



By Richard D. Czerniawski

## **INCREASE YOUR VOCABULARY TO IMPROVE YOUR MARKETING**

My wife and I are in the process of remodeling our new home in Pensacola. It's a long and arduous process. We—mostly she—has to answer a ton of questions from the builder, landscaper, and assorted subs. It is all very time consuming, stressful, and expensive.

Interestingly, my wife is far better equipped to answer these questions than me. She has an extensive vocabulary of the building and landscaping trade from her experience as the "plant manager" for our previously owned 1892 Victorian home in Chicagoland. Nonetheless, my wife wants my involvement. However, my vocabulary is minimal. For example, as a born and bred city boy (Brooklyn, NY), I know next to nothing about the names and types of trees, bushes, and flowers. So, how can I possibly help? Increase my vocabulary as it directly translates to knowledge.

To improve my knowledge before a scheduled meeting with a landscaper, my wife and I walked through a neighborhood to explore the varied flora and landscape designs. The objective was to learn the basic vocabulary (such as deciduous versus evergreen trees, shrubs, and plants) so I could better assist her in working with the landscaper by articulating what I like and would like to see. I learned what is possible and works for me and what doesn't, from her tutelage throughout the excursion.

So, what does this have to do with making our marketing matter more? Other brands, their strategies, campaigns, promotions, etc., and results, constitute our marketing vocabulary. The more we learn about different brands and their marketing successes and failures, the better equipped we are to improve marketing effectiveness.

I've been fortunate in my nearly 50-year career in marketing to have worked with scores of leading companies and their brands across a broad spectrum of sectors and categories throughout the world. The result is a rather extensive marketing vocabulary. Accordingly, it opens up a whole new world of possibilities in expressing the brands that I work on more successfully.

Unfortunately, many marketers have a limited vocabulary. In many cases, they are unfamiliar with their company's other brands and even their own brand's history. Therefore, while they can recite facts and figures about their brand, their knowledge of marketing is poor. Their experience is very narrow. There is little to draw on to recognize and capitalize on opportunities and anticipate and overcome problems.

An excellent place to start is to get your head out of the cockpit of managing your brand and investigate what's going on with other brands in your company. Here are some practices for your consideration to increase your vocabulary, grow your knowledge, and broaden your experience:

- Take another marketing manager from another division, another brand, to lunch and learn about their and their competitors' marketing.
- Yes, we shouldn't overlook a study of our competitors. Don't assume that they are inferior. Respect them, and you'll be able to learn from them.
- Read the business news for marketing related stories of companies and brands. Continue to read our marketing blogs, DISPATCHES and Marketing Matters.
- Conduct lunch & learns with speakers who can share brand stories and learning. (These can be external to your company and/or other marketing managers in your company.)
- Read books on marketing to discover proven principles, best practices, and quality processes. (While you're at it, I hope you will read my latest book, AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS: How to Go from Dumb to Smart Marketing.)

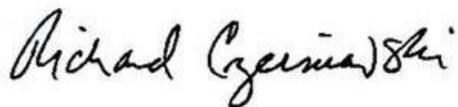
Back in my Johnson & Johnson days, Cal Hodock, then the Director of Marketing Research, counseled me that “A successful Brand Manager is like a thief. S/he steals ideas from other brands, adapts, and applies it to her/his brand.” You can't steal what you don't know. Moreover, you'll miss the spark of inspiration or creativity to make your marketing matter more.

Increase your vocabulary to improve your marketing.

**Take your marketing to the next level.** Check-out my new book, AVOID CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS: How to Go from Dumb to Smart Marketing. In it, I share many learnings from my 48-year, and still counting, career in marketing management. It will add to your vocabulary, knowledge, and experience to help your marketing matter more. Learn more here: <http://bdn-intl.com/avoiding-critical-marketing-errors>

Stay SAFE and be well.

Peace and best wishes,



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