



By Richard D. Czerniawski

## **DO YOU PRACTICE EMINENCE- OR EVIDENCE-BASED MARKETING?**

In the early days of medicine, as late as the last century, during which many current marketers entered this world, eminence ruled medical practice. The practice included bizarre and radical treatments such as performing lobotomies on patients suffering from mental illness. Or bleeding patients with leeches to rid them of excess "humours" believed to cause disease. Babies suffering from teething were treated with formulations that contained alcohol, and even morphine!

How did these practices become the Standard of Care? It certainly wasn't through careful study, the kind required by governmental regulatory organizations like the FDA (US Food and Drug Administration).

Instead, these practices came about by following someone of eminent status. Status arose from where the doctor received his medical degree, what hospital he (back then, it was undoubtedly a "he") was associated with, social status, and experiments he initiated and conducted, among other factors, including years of on the job. There was no to little evidence to support the aforementioned dangerous practices. In fact, there's been plenty of evidence to overturn them.

It was a common practice to surgically remove an inflamed appendix (appendicitis) before it ruptured. If you had appendicitis, you could count on undergoing the scalpel even though the use of antibiotics could alleviate the majority of cases.

The Cochrane Organization (formerly the Cochrane Collaboration), an independent group that organizes research findings to facilitate evidence-based choices, revealed this outcome. Now, if you have appendicitis, an antibiotic regimen is considered. (If it isn't, you should ask your MD to consider it!) It's a case of evidence over eminence.

Unfortunately, there's still too much of what passes for marketing today that's eminence over evidence. Eminence is a function of senior people directing action for which they have no proof, only unexamined experience. They have nothing but an opinion. It isn't the value of the opinion; it's the value of the authority their position carries that drives others to follow.

There's also the practice of doing things the way they've always been done. This practice is also eminence-based marketing, leading to blind obedience to follow. And, if a marketer questions the "conventional wisdom," then s/he may be harshly judged as not understanding the business.

We need to ensure that all our marketing is evidence, not eminence-based. This is the way to achieve success and achieve it on a more consistent basis.

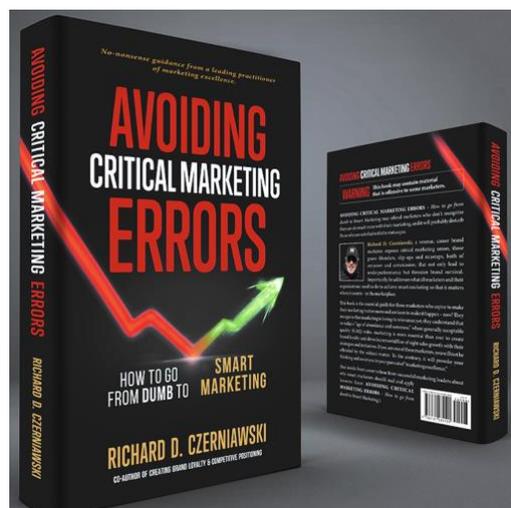
However, we need facts to practice evidence-based marketing. We may get the facts that prove or disprove a case from many sources. These include three steps that organizations frequently fail to follow:

1. **Set objectives** – This is about quantifying what you expect to achieve from each of your marketing initiatives. All initiatives should have SMART (i.e., Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time Bound) objectives. Achievement of these objectives lead to achieving the specific business objectives of sales, market share, and profit goals.
2. **Conduct marketing research** – Here we inspect for what we expect (our SMART objectives)! Test all initiatives before investing resources and launching broadly to ensure that they achieve those objectives you set. Only go forward with those initiatives that best meet expectations to demonstrate line of sight to sales and deliver a favorable ROI (Return on Investment).
3. **Analyze performance** - Brands should conduct analyses of their performance and those of their competitors. The purpose is to identify the “what” and, importantly, uncover the “why” behind the “what.”

These three steps could lead to a Cochrane Organization type of review for the business enterprise to help develop evidence-based decisions.

If you want your marketing to matter more, institute and practice evidence-based marketing.

For more information, read chapter 12, “Eminence-Based versus Evidence-Based Marketing” from 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>.



Peace and best wishes for making your marketing matter (even) more,

*Richard Czerniawski*



## **Richard D. Czerniawski**

1812 Yates Avenue

Pensacola, Florida 32503

847-312-8822

[richardcz@bdn-intl.com](mailto:richardcz@bdn-intl.com)

[richardcz@me.com](mailto:richardcz@me.com)

[www.bdn-intl.com](http://www.bdn-intl.com)