

The New Marketing Agenda

10 trends for the marketers to win in changing markets

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Connections lie at the heart of marketing – bringing together customers and business, strategy and delivery, brands and relationships, loyalty and growth.

In a world being revolutionised by connectivity – networks and speed, knowledge and interactivity – marketing should be at the forefront of new ways of thinking, new business models, and more inspiring approaches to business.

Yet marketing too often has a heads-down, sales-driven obsession for short-term results. We keep pushing harder - with the same old techniques, at increasingly resistant audiences, and with ever diminishing returns.

Marketers need a more heads-up approach – to see things differently, and think different things. Remember Kodak? Obsessed with its existing customers and competitors, fighting for points of market share, when the real world was changing rapidly around it

So here are 10 opportunities for marketers to engage differently with customers, catalyse more radical innovation, and to drive more profitable growth:

1. **Insights into individuality** – stop creating average solutions for average people, dive deeper to understand what makes real people tick, spend more time understanding the ideas and aspirations of different customers.

2. **Riding with the niches** – the mass market is dead, focus on the best niches – youth, women, gay, boomers, ethnic, green, heritage, east – choose your audience, be relevant and distinctive, and truly special for them.
3. **Seeing the bigger picture** – redraw your boundaries, developing a market strategy (not a marketing strategy) to consider adjacent spaces, and redefine your competitive context through customer eyes (typically bigger and richer).
4. **Power to the customer** – supply exceeds demand therefore customers call the shots – start doing business on their terms – where when and how they want – the end of mass campaigns, cost-plus pricing and generic solutions.
5. **Working in time and space** – get out your sonic screwdriver, turn on Google Earth, and start engaging customers where and when it matters most to them – from GPS and RFID, to Bluetooth and smart phones, the technology is all there.
6. **Real brand affinities** – people trust and engage with fewer brands, the ones that mean most to them – new collaborations across sectors, and with personal interests will be much more compelling than yet another logo in their face.
7. **Doing the right thing** – if marketing is the evil force of consumerism, and living beyond our natural means, then innovation is the best way to encourage people to address environmental and ethical challenges in mutually beneficial ways.
8. **Making networks work** – from Facebook to Fedex, Linex to Li & Fung we must learn to work with the incredible power of virtual and physical networks – finding ways to work alongside user-driven communities, content and control.
9. **Connecting people** – stop trying to force people to love you, when in fact they'd much prefer to engage with other people like themselves – loyalty is rare, despite what Siebel say, and net promoter scores are only one part of the picture.
10. **The value engines** – brands, ideas and relationships are the most valuable business valuable assets, the keys to future profits and growth. Marketers are the guardians of these assets, bringing new power, influence and responsibility.

Marketing in a Diesel living, iPod thinking, Li & Fung working world should have moved well beyond the 4Ps of Philip Kotler, the 1 to1s of Don Peppers, and the Purple Cows of Seth Godin. Yet we are often still stuck in the 1960's myopia described by Ted Levitt.

Marketing, as the connection between customers and business, is the most powerful force in business today. Whilst it took P&G 165 years to realise "the customer is the boss", this simple idea can still revolutionise organisations and performance.

When marketing typically drives three times more economic value than anything else, there has never been a more important or exciting time to be a marketer.

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