

Building Bandwidth

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The Big Idea

The authors assert that marketing is marketing-- that marketing online takes as much discipline and work as it does offline.

Introduction

In the book, the authors explain why:

Building bandwidth is not about being trendy. It 's about closing the sale online and using some of the back-to-the-future principles of e-merchandising to do that.

Everything you knew about mass marketing is over. Today, customization rules, and that means customerization rules.

Customers don't care if your web site has the coolest technology -- they want to know how it can benefit them and how different it is from others site.

Creativity isn't about being obscure. Creativity means doing the hard work of communicating what your business can do that competition can't.

What applies to e-companies now applies to all companies. The new and old economies have fused into one hypercompetitive transformed economy.

Bandwidth

The authors define bandwidth as follows: "The winning companies will be the ones who build their brand strongly in all of the channels and for all of the possible purchasing occasions. That's building bandwidth." The authors take the building of value quite seriously. They consider building value the *raison d'être* of marketing. They remind the reader that everything that a company says or does adds or subtracts to their value.

The authors explain that building bandwidth is science, not art. Their objective in writing the book is precisely to teach the disciplines and processes of building bandwidth. They say:

We'll help you build bandwidth for a traditional BAM [brick-and-mortar] or an Internet business.

We'll teach you how the BAMs can maximize the value of their assets using Internet technology.

We'll help you understand the laws of the jungle for Web companies.

We'll reinforce the basics stressed in *The End of Marketing as We Know It*: how to use marketing to sell more stuff to more people more of the time.

In as much as closing the sale is the ultimate aim of marketing, the authors believe that purchase intent is the most reliable predictor of actual consumer purchase behavior—considering all other factors such as pricing and availability equal. The authors also claim that purchase intent is the best metric with which to measure advertising's ability to stimulate a consumer's desire for a product or service. In a study conducted, they found:

Ad likeability is a poor predictor of purchase intent.

Some of the least likeable ads on the Super Bowl were the most effective.

Super Bowl ads that rank high on the USA Today ad meter have a poor record of real business results.

Purchase intent data tell a different story.

Website traffic supported purchase intent data.

E-Marketing

The authors define e-marketing as marketing online. The purpose of e-marketing is to sell stuff; the same purpose that marketing has offline. Thus, when marketing fails to sell stuff, it is not marketing. It is merely communication. E-marketing is marketing at a much faster speed for higher stakes. Like offline marketing, however, e-marketing should convince people to return more often, to buy more, and be willing to pay more.

In the first phase of e-marketing, very few were present in cyberspace. Differentiation was therefore the result of lack of competitors. Communication was viral-- passed from person to person. The second phase of e-marketing was characterized by complete creative freedom which resulted in nonsensical, undisciplined, underachieving marketing. The third or current phase of e-marketing, looks seriously at revenue generation. This is the phase that expects marketing plans and market research-- not just advertising.

E-Marketing Must Be E-effective

Anything that doesn't bring in the desired revenue isn't marketing. The Net is all about marketing. In marketing, everything communicates. Every detail is either adding value or subtracting value, every detail is selling or unselling.

In the first phase of e-marketing, focus was on the two key components of marketing today -- brand and customer. Brandwidth was developed in the customer's experience with the product, based on usage.

Increasing usage is the surest way to build brand loyalty. To accomplish this, communicate to your customer's attitudes, not your own.

Building brandwidth is about connecting what is relevant and beneficial between people and your product or service. Building brandwidth means making that connection deeper and wider over time. On the Net, everything is considered a corporate crisis. With the life expectancy of a fruit fly, a new strategic advantage must do a lot of living quickly.

Practicing e-marketing means developing a marketing and branding strategy that delivers on the needs for market presence, consumer relevance, competitive differentiation, brand credibility, and user, usage, product and associative imagery-- the basics of brandwidth. This means uniting every detail of operations, communications, and interactions around a core marketing strategy. You must coordinate the efforts of internal communications, event planning and sponsorships, investor relations, community activities, public relations, advertising, merchandising, distribution, sales, customer support and customer relationship development, promotions, and corporate recruiting into one integrated whole.

Understand what's important to your customers then drive that meaning into your products and services and into everything you do and say. Understand their attitudes, their language, and their sense of the competitive set in your marketplace. Learn to talk back to them in that same language, so you can sell them more stuff more often and make more money.

Because customers keep getting smarter, you must market smarter.

Because competition keeps getting tougher, you must market tougher.

Your Most Important Job Is to Build Brandwidth

Your brand is the most valuable asset you can ever build in your company. Branding is a necessity brought about by the ease and speed with which other marketers are able to bring information and other brands into and out of markets. Branding allows you to stand out and be recognized in the confusion of overwhelming market clutter. To slice through this clutter is the purpose of branding today.

Sameness kills brandwidth.

Developing awareness for relatively unknown Net brands is something the mass media are actually pretty good at doing.

Consumer attention span is decreasing on the Net. The key issue at the point of decision is stickiness: What will keep customers around longer, in order to get more usage, more satisfaction, more sales, and the likelihood of more brand loyalty?

How to Build Brandwidth

Building brandwidth means building a brand that:

- Explains the product or service
- Connects consumers' wants and needs
- Enhances the value of the product or service and the company from which it comes.
- Distinguishes itself from all competitors and from the consumer sin of not doing anything at all.

The end result of building brandwidth is closing the sale. Building brandwidth is all business-- structure and process designed to deliver results. Brands are built along five key dimensions:

- Presence
- Relevance
- Differentiation
- Credibility
- Imagery -- user, usage, product, and association A strong brand strategy requires a plan for each dimension.

Presence

Presence in the marketplace is the way any brand gains consumers' awareness and acceptance. Brands extend their presence through advertising, merchandising, promotions, PR, and sponsorships. These create basic brand awareness and should also drive other brand attributes. It should be understood, however, that awareness does not necessarily translate into purchase intent or purchase. It must also be remembered that word of mouth is still the most compelling medium of advertising there is. On the Net, activated presence is quick and easy through chatrooms and e-groups and, with greater impact, visible usage. Visible sales and usage of your product in the marketplace motivates others to try it.

Convincing consumers it's worth paying a premium for your product is the best business model there is. Many sites ask consumers to provide information about themselves. Captured customer information is considered almost as valuable as captured customers. Captured customer information allows for customization of a more personal experience that increases the likelihood that the customer will return.

Do the doable. Do not waste time and effort on objectives that cannot be achieved. Segment users you want to move and can move.

HO -- the hard opposition: These are impossible to get. Do not waste your resources on trying to get them.

SO -- the soft opposition: Avoid turning these into HOs.

UNDECIDED: You have yet to prove value to get them to use your service voluntarily.

SOS -- the soft support: Build layer over layer of reasons to purchase and continue to purchase your brand, to come back more often, and to buy more.

HAS -- the hard support: These are your best brandwidth developers. Nurture them. Turn them into walking, talking billboards. Brand your users, too.

Relevance

Brand relevance is the way your brand fits into your customers' lives and how it meets their needs and desires. It is about personalization. The better it "fits" the needs and wants of its users, the more brandwidth it will develop. Thus, specially on the Net, the rule is "Fixate on the customer, not on the product or the competition."

On the Net, direct communication with the customer is continuous and interactive. Active dialogue with the customer is the best way to build brandwidth. Active dialogue allows you to get to know your customer in detail and to adapt your unique selling proposition to his terms. Next to direct communication, sensitive market research is best.

Learn relevance on the most personal terms. Don't get caught up in reciting product and service attributes. Translate attributes into personal benefits for customers.
Learn about opportunities to sell them more stuff, more often. Why and when would your customers like more?
Learn about the competitive set from your customers' perspective. Who do they think is your good alternative?
Learn what's keeping your customers from greater brand commitment. They're quite willing to tell you what would help you to build more bandwidth with them.

Differentiation

To create a positive return on investment, own the position of relevant differentiation in your marketplace. You've got to be perceived as different from all competitors. Differentiation is where value is created on the Net as well as anywhere else.

Value is created by the scarcity of something that people want or need. There is no value in sameness. Streamline communications around issues that differentiate.
Whenever you have a market advantage, communicate it early, loudly and clearly.

Credibility

Deliver on your promises. Every brand is a promise -- a set of expectations built on user experience and on your own claims. Clearly define the customer benefit in advance. In this way, your having delivered the benefit will be easily recognizable. Do not make promises you cannot keep.

Imagery

Good brands shape imagery into meaning and differentiation. Imagery is of four kinds. To successfully build bandwidth, you must be successful at building each of these four kinds of imagery:

User imagery -- This is about what kind of people use your product. The customer should see -- "people like me, people I like, people I'd like to be like."

Usage imagery -- This is about what it feels like to use your product and be associated with your brand. In e-marketing the desirable usage imagery is "smart."

Product imagery -- This is the direct image of the product and the product in use.

Associative imagery -- This is about the company you keep -- the brands, individuals, institutions, and events closely identified with your brand.

Brand is defined in the customers' perceptions. Their perceptions are the reality within which marketers must work.

Designing Brand Architecture

The strength of your company brand or top product brand is reinforced by building a coherent brand architecture around it. Brand architecture is the relationship between one brand and another within your brand portfolio. With brand architecture, you create the total picture of your company's meaning within the customer's perception.

Brands on the Internet need constant refreshment and revitalization. While staying true to core meaning, constantly add value to the meaning of your brand in personal terms.

Advertising

Advertising is a key component of the total marketing mix. When it works, it sells. It builds bandwidth.

When advertising does not sell it is advertising that does not work. Advertising must perform:

The ad has to create awareness for the brand, not just for the ad.

The ad has to define the product. What's it for? If it's a new idea, what's it like?

The ad has to define why the consumer should care about the product.

The ad has to define the rational and emotional benefits of the products.

The ad must help define the user, usage, product, and associative imagery of the product.

Counting the number of hits a site receives is not enough. There appears to be a widening gap between site visits and commercial activity. As e-commerce develops, sales or click-throughs to sales will be a better measure of a site's effect.

To build bandwidth, go back to the fundamentals of e-business and all business. Define your brand clearly. Explain to consumers why they should come to your site -- on their terms, not yours. Tell them what your site is going to do for them, and remind them why it's going to do it differently and better than anybody else anywhere. Aggressively communicate what your brand is all about. Precisely identify the target audience and understand their perceptions and attitudes. Carefully develop the imagery of the user, usage, the product, and its associations on and off the Net. Talk to your audience in their own language. When in doubt, just say it clearly and directly.

Speed

On the Internet, speed wins. E-marketing's job is to add value. Velocity is value. But getting there RIGHT first, is what counts. The e-marketing plan checklist is an aid to getting there right:

Destination -- Did you clearly define where this strategy is supposed to take your brand? Have you defined what success will be?

Objectives -- Are your e-marketing objectives clearly linked to your business objectives? Have you homed in on just two or three key objectives? **Targets** -- Have you defined your marketing targets from the inside out, starting with your own employees, your market partners, your current customers, your own investors and friendly analysts, other investors and analysts, trade and business journalists, market prospects, and those who influence market decisions? The strategy you've defined must work for all these marketing targets.

Customer Benefit -- Have you defined the brand benefit that covers all of these audiences? Or have you defined specific benefits by audience group?

Strategy -- What's the plan to achieve your e-marketing objectives? What's the roadmap to your defined destination?

Tactics -- Finally, you get to do the ad. But you must define 360 degrees of tactics, to surround your targets with an integrated message.

This is the brand plan checklist:

Awareness -- How are you going to build awareness for your brand with key audiences? How are you going to activate it through usage and word-of-mouth "viral" marketing?

Relevance -- Where does the brand fit into the needs and desires of your marketing targets?

Differentiation -- What makes your brand different and better than the competition? Can you define it in terms of rational and emotional benefits, not just features?

Credibility -- What's your plan to develop credibility with your marketing targets? How will you define expectations? How will you overdeliver on those expectations? What's the plan to claim the satisfaction you deliver?

Imagery -- How will you define user, usage, product, and associative imagery for the brand?

Brand Positioning -- Given all of the above, what is the brand positioning? Where do you fit in the marketplace today and tomorrow?

Getting there first means working to minimize re-do's. Narrow the choices of suppliers and your own people by providing a clear, concise, but comprehensive creative brief before any tactical work is started:

- What is the market problem we are addressing?
- What change could help?
- Who are we talking to?
- What do we know about them that helps?
- What is the brand positioning -- and how can you make it the creative springboard?
- Why should they believe it (what are the rational and emotional benefits)?
- How do we close the sale?

The advantage of youth on the Internet is the unencumbered mind. Always be willing to learn something new. Your consumers and competitors change their minds quickly. They learn quickly. You have to adjust to them.

Marketing is Everything

Marketing is a lot more than advertising. Everything markets. Since everything communicates, you want to be in control of as many details as possible. This is why a core marketing strategy is recommended. All details can be formed around this core. To affect all these details, marketing must also be at the very core of a company's operations.

The idea behind integrated marketing is to make each detail enhance another and to make the whole greater than the sum of its parts. The most important selling a marketing person can do, therefore, is to convince his boss that marketing should be integrated into every aspect of company life. By integrating marketing, you better ensure that you have control over messages about your brands and company that reach various audiences at any time.

Layer-Cake Communications

Advertising is mere icing. The various layers must work together to tell the total brand story. Every crumb must make the brand story better.

PR

PR is important. It creates third-party validation of your messages by news media. PR must be integrated into all other communications. PR must achieve the same brand objectives as advertising or any other marketing communications: building presence, relevance, differentiation, credibility, and brand imagery. The focus of a PR campaign, however, should be on:

- Define the brand.
- Define the company.
- Define the future.

The objective of a PR campaign is to generate talk: a buzz. Good PR is good storytelling.

Defining the Brand

- What is this thing (product or service)?
- What does it do?
- Why was it developed?
- Who, what, where, when, and why?
- Where does it fit in people's lives (relevance)?
- What makes it different from the competitive set (differentiation)?
- How has it proved its market claims (credibility)?

What symbols, images, or icons can be associated with this brand (user, usage, product, and associative imagery)?

Telling the brand story is the most important job of PR for any kind of product or service on or off the Net.

Defining the company means defining the culture, strategy, and individual contributions that could create the successful brand.

Defining the future is the CEO's most important communications job.

It describes the destiny of your company and brand.
It projects your company as a success.

E-Merchanting

The basic assumption of e-marketing is selling to one customer at a time. This implies a shift from highly impersonal, highly inefficient mass marketing to highly personal, highly efficient customized marketing. We are therefore seeing the return of personalized merchanting.

In the online world, it is difficult to separate marketing from product development. Organic marketing is the building of marketing around a consumer's needs and wants. Organic marketing asks rather than tells. Today and in the future, e-marketing must be organic marketing. E-marketing must sell what the customer wants to buy and then sell him some more. With so many choices readily available on the Net, force and sameness can no longer win.

Learn about bandwidth and why the capacity of a wired or wireless network communications link to transmit the maximum amount of data from one point to another over a network is so important. Network bandwidth is the capacity of a wired or wireless network communications link to transmit the maximum amount of data from one point to another over a computer network or internet connection in a given amount of time -- usually, one second. Bandwidth management is about ensuring the best possible user experience end-to-end for all voice and video endpoints, clients, and applications in the Collaboration solution. Many different types of mobile users and teleworkers also connect over the Internet into the on-premises solution. So the incorporation of the Internet as a source for connecting the enterprise with remote sites, home and mobile users, as well as other businesses and consumers, has an important impact on bandwidth management and user experience. In computing, bandwidth is the maximum rate of data transfer across a given path. Bandwidth may be characterized as network bandwidth, data bandwidth, or digital bandwidth. This definition of bandwidth is in contrast to the field of signal processing, wireless communications, modem data transmission, digital communications, and electronics, in which bandwidth is used to refer to analog signal bandwidth measured in hertz, meaning the frequency range between lowest and highest attainable frequency while Dealing with bandwidth and the internet, in general, might get confusing at times since it requires a lot of acronyms and jargons. Here is one common mistake people always commit and we should avoid, the Mbps and MBps. Funny how one letter can make a difference. Bandwidth is the amount of data that can be transferred from one point to another within a network in a specific amount of time. It is measured in bits per second.

1. What is Bandwidth in Computing?
2. Expressing Bandwidth.
3. Measuring Bandwidth.
4. Bandwidth vs. Speed vs. Throughput.
5. Why Measure Bandwidth.
6. Purchasing Bandwidth.
7. Bandwidth Issues.
8. Troubleshooting Bandwidth Issues.

What is bandwidth?