



By Richard D. Czerniawski

## WHAT ARE YOU MARKETING?

This question that I'm posing, "What are you marketing?" requires answering three questions:

1. "What is your business?"
2. "What is your brand's "WHY?"
3. "What is your brand's promise to prospective customers?"

A photo a client shared with me prompted the question. It shows a delivery boy of about 14-years old leaning against his bicycle in front of a kiosk filled with flowers. A sign over the stall states, "Flowers on Tour." Clearly, the enterprising adolescent delivers flowers to customers.

So, it appears he's in the flower delivery business. But wait, there's more! Posted at the bottom of the sign is "We deliver happiness."

*What business is that boy engaged in? He's in the business of delivering happiness!*

There's a solid rationale for his choice. Flowers, while a large market, is not as large as the market for happiness. Happiness might include delivering meals to shut-ins, novelties for special occasions, or colorful balloons to celebrate events. The demand for happiness is more than flowers and enables the marketer to respond to changing times and market situations—not just to survive but also to grow.

There's a story most of us are familiar with regarding the obsolescence of "horse and buggies" as a primary means of transportation. At one time, people thought the market had a ceiling on growth because the streets would become impassable due to piles of horses and buggies. However, it did not come to that end.

Instead, the dawn of the automobile obsoleted the former mode of transportation and those who made buggies (horse-drawn carriages). Had carriage makers recognized they were in the transportation business, they might still be in business, as is the Fisher Body Company, a division of General Motors Corporation.

Or, they might have gone into making baby carriages and strollers. It's a form of transporting babies from one place to another who could not reach on their own.

*In addressing the question of “WHY,” we’re attending to the Brand Idea—the theme of the Brand Positioning Strategy. This young fellow in the photo is delivering “happiness.” It’s aspirational both for the marketer and enterprise, as well as for its target customers. It has meaning. It provides context. It goes beyond the product you sell to embrace the experience you deliver. Delivering (and spreading) “happiness” is a worthwhile and defining purpose—particularly in these trying times.*

Finally, *we come to the question regarding the brand promise.* At the very least, delivering flowers is a product benefit promise. It’s what the service (or product or compound) does. Happiness is what’s in it for this boy’s customers, WIIFM (well, What’s In It For “Me”). It’s a customer benefit! What is it that you prefer? Flowers or happiness? (Flowers are the means to an end. Happiness is an end in itself!)

If you prefer the latter, you find the customer benefit (WIIFM) more compelling than the product benefit. You are not alone. Customer benefits tend to be preferable and more compelling than product benefits.

Case in point, Viagra. The product benefit is “remedies E.D.” (i.e., erectile dysfunction). The customer benefit is that it “enables you to share intimacy with your loved one.” When I ask marketers, what they prefer, a product that remedies E.D. or one that enables them to share intimacy, 100% respond “share intimacy.” Again, customer benefits are preferable and more compelling than product benefits.

Customer benefits are one rung up from the product benefit in the Benefit Ladder, and one step below the emotional benefit. However, most emotional benefits are BS. They're just not realistic! Moreover, the operable word is "emotive," not "emotional," and customer, even product, benefits can be expressed emotively, so they are compelling.

So, what are you marketing? Your answer to the questions posed at the top of this article will give you insights into the answer. Thoughtfully addressing it can help you make your marketing matter more.

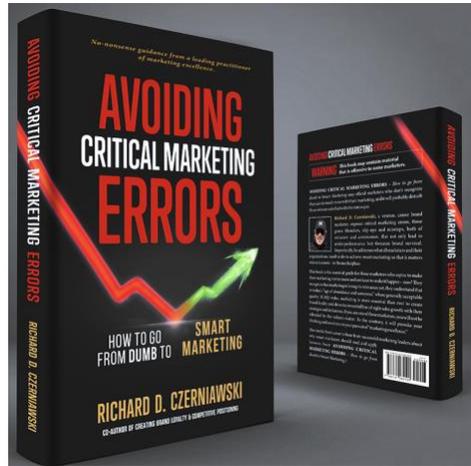
### **Proposed Action(s) for Implementation (*Crossing the chasm from learning to impact*)**

1. Tackle the three questions:
  - What is your business?
  - What is your brand’s “WHY?”
  - What is the brand’s promise to prospective customers?
2. Use your answers to inspire your team and organization and to drive preference for your brand.

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***Are you interested in making your marketing matter even more?*** Please read my most recent book, **AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS: How to Go from Dumb to Smart Marketing.** Learn more here: <http://bdn-intl.com/avoiding-critical-marketing-errors> It will help lead you to

discover where your marketing may be half-empty or half-full. Importantly it suggests actions you can take to make your marketing matter even more.



Peace and best wishes,

*Richard Czerniawski*



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