



Marketing Matters

By Richard D. Czerniawski

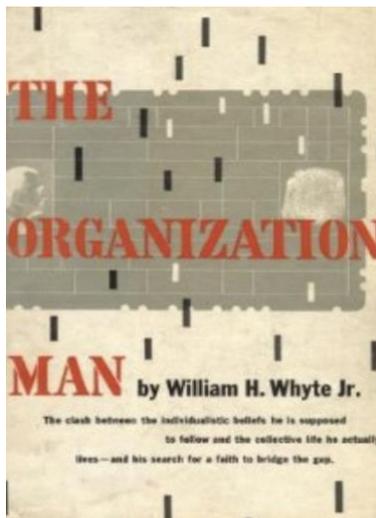
WHY OPTIONS ARE BETTER THAN ...

In the world of finance, an option is a contract to buy or sell a stock at a specified strike price on or before a specified expiration date. Now that we have that out of the way, I'm not referring to these financial instruments.

Instead, I'm referring to the necessity of creating choices in developing marketing strategies regardless of the type—brand positioning, messaging, any marketing mix element for that matter!

Options are better than what? One solution. The “right” solution resulting from “groupthink.”

William Whyte introduced us to "the organization man" in his book of the same title. The organization man and woman are conformists—their need for belonging trumps independent thinking.



He coined the term “groupthink,” which signifies “rationalized conformity.” Groupthink is the antithesis of diversity. While people of diverse races, genders, cultures, etc., comprise nearly every large organization, groupthink subverts diversity of thought. This lack of independent thinking limits choices.

Groupthink leads to the “right” strategy, which I define from my 50-years of working with Fortune Top 100 corporations as “the first executionally expedient idea that has consensus.” It is rarely the right idea for the marketplace and, as such, individual brands and even corporate success.

The lack of options resulting from groupthink forecloses diversity of thinking. It squanders the potential for innovation and more productive solutions arising from independent thinking with its rich insights and experiences.

Additionally, groupthink and the quest for the one “right” solution stymies deep thinking. It leads to superficial thinking. In this “age of abundance and sameness,” where our products are like eggs—they do the same thing, work in the same way, and generate the same outcome as our competitors—how we think is critical to success in the marketplace. We need to outthink our competition, and superficial thinking will not get us there.

When we welcome options and unleash diversity of thinking, we take the proverbial “more shots on goal.” More shots improve the likelihood for a breakthrough solution and more significant success where it counts—in the market.

So, when you think you have the “right” solution, tuck it into your pocket and strive to beat it. That’s right, strive for more and better solutions.

Finally, going beyond that one “right” solution reinforces the notion that each option represents a hypothesis. It brings us back to recognize that marketing is not something we engage in by the seat of our pants or skirts but is driven by (both) science (and art).

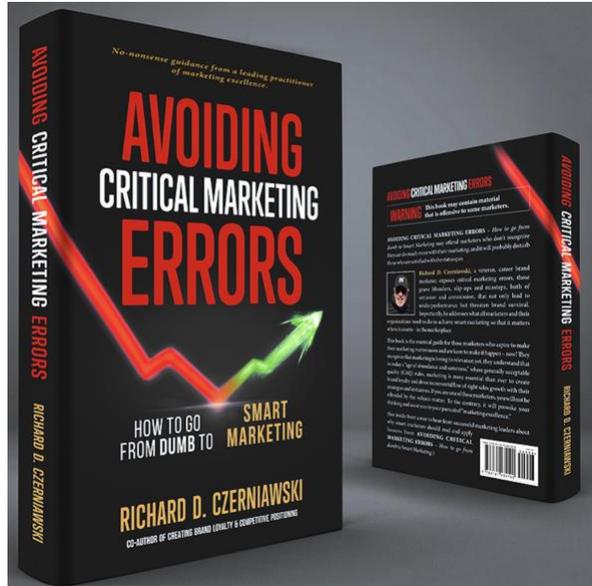
The mere recognition of options as hypotheses can lead to the development of evidence-based marketing. Namely, we can test each to prove its value when deciding the best way to go. Our solutions go from an opinion to proven action.

Make your marketing matter more—crush groupthink. Unleash the power of diversity of thinking. Don't settle for the one "right" solution. Instead, take more shots on goal. Treat each option as a hypothesis—test to determine the best option. Help create an evidence-based culture where strategies and actions are not mere conjecture but proven.

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Avoid marketing errors of commission and omission that are undermining your marketing.

Please consider reading 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 not only help you avoid critical marketing errors but, importantly, suggest actions you can take to make your marketing matter even more.



Peace and best wishes in making your marketing and you matter even more,

Richard Czerniawski



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