

Selling the Invisible: A Field Guide to Modern Marketing
Harry Beckwith

Getting Started

- The core of service marketing is the service itself.
- Before you write an ad, rent a list, sash off a press release—fix your service.
- Assume your service is bad. It can't hurt, and it will force you to improve.
- Forget the excuses.
- Who is setting your standards—your industry, your ego, or your clients?
- Remember the Butterfly Effect: Tiny cause, huge effect.
- Big mistakes are big opportunities.
- Write an ad for your service. If after a week your best ad is weak, stop working on the ad and start working on your service.
- Don't just think better. Think different.
- Always start at zero.
- Create the possible service; don't just create what the market needs or wants. Create what it would love.

Surveying and Research

- Have a third party do your surveys.
- Survey, survey, survey.
- Unless you are confident that you can interpret them, beware of written surveys.
- For a dozen reasons, conduct oral surveys, not written ones.
- Never ask, "What don't you like?"
- You're selling individuals. Talk to individuals.

Marketing is Not a Department

- Marketing is not a department. It is your business.
- It's hard to see the real scope you're your business. Ask for help.
- Get out, climb out, have someone pull you out of the tunnel.
- Every act is a marketing act. Make every employee a marketing person.
- In planning your marketing, don't just think of your business. Think of your skills.
- Find out what clients are *really* buying.
- If you're selling a service, you're selling a relationship.
- Before you try to satisfy "the client," understand and satisfy the *person*.
- Your real competitor often is sitting across the table. Plan accordingly.
- Go where others aren't.
- Make technology a key part of every marketing plan.
- Study each point of contact. Then improve each one—significantly.
- In large part, service marketing is a popularity contest.
 - Meryl Streep: "I really did think that life would be like college, but it isn't. Life is like high school."
- Be professional—but more importantly, be personable.

Planning

- You never know. So don't assume that you should. Plan for several possible futures.
- Accept the limitations of planning. Don't value planning for its result: the plan. Don't plan your future. Plan your people.
- Do anything.
- Execute passionately. Marginal tactics executed passionately almost always will outperform brilliant tactics executed marginally.
- Do it now. The business obituary pages are filled with planners who waited.
- Act like a shark. Keep moving.
- Think dumb. Good ideas often seem ludicrous at first.
- Mistrust facts. And don't approach planning as a precise science. Planning is an imprecise art.
- Beware of focus groups; they focus only on today. And planning is about tomorrow.
- In planning, beware of what you think you remember.
- Have a healthy distrust of what experience has taught you.
- Beware of the overconfidence bias. Maybe he's right.
- Don't let perfect ruin good
- Start failing so you can start succeeding.
- Don't look to experts for all your answers. There are no answers, only informed opinions.
- The bumper stickers are right: Question Authority. Question alphas.
- Common sense will only get you so far. For inspiring results, you'll need inspiration.
- You gotta believe.

How Prospects Think

- Appeal only to a prospect's reasons, and you may have no appeal at all.
- Familiarity breeds business. Spread your work however you can.
- Take advantage of the Recency Effect. Follow up brilliantly.
- Forget looking like the superior choice. Make yourself an excellent choice. Then eliminate anything that might make you a bad choice.
- Identify and polish your anchors.
- Each impression you make will—temporarily, at least—be your last. So make it strong.
- Yes, build the quality into your service—but make it less risky, too.
- The best think you can do for a prospect is eliminate her fear. Offer a trial period or a test project.
- Tell the truth. Even if it hurts, it will help.
- Accentuate the trivial.

Positioning and Focus

- Stand for one distinctive thing that will give you a competitive advantage.
- To broaden your appeal, narrow your position.
- In your service, what's the hardest task? Position yourself as the expert at this task, and you'll have lesser logic in your corner. What is the big skill you could develop and market that clearly implies other valuable skills?
- Say one positive thing, and you will become associated with many.

- If you cannot see the differences in your service, look harder.
- Don't start by positioning your service. Instead, leverage the position you have.
- Ask yourself these seven questions—and have seven good answers.
 - Who: Who are you?
 - What: What business are you in?
 - For whom: What people do you serve?
 - What need: What are the special needs of the people you serve?
 - Against whom: With whom are you competing?
 - What's different: What makes you different from those competitors?
 - So: What's the benefit? What unique benefit does a client derive from your service?
- Your position is all in people's minds. Find out what that position is.
- If the gap between your position and your positioning statement is too big, your customers won't make the leap. Keep your steps small.
- Craft bold dreams and realistic positioning statements.
- Choose a position that will reposition your competitors; then move a step back toward the middle to cinch the sale.
- In positioning, don't try to hide your small size. Make it work by stressing its advantages, such as responsiveness and individual attention.
- Focus. In everything from campaigns for peanuts to campaigns for president, focus wins.
- No matter how skilled you are, you must focus your skills.

Naming and Branding

- Give your service a name, not a monogram.
- Don't get funny with your name.
- Generic names encourage generic business.
- Never choose a name that describes something that everyone expects from the service. The name will be generic, forgettable, and meaningless.
- Be distinctive—and sound it.
- If you need a name for your service, start with your own.
- In service marketing, almost nothing beats a brand.
- Brands are alive—and you could use one.
- A service is a promise, and building a brand builds your promise.
- Invest in and religiously preach integrity. It is the heart of your brand.
- Make selling easier, faster, and cheaper. Build a brand.
- Never underestimate the value of your brand or the difficulty in creating a new one.
- A brand is money.
- Give your prospects a shortcut. Give them a brand.
- Building your brand doesn't take millions. It takes imagination.

Communicating and Selling

- Make the service visible, and make the prospect comfortable.
- Your first competitor is indifference.
- Say one thing. People can only hear one thing at a time.

- Saying many things usually communicates nothing.
- Meet your market's very first need. Give it one good reason.
- After you say one thing, repeat it again and again.
- Don't use adjectives. Use stories.
- Attack your first weakness: the stereotype the prospect has about you.
- Good basic communicating is good basic marketing.
- Create the evidence of your service quality. Then communicate it.
- No tricks.
- If you think your promotional idea might seem silly or unprofessional, it is.
- Prospects do not buy how good you are at what you do. They buy how good you are *at who you are*.
- Convey that you are "positively good."
- Far better to say too little than too much.
- Watch what you show.
- Make sure people *see* who you are.
- Seeing is believing. So check your peel. (oranges)
- Watch—and perfect—the visual clues you send.
- Repeat yourself visually, too. It makes you look more organized and professional, and easier to remember.
- Give your marketing a human face.
- If you are selling something complex, simplify it with a metaphor.
- Remember Gettysburg, and the generative power of words.
- Sometimes, it's all in how you say it.
- You don't listen to clichés. Your clients won't either.
- Get to the point or you will never get to the close.
- Tell people—in a single compelling sentence—why they should buy from you instead of someone else.
- In your words and pictures, make yourself vivid.
- You cannot bore someone into buying your product.
- If you want publicity, advertise.
- If you want more publicity, do more advertising.
- If you want editors to help you, help them. Give them something interesting. Give them a story.
- Make your service easy to buy.
- Don't sell your service. See your prospect.
- Talk about him, not about you.
- Draw a clear map. And after every mission statement, add an objectives statement.
- If your mission statement isn't producing, fire it.

Nurturing and Keeping Clients

- Watch your relationship balance sheet; assume it is worse than it appears, and fix it.
- Don't raise expectations you cannot meet.
- To manage satisfaction, you must carefully manage your customer's expectations.
- Your parents were right. Say thank you. Often.

- Keep thanking.
- Do you thank people enough? Are you sure?
- Make sure the client knows. Don't expect the client to see how hard you have worked, how much you have cared, and how well you have performed. So often, the client is the last to know.
- Out of sight is out of mind. A product continually reminds its buyers that it is good. With appropriate modesty, you must, too.
- Sweat the smallest stuff.
- Your business starts with the first call. How good is yours?
- Be fast. Then get faster.
- Say P.M., deliver A.M.
- Make every client very happy every day.
- To fix your messengers, fix your message.
- Risk yourself.
- Get out there. Almost anywhere. Let opportunity hit you.