

Ten “Not So Obvious” Steps to Marketing Success

By David Diana

I’m not a big “list” person, but this past week I found myself swimming in ideas. Ideas I wanted to share. So today I am purposefully breaking my “one idea – one message” rule. Here are some interesting thoughts worth pondering.

1) If Someone Has to Ask for Clarification...You Already Lost

One of the keys to success in business is eliminating barriers to buying. Give people permission to take part in what you have to offer by providing solutions.

Do I have to navigate through some convoluted messaging service to connect with you, am I forced to talk about a sensitive situation with your secretary before I can get to you, or must I sit in an uncomfortable waiting room? If the answer is YES, you are NOT making it easy for me to buy your services.

Do you think you have it covered? Why not ask someone to test the experience? Have them visit your website, call your office, and schedule an appointment. Better yet, have them come to your office and wait for the appointment. Then listen to what they have to say about the overall experience. You might receive some surprising and important feedback.

2) Approach Everything as a Creative Opportunity

For me personally, it starts with finding that place where there is no separation between “life” and “work”. Find this and you will begin to see opportunity where it may never have existed before. It’s how I’m able to uncover invaluable marketing lessons from my seven-year-old son when he tells me about a 30-year old Pop Rocks myth (*a candy he has never even seen*), or when I learn about the value of a mobile Korean Taco Restaurant in Los Angeles, or when I receive a lesson in problem solving from a man named Dick Fosbury as he revolutionized the high jump more than forty years ago.

When you find something you are passionate about, focus relentlessly on it. Spend time learning and growing within that space.

3) Focus on the Process, not the Outcome

Don’t become paralyzed trying to achieve perfection. And don’t search for that one otherworldly idea, that one concept you feel is the epitome of creativity. What use is the idea if it lies well beyond the realm of possibility? Search the edges, that fine line between what is and what could be. Then dive in, produce something and share it with others. Avoid the temptation to be “perfect”.

Get yourself into action mode, put yourself out there, and be a part of that creative

energy. It will serve you well, and will bring you to a place where things expected and unexpected can happen.

4) Let Go

Sometimes, opportunity arises when you choose to let go. It may be a belief or idea you have been holding onto for years, something you protect with all your might. What would happen if you set it free?

You don't have to take that lowly job so you can "pay your dues". You don't need to work harder at what you are doing. You don't have to hold onto your belief that writing a novel is frivolous and unrealistic.

If something isn't working, and you want to define things on your own terms, try giving it up and see what happens.

5) Sometimes You Should Try the Lunch Special, Even When Others Say, "Yuck"

If you are exploring the edges of opportunity, chances are some of your ideas will be met with lukewarm responses. You may need to go it alone for a period of time. Don't get discouraged.

It is often a good thing to be out there all alone, especially if you are looking to be first to market or if you have uncovered something that excites you. For starters, it means there are fewer fish in the pond.

Furthermore, make peace with the fact that everybody is busy with his or her own life. Don't expect a big pat on the back or standing ovation. Don't do something based on other people's responses.

Do it for yourself.

6) Don't Quit Your Day Job

It's perfectly fine to dive right into something. Many experts believe you must make that kind of commitment to succeed.

But I don't believe it's an all or nothing arrangement. In fact, sometimes staying with your day job, while nurturing your passion, can be the smarter move.

Why? It helps keep that balance between day-to-day realities and aspirations. I find it helps me be more creative and motivated. In addition, your day job may also add a level of credibility and connection that might not exist should you jump ship right away.

7) Break Someone's Mental Mindset, Then Fix It

If you're looking to market your services more effectively, try thinking in terms of the unexpected. You'll earn more attention when you challenge what people have come to expect. Find the unexpected implications of your message.

Make people a little uncomfortable and get them off balance by breaking the thought process and judgments we commonly use to make sense of a specific topic.

Offer material that seems perplexing, and then help bring clarity to the message. You can use this approach in your elevator speech, in your advertisements, and in your service delivery model.

For example: *"In Substance Abuse treatment circles, there is the common belief that nothing can be done from a treatment standpoint until a person truly wants to change. We have proof that this is simply not the case. There are numerous clinical interventions that deserve our attention. Learn more at..."*

8) Watch Out For Resistance

"I am an old man and have known a great many troubles, but most of them never happened."

– Mark Twain

There have been times when I've talked myself out of something, or when I couldn't push myself through a critical period because I felt sorry for myself. I found a million and one reasons why something would go terribly wrong. I was stuck.

Find ways to overcome resistance by tapping into your strengths.

9) Be Giving: It's Your Number One Marketing Strategy!

Inscribed on one of the six pillars in the Holocaust Memorial at Quincy Market in Boston are stories that speak of the cruelty and suffering in the camps. The sixth pillar presents a tale of a different sort, about a little girl named Ilse, a childhood friend of Guerda Weissman Kline, in Auschwitz. Guerda remembers that Ilse, who was about six years old at the time, found one morning a single raspberry somewhere in the camp. Ilse carried it all day long in a protected place in her pocket, and in the evening, her eyes shining with happiness, she presented it to her friend Guerda on a leaf. 'Imagine a world,' writes Guerda, 'in which your entire possession is one raspberry, and you give it to your friend.'

– The Art of Possibility, Zander & Zander

Make the shift from a scarcity model to one of generosity and possibility. Give to others, and share in their prosperity.

Offer value without any expectation of something in return! This strategy will multiply your power and influence by a factor of 100. Besides, it's the right thing to do!

10) Be Mindful of “The Big Three”.

If you do nothing else, keep these three market realities at the forefront of your mind. They will have a positive or negative impact on your business depending on how well you understand and utilize them.

- Market Fragmentation is your window of opportunity. Have you noticed big business and institutions no longer hold the same power over you and me? Gatekeepers (e.g., publishing houses, news outlets, communication channels) are disappearing all over the place, leaving you with possibilities not available ten years ago. Don't miss the boat!

- The traditional “big business” model of work is dying out. State agency job opportunities and large corporate entities are great examples of this shift. What was once a clear and comfortable path is now a very risky proposition. The marketplace today rewards innovation and creativity. Think of yourself as a separate business entity even while you are working elsewhere.

- Traditional forms of marketing do not have the reach and influence they have had in the past. Markets are about conversations and connecting, they are not about self-serving advertisements or brochures. You will need to make a real connection to break through the “information clutter”.

About the Author

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