

Getting RESPECT

R - E - S - P

"All I'm askin' is for a little respect

In American culture there are feuds that have become legendary: Alexander Hamilton versus Aaron Burr, the Hatfields versus the McCoys, Al Capone versus Bugs Moran and...Marketers versus Management. Though no blood is spilled in boardrooms, these opposing forces battle it out routinely, and far too frequently, it's the marketers who are overruled, undervalued and disrespected. So, why don't marketers get the respect they deserve? Reasons range from complex physiology and sociology to simple economics. Here are a few for your consideration:

E - C - T

Why Marketers Frequently Don't Get the *Respect* They Deserve

by Lorrie Bryan

R - ROI (Return on Investment)

ROI is a term often used to subdue marketers, says Jeffrey Hayzlett, hailed a "Celebrity CMO" by *Forbes Magazine*. "One of the reasons that marketing seems to take a back seat to sales and finance is that people fail to see the value of marketing. They continually push for an ROI for marketing and many elements associated with

economy, most executive leadership teams have gone into a mode of extremely low tolerance for exploratory growth and high reliability controls.

"Most leadership teams are content to grow the bottom line with the low-risk ap-

proach—reducing costs and increasing efficiencies—not by investing in revenue growth drivers. The recent financial institution crisis and mortgage collapse has led to new SEC regulations, tougher reporting rules, stricter banking policies and, for many companies, a loss of credit lines. The "cash is king" mentality fueled fears of investing in real revenue growth. Most organizations became so risk averse that they overtly communicated intolerance for any high-risk, unproven marketing initiatives. Unpredictable results scared most leaders. They stopped playing to win and started playing not to lose."

E - The Economy

Corporate America is in a financial crisis with no clear end in sight, and the effect of the crisis on the role of marketers can't be ignored. Steve Jones, former CMO at The Coca Cola Company and principal at (r)evolution, says that as result of the

when you come home—just a little bit..."

— from *Respect* sung by Aretha Franklin, number five on *Rolling Stone's* list of *The 500 Greatest Songs of All Time*



S - Social Media

Marketing is stuck in second gear. Al Ries, marketing guru and best-selling author of *The Fall of Advertising and the Rise of PR*, says that if marketing were an automobile, it would be making a lot of noise, but not getting anywhere.

“Second gear is *social media*. The entire marketing community, including the trade press, is fascinated by social media and spends endless hours discussing its uses and functions. It’s as if the success or failure of a marketing program hinges on just one thing—the proper use of social media. There hasn’t been as much chatter about a single marketing concept since the rise of television in the 1950s, so perhaps the excitement is understandable—apparently a new medium appears only about once every 50 years or so.”

So, is social media important? Yes, but, as Ries points out, “It’s only a tactic. And tactics are never as important as strategies. A company can be successful with a good strategy and poor tactics, but almost never with good tactics and a poor strategy. The excitement about social media has blinded many marketing people to the importance of developing a good strategy. They seem to think that executing an effective social media program is all that’s necessary to achieve success.”

P - Processing differences in the brain

In their recent book, *War in the Boardroom*, Al Ries and his daughter and business partner Laura Ries propose that fundamental differences in the way people process information—whether the left or right hemisphere of their brain is dominant—lead to conflicts within businesses. Management tends to be left-brained (verbal, logical, analytical) and marketing tends to be right-brained (visual, intuitive, holistic). Right-brainers tend to make the best marketing people, but they seldom become top management types.

“Marketing is considered by most management people as nothing but “common sense.” And who has more common sense than the CEO? This is why many chief executives don’t hesitate to overrule their marketing people when it comes to deciding on marketing strategies. It’s been our experience that the CEOs of most companies today are the ones who are conceiving and developing their companies’ marketing strategies. And they tend to treat their marketing departments as the people who execute the strategies developed by the top management team. And frankly, most corporate strategies today are weak, with the possible exception of companies like Apple, Oracle and a handful of other companies,” Laura Ries explains.

E - Expansion v. contraction

Is marketing common sense? No; most of marketing’s most important principles are illogical. Laura Ries cites the expand-contract argument as an example. “The best way to build a brand is by narrowing its focus: *Driving* in the case of BMW, *Prestige* in the case of Mercedes-Benz, *Safety* in the case of Volvo. But management thinks otherwise—most management people want to expand what a brand stands for in order to attract more customers. That’s

why Hyundai, a low-price brand, is busy introducing high-priced cars. And the high-price brands are doing just the opposite—introducing low-price cars.”

“In all of the meetings we have ever had with management people, we almost never hear words like *focus or eliminate or contract*,” adds Al Ries. “What we hear over and over again are words like *expand, leverage the brand, develop new markets or line extensions*. Management needs to recognize the difference between the two ways of thinking. They need to make sure their marketing departments are staffed with right-brainers before they allow their marketing people to formulate strategies.”

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— Dr. David W. Rosenthal,
professor of Marketing,
Miami University



C - Confusion about Marketing

So, just what is marketing? Dr. David W. Rosenthal, a professor of Marketing at Miami University, notes that the confusion about the definition of marketing is problematic. “I think that there are two very different definitions of *marketing*. I’ll call them *MARKETING* and *marketing*. *MARKETING* is the version that we teach in our colleges and universities. It encompasses the 4Ps (product, price, promotion, and place) and much more. It includes segmentation processes, customer behavior, competitive positioning, environmental scanning and linkages to the rest of the organization. Overall, *MARKETING* represents a philosophy of putting customers and their needs first; everything else flows from that.”

However, the common definition of *marketing* is essentially equivalent to *promotion*. “If one asks someone on the street what marketing involves, they will immediately launch into illustrations of advertising and sales promotion. This narrower definition has become so widespread that it dwarfs the broader meaning of *MARKETING* in the public’s perception.

“I fear that the confusion is so deeply established that we have lost “the rights” to the term and need to find another “brand” for our function,” Rosenthal adds.

T - Technology

Technology fueled the Information Age which has allowed rapid global communications and networking to shape our modern society, marketing notwithstanding. Rosenthal contends that technology has eroded the prestige of professional marketers. “The proliferation and fragmentation of media and the advent of e-commerce have trivialized the perceived role of the marketer. With so many communication avenues and stories of teen-aged technical whizzes creating million dollar Web sites, the prestige of professional marketers has eroded. Ironically, the increased complexity calls for more professionalism, not less.”

“To be certain, the ability to communicate with customers in two-way dialogues and the application of technology to mass-customize efficiently will be critical,” says Rosenthal. “But the essential task of marketing won’t change. Find a need and fill it, efficiently.”



TCB : Take Care of Business

“R-E-S-P-E-C-T, find out what it means to me. R-E-S-P-E-C-T, take care...TCB.”

The last line of *Respect* is often misquoted as “Take out, TCP”, or something similar, and many published music sheets which include the lyrics are inaccurate. TCB is an abbreviation that was commonly used in the 1960s and 1970s, meaning *Taking Care of Business*. TCB later became Elvis Presley’s motto and signature, from his necklace to his band and private jet plane.

So how should marketers take care of business and earn respect? Here are some suggestions:

T -Tolerance

Marketers need to advocate tolerance for exploratory solutions.

We now know that we are not going back to any previous state of economic expansion and spending any time soon, and business leaders are also realizing that cost cutting and efficiencies are not enough to grow the bottom line. Marketers have an opportunity to be a respected player as analysts and investors start to exert pressure for

C -Credibility

Marketers need to regain credibility by understanding the new landscape and creating a new marketing model.

Jones contends that marketer’s credibility is questionable because they haven’t figured out the true value of new technology. “They haven’t figured out how to use it in a way that new young consumers want to use it. They abdicated their responsibility to the ad agency whose only interest

change and welcome the challenges and opportunities that it brings. “Marketing is such a dynamic field, and with technology evolving rapidly, it is becoming ever more complex with even more creative outlets. I think the best marketers are those that embrace change while knowing their brand and what it means to customers. They should constantly be learning about themselves, the market, customers, and new technology they can utilize.”

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– Jeffrey Hayzlett



better results driven by top-line revenue growth. However, as Jones points out, it is essential that marketers develop within the C Suite a tolerance for exploratory and insightful solutions.

“They need to make the case for managed risk taking. They need to demonstrate that they understand the company agenda, can explore possibilities responsibly without betting the farm or burning unpredictable sums of cash. They need to make the case that the landscape has been shifting since we all put our heads down in September 2008. New players from India are providing better services; new producers from China are increasing quality products; new middle classes are emerging that we need to penetrate. Consumers have completely shifted their attitudes and values and need to be approached in a new way. And marketers need to act like business leaders, not flakey ad guys.”

is the preservation of their old financial model.

“To regain credibility and respect, marketers need to take back responsibility for understanding how to use the digital and Web technology as a meaningful marketplace. They have to abandon the traditional TV advertising campaign mental model. They need to stop translating from advertising into digital. If a marketer abandons all that is old and immerses themselves in new technology and new consumer attitudes and behavior they will emerge with a whole new credible marketing model that will generate more sales revenue and earn them a seat at the C Suite Table.”

Hayzlett suggests that marketers should be prepared for the landscape to constantly

B -Big Picture

Marketers need to maintain their focus on the big picture.

To be a valued player, Jones says you need to understand the current macro business context, “And figure out a valuable strategic contribution to the CEO and total company game plan.”

As predominantly left-brain thinkers, lawyers, accountants and most management professionals are more inclined to focus on the details—bean counters are good at counting beans. But as Al and Laura Ries purport, the traits that make a good lawyer or accountant are almost exactly the opposite of what makes a good marketing person. “Someone in the boardroom needs to focus on the big picture, and that is the role of the marketing specialist,” Al Ries affirms.