

Introduction

Time to get clear and confident.

People make marketing far too complicated. They get stuck in cumbersome strategies, follow the crowd without knowing where it's going, and believe they have to spend a lot of money to make marketing work.

The problem is that they aren't thinking like a marketer. In fact, they may not be thinking at all. When it comes to marketing, I believe most business owners and managers are working much harder than they have to. Maybe you are, too.

Most are missing hundreds of marketing opportunities that stare them in the face in the everyday operation of their business. Maybe you are, too.

Most are wasting time, money, and optimism on haphazard marketing efforts, only to get minimal returns and diminish all faith in the very thing that can help them excel. Maybe you are, too.

If this is you, or ever has been you, then it's time to re-think marketing.

This book is about making marketing practical, easy, even automatic. It's about showing you a new way to think and approach your business so marketing gets done and gets results.

As a small business owner, I understand firsthand the challenges marketing can pose, especially for a small or mid-size enterprise. I also understand the consequences that come from neglecting it. If you want to be successful, marketing is not an option. But then, why wouldn't you be anxious and thrilled to market your business and yourself? You chose to do what you do. I'm assuming you offer a product or service that can benefit others. Why wouldn't you be ecstatic to tell the world about it?

I know it's not always easy, and I know all of the excuses—the list of “not enough's.” Not enough time. Not enough money. Not enough people. Not enough expertise. Well, enough with all that. It's time to get out of your own way. It's time to make marketing doable and, most importantly, integrated into the day-to-day running of your business so it happens in spite of yourself and even while you're chasing fires.

It's time to stir things up.

If you are one of the “most” who have found marketing to be confusing and overwhelming, take heart and take a deep breath. Your world is about to get much easier. I will demystify marketing so you can act with a level head and fresh perspective on the marketing opportunities that abound right under your nose. You'll learn how to stand out from the crowd and the clutter. You'll learn how to outperform the competition by outthinking the competition. And, you'll learn how to transform your business into a marketing machine.

What is mind-boggling and frustrating about marketing today will become easy, natural, and business as usual tomorrow. In fact, I'm confident that, with your new marketing mindset, you'll change how you do business forever.

Marketing does not have to be complicated, and you can make big things happen in your business even with your limited resources. I know because I've done it for my customers and my own business. I have dedicated my entire career to helping small, but aggressive businesses reach their marketing potential while doing the best with what they had.

My favorite personal success story involves a mature, business-to-business company of 23 years. They had reached about \$1 million in sales. They were successful by all accounts in their industry and marketplace, but they wanted to take the next leap. Traditional sales efforts weren't working well enough. The company needed to reach deeper and wider. So, we created a program that integrated marketing into the day-to-day operation of the business. We worked and kneaded it until marketing became as natural and as common as making payroll and paying taxes. We sniffed and sought out every opportunity to get a meaningful message to their target audience consistently and constantly. By thinking like a marketer, we had the guidance we needed to capitalize on opportunities that would be completely unrecognizable to the average company. In four years, sales doubled to more than \$2.1 million with notably no major operational changes, a bare-bones budget, and, get this, not one outside salesperson. This is living proof that, when you think like a marketer, you can make magical things happen in your business, even with all of those "not enough's."

Now it's your turn to get a mental marketing adjustment. If you have struggled in making marketing happen and misfired in making it effective, things are about to change. We are about to drill down to the very essence of what marketing really is and what it means for you every day in the normal running of your business. We'll explore the timeless principles that transcend the latest trends and technological exploits. And, I'll teach you how to put marketing into action and how to keep it there—so you'll have a great success story, too. The best part is that you will know exactly what to do when you shut the book.

As you read, make notes, highlight passages, dog-ear pages, and really ponder the questions posed. This book is packed with principles to guide you, questions to challenge you, and tips and tools to help you put your newfound learning into practice.

The time has come to get clear and confident in your marketing, so grab your pen and open your mind. Get ready to think like a marketer. Get ready to stand out from the crowd, the clutter, and the competition. Get ready to be a marketing machine!