Tiago Forte

MY TOP 5 MARKETING BREAKTHROUGHS

The biggest needle movers I've found in growing my online business





In this short guide, I want to share my top 5 marketing breakthroughs.

Marketing is a tough topic. You can have the best product in the world, but if you don't communicate about it properly, you're not going to reach as many people as you could.

I'm no marketing expert – I'm a productivity expert. I was forced to do marketing out of necessity. I'm writing this guide with the help of Billy Broas, who also comes from a non-marketing background. We worked closely in growing Building a Second Brain and learned many lessons along the way.

There is so much BS out there about marketing. We found that most advice misses what works best.

This document contains my truly precious insights. It's geared toward people who really want to make an impact with their businesses – not just a quick buck. These are the marketing lessons I'd go back and give myself if I could step into a time machine.

Enjoy!

Tiago Forte



IDENTIFY YOUR PRODUCT'S "CHAIN OF BELIEFS"

Borrow this messaging strategy from the world's top-selling copywriters

NUMBER 1: IDENTIFY YOUR PRODUCT'S "CHAIN OF BELIEFS"

Customer insights are everything in marketing.

When I was working with Billy, this was the big thing he helped me understand. It completely changed the way I think about marketing – plus many other things.

Ask yourself the question, "What does my customer need to believe in order to buy?"

Good question, isn't it?

You see, our customers are usually not as "sold" on certain things as we might imagine. And that resistance is the reason they don't buy.

Using the Chain of Beliefs strategy, you identify each of the beliefs that a prospect must have in order to buy your product. If they have these beliefs, taking you up on your offer is a no-brainer. If they don't have these beliefs, then no amount of discounts or promotions will get your prospect across the finish line.

"Put yourself in the mind of your customer. What do they need to not only *know* but *believe in* and *agree* to in order to trust you with their time and money?"

NUMBER 1: IDENTIFY YOUR PRODUCT'S "CHAIN OF BELIEFS"

Let's look at an example from my own product, Building a Second Brain. The needed belief: **My brain is for having ideas, not holding them.**

Can you see that if that belief is missing, a person is far less likely to buy my online course? In other words, if they believe their brain is the perfect place to store ideas, they're probably not going to buy a course that teaches them how to store their ideas in software.

Also, I can now create specific pieces of content to instill these beliefs. Instead of selling my course, I'm selling the belief "your brain is for having ideas, not holding them."

If I sell that belief, the course sells itself. This has the wonderful side effect of **making hard** selling unnecessary because your prospects are already pre-sold.

Also, I can systematically obtain these agreements from a large group of people using short, easy-to-consume content. That's far more effective and less work than drowning them in endless tutorials, teaching them something they might not even believe is important. (More on this in the next breakthrough.)

This belief-building approach is how you know every hour you spend creating content is worth it. ou can be certain that every piece of content they consume moves a member of your audience decisively towards a purchase.

I'll use this approach for any product or business I ever create.



FEWER HOW-TO'S AND TUTORIALS

Break free from this common content creator trap

NUMBER 2: FEWER HOW-TO'S AND TUTORIALS

At my core, I'm an educator. I educate and train knowledge workers on better methods of productivity. Before finding a better marketing approach, my tendency was to share as many tips, tutorials, and how-to's as possible.

There is nothing inherently wrong with this, but it's often too deep in the weeds and not as valuable to our readers as we think. We, as experts, have a tendency to make this mistake. It's the curse of knowledge. We dive right into the nitty gritty because that's where we play.

But while we're deep down the rabbit hole, our prospects are back at the surface. We lost them a long time ago.

I discovered that I could deliver more value by going up a few levels. For example, instead of giving someone tips on Evernote, I'd give them advice on choosing a productivity tool. Or, going up another level, ask them the questions: "What will you use these tools for? What outcomes are you trying to achieve?"

I found that by going up a few levels in the message, I could not only talk about issues deemed more important to my readers, but I could separate myself from the pack. There are thousands of productivity experts giving tips, tutorials, and software hacks. But I was one of the few talking about bigger needle-moving topics, like career growth and goal achievement.

"There is nothing inherently wrong with how-to's and tutorials, but it's often too deep in the weeds and not as valuable to our readers as we think."

NUMBER 2: FEWER HOW-TO'S AND TUTORIALS

This approach was one of the earliest and most eye-opening marketing shifts for me, and the effect on my audience growth was obvious. Things took off.

You see, so many business owners and creators are out there giving away more and more of their best content, hoping and praying that if they just give out enough free stuff, people will somehow magically buy.

Now, my company does believe in providing free content, but we approach it differently. We know that we must first change people's mindsets before they can truly benefit from a tutorial.

Rather than stacking an encyclopedia of information upon people's arms, **our content** coaches and guides our audience on making better decisions.



BUILD RELATIONSHIPS OVER EMAIL

Step aside, social media. When it comes to marketing, email is still king.

NUMBER 3: BUILD RELATIONSHIPS OVER EMAIL

Email is the only online distribution channel you can truly control. Every other one is controlled by a platform with its own priorities.

Email is cheap. You pay only for your total number of active subscribers, not per email. This gives you the chance to test new ideas and positioning in a low-risk way and then double down on what works.

Emails are personal. They go straight to people's most private, personal channel: their inbox. The same place they receive emails from their colleagues, boss, or customers. And they are written as if to just one person, like a personal letter, even if sent to thousands.

Emails are completely opt-in. No one's getting targeted by an algorithm or marketing campaign. They have to actually take an action that strongly signals that they want to know more. This means you're never cold-emailing someone trying to drum up interest.

Your email list is the single greatest asset you have because you can take it with you. It represents not transactions, but long-term relationships with real people you've built up trust with.

It was a HUGE relief to be able to set aside the noise of social media and focus all my attention on building my greatest long-term asset, my email list.

Once you get this core email machine in place, you can bolt new channels onto it. But without a strong email game at the center of your business, it's like trying to drive up a mountain road with a flat tire.



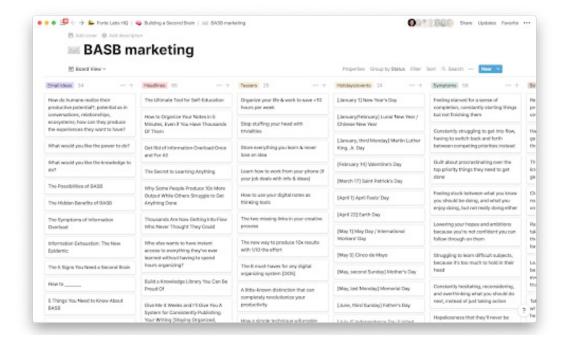
CENTRALIZE YOUR CORE MESSAGING

Why you must be clear and consistent in your messaging.

In the early days, Billy and I were creating marketing material left, right, and center. Websites, email campaigns, product pages, social media content, and more. We needed a way to make sure all our messaging was aligned.

You see, a confused person does not buy, so creating clarity and consistency in your marketing messaging is of utmost importance.

We created a "messaging map" that served as the guiding light for all content we produce. Today, my team and I still use this core messaging document for every piece of marketing material we create.



How would it feel to have your core persuasive messaging all in one place? What if any time you wanted to create something new... an email, a Twitter thread, a webinar... you had a single document to reference? It's like a brand manual, except instead of fonts and colors, it contains the words and phrases needed to inspire your customers to buy.

In an era where readers are overwhelmed by content, you can't risk adding to people's confusion by putting out a muddy marketing message. A clear, consistent message will change your business.



HELP PEOPLE CROSS THE BRIDGE OF TRANSFORMATION

People don't want a hammer. They want a picture on their wall.

Creators often fall into this trap. We have a lot of information to offer, so we think information is what people really want. But it's not. People want an outcome.

Beyond the content – the tips, tactics, videos, how-to's, tutorials, frameworks, step-by-step checklists, etc. – **you are selling a transformation.**

A transformation is a clear, unmistakable change from one state to another. You were one kind of person before, and you are a distinctly different kind of person after. It doesn't mean all your problems are solved. It means that your identity has made a decisive shift, and there's no going back.

Every successful educational program includes such a transformation, even if it's a very utilitarian subject. And even if it's not explicitly called out.

Transformation is the essence of learning. If there is no transformation, then all you're doing is giving people a massive data dump, hoping they figure it out for themselves.

It's tremendously helpful to know what "Bridge of Transformation" you are leading people across because then you know what actually needs to be in your product or service (everything needed to get customers across), and what you can leave out (anything that's not absolutely necessary).

It's also tremendously powerful to explicitly communicate that transformation to your prospects. It is the question they don't know they need the answer to.

For myself, we identified that "having a Second Brain" was the clear before-and-after shift. Which gave me the clarity to continually ask "How do we help people determine when they've crossed the bridge and built their Second Brain?"

That question led to dozens of changes, and new features, and eliminated content that wasn't truly moving people forward on that journey.

A product is a bridge from who they are now to who they want to be. How much they are willing to invest depends on how quickly, reliably, and painlessly you can help them cross that bridge.

Ask yourself: What will they be able to have, feel, do, or be after using your product? What will be possible? What will be within reach? What will their daily experience of life be like?

"It is the question they didn't know they needed the answer to."

Those are my top 5 marketing breakthroughs!

Marketing is tough – no doubt about that. Don't be hard on yourself if you struggle with it.

It doesn't help that there is tons of awful advice out there. I hope you benefited from this real-world perspective and in hearing what I've learned in growing my online business from zero to over 7-figures.

Do you need marketing help?

Our approach toward marketing tends to resonate with a certain type of person. If the strategies in this PDF resonated with you, I invite you to check out the program Billy and I co-created.

Click here to learn more about our marketing accelerator for online business owners.

Thank you,

Tiago

