

NEW MARKETING MASTERY

NO MORE BUSINESS AS USUAL

What sorts of attitudes and behaviors does it take to be successful with New Marketing Mastery?

I've talked with people all over the world who are wrestling with the challenge, and most are not at all comfortable with adopting a real-time mind-set. It's not on the corporate agenda or the business-school curriculum. And when the notion is put to them, many people dismiss quick response to opportunities and threats as reckless or risky.

Attitudes are so ingrained that even when confronted with an iceberg off the bow, companies persist in choosing slow and cautious over quick and nimble.

Way too much time is spent checking, getting permission, researching, and running it past experts. By the time a decision is finally reached it's time to head for the lifeboats.

What's Expected in the Corporate World

- X Wait, to make certain.
- X Work from checklists dictated by one-year and even five-year business plans.
- X Measure results quarterly.
- X Execute based on a long-term new product launch mentality.
- X Organize around multimonth marketing and communications campaigns.
- X Get permission from your superior.
- X Run decisions by your staff.
- X Bring in the experts, the agencies, and the lawyers.
- X Conduct extensive research.
- X Carefully evaluate all the alternatives.
- X Aim for perfection before public release.
- X Respond to customers on your time frame.
- X Engage with media, analysts, and commentators only when convenient and comfortable for you.

None of this is inherently wrong. Clearly, research, planning, and teamwork are essential. The problem is that speed and agility are too often sacrificed for the sake of process.

Marketing at the speed of slow

The conventional approach favors a campaign (note the war metaphor) that requires people to spend weeks or months planning to hit targets. Agencies must be consulted. Messaging strategies must be developed. Advertising space/time must be bought. Conference rooms and refreshments must be prepared for press conferences. Do you serve them sushi or sandwiches?

In planning ahead, marketing and PR teams commonly look back. What were we doing five or six quarters ago? What happened at the trade show last year? In doing so they ignore what's happening right now, today, this instant.

It's a comfortable way to work, following the plan and the process. Just do what's expected and there is no risk of getting in trouble. By contrast, responding to events in real time is uncomfortable; it requires quick thinking and taking risks. You need to consciously and proactively adopt a real-time mind-set.



We're in a new world

The process starts with an understanding of just how severely conventional methods can handicap business functions—especially marketing and PR—in the always-on world of instant communication.

So Why Bother?

- Because now events unfold light years faster than a conventional campaign can deal with.
- Because your nimble, real-time-oriented competitor may snatch a huge opportunity from under your nose before you even notice it's there.
- Because your company will look out of touch and clueless when a crisis hits and you have nothing to say for a whole hour.
- Because when a buyer is ready to become your customer, the time is NOW.

Developing a real-time business requires sustained effort: encouraging people to take initiative; celebrating their success when they go out on a real-time limb; cutting them slack when they try and fail. None of this is easy.



Real-Time Business

- ✓ Act before the window of opportunity vanishes.
- ✓ Revise plans as the market changes.
- ✓ Measure results today.
- ✓ Execute based on what's happening now.
- ✓ Implement strategies and tactics based on breaking news.
- ✓ Empower your people to act.
- ✓ Move when the time is right.
- ✓ Encourage people to make wise decisions quickly, alone if necessary.
- ✓ Make swift inquiries, but be prepared to act.
- ✓ Quickly evaluate the alternatives and choose a course of action.
- ✓ Get it done and push it out, because it will never be perfect.
- ✓ Respond to customers on their time frames.
- ✓ Engage with media at the moment they need your input.

To develop real-time business, cultivate individuals for whom it is second nature.

Companies that do have a real-time mind-set push decision-making as far down the ladder as possible. Frontline service reps decide how best to deal with customer issues. Marketers are free to blog about their work and comment on other people's blogs as appropriate. Public relations staffers are empowered to respond immediately, without asking management or the lawyers.

In a real-time corporate culture everyone is recognized as a responsible adult.

An immensely powerful competitive advantage flows to organizations with people who understand the power of real-time business.

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