



By Richard D. Czerniawski

STRIVE TO MAKE PROGRESS DURING CHANGE

While the current coronavirus pandemic and social upheaval are producing massive change, change is a constant variable. As the Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, stated more than two-thousand years ago, “You can never step into the same river twice.” Not only do the waters flow ever-changing, but we, too, change moment to moment.

Most often, we are oblivious to change. We only recognize it when it is well behind in our rearview mirror. However, massive change is easy to spot. It causes significant disruptions to how we think, act, and feel as individuals and society. It is not a gradual realization but a sudden awakening. It jolts us!

Regardless of the degree of change, we need to make course corrections to get back on track. We shouldn't merely settle for the so-called “new normal” but seek ways to win! We must make progress regardless of the changes around us.

Perhaps, now is the time to take stock of our health—physical, financial, business, spiritual, whatever is right for you—and get back on track to secure it. Or, perhaps, it's the time to assess our performance as a spouse, parent, friend, or marketer. While I'm certainly not equipped to speak about the former, I can certainly address the latter—marketer.

Hopefully, we set goals for ourselves at the start of the New Year 2020. We may have even called them resolutions. At the beginning of each year, I publish a DISPATCHES article, *Resolutions for Marketers*. Chances are that whatever resolutions or goals you established for yourself, regardless of whether you adopted my recommendations, have been forgotten or jettisoned in addressing the intensity of the tectonic changes we are currently experiencing.

Well, we are just beyond the half-point of the year 2020. We still have the last half of the year to play out. Not just play out as in a season where we know we will not make the playoffs, so we merely go through the motions, but regroup to win. It starts with setting clear intentions, goals, and **resolutions to make progress** during this period of unprecedented, significant change.

Accordingly, I'm republishing the resolutions offered in DISPATCHES. Use this to provoke your thinking regarding setting the course for your business and life. Feel free to adopt, adapt, and/or create new ones that match your ambition for yourself, marketing, and life. Also, make them specific. For example, if you are interested in your personal, professional development, you might

resolve to read three books on marketing. If you do, I hope you'll consider reading **AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS**, **COMPETITIVE POSITIONING**, and **CREATING BRAND LOYALTY**. Hahaha! Or you could resolve to participate in a marketing workshop—again, I hope you'll consider **BDNI** to conduct one for your team.

Here is the list of resolutions:

As a “marketer” I resolve to:

Above all else, be customer-centric by being a faithful servant to my intended target customers, regardless of race, creed, beliefs, or choices.

Resist attempts to reach out to all the customers in the category but, instead, **to carefully choose, marshal, and focus available resources against a select segment** of customers who believe in and appreciate my brand's values, what it represents, and, importantly, why it exists.

Get beyond defining and engaging these customers based upon superficial demographics, classifications, and stereotypes. Instead, I resolve to **get to know and better appreciate my customers** to truly understand and anticipate their needs and serve them better than my competition.

I resolve to **become a Marketect**, in the manner of the late Steve Jobs, in redefining the marketplace for my customers, to create distinctive offerings that compel customer preference and create brand loyalty.

To **create a competitive brand positioning strategy** built upon a big, juicy **Brand Idea** that disrupts the category and use it: a) as the blueprint for directing the organization; and b) to steward brand development by ensuring it is reflected in everything we decide and do, to firmly establish it in the marketplace.

To earn customers' trust by **providing “honest” products** at a fair value that balance price with benefits—**exercising the highest code of ethics** in all decisions and actions.

To devote myself to **creating a bond between our customers and the brand based** upon my ability to anticipate their needs and delight them in everything the organization does to deliver on the brand promise embodied in the Brand Idea.

To seek to get beyond “unsights” to **discover “legitimate” and “productive” customer insights** that reveal deep-seated truths, values, and/or needs that our brand can better satisfy versus the competition.

To transcend product features and attributes and **focus on the experience** we deliver to customers.

To **think different**, challenge the conventional wisdom in where, how, and with what we engage our customers.

To **engage in evidence-based marketing** and not fallback to eminence-based marketing.

To encourage, seek, and settle for nothing less than **BIG Juicy Ideas** that animate the brand and its positioning strategy to compel customer preference.

To **coach versus evaluate** the work of resource groups, such as my agency, to add value to the productivity of their work, and all ideas and tactics we employ.

To take steps to **enhance my personal development and capabilities** so I can realize my potential and make a difference for the customer, brand, and organization I serve.

To **avoid critical marketing errors** of omission and commission that sabotage my marketing.

To **embrace Kaizen**, continuous improvement, in making small, incremental changes to my marketing that contribute to on-going success.

To measure, analyze, and **gain knowledge regarding the effectiveness (impact and ROI) of all the marketing mix elements and tactics** I employ in support of the brand.

To focus my energies and time on those **critical, non-urgent activities** that will significantly impact brand development and health versus those non-critical, but urgent, activities that do little, if anything, to serve customers and advance the brand.

To make my marketing matter more!

What are yours? The key is to take stock and strive to make progress during the remainder of the year that reflects the marketplace's changes and resultant business performance.

If you are into personal development—yours and your team—check-out my new book, **AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS: How to Go from Dumb to Smart Marketing**. I share many learnings from my 48-year—still counting—marketing management career with some of the most successful companies and brands throughout the world. It will help you spot and avoid those critical marketing errors of omission and commission and, importantly, 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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