



Marketing Messages

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The 7 habits of successful marketers

While just recovering from the festivities of the holiday season, and ushering in 2006, our focus at this time of year often turns to a fresh start. What better time to consider the elements of inspired marketing leadership? With a nod to Steven Covey and his “7 Habits” success, I’ll offer up my “7 Habits of Successful Marketers”. In working with clients over the years, I have observed common traits and behaviours of successful marketers and business leaders. Besides an invigorating entrepreneurial spirit, an amazing intuitive grasp of how business works and a driving desire for success, they possess leadership traits which form the basis of their marketing success. Work these into your plan and make 2006 your best year yet!

1. ***They have a clear vision of their company values, what they want the company to become, and how they will get it there.*** They believe their company has a responsibility to set a personal best in their chosen industry. And the leaders of these companies inspire a vision that is shared by all employees. Without vision there are no values. Without goals and objectives, there is no course. Leading businesses and marketers define their values, goals and objectives and then make it their voice in their industry. When Chip Wilson launched Lululemon, his vision was “to elevate the world from mediocrity to a place of greatness”. He did this by providing yoga wear to help people lead a healthy, balanced fun filled life. Lululemon not only set out to be the best in their industry, but they grew from a single Kitsilano store in 1998 to over 40 stores in Canada, the US, Japan and Australia by the end of 2005. Lululemon also clearly defined their values. Who else could suggest you dance, sing, floss and travel in their manifesto?

2. ***The company speaks with one voice to the marketplace.*** All marketing materials are integrated and aligned to support the vision. There is internal and external consistency. The customer knows not only what produce or service is represented, but the promise of what the business or brand will deliver. What does a small blue Birks box mean to you? That box speaks volumes. It promises something of quality and value. Most of all, it promises to delight. Birks has a clear, consistent voice. Their promise is clear.

3. ***They are pioneers in their industry, willing to step out into the unknown and search for opportunities to innovate, grow and improve.*** They are not afraid to take calculated risks. When they generate a win, the business benefits. But they also learn from their mistakes. In the mid 80’s, did you think a smoke free donut shop would have a future? Seems obvious now, but it wasn’t when Tim Hortons first launched the idea.

4. ***They have a commitment to do better. They are not satisfied with the status quo.*** Whether it is becoming more innovative, giving better service, developing a better product, growing the business into new markets of opportunity, increasing efficiencies, increasing profitability, improving their marketing efforts or simply making their business a better place to work for staff, they are driven to continuous improvement.

5. ***They get accurate and timely information about the internal and external forces affecting their businesses.*** Successful businesses and marketers seek information about how their business is doing (the internal part) and then evaluate it in the context of what competitors are doing, what is happening to their industry and what opportunities or threats might come up due to trends (the external part). Knowledge is king. They appreciate that business is not a static thing. It changes and evolves. Think of the camera and film industry, book sales, telecommunications or post secondary education as examples. All of these industries have seen huge external forces affecting their businesses. Nobody is free of influence. Leaders understand that unless you embrace constant threat and opportunity, you will get left behind.

6. ***They hire good people and give them the tools to be successful.*** They foster collaboration and built trust. They understand the value of ongoing training. They give employees the tools to do their job exceptionally well. They know how to empower their people. And they understand intuitively that their largest asset is people - both the people who work there and the customers they serve.

7. ***They understand the importance of good communication.*** This includes communication with both customers and with staff. The most successful companies are the ones who remain accessible and accountable. They think of everything as communication: their advertising, customer service, staff training, team building, and management relations.

Companies flounder daily for failure to address even some of these points. Forming habits first takes knowledge, then commitment and finally practice. Make this the year to become the true marketing success you know you can be.

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