus.

You can learn more about avoiding those common critical marketing errors that undermine your marketing, and how to begin instituting evidence-based marketing here: <http://bdn-intl.com/avoiding-critical-marketing-errors>

Stay SAFE. Stay home. Be well.

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