

Get Different

What's in it for me? Stand out from your competition, and attract the customers you want.

So, you've got an amazing product or service to offer the world. You know there's a need, and you're convinced there's nothing better on the market to fulfill it. The trouble is, no one knows about it – yet. No matter how great your offering is, it's easy to go unnoticed in a crowded market. Lack of effective marketing is the reason many businesses struggle to grow. But it doesn't have to be that way. In these blinks, you'll see that getting your market's attention – and converting that attention into leads – isn't about following the herd. Instead, these experimental tools generate totally atypical marketing solutions that will set you apart from the competition no matter your budget. In these blinks, you'll learn

how mailing candles kept a restaurant owner afloat; why having a nemesis can motivate your marketing efforts; and how free ice water turned a fledgling supermarket into a tourist destination.

To get noticed by prospects, be different.

Imagine you're sitting on a plane. It's about to take off, and there's a lot going on. Seatbelts clicking. Overhead compartments shutting and opening. The pilot's voice on the intercom. In spite of all of this commotion, most passengers are probably zoning out or on their phones. After all, this is what happens before every flight. Now, imagine that a fellow passenger two rows behind you begins whooping loudly and flailing his arms around. There's no doubt that you – and every passenger on the plane – will turn your attention to him. That's because the spectacle is not only unexpected, but different. And what's different, gets noticed. This is the key message: To get noticed by prospects, be different. To understand why humans are wired to ignore what's expected, consider that our hunter-gatherer ancestors depended on their ability to filter out sensory data for survival. Recurring sounds like leaves crunching, for example, were not as important as the unexpected ones: passing deer hooves signaling dinner, or a lion's approach signaling danger. The human brain is designed for survival at this level: to grasp opportunities, avoid danger, and ignore the rest. Your mind is excellent at ignoring anything that repeatedly proves to be neither an opportunity nor a threat. This phenomenon is known as habituation – and it explains why so many marketing crazes are short-lived. After all, the first goal of all marketing efforts is to get attention; before you can sell the benefits of your product or service, you need an audience. But when businesses use the same marketing tactics over and over again, customers become habituated to them and eventually learn to stop paying attention. Think of the first time you got a marketing email that addressed you by your first name. The informal address probably made you stop for a second. Other companies addressed you as “Dear customer,” and here was this message hitting you up like a pal. Now, though, personalized marketing emails are the norm. As soon as you spot an unsolicited “Hey, Name” email from a company, you don't stop to appreciate the friendliness – you hit delete and get on with your day. In marketing, going the tried-and-tested route means

you'll blend into the background. To get noticed, you have to make choices that are different from everyone else. But first, you have to know whose attention you're after.

Before experimenting with your marketing, build a list of target prospects.

Now imagine you're out fishing in a small backyard pond. As you lower your bait, you hope to catch a marlin. If that sounds absurd, it's because it is – there's no way you're going to catch an ocean fish in a tiny pond. The same principle applies to your marketing. If you don't know exactly who you're targeting with your idea or strategy, you'll just be wasting your time. Here's the key message: Before experimenting with your marketing, build a list of target prospects. The Get Different framework is essentially a marketing experiment, so you'll need a sampling of participants – these are your prospects. According to data scientist Dr. Pirooska Bisits Bullen, the sample size for any experiment should involve at least one hundred people. So that's your first step: to identify your Target One Hundred. This list of prospects is the audience of your marketing experiment. Sound like an ambitious number? Don't worry. Breaking the process down will help you get started, whether you currently have customers or not. If you have an existing customer base, begin by ranking them in order of most to least revenue for the previous two years. That way, you'll see which customers value your product or services the most based on how much they spend already. Next, ask yourself a question: Of all the customers you've listed, with whom do you love doing business? Put a smiley face next to those. Finally, mark customers on your list who bring in the highest revenue and are marked with a smiley face. These customers make the final cut – they represent your target prospects. In other words, you want to target one hundred people just like them. But what if you don't have any customers you want to clone, or even any customers at all? In that case, look at the people around you – your vendors, friends, or colleagues. If the car manufacturer Ford is your top customer, then Goodyear, a tire manufacturer that is partnered with Ford, is likely a good prospect for you. And even your competition can give you insights into the community. Once you have your Target One Hundred, you need to get to know them a little better.

You need a clear goal to market effectively.

Visualize yourself at the foot of an enormous mountain. What could motivate you to climb to the top? Maybe you think it'd be really cool to get up there. But that alone probably wouldn't be enough to overcome the challenge. Now, what if your child were at the top of that mountain? And what if, at the same time, a villain were scaling the mountain to get her? That's a mission that will get you going – a lot more than simple desire! Similarly, if you want to maximize your chances of marketing effectively, it's important to be aware of your mission, and your competition, from the get-go. The key message here is: You need a clear goal to market effectively. Before you begin developing your experiment idea, know your desired outcome. There are many different goals you might have: retaining a customer, getting newsletter sign-ups, or selling a certain product to a given customer. This objective, known as your “win,” is your

marketing mission – the top of the proverbial mountain. Next, you must determine specifically what your customers are looking for, and how you can meet those needs. Ask yourself what you’re promising to give to your prospects. If you offer a range of different products and services, which ones are going to be most appreciated by your prospects – and why? This will help you form your marketing mission. Say you have a window-selling business, for instance. Your “what” would be a draft-proof window. That’s your promise to your prospects – in this case, homeowners. Meanwhile, your “win” is selling new windows. And your greater mission is to save homeowners from cold and drafts. But remember our proverbial villain racing you to the top of the mountain? Keeping an eye on your competition can also serve as motivation. The author keeps a photo of someone he labels his “nemesis” – a greedy and dishonest so-called marketing expert – on the wall in his office. Whenever he’s unsure of the value of his offer, he takes one look at that photo, cringes, and gets motivated to outmarket him by doing everything differently. Once you have your list of prospects, a marketing mission, and an awareness of the competition, you’re fully equipped to get to the nitty-gritty: budgeting.

Let your odds of success determine how much to spend on marketing.

When Linda Weathers reached out to Michalowicz, she was desperate. She’d successfully launched her bookkeeping business but had zero new leads after a whole year of operations. It’s not like she wasn’t trying – she’d spent \$50,000 on programs that promised to find her leads, but none of them had delivered. Michalowicz warned Linda that she was likely being scammed. In fact, he said, getting new leads doesn’t need to cost a cent. The key message? Let your odds of success determine how much to spend on marketing. Now that you know who and what you’re targeting, you have to decide how much you want to invest in your marketing. If you’re unsure about the amount, try this simple three-step calculation. Remember your list of top customers? Take each one’s average annual revenue, and multiply it by the overall number of years you expect to be doing business with them. This will determine what’s called your Customer Lifetime Value. The author, for example, wants to sell books. He expects the average top prospect to buy eight of his books throughout their lifetime, and he knows that he makes \$3.50 in royalties per book sale. This means that he will get \$28 from that customer – that’s his Customer Lifetime Value. Next, you’ll want to determine what’s known as your Close Rate Odds – the likelihood that you will land that customer. In other words, what are the odds that you will win a prospect’s business if you manage to get their attention? Look at your past conversion rates. Based on past book sales, the author determined that he had a 1:5 chance of selling to prospects. You can also determine your Close Rate Odds by simply looking up average conversion rates in your industry. Finally, using these two figures, you can estimate how much to spend per customer. Based on his Customer Lifetime Value of \$28 and his Close Rate Odds of 1:5, the author determined that it would be profitable to invest \$1.00 per prospect. So with a hundred prospects, his final marketing budget is \$100. The point is to end up with a ballpark figure to guide you in your efforts. Don’t get bogged down by details – a rough estimate is fine. Nevermind if that figure is low. As we’ll see, a little can go a long way.

Sustain your prospects’ attention by

presenting a clear opportunity.

Michalowicz was driving in New York City when he stopped at a red light and came face-to-face with a man in a cheap Statue of Liberty costume. Everything about him was striking: the green toga, the foam crown, the cigarette dangling out of his sneering mouth. He was also holding a sign advertising tax consults. Sure, this guy stood out – but the idea of getting tax consults from him seemed absurd. The fact is, getting attention is only effective marketing if you appeal to the people you want as customers – not turn them off. This is the key message: Sustain your prospects' attention by presenting a clear opportunity. As we've already established, effective marketing has to be different from the norm. The question is, how do you come up with a marketing idea that's different but also appealing? If you're struggling to get started, the author recommends getting a group of people together to help you brainstorm. These people don't have to be marketers – they don't even have to like marketing. Just get together, and get the ideas rolling. Tell the group what your industry is already doing, and spitball ideas that are totally different. Don't turn down any of the ideas – don't even comment on them. Simply write them all down. By the end, you'll be sure to find an idea worth tackling. When evaluating the ideas, the most important question you should ask is, Does this clearly present an opportunity for my target market? If the answer's yes, you're on to something. Your idea can be very simple. Take Kasey Anton, who kept her high-end restaurant afloat by mailing birthday candles to customers who had previously filled out their details. Enclosed with the birthday candles – atypical enough to get attention, yet appropriate for the occasion – was a coupon for a free entrée at her restaurant. Kasey assumed that most people don't dine alone on birthdays – and hoped she could attract extra business. Her bet paid off. In fact, it earned her more than \$18,000 in new business in a single month! Apart from the entrée, the costs were minimal: under \$200 for stamps, paper, ink, and birthday candles. Kasey kept up the promotion until she sold her business in 2008. As we'll soon see, when it comes to marketing, it's best to keep it simple – whether you're presenting an opportunity or communicating the outcome you want.

Point your customers toward action by offering a simple directive.

You know how street performers have a container set out in front of them? When you pass a busker or a mime, it's pretty obvious what they want you to do with that container: express your appreciation for their work by putting money in it. Of course, you may not want to tip. But the fact that their request is so simple and specific maximizes the odds that you will. This is the power of a clear directive. The key message here is: Point your customers toward action by offering a simple directive. The final stage of the Get Different framework is designed to hold your prospects' attention and keep them engaged long enough to take the next action. Remember your "win," the desired marketing outcome that you developed earlier? Well, this stage is the time to communicate that to your customer. When directing your customer toward your objective, it's essential that you keep your call to action as simple and direct as possible. Adding steps makes it less likely your prospect will respond the way you want. On the other hand, an effective idea paired with a clear call to action can transform a business. Take Dorothy and Ted Hustead, who in 1931 ran a supermarket in rural Wall, South Dakota. It was right after the Great Depression – and in the middle of nowhere – so

customers weren't exactly pouring in. But one hot summer, Dorothy came up with a way to draw people in: Why not offer free ice water at the store? She decided to put up a sign on the road in the area advertising food and drinks, but the only direct call to action was, "Come to Wall Drug for free ice water." Thanks to the simple directive, Wall Drug became a major tourist stop that summer - and attracted millions of visitors every year that followed as the store continued to expand. Customers initially came for the free ice water, but they came back time and again for the experience. When thinking about your directive, ask yourself what offers instant gratification to your customers. And what satisfies their long-term desires? If you sell grills, for example, the instant benefit may be a free "easiest ways to fire up a grill" booklet. Meanwhile, the long-term benefit would be a functional grill that lasts. Once you have a clear directive, you've arrived at the final stage of your Get Different marketing experiment.

Measure the success of your idea, and continue to experiment if necessary.

Following a Get Different workshop, an accountant named Gabe Piña came up with an idea to gain new leads. He would send ten prospects a copy of his favorite business book and include a Post-it on the first page. On it, he'd write, "I hope this book serves you as much as it has served me," along with his name and email. Gabe was successful in gaining attention from his prospects. But while they appreciated the note, his prospects were too busy to read the book. He didn't get any new leads either. It was a failed experiment, sure. But, as the final principle of the Get Different framework prescribes, he simply continued to experiment further. Here's the key message: Measure the success of your idea, and continue to experiment if necessary. Say you've grabbed your prospects' attention by presenting something uncommon. You've identified the opportunity you will present. And you have a clear call to action. But what if your experiment still doesn't yield the results you want? What happens when your customers don't respond to your idea? Then it's time to experiment. Remember Gabe's books with the Post-its? In his second trial of the experiment, he added five sticky notes in each book instead of one. He placed them on key pages with messages such as, "I think you'll like this part!" and "Don't skip this page!" He knew people may not read the book, but that the sticky notes would attract their curiosity. On the final sticky note, he offered his own guidance and added his cell number with a - very direct - call to action: "Call me." This marketing approach worked far better than planned. Gabe didn't just pick up a client; seven prospects publicly expressed their gratitude for the book, resulting in more exposure. All this engagement thanks to a low-cost experiment! Gabe kept track of how many book recipients turned into new leads. It's essential that you, too, find a way to measure your idea's impact. Before conducting your experiment, set a start and end date, and write down your number of prospects, your intended investment, and the intended outcome. This way, at the end of the experiment, you can evaluate your next steps - whether to reject the idea, improve it like Gabe did, or retest the same idea with a new sample of prospects. Most importantly, never get discouraged if an experiment fails. Remember, you can always try something different.

Final summary

The key message in these blinks is that: To stand apart from the competition, forget your standard industry marketing practices. To attract customers' attention, you'll have

to dare to be different. As long as you present a valuable opportunity to your prospects, invest intelligently, and measure your progress, you can turn marketing experiments into profitable leads. actionable advice: Find your “-est.” To stand out in your industry, you have to be more than just the best – you have to be the best at something specific. Explore where you stand by searching for superlatives, or words ending in “-est,” online; you’ll find a list of about a thousand words. As you skim the list, consider which words resonate with you the most. To establish your unique positioning, select a few that are in line with your objectives and your customers’ needs.