

The Buyers Journey

Come with me, allow me to be your Guide on this path of discovery. You will learn about the importance of Strategic Marketing, as we follow The Buyer's Journey. As you discover how buyers reach their decision on what to buy and who from, we shall contrast Tactical Marketing with Strategic Marketing.

Definitions

I define Strategy as a collection of tactics, designed to work harmoniously together in order to achieve a stated objective. Tactics are individual activities, like the steps to deliver a Strategy.

It is worth pointing out something that I see every single working day; we run our businesses and take decisions using imperfect information. This means that we may well have a desired outcome which is our stated objective, but we have no certainty as to what result we shall achieve. For instance, if we intended to generate 50% more sales leads from a specific strategy, the outcome is very much dependent on the accuracy of our assumptions combined with the expected behaviour of our customers. (Retailers for example hate unexpected weather patterns, which disrupt the anticipated buying behaviour of the general public, especially if that means the retailer is left holding unsold unwanted stock.) Hence if we execute our strategy poorly, we may see a mere 10 - 15% increase in leads whereas if we get everything right, in terms of Market, Message & Media, so that our message resonates perfectly with our prospects, then we may see a 100% increase in our sales leads as our outcome. But don't let this put you off devising strategies for your business, because a strategy that is not as effective as intended will help identify some of the gaps in your knowledge, or erroneous assumptions, enabling you to refine and improve such strategies to make them more effective for you!

Tactical Marketing

Tactical Marketing used to work many years ago, back when there was less competition, less information available, less use of technology, and there was generally a lower level of sales-resistance. Now, it only works for common purchases, emergency situations, or "impulse" buys. Which means it fails for so called high-ticket items, i.e. expensive purchases. A tow-truck is of no interest normally, but if we were to suffer a car breakdown and saw that tow-truck parked across the road it is only natural that we would approach them for assistance. Similarly, if walking through a park on a hot summers day we come across an ice cream van, although we had no prior plans to do so we may well make the impulse purchase of an ice cream, especially as it is a low-priced item.

Tactical Marketing wrongly assumes that the Seller is in full control. From the 1980s through to today there has been a paradigm shift, such that the Buyer has the power not the Seller. Now more than ever we face a Confidence Gap. I define that Confidence Gap as the Buyer's inability to determine whether any supplier businesses, or any of their products or services

*are any better
or any different
or any worse*

than any of the others.

Strong marketing bridges The Confidence Gap. The Seller must state their case powerfully, in a concise and well-articulated way. The Seller needs to recognise that this is one-way communication, which must be done in a way that puts little or no pressure on the intended Buyer, hence the mere First name & email address requirement to access the free report. The Buyer needs marketing messages to be delivered non-obtrusively, such that they may review them at their own pace and convenience, may ignore if they so choose, and without any commitment by them at this point.

Marketing in a vacuum

In all probability, our direct competitors will be following a tactical approach with their marketing (poor saps!), oblivious to the fact that the threshold of sales resistance grows as the prospect reaches the buying decision. Which means that they are fighting for attention to that small group of Now Buyers, competing to be heard above our other perceived direct competitors. This usually results in them having high marketing costs, such as pay per click or other expensive advertising channels.

We however know better, and direct our message, focus our marketing, on the Future Buyers and Soon-To-Buy Buyers, who our competitors ignore at their cost. Because we have the attention of our prospects earlier than our competitors we have the field all to ourselves, very much like marketing in a vacuum since no one else is aiming their marketing into that void. With Strategic Marketing we are able to nurture those prospects every step of the way through the Buyer's Journey, as we understand that prospects gather information in different ways and within different timelines. Whereas tactical marketing attempts to jump the prospect from first recognition of an issue in one single bound to the buying decision. That does not happen; 99% all buying decisions are reached in line with the Buyer's Journey.

The key to successful marketing

You MUST be able to enter the conversation taking place in the head of your prospects. Or another way to look at it is to be able to address the number one question on your prospects mind at just the right time.

That inner conversation taking place in EVERY prospect's mind revolves around two major points...

there's a problem they have and they don't want

there's a result they crave but don't have

That has to be the starting point for our strategic marketing, the point from which we help the prospect along the path of the Buyer's Journey simply by sharing information.

Niches

This may be a good reason to niche your business, but don't panic because you can serve more than one niche. A niche is merely a tightly defined market segment that you can serve, and can speak to in their language in your marketing media. We need to avoid the snake oil salesman syndrome, where it is claimed to cure all ills, we must be able to demonstrate how our solution resolves the problem the prospect has but doesn't want, in a fashion that will yield the result that they wish for, in a timely and economic fashion. If you service multiple niches you will need different marketing messages for each one, possibly serviced via different landing pages. Together with multiple free reports, one for each.

Market

To ensure that our message resonates with our audience we need to very clearly identify who our marketplace are, what commonality they share as to the problem we can solve. Only then can we enter that inner conversation in their heads, and use the language that they would use themselves about both their problem and their desired solution.

Message

It should be stressed that the message is all about building credibility in our solution to their problem. If we can do so in such a way that our perceived competitors are unable to match, all the better. It is vital that we bridge the Confidence Gap, which means we must clearly articulate what makes us different, our uniqueness, or at the very least the uniqueness of our solution. Then our message needs to reinforce in the prospect's mind our credibility as a provider of our solution, together with the effectiveness of our solution, which may be best illustrated by case studies and testimonials. If you have innovated a solution which is way

ahead of anything direct competitors can offer, especially if it is more cost effective, then that is exactly what you should be trumpeting in your message, repeatedly!

Media

When you are confident that you know your marketplace, or audience, and have the right message to reach them with, that they will relate to and welcome, the remaining ingredient for effective marketing is the medium(s) through which we reach out to them. This means if you are attempting to reach decision takers in large corporate businesses, you need to identify where they meet and/or what they read, how they learn about such products or services that you provide. If however you are reaching out to millennial consumers, then Facebook and other social media channels are probably the right media to use. Regardless of your target audience if you have a relatively high sales value it is often best to utilise direct mail. Yes, that is snail mail! Done well it yields amazingly good results. How much junk mail do you get? It is because it works! How many junk emails do you delete unread? We are bombarded by blizzards of email, hence our intolerance of anything we don't consider to be of value. How many letters do you receive, landing on your doormat? For most of us that is very few, so we tend to look carefully at what arrives. If you are interested in learning how to make direct mail an effective weapon in your armoury, please let me know so that we can discuss how I may assist you make that a very economic and effective strategy for your business.

Case studies

Child Psychologist - helping parents of nightmarish out-of-control children.

He was averaging 300 leads per month of which 10%, 30 in total called to ask about the consultation; of those 10% consented to the consultation and all those 3 become new patients, representing the typical 1% conversion rate.

After changing his landing page, in line with what we learned from the Buyers Journey, 20% requested the offered report so that's a total of 60. An average of 10% consent to the consultation all six become new patients. With an average sale value of £800, that represents £2,400 per month increase in his turnover or £28,800 per annum. However, the story doesn't stop there, because in line with Strategic Marketing thinking we implemented a drip campaign with him. His initial conversion rate of 10% of the 60 leads, as defined by their requesting the report, meant each month 54 leads were not yet converted so they were put into the drip campaign, to nurture them along. If we take a conservative view, that only two of those 54 would be converted as a result of the follow-up drip campaign, and that this pattern was repeated month after month after month, the exponential growth of prospects in that drip campaign can build up over a year to the point where no further direct marketing is required. The regular sales process generated 72 additional sales in that first year however the drip campaign generated an additional 156 sales. That's 156 new patients that would never have happened without the drip campaign nurturing those prospects, in line with what we've learnt about the Buyers Journey. This is the power of strategic marketing.

Cosmetic Surgeon - helping mothers regain their youthful figure.

He was generating 35 leads per month, at a cost of £6,000 on Facebook ads. His conversion rate was a nice round 0%!

After working with us, with the improved message that resonated with his target audience, his free report about "Mommy Makeovers" was generating between 300 and 500 leads every month. That's an increase of 1143% in his number of prospects. His report conversion rate was 67% while his patient conversion rate was 8%. So that's 268 new leads, generating 32 new patients, representing approximately £600,000 of monthly revenue.

Chiropractor - helping mainly women in awful pain by better diagnosis of Fibromyalgia.

He was generating three leads per month, using newspaper flyers, costing £2000 a month.

By focussing on his passion (as far as his marketing message was concerned) and offering a free report about his reliable diagnosis, he saw a startling increase of 4566% in his lead generation, which was a total of 137 in a mere four days, from a TV advert. His free report converted 37 patients the £2,500 each, which amounts to £92,500 total revenue.

Pre-school Nursery / Kindergarten – teaching infants for a head start at school.

They mailed out a postcard to every home in a 5 mile radius, but received no calls.

After we got to work with them, helped them clear up their message, and truly engage in that inner conversation in their prospects heads, they generated 58 leads in the first week, so had to stop running the advertisement! 47 of those applied for the 18 available places.

Wouldn't you like a marketing system like that, which you could turn on & off as needed, confident in the results it would yield for you?

If you found this guide useful, we'd love to
hear from you so please get in touch

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This report is one of a series by John Holder,
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Please feel free to share it, as is, with
other interested parties.

If you'd like to read more of John's 'pearls of wisdom',
about advertising and other forms of Strategic Marketing
click [this link](#) to buy John's first book.

Or go to Amazon.co.uk and search in 'Books' for
'Stop Wasting Money on Ineffectual Marketing'.

Isn't it about time for you to out-think, out-market and out-sell
your Competitors?

