



The 8 ATEs of Successful Marketing **Everyone Can be a Marketing Genius**

I am in the process of updating my web site. It's about time. Don't misunderstand me, it worked when I made half of what I do now for presentations, training and speaking engagements. Today, my business is bigger, my approach has improved, my presentations are more targeted to specific groups and industries, and my delivery is more sophisticated. My web site needs to reflect that. Until now, the web site reflected the thinking that people are dying to read my copy. They aren't. I hate to admit it, but they aren't just gobbling up my terrific content word for word. Ugh. So what have I learned that you can apply to your marketing, whether you are a one-person lemonade stand or a multi-national corporation? You need to familiarize yourself with 8 words to get you in front of your customers and make a fortune:

1. **Differentiate** – Focus. What makes you stand out from the rest? Australians call this the “poppy principle.” The poppy that stands out in the field. Porsche decided a few years ago to get into the SUV market. They have failed miserably because this is not what they are known for. Consumers have come to know the Porsche name for excellent high-performance cars. Wanna race SUV’s?

Look at Jimmy Buffett and how he has taken the Margaritaville (a song that never made it to the top of the charts) image and bankrolled it into stores, cafes, Radio Margaritaville, beachwear, and don't forget the albums and concerts. He has an image that he has never deviated from and stayed in his niche. Mention his name and it conjures up tropical drinks, parrots, the beach, and a lifestyle that says, “It's Five O'clock Somewhere.” What differentiates you from others in your industry? What makes you stand out like a tall flower in a field of look-alikes? What can you do to take the image you have carved out and differentiate it from the rest?

2. **Illustrate** - Features, not Benefits – Does your marketing, sales pitch or web site tell what the features are of your product or service? Why? Most people know what they want. They want something that benefits them.

Don't tell me what makes it work for you; tell me what it will do to solve my problem. Don't tell me what it does; tell me what it does for me. Don't spend your time shoving the features down my throat. Show me the benefits. Nobody wants to be sold, but everyone wants to buy something that benefits them.

As Jeffrey Gitomer says, quit trying to find people's pain. If you want to find pain, become a doctor and you will be surrounded by others' pain. Find what makes people happy. Find what they want. I ask clients what their people are doing now that they want them to stop doing when I am finished speaking to or training them. They tell me and I illustrate how what I present will benefit them. When you go in for surgery, do you want to know the details of the operation or when you will be walking around again? What about your marketing plan? Is your web site filled with features or benefits?

3. **Dominate** - Branding – What are you known for in your industry? When your name or your company's name is mentioned what do people think of? Here are some multimillion dollar brands. What do they make you think of? Samsung, Coca-Cola, FedEx, Google, Microsoft, Lexus, Oprah, Jos. A. Bank, Tiffany, Versace and Tiffany. When I lived in Columbia, SC a local church put out a sign one week that read: "A Biker Friendly Church." The pastor, a biker, put out his Harley Davidson in front of the church the next Sunday. The next Sunday I drove by and there were three Harleys. Two weeks later there were a dozen. Pretty soon there were motorcycles covering the lawn of the church. The brand attracted both permanent and weekend bikers.

When I began my speaking career I started looking for a brand. I was trying to overcome what I thought was the negative image of a Southern accent (you know, ignorant, hick, red neck, uneducated, etc.) until my speaking coach pointed out that I had a "sophisticated Southern accent." About the same time people were comparing my content and delivery to television psychologist Dr. Phil and comedian Jeff Foxworthy. When a client asked me one day what I was like in front of a crowd, I answered, "Sort of like Dr. Phil meets Jeff Foxworthy." He laughed, hired me and the brand was born. What do you do that you are known for? What do people think of when they think of you? What does your web site make prospective customers do when they visit?

4. **Investigate** - To do some real marketing research, ask yourself this question - What is your Customer's #1 Complaint? What is it that you wish they would quit harping to you about? Odds are there is a fortune to be found in it. Why? Because it is a need that is not being met by you – or your competition (or else they would have left you for them a long time ago). UPS got tired of people asking where their package was so they got

into the tracking business. Hertz got tired of people complaining about standing in lines so they got into the “Get me out of the airport faster” business. Dominos got into the pizza DELIVERY business.

Is there some changing need or complaint that keeps you up at night? Tired of hearing it? Believe it or not, it is opportunity telling you how to make a fortune. Solve that problem and meet that need and you will be the only one doing it (for a while) and you will make a fortune. What unconventional thing can you do for your customers and future customers that will draw them to you like flies to sugar? Since no one else is meeting that need or solving that problem you will dominate that market. Anyone can open a bank, provide health care, sell air time. Sell what no one else is selling that everyone complains about not being able to get.

5. **Innovate** - What are you doing to adapt to the changing times? What are you doing to meet the newest demands within your industry? What are you doing to stay on the cutting edge of innovation? Better yet, how's your Palm Pilot working? Remember Palm Pilots? Everyone used to have them. They were irreplaceable in meetings. Walk through an airport and you saw them in almost every hand. Then along came the “smart phone.” The Blackberry. I think I went through four palm pilots, then I discovered the smart phone – a phone and personal data assistant all in one. Next came the iPhone: music, phone, calendar, email, organizer and web browser all in one place. Smart marketers are constantly watching the horizon to see what the next wave is and will it last beyond the fad stage.

Professional speakers use a “one sheet” to market themselves. It is a one page flyer that contains a current photo, their name, a brief bio and what they specialize in. Unfortunately, most speakers talk about leadership and sales so take off the name, photo and bio and they all look alike. Several years ago I started producing a magalogue” – a twelve page magazine/catalogue about me. Very few other speakers produce these so it makes me stand out. Great marketers can tell the difference immediately. What changes are going on in society, culture, industry and your arena that you are certain will last? Are you fighting them or riding the new wave?

6. **Communicate** - Don't get too caught up in asking everyone's general opinions. I believe most folks don't know what they want when they are asked. I talk to meeting planners all the time who send out general questionnaires to their members each year asking what they want at the next convention. They compile the answers, hire professional speakers, rent a huge facility at some resort and no one shows up. Why? Because people don't have the nerve, intelligence or time to tell you what they really want. Henry Ford said, “If we had asked the public what they

wanted, they would have said 'faster horses'." He trusted his intuition and was generally correct.

Coca Cola used product surveys in the early 1980's that told them that a sweeter flavor of their number 1 soft drink would outsell the competition. Yielding to "the experts" the executives changed the formula amid a fanfare of bands, media blitz and hoopla. Within days they began receiving complaints from the consuming public who wanted their "Old Coke" back. You can't always rely on what the experts tell you. They are often giving you an opinion just to get a paycheck from you. Trust your gut and what you know about your top customers. You DO know them, don't you?

7. **Agitate** - Once you create the problem, agitate it. Get under the consumer's skin and irritate them. Find ways to make them not only aware of the problem, but bothered by it. Make them want it. Don't sell your solution (features); sell the problem and how it bothers them (benefits). A good way to do this is to take a survey and ask people what is bothering them about the way things are. In high school, I ran for Vice President of the student body. I spent two weeks calling fellow students on the phone. I asked them what irritated them about the way we were running the student government. Most said the same thing. That became my platform for election - just kept talking about the same thing over and over – the problem they told me they were irritated with. I agitated it until they couldn't wait to have me solve it. My campaign speech was how they were bothered by the problem and how I could solve it like no one else (since no one else was talking about it, that part was easy. My opponents were talking about what THEY wanted – not the student body). On our Election Day I won by a landslide.

So now I ask: What problem can you create that doesn't exist until you come along with a great solution? Here is a simple formula to make a fortune: State the problem; Agitate the Problem; "I have the solution!"

8. **Evaluate** – Constantly review your marketing and branding. Use times when the economy is down to take a long hard look at your marketing materials. Take a look at what your competition is doing to take your business away. Look at what you have learned during the good times that will help you through the bad ones. Look at what trends are developing during the down times.

One thing is certain. Times are changing. The "good old days" are gone forever. Bad economic times have a tendency to change the way we do business forever. The great Depression spelled the end of life in the USA as everyone knew it. World War II spelled the end of women not being in the workplace. The recession of 2001 brought an end to investing in dot-

com companies. Be aware of what is changing now and be ready to meet the needs these changes are creating.

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