

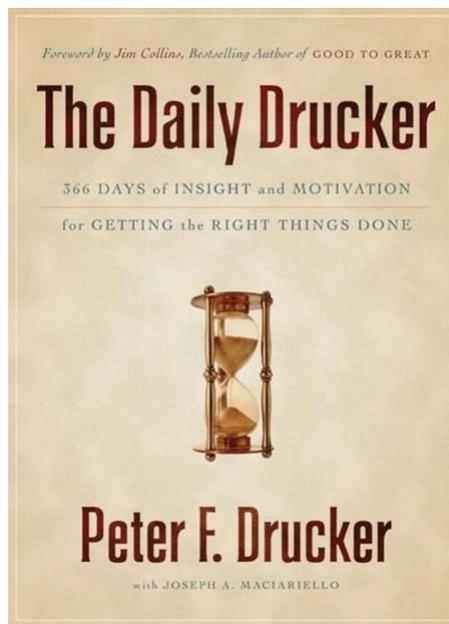


Marketing Matters

By Richard D. Czerniawski

GO AHEAD AND OBSOLETE YOUR BRAND!

Being the one who makes your product, process, or service obsolete is the only way to prevent your competitor from doing so. Peter F. Drucker, THE DAILY DRUCKER



Yes, I read THE DAILY DRUCKER: 366 DAYS of INSIGHTS and MOTIVATION for GETTING THE RIGHT THINGS DONE. Yes, I read it daily, highlight passages, and make notes on making (my) marketing matter more.

This is my second time around reading the book. I believe Peter Drucker is a treasure. While he no longer lives, he and his thinking remain alive in his 39 books. His thinking is timeless.

He, his thoughts and words, are an inspiration to me. He is my mentor through his books, sharing his wisdom and insights with me. I would have loved to have met and studied with him.

Professor Drucker's quote at the top of this article was not in today's reading. Instead, it popped-up on my READWISE app as a passage I highlighted in an earlier reading.

The passage is a reminder that our product, process, or service will be obsolete. It's just a matter of time coupled with—choose one or more—hubris, active inertia, an outdated business model, failure to keep up

with the times, clinging to profit over customer satisfaction, and/or not anticipating emerging customer needs.

Obsoleting our brand is not about building obsolescence into our products. Obsolescence is the practice of designing the expiration or usefulness of an offering to customers.

Obsolescence undermines quality and, ultimately, customer experiences. It also burdens the enterprise to keep producing, society to keep consuming, and our planet to keep expending precious resources.

Importantly, building in obsolescence distracts us from productive innovation and the practice Professor Drucker is espousing—obsoleting our product, process, or service.

Obsoleting ourselves is about recreating our brand or business with an improved or different version. It's a rebirth!

Obsoleting our offering leads to better serving customers, society, and our organization. It serves to preserve the business by shifting the S-curve up and to the right to extend the lifecycle of the business. It also immunizes the business against more agile, innovative, and aggressive competitors who want to obsolete it.

Here are some thoughts on how we might go about obsoleting our offering before the competition gets around to doing it to us:

1. **Resist self-satisfaction** – Self-satisfaction leads to active inertia. We become complacent satisfied with our success today, ignoring the future marketplace. Instead, we need to ask ourselves what might replace us and work towards that goal. Kaizen is a start but not enough as it falls short of obsoleting businesses.
2. **Think beyond your category** – We need to think broader. Ask ourselves, “what business are we in?” It's the “transportation” business, not the “horse and buggy” business.
3. **Understand and resolve customer dissatisfactions** – Elicit and listen to what your customers think. Customers may have difficulty in identifying “needs.” It is easier for them to express “dissatisfactions.” If that, too, proves difficult, create hypotheses and test them (see #5).



4. **Consider new business models** – The digital age ushered in the creation of new business models. Amazon is a "prime" example. (I couldn't resist the pun.) Apple music another. Today, I purchase

many subscription services (such as Netflix) for much of the same kind of content that can be received for free (network TV).

5. ***Conduct adaptive experiments and fail forward*** – Test, test, test, and use the tests to iterate your way to success. If you fail, fail quickly and forward. The market is providing feedback that you can use to navigate to success. Aspartame was first discovered and developed to be an anti-ulcer drug. While it failed in one need, it was successful as an artificial sweetener.

Go ahead and obsolete your brand before a competitor does it to you!

Protect yourself from competitors obsoleting you. Read my most recent book, AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS: How to Go from Dumb to Smart Marketing. It will provide you with a list of common marketing errors to avoid and, importantly, effective ways to make your marketing matter more. Learn more here: <http://bdn-intl.com/avoiding-critical-marketing-errors>
Peace and best wishes,

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