



CK's Epiphanies

Inspirations & revelations from
the mind of a marketer.



strategy: Unleash Marketable Strategies ...Avoid Myopic Madness!

Many a marketer has been accused of being biased, subjective and downright "out of touch" with the brands they manage. This "myopia" affects - and infects - marketing plans, programs and creative. The plans that were set in motion to acquire customers result in the departure of shareholders. The creative that wins awards, loses with customers.

It holds that if your strategy is flawed, then your plan and programs will fail.

Welcome a fundamental epiphany:

Marketing is not a task. It is a process.

The process is composed of: Strategy, Planning, Development and Tracking. These components are not independent; rather they are interdependent. Developing each part carefully and constructively ensures the success of the entire process. Ergo, it's mission-critical that your strategy is solid since it will be the foundation of all plans and programs.

In this issue, we'll focus on marketable strategies and outlay practices - and several epiphanies - that will help you steer clear of myopic madness.

Marketable - meaning sound, informed and decisive - strategies are devised when they begin with surveying the business environment for wants, needs, challenges and opportunities. Myopic strategies occur when the marketer surveys the boardroom, aged data or intuition for these pivotal points of information.

Which brings us to an epiphany:

Your marketing is only as good as your method.

Method is paramount. And any good method for deriving a marketing strategy depends on first understanding your (or your clients') business environment.

Your business environment is comprised of:

- Customer Audiences
- Industry Trends
- Competitive Set

Illuminating Questions:

Want to ensure that your strategy is marketable...not myopic?

Make sure you have answered the following questions before devising your strategy:

- What industry trends are most relevant to your customers?
- Which key messages do your customers identify with?
- Who is your brand's "competitive set"?
- What is the press saying about your offerings?
- What is the press saying about your competitors' offerings?
- What is your brand's competitive advantage?

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- Media
- Your Own Brand

Each of these business environment factors can be thought of as a "vantage point" since you are viewing your brand from different angles and audiences. When analyzed for the right information, these factors get you out of the depths of visceral notions and into the sunny realm of empirical data.

Best of all, you'll have a 360-degree view of your business environment – a view that makes it easy to navigate the opportunities and plot the course of your truly marketable strategy.

vantage points:

Let's take a closer look at these vantage points and the valuable information they generate:

Getting to know you: Customers

Through interviews, focus groups and surveys you can profile your customer segments (primary, secondary, tertiary) and target your promotional efforts according to their demographics (age, gender, income) and psychographics (needs, preferences, influencers).

You're empowered to tailor your marketing messages according to what's important to them, not you.

Get relevant!: Trends

Successful businesses evolve with the marketplace. A marketplace that is forever in flux. Knowing your industry dynamics allows you to identify and use trends to your brand's advantage.

By speaking to your target audiences' current business problems and needs you are promoting with relevance.

Keeping up with the Jones': Competitors

Competitive intelligence is a vital resource that enables us to learn from, respond to and outmaneuver the business models, propositions and successes of competitors.

Equally important, it helps you understand and leverage your brand's unique selling points.

Perception IS Reality: Media

Staying current with how the media covers competitive brands as well as your own enables you to gauge how your brand is perceived in the marketplace.

You will be able to detect and leverage marketing messages that resonate and abandon selling points that receive a lackluster reception.

A Welcome Audit: Internal

Not the books – the brand. Discern and document your brand's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Not only does this net out your core competencies and competitive advantages, it pinpoints critical success factors and gives you benchmarks for gauging the success of your promotional efforts.

Take these vantage points together and you get a sure cure for marketing myopia. You'll see the true lay of the land, and your strategy for navigating your business environment will be clear,

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decisive and truly marketable.

But what's next? How do you turn that strategy into a plan of action and assure its success? This calls to mind the timeless adage, "Failure to plan is a plan to fail."

Giving birth to the epiphany:

Failure to plan viable programs is a fast road to vulnerability.

Next edition we'll explore planning epiphanies, hope you'll join us. ■

who is CK?

CK is Christina Kerley.

Since '91, Christina has been identifying and developing marketing epiphanies for up and coming Start-Ups and formidable Fortune 500s. Passionate about working on extraordinary projects and providing exemplary service, she formed ckEpiphany in '99.

The business works with clients to realize their marketing, branding and business development objectives. For more information on CK and ckEpiphany, please visit: www.ckEpiphany.com

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