

# MARKETING

## Moving from Pretty to Customer-Centric Marketing

By Laura Patterson, VisionEdge Marketing, Inc., [laurap@visionedgemarketing.com](mailto:laurap@visionedgemarketing.com)

The marketing professionals within the customer organizations we work with often tell us they have been relegated merely to tactical implementers who make things pretty. We often hear them say they are perceived as the team that makes the website pretty, the presentations prettier, the trade show booth attractive, the online demo cooler, the new product brochure snappier, and so on. Perhaps you're sensing a theme here?

This reminds me of a question that I heard Sylvia Reynolds, chief marketing officer for Wells Fargo, ask at a conference a while back: "When did marketing become the make-it-pretty department?" Somehow marketing has moved away from its fundamental role of being about the customer. Marketing guru Phil Kotler tells us that marketing is responsible for finding, keeping and growing the value of customers. So what does that mean and how does a marketer get beyond the "make it pretty" syndrome?

The answer lies within the definition of marketing. The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines marketing as "an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders." This definition dictates that that marketing must be more than a creative function. Our goal as marketers should be to leverage the creative aspects of marketing to facilitate four critical customer-focused marketing processes.

### 1 Create Value

Marketing sits in the space between the company's capabilities and what the customer wants. By understanding the core capabilities of the company, and then matching it with customer wants and needs, marketing drives value creation. This means marketing must fully understand the customer. In this capacity, your company's marketing staff drives your value chain by insuring your products (marketing

collateral, books, photo products, labels, cartons, signs, banners, car wraps and more) and services (cross-media marketing campaigns) are shaped by customer expectations and demands.

### 2 Communicate Value

In order to be the chosen supplier for your customer, you first must be on your customer's "short list." To be on the short list, you need to know what the customer values so you can communicate how your company's products and services deliver on this value in such a way as to be preferable to alternative options. Every customer touch point affects the customer's decision and action; therefore, every touch point needs to be tied to and communicate the value proposition.

### 3 Deliver Value

By establishing a strong link between customer value requirements and the major value-producing activities in the company, marketing is in the unique position to enable the company to deliver on customers' value expectations. Marketing can then use these value expectations to drive customer preference and stimulate purchase decisions. One way to think of this is that at every customer touch point—whenever a customer will be affected by a decision or action—the people involved in that touch point need to understand and deliver on the value. In some organizations, this is known as "moments of truth." Marketing is in the unique role of being able to look across all the touch points and monitor whether the value is actually delivered. Through constant monitoring, marketing can help determine whether it is delivering on its value promise and whether the value proposition needs modification.

### 4 Manage Customer Relationships

We need to think beyond technology when we think of customer relationship management (CRM) and instead realize that CRM is a business philosophy in which the customer plays a central and critical role in all business activities. While we can debate who "owns" the customer, marketing is in the ideal position to be the centralized point for aggregating, segmenting and analyzing customer data. Potentially,

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your expertise with management information systems can help create a single view of the customer. This leads to the responsibility for creating and managing the processes associated with the company's customer relationships.

For organizations to grow, the leadership team relies on marketing for more than just the "pretty stuff." It should depend on marketing to develop marketing strategies that create and deliver superior perceived customer value. With this emphasis on increasing value, marketing can help grow your print business by penetrating existing segments, developing new markets, and creating new products and services. As a result, marketers should be willing to own and be accountable for these four processes if they want to serve as growth champions within your organization and leave the make it pretty syndrome behind.

Laura Patterson is the author of *Measure What Matters: Reconnecting Marketing to Business Goals*, *Gone Fishin' for Marketing and Sales Alignment: A Guide to Finding, Keeping and Growing Profitable Customers*, and numerous marketing articles. She is president and co-founder of VisionEdge Marketing, Inc., a leading data-driven strategic and product marketing firm located in Austin, Texas. The company specializes in consulting and learning services associated with measuring marketing performance, marketing and sales alignment, customer acquisition and retention initiatives, market, customer and competitive intelligence, market and product validation, market and customer segmentation, and go-to-market strategies. For more information, visit [www.visionedgemarketing.com](http://www.visionedgemarketing.com).

## From the Desk of Alon Bar-Shany

Vice President and General Manager, Indigo Division, HP

Shalom,

If we needed any proof that we live in a fast changing world or of the importance of community, the terrible disaster in Japan has been a sad and powerful reminder. Within seconds, we experienced huge destruction that has impacted millions of Japanese directly



and all of us indirectly. All HP Indigo customers, vendors, partners and employees are safe, but the damage to the country is immense. I am proud to say that Dscope and HP in North America and Asia-Pacific reacted very quickly, and we are in touch with our customers and trying to help as we can. Just as an example - many paper mills

were impacted and there is an effort to ensure continued supply, including imports from around the world, to Japan. I am sure all will join me in sending our thoughts and prayers to our friends in Japan as they focus on rebuilding and looking forward.

So much has happened since we met in Orlando, Fla., at Dscope6, and yet the event is still very fresh in my mind and heart. It all moved so fast for me—an amazing opportunity to meet so many old friends and new ones, learn a great deal, network and feel a sense of community and innovation. For me, this was the best Dscope event ever, and despite the increase in quantity, I felt the quality improved. I was amazed to see the real business that has developed from members connecting at previous Dscope conferences. There is clearly strong momentum in the market for digital solutions and a thirst to learn and share as we grow the market together.

I want to thank many of you who have taken the time to complete our annual Total Customer Experience survey for HP Indigo. I know we ask a lot of questions and this takes time. I want to ensure you that your feedback is taken very seriously and, as we collect the data, it will drive action so we can continue to improve our products, service and interaction with our customers and partners. The interactions at Dscope and other customer events enable us to try and stay very close to our customers. But the annual survey does provide additional input, which is critical.

2011 is off to a good start based on all I heard and saw in Orlando as well as the 26 percent page growth of our customers in Q1. Still the economy is vulnerable, the traditional print industry in North America, Japan and Western Europe is contracting and we all need to move very fast to maintain the momentum. Let's continue to partner and innovate as we continue to transform this industry.

Regards,



Alon