

DISPATCHES™

Insights On Brand Development From The Marketing Front

DARE TO PUT YOUR MARKETING ON TRIAL?

If you were to put your marketing on trial, would it be convicted of being dumb? While you might feel offended by the question and vigorously protest that your marketing is not dumb but, in fact, smart, we'd venture you are probably self-delusional. You are not objective. If you are so sure of your marketing, dare to put it on trial.

First off, let's define "dumb." It's a lack of know-how that leads to errors of omission and commission. It's not about a lack of intelligence but the inability to gather or use it appropriately. For example, you agree that you must have a meaningfully different positioning strategy versus your competition. Still, you neither know your competitor's positioning (if you don't, then how would you know if yours is differentiated?) or yours is virtually identical to their positioning. Now, neither is very smart! It's dumb! Wouldn't you agree? (If not, you are guilty of being self-delusional.)

Second, ignorance of proven principles, best practices, and quality practices for marketing is dumb. You, as a marketer, are supposed to know these and apply them. In the court of law, "ignorance is not an excuse for violation of the law." Well, likewise, ignorance is no excuse for dumb marketing. Moreover, if you know but violate those principles, practices, and processes without a clear rationale to support your actions, well, that's even dumber!

DUMB AND DUMBERER
WHEN HARRY MET LLOYD
IN THEATERS JUNE 13, 2003 A.D.



The Evolution of Dumb

TM & © 2003 New Line Productions, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

WWW.WHENHARRYMETLLOYD.COM
AD KEYWORD: DUMB AND DUMBERER

This last point leads us to a third; there are degrees of dumb—to wit the movie “Dumb and Dumber(er).” Hahaha! Similarly, there are degrees of smart—smart and smarter and, perhaps, brilliant. We might classify a spectrum from dumber to smarter, and even brilliant, and the impact of each on the business. Here it goes:

- ***Dumber(er)*** – Marketing is riddled with (many) errors; however, we’re oblivious to them! It is adversely impacting the business. Therefore, marketing doesn’t matter other than to drain resources that lead to significant opportunity losses and, perhaps, even drag the business and company down.
- ***Dumb*** – We recognize that what we’ve done, are doing and planning to do is in error. We may be able to avoid repeating some of these errors in the future. For the most part, the proverbial horse is out of the barn, and our marketing is failing to generate a positive ROI.
- ***Smart*** – When we focus and apply a host of checklists and tools, we can make our marketing technically sound to contribute to brand development and business growth.
- ***Smarter*** – We know and consistently apply proven principles, best practices, and quality processes so that our marketing is not only technically sound but strategically appropriate in contributing to achieving targeted business objectives.
- ***Brilliant*** – We not only apply the science of marketing but infuse it with the art of marketing to restructure the market, leapfrog (internal and external) competition, and create an iconic brand in the manner of a “Marketect,” such as a Steve Jobs, Elon Musk or Jeff Bezos. (A Marketect changes customers’ perceptions of the market in a way that favors her/his brand.)

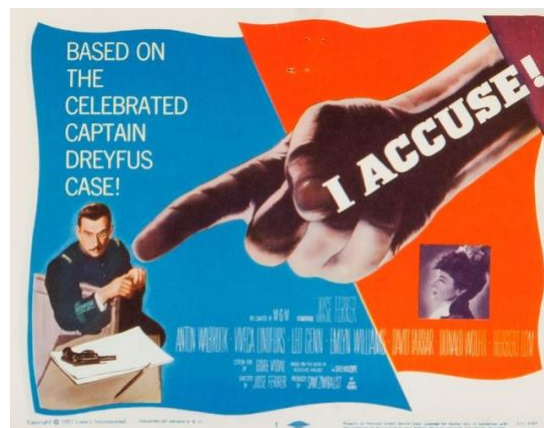
Now that we've got those mentioned above out of the way, let's put your marketing on trial. Try to keep in mind that it's your marketing that is on trial, not you. We want to be objective and not defensive, which is quite challenging since there is, admittedly, guilt by association. (If you know better, why haven't you done better with your marketing?) Also, keep in mind, that if we were serving as prosecutors, we'd go deeper with each of the questions we pose to completely peel the onion back to its center, and demand proof in the form of evidence. Dare to put our marketing on trial? If so, answer “YES” or “NO” to the following series of questions:

1. Do you have a "Brand Idea" that succinctly states the "WHY" for your brand (not product but brand) that is inspirational? Is it aligned to the values and beliefs of a distinct customer segment?
2. Do you have a “Brand” Positioning Strategy (if not, your marketing is “dumber”) that is meaningfully differentiated versus your competitors? Is it relevant to your target customer? Is it used as a filter to guide everything the organization does to support it?
3. Are you marketing the brand experience? Does your brand go beyond product features and attributes to include intangibles that lead to a preference for your offering?

4. All of your strategies are technically sound? Specifically, they are clear (incapable of being misunderstood)? Complete (they address all relevant elements and do it robustly)? Competitive (either explicitly or implicitly)? Cohesive (another word for alignment with all strategies and elements within)? Choiceful (it contains one theme!!!)?
5. Is your target customer “everyone” who needs what you have? (In the words of leadership coach Simon Sinek your target should not be “everyone who needs what you have but those who believe what you believe,” which to us is your Brand Idea.)
6. Do you have a robust target customer profile that addresses a critical segment of the potential population your marketing can win? Does the profile include target customer "demographics," "psychographics," "occasion need-state," or "patient-condition" in the case of the healthcare professional, and "current usage and dissatisfactions?" (If you've included a "magnetic" psychographic" it's showing signs of brilliance!)
7. Are your strategies based on "legitimate" and “productive” insights? (Legitimate insights come from one of three buckets: real or customer perceived weaknesses of the competition; attitudinal barriers to overcome; and untapped compelling beliefs. If the insight doesn't lead to an impact in the market, then it is not productive. If you don't have legitimate and productive insights, then you are dealing with “unsights.”)
8. Does your competition go beyond your class of drug, device, product, or service? Does it pinpoint where you will source volume and anticipated % volume from each? Are you tracking your source of volume?
9. Does your marketing employ proven principles, best practices, AND quality processes? Can you point to them and how and where they make a difference?
10. Do all of your marketing mix strategies identify and include SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timebound) customer "behavior" objectives? Importantly, do the sum of achieving these objectives tie to the business objectives of sales, market share, and profit?
11. Does your messaging go beyond point-of-differentiation to capture “point-of-preferentiation?” (Your messaging must be relevant to and drive target customer preference for your brand.) Is it single-minded? Does it motivate the target customer behavior and level you need to achieve your business objectives?
12. Do marketing initiatives lead to line-of-sight sales? In other words, is there a direct causal relationship? Do you have the evidence to support a significant impact on the achievement of the business objectives from your tactics? Is each

generating a highly favorable ROI? (Did you conduct an ROI analysis on any initiative in the past year?)

13. Is your marketing evidence- versus eminence-based? Do you test initiatives for impact and ROI before employing them on a broad scale? Does the marketing plan include a robust testing program from which you will choose initiatives to roll out or execute on a broad scale in the future?
14. Is your marketing fueled by BIG Ideas that lead to the achievement of *s-t-r-e-t-c-h* target customer behavior and business objectives? Does your advertising feature a Campaign Idea? Is it consistent with your Marketing Idea? Is it driving every single tactic consistent with the Brand Idea?



J'accuse! (French for "I accuse.") Excuse the dramatics, but it's just so powerful to state! What is it that we are accusing? Your marketing is far from brilliant. More likely, your marketing is dumb, perhaps, not in its entirety but far less of what it is capable of achieving, you can do, and your customers and organization deserve. However, we need not accuse you. If you took the time to address and reflect on the questions above, you know where your marketing stands on the "dumb to smarter" continuum.

So, what do we do about it? Each of us needs to take the road less dumb in one or more of the areas we shared with you to make our marketing matter more.

- Let's start with the recognition that we don't know what we don't know, so we should learn what we don't know. We'll make far fewer errors of omission, which are typically the most damaging. Ignorance is not bliss!
- Acknowledge that our marketing can be made smarter. We are making errors, and we need to fix them and, better yet, avoid making them altogether in the future.
- Make the upgrading of your marketing an ongoing process of kaizen, not episodic fits and starts that fail to achieve genuine marketing excellence.
- As the late, great adman, Leo Burnett, said, "When you reach for the stars you may not quite get one, but you won't come up with a handful of mud either." So, do not settle for the status quo, conventional wisdom, and the practice of "keeping on." Reach and stretch yourself and your team to make your marketing matter more!

One more question. *Are you interested in making your marketing matter more?* Call us if you'd like assistance in creating smarter marketing. Also, read Richard's new book, **AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS: How to Go from Dumb to Smart Marketing**. Learn more here: <http://bdn-intl.com/avoiding-critical-marketing-errors>

Stay safe and be well,
Richard Czerniawski and Mike Maloney

Richard D. Czerniawski
1812 Yates Avenue
Pensacola, Florida 32503
richardcz@bdn-intl.com
847-312-8822

Mike W. Maloney
555 East Fifth Street #819
Austin, Texas 78701
mikewmaloney@gmail.com
512-657-2307