

HOW TO MARKET TO PEOPLE

NOT LIKE *
YOU



**"KNOW IT OR BLOW IT" RULES FOR
REACHING DIVERSE CUSTOMERS**

KELLY McDONALD

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KELLY McDONALD



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Introduction

You Can't Reach a Customer You Don't Understand

I was in the Dallas airport recently and saw one of the worst ads I've ever seen. It stopped me in my tracks and I found myself studying it, trying to fathom how an ad this awful came to exist. As a marketing professional, I had to wonder, "Who created it? And who approved it?" The ad was for Cancun, Mexico. The intent was obviously to increase tourism to Cancun by appealing to vacationers. It was an ad featuring a beautiful beach with a woman lying on a massage table, outside, by the ocean, getting a massage. There were starfish and sand dollars strewn around the bottom of the ad. The headline stated: "Yes You Can...Cun."

Aside from the cheesy, stupid, horrible play on words and pun ("Yes you can"), there was nothing that would entice a reader to choose Cancun over any other beach destination. There was no mention of the culture, the history, or things to do in Cancun. There was simply a picture of a woman getting a massage by the ocean. It could have been an ad for Miami or St. Croix or San Diego. The odd thing is, there are many, many reasons why someone would want to vacation in Cancun: world-class snorkeling and diving, Mayan ruins, five-star hotels and restaurants, fantastic weather, a large English-speaking population, affordability—the list goes on. I'm willing to bet that most people planning a vacation to a beach destination are not going to choose their destination because of a generic, bland ad and a corny, cheesy pun with no relevance.

It was kind of sad, too. Poor Cancun—if Cancun were a person, he'd feel so misunderstood! Imagine the thoughts

Cancun would have: “Wow, I have so much to offer! I have rich cultural history; amazing ruins and temples that are thousands of years old; a terrific, mild climate; clear turquoise waters filled with fish and colorful coral; great restaurants and nightlife; and I'm so affordable compared to others! So why is all of this substance overlooked in favor of making a cheesy pun? Doesn't anybody know who I am? Don't the ad makers want to know more about me and really understand me? If they did, and they created an ad that really showcased who I am, their results would be so much better! Because the people who really want what I have would learn about me. And they'd like what they learned. They'd want to come visit me and see for themselves. They'd want to experience me, the real Cancun.”

To me, the reason that ad for Cancun was so weak was that whoever created it doesn't seem to know anything about what vacationers want. It didn't communicate effectively—about the merits of Cancun or, frankly, anything. There was no substance to that message at all.

To be fair, it's hard to communicate effectively when you don't really understand whom you're talking to or what that person or group cares about. The best marketing messages resonate with their target audience; there is something in the message that taps into a belief, a value, an aspiration, a hope, a fear, or something the target holds dear. This is a simple concept, but it's scary because you don't want to risk offending anyone or making a fool of yourself if you try something new and get it wrong.

You're probably feeling some of that anxiety right now. The fact that you're even holding this book tells me that you know you need to reach out to new markets, you know there is a business opportunity in doing so, but how in the world do you begin? You want to grow your business, but you don't want to make a mistake or offend anyone. You know that a

marketing message has to be relevant to the target audience, but how do you know what's "relevant" when the target audience is quite different from you or your experiences? How are you supposed to grasp someone's beliefs and values if that person is nothing like you?

That's what this book will address. It will teach you, step by step, how to market to people not like you. This is more important than ever because marketing budgets are getting tighter and tighter and the consumer market is more fragmented than ever. It's imperative that your marketing dollars work as well and as hard as they can to deliver potential prospects and customers to your business. This book will teach you what you need to know to reach new market segments without blowing it by making cultural blunders, foolish mistakes, or embarrassing errors. You can do it. And this book will show you how.

I have not met one person in the past several years who claims that growing business is easy. In fact, every business owner, corporate marketing manager, and ad agency or marketing executive tells me that their biggest business pressure, the thing that keeps them awake at night, is figuring out how to expand their business. There are really only three ways to do this:

- 1.** Sell more of your products or services to your existing customer base, thereby increasing your sales volume or transaction revenue.
- 2.** Get your customers to buy from you more frequently.
- 3.** Tap into new market segments.

The first two options aren't all that realistic for many companies and brands. Let's say you're a car dealer. You might be able to sell your current customers a little more service (oil changes or accessories) with coupons and promotional efforts. Or you might be able to convince a customer to buy a new vehicle every three years instead of four. But each of these scenarios will bring only slight

incremental revenue. If you want to really grow your business by selling more vehicles, you have to find new customers. The same is true if you're a restaurant owner; you can either try to get your current customers to come and dine more frequently, or you can try to sell them more food when they dine (appetizers, drinks, and desserts). But the better approach is to try to reach new customers who haven't eaten at your restaurant before.

By tapping into new markets and cultivating new customers, you gain sales immediately. Your sales growth won't be dependent on trying to change the behavior of your existing customers, which is very hard to do. You'll still have your existing customers, but you'll also have new customers, and those new customers represent huge potential for ongoing sales and profits.

It sounds simple, and it's quite logical: market to a new clientele and watch your business soar. Yet marketing to people who are not like you may make you feel very uncomfortable because there are so many examples of bad ads and horrible blunders out there. I know you may be afraid to even try to tap into a new market for fear of getting it wrong and making one of those embarrassing blunders. I promise that this book will show you the steps on how to do it right, without offending others or making a fool of yourself. Let me give you an example.

A couple of years ago, we were approached by an auto insurance company that specializes in nonstandard insurance, which means insurance for those with blemishes on their driving records or other problems. These individuals may have a poor driving record, a DUI offense, bad credit, no driver's license, and the like. You get the picture. They are individuals that other insurance companies do not want to insure because they're considered high risk.

This company, A-Affordable Insurance, wanted to reach out to Hispanic consumers in the Texas market. The first

thing we did was conduct consumer focus groups among Hispanic adult drivers to learn what they thought about auto insurance. We discovered two primary things:

1. Everyone called it “car insurance,” even if they had a truck or a sport-utility vehicle. They'd say, “Yes, I have car insurance on my truck” or “I pay \$79 a month for the car insurance on my truck.” They didn't call it auto insurance—they called it car insurance, regardless of what type of vehicle they drove.

2. They didn't understand how insurance works. They found it all very confusing, particularly things like the deductible. One man stated in the focus groups that he felt he'd been ripped off by his insurance company. When we asked why, he said, “Because I'd been paying \$120 a month for insurance for three years. When I finally had an accident, they told me I'd need to pay \$500 to cover the deductible. What's that? Why don't they just take the money out of my account?” You can see how, if you are not very sophisticated about how insurance works, you might think that the money you've been paying for insurance goes into “an account” each month. And that the “account” will cover the repair expenses. Except that's not how it works, of course. We realized, hearing comments like these, that we really needed to do some education with this consumer before we could effectively sell him insurance.

The second thing we did was look at the other advertisers in that industry, to see and understand what the “competitive landscape” was like. We looked at TV spots, ads, and flyers to learn how the competition was positioning themselves and promoting themselves to the Hispanic nonstandard insurance consumer. What we found was quite interesting. All the companies going after this consumer were running very negative ads. The ads had messages like, “No credit? Bad credit? No money? Bad driving record? XYZ Insurance Company can help....”

It struck us that, if you are the nonstandard insurance consumer, you already know you have poor credit. You already know you don't have much money. You already know you've got a bad driving record. You already have had to face up to these things and that probably doesn't make you feel very good about yourself. You don't need any reminders of the trouble you've had in the past or that you're currently facing. You need a solution, not a lecture about what a high-risk driver you are.

So we created a tagline for the client that took the opposite approach. We stated, in positive terms, that your business is welcome at A-Affordable insurance. The tagline in English said, "Car insurance for all." In Spanish, it was "Seguro de carros para todos."

To address the lack of understanding about insurance, we developed an educational seminar. We designed it to be 30 minutes long, explaining in clear, easy-to-understand terms how auto insurance works and why having auto insurance is important. We created inexpensive booklets that had all the basic information, in Spanish and English, about insurance. We included a glossary of terms, as well as a map of all the local A-Affordable offices with addresses and phone numbers.

We contacted local community centers, YMCAs, churches, and even laundromats and asked if we could present a free, no obligation, no sales pressure seminar on auto insurance. Because having auto insurance in Texas is required by law, everyone we approached said yes and provided the space for us to have the seminar at no cost to us. They considered it a positive message for the community. We posted flyers on-site about when the free seminar would be held.

We had bilingual agents from A-Affordable conduct the seminars. There was no hard sell—just an informative approach about auto insurance and what you need to know to protect yourself, your vehicle, and your loved ones. Of

course, the agents provided their business cards to attendees, but it was positioned as, "If you have any questions, call me and let's talk." The agents were happy to do the seminars because they work on commission, and this opened up an entirely new customer group for them.

How did it work? Sales went up 19 percent during the campaign and calls to the company's dedicated Spanish-language 800 number increased 22 percent. What we did was quite simple: We talked to our target customer. We found out a few important things that helped us create a message that was relevant to them. We provided a solution for them (education about a topic they didn't fully understand). And we "put the welcome mat out" for them by creating a tagline that was positive and made them feel good about themselves instead of making them feel bad.

You can grow your business with sales results like this, by narrowcasting and following the steps to market to people not like you.

It's not that hard to do. And it's really important. Because the world is more diverse than ever, and not just racially and ethnically. Different viewpoints, lifestyles, levels of affluence, religions, values, and priorities are all ways in which we can be different from each other. No longer is there one "customer group," or what marketing folks like to call the "General Market." Technology has made it easier (and cheaper) than ever before for us to be recognized as individuals and have our needs and wants catered to by companies. For consumers, this has meant more information and, consequently, more choices. When you have more choices, you become more selective. The consumer today is more selective than ever before and has more power. Therefore, the marketer has to do a better job of reaching the consumer and making sure that the marketing message is not just received, but is received enthusiastically.

It all comes down to relevance. Sure, you can reach lots of people with your ads and marketing campaigns. But if you don't reach those people with a meaningful message that they find relevant to them, they'll dismiss you. That's what happened with the ad for Cancun; the ad reached me (I saw it and I read it), and then I immediately dismissed it. Because it had no real message and therefore, no real value to me. It was not relevant in any way.

It used to be easier. Back in the day, there just weren't that many ways to reach people, and consumers weren't as sophisticated as they are now. Mass marketing was easy. And we didn't have the ability to tailor our marketing messages and offers to specific, different audiences. Think about Nike. Decades ago, Nike launched their famous "Just Do It" campaign, and it was targeted to athletes and people who exercised. From there, Nike refined their marketing efforts because they realized that not all people who exercise are alike. They segmented their marketing messages and made them more targeted. Today, Nike markets to teens, women, various racial and ethnic groups, runners, basketball players, and those who participate in specialized sports. They even use the term *cross-training* to market to people who exercise in multiple ways, whether it's jumping rope, walking, or playing volleyball. Each message is different, and so are the media channels used to reach those different audiences.

You know that you need to cultivate new customers to ensure that your company thrives and grows. What you're probably struggling with is how to go about doing that. How do you find the right new market segment for your business? How do you develop meaningful, relevant messages? How do you know what a new customer group wants? How do you market in a new way to a new group and know that you're not offending, being culturally insensitive, or coming across as weird or stupid? Add to that

the tremendous budget pressure that most businesses are under, and it's easy to see why you might be fearful about trying new techniques and approaches. You don't know how to market to people not like you. But you will.

In the following pages, you'll learn about market segments that represent high potential for your business. You'll recognize which are the best market segments for your business today and which represent opportunity in the future. You'll see that you don't need a huge budget to create meaningful marketing messages that will make the cash register ring.

You'll learn how to identify new market segments and reach them with relevance. You'll learn how to build a marketing message that will resonate with new customers without blowing it, offending, or being stereotypical or insensitive. You'll learn, step by step, what to do and what not to do.

Our world offers us a wealth of diversity. And this diversity will only expand in the future. Different cultures, languages, generations, and lifestyles bring huge, unlimited opportunity for growing your business. Diversity will drive everything from product development to consumer insights to marketing messages. It will shape culture, music, media, politics, entertainment, and religion. It will shape lifestyles and habits. It will present smart businesses with a wide-open playing field and a serious competitive edge.

Tap into this diverse marketplace and find your high-potential customer now. Learn how to market to people not like you and watch your business grow and prosper. You can do it.

Part One

Seven Steps for Selling to New and Unfamiliar Customers

Chapter One

Get Out of Your Comfort Zone to Grow Sales

“Spray and Pray” versus Broad Thinking and Narrowcasting

Marketers are lazy. I should know—I'm a marketer. I don't mean to imply we don't work hard. We do. We work our butts off. And we tend to be unappreciated. There's even a joke about it in my field: “When business is great, the credit goes to the Sales Department. When business is bad, blame Marketing.”

Marketing is hard. It's not like other disciplines in business that are easily measured or quantified. For example, if you're in the Product Development Department of a technology company and you develop a new computer system, you can test and test and retest that system to see where the bugs and glitches are before you ever release it for launch. In marketing, we can take certain steps to “test” our thinking, our approach, and our message, but it's still very hard to anticipate human behavior, desires, and what will ultimately inspire someone to buy something.

Marketers are also highly accountable for the results of their work. If you're a marketing executive at a company and your efforts don't yield the anticipated sales results, your butt's on the line. If you work for an ad agency and your clients don't get the results they want or expect, your clients will probably fire you. If you're a small business

owner, your budget pressure is enormous and you need to make every dollar count.

When I say “marketers are lazy,” what I mean by that is that we are often guilty of being lazy *thinkers*. We are under so much pressure to hit our numbers (sales targets or budget targets, or both), that we often take the path of least resistance or the easiest route to getting our work done. For example, sometimes marketing executives compromise on doing the *right* thing and end up doing the *safe* thing—the thing that makes their boss or their shareholders happy. Instead of marketing to your potential prospect, you end up marketing to yourself (or your boss).

I recently saw a brochure for a midsized accounting firm. Their potential customers are other businesses that need the services of a solid accounting firm. As a small business owner myself, I can say that some of the things that might be important to other business owners could be personal service, reasonable fees, excellent tax advice, financial problem solving, tax savings strategies, and long-range thinking and planning steps, just to name a few.

However, this brochure touted none of those attributes. Instead, it featured a picture of their building, and inside, a bio of their founder. It's hard to believe that anyone would choose an accounting firm based on what their building looks like. And most people are smart enough to know that the founder, if he or she is still alive, will not be the person actually working with you on your business.

The brochure was clearly meant to satisfy the ego of the founder, rather than actually stimulate new business for the firm. I'll bet it didn't do much in the way of getting sales results, but by giving the boss what he wanted, the marketing executive probably made his own life a lot easier.

That's what I mean by being lazy. We have so much pressure on us to hit those numbers, hit those deadlines, and keep everyone happy that we compromise. Or we want

sales results so badly that we take the broadest approach possible to our marketing efforts, hoping to reach as many people as possible with our message.

I call this “spray and pray.” You spray your message out there as widely as possible and pray it works. It's the opposite of targeting. It's “broadcasting” in the truest, most literal sense of the word: casting your net as broadly as possible, hoping to catch a lot of fish.

A better approach today is *narrowcasting*—learning as much as possible about your target audience, however small that audience may be, and communicating to them frequently, richly, and relevantly. It's better to reach 10 percent of what I call your “high-potential market” than to reach 90 percent of a market that doesn't really care about your company or your products.

Most readers of this book have probably never done this, so you're understandably a little afraid of this concept of narrowcasting. You don't know how to do it. You don't know how to find the percentage of the market that represents “high potential,” and you don't know how to create products, services, or messages that are relevant to that high-potential customer. You're nervous that you'll make a mistake, offend somebody, or look bad to your boss. And let's face it—on top of all that, you're busy! You've got a lot on your plate, and doing thoughtful, careful consumer marketing takes a lot of time. So you continue to “spray and pray” because it's faster and easier. And it's “safe.”

But you were smart enough to pick up this book. You know you can, and should, do more to reach new markets. What you may not know is this: *every business can grow this way*. Narrowcasting and marketing to people's values can be your “secret sauce.” It will be the thing that differentiates you from your competition and sets you apart in the consumer's mind. And I promise you this: your competitors are not likely to be developing marketing plans around narrowcasting. No,

they are much more likely to stick with spray and pray, which means that you have a wide-open field of opportunity before you.

Toyota Tundras, Nike, and iPhones

Apple Computers built their business by narrowcasting. In the 1980s, Apple targeted the Macintosh computer at specific, narrow segments like graphic design, education, and publishing. The Mac became the preferred computer for people in those industries. Gradually, the popularity of Macs spread and, today, Apple is one of the strongest brands in the world. The iPhone strategy was similar: they didn't try to sell everyone an iPhone initially. They focused on the people who would influence their friends and colleagues. Apple *narrowcasted* and targeted trendsetters and tech-savvy people who want to stay connected. From there, iPhone sales spread like wildfire.

Jones Soda Company grew their business by narrowcasting, too. Jones Soda Company is a small beverage company, and they never had the multimillion-dollar marketing budgets to compete with established brands like Coke or Pepsi. One of their company mottos is “Run with the little guy...Create some change.” They want to be seen as the everyman who just happens to make good sodas. This is evident in the witty quotes and unique pictures on each bottle, the fact that they avoid conventional advertising, and their ever-changing flavors.

Because they were a funky “alternative” soda brand, they narrowcasted and went after consumers who might appreciate their funky, small company appeal. They placed their soda coolers in tattoo and piercing parlors, skate parks and surf shops, and funky little fashion boutiques—places